

OBITUARY NOTICE

Ernest A. Wallis Budge

All Oriental scholars must have read with deep regret the announcement a short while ago of the death, at the age of 77, of Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, the eminent Egyptologist, who from 1893 to 1924 was Keeper of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum. Sir Ernest's treatises upon Egyptological subjects are more numerous and cover more ground than those of any other English authority, and, after a brief notice of the principal events of his career, it is upon them especially and their significance that the present writer wishes to dwell.

Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge found his interest in Oriental languages awakened at an early age, while he was yet at school, and, with the help and advice of the Orientalist Charles Seager, he proceeded from the study of Hebrew to that of cuneiform. His work in this direction led eventually to his introduction to Samuel Birch and George Smith of the British Museum, and his first publication, *Assyrian Incantations*, appeared in 1878, actually before he went up to Christ's College, Cambridge. After a distinguished University career which culminated in his gaining the Tyrwhitt Hebrew Scholarship, he was appointed an Assistant to the Egyptian and Assyrian Department of the British Museum, being made Keeper in 1893 at the early age of 36. He married in 1883 Dora Helen, daughter of the Rev. Titus Emerson, Rector of Allendale. In 1920 Budge was knighted, and in October of the year 1926, two years after his retirement, Lady Budge died.

Such is a bare account of the life of this remarkable scholar, and, if full justice were to be done to his achievements, equal space should be devoted to his adventurous travels in the East, which enriched the Museum with some of its most priceless treasures, and to his amazing linguistic ability which enabled him to edit and publish texts not only in Egyptian and Assyrian, but also in Coptic, Syriac, and Ethiopic. But it is his works dealing with ancient Egypt, on which the greater

part of his life was spent, that chiefly concern the present writer, who is numbered among those younger students who owe them an incalculable debt. The official publications of the Museum issued under his direction put within the reach of scholars some of the most important manuscripts, both religious and secular, which the Egyptians have bequeathed to us. One need only mention the papyri of Ani, Hunefer, Anhai, Amenemope, and Nes-min to suggest the wealth of his contribution in this direction.

In his private time he wrote prolifically on the history, social life, and religion of the ancient Egyptians, but it was the last mentioned subject, the religion, that was nearest his heart. His *History of Egypt*, in eight volumes, published in 1902, and the companion volumes of the series entitled *Books on Egypt and Chaldea* successfully carried out the plan of presenting, in a scholarly and readable fashion, the results of a century of Egyptology at a price within the reach of all. Herein perhaps lay his greatest service to his subject, for in the library of books which were the work of his pen he made available in a handy usable form material which hitherto had been confined to more inaccessible works, mostly written in foreign languages. His valuable edition of the *Book of the Dead* (1898), in three volumes, consisting of text, translation, and vocabulary, still stands, for all general purposes, un superseded, as also does his *Egyptian Heaven and Hell* (1905), which, admirably edited and arranged, reduces to three volumes (in the new reprint, to one volume) the scattered material from the royal tombs of Thebes and the coffin of Seti I. Of equal value are the best known of his more general books, to the preparation of which went a deep knowledge of the work of the earlier Egyptologists, work too often neglected by the younger students of to-day. *The Gods of the Egyptians* (1904) is a storehouse of information concerning the Egyptian Pantheon, and *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (1911) collects a mass of material concerning that god which no other single work contains. But Budge's genius in this direction is

exemplified most of all by *The Mummy* which, in its revised and enlarged edition (1925), should be considered a classic of its kind. Between the covers of this book is included all, so to speak, that the general reader would wish to know about ancient Egypt, and a good deal more that the serious student might profitably take to heart. As a manual of funerary archæology it has no equal. The same genius is shown in Budge's *Introductory Guide to the Egyptian Collections in the British Museum* (1909), which must have stimulated the interest of hundreds of visitors to the Museum and which was, in the case of the present writer, the first Egyptological book he ever possessed. There remain to be mentioned his big *Egyptian Dictionary*, an amazing product for a single scholar, which is the only one of its kind existing in the English language, and his last book, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, which appeared only a few weeks before his death. In the latter work he takes us once more over the whole field of Egyptian mythology and, as the last representative of the older generation of scholars, unmoved by the changing fashions of modern opinion, bids us consider afresh the beliefs of ancient Egypt. It is a fitting close to a great career, and if the present writer has succeeded in presenting, however briefly, that side of it for which he personally feels most grateful, he is content.

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ALAN W. SHORTER.

Correction to the Calculated Astronomical Length of the Lunar Month in Babylonia

A serious mathematical error in the reduction of the length of the lunar month by the Babylonian astronomer Cidenas was published in my *Babylonian Menologies, Schueich Lectures*, p. 11. Cidenas gives 29·530594 days as the length of the lunar month. This should be reduced to 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, 3·3204 seconds. $3\frac{1}{3}$ seconds in my book is almost minutely right; either by printer's error or my own "twelve hours" were omitted. This is a serious mathematical error for those who may use my figures in time reckoning and I trust that this correction will receive attention by the readers of my book.

S. H. LANGDON.