



Edward William Lane: The Life of the Pioneering Egyptologist and Orientalist

Jason Thompson

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Few Western scholars of the Middle East have exerted such profound influence as Edward William Lane. Lane's *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836), which has never gone out of print, remains as a highly authoritative study of Middle Eastern society. His annotated translation of the *Arabian Nights* (1839–41) retains a devoted readership. Lane's recently recovered and published *Description of Egypt* (2000) shows that he was a pioneering Egyptologist as well as orientalist. The capstone of his career, the definitive *Arabic-English Lexicon* (1863–93), is an indispensable reference tool.

Yet, despite his extraordinary influence, little was known about Lane and virtually nothing about how he did his work. Now, in the first full-length biography, Lane's life and accomplishments are examined in full, including his crucial years of field work in Egypt, revealing the life of a great Victorian scholar and presenting a fascinating episode in east–west encounter, interaction, and representation.

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