



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

Jason Thompson

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

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