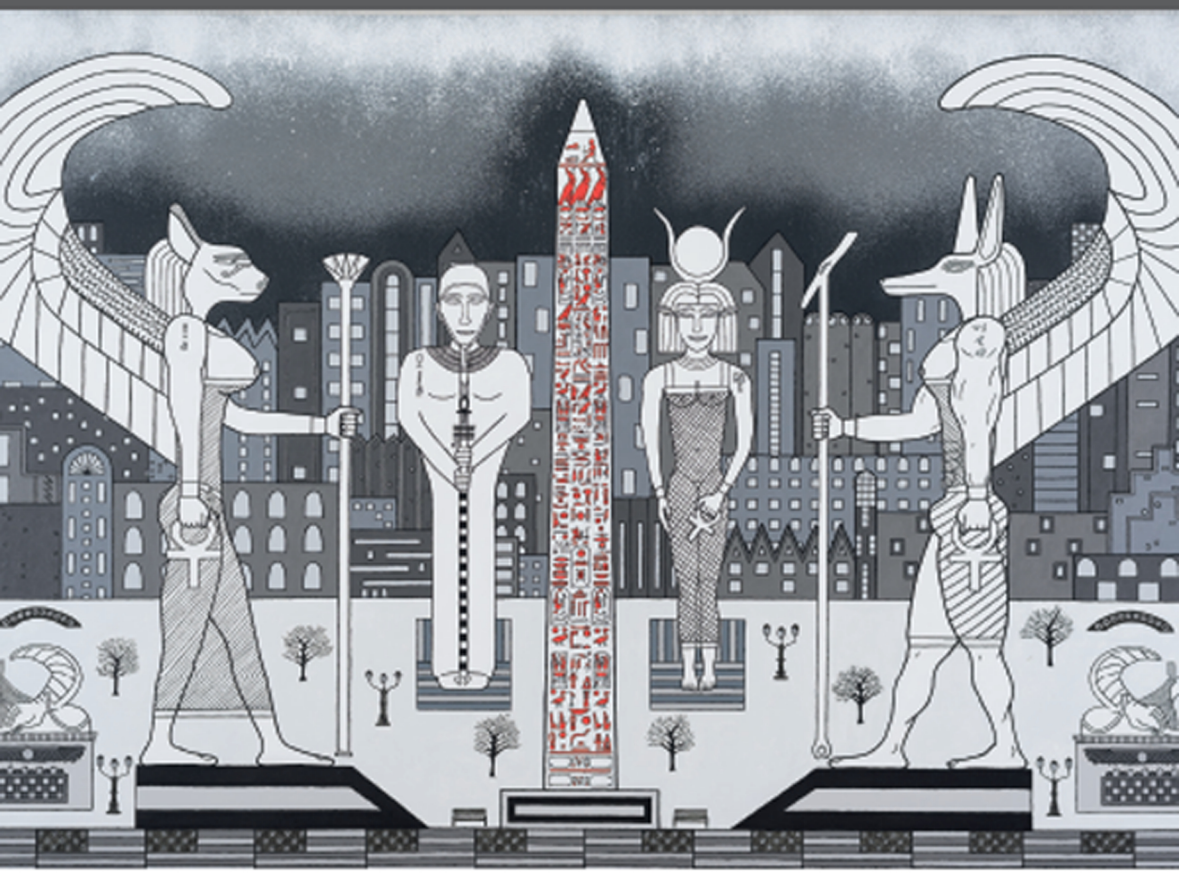
PROFANE EGYPTOLOGISTS

THE MODERN REVIVAL OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN RELIGION



UCL INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY CRITICAL CULTURAL HERITAGE SERIES

13

PAUL HARRISON

UCL

ROUTLEDGE

Profane Egyptologists

It is widely believed that the practice of ancient Egyptian religion ceased with the end of pharaonic culture and the rise of Christianity. However, an organised reconstruction and revival of the authentic practice of Egyptian, or *Kemetic* religion has been growing, almost undocumented, for nearly three decades. *Profane Egyptologists* is the first in-depth study of the now-global phenomenon of Kemeticism. Presenting key players in their own words, the book utilises extensive interviews to reveal a continuum of beliefs and practices spanning eight years of community growth.

The existence of competing visions of Egypt, which employ ancient material and academic resources, questions the position of Egyptology as a gatekeeper of Egypt's past. Exploring these boundaries, the book highlights the politised and economic factors driving the discipline's self-conception. Could an historically self-imposed insular nature have harmed Egyptology as a field, and how could inclusive discussion help guard against further isolationism?

Profane Egyptologists is both an Egyptological study of Kemeticism, and a critical study of the discipline of Egyptology itself. It will be of value to scholars and students of archaeology and Egyptology, cultural heritage, religion online, phenomenology, epistemology, pagan studies and ethnography, as well as Kemetics and devotees of Egyptian culture.

Paul Harrison gained an MA and PhD from UCL, where he is an Honorary Lecturer for the Institute of Archaeology. He has appeared on the History Channel and Sky News as an historical expert and lectured at UCL and the British Museum. His areas of research include Egyptomania, public engagement, political appropriations of the past, spirituality and the occult, and the intersection of history with ethnicity. His recent work focuses on historical communication in print and media. He is currently working on his second book and finishing a documentary based on archaeological conservation.

UCL Institute of Archaeology Critical Cultural Heritage Series
Series editor: Dr Beverley Butler
General series editor: Professor Ruth Whitehouse
Founding editor: Professor Peter Ucko

The aim of this Critical Cultural Heritage Series is to define a new area of research and to produce a set of volumes that make a radical break with the existing canon of cultural heritage texts. In a fundamental shift of perspective, Jacques Derrida's rallying call to "restore heritage to dignity" inspires both a re-examination of the core questions of what constitutes cultural heritage and an engagement with the ethical issues that shape the possible futures of this research area.

The series is intended to be of transformative value in creating new agendas within cultural heritage discourse, using individual texts as building blocks. Central to the project is a realignment of cultural heritage studies through a wider scholarship committed to disrupting the Eurocentrism which underpins current theory and practice, and through a contemporary "politics of recognition" that is concerned with articulating new, alternative, or parallel characterisations of heritage value. The aim is to centre cultural heritage studies within a wider concern for the preservation of human dignity and justice and to use these alternative discourses as a resource for future action, thereby creating a proactive, responsive, and just future for both cultural heritage studies and heritage practice.

Available titles:

Volume 13: Profane Egyptologists: The Modern Revival of Ancient Egyptian Religion by Paul Harrison

Volume 12: Constructing Destruction: Heritage Narratives in the Tsunami City by Trinidad Rico

Volume 11: Stones Standing: Archaeology, Colonialism, and Ecotourism in Northern Lao by Anna Källén

Volume 10: Mundane Objects: Materiality and Non-Verbal Communication by Pierre Lemonnier

Volume 9: Translating Museums: A Counterhistory of South Asian Museology by Shaila Bhati

https://www.routledge.com/UCL-Institute-of-Archaeology-Critical-Cultural-Heritage-Series/book-series/CCHS

Profane Egyptologists

The Modern Revival of Ancient Egyptian Religion

Paul Harrison

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2018
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Harrison, Paul (Egyptologist), author.
Title: Profane Egyptologists: the modern revival of ancient Egyptian religion / Paul Harrison.
Description: Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017015609 | ISBN 9781138102996 (hardback: alk. paper) | ISBN 9781315103327 (ebook).
Subjects: LCSH: Kemeticism. | Egypt–Religion. | Neopaganism. | Egyptology. Classification: LCC BP605.K46 H37 2017 | DDC 299/.31–dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017015609

ISBN: 978-1-138-10299-6 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-10332-7 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Cenveo Publisher Services

In memory of my brother Jacques
and
my friend Richard Reidy
In a better place

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Contents

List of figures

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the following: my supervisors, Professor Stephen Quirke and Dr Beverley Butler, for their tireless feedback and support throughout this endeavour. Not once did they shy from the controversial and volatile areas of discussion that I frequently stumble into. The staff at the UCL Institute of Archaeology, including: Professor Ruth Whitehouse, for her steadfast support of this publication; Professor John Tait, who retired from UCL and my own supervision; Dr David Jeffreys, who helped develop an archaeologist's perspective from my enthusiast's beginnings; Professor David Wengrow, who showed encouragement and enthusiasm for my research, and guided my first steps into anthropology; Professor Cyprian Broodbank, who helped navigate our maiden year as research students; Judy Medrington, who ensured that I was never tangled in red tape; and, finally, Dr Kasia Szpakowska and Professor Sue Hamilton, who gazed unblinking into the abyss that was my PhD thesis and saw the potential publication lurking within. Outside the Institute I would like to thank Professor Will Brooker, for his feedback and encouragement, Dr Debbie Challis and the staff of the Petrie Museum, for providing research and a platform for some of my more 'alternative' lectures. Acknowledgement and thanks go to Roo Mitcheson, John J. Johnston and Chris Naunton of the Egypt Exploration Society (EES) for support and access to facilities, various work opportunities and a stage at Bec 3, and the staff at Taylor & Francis, for humouring my first-time author needs. A special thank you goes to Professor John Baines, for taking the time to write back to an enthusiast, over a decade ago, which is how this all began.

Profound gratitude goes to all my family, particularly Jacques, who passed before this work could see light of day, but without whom finishing this work would not have been possible. Your life remains an example of perseverance in the face of impossible odds. The continued love and support of Jacquie Joubert and Dr Adriaan Joubert has been instrumental in the completion of this work and I cannot thank you both enough. Thanks also go to Celine, for the love and encouragement; Stevey G, for support and patience in the difficult (i.e. 'broke') periods; Steve Harrison, for my first wheels; Rob for egging me on; Georgia for the intellectual stimulation and sympathetic ear; Becka for her kindness and optimism; Wayne Pobi, for showing me a different side of Kemet; Charlotte, for

kicking my ass; the staff of Atlantis Books; Mr Cheevers, Mr Watkins and Miss Earnshaw of Stratford School; and Dr 'Dangerous' Dave Hurford – you started this by getting the first PhD, so this is also your fault!

Lastly, but by no means least, the stars of the show: the Kemetic community and their gods. Richard Reidy is another passed soul instrumental to this work, who gave of himself tirelessly, to his community and to this research. His friendship and input is dearly missed. The Kemetic community were more generous and trusting than I ever could have hoped or dared to expect. Sincerely, I thank you all. Richard, Banu, Neb, Tamara Siuda, Senut, Kerry Wisner, Sharon LaBorde, Randall, Darkhawk, Fannyfae, Setken (who kindly furnished this work with a cover), HiC, Matt Whealton, Jennifer Wheatley, the Temple of Ra, the House of Netjer, the Kemetic Temple of San José and Colorado, and *everyone* who took time to respond to my sometimes-clumsy intrusions into their worlds: without you, this work would be as nought. *Em Hotep*.

Dr Paul Harrison

Abbreviations

ATR	African Traditional Religion
EES	Egypt Exploration Society
HAD	Honouring the Ancient Dead
KO	Kemetic Orthodoxy
KTR	Kemetic Traditional Religion
KTSJ	Kemetic Temple of San José
NRM	New Religious Movement
PC	The Pagan Cauldron (aka The Cauldron)
SCA	Supreme Council of Antiquities
SIG	Special Interest Group
ToR	Temple of Ra
UPG	Unverified Personal Gnosis

Glossary

Eclecticism: Commonly the process of blending traditions of different eras, peoples and regions; largely free of concerns of historical authenticity.

Kemetic: Used in distinct contexts, it is primarily employed in this work to describe a practitioner of Kemeticism. It is also employed in Afrocentric epistemes to describe a body of ancient African/Egyptian knowledge, and those who subscribe to this in the construction of post-diaspora African identity.

Kemetic continuum: A spectrum of Egypt-centred religions, which employ pharaonic cultural material to varying degrees of perceived authenticity in the reconstruction and revival of ancient Egyptian religion.

Kemetic Orthodoxy: A form of contemporary pharaonic religion which incorporates elements of African Traditional Religions in the reconstruction of its practices and ideology.

Kemeticism: Loosely defined as a re-creation of the religion of ancient Egypt.

Paganism: Paganism is employed in two contexts: modern neo-pagan movements; and broader historical uses which denote 'non-Christian' status (Pearson 2002, 2002a; Strimska 2005).

Reconstruction (recon) and revival: These terms are contested within the Kemetic continuum, sometimes employed interchangeably by a body to describe authenticity for the self, and eclecticism for the other.

Part I

Why Kemeticism?

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

1 Introduction

It is held that the authentic practice of ancient Egyptian religion ceased with the end of pharaonic culture and the rise of Christianity. However, this book is the result of a four-year ethnographic study of individuals and groups presently engaged in ancient Egyptian religion, self-described as the *Kemetic* community. 'Kemetic' originates from the ancient Egyptian name for Egypt itself, 'Kemet', roughly translated as 'Black Land'.[1] It is a term used in discrete, but non-exclusive contexts; one use of Kemet originates from the contours of Afrocentrism, touched upon herein, but warranting further study (Chapters 2 and 3). Another notable use is by communities engaged in the revival and/or reconstruction of ancient Egyptian religion and spirituality. In many cases, Kemet is used as a term of respect for the ancient culture and language of the Nile Valley's inhabitants, and 'Kemetic' can be employed to self-describe an individual adhering to one or more aspects of that culture. However, uses between politically/ethnically and spiritually motivated groups are often discrete, differing on several significant points. The Kemetic continuum consists of a range of present-day Egypt-centred religious practices: from the eclectic pagan at one end, building a personal religion from a variety of cultures, to reconstructionists at the other, who attempt to reconstruct the religion of pharaonic Egypt as *authentically* as possible. Reconstructionists utilise primary Egyptian texts and materials, in addition to the work of scholars and academics. Kemetic religion has a growing and active community, thousands of individuals reviving and living pharaonic practices in the modern world. These individuals might provide unique perspectives on the religion of ancient Egypt, as Kemeticism raises pertinent questions on the 'lived' aspect of Egyptian religiousity, and as such provides a unique opportunity for ethnography in Egyptology. Subsequently, this volume asks if archaeologists and Egyptologists could potentially benefit from Kemetic insights. Faced with a sparse record, archaeologists struggle to engage with topics such as 'taboo', ritual performance and, significantly, gender, sexuality, religious identity and piety. Dealing with a culture that is no longer 'lived', archaeologists and Egyptologists attempt to construct a working understanding, based on the evidence, from texts and material remains. Yet the *experiential* aspects may become lost in *analysis and classification*. This work asks what biases are brought into play during such processes, particularly when reconstructing an alien culture through the lens of modern Western secular thought.

This volume was undertaken for several reasons: the first is to address a gap in Egyptological knowledge. At the genesis of this work (the period of my PhD, commencing in 2007) there was no study or mention of Kemeticism within the contours of Egyptology, and only one sociological study was present (Krogh and Pillifant 2004, 2004a). This research was also an attempt to provide space and voice to an assemblage who are currently sharing Egyptology's resources, and might otherwise be conflated with other 'revisionist/mystical' approaches or uncritically overlooked by the field. Attempts to give voice to the 'other' are fraught with pitfalls, and studies of anthropological 'insider/outsider' research were undertaken, as explored below. The title of this work, *Profane Egyptologists*, is taken from the primary text of *The Temple of Set* (Aquino 2009: 27), a contemporary Egyptian-themed esoteric identity group. Although located outside Kemeticism, and subsequently the remit of this volume, the term's employment highlights a perceived division between 'alternative' approaches to Egypt and mainstream academic research. The title also underscores questions raised by this and other works regarding the perceived status of Egyptology as a secular, scientific, post-colonial study of the 'other' (Carruthers 2014; Colla 2007; Moreno Garcia 2014; Reid 2002; Wengrow 2003).

A construct of history

The territory of Egyptology is complex, and has altered even since the inception of this research in 2007. The redefinition of the political landscape of Egypt has led to a questioning of 'Egyptology's' scope. According to Jeffreys (2003: 4), Egyptology had, 'an unusually precise meaning, being specifically the study of society in the Nile Valley from 3000 BC (the beginning of unitary rule, or the dynastic period) to 330 BC (the arrival of Alexander), or at latest the first century AD'. Jeffreys' statement highlights the constructed and contested nature of both Egyptology and 'ancient Egypt', both of which can be argued as socially ordered categories (Carruthers 2014a: 9). The destruction and defacing of ancient Egyptian monuments and artefacts in the wake of the 2011–12 political upheaval inspired a process of public outcry, condemnation and debate, leading to increased interaction between self-described Egyptologists and contemporary concerns (Carruthers 2014; Riggs 2014a). Historically, such interaction emerges around moments of cultural crisis, such as the UNESCO rescue project in the Sudan, which ran from the 1960s to the 1980s (Soderbergh 1987). It has been argued (Jeffreys 2003: 6) that incursions on the field from 'outsiders' have limited impact on disciplinary norms, and 'Egyptology' soon returns to a default (sometimes isolationist) standpoint once a crisis has passed (ibid.; Moreno Garcia 2014; Riggs 2014a). Carruthers (2014a: 3) suggests that the history of Egyptology, if such a thing exists, is written at cross-purposes, 'everyone writing about it seems to think they know what it is, despite not reaching any sort of consensus'. The birth of 'Egyptology', as an '-ology', is closely tied to the development of modern scientific knowledge, 'the disciplined study of ancient Egypt' (ibid.: 1), in contrast to former antiquarian and esoteric approaches (Haycock 2003: 169;

Hornung 1999). Writers such as Reid (2002) and Colla (2007) explore the notion that such a definition creates, legitimises and emphasises the exclusivity of the field, which subsequently requires a particular sort of training, from a 'certain sort of European institution centered on artifact discourse' (Carruthers 2014a: 8). As such, the 'purity' of the field can be conceived as intrinsically tied to political narratives in Egypt itself.

Political, religious and ethnological polemics have historically surrounded Egypt, enlivened by the translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* in the Renaissance period. The Hermeticum consists of a number of books of philosophy and apparent prophecies, commonly attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, or Hermes the Thrice Great, a philosopher named for the Greek version of the Egyptian god, Thoth (Djehuty) and, significantly – to early Christian authorities – perceived as a contemporary of Moses (Champion 2003). The Hermeticum subsequently occupies a unique space as being employed 'as evidence that Egyptian religion had both anticipated Christianity and influenced Greek philosophy' (ibid.: 135). It was additionally employed to legitimise the notion of a continuity of learning, 'wisdom' passed from ancient to modern world; the idea of a chronological transition of knowledge is salient to the reconstruction narratives herein. Prior to the decipherment of hieroglyphs in the 1820s, unfamiliarity with the language of the ancient Egyptians had resulted in reliance upon Greek writers, such as Strabo and Herodotus. Following a Greek tradition of adding authority by virtue of antiquity (Lefkowitz 1996), such writers corroborated the notion of Egypt as the font of all wisdom, and the birthplace of learning (Hornung 1999). This perspective helped perpetuate the belief among scholars that the Greeks were the inheritors of the Egyptians – culturally, philosophically and scientifically. Education in Classical civilisation characterised eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western academic discourse, 'From Petrarch to Sartre, the classics rivalled even the Bible as a widespread, flexible vehicle of Western thought' (Reid 2002: 140). The Greek notion of an 'Egyptian Mystery System' and Egyptian systems of philosophy has been historically perpetuated in literature by writers such as Vail ([1909] 1991), who reference sources such as Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris* and Apelius's *The Golden Ass* (Lefkowitz 1996: 93–121, and see Chapters 2 and 3). The Hermeticum was later determined to be a work not of ancient Egyptian origin, but likely penned between the first and third centuries CE. Hermeticism, however, endured in forms of Freemasonry, which further mythologised the nature of Egyptian culture (Champion 2003; Hornung 1999). This is not to say that Egypt has not contributed in these areas, and debates surrounding Egypt's contribution to philosophy (and other fields) continue (Lefkowitz 1996; Obenga 1992; Rossi 2004). Rather, it is to propose that Western preconceptions and expectations have resulted in cycles of both fascination and disappointment with Egypt, which sometimes bear little relation to the ancient record itself (Jeffreys 2003; Rice and MacDonald 2003).

The Napoleonic expedition recruited Egypt into mainstream Western dialogues on an unprecedented scale. The advent of increased international travel, with the foundation of agents such as Thomas Cook, encouraged wider access to this once

impenetrable land (Reid 2002). The prominence of Egypt in the *Old* and *New Testaments* resulted in archaeological expeditions to verify biblical narratives. Roth (1995: 32) proposes that Egyptology was founded by American and European scholars whose 'primary interest was in confirming and explicating the Old and New Testaments for the furtherance of Christianity'. Biblical archaeology does appear to have had a powerful influence on the choice of early expeditions, while the evidence suggests that cultural interest was both broader and more deeply embedded (Ucko and Champion 2003). The Egypt Exploration Society (EES), founded by British author Amelia Edwards and Reginald Stuart Poole of the British Museum, was initially conceived as the 'Egypt Exploration Fund': in order 'to explore, survey, and excavate at ancient sites in Egypt and Sudan, and to publish the results of this work' (EES 2016). Notably, however, early publications included *Route of the Exodus* (1885), *Tanis* (1885), *Naucratis* (1886 and 1888) and *Mound of the Jew* (1890). Subsequently, a mindfulness of the religious lens of early Western archaeologists, and its influence on their interpretation of Egyptian spirituality and religion, might be advised.

Resulting from the foundational era of Egyptology is a complex relationship with race sciences and ethnicity narratives, which retain powerful cultural capital to this day (Challis 2013; Trafton 2004). Ethnologists, such as Morton (1844, as cited in Champion 2003: 168–70) employed measurement of European, African and, notably, Egyptian skulls in the construction of *craniology.* These controversial race 'sciences' followed an ever-increasing trend towards measurement and classification, and were employed to support a belief in the historical superiority of the Caucasian race. This resulted in friction regarding the classification of the then highly regarded ancient Egyptians, who were subsequently recruited into this narrative as *dark skinned Caucasians* (Champion 2003). While the status of Egypt in Western dialogues is highly protean (Chapters 2 and 3), craniology played a significant role in the removal of pharaonic Egypt from its African surroundings. Contemporary class systems were also projected onto ancient Egypt; employing a blend of craniology, biblical scholarship and an examination of monumental architecture, Nott and Gliddon (1854, in Champion 2003: 173) published *Types of Mankind*, proposed as 'proof' of their agenda: the 'permanence of racial difference' (ibid.). Craniology and race sciences were strongly biased by their political and social contexts, having emerged from institutionalised efforts to justify the slave trade, and promote the developing field of eugenics. Writers such as Derry ([1914] 1956) would later postulate the existence of a 'Dynastic Race' which was distinct from the predynastic population of the Nile Valley, also termed the *Hamite Hypothesis*. While the use of race science would decline in popularity and legitimacy when faced with the horror perpetuated by the Nazis during the Second World War, the idea of a Dynastic Race endured for some time (Emery 1952). The *whitewashing* of the ancient Egyptians remains a controversial aspect of popular culture to this day, as witnessed in the furore surrounding the casting of the 2016 film *Gods of Egypt.*[2] Debates surrounding race, Afrocentrism and the location and legacy of Egypt are significant to this work, and are explored throughout the text.

An unforeseen result of the interaction between biblical and race narratives with ancient Egypt is the development of 'pyramidology'. This continuing phenomenon is frequently associated with 'lunatic fringe' and so-called 'pyramidiots' (Petrie 1883), yet finds its origin where religious and racial archaeology intersect. John Taylor (1859) was one of the first 'modern' commentators to propose that the Great Pyramid embodied and employed mathematical ideas usually attributed to the Greeks, such as Pi, and explored the idea that the pyramid was a scale representation of the Earth itself. Significantly, however, Taylor was also among the first to propose the notion that the architect of the Great Pyramid was a 'biblical Israelite', more specifically, Noah (ibid.). After correspondence with Taylor, Piazzi Smyth (1864) set out to examine the pyramid for himself. His publication, *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid* (1864) expanded on Taylor's theories, employing a detailed analysis and measurement to 'prove' that the monument was a 'perfect structure'. Smyth suggested that the peoples of the Old Testament built the pyramid as an artefact of divine inspiration, and that its measurements were the embodiment of a scientific proof of Christianity. He expanded on Taylor's (1859) hypotheses surrounding the so-called 'pyramid inch', based upon the earlier works of Greaves (1706). Taylor suggested that the pyramid inch was a version of the sacred cubits of the Israelites and, as such, contained a system of divine prophecy. While perhaps incongruous on the surface, such narratives were seemingly included to counter the rise of the French *metric system*, and were significant to the cause of British nationalism for a brief period (Bloxam 1932). Such theories were later to be debunked by writers such as Petrie (1883), who coined the term 'pyramidiot', and generally dismissed the subject thereafter, though this did not remove Petrie himself from race narratives (Challis 2013). Theories supporting a constructed association between an *Anglo-Saxon race* and the *Biblical Lost Tribes* persist, however. Smyth's ideas were later appropriated by then principal of what was to become the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, eventual founder of their spiritual descendants, the Jehovah's Witnesses. The Watch Tower Society would abandon pyramidology, but the theories were to be assimilated in 1932 into the separate British Israelite movement with the publication of *God's Stone Witness* (Bloxam 1932). These narratives persist, and descendant groups of the British Israelites, such as the British Israel World Federation, still hold numerous volumes of pyramidology in their online store, including an intellectual descendant of the above texts, Riffert's (1960) *Great Pyramid Proof of God*.[3]

The above examples should illustrate the sometimes-pernicious political ideologies which surround and intersect with the subject of Egypt (Chapters 2 and 3). This issue is illustrated by Carruthers (2014a: 3), who notes a binary between 'an internal disciplinary world and an external world of other goings on'. The question of what constitutes the history of Egyptology and, leading from this, Egyptology itself, is of direct interest to this work, which deals in the characterisation of disciplinary trends and boundaries. Carruthers (2014a) notes, of efforts to understand *interactions* between Egyptology and ideology, that a form of ideological 'purification' may be present. His critique includes

the example of the *Journal of Egyptian History*, with reference to Schneider (2012, in Carruthers 2014a), who traces biographies of German Egyptologists under the Nazi regime. Carruthers (2014a: 4) observes that Schneider's work seeks to disentangle German Egyptology (and Egyptology more widely) from those works which may have been influenced by the political ideologies of the era. This speaks to an implication, intentional or not, 'In this frame… that Egyptology is at heart a "pure" discipline, an ordered and stable set of practices that objectively inquire into and constitute what is understood of ancient Egypt' (ibid.). He highlights that such a model also implies that corresponding practices can 'after appropriate historical reflection' be thought to be 'separated from pernicious political "ideology"' (ibid.). As such, practices deemed as 'inappropriate' to 'scholarly inquiry' may be placed 'outside the Egyptological sphere' and the discipline progress to 'better, implicitly more correct, work' (ibid.). Carruthers additionally notes that histories of Egyptology can take on biographical form, which, to greater or lesser extent, celebrate the pioneer while naturalising the discipline. This, he argues, acts as an adjunct to the 'thrust of the narrative', characterised by an 'heroic disciplinary genealogy' (ibid.: 4–5). Such a practice is likened to a process of purification, whereby individual histories and narratives self-regulate what is deemed appropriate to the field. This is a powerful notion, crucial to studies of the 'other', or narratives which may be perceived as originating 'outside' this located and purified set of practices. Carruthers (ibid.: 7) highlights a set of *knowledge practices* 'that constitute the proper object of a field of inquiry, practices that contain the source of that field's continued reproduction and relevance', which, significantly, set the rules '..of who can and cannot partake in it… defining the worlds in which the field can be said to be connected'. Carruthers' observations of these questionable disciplinary boundaries are seemingly supported herein, particularly in the case of Naydler (2005), whose text, *Shamanic Wisdom in the Pyramid Texts*, has potentially been denoted as situated 'outside' the 'proper' practice of Egyptology (Part 1). The practice of disciplinary purification may be thought of in terms of a number of more or less powerful 'claims to authority' (Carruthers 2014a: 7), which in turn suggest that the notion of an uncontested and naturalised Egyptology should be recurrently examined and never assumed. Supporting the notion that claims are situated is the account of Middle Eastern archaeology presented by Scham (2001: 183), who relates the circumstances of contested pasts in Jerusalem. Scham emphasis the notion of multiple 'pasts' due to the 'multivocal' nature of the debate: two archaeologists, a Palestinian Muslim and a secular Israeli Jew, presented their views. These were proceeded by questions from the audience, 'Who was here first?… and Does it Matter?' Scham suggests that 'it clearly did matter to most of those present, including the speakers'. Scham notes that the 'postmodern critique of objectivity' is unfamiliar in this context, a region which offers the 'most proof' of the post-modern claim, 'that ideological bias has overtaken even our best intentioned efforts to know the past' (ibid.: 184). When examined within the context of the corresponding archaeological record one might concede that, in

such circumstances, cognitive and political bias strongly dictate interpretation and practice. This leads Scham to conclude that 'confronting ideology in archaeological interpretation is not a matter of conjecture but one of *practice*' (ibid.: 186, emphasis added).

The study of Kemeticism inherently questions Egyptology's boundaries; it lays at the heart of discourse which antagonises the right and authority of contributions to the story and meaning of Egypt's past. There are exceptions to such a characterisation of Egyptology, and a number of increasingly sensitive and provocative studies have emerged in the wake of the millennium. Such works examine the discipline and its historical location and cultural and political impact: the UCL Press 2003 *Encounters with Ancient Egypt* series (Ucko 2003) details numerous interactions between Egyptology and public discourse, emerging from a symposium which questioned Egyptology's place in an increasingly pluralist world; Butler's (2007) Alexandria ethnography moves 'beyond visitor response' models to an understanding of colonial narratives on the natives of Egypt, exploding Western conceptions of 'loss' and the ownership of heritage; Reid (2002) and Colla (2007) trace the history of Egyptology as a means of projecting imperial power which perpetuates colonial discourse; Luckhurst (2012) and Riggs (2014a) both highlight, in different ways, the role of Victorian conceptions of death and the body in Egyptology's disciplinary objectification of the other; Moser (2006) examines the manner in which the past becomes 'fixed' through museum narratives and interactions with Egyptology; and El-Daly (2005) and Quirke (2010) highlight work by Arabic Egyptologists and labourers, respectively, de-privileging the laterality of European Egyptology. With the addition of Carruthers' (2014) insightful historiography, and many other papers and smaller studies, one might be forgiven for thinking that all was well within the discipline, that change was afoot. However, this book sits in accord with Riggs (2014a), who argues that, 'Without a significant realignment of priorities and multiplicity of voices, the study and presentation of ancient Egypt increasingly risk stagnation, and that is why critical analysis… is as urgent as it is essential' (ibid.: 4). As such, this work treats Egyptology as a recognisable discipline, but one that is not fixed in place. It may be, at times, characterised by the problems of purification and stagnation mentioned by Carruthers (2014a) and Riggs (2014a), but is a discipline capable of producing self-reflexive works, even if these are not yet the most dominant trends of the field. 'Egyptology', within this work, refers to a body of texts focused on ancient Egypt and surrounding discourse, which are preserved and perpetuated by academic institutions; subsequently, 'Egyptologists' are those academics self-identifying as such, or having produced such a text within the tenets of the academy. Within this volume, I argue against 'straw-man' constructs, which all too easily homogenise a range of practices. However, this work supports a recognition that Egyptology, however defined from without or within, is a politically located, post-colonial discipline which carries problematic histories and discourse in its wake, from which it cannot ever be entirely cleared (see below).

Bodies in discourse

In 2000, the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology commissioned market research by the Susie Fisher Group (Fisher 2000). The objective of this exercise was to better understand their target audiences' perception of and attraction to Egypt. The museum kindly provided me with a copy of the research findings; these had been the basis for a later article by former director of UCL museums, Sally MacDonald (2003), titled, 'Lost in time and space: ancient Egypt in museums'. The research and article highlight the mythologised nature of the museum encounter, and the notion that Egypt is perceived as a 'construct rather than a country' (Fisher 2000: 48), free of concerns of geography and 'historical fact' (ibid.: 8). The research also emphasises the role of popular culture and tourism on this construct, while highlighting preconceptions revealed in their public consultation. This included responses to questions about Egypt from social groups consisting of children aged nine to ten who had studied Egypt in school, two groups who had visited Egypt – one of backpackers and an 'older group who had been on a cruise or organised tour… and two groups of UK-born people aged 25–45 (one white and one non-white) who had never visited Egypt. Each group contained 6-8 respondents and each discussion session lasted between 60 and 90 minutes' (MacDonald, S. 2003: 87). The *Egypt* presented by the research 'retains its hold because it is a compelling myth', one which is not concerned with remaining 'pure' and 'historically accurate' (Fisher 2000: 48). It is 'peopled by pharaohs and slaves' (MacDonald, S. 2003: 89) and the everyday person is unknown or little thought about (ibid.). Spontaneous reactions displayed an association with pyramids, tombs, mummies, gods, heat, sand, mystery and, somewhat significantly, *archaeology* (Fisher 2000: 10–13, 44). Modern-day Egypt 'becomes a magnificent obstacle course' (ibid.: 15), something with which one must *contend* in order to see the ancient remains. Fisher's results showed some bias against modern-day Egyptians, and disassociative trends which disinherit modern Egyptians from pharaonic heritage are also implied, 'All-encompassing but disappeared without trace' (ibid.: 20). Such a trend may be reflective of embedded colonial paradigms (Chapters 2 and 3). Interestingly, this phenomenon was also observed of questioned 'non-white' groups (a problematic category in itself, which implies a *normative* stance). Black respondents viewed Egypt as a stolen African cultural capital in which they had a vested interest. Questions regarding the current indigenous population were not extensively explored. Egypt's geographical placement in the continent of Africa is often highlighted by advocates of Afrocentrism and, in this book, by the leader of Kemetic Orthodoxy (Chapter 6). Consideration of African origins has led to research into ethnicity and the origins of Egyptian civilisation by some Egyptologists and Africanists (Diop 1981; O'Connor and Reid 2003; Obenga 1992; Chapter 2). Fisher's study does little to distinguish between modern and ancient conceptions of geography and race, however. Nobody is asked to consider what conceptions the ancients may have had of their own identity and geography (Fisher 2000: 48–9). Popular views on Egyptian religion were of interest to this work as, 'The Ancient Egyptians are believed to have had a