

## OBITUARY

F. W. THOMAS, C.I.E., F.B.A., Ph.D., D.Lit., D.Litt.  
(1867–1956)

A just appraisal will, I am confident, assign to Frederick William Thomas a place in the foremost rank of Indologists. He traversed several diverse fields of Oriental learning, and upon all of them he brought to bear an exact scholarship and a fine literary judgment, *μούσαις ἄμμιγα καὶ χάρισιν*. Following the wise Cambridge tradition, he entered Oriental studies through the gateway of the Classical School, and became a pupil of that much loved and honoured *kalyāṇa-mitra* Professor Cowell. Jointly with Cowell he published in 1897 a translation of Bāṇa's "Harṣa-carita", a narrative of the rise of the emperor Harṣa-varḍhana of Kanauj, composed in highly ornate Sanskrit style. The historical interest which this work aroused in Thomas continued to influence him in later years, bearing a manifold variety of valuable fruits, notably his work on the *Epigraphia Indica* (of which he was editor in Vols. xiii–xvi (1915–1922), jointly with Sten Konow in Vol. xiii, and with H. Kṛishṇa Śāstri in Vol. xvi), his "Science of Politics according to the School of Bṛihaspati", in which he edited with a translation and introduction the Bṛhaspati-sūtra (1921), his contribution to the Cambridge History of India, and his "India and its Expansion", which formed his Calcutta University Readership Lecture in 1942. The epoch-making discoveries of Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan opened new and most welcome fields of historical and philological research, into which Thomas, who from the outset was closely connected with them as Librarian of the India Office, entered with keen zest. His studies of the documents of Khotan, written in an old Prakrit dialect of Northern India heavily charged with the local language, yielded important results, and still greater success attended his work on the native languages of Central Asia. He attained a high degree of mastery in classical Tibetan, and he discovered and described the hitherto lost "Nam" tongue, of which he published a grammar and texts in two volumes.

But his multifarious activities had other sides as well. His bibliographic skill was shown in his Appendix to Winternitz's Catalogue of South Indian MSS. in the Royal Asiatic Society (1902), the "Catalogue of Two Collections of Sanskrit Manuscripts preserved

in the India Office Library”, in which he collaborated with C. H. Tawney (1903), and his Supplement on the Buddhist MSS. in the great Catalogue of Sanskrit and Prakrit MSS. in the India Office (1935). His interest in Buddhism was also evidenced earlier in the annotated edition of the Sarva-siddhānta-saṅgraha published by him jointly with L. de La Vallée Poussin (1902), and in “The Beginnings of Buddhist Art”, translated by him and Miss L. Thomas from Foucher’s fine work (1917). Besides his Buddhist studies, he took an interest in the sister-heresy Jainism, which resulted first in his work on Jagmandarlal Jaini’s *Outlines of Jainism* (edited and enriched by him with useful notes, 1916), and later in his introduction to Kunda-kunda’s Pravaçana-sāra with Amṛta-candra’s commentary and Professor Faddegon’s translation, which he likewise edited (1935). Moreover he completed in 1946 a translation of another standard work of Jain doctrine, Malli-ṣeṇa’s Syād-vāda-mañjarī, a commentary on Hema-candra’s Anya-yoga-vyavaccheda-dvātriṃśikā; the typescript of this awaits funds for its publication. Nor did Thomas neglect other sides of Indian thought, for he edited in 1917 Uṅgi’s work on the Vaiśeṣika as expounded in the Daśa-padārthasāstra. In addition to these major occupations he produced numerous scholarly articles in many learned journals. He was in truth

πολυφραδῆς ἀνήρ.

L. D. BARNETT.