

OBITUARIES

L. D. BARNETT, C.B., F.B.A., Litt.D. (1871–1960)

Almost seventy years of active academic life and scarcely a year in that long span which did not bring to birth one or more valuable contributions to learning. That is Dr. Barnett's record as a scholar, and in this brief space to speak of it as it deserves is obviously impossible. Fortunately we have a list of his published writings to 1947 compiled by his friend and colleague the late Miss Edith M. White, in vol. xii, pts. 3 and 4 of BSOAS, a special volume entitled "Oriental and African Studies presented to Lionel David Barnett by his colleagues past and present". This has been supplemented by Dr. C. A. Lewis, bringing the record down to 1959. His academic life was for the most part dedicated to the service of three learned institutions—the British Museum, the Oriental School of London University and the Royal Asiatic Society. To speak of the last first, as befits this occasion; he was elected a member in 1904, was at various times a member of council and a vice-president, and since 1939 rendered inestimable service as Honorary Librarian. In 1950 the Society was proud to confer upon him its gold medal.

His first published work goes back to Victorian days; it was the *Mostellaria* of Plautus which he translated in 1890 with two student friends at University College Liverpool, his native city, one of them F. E. Smith, later first Earl of Birkenhead. Then followed at Trinity College Cambridge a triumphal progress, although his extreme shyness and modesty would have shuddered at such a word:—first class in the Classical Tripos with special distinction and the Chancellor's medal; Craven Scholar, Craven Student, four times Sir Wm. Browne's medallist for Greek verse (one of his themes "Mors Tennysonis" again recalling a vanished world).

His rare abilities were soon recognised by the Trustees of the British Museum who in 1908, promoted him, while still a junior, Keeper of the Department of Oriental Books and Manuscripts after only nine years' service. That institution has known many scholars of high repute in special fields, but the vast range of Dr. Barnett's erudition in realms both of eastern and western culture was probably unique in the Museum's history. From 1906 to 1917 he also held the Professorship of Sanskrit at University College London; then when London University's School of Oriental Studies was founded he was included in its staff, and in addition to his

arduous Museum duties as Keeper which continued until his retirement from the Keepership in 1936, he served at the School for thirty-one years. The offices he held there were these : Lecturer in Sanskrit, 1917–48 ; Lecturer in Ancient Indian History and Epigraphy, 1922–48 ; Librarian of the School, 1940–47. When his term as the School's librarian ended, he was invited and gladly agreed to return and assist in his old Department at the Museum which was then in sore straits through shortage of professional staff. There he served during his remaining years of life, for part of that time taking sole charge of its Indian section, which normally absorbs the energies of two assistant keepers.

Barnett's career as Keeper at the Museum for twenty-eight years (1908–36) was in every way memorable. Such a post is no place for the absent-minded professor type, demanding as it does not only scholarship but administrative ability and business acumen, and with all these qualities he was superbly endowed. It was amazing how easily he could switch his mind for instance from some teasing problem in Oriental epigraphy to the typing of an official minute (he was his own secretary-typist) often on a complicated matter which he would speedily resolve, and in a style ever lucid, cogent, and when necessary, pungent. He drove himself hard but was ever kind and considerate to his staff, and merely by his example drew from them their best efforts. They could not but admire, almost awe-struck, his encyclopaedic learning, but they loved him for his utter unselfishness, for the humility of true greatness in him, and his unwearying generosity in giving help and encouragement to younger scholars. Only a fortnight before he died the Asiatic Society of Calcutta wrote to tell him they had voted him the Sir Wm. Browne gold medal. While he deeply appreciated this honour it drew from him the characteristically modest comment : " They must surely have better men than I."

In this rapid review a few figures may help to convey some idea of his prodigious output of work. He compiled for the Museum a monumental series of no fewer than ten descriptive catalogues of Oriental printed books (two of them still in the press) covering Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Kannada, Badaga, Kurg, Tamil, Telugu, Burmese, Hindi, Bihari, Pahari, Panjabi, Saurashtra, and other dialects—large quarto volumes running to a total of over 4,000 pages. To this must be added some twenty independent works, some written for specialists, others for the cultured lay public, together with

nearly 100 articles and monographs contributed to the JRAS, the BSOAS, and other learned periodicals. And as if even all this were not a sufficient offering, he also wrote over 400 book reviews, nearly all of them for the JRAS. He shunned personal publicity and in the evening of his life expressed the wish that there should be no obituary of him, unless this Society, which was very dear to him, might care to print a brief notice in its Journal.

A. S. FULTON.

H. C. BOWEN, 1896–1959

Harold Bowen, who died on 22nd June, 1959, had served as a young man in the Diplomatic Service. During the Second World War he worked in the Middle East Division of the Ministry of Information. At the time of his death he was Reader in the History of the Near and Middle East at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, a post which he had held since 1951.

His academic interests lay originally in the 'Abbasid period, to the knowledge of which he made a contribution by his book, *The life and times of 'Alī ibn 'Īsā* (Cambridge, 1928). Subsequently he worked on the history of the later Ottoman Empire, and collaborated with Sir Hamilton Gibb in writing *Islamic society and the West*, Vol. I, *Islamic society in the eighteenth century* (O.U.P. for the Royal Institute of International Affairs: Part I, 1950; Part II, 1957). He was also the author of a number of articles in these two fields in the new edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

He was a man of wide interests and had taken a part in the establishment of the London branch of the Turkish Halkevi and of the British Institute of Archaeology in Ankara. From 1956 until his death, he was a Member of Council of the Royal Asiatic Society. By his colleagues and students he will be remembered for his deep kindness and sympathy, no less than for his true and unostentatious scholarship.

P. M. HOLT.

PROFESSOR ELMER H. CUTTS

Rarely do scholars reach the breadth of vision attained by Professor Elmer H. Cutts who died suddenly on 4th April, 1960. He received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of