

professional will be able to gain a basic understanding of the logic and utility of such approaches. Finally, he offers a hypothetical case study to illustrate the entire approach from data collection to quantitative analysis and development of implications.

Chapters 3–5 form the core of the volume and take the reader through Jordan's studies of ethnographic material culture from north-west Siberia, North America's central north-west coast and northern California. The north-west Siberia data derive from the Khanty, a group with whom Jordan conducted extensive ethnoarchaeological research. Jordan tests hypotheses about propagation and coherence of cultural traditions centred on five male crafts. He finds that storage platforms and shrines have the least coherence due to common individual modification of critical design elements. In contrast, skis, dugout canoes and sledges tend to have a higher degree of coherence with "design recipes" (p. 203) transmitted and applied far more faithfully to meet functional requirements among other things. The coherence of Coast Salish craft traditions on the north-west coast is affected substantially by gender. Long houses feature high coherence and distinct branching histories due to vertical transmission (e.g. father to son) and conformist bias (Richerson & Boyd 2005). Likewise, the notion that canoe manufacture is also characterised by strong vertical descent although congruence with language does not hold well given the propensity of canoe makers to move between villages. In contrast, women's basketry traditions do not form coherent lineages as upon marriage women move frequently between villages and borrow concepts from other women. Finally, Jordan finds interesting contrasts in craft traditions between indigenous groups in north-west and north-east California. In the north-west, ceremonial dress and basketry have very mixed traditions, linked respectively to participation in community festivals and women's movement at marriage, in the latter case, much akin to the Coast Salish. Also similar to the Coast Salish, north-west houses form relatively coherent lineages. In contrast, north-east groups appear to have had stronger "transmission isolating mechanisms" (p. 44) or TRIMS (Durham 1992) linked to their tribelet-based land-holding systems leading to far more coherent basketry and ceremonial dress traditions. Houses, however, were not routinely reproduced in a highly faithful manner due to frequent local innovation by builders.

Jordan offers an array of conclusions in Chapter 6 that will be discussed, debated and tested by scholars

for some time into the future. He recognises that some craft traditions can form coherent cultural lineages while others do not, thereby negating the old debate that culture changes entirely via ethnogenesis or phylogenesis. Clearly, culture can change either way and it is the variation inherent in these histories that is interesting. Jordan's study shows that variability in craft transmission and lineage history is affected by a host of structural variables including the craft technology itself, its uses, gender, marriage rules, learning traditions, ritual practices and inter-group socio-political relationships. Jordan also finds that, in some cases, crafts are bound up with other traditions into more complex packages, thus showing congruence with language and other crafts. Returning to the Boyd *et al.* (1997) hypotheses, Jordan finds evidence that culture can be structured as a hierarchically integrated system and as an assemblage of many units. Overall, this is a masterful contribution that should be read and widely discussed by students and scholars of material culture history, social anthropology and archaeology.

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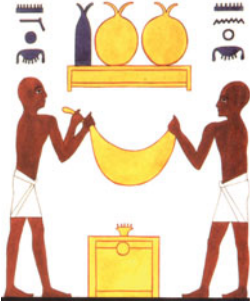
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JASON THOMPSON. *Wonderful things. A history of Egyptology 1: from Antiquity to 1881*. 2015. 352 pages. New York & Cairo: American University in Cairo Press; 978-977-416-599-3 hardback \$39.95.

Heroes, travellers and villains: the early history of Egyptology involves a cast of fascinating and often flamboyant characters. Some of them, such as the circus strongman Giovanni Belzoni, are practically household names. Many popular books

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have recounted the highlights of the colourful early days, but a definitive synthesis has been long overdue. Jason Thompson, author of esteemed biographies of pioneer Egyptologist John Gardner Wilkinson and

orientalist Edward William Lane, has now turned his formidable talents to a comprehensive history of Egyptology. He plans a three-volume study, of which this is the first, covering Antiquity to 1881: the dawn of Egyptology's golden age.

Thompson takes us back as far as the Setem-priest Khaemwaset of the Fifth Dynasty, who had a passion for restoring ancient monuments. He treats familiar and less well-known Greek and Roman authors, and points out that medieval European travellers knew more about Egypt than is often assumed. Enlightenment visitors to this then little-known country included the French consul Benoît de Maillet, who made a memorable study of the Pyramids of Giza in the very early eighteenth century, and the well-known travellers Frederik Norden and Richard Pococke. Two French observers, Claude Savary and Constantin Volnay, described modern, rather than ancient, Egypt and assessed its suitability as a French colony. Napoleon read their books and took Volnay's account with him when he invaded Egypt in 1798. He also brought with him a commission of 151 experts, charged with studying Egypt, ancient and modern. The artist and writer Baron Vivant Denon also accompanied Napoleon. His popular account of his travels enjoyed a wider popularity than the commission's monumental *Description de l'Égypte*, which took years to appear. After Napoleon, Thompson casts a much wider antiquarian net than merely dwelling on such familiar characters as Giovanni Belzoni, Bernardino Drovetti and Henry Salt. He places Jean-François Champollion's partial decipherment of hieroglyphs in a much wider context, and introduces us to less well-known pioneers, among them William Richard Hamilton, who travelled through Egypt in 1801 during the chaotic years following the French withdrawal.

Thompson travels well-researched territory with the decipherment of hieroglyphs, but he brings

to it a valuable perception of the years during and after Champollion's partial decipherment. The artist and antiquarian John Gardner Wilkinson was highly influential. His shadow looms large over a constellation of antiquarians, avid travellers and artists, who helped lay the foundations of today's Egyptology. Alas, much of their work remains unpublished and largely forgotten. Their number includes the wealthy dilettante William Bankes, also the Scot Robert Hay and his artist Joseph Bonomi, who explored and recorded important sites. It was Hay who employed the artist Frederick Catherwood, later famous for his Maya paintings, to work along the Nile. There were tourists such as Lord Prudhoe, who acquired a large collection that is now at Durham University. All kinds of fascinating historical tidbits emerge, among them the revelation that an obscure Irish parson, Edward Hincks, known for his research on Assyrian cuneiform, tried unsuccessfully to encourage follow-up research on ancient Egyptian language and script in Britain. *Wonderful things* weaves an engaging tapestry of discovery out of the well-known and the obscure, forming an invaluable synthesis as well as being a smooth read.

Champollion's celebrated Nile expedition of 1828 was the first government-sponsored exploration of ancient Egypt, but there was somewhat of a lull after his untimely death. Two classics defined mid-nineteenth century knowledge of ancient Egypt—Wilkinson's *Manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians* (1837) and Edward William Lane's equivalent on the modern Egyptians, published a year earlier. Then there were Richard William Howard Vyse's energetic and gunpowder-defined investigations of the Pyramids of Giza, published in 1840. The French adventurer and antiquarian Émile Prisse d'Avennes made meticulous drawings, plans and watercolours, but much of his work still remains unpublished. Similar to Hay and his colleagues, this gifted artist and scholar has remained undeservedly in the shadows. Thompson discusses other scholars and collectors as well, but they pale into insignificance against the great Prussian expedition, led by philologist Karl Richard Lepsius during 1842–1845. Lepsius travelled as far upstream as Khartoum and the Blue Nile, visiting Meroe. The 12 folio volumes of his *Denkmäler* (1849–1859) formed a unique, and then definitive, description of ancient Egypt.

Two chapters chronicle the aggressive collecting of Egyptian antiquities by European museums, which accelerated after the 1830s. The market for antiquities

was very lucrative, fuelled both by acquisitive museum curators and by private collectors, as well as a burgeoning tourist trade after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The chapter 'Taking possession of Egypt for the cause of science' places the celebrated Frenchman Auguste Mariette in his proper context, including his work on Verdi's *Aida*, performed in Cairo in 1871. A welcome chapter discusses the often neglected topic of the depiction of ancient Egypt in art, photography and literature, which pays tribute not only to novelist Amelia Edwards, often called the 'Queen of Egyptology', but more obscure figures such as the consumptive Lucie Duff Gordon, who lived atop the Luxor Temple during the 1860s, and the pioneer photographer Francis Frith, who made a fortune cornering the raisin market, then took up photography. The book ends with Egyptology and Egyptian archaeology in a precarious state, with uncertain prospects on the eve of a new era of discovery, to be described in volume II.

Wonderful things is a rare treasure of Egyptology and historiography, based on meticulous, often very obscure, research and turned into a mellifluous narrative. This is no catalogue of heroes and villains, but a balanced and measured account that is a definitive history and a first-rate read at the same time. One eagerly awaits the two forthcoming volumes in this remarkable story, written by a scholar with considerable academic and literary gifts. And, as a bonus, he promises us a separate volume devoted entirely to illustrations of all kinds to amplify the story. By any standards, this book is a remarkable achievement. Just the Notes and comprehensive Bibliography are worth the price of admission.

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DAVID O'CONNOR. *The Old Kingdom town at Buhen* (EES Excavation Memoir 106). 2014. xiv+403 pages, 175 b&w illustrations. London: Egypt Exploration Society; 978-0-85698-215-6 paperback £70.



The site of Buhen formed part of the Egypt Exploration Society's (EES) concession during the Nubian Rescue Campaign of the late 1950s and 1960s. W.B. Emery, director of the mission, noticed

the area of the Old Kingdom town during the 1960 campaign at the main fortress. Work began at the town site in 1962, with a second season in 1964. Emery's subsequent work priorities, mainly at Saqqara, prevented him from writing a final report on the Old Kingdom town, and he died unexpectedly in 1971. Emery was only able to publish a couple of reports on his work, principally in the journal *Kush* (1963) and a briefer note in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* (James 1962). Over the past 40 years, the EES has worked hard to publish Emery's *Nachlass*; in the case of the Old Kingdom town, David O'Connor, who had worked on the site, agreed to take on the task. It is never easy working on the records of others or combining that with one's own duties, but nonetheless, O'Connor was able to finish the text in 1988. Various editors were assigned to the volume at different times, but another 25 years were needed; the reviewer recalls the non-appearance of this volume as an ongoing issue during his time on the Society's publications sub-committee in the early 2000s.

Settlement sites, especially Old Kingdom ones, are uncommon, so the publication of Buhen is most welcome. Recent work at Giza and elsewhere has provided scholars with further examples of such sites, but Buhen's location in Nubia makes it particularly important. The book is divided into 12 chapters, plus an introduction to the records used by the author and the methods employed. After Chapter 1, describing the location of the site and an outline of the excavations, come seven chapters dealing in great detail with the separate parts of the town, mostly termed 'Terraces' and 'Blocks'. Two further chapters deal with the Egyptian and Nubian ceramic remains, plus one on the artefacts. The last chapter presents O'Connor's conclusions.

The descriptions of the contexts and reconstructed stratigraphy are detailed and complex, and may be impenetrable for the reader less than familiar with

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