

The chief characteristic of Charpentier's work is perhaps its thoroughness : the reader is left with the impression that he had mastered his subject from beginning to end in all its details. He had a most retentive memory from which nothing seemed to escape. His bibliographical introductions are admirable in their fullness.

He was an omnivorous reader and was interested in many things. In ordinary conversation he would often surprise his English hearers by his intimate acquaintance with English history and literature or by his knowledge of the politics of the present day.

17.

E. J. RAPSON.

James Henry Breasted

Death has laid a heavy hand on Egyptology during the last two years. There have passed from amongst us in this country, Weigall, Peet, Griffith, Hunt, Budge, and Quibell ; in Germany, Sethe and Wreszinski ; in Holland, Boeser. And now to this list we have to add the name of the doyen of American Orientalists, Breasted.

James Henry Breasted, the son of Charles and Harriet (*née* Garrison) Breasted, was born at Rockford, Illinois, 27th August, 1865. He was educated at the North Central College, Chicago Theological Seminary, and Yale University. Having early manifested a deep interest in ancient Oriental history, and especially that of Egypt, he proceeded to Berlin University, where he studied Egyptology under Erman. His first Egyptological publication, giving manifest promise of a brilliant career, was his doctoral thesis, for the subject of which he chose the so-called monotheistic hymns of Amarna, composed in the reign of the heretic king Amenophis IV—Akhenaten (*De Hymnis in Solem sub rege Amenophide conceptis*, Berlin, 1894). In the same year Breasted rendered a great service to all English-speaking students by publishing an English translation of Erman's

Aegyptische Grammatik, in which were embodied the results of that scholar's intensive studies of the structure of the ancient language of Egypt—studies that established a radically new conception of its nature. Erman's brilliant demonstrations have formed the basis of Egyptian grammar and syntax as it is to-day universally understood and accepted, and the younger generation of Egyptologists can scarcely conceive the opposition which was raised against Erman's thesis by those who had been schooled in the older methods of study. Erman indeed, like all pioneers, had reason to see the force of the utterance of John Locke, made in 1690, that "new opinions are always suspected and usually opposed without any other reason but because they are not already common", or, as the translators of the Authorized Version had said in 1611, "was there anything projected, that savoured in any way of newness or renewing, but the same endured many a storm of gainsaying or opposition?" These facts are worth recalling, because and Breasted's translation was the means of making Erman's conception of the Egyptian language, and the logical basis on which his views were founded, far more widely known than could have been the case had they been available in the German edition alone. Breasted had the advantage of being trained in the new system, and he turned this advantage, aided by his native aptitude and vigorous energy, to good account. On the completion of his studies he was appointed an assistant in Egyptology at the University of Chicago; in 1901 he was made director of the Haskell Museum, and in 1905 he was nominated to the chair of Egyptology at Chicago University.

Meanwhile, under the auspices of the academies of Germany, the Egyptian Dictionary had been inaugurated, and scholars of all nations readily co-operated, each in his own particular sphere, in amassing the material for this great undertaking, which has in recent years materialized in the publication of the *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* in five stout volumes (1925–1931). For this work Breasted undertook the historical

texts, and in 1900 he began a long mission to the museums of Europe, where he copied, collated, and revised many hundreds of stelae and other hieroglyphic texts. The benefits of his prolonged labours were threefold : first, the dictionary benefited by the lexicographical material ; secondly, Breasted being provided with reliable copies of inscriptions, was enabled to write his *History of Egypt* (1st ed., 1905) from first-hand and authentic sources ; and thirdly, with these stores of texts, he undertook the publication of English translations of all the historical texts from the earliest times to the end of the 26th Dynasty. These translations appeared in chronological order in his *Ancient Records of Egypt* (5 vols., 1906-7). Breasted's *History* (later editions, 1919 and 1921) has become the standard work on the subject, and it has the advantage of covering the ground thoroughly in a single volume. Although Egypt was his first and most persistent love, Breasted realized that that country was but a single unit in the ancient history of the Near East, and he soon extended his reading and studies to cover the wider field. As a result he has given us several charmingly written books, at once scholarly and popular, amongst which may be mentioned *Ancient Times* (1916) and *A Survey of the Ancient World* (1919). His attention was not limited to history, however ; religion and mythology were studies of equal devotion, and in 1912 appeared his *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*. Previous writings on Egyptian religion had been based almost entirely on the so-called " Book of the Dead " : Breasted showed that it is necessary to go back farther in time, and he emphasized the importance of the " Pyramid Texts " of the Old Kingdom and the " Coffin Texts " of the Middle Kingdom as the forerunners of the " Book of the Dead ", which became popular in the New Kingdom and later times. He returned to similar studies towards the close of his life, when he published, in collaboration with J. H. Robinson, the *Dawn of Conscience* (1933).

Breasted's writings are too numerous to be surveyed here

in detail, but brief mention must be made of one or two more. In his "Philosophy of a Memphite Priest" (*Zeitschr. f. äg. Sprache*, 39, 1901, 39-54), he made an important contribution to the understanding of a difficult text which has since occupied the attention of Erman, Sethe, and other scholars; his "New Chapter in the Life of Thutmose III" (Sethe's *Untersuchungen*, ii, 1900) shows his enterprise and resource in interpreting an obscure episode in history; and his "Battle of Kadesh" (*Chicago Decennial Publications*, v, 1904, 81-126) is a masterly analysis and reconstruction of an ancient feat of military strategy. And, finally, in his great edition of the *Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus* (1930), he brought his full powers of scholarship and exposition to bear in the elucidation of an important medical text.

Important as Breasted's published works have been and will long remain in the literature of Egyptology they did not constitute by any means the whole of his activities, and he will always be remembered as the organizer and director of the Oriental Institute of Chicago. In planning the activities of this organization Breasted was a megalomaniac, but a fortunate megalomaniac who saw the realization of his far-flung schemes. The purpose of the Institute as he conceived it is well expressed in the opening paragraph of the *Report for 1935*: "The Oriental Institute is a research laboratory for the investigation of the early human career. It endeavours to trace the course of human development from the merely physical man disclosed by the palæontologist to the rise and early advance of civilized societies, the product of a social and material evolution culminating in social idealism." To give effect to this conception Breasted organized an archaeological mission of extraordinary scope, maintaining expeditions in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Asia Minor. Bodies of trained workers have carried out explorations in all these countries and their activities and results are attested by the numerous publications of the Institute. Epigraphic surveys have been organized to record

the inscriptions of the monuments of Egypt and elsewhere and to copy frescos, paintings, and other ancient works of art. One of the most important of the Institute's works was to compile a dictionary of Assyrian Cuneiform. The needs of hieroglyphic scholars have been met by the Berlin *Wörterbuch*, and those of Coptic by Crum's *Coptic Dictionary*, now in course of publication; but Cuneiform scholars have hitherto been entirely without such aid. Breasted, whose aim was always to fill up gaps in the equipment of Oriental studies, set this great undertaking in motion in 1921, securing the services of the able scholar, Daniel David Luckenbill, who unfortunately died in 1927. Luckenbill had initiated the project and had carried it forward with great energy, and had likewise published two further volumes of Breasted's *Ancient Records* series, containing the historical records of Assyria. In the hands of his successors the Assyrian dictionary continues to make solid progress. Another gap was perceived by Breasted in that the extensive and important religious texts of the Middle Kingdom, the so-called "Coffin Texts", mostly unpublished, required collecting and editing. He himself, in conjunction with Dr. Alan Gardiner and others, did much in the labour of collecting and collating these texts, and he arranged that the Institute should publish a complete corpus of them, under the editorship of Drs. De Buck and Gardiner. The first volume of this elaborate edition will soon appear, and others will follow in due course. The foregoing are only a few of the many branches of the Institute's activities: for a full appreciation of its wide scope the reader must consult the Annual Reports, in which the ability and initiative of Breasted are everywhere apparent. His energy was unbounded both at home and abroad; he constantly visited Europe and the East and has done much actual field-work.

Breasted was honoured by all the principal universities, academies, and learned societies of Europe and America, and the list of his diplomas and appointments is a long one.

He was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1923. Of his personal kindness and charm his colleagues have given ample testimony, and of his abilities as a scholar and an organizer his own publications and the thriving Oriental Institute are lasting memorials. His death occurred in the Medical Centre Hospital at Chicago on the 2nd December, 1935, as the result of streptococcal infection, in the 71st year of his age.

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WARREN R. DAWSON.