

**THORNTON'S ARABIC SERIES, VOLUME
I. ELEMENTARY ARABIC: A GRAMMAR;
BEING AN ABRIDGEMENT OF WRIGHT'S
ARABIC GRAMMAR TO WHICH IT WILL
SERVE AS A TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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Thornton's arabic series, Volume I. Elementary Arabic: a grammar; being an abridgement of Wright's Arabic grammar to which it will serve as a table of contents by Frederic Du Pre Thornton & Reynold A. Nicholson

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FREDERIC DU PRE THORNTON & REYNOLD A. NICHOLSON

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VOLUME I.

ELEMENTARY ARABIC
A GRAMMAR

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ELEMENTARY ARABIC

A GRAMMAR



FREDERIC DU PRE THORNTON

being an abridgement of

WRIGHT'S ARABIC GRAMMAR

to which it will serve as a table of contents

EDITED BY

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PREFACE.

FREDERIC DU PRE THORNTON was born in 1841 at Wendover in Buckinghamshire, where his father, the Rev. Spencer Thornton, was Vicar, and received his education at Brighton College. He commenced the study of Arabic in 1880, when he first visited Egypt and Palestine, following the method which he recommends in his *First Reading-Book*, namely, "to begin by reading aloud, from a book fully pointed, with a Moslem who is accustomed to recite the Qur'ân (Corân) in public prayer." From 1880 to 1892 he was almost continually in the East. As Mrs Thornton, who accompanied her husband on all his journeys, writes to me:— "He was very quick at languages and thought much of correct pronunciation, so that during several visits to Egypt he had one of the students from the University Mosque al Azhar, Cairo, to read Arabic with him. His whole thoughts and time were given up to his projected Series, and especially to the Arabic Grammar, as he found so many in Egypt, Army officers and missionaries, who did not care to go to the expense or labour of learning the larger and more difficult Grammars. We visited twice the Jebel Haurân, the ancient Bashan of the Bible, and found it a most interesting country to travel

in, and the Druse people very hospitable, especially to the English. My husband's idea in visiting India was to find out about the Moslems there, and whether they spoke Arabic much amongst themselves, which does not seem to be the case. It is only used there as the Sacred Language." Mr Thornton was acquainted with most of the leading Arabists in this country—Professor William Wright, a portion of whose *Arabic Reading-Book* (Williams and Norgate, 1870) he read with the author; Professor W. Robertson Smith, Professor Ion Keith-Falconer, Sir Charles Lyall, Professor D. S. Margoliouth, and others. My friendship with him began, I think, in 1895 or a little afterwards, and we corresponded pretty regularly until his death, which took place in January 1903, besides meeting now and then to talk over the work on which he was engaged. I have pleasant recollections of the hospitality shown to me by Mr and Mrs Thornton on several occasions when I stayed with them at Westgate-on-Sea, as well as of the enthusiasm with which Mr Thornton would discourse on his favourite topics. Few can have known Wright's Grammar so perfectly as he did; and though the present volume bears witness to his minute accuracy and to the systematic thoroughness with which he entered into the smallest details of exposition, only those whom he consulted or who helped him in his work can have any conception how much thought and labour it cost him to produce. He was trying to improve it almost to the last day of his life.

This volume, however, does not stand by itself. It was Mr Thornton's intention to compile and publish an Arabic Series, based on the Corân, which should enable the learner to get a good working knowledge of the language without the necessity of constantly referring to other books. Of this *

* p. vii will be found two pages further on

to Wright's masterly, but to beginners somewhat perplexing, book* ; to which enquiry he made reply, 'There are two difficulties: to know what to put in, and to know what to leave out.' Ten years later I determined to make the attempt, 'putting in' all required by the grammatical analysis (then as now in manuscript) of my *First Reading-Book* and, so far as could be, 'leaving out' everything else; for I supposed that a rule would only be needed, if the Reading-Book's Arabic text afford an example in illustration; and I hoped by retaining Wright's section numbers that my abridgement might become a table of contents to his Grammar. I had supplied lists of omissions to Professors W. R. Smith and de Goeje with a view to their being remedied in the forthcoming 3rd edition; and such omissions as I subsequently discovered have been placed in this book under the heading of 'Note,' so that my trivial additions stand markedly apart from (my abridgement of) the scholarly text."

Mr Thornton then goes on to speak of his *Elementary Arabic: First Reading-Book*, to which reference has been made above, calling attention to the fact that all its words appear singly in Parts I and II of the Grammar, and all recur later in phrases to illustrate syntax. As he observes, "it may be said to supply almost without exception my Grammar's examples." The remainder of his Conclusion I will quote entire.

* A Grammar of the Arabic Language translated from the German of Caspari and edited with numerous additions and corrections by W. Wright, LL.D., late Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge. Third edition revised by W. Robertson Smith, late Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge, and M. J. de Goeje, Professor of Arabic in the University of Leyden. Cambridge: at the University Press, 1896.

"From a biographical sketch of M. S. de Sacy written in October 1895 by Professor Hartwig Derenbourg, Titulaire de la chaire de Silvestre de Sacy à l'École spéciale des langues orientales vivantes, I borrow the following :

La grammaire arabe de Caspari, le livre de classe qui, depuis 1848, n'a pas cessé d'être mis entre les mains des élèves dans des rédactions latine (1848), allemande (1859, 1866, 1876, et 1887), anglaise (1862 et 1874) et française (1880), tient le milieu entre les tendances des deux rivaux. "Elle s'appuie, dit M. Fleischer, sur Sacy et Ewald, et cherche seulement, avec quelques rectifications et additions que j'ai fournies, à réunir les qualités de l'un et de l'autre... La grammaire de l'ancien arabe ne progressera vraiment d'une manière sensible que le jour où, d'un côté, on comparera et appréciera avec une balance de précision les philologues orientaux répartis dans les diverses écoles, et où, d'autre part, l'on soumettra les matériaux accumulés dans leurs plus excellents traités à une enquête approfondie dirigée dans le sens de notre linguistique."

Dans cette dernière direction, c'est à peine si nous avons dépassé la première étape, franchie d'un seul bond par le jeune Ewald, alors presque à ses débuts. L'édition anglaise de Caspari, par M. William Wright, ouvre seule quelques échappées sur l'horizon encore incertain de la philologie sémitique comparée. La *Grammaire de la langue arabe* qui, dans ses diverses transformations, continue à porter le nom de Caspari, se recommande et a réussi surtout à cause de son ordonnance harmonieuse: point de dérogations au plan général, chaque règle à sa place, pas de redites, pas de doubles emplois, une sobriété dans les tours de phrase n'excluant pas la clarté, une clarté obtenue sans redondances oiseuses et sans vaines amplifications. C'est un peu terre à terre, et cela manque d'essor; mais si l'imagination n'y trouve pas son compte, le raison est pleinement satisfaite par ce Lhomond de la langue arabe.