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Arthur Weigall
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The large-scale scientific investigation of Egyptian antiquities by Western scholars began as an unintended consequence of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt during which, in 1799, the Rosetta Stone was discovered. The military expedition was accompanied by French scholars, whose reports prompted a wave of enthusiasm that swept across Europe and North America resulting in the Egyptian Revival style in art and architecture. Increasing numbers of tourists visited Egypt, eager to see the marvels being revealed by archaeological excavation. Writers and booksellers responded to this growing interest with publications ranging from technical site reports to tourist guidebooks and from children's histories to theories identifying the pyramids as repositories of esoteric knowledge. This series reissues a wide selection of such books. They reveal the gradual change from the 'tomb-robbing' approach of early excavators to the highly organised and systematic approach of Flinders Petrie, the 'father of Egyptology', and include early accounts of the decipherment of the hieroglyphic script.

Tutankhamen and Other Essays

Arthur Weigall (1880–1934) is chiefly remembered as an Egyptologist, although he also wrote novels, screenplays and film reviews. Following a period spent working with Flinders Petrie at Abydos, he succeeded Howard Carter in 1905 as Chief Inspector of Antiquities for Upper Egypt at Luxor. Here he worked diligently to protect Egyptian artefacts from the ravages of thieves, antiques dealers, public works, and amateur excavators. Ill health then forced a return to London, where he became a successful set designer and later moved into journalism. He returned to Egypt to report on Carter's discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb for the *Daily Mail*. This collection of essays, accessible to non-specialists, appeared in 1923. Written in response to the extraordinary surge of public interest in Egyptology, the book covers various archaeological and historical subjects, taking Tutankhamun's magnificent tomb in the Valley of the Kings as its starting point.

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University Printing House, Cambridge, CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108082990

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2015

This edition first published 1923
This digitally printed version 2015

ISBN 978-1-108-08299-0 Paperback

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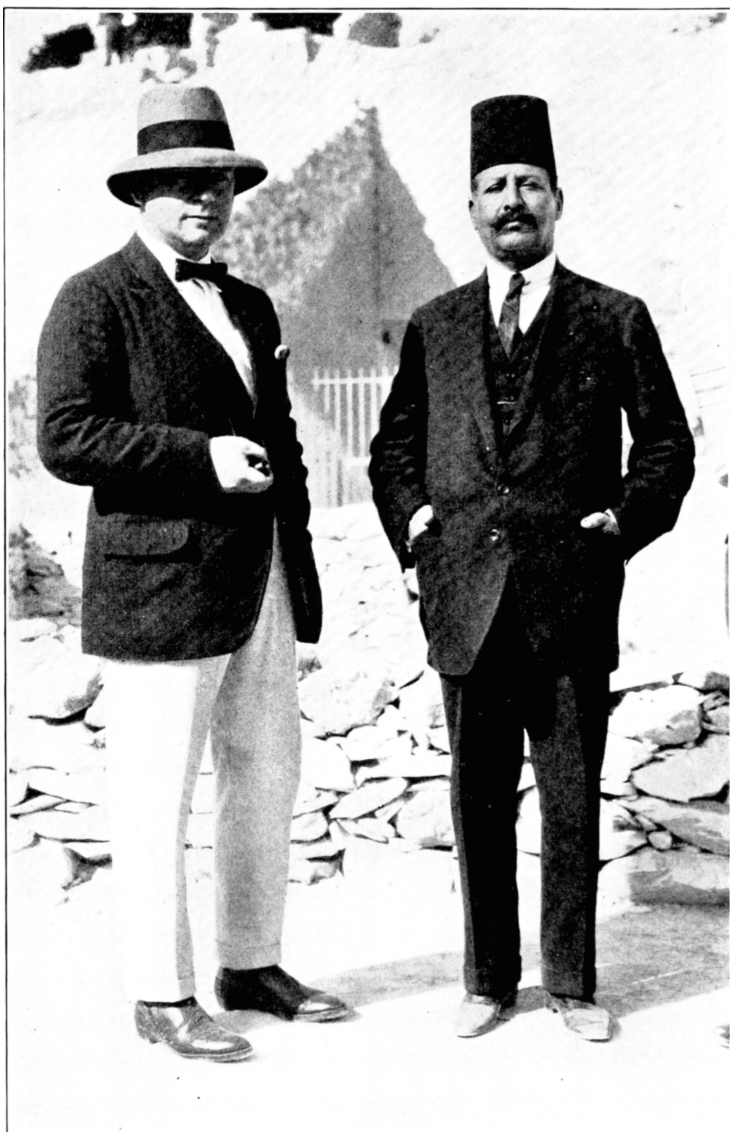
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THE AUTHOR, WITH THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE,
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TUTANKHAMEN

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY
ARTHUR WEIGALL

*Late Inspector-General of Antiquities, Egyptian Government, and
Member of the Catalogue Staff of the Cairo Museum.
Officer of the Order of the Medjidieh*



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15 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND, W.C.2

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First published: November 1923

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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PREFACE

It is not many months since a volume of my essays and papers on Egyptological matters was published, under the title of "The Glory of the Pharaohs"; but the interest aroused in the whole subject of Egyptian research by the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen has created a definite call for another volume of the same kind. In the previous collection there were, amongst some miscellaneous articles, three or four papers which had a close bearing on the excavations in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings; and I there gave some account of the work conducted under my supervision in that royal necropolis. In this new volume there is again a varied collection of papers dealing with different aspects of Egyptian research, but the first few chapters are directly concerned with the new tomb.

Never before has the public been so widely stirred by an archæological discovery as it has been by the opening of the sepulchre of Tutankhamen, and on all sides one may observe an eager desire to learn something about the past ages of man both in Egypt and in other countries. The cynic has already been aroused by it to scoff at what he terms the pursuit of a new nine-days' wonder; but I am inclined to believe that the finding of this ancient Pharaoh's tomb has revealed an almost universal love of ancient things, until now largely suppressed by the clamour of the concerns of the present day, and I think that the world at large is at last about to claim that inheritance in the regions of the Past to which the archæologist has opened the road. The estate of Egyptology has been long enough the exclusive domain of the scholar. His pioneer work is hardly begun, it is true; but from now onwards, I believe, he will have to labour under the eyes of an ever increasing public who will follow him into those regions, and will continuously demand to know what he has found.

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This is all to the good. Upon the Egyptologist it will have a humanising effect which is badly needed ; and upon the public a knowledge of the Past cannot fail to exert a broadening influence. In this life of ours which, under modern conditions, is lived at so great a speed, there is a growing need for a periodical pause wherein the mind may adjust the relationship of the things that have been to those that are. So rapidly are our impressions received and assimilated, so individually are they shaped and adapted, that, in whatever direction our brains lead us, we are speedily carried away from that broad province of thought which is our common heritage. But a man who travels alone finds himself, in a few months, out of touch with the thought of his fellows ; and, similarly, a man who journeys continuously along the narrow road of his own modern experience finds himself grown impatient of the larger outlook of the world's continuity. And just as the solitary man must needs come into the company of his fellows if he would retain a healthy mind, so the man who lives in his own confined present must allow himself an occasional visit to the realm of the past if he would keep his balance.

Heraclitus, in a quotation preserved by Sextus Empiricus,* writes : " It behoves us to follow the common reason of the world ; yet, though there is a common reason in the world, the majority live as though they possessed a wisdom peculiar each unto himself alone." Every one of us who considers his mentality an important part of his constitution should endeavour to give himself ample opportunities of breathing the breath of this " common reason," which comes like a cool breeze from the regions of the Past. We should remember the yesterdays, that we may know what all the bother of to-day is about ; and we should foretell to-morrow not by to-day but by every day that has been.

Forgetfulness is so common a human failing. In our rapid transit along the individual pathway of our life we are so inclined to forget the past stages of the journey. All things pass by and are swallowed up in a moment of time. Experiences crowd upon us ; the events of our life occur, are

* Bywater : " Heracliti Ephesii Reliquiae," p. 38.

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PREFACE

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recorded by our busy brains, are digested, and are forgotten before the substance of which they were made has resolved into its elements. We race through the years, and our progress is headlong through the days.

Everything we have used, as it is done with is swept up into the basket of the past, and the busy scavengers, unless we check them, toss the contents, good and bad, on to the great rubbish heap of the world's waste. Loves, hates, gains, losses,—all things upon which we do not lay fierce and strong hands, are gathered into nothingness, and, with a few exceptions, are utterly forgotten.

And we, too, will soon have passed, and our little brains which have forgotten so much will be forgotten. We shall be throttled out of the world and pressed by the clumsy hands of death into the mould of that same rubbish-hill of oblivion,

.where lie

Days past like dreams, and waning moons slid by,
And mixed heaps of lost mortality,

unless there be a stronger hand to save us. There is only one human force stronger than death, and that force is History, for by it the dead are made to live again.

Sometimes, then, in our little race from day to day it is necessary to stop the headlong progress of our individual experience and, for an hour, to look back upon the broad fields of the past. "There is," says Emerson, "a relationship between the hours of our life and the centuries of time." Let us give history, and archæology its due attention; for thus not only shall we be rendering a service to all the dead, not only shall we be giving a reason and a usefulness to their lives, but we shall also bring to our own brains a balance which cannot easily otherwise be obtained; we shall adjust our thoughts to the big movement of the world; and, above all, we shall learn how best to do our duty in this wonderful age to which it is our inestimable privilege to belong.

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