

(London: Duckworth, 2010) would have made a useful addition to the bibliography; it makes a start at coming to grips with some of these questions. Vol. 3 of *Wonderful Things* will inevitably pay more attention to Egyptian nationalism, which became much more visible and assertive in the national uprising of 1919 in the wake of World War I.

In conclusion, even without volume 3, *Wonderful Things* already constitutes a masterful survey of a vast field. No one seriously interested in the history of ancient Egypt and of the discipline devoted to its study can afford to neglect this impressive work.

DONALD MALCOLM REID

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

*Contesting Antiquity in Egypt: Archaeologies, Museums and the Struggle for Identities from World War I to Nasser.* By DONALD MALCOLM REID. Cairo: THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO PRESS, 2015. Pp. xxii + 491, illus. \$59.95.

The history of Egyptology in our time can be divided into two periods: before Donald Reid and after Donald Reid. Histories of the first period—a long twentieth-century prologue to historical criticism of a quintessentially nineteenth-century discipline—basked in the glow of Egyptology’s great European heroes well into the postcolonial era. They bequeathed a narrative that was, among other things, largely blind to modern and living Egyptians into the very late twentieth century. Many scholars today are busy probing the shadows of those outsized European legacies for the stories behind the legends. The introduction to Reid’s pioneering research in this field first appeared here in the pages of *JAOS* more than thirty years ago with an article entitled “Indigenous Egyptology: The Decolonization of a Profession?” (vol. 105 [1985]: 233–46). By the time his first full-length study on the history of Egyptology appeared in 2002, with the publication of *Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I*, the question mark had moved auspiciously from subtitle to title. This time the question shot straight to the heart of the matter: who has the greater claim to Egypt’s archaeological legacy, Egypt or the West? With this question, Reid framed the first generation of the critical history of Egyptology. What are we to make of the question mark’s disappearance in this, the long-awaited sequel to *Whose Pharaohs?* Has the question finally been answered?

Like its predecessor, this book turns our attention away from the shopworn tales of Egyptology’s giants toward the remarkable and poignant experiences of others around them. The leading chapters provide a bridge from the nineteenth-century world of *Whose Pharaohs?* to the very different world that emerged from the Great War, picking up the story on the other side of 1914. The stars are all still here, of course—names like Napoleon, Champollion, Mariette, Petrie, Carter, Borchart, Breasted, and Reisner are to the history of Egyptology what oxygen is to life on earth—but with Reid we see them in their correct historical proportions.

We see also several brilliant and inspired Egyptians, whose Sisyphean struggles for a foothold in the archaeology of their homeland during the colonial era are no less significant for the drama inherent to their portrayal. We see, for instance, Ahmad Kamal, the tragic hero of Egyptian Egyptology, growing old as he labors over his mammoth dictionary of ancient Egyptian in Arabic—a single letter’s entries costing him over a thousand pages of sweat—only to see its publication blocked by the French director of the Antiquities Service just months before the end of his life.

Then we see Selim Hassan and Sami Gabra, the second generation of Egyptian Egyptologists, stalking Kamal’s ghost through the twists and turns of a revolutionary age. The contrast between these two men, both products of the avant-garde “generation of 1919,” could not have been sharper—with Gabra the proud scholar who flourished in the international milieu of interwar Egyptology to Hassan’s flamboyant nationalist who antagonized his European contemporaries—but together their professional paths span the history of modern Egypt’s cultural institutions from European occupation to full Egyptianization. The discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb in 1922, the same year that Egypt achieved partial

independence from Great Britain, was this story's shot heard round the world; it forever changed the course of history for Egyptians and Egyptologists. Reid's eyewitness-like account of the discovery and its impact from the Egyptian point of view (in chapter 2) is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of nationalism, or the politics of the ancient past in our very modern world. Just as they did in life, the effects of that moment reverberate clearly throughout the rest of the book.

On the deep sea of Egyptian antiquity, however, there are shores beyond Egyptology. *Contesting Antiquity in Egypt* is about more than a contest over whose pharaohs; it is about the contest over what makes Egypt Egyptian. In the archaeological panorama of this most ancient land, where the memory of the world's first superpower sits uneasily in the heart of a younger Islamic world, with a strong Coptic community whose roots in Egypt predate the Arab conquest, and a proud Classical inheritance from the age that gave us Cleopatra, the stakes in this contest are high.

The book is organized by theme, alternating between discussions of Egyptology in the intellectual circles of the day (both Western and Egyptian), and pharaonism in Egyptian politics and popular culture, within a chronological framework that is split between the WWI years and the 1920s (in part one) and the 1930s and 1940s (in part three). These are separated in the middle by four topical chapters on Western tourism, Islamic archaeology, Copts and archaeology, and Graeco-Roman heritage, each spanning the entire timeframe from 1914 to 1952. Here we see Murqus Simaika, a charismatic Coptic activist, reformer, and intellectual, pleading with Patriarch Kyrillus V to spare a collection of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Church artifacts from the silversmith's saw, persuading the Patriarch just in time that he could raise the money to preserve them for what would eventually become the fourth, and last, of Egypt's great antiquities museums. We see Ali Bahgat, Egypt's erudite father of Islamic archaeology, on a mission to photograph Mecca and Medina for the Museum of Arab Art in Cairo, a job it would have been impossible for his head curator at the Museum, a European, to undertake, but one which counted for little in Bahgat's ensuing struggle against the glass ceiling of colonial power.

We see, too, the luminaries of Egypt's progressive era staking their own claims in the contest. There is Taha Hussein, one of the brightest stars in Egypt's modern renaissance, whose attendance as a young man at Ahmad Kamal's lectures helped stir the future Minister of Education's lifelong passion for antiquity, a passion he would introduce into the mainstream intellectual life of his day; and his visionary mentor Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, whose fight not just for Egypt's independence, but for the true freedom of its people, raised education, archaeology, and cultural heritage to new heights of public awareness and support. Theirs was an Egypt in which public debates, like the one Reid describes in 1930, could ask: "Was Egypt's culture pharaonic or Arab?" (see p. 305 for the answer).

This book is much more still than a history of archaeology—or archaeologies—in Egypt. Indeed, it is one of the most important books in recent years to bear on the period of Egyptian history between the 1919 and 1952 revolutions. No other work on modern Egypt covers the political landscape of this liberal age in such fine detail. After 1922, Egypt was what Reid calls a "semicolonial parliamentary monarchy." All three of Egypt's governing interests—the British administration, the Egyptian parliament, and the courts of Kings Fuad I and Faruq—had important political stakes in antiquity. This book covers each of them in fair measure, in addition to France's controlling interest in the Egyptian Antiquities Service through a restless alliance with the British. It is notable in its attention to the political influence of the royal family during this period, the history of which naturally centers on the challenges of Egyptian-born political parties to both the monarchy and the British Empire.

But the excitement of this constitutional era—the most liberal in Egypt's modern history—can sometimes conceal the dogged forces of colonialism and monarchism nipping away at the heels of its nationalists. Reid's brilliance is in capturing the tapestry of power that is refracted through the lens of archaeology in a multi-layered land such as Egypt.

Reid makes an especially convincing case for the importance of pharaonism as more than just a homegrown version of Egyptomania, but an influential multicultural, nationalist sub-movement, which mirrored the path of the Wafd—liberal Egypt's dominant political party—through the shifting currents of the interwar years. The twin fates of the Wafd and pharaonism whisper to each other throughout the book, tracing the outline of Egypt's once-embryonic secularism and its open embrace of a multicultural heritage.

Reid's discussion of Islamist and other challenges to pharaonism in the 1930s and 1940s, as the zeitgeist of 1920s Egypt faded into the horizon of a new political generation, is one of the best argued sections of the book (chapter 10).

Perhaps the greatest jewel in the story, however, is Reid's chapter 7 on "Copts and Archaeology." Nowhere else are the stakes in Egypt's contested antiquity so clear, and Reid's inspired telling of this chapter in the history of Egypt's underrepresented Coptic community restores it to its rightful place in the mainstream political discourse of the reform era.

*Contesting Antiquity in Egypt* does not so much answer as reframe the question posed in *Whose Pharaohs?* The meaning of Egypt's heritage is elusive, and the struggle over Egyptian identity is ongoing. For Reid, the historical balance of the struggle lies between the forces of imperialism and nationalism, in the central power of institutions to shape knowledge and identity. This framework is fundamental to any understanding of the relationship between knowledge and culture in modern Egypt, though it leaves open questions of economic imperialism outside institutional walls, tensions between science and religion, and class differences in Egyptian society. The remarkable legacy of Donald Reid's work belongs not just to historians, however. It belongs to everyone with an interest in Egypt's past, from its deepest sources in antiquity to its most familiar aspects today. Few other historians have brought us so close to understanding what makes Egypt Egyptian.

WENDY DOYON  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

---

*The Quṣṣās of Early Islam.* By LYALL R. ARMSTRONG. Islamic History and Civilization, vol. 139. Leiden: BRILL, 2017. Pp. xii + 342. \$165, €135.

In this groundbreaking work, Lyall Armstrong offers the first comprehensive discussion of "story-tellers" (*quṣṣās*) during the formative period of Islam. While the *quṣṣās* appear frequently in early Islamic sources, they have received little scholarly attention. As Armstrong aptly points out, they are typically dismissed as curiosities or as "second-rate religious figures" suspected of corrupting the faith (p. 1). Relying on works specifically addressing them, by Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Suyūṭī, Ibn Taymiyya, and others, as well as historical chronicles, biographical dictionaries, and works from the genre of Stories of the Prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*), Armstrong presents a more nuanced picture of the *quṣṣās* and their activities. His study demonstrates that their role in early Islamic society was complex and varied, while underscoring the difficulties inherent in any study of a group that is both common and ill defined.

Armstrong begins by grappling with the problem of determining who the *quṣṣās* actually were. Given that the storyteller or sermonizer (*qāṣṣ*) did not occupy an official, paid position like the qadī or the amir and that even the function performed was murky, distinguishing the composition of this group proves problematic. Armstrong opts to err on the side of caution by including only those who are explicitly identified somewhere in his sources as *quṣṣās*. This creates a manageable list of 109 individuals who were active between the advent of Islam and the fall of the Umayyads. Geographically, they are broadly distributed throughout the early Islamic world. Chronologically, they appear throughout the period under consideration.

Armstrong next turns to an examination of what the *quṣṣās* actually say. This is a more complicated exercise because, as Armstrong recognizes, not every statement uttered by a *qāṣṣ* is a *qiṣṣa* (pl. *qaṣaṣ*), whatever that vague genre of pronouncements might actually include. Here again, Armstrong uses a very strict criterion. He includes only statements described as such, or somehow associated with the verb *qaṣṣa*, which produces a corpus of a mere forty-three *qaṣaṣ* texts, most of which are quite brief. This effort to narrow the list of texts illustrates the difficulty the stories present as a topic of analysis. Armstrong is aware that his restrictive standard likely excludes many texts that might easily be considered to be *qaṣaṣ*. However, including additional texts creates the risk of defining them according to the author's modern standards rather than by contemporaneous criteria.

In his analysis of the texts, Armstrong divides the *qaṣaṣ* into three separate but often overlapping groups: thirty-four religious *qaṣaṣ* focus on questions of theology, law, and proper conduct, eight mar-