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SIR RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON, TRANSLATOR OF *THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND A NIGHT*

I. A many-faceted man

On the 11th of September 1885, the first volume of Sir Richard Francis Burton's translation from the Arabic *Alf laylah wa laylah -- The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* --was published. Burton and his wife, Isabel, expected that the popular press and by extension the Victorian society of the day would have little good to say of the work, with its detailed and often graphic depictions of the sexual mores of the Arab world from which it sprang. Instead, the response was generally positive and the original subscription for copies was far exceeded. One newspaper commented that "it is simply priceless to any one who concerns himself as marking an era in the annals of Oriental translation" and other comments of like nature followed.[1]

This work, while only one of several major translations published by Burton in his lifetime, is nonetheless that with which he remains most closely identified. It is a massive work -- ten volumes of the main text, a lengthy "Terminal Essay", and six volumes of *Supplemental Nights*, all including copious and detailed notes on the text. The text is highly complex, not only owing to its length, but also as a result of the diverse origins of the tales themselves and the period of several centuries over which they developed. Story is added to story, in an intricately woven tapestry of detail and intrigue. This complexity echoes that of Burton's own life, itself a tale composed of many interwoven episodes. Perhaps it is not surprising that such a life should eventually bear literary fruit in the translation of the many tales within a tale which make up the *Thousand Nights and a Night.*

Who then was Richard Burton? How exactly did his life experience lead him to produce his great work? Attempting to define Burton in simple terms is futile; an overview of his life leaves the reader feeling that Burton experienced more in one lifetime than most could fit into several. Despite chronic money worries, years of self-destructive behaviour, and failing health in his later years, he managed to survive more adventures than one would think possible. He was many men: a Victorian Romantic, an inveterate wanderer and explorer, a linguist and master of disguise, an anthropologist ahead of his time, an amateur sexologist and a reluctant husband. And out of all of these personae developed the scholar and writer of his later years.. Rather than focussing on Burton's life in chronological order, this portrait will briefly consider the various "men" who made up Sir Richard Burton, with a view to distinguishing just how the many facets of one personality found their reflection in his greatest work of translation: *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night.*

II. The "Victorian Romantic"

Queen Victoria was born in 1819 and died in 1901; Richard Burton was born in

Torquay, England, on March 19, 1821, and died on October 19, 1890. His life spanned much of the Victorian Age, and he both reflected its values and rebelled against them. Under Victoria, Britain saw its peak of development as a world power. It was the first European nation to industrialize on a large scale and to experience the movement of vast numbers of people from a rural to an urban way of life. The middle class expanded its wealth and power and England asserted itself abroad in the interests of "Empire".[2]

History remembers the Victorian middle classes as being greatly concerned with respectability and appearances, although there is ample evidence to suggest that for the masses, the reality was very different. Historians agree, however, that the era did value a middle-class puritan code reflecting "commercial experience in which sobriety, hard work, and a joyless abstention from worldly pleasures paid off [...] in worldly success."[3] This concern for respectability was reflected in the accepted middle class standards of sexual behaviour, "with its intense concern for female innocence -- or, as its opponents contended, for female ignorance."[4] Society, and especially female society, was to be protected from knowledge of sexual mores at all costs. What we today might call hypocrisy in sexual matters was simply considered a matter of good taste.

The Victorian age also saw explosive growth in scientific knowledge and the extension of European control over widespread geographical areas. Organizations such as the Royal Geographical Society funded expeditions of discovery and notions of "Empire" and the belief in the "white-man's burden" led to political and commercial expansion across the globe, by means of corporations such as the East India Company. By the end of the century, developments in transportation enabled people to travel further and faster than ever before.

Burton was in many ways a product of his time. He enjoyed study, travel, and all manner of activities available to a Victorian gentleman, without the restrictions of middle-class employment. Unfortunately, his aristocratic pretensions were not supported by money, and he was forced to earn his living. This he did in true Victorian fashion, first obtaining a commission in the Indian Army, a profession then considered a suitable outlet for a young adventurer. He spent seven years in India, and continued on the East India Company payroll for many years afterward. His explorations were funded by the Royal Geographical Society, and he served for some time in the Crimea, although he never saw action in the field. In the second half of his life, he spent years in the Consular Service, in West Africa, Brazil, Syria, and lastly, Trieste.

Yet, while on the surface Burton appears to fit the mould of his time, labouring in the service of Empire, in reality he frequently rebelled against the Victorian ethic. As one biographer notes, he was actually a Romantic figure[5]; Burton did not sacrifice himself for the greater good -- his ego was always at the centre of what he did, and he was fundamentally a loner, impatient, easily bored. A greater problem and one which caused him many professional difficulties in his life was his distaste for deferring to anyone or taking direction from his superiors. Victorian society and the professions of note within it, such as the military, depended on the willingness of the individual to follow orders, a notion with which Burton always had difficulty.[6] As a result, while the preoccupations of the Victorian age permitted him to pursue many of the activities he loved, his individualism kept bringing him up against obstacles which he could not

surmount. His many accomplishments led to his eventual knighthood, but he was never a part of the establishment, and by polite society was always viewed with a degree of distrust. He himself did nothing to diminish this reaction and indeed often exacerbated it.

III. The inveterate wanderer and fearless explorer

The life of Richard Burton was one of nearly constant motion. What we must remember is that travel in the Victorian era was no small feat. Every journey, no matter how short, was cause for extensive preparation. The well-to-do traveled with vast quantities of luggage, prepared for months or sometimes years of travel; transportation was slow and often unreliable; journeys could be dangerous and health problems could always arise far from home and medical assistance. Viewed in this light, Burton's life of motion is quite astonishing for his time, as indeed it would still be for ours.

His travels began in childhood. After years of financial and family difficulties, his father decided to move the family abroad when Richard was a young child. Throughout his childhood, and despite the births of a sister and a brother in the space of two years, the family moved from England to France, back to England and back to France again. After spending some time in Blois, they moved on to Italy -- Pisa, Siena, Perugia and Florence. His parents became "professional invalids"[7] and the children had little formal education or discipline in their young lives. In Burton's adolescence, the family moved from Rome to Naples and then back to France, to Pau, where Richard and his brother gravitated towards a life of youthful debauchery. Finally, at 19, he was sent back to England to prepare for Oxford.

Childhood and adolescence were to mark just the beginning of his wanderings. His unsuccessful Oxford phase was followed by work and travel in India, Arabia, Somalia and what is now Tanzania, the Crimea, West Africa, Brazil, North America, Syria, and continental Europe, with all of these moves and expeditions punctuated by lengthy home leaves in Britain. He once claimed that Britain was where he felt most foreign[8] and it is easy to understand why. Burton loved exotic locales, and especially the Arab and Persian worlds, where he felt most at home. This love took root early in his career. It certainly sowed the seed which would later grow into his extensive knowledge of and love for Arabic literature and culminate in the translation of the tales of the *Thousand Nights and a Night.*

Burton was able to turn his love for and need to travel into a profession. His initial fame as an explorer came as a result of an exploit in his early thirties. In 1852, he decided to try and obtain funds to enable him to go to Mecca in disguise. In AD 629, Mecca had been declared out of bounds to all non-believers and trespassing was punishable by death. Burton wanted to be the first unconverted Englishman to visit Mecca and in so doing to establish himself as the authority on Arabia.[9] He managed to obtain funding from the Royal Geographical Society, as well as a year's leave from the East India Company. In preparation for the pilgrimage, he trained himself to behave like an Arab, even going so far as to be circumcised in the Arab fashion. The story of the pilgrimage reads like a boy's adventure novel, and his success brought him instant fame, if not fortune, cementing his self-identification with the most profound aspects of the Arab world and contributing greatly to his fund of knowledge

of its mores, literature and history. He took his place as one of a few great travelers "who penetrated to the heart of an alien culture"[10] and as a romantic figure in the eyes of his age.

Not content with this achievement, Burton decided to request permission to attempt to reach the closed city of Harar in Somalia, and thence to travel on Zanzibar. In this he also succeeded, although a close call with death was later to lead him into trouble with his masters in Britain. A subsequent expedition, again funded by the Royal Geographical Society, took him into what is now Tanzania. Once again, the tales of his travels, in the company of John Hanning Speke, read like an adventure novel. Burton and Speke discovered Lake Tanganyika, and Speke, acting on the advice of Burton, was then to discover the source of the Nile in Lake Victoria. As often happened, however, Burton was not able or willing to "play the game" to ensure continued support for his enterprises, and with no personal fortune, had to turn to earning his living in other ways.

IV. The linguist and master of disguise

One of the notable features of Richard Burton was his willingness to fully immerse himself in the cultures he visited. From an early age he demonstrated an extraordinary gift for languages. One writer notes that in Burton's case "we are dealing with linguistic talent of such a high order as, arguably, to merit that much misused word 'genius'."[11] His childhood travels familiarized him with French and Italian, and once at Oxford, while studying Latin and Greek, he began to teach himself Arabic. By all accounts, he was a great mimic and actor. In India he achieved a high level of competency in several Indian languages and then undertook to learn Persian, which became one of his favourite languages, as later was Portuguese. It is estimated that in all he spoke 25 languages fluently, and when dialects were counted, about 40.

His mastery of foreign languages and of the cultural attributes of the peoples he visited, as well as his ability to disguise himself completely, played a major role in his career. The pilgrimage to Mecca and its subsequent triumph would not have been possible without this gift. Burton had first perfected his talent for disguise while in India, where he frequently would dress in native costume, stain his skin, and travel under the name of Mirza Abdullah of Bushire, a disguise which allowed him to go where no white man had previously gone. Ironically, this very capacity to enter into a culture was to later damage his career in India. He was at one point asked by General Sir Charles Napier to investigate rumours that soldiers were visiting homosexual brothels in Karachi. Burton did so in disguise and produced a report detailing what he had observed. The report later resurfaced and its details were to cast doubt on Burton's own sexuality and on his suitability for a military career, leading to his departure from India.

In later life, the stories he remembered and recorded and the vast wealth of cultural and linguistic knowledge he had absorbed about the languages and cultures of the East were to be reflected in his choice of writing and translation and in his final works, including the *Thousand Nights and a Night.* Without this linguistic and cultural gift for dissimilation and absorption, it is doubtful that his final rendering could have been as complete and authentic as it was then and remains today.

V. The anthropologist

But Burton was much more than a language student. He took a keen interest in the cultures he visited, and more importantly for us, he diligently recorded what he saw and heard. His notes on cultures ranging from the Middle East to West Africa and Brazil are considered to be those of an anthropologist of great talent. The only fly in the ointment was that Burton, while able to stand by and dispassionately report on the customs of a people, was not always able to hide his distaste for his subjects. He was an opinionated believer in the superiority of the European nations; he developed strong views on blacks which he did not hesitate to express, as well as having a misogynist bent. Biographers have tried to explain these tendencies in various ways, both psychological and social. Suffice it to say that Burton was in many ways a man of his time, and many of his views, while unpalatable to today's educated reader, would not have seemed all that unusual or even unacceptable to the reading public of his day.

VI. The amateur sexologist and reluctant husband

Much has been made of Burton's lifelong interest in the subject of sex and much speculation has circulated concerning his own sexual leanings. This reputation was at least partly based on many of the works he translated, and there is no doubt that Burton found the subject interesting, perhaps owing to his anthropological interests, or perhaps to a not-so-hidden desire to shock the Victorian public.

Burton's own sexual initiation took place sometime in adolescence in Naples and from then on references are made throughout his life to visits to prostitutes, evenings spent with other like-minded gentlemen of the time, and so forth. Such behaviour was not uncommon for a bachelor of the day, especially one in the military, stationed abroad. The episode in the brothels of Karachi raised a few eyebrows, as it was deemed impossible by those who read the report that such a knowledge of details could be attained without participation, but nothing was ever proven. Much has also been made of a lengthy discourse on homosexuality in the middle of the "Terminal Essay" on *The Thousand Nights and a Night*, but again, whether this reflected a reality in his own life is open to debate. Much of what he translated contains material verging on the pornographic because such material was already in the original text, and Burton wanted to be faithful to the original. Of course, the fact he left such material in not only indicates his belief that it was important to the story, but also underscores his own keen interest in these customs and behaviours. Whatever the motivation, human nature ? and the Victorian legacy ? being what they were and are, Burton has tended to be remembered more for his translation of the *Kama Sutra* than for the volumes of other material he produced.

Given Burton's restless energy, intellectual preoccupations, professional ups and downs and constant movement, it is surprising he ever married at all. He had no particularly close ties with his family; his mother and sister are seldom mentioned and his brother, with whom he was close as a boy, subsequently sank into mental illness and never recovered. A number of Burton's close friends died young and he had no longstanding female friendships that are recorded. He eventually married Isabel Arundell in 1861, a devout Catholic who had "set her cap" for Burton some ten years

earlier. Then, as one biographer commented, he spent the next twenty-five years trying to get away from her.[12] This might seem harsh, but critics agree that theirs was not a marriage of passion, nor was she his intellectual match, although he depended on her to administer their many moves and she took it upon herself to lobby on his behalf when professional issues disrupted their lives. Today, she is primarily remembered as the widow who, upon Burton's death in Trieste in 1890, burned all of his remaining unpublished diaries and manuscripts, including the text of a translation of a work known as *The Scented Garden*, which she deemed too risqué for public consumption. Whatever her personality or prejudices, however, she played a significant role, especially in the last decade of Burton's life. It was during their time in Trieste that he published the *Thousand Nights and a Night* and she provided the home base from which he did so, despite his failing health. She was by nature a devout Catholic, with all the concerns about decency typical of a woman of her class and era, and one has to wonder whether some of the material Burton published was not designed-- just a little -- to shock his rather prudish wife.

VII. The scholar, writer and translator

Doubtless, one could isolate many other facets of Burton's personality. One thread, however, runs throughout the decades of his peripatetic existence: wherever he went, whatever he did, and in whatever language he did it, Burton was first and foremost an observer and writer. His first published work, *Goa and the Blue Mountains*, was based on a period of convalescence in this region during his time in India. Altogether he published 43 volumes of travel writing, which some critics criticized for its complex and unedited prose. He continued to write throughout his diplomatic career, but it was in Trieste, a rather sleepy consular outpost, that he began his real transformation into a "man of letters".[13]

Burton loved the Portuguese language and decided to translate the heroic national epic, *The Lusiads*, by Camoens, the Portuguese national poet. He had already worked on the project in Goa and Brazil, and his finished translation appeared in 1880. Camoens' epic was written in the 1500s and used an artificial form of Portuguese to reconcile differing aspects of the narrative. Rather than using the English of his day, Burton therefore tried to match the artificiality of the Portuguese using "a sort of Never-Never Elizabethan English".[14] The result was considered difficult to read, to say the least.

Undeterred, Burton then returned to his work on *The Nights*, a project conceived in 1854 in collaboration with his friend Steinhauser, who had since died. In 1881, he learned that another Arabist, John Payne, was intending to bring out his own version. The two men considered collaboration, but in the event, Payne went ahead and published. Burton decided to proceed with his version as well, expecting to sell only a limited number of copies; in the end he sold so many that he brought out a further six volumes of *Supplemental Nights*, to great acclaim. He also worked on a translation of the *Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana*, on a work known as the *Ananga Rana*, and on *The Perfumed Garden of Sheikh Nefzaoui*, among others. All of this material was deemed "unsuitable" for a broad audience and indeed the *Ananga Rana* had already been rejected by a printer because of its content. As a result, Burton and several friends founded the "Kama Shastra Society of London and Benares" as a cover for printing

their material. It is Burton's translation of the *Thousand Nights and a Night*, however, which "is most often identified with Burton", perhaps because it reflects so many aspects of Burton's own life experience.[15] Through *The Nights* and his comments on the work, we catch an illuminating glimpse of Burton as translator and scholar.

The framework of the story is familiar to most western readers, even if they have not read the text in full. The text is a compilation of tales told by Sheherazade to the king, who normally beheads his partners at dawn after one night, as vengeance on the infidelity of women. Sheherazade is able, through her storytelling, to ward off death for a thousand and one nights (during which time she gives birth to three children) until in the end the King spares her life. This framework provided a cohesive structure into which tales of all kinds were woven; the whole is a collection of stories and anecdotes spanning many centuries and written down after long oral transmission by many different authors. The original texts are said to be highly explicit on sexual matters and also contain a wealth of cultural information reflecting the various periods in which the tales originated.

Burton's translation of the *Thousand Nights and a Night* provides clues as to how he viewed the process of translation itself. Firstly, he was obviously prepared to brave the disapproval of the public in the name of what he viewed as an accurate and complete translation. Ballard notes: "Déjà il était conscient 'que les deux tiers des contes étaient d'une grossièreté telle que la tâche était insurmontable', et pourtant son objet était de donner une traduction aussi fidèle que possible et qui restituât la verdeur de l'original."[16] As noted earlier, he and Isabel were prepared for censure, and were surprised when "the first volume of *The Nights* appeared to public acclaim, not censorship by the police."[17]

Secondly. based on the final product, it is possible to conclude that Burton strongly believed that the translator should be present in the text and its commentary. In his case, the vast amount of scholarly material included in notes and appendices attests to the view that the translator has the right to explain, add to, and judge the original text. For Burton, translation was not simply the production of a text in a second language, but an excuse for the translator to display the erudition of which he was capable.

The text also reflects Burton's belief that the language used should in some way parallel that of the original work, however difficult this may be to achieve. While the sheer volume of the project and the depth of knowledge of culture and language it displays won Burton nearly universal praise, he was criticized for his decision to use a form of artificial "Chaucerized" English to attempt to reflect the mixed and somewhat archaic forms of Arabic in the original. As one commentator notes, Burton "overexerted himself in trying to find English equivalents of what may have been at times archaic and difficult forms of Arabic."[18] In this, he repeated the technique he had used earlier in his translations of *The Lusiads*; the result, which some readers again found difficult to read, caused many to question the validity of his choice. His wife, on the other hand, attempted to justify it thus: "Richard's object was not only to produce an absolutely literal translation, but to reproduce it in an absolutely Arabian manner. He preserved the strict division of the Nights, he kept to the long unbroken sentences in which the composer indulged. Being perfect master of both languages, he could imitate the rhythmic prose which is a characteristic of the Arabic."[19] Burton also insisted on using a correct anglicized version of Arab words even when these

were not the most familiar forms for his audience; he did not hesitate to insert obscure or archaic words in his attempt to maintain the flavour of the original. In this, he was again accused of making the text more difficult for the reader, but one has the impression that facilitating reader comprehension was not one of his principal goals. It must be remembered that Burton was first and foremost a scholar and not a creator of popular fiction. As one biographer states, "There is something obsessional about his pedantry and love of the arcane, and the suspicion often arises that he used the translation of the Nights as an excuse to display his formidable erudition."[20]

A further key to Burton's perspective on his work lies not in the stories themselves, but in the lengthy "Terminal Essay" which Burton appended, a text of over 200 pages in which he discusses every possible aspect of the work. It has been called "one of the most important products of nineteenth-century scholarship."[21] Its four sections -- the "Origin of The Nights", "The Nights in Europe", "The Matter and the Manner of the Nights", and the "Social Condition" -- plus a discourse on the prose-rhyme and poetry of *The Nights*, present a detailed and at times rambling gloss on the text as a whole.

The "Origin of the Nights" is an elucidation of the translator's perspective on the need to "carefully separate subject-matter from language-manner".[22] His belief in the need for a thorough understanding of the work to be done and in profound scholarship and attention to detail is apparent, as is his awareness and criticism of others' views and arguments. Burton did not doubt his own capacity to fulfil this task better than other Arabists. "The Nights in Europe" reviews the history of the dissemination of the tales in Europe. Burton does not stint in his praise for the work begun by Antoine Galland, and carried on by others, notably John Payne. His other English forerunner, Edward Lane, receives harsher treatment. As he notes, "Without the name and fame won for the work by the brilliant paraphrase of this learned and single-minded Frenchman [Galland], Lane's curious hash and Latinized English, at once turgid and emasculated, would have found few readers. Mr. Payne's admirable version appeals to the Orientalist and the "stylist", not to the many-headed; and mine to the anthropologist and student of Eastern manners and customs. "[23] His principal criticism was that previous versions had bowdlerized the text, abridging it and removing from it any information judged to be unsuitable for the eyes and ears of the public, thus stripping the text of its soul.

Section 3, "The Matter and the Manner of the Nights" is a discussion of the forms of the tales and their contents, language and style. A further perspective on his art is apparent in his comment that "In considering the style of The Nights we must bear in mind that the work has never been edited according to our ideas of this process. Consequently there is no just reason for translating the whole verbatim et literatim, as has been done by Torrens, Lane and Payne in his 'Tales from the Arabic'".[24] He thus justifies his own adaptations or omissions.

Finally, the last section, entitled "Social Condition", purports to discuss Islam at its earlier period, the role of women, and the "pornology" of the text. Over fifty pages is given to the topic of homosexuality; this has been interpreted in various ways by critics.[25] Whether its inclusion, considered out of proportion to the few references to homosexuality in the text, reflected some deep-seated psychological state in Burton, we will never know; in any event, more neutral critics have commented that including this section gave Burton the opportunity to display his knowledge in sexology in an

ostensibly erudite and literate format. He justifies in this section the decision to leave in all elements of the original which might be construed as pornographic on the grounds that the coarseness is one of language, not idea and recognizes that the English may be offended.[26]

Several of Burton's views on the essence of translation thus emerge. The translator must know his languages and cultures in the minutest detail, his knowledge must be rooted in scholarship, he must play a role in determining what and how to translate, he has the right to intervene and explain when and where he will, and perhaps above all, he must not be afraid of shocking the sensibilities of his readers and of criticizing his peers ? if such there be.

Conclusion

In the *Thousand Nights and a Night*, many Richard Burtons are reflected. The Victorian benefitted from the opportunities afforded by his age to travel and delve into the foreign cultures he would otherwise never have known; he was thus able to develop the most profound knowledge of Arab culture possessed by anyone in his day. The Romantic turned these opportunities into a quest for self-knowledge and adventure, often running counter to what his masters intended for him and putting his own interests above those of King -- or Queen -- and country. The wanderer and explorer expanded the range of knowledge of his time both geographically and culturally; in his literary work, he laid the fruits of this knowledge before the Victorian public in a new and some said shocking way. Ever the anthropologist, the experience of a lifetime of investigation and record-keeping instilled in Burton a desire to share the details of the cultures he came to know, and particularly those of the East where he felt so at home; *The Nights* provided him with an opportunity to display this knowledge. The amateur sexologist with a fascination for the obscure and mysterious, not to say licentious, aspects of the social condition, could not resist the opportunity to find a legitimate outlet for his knowledge, while at the same time thumbing his nose, literarily speaking, at the conventions of his time. The actor and master of disguise, with a love for fantasy and storytelling found his ultimate audience in the late Victorian public. And the scholar, writer and translator was able to weave the threads together into a tapestry unlike any other.

Richard Burton was not a saint, nor was he a particularly congenial man to know. His personal relations were often difficult and he could be socially unpredictable. He claimed to be generally pessimistic about human beings, did not approve of egalitarianism, and was a convinced imperialist, believing it was the function of white races to elevate the rest. His lack of private wealth, given his personal interests and longing for adventure, was a problem until the end of his life. His biographers portray him as arrogant and self-centred, a loner who did as he pleased despite the inevitable professional consequences. He was misogynist and racist, by the standards of our day.

And yet, he continues to fascinate. On publication, *The Nights* was considered the best version yet seen: "Hitherto, however, all of the editions have been imperfect and more or less colourless versions of the original [...] In the Arabic, a spade is usually called a spade, and in the latest English translation it is never designated an agricultural implement."[27] Today, despite its flaws, some still claim that "his text is unrivaled and the poetry superb."[28] Others are more nuanced in their praise, stressing

the amazing anthropological skill and linguistic genius through which he entered the world of his subjects, while gently criticizing his less than accessible writing style. Burton's own assessment of his success was both modest and self-assured: "That the work contains errors, shortcomings and many a lapsus, I am the first and foremost to declare [...] I must also notice that the maculae are few and far between".[29] Whatever flaws readers and critics may find in the text, the importance of the work as the product of the translation skills, scholarship, and life experience of Sir Richard Burton cannot be denied. And in the end, perhaps its greatest interest lies in the window it opens onto the soul of one of the most unusual and intriguing individuals of the Victorian period.

APPENDIX

The Life of Sir Richard Francis Burton

1821: Richard Francis Burton born March 19, Torquay, England, to Captain Joseph Netterville Burton and Martha Burton (nee Baker).

1831: Isabel Arundell born March 20.

1840: Burton enrolls at Trinity College, Oxford, England.

1841: While at Oxford, Burton begins to study Arabic.

1842: Burton leaves Oxford, joins the military, and takes his first commission in India.

1843: Burton is stationed in Baroda, where he studies Hindustani.

1844: Transferred to Karachi, and Sindh. Continues to study languages; begins to learn Persian.

1845: Burton is assigned to work as a surveyor, and receives his first spy missions.

1846: Returns to Hyderabad. In July, Burton becomes seriously ill with cholera. At the end of 1846, Burton receives two years' sick leave from the military.

1847: Weak and ill, Burton travels to Goa to convalesce.

1848: Burton returns to Sindh, where he is still to ill to work, but continues his studies of several languages, including Arabic, Sindi and Punji. Becomes a Master Sufi.

1850: Returns to England.

1851: Burton meets Isabel Arundell.

1853: Journeys to Mecca and Medina.

1854: Burton plans an African expedition. He has difficulty finding funding. Meets John Hanning Speke.

1855: Burton and Speke travel to Africa. Their camp is attacked at Berbera. Speke is captured but later escapes; a spear is thrust into Burton's jaw, breaking his palette and causing severe scarring. The expedition is cancelled and Burton and Speke return to England.

1856: Burton joins the war in Crimea. Becomes engaged to Isabel Arundell. Returns to Africa with Speke.

1857: The expedition departs for the central lake regions of Africa.

1858: Burton and Speke locate Lake Tanganyika.

1859: Burton and Speke return to the coast, but Burton is too ill to travel onward to England. Speke returns to England alone. When he arrives, Speke takes most of the credit for the discovery of Lake Tanganyika. Burton returns to England, and is furious that Speke has upstaged him.

1860: Public feud between Burton and Speke. Burton leaves for the United States, and Speke launches a third expedition to central Africa.

1861: Richard F. Burton and Isabel Arundell are married. Burton accepts a consular position at Fernando Po, in West Africa.

1862: Burton explores the West African coast and interior.

1863: On January 6, Burton co-founds the Anthropological Society of London with Dr. James Hunt. Burton uses the Anthropological Society to publish some of his more controversial writing..

1864: Burton is given a consular appointment to Brazil.

1865: Isabel joins Richard in Santos, Brazil.

1867: Burton explores the interior regions of Brazil. One of his trips involved travelling 1500 miles down the S. Francisco River -- alone -- to the coast.

1868: Ill with pneumonia and hepatitis, Burton resigns from his consular position. When he recovers, Burton travels to Paraguay and Chile.

1869: Receives a consular position in Damascus.

1871: Burton is blamed for the growing unrest in Syria, and fired from his consular post. Returns to England with Isabel.

1872: Exploration of Iceland. Burton receives consular post at Trieste, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

1875: Burton makes second journey to Iceland.

1876: Richard and Isabel travel in India for six months. Burton and Foster Fitzgerald Arbuthnot co-found the Kama Shastra Society.

1877: Burton travels to Egypt, and to Midian. Burton hoped to find gold deposits and become wealthy.

1878: Second trip to Midian to look for gold. Richard and Isabel return to England.

1879: Richard and Isabel return to Trieste.

1882: Burton travels to Egypt to look for Edward Palmer, who disappeared during a mission in the Arabian Desert. Palmer was later found dead.

1883: Burton publishes the *Kama Sutra*.

1885: Publishes *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* and the *Ananga Ranga*.

1886: Burton is knighted. Burton publishes *The Perfumed Garden*.

1890: Translates *The Scented Garden*. Sir Richard Francis Burton dies, October 19, 1890. Isabel burns the unpublished manuscript of *The Scented Garden*.

1891: Burton is buried at Mortlake.

1892: Isabel publishes her biography of Burton, *The Life of Captain Sir Richard F. Burton*.

1896: Isabel Burton dies, and is buried beside Richard Burton at Mortlake.

Note: The above time line is an adapted version of that found on site dedicated to information concerning Sir Richard Francis Burton: http://vvv.com/home/rowena/srfbbio.html.

Notes

1. Isabel Burton, *The Life of Captain Sir Richard F. Burton.* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1893. 2 Volumes. This reprint edition published in Boston: Milford House,

1973), 288.

2. M. H. Abrams, ed., "The Victorian Age", in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Volume 2 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968), 727-745.

3. *Ibid.*, 740.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Frank McLynn, *Snow Upon the Desert* (London: John Murray Ltd., 1990), 371.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, 7.

8. *Ibid.*, 11.

9. *Ibid.*, 73.

10. *Ibid.*, 89.

11. *Ibid.*, 25.

12. *Ibid.*, 346.

13. *Ibid.*, 316.

14. *Ibid.*, 318.

15. Edward Rice, *Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton: The Secret Agent Who Made the Pilgrimage to Mecca, Discovered the "Kama Sutra", and Brought the "Arabian Nights" to the West* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), 451.

16. Michel Ballard, *De Cicéron à Benjamin : Traducteurs, traductions, réflexions* (Lille : Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1992), 247.

17. Rice, 456.

18. *Ibid.*, 457.

19. Isabel Burton, 284.

20. McFlynn, 340.

21. Rice, 459.

22. Sir Richard Francis Burton, trans. The "Terminal Essay" in *The Book of the*

Thousand Nights and a Night. Volume XVIII (Reprinted from the original edition and edited by Leonard C. Smithers. London: H. S. Nichols & Co., 1894), 63.

23. *Ibid.*, 86.

24. *Ibid.*, 151.

25. Interestingly, the fourth section had been omitted from the edition I consulted, published for library use in 1894.

26. Sir Richard Francis Burton, 184.

27. Isabel Burton, 287.

28. Rice, 451.

29. Sir Richard Francis Burton, 229.

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Web Site http://vvv.com/home/rowena/srfbbio.html

Source : Ce portrait a été présenté en 1999 par Barbara Sandilands dans le cadre du

cours d'histoire de la traduction TRA 5901donné à l'École de traduction et d'interprétation, Université d'Ottawa.