



ARNOLD, THOMAS WALKER

ARNOLD, Sir THOMAS WALKER. British orientalist, b. April 19, 1864; d. June 9, 1930. The third son of a Devonport businessman, he gained a scholarship at Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he read classics, but was soon drawn towards oriental studies. At the age of twenty-four he was appointed teacher of philosophy at the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, a post which he held with conspicuous success for ten years. He formed a very strong bond with Indian Muslims and worked devotedly in the cause of reform in Islam. In 1898 he was made Professor of philosophy at Government College, Lahore. Returning to England in 1904, he became Educational Advisor for Indian students. From 1921 until his death he was Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at London University. He was knighted in 1921. Thus by 1928 Sir Thomas Arnold could look back on more than forty years of scholarship in Arabic and Persian and a long and honorable career of university teaching, during which he had steeped himself in every aspect of Islamic culture. In 1921 he supplied "historical introduction and notes" to Laurence Binyon's *Court Painters of the Grand Mogals* (London), and contributed a valuable article on the *Ḳosrowwa Šīrīn* manuscript with miniatures by Reżā-ye 'Abbāsī (Victoria and Albert Museum, N. 364-1885) to the *Burlington Magazine* (38, pp. 59-67). Thus his flair for Islamic painting began to show itself. In 1924 he published his first individual study on the subject in the modest but highly original and suggestive *Survivals of Sasanian and Manichaean Art in Persian Painting* (Oxford), the text of a talk which he had delivered as the fourth Charlton Lecture at Durham University two years previously. In 1926 he collaborated with F. R. Martin, publishing in Vienna limited editions of three



outstanding Persian manuscripts, with plates by Max Jaffe: *Miniatures from the Period of Timur in a MS. of the Poems of Sultan Jalair* (a ms. now in the Freer Gallery, Washington, D.C.); *The Nizami ms. illuminated by Bihzad, Mirak, and Qasim Ali*. (British Library Or. 6810 dated 1494); *The Miniatures in Hilālī's Mystical Poem, the King and the Dervish* (i.e., *Šāh o gada*; the ms. had passed from Martin's own collection to the National Museum, Stockholm). In 1928 appeared his masterpiece, *Painting in Islam* (Oxford, repr. New York, 1965), followed in 1929 by *The Islamic Book* (Paris and New York), a comprehensive work of profound scholarship written in collaboration with the distinguished Austrian Arabist, Dr. Adolf Grohmann, *Bihzād and his Paintings in the Zafar Nāma MS* (London), on the celebrated manuscript copied in 1467, (formerly in the collection of Schulz and now in the Johns Hopkins University Library, Baltimore) appeared in the year of Arnold's death. *The Old and New Testaments in Muslim Religious Art* (Oxford), the Schweich Lecture he delivered before the British Academy in 1928, two years after his election as a fellow, was published posthumously in 1932. His great catalogue of Mughal paintings (*The Library of A. Chester Beatty, a Catalogue of the Indian Miniatures*, London) was not published until 1936. This was followed by a work done with J. V. S. Wilkinson, *Chronicle of Akbar the Great: a Description of the Akbar-nama Illustrated by the Court Painters* (Oxford, 1937).

But of all Arnold's works, *Painting in Islam* is of the greatest value to the student of Muslim, and particularly Persian, painting. It set a new standard of scholarship in the subject, for the author's long apprenticeship in Arabic and Persian gave him free access to the original sources; his deep interest in the religion and culture of Islam enabled him to see Islamic painting in its true setting and proportion. At the same time his humanity makes the book an eminently readable account of a somewhat abstruse subject. He went to previously untapped sources for many of his illustrations and examples—the Bodleian Library, the Royal Asiatic Society, and the India Office Library (where he had been Assistant Librarian from 1904 to 1909)—and thus widened the field of research for his successors. In his preface he emphasizes that he has not attempted to write a general history of Islamic painting, the "purpose of the book is rather to indicate the place of painting in the culture of the Islamic world," and it has thus never been superseded by later works of a strictly art historical nature.

Important early works of Arnold were his two books *The Preaching of Islam; a History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (London, 1896, 1913, 1935) and



The Caliphate (Oxford, 1924; repr. London, 1965). Arnold became the first English editor for the first edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. He co-edited the first edition of *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford, 1931; repr. London, 1952) with A. Guillaume; and with R. A. Nicholson he edited *A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to Edward G. Browne . . .*, (Cambridge, 1922).

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See also the reprint of *The Preaching of Islam . . . With an Introduction and a Note on the Life and Work of Sir Thomas Arnold* by J. A. Saiyid, Lahore, 1956.

(B. W. Robinson)