



INTRODUCTION

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This volume, *Beyond Egypt: Relations and Imaginations of the Ancient Past*, grew out of the Second Missouri Egyptological Symposium, held at Missouri State University in October 2019. This meeting followed in the footsteps of the tremendous efforts of the organizers of the inaugural Missouri Egyptological Symposium, held the year prior at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri. Principal among those organizers was Dr. Sara Orel. The theme of the second symposium was “Unwrapping Ancient Egypt”—that is, laying bare the study of ancient Egypt in its numerous contexts. The primary heuristic driving this “unwrapping” was the location and demonstration of the various connections between Egyptology and other fields and intellectual practices, broadly defined. As

represented in this volume, the scholars at the symposium drew these interconnecting lines between Egypt and other cultures in antiquity, Egypt and the history of the United States, and ancient Egypt and the museum. The symposium involved an additional important point of connection: academic research and pre-college education. The organizers of the symposium reached out to K–12 educators in Missouri to invite them to participate in workshops that addressed the unique challenges of teaching about antiquity (particularly ancient Egypt) and allowed for the exchange of resources and curricula.

One of the most conspicuous trends in humanities and social sciences has been a particular effort to locate the various ways that traditionally discrete

fields of scholarly inquiry can be—or innately are—connected. The spheres of interconnectivity are growing. Egyptological research has moved even further beyond the study of relations between Egypt and its neighbors in antiquity to now highlight the diachronic links that tie Egypt to the many later societies that found in Egyptian history (real or imagined) some affinity with their own. “Egyptomania” itself has become a substantial area of research. What is more, institutions of higher learning and repositories of historical knowledge, such as museums, have only strengthened their missions to underscore the importance of engagement with the public. Connecting the public with the knowledge and the physical material of ancient Egypt is increasingly viewed as a central goal of Egyptology. The essays presented in this volume represent these various aspects of interconnectivity and ancient Egypt.

The first set of essays examines the connections between Egypt and others in antiquity. In “The Roman Egyptian-Nubian Frontier during the reigns of Augustus and Amanirenas: Archaeological Evidence from Talmis, Qasr Ibrim, and Meroë,” Dr. Julia Troche considers Egypt as a borderland, or perhaps more properly a “Third Space,” where Augustan Roman and Meroitic Nubian encounters unfolded. Troche critiques broad reliance on the Roman textual tradition to reconstruct these narratives and encourages renewed consideration of the archaeological, Nubian material, concluding that it is only in concert that a reliable historical reconstruction emerges. Similarly, Dr. Bryan Brinkman’s “An Interior View: Osiris and Serapis in ca. 2nd-Century Rome” explains the discrepancy in different forms of written evidence (epigraphic and literary) where the two gods, Serapis and Osiris, are invoked. He suggests that we can better explain this phenomenon by understanding how our evidence of the Egyptian cults reflects various levels of “interiority.”

The next pair of essays move us to the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. In these essays, ancient Egypt helped define implicit discourses of power as they related to race and gender. Through an examination of the region in Illinois known as “Egypt” or “Little Egypt,” Stacy Davidson tracks the dynamic semiotics that connected “ancient Egypt” with “Egypt, Illinois” in a volatile period in U.S. history. Egypt of the Biblical narrative, and its

association with slavery and Exodus, which could not be divorced from the political and moral concerns that defined Southern Illinois in the 19th century, in her contribution “Untangling the 19th-Century Roots of Southern Illinois’ Egyptian Regional Identity.” In “Egypt Through the Magic Lantern: Bringing an Antique Technology Back into the Light,” Clara McCafferty Wright, Leah Packard Grams, and Ella McCafferty Wright trace contributions of early 20th-century Egyptologist Dr. Caroline Ransom through one powerful pedagogical and research tool she employed—the magic lantern and slides. It also demonstrates the continued legacy of this Egyptological research through an outline of the Magic Lantern Slide Digitization Project.

In the last set of essays, the museum and its collections become the locus for interactions with ancient Egypt. In “An Overview of the Offering Trays and Soul Houses in the Penn Museum,” Dr. Lisa Saladino Haney draws connections between important pieces in museum collections and new interpretations, tying a past research paradigm with a newly defined corpus (Offering Trays and Soul Houses). Similarly, in “Origin of the Coffin Set of Meret-it-es (NAMA 2007.12.1–7)” Rozanne Klinzing offers a documentation and reevaluation of the provenance of a coffin assemblage from the Nelson-Atkins Art Museum, an important piece that connects the Egyptian collection with the wider public.

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