

Uarda: A Romance of Ancient Egypt

Georg Ebers

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The character of "Uarda" and the present story have grown out of the memory of a Fellah girl, half child, half maiden, whom I saw suffer and die in a hut at Abu el Qurnah in the Necropolis of Thebes.

I still persist in the conviction I have so frequently expressed, the conviction that the fundamental traits of the life of the soul have undergone very trivial modifications among civilized nations in all times and ages, the expression of these emotions show considerable variations among different peoples, and at different epochs.

In a long, long time ago, "by the walls of Thebes—the old city of a hundred gates—the Nile spread to a broad river; the heights, which follow the stream on both sides, here take a more decided outline; solitary, almost cone-shaped peaks stand out sharply from the level background of the many-colored. limestone hills, on which no palm-tree flourishes and in which no humble desert-plant can strike root. Rocky crevasses and gorges cut more or less deeply into the mountain range, and up to its ridge extends the desert, destructive of all life, with sand and stones, with rocky cliffs and reef-like, desert hills.

Behind the eastern range the desert spreads to the Red Sea; behind the western it stretches without limit, into infinity. In the belief of the Egyptians beyond it lay the region of the dead."

Georg Moritz Ebers (1837–1898), German Egyptologist and novelist, discovered the Egyptian medical papyrus, of ca. 1550 BCE, named for him at Luxor (Thebes) in the winter of 1873–74. Now in the Library of the University of Leipzig, the Ebers Papyrus is among the most important ancient Egyptian medical papyri. It is one of two of the oldest preserved medical documents anywhere—the other being the Edwin Smith Papyrus (ca. 1600 BCE).

Clara Bell, née Poynter (1835–1927), was an English translator fluent in French, German, Danish, Dutch, Italian, Norwegian, Russian, and Spanish, noted for her translations of works by Henrik Ibsen, Balzac, Georg Ebers, Huysmans, Maupassant, and others. She was educated in France, where she became fluent in French and German; she did not acquire her knowledge of the other languages until after her fortieth birthday. She spent most of her life in London.



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