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Donald Malcolm Reid, *Contesting Antiquity in Egypt. Archaeologies, Museums & the Struggle for Identities from World War I to Nasser*, The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo- New-York, 2015, 491 p.

Egypt has had a tumultuous and extraordinary history not only in what we define today as Prehistory, Antiquity and Middle Ages but also in the last two centuries. Donald M. Reid explores the relation which Egypt has had with its past history and cultural heritage, and the struggle of coping with it, as seen in a broader modern historical context. The author's first important contribution on this topic is called *Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I*, and can be defined as a series of studies (some previously already published as papers in scientific journals or book chapters), dealing with the subject over a period of more than one hundred years of Egyptian modern history (1798-1914)¹. The second book of this series consists of a sequel, which goes on the path of the same historiographic trails, starting prior to World War I, up to the presidency of Gamal Abdel Nasser, one of the most influential figures of the Arab World after World War II.

My interest in both works and the subjects tackled by Donald Malcolm Reid has been aroused due to the contribution it provides in understanding a critical period of Egyptian modern history which is overlapped by the rising of a new scientific field of study- Egyptology. As the author indirectly suggests, it is mandatory for every Egyptologist to understand not only Ancient Egypt, but also the broader history (Graeco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic) and how Egypt evolved in modern times (p. 11)². Due to the limits imposed, I will briefly outline major features of the book in the following words and give my final impressions at the end from an egyptological point of view.

Part one entitled *Egyptology and Pharaonism to 1930* (p. 19-133) commences with a rich **Introduction** (p. 1-16), which marks the most important subjects addressed by the author, most of them already discussed in the first book. **Chapter One** (p. 19-50) takes us into a journey through mainly the "Colonial era" and the grip on the heritage Egyptologists representing the Colonial powers exercised; on the other hand the author stresses upon, for example, on the personality of Ahmad Kamal Pasha, portrayed as the first representative figure of "pharaonism"³, a term which brings forward the view through which the Egyptians "created" their own past, nicely sketched by Reid in the broader context. **Chapter Two** (p. 51-79) highlights the conflicts between "Colonian" representatives around the discovery of the boy-king's tomb (whose discovery by Howard Carter is pivotal in this chapter), or the way Egyptians related to the discovery through the voices of newspapers for example, in a period when Egypt had just obtained its limited independence from the British protectorate. The last two chapters, **Chapter Three** (p.

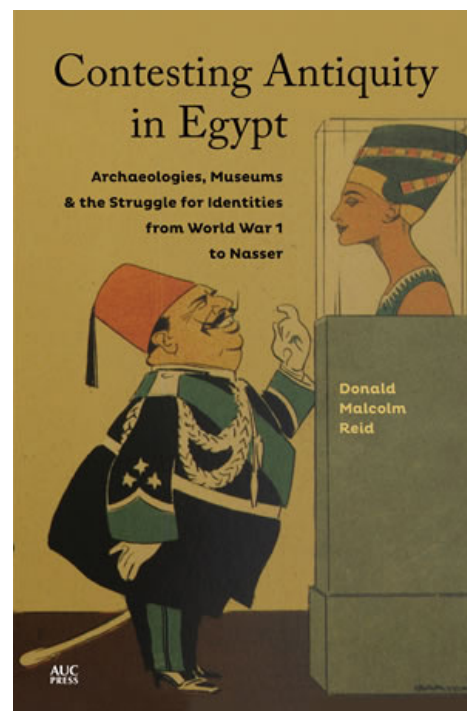
¹ Reid 2002.

² Compare with the latest International Congress of Egyptology Proceedings (Rosati, Guidotti 2017).

³ Reid 2002, p. 12 for a definition of the term who also calls it "pharaonicism". Reid also draws a line between this concept and Western Egyptomania.

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81-107), and **Chapter Four** (p. 109-133), are dichotomic in their approach, as Reid explores Western Egyptology on one hand (namely British, French, German and American), and the new generations of Egyptian Egyptologists on the other (represented for example by Selim Hassan or Sami Gabra), briefly highlighting also, for instance, the role Cairo University has had⁴, or how *pharaonism* developed during this period and after the discovery of Tutankhamun.

Part two entitled *Tourism and Islamic, Coptic, and Greco-Roman Archaeologies* (p. 137-259) consists of the next four chapters: **Chapter Five** (p. 137-166), in which the author analyzes the way Western tourism evolved in Egypt and the individuals and historical events that influenced it, with on-hand contemporary evidence; **Chapter Six** (p. 167-195); **Chapter Seven** (p. 197-227) and **Chapter Eight** (p. 229-259) present the "non-pharaonic" fields of the study of the Egyptian past, their major centers and museums, and also main actors in between roughly the two uprisings/revolutions from 1919 and 1952.

Part three entitled *Egyptology and Pharaonism to Nasser`s Revolution* (p. 263-368), consist of **Chapter Nine** (p. 263-294), marked by the return of the German Egyptologists; **Chapter Ten** (p. 295-327) which resurfaces the concept of "pharaonism" and portrays its new main figures- e.g. Salama Musa, briefly outlining other competing major political concepts such as Islamism and Arabism. **Chapter Eleven** (p. 329-354) draws attention on the author`s ability to highlight the poor relations between Egyptians and their Western counterparts (especially French and British) during World War II and up to King Farouk I forced abdication. Naturally, the final conclusions emerge (p. 355-368), with Naguib Mahfouz`s words at the end epitomizing in Reid`s view, Egypt`s constant search for its national identity (p. 367-368). Further, one has to acknowledge that the narrative in the post-colonial history of Egypt is necessary "to close the circle" (and in a way echoes from the final conclusions), as the events that unfolded in the period after 1952 influenced the view on Egyptian past and heritage, alongside their main actors, both Egyptian and non-Egyptian alike.

Undoubtedly the book of Donald Malcolm Reid is an important work for Egyptologists all around the world although it never answered some fundamental questions. First of all, it stands out as a major contribution to the history of Egyptology in a wider, political context. Secondly, I should stress upon the importance of Reid`s book (together with the first one) from a "traditional" egyptological point of view, as both are seminal in contextualizing the creation of egyptological collections in the Western world⁵.

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⁴ For the importance of the Cairo University and the development of modern Egypt see Reid 1990.

⁵ For example the situation of the Egyptian collections and scholarly work in South-East Europe as envisaged recently in the book edited by Mladen Tomorad (Tomorad 2015).