

Cartogram of the frequency countries appear in the supra-national literature on the history of Egyptology between 2014 and 2023. *Source:* Author.

□ Global Egyptology: Awareness, Historiography and Future Implications

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Abstract: *This paper discusses Egyptology as a field of global professional engagement and analyses its global scope and historiography from 2014 to 2023 through a quantitative, bibliometric review of supra-national literature. In so doing, it asks to what extent the literature reflects an emerging global awareness of Egyptology and what implications current trends may hold for the future. In recent years, under the impression of intensifying calls for decolonization and emergent criticisms of the unipolar world order, an awareness has arisen that ancient Egypt incurs worldwide interest. While scholarly attention to Egyptology's emergence outside traditional Western centres is growing, a marked Eurocentric bias persists. The increased inclusion of BRICS countries reflects broader geopolitical shifts towards multipolarity, paralleling Egyptology's gradual, postcolonial self-reflection and calls for greater inclusivity. However, significant absences—such as Sudan, West African scholarship, and African American perspectives—underscore enduring structural and epistemic inequalities. The paper argues that genuine global integration in Egyptology is shaped as much by geopolitical context, international networks, and editorial access as by scholarly intent. It concludes that a more equitable, multipolar Egyptology hinges on active inclusion of underrepresented regions and traditions, as well as critical awareness of persistent systemic barriers.*

Résumé: Égyptologie mondiale : Prise de conscience, historiographie et implications futures – *Cet article traite de l'égyptologie comme discipline d'engagement professionnel mondial et analyse sa portée et son historiographie internationales de 2014 à 2023 à travers une revue quantitative et bibliométrique de la littérature supranationale. Ce faisant, il s'interroge sur la mesure dans laquelle cette littérature reflète une prise de conscience mondiale émergente de l'égyptologie et sur les implications que les tendances actuelles pourraient avoir pour l'avenir. Ces dernières années, sous l'effet de l'intensification des appels à la décolonisation et des critiques émergentes de l'ordre mondial unipolaire, on a pris conscience que l'Égypte ancienne suscite un intérêt mondial. Si l'émergence de l'égyptologie hors des centres occidentaux traditionnels suscite une attention croissante de la part des chercheurs, un biais eurocentrique marqué persiste. L'inclusion croissante des « BRICS » reflète des évolutions géopolitiques plus larges vers la multipolarité, parallèlement à l'auto-réflexion postcoloniale progressive de l'égyptologie et aux appels à une plus grande inclusion. Cependant, des absences significatives – telles que celles du Soudan, des chercheurs ouest-africains et des perspectives afro-américaines – soulignent la persistance d'inégalités structurelles et épistémiques. L'article soutient qu'une véritable intégration mondiale en égyptologie est façonnée autant par le contexte géopolitique, les réseaux internationaux et l'accès éditorial que par l'intention des chercheurs. Il conclut qu'une égyptologie plus équitable et multipolaire repose sur l'inclusion active des régions et des traditions sous-représentées, ainsi que sur une prise de conscience critique des barrières systémiques persistantes.*

I. Introduction

Over the past decade or so, a string of, at times, related publications have discussed the history of the study of ancient Egypt from regional and global perspectives. Following a bibliometric approach, this contribution attempts to trace to what extent the available literature reflects an awareness of the effectively global nature of the engagement with ancient Egypt, and how the literature fosters an improved understanding of that global nature. Basis of the discussion is a quantitative survey of supranational literature on the history of Egyptology; supranational literature here being such that discusses Egyptology not from a national perspective but rather from an international or regional, if not outright global, perspective.

The first part of the paper introduces the relevant publications that have been released since 2014 and outlines their geographic scope. The works surveyed here appear in chronological order of their publication. The second part discusses the major trends as they emerge from the data and embeds in the wider geopolitical context of the recent years. The final part of the paper, the *Conclusion*, condenses the findings and raises questions that emerge from the discussion. Overall, the data suggest that Egyptology has been gaining a more global understanding of the field and its history, while geographical inequities persist.

II. Egyptology as a Global Field in Recent Literature (post-2014)

The year 2014 saw the release of William Carruthers' *Histories of Egyptology*.¹ The volume provides a comprehensive overview of the development of Egyptology as a field of study. Next to the impact of historical context on the exploration of ancient Egypt, it highlights key figures in the discipline, their methodologies, and the shifting perceptions of Egyptian civilization over time to form a critical reflection on the complexities of studying ancient Egypt. The volume contains a total nine chapters on the history of Egyptology three countries: Egypt (four chapters),² Germany (one chapter),³ and the United Kingdom (four chapters).⁴

¹ William CARRUTHERS (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures*, New York, Routledge, 2014.

² Wendy DOYON, On Archaeological Labor in Modern Egypt, in: William CARRUTHERS (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures*, New York, Routledge, 2014, pp. 142–156; Mohamed ELSHAHED, The Old and New Egyptian Museums: Between Imperialists, Nationalists, and Tourists, in: William CARRUTHERS (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures*, New York, Routledge, 2014, pp. 255–269; Marwa ELSHAKRY, Histories of Egyptology in Egypt: Some Thoughts, in: William CARRUTHERS (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures*, New York, Routledge, 2014, pp. 185–197; Hussein OMAR, The State of the Archive: Manipulating Memory in Modern Egypt and the Writing of Egyptological Histories, in: William CARRUTHERS (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures*, New York, Routledge, 2014, pp. 174–184.

³ Thomas GERTZEN, The Anglo-Saxon Branch of the Berlin School: The Interwar Correspondence of Adolf Erman and Alan Gardiner and the Loss of the German Concession at Amarna, in: William CARRUTHERS (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures*, New York, Routledge, 2014, pp. 34–49.

⁴ Gabriel MOSHENSKA, Thomas “Mummy” Pettigrew and the Study of Egypt in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain, in: William CARRUTHERS (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures*, New York, Routledge, 2014, pp. 201–214; Kathleen L. SHEPPARD, Margaret Alice Murray and Archaeological Training in the Classroom: Preparing “Petrie’s Pups”, in: William CARRUTHERS (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures*, New York, Routledge, 2014, pp. 113–127; Alice STEVENSON, The Object of Study: Egyptology, Archaeology, and Anthropology at Oxford, 1860–1960, in: William CARRUTHERS (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures*, New York, Routledge, 2014, pp. 19–33; Steve VINSON and Janet GUNN, Studies in Esoteric Syntax: The Enigmatic Friendship of Aleister Crowley and Battiscombe Gunn, in: William CARRUTHERS (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures*, New York, Routledge, 2014, pp. 96–112.

2017's *Global Egyptology*⁵ is not a historiographical work *per se*, yet it includes a section on regional histories of Egyptology next to other concerns such as the social history of pharaonic Egypt. The corresponding section has one paper each on the history of Egyptology in Brazil,⁶ Mainland China,⁷ Japan,⁸ and Russia/the Soviet Union,⁹ all penned by authors with origins in the respective regions. The chapters cover the period from the nineteenth to the early twenty-first centuries and arguably represent the first English-language treatments of the respective subject matter. It is also noteworthy, that with this section in *Global Egyptology*, Egyptologies of the Global South – here represented by Brazil and China as two of the founding BRICS members – entered what can be labelled as mainstream historiography of Egyptology for the first time. This edited volume opened the door for some of these authors to expand their forays into historiography in other outlets.¹⁰

2019 saw the release of the edited volume *Towards a History of Egyptology*,¹¹ which was based on a conference that took place a year earlier. This edited volume contains articles on the history of the field in Belgium,¹² Brazil,¹³ Britain,¹⁴ Czechoslovakia,¹⁵ Egypt,¹⁶

⁵ Christian LANGER (ed.), *Global Egyptology: Negotiations in the Production of Knowledges on Ancient Egypt in Global Contexts*, London, Golden House Publications, 2017.

⁶ Thais ROCHA DA SILVA, Tropical Egypt: The Development of Egyptology in Brazil and its Future Challenges, in: Christian LANGER (ed.), *Global Egyptology: Negotiations in the Production of Knowledges on Ancient Egypt in Global Contexts*, London, Golden House Publications, 2017, pp. 161–172.

⁷ Tian TIAN, Budding Lotus: Egyptology in China from the 1840s to Today, in: Christian LANGER (ed.), *Global Egyptology: Negotiations in the Production of Knowledges on Ancient Egypt in Global Contexts*, London, Golden House Publications, 2017, pp. 173–198.

⁸ Yōko NISHIMURA and So MIYAGAWA, An Early History of Egyptology in Japan with a Focus on Philological Studies, in: Christian LANGER (ed.), *Global Egyptology: Negotiations in the Production of Knowledges on Ancient Egypt in Global Contexts*, London, Golden House Publications, 2017, pp. 147–159.

⁹ Alexandre A. LOKTIONOV, Of Pilgrims and Poets, Prisoners and Politics: The Story of Egyptology in Russia, in: Christian LANGER (ed.), *Global Egyptology: Negotiations in the Production of Knowledges on Ancient Egypt in Global Contexts*, London, Golden House Publications, 2017, pp. 129–145.

¹⁰ See below for other publications by LOKTIONOV and ROCHA DA SILVA. TIAN went on to publish the following works on the history of Egyptology in China: Tian TIAN, “Thoth with four eyes: Chinese views of Egyptian hieroglyphs in the late Qing period (1840–1912)”, *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 31, 2021, pp. 55–80; Tian TIAN, Was Narmer a Chinese emperor? Alternative history of ancient Egypt in China, in: Ben J.L. VAN DEN BERCKEN (ed.), *Alternative Egyptology: Critical essays on the relation between academic and alternative interpretations of ancient Egypt*, Leiden, Sidestone Press, 2024, pp. 133–144; Tian TIAN, Encountering Egypt: Chinese studies of ancient Egypt during the late Qing period (1840–1912) and their echoes in Chinese archaeology abroad today, in: Anke HEIN and Julia LOVELL (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of the History and Practice of Chinese Archaeology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, in press.

¹¹ Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Towards a History of Egyptology: Proceedings of the Egyptological Section of the 8th ESHS Conference in London, 2018*, Münster, Zaphon, 2019.

¹² Marleen DE MEYER, Jan VANDERSMISSEN, Christophe VERBRUGGEN, Wouter CLAES, Luc DELVAUX, Marie-Cécile BRUWIER, Arnaud QUERTINMONT, Eugène WARMENBOL, Laurent BAVAY, and Harco WILLEMS, Pyramids and Progress: Belgian Expansionism and the Making of Egyptology, 1830–1952, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Towards a History of Egyptology: Proceedings of the Egyptological Section of the 8th ESHS Conference in London, 2018*, Münster, Zaphon, 2019, pp. 173–193.

¹³ Thais ROCHA DA SILVA, Brazilian Egyptology: Reassessing Colonialism and Exploring Limits, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Towards a History of Egyptology: Proceedings of the Egyptological Section of the 8th ESHS Conference in London, 2018*, Münster, Zaphon, 2019, pp. 127–146.

¹⁴ Aidan DODSON, Egyptology: A British Model?, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Towards a History of Egyptology: Proceedings of the Egyptological Section of the 8th ESHS Conference in London, 2018*, Münster, Zaphon, 2019, pp. 147–156.

¹⁵ Hana NAVRATILOVA and Radek PODHORNÝ, Displaying Egypt Behind the Iron Curtain: Czechoslovakia 1949–1989, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Towards a History of Egyptology: Proceedings of the Egyptological Section of the 8th ESHS Conference in London, 2018*, Münster, Zaphon, 2019, pp. 255–292.

¹⁶ Fayza HAIKAL and Amr OMAR, Egyptology in Egypt: The Founding Institutions, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Towards a History of Egyptology:*

Germany,¹⁷ Hungary,¹⁸ and Russia;¹⁹ Brazil and Russia are covered by the respective contributors from *Global Egyptology*. Whereas the volume focuses on Europe and Egypt – here especially on Central Europe – with Brazil and Russia it includes Global South Egyptology in the form of two BRICS countries.

The first full pandemic year of 2020 saw the publication of *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptology*.²⁰ This edited volume aimed to present the current state of knowledge on various topics in Egyptology as well as methodology, yet oddly enough contains a paper on the history of Egyptology in China as the only such contribution.²¹ While the paper's title refers to Chinese Egyptology, it primarily focuses on Egyptology at the Institute for History of Ancient Civilizations (IHAC) at Northeast Normal University in Changchun and individuals connected to it; Egyptology at other Chinese institutions is mentioned only on the side. This can create the false impression that not much is going on in China outside IHAC in terms of Egyptology, which is not the case. In this sense, readers should consider this particular paper as a complement to Tian's comparatively more complete treatment of the subject in *Global Egyptology*.²² The editors state that Chinese Egyptology was included due to "the need for voices outside of European discourses" and for comparative purposes.²³ The question is whether China is the only suitable example in this case – to mind spring Brazil and African countries, which were obviously not included in the Oxford handbook – and, indeed, whether it is outside European discourse at all. I revisit that question further below. Why other countries were excluded but China was included ultimately has to remain unknown, although one may expect a connection with volume editor Ian Shaw's activity at the IHAC in the years leading up to the volume as the driving force.

In 2021, a competing publishing house released the edited volume *A History of World Egyptology*.²⁴ Written by established and celebrity scholars, most of the chapters deal with the history of Egyptology among the usual European and wider Western suspects: Britain,²⁵

Proceedings of the Egyptological Section of the 8th ESHS Conference in London, 2018, Münster, Zaphon, 2019, pp. 73–89.

¹⁷ Thomas L. GERTZEN, "Germanic" Egyptology? Scholarship and Politics as Resources for Each Other and Their Alleged Binary Relationship, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Towards a History of Egyptology: Proceedings of the Egyptological Section of the 8th ESHS Conference in London, 2018*, Münster, Zaphon, 2019, pp. 211–227.

¹⁸ Katalin Anna KÓTHAY, Early Hungarian Egyptology in the Context of National and European Identity, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Towards a History of Egyptology: Proceedings of the Egyptological Section of the 8th ESHS Conference in London, 2018*, Münster, Zaphon, 2019, pp. 195–210.

¹⁹ Alexandre A. LOKTIONOV, A Revolution in Egyptology, or an Egyptology of the Revolution? Changing Perspectives on Ancient Egypt in Russia, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Towards a History of Egyptology: Proceedings of the Egyptological Section of the 8th ESHS Conference in London, 2018*, Münster, Zaphon, 2019, pp. 157–170.

²⁰ Elizabeth BLOXAM and Ian SHAW (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020.

²¹ Xiaodong LI, Egyptology in China, in: Elizabeth BLOXAM and Ian SHAW (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020, pp. 66–78.

²² T. TIAN, Budding Lotus.

²³ Elizabeth BLOXAM and Ian SHAW, Introduction: Egyptology in the Twenty-first Century: An Historical Curiosity or Setting New Agendas in Multidisciplinary Research?, in: Elizabeth BLOXAM and Ian SHAW (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020, pp. 1–30.

²⁴ Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021.

²⁵ Aidan DODSON, The British Isles, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 91–135.

France,²⁶ Germany,²⁷ Italy,²⁸ the United States,²⁹ and Australasia.³⁰ Refreshingly, the volume also includes treatments of Egyptology in European regions whose role in the field tends to be overlooked in-between the historical heavyweights: Austria,³¹ Belgium,³² Canada,³³ Czechoslovakia,³⁴ Hungary,³⁵ the Netherlands,³⁶ the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden),³⁷ Poland,³⁸ Russia,³⁹ Spain,⁴⁰ and Switzerland.⁴¹ Although the focus is clearly on the Egyptologies of the North Atlantic, the editors invited contributions on Egyptology in Egypt and Japan as well.⁴² The editors generally opted for a territorial approach to the history of Egyptology to highlight the transnational nature of the field. Strikingly absent are chapters on Egyptology in Global South countries other than Egypt; for instance, Brazil and China as they were included in the older *Global Egyptology*, or Sudan as the other major host of ancient Egyptian and Nubian antiquities. What is left is the impression that 'World Egyptology' comprises the Global North and surging countries of post-Soviet spaces. The editors' definition of the field of Egyptology may offer clues as to why that is.⁴³ I wish to stress the spatiotemporal dimension of that definition here: The study of all facets of ancient Egyptian civilisation, *as institutionalised by centres of learning in the*

²⁶ Philippe MAINTEROT, France, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 68–90.

²⁷ Thomas L. GERTZEN, Susanne VOSS and Maximilian GEORG, Prussia and Germany, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 210–258.

²⁸ Patrizia PIACENTINI, Italy, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 369–396.

²⁹ Peter LACOVARA, United States of America, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 406–430.

³⁰ Boyo OCKINGA, Australasia, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 448–473.

³¹ Ernst CZERNY and Hana NAVRATILOVA, The Empire of Austria-Hungary and the Republic of Austria, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 259–286.

³² Jean-Michel BRUFFAERTS, Belgium, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 153–187.

³³ Zoe MCQUINN, Canada, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 431–438.

³⁴ Hana NAVRATILOVA and Adéla Jünová MACKOVÁ, Czechoslovakia, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 318–343.

³⁵ Katalin KÓTHAY, Hungary, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 298–317.

³⁶ Maarten RAVEN, The Netherlands, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 136–152.

³⁷ Tine BAGH, The Nordic Countries, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 188–209.

³⁸ Joachim ŚLIWA, Poland, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 344–353.

³⁹ Andrey O. BOLSHAKOV, Russia, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 354–368.

⁴⁰ Alba María VILLAR GÓMEZ, Spain, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 397–405.

⁴¹ Aurélie CUENOD, Switzerland, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 287–297.

⁴² Salima IKRAM and Amr OMAR, Egypt, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 25–67; Jiro KONDO and Nozomu KAWAI, Japan, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 439–447.

⁴³ The editors defined Egyptology as follows: "The study of all facets of ancient Egyptian civilisation, as institutionalised by centres of learning in the early nineteenth century, with a primary temporal focus starting in 3000 BC and continuing through to the fourth century AD, but not necessarily excluding the period before 3000 BC, especially prior to the separation of prehistory from 'mainstream Egyptology'" (Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM, Introduction, in: Andrew BEDNARSKI, Aidan DODSON and Salima IKRAM (eds.), *A History of World Egyptology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 1–7).

early nineteenth century (emphasis added). The highlighting of institutionalisation, centres of learning and the early nineteenth century provides a frame that perpetuates nineteenth-century Eurocentrism. The setting is the time when Egyptology emerged out of European centres of knowledge production (i.e., universities, learned societies, museums, government bodies) around the time of the Napoleonic Wars. Crucially, 'as institutionalised' implies that how these European centres understood and performed Egyptology would continue to serve as the gold standard. This understanding of the field of Egyptology would explain why pre-existing knowledge of ancient Egypt in medieval Arab sources is missing from the chapter on Egypt,⁴⁴ but also why the focus of *A History of World Egyptology* is rather on Egyptologies of the North Atlantic and wider Global North.

2023 saw the publication of *Addressing Diversity*.⁴⁵ Arguably a follow-up to *Towards a History of Egyptology* introduced above, this edited volume casts its net wider to cover :

- Austria,⁴⁶
- Belgium,⁴⁷
- Brazil,⁴⁸
- Britain,⁴⁹
- China,⁵⁰
- Denmark,⁵¹
- Egypt,⁵²

⁴⁴ The so-called 'missing millennium', see Okasha EL-DALY, *Egyptology: the Missing Millennium. Ancient Egypt in Medieval Arabic Writings*, London, UCL Press, 2005.

⁴⁵ Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023.

⁴⁶ Nicky VAN DE BEEK, Braving the Odds: Egyptologist Herta Mohr During the Second World War, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 181–203; Wolf B. OERTER, Wien - Prag - Wien - Philadelphia: Nathaniel Julius Reich (1876–1943), der rastlose Wanderer, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 55–73.

⁴⁷ Marleen DE MEYER, Wouter CLAES, Noha Mostafa MAHRAN, Athena VAN DER PERRE, and Aude GRÄZER OHARA, Working with Capart: Qufis and Local Workmen During the ElKab Excavation Seasons, 1937–1946, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023 pp. 343–364; Vincent OETERS, Frans Jonckheere (1903–1956): A Proactive Pioneer in the Study of Ancient Egyptian Medicine, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 111–140.

⁴⁸ Thais ROCHA DA SILVA, Ancient Egypt in Africa: Why It Matters to Brazilian Egyptology, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 535–563.

⁴⁹ Rosalind JANSSEN, Anthropometry beyond UCL: Measuring the Egyptian Fellahin, c. 1900, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 367–418.

⁵⁰ Wendy DOYON, Xia Nai's Egypt in the Archaeology of China: Field Workers and Field Methods in Xia Nai's Diary at Armant, Egypt, 1938, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 509–534.

⁵¹ Andreas ALM, Valdemar Schmidt and the foundation of Egyptology in Denmark, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 31–53.

⁵² Ladislav BAREŠ, Sixty Years of the el-Kereti Family at Abusir, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 309–322; Mostafa I. TOLBA, On the Trail of Ahmed Fakhry: The Legacy of an Egyptian Archaeologist, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN,

- France,⁵³
- Germany,⁵⁴
- and the Soviet Union.⁵⁵

More ambitious in scope than its immediate predecessor, the volume has shifted from the macro to the micro level and centres largely on individual biographies of people who had an impact on Egyptology. China joins the other BRICS countries of Brazil and Russia, while the focus remains on Europe and Egypt, here especially Central and Western Europe.

By the end of 2023, the ever-evolving *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (UEE) had published a few chapters on the history of Egyptology as well.⁵⁶ Specifically, on Egyptology in Britain,⁵⁷ Germany,⁵⁸ and Russia.⁵⁹ While the publication process of the UEE seems to be slower than with traditional academic publishing, one can expect more entries on the history of Egyptology in the future beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Jason Thompson, in the third volume of his *Wonderful Things* trilogy, detailed the UNESCO Nubian Salvage and Rescue Campaign and, indeed, mentioned the participation of the newly independent Ghana,⁶⁰ on the other hand, he failed to mention India as active participant and major financial contributor to this enterprise in an obviously selective narrative of the internationalization of Egyptology in the 1960s. In the epilogue, he went on to say that during “the twentieth century, Egyptology became a truly international science with institutions and outposts in most parts of the globe”, yet only mentions Australia and Japan as outposts of the

Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 277–307; Nora SHALABY, Ayman DAMARANY, and Jessica KAISER, A Nazir and an Effendi: Glimpses from the Abydos Paper Archive, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 251–276.

⁵³ Hélène VIRENQUE, Hermine Hartleben: une vie et une œuvre au service de l'égyptologie allemande et française, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 167–179.

⁵⁴ Peter DILS, Dr. Hildegard von Deines (1902–1978): Ägyptologin im zweiten Leben, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 205–247; Thomas L. GERTZEN, "Not the Button on Fortuna's Cap": The Egyptologist and Celtologist Ludwig Julius Christian Stern (1846–1911), in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 141–163; Bart R. HELLINCKX, Fritz Krebs (1867–1900): Forgotten *école de Berlin* Egyptologist and Pioneer Papyrologist, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 449–507; Heike C. SCHMIDT, The "Little Brugsch": The Life and Adventures of Emil(e) Brugsch, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 419–448.

⁵⁵ Alexandre A. LOKTIONOV, From Class Foes to the Upper Class: Diverse Paths to Fame and Fortune in Soviet Egyptology, in: Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thomas L. GERTZEN, Marleen DE MEYER, Aidan DODSON and Andrew BEDNARSKI (eds.), *Addressing Diversity: Inclusive Histories of Egyptology*, Münster, Zaphon, 2023, pp. 565–580.

⁵⁶ Andréas STAUDER and Willeke WENDRICH, *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. Los Angeles, https://escholarship.org/uc/nclc_uee.

⁵⁷ Meira GOLD, "British Egyptology (1822-1882)", *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/07v2d8vk>; Kathleen SHEPPARD, "British Egyptology (1882-1914)", *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7nt9d23q>.

⁵⁸ Thomas L. GERTZEN and Susanne VOSS, "German Egyptology (1882-1914)", *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6np9x3sq>.

⁵⁹ Ivan LADYNIN, "Russian Egyptology (1914-1945)", *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1bj5037j>.

⁶⁰ Jason THOMPSON, *Wonderful Things: A History of Egyptology 3: From 1914 to the Twenty-First Century*, Cairo and New York, The American University in Cairo Press, 2018, position 4850.

field outside the North Atlantic.⁶¹ Generally, throughout the volume France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States feature as the ‘big four of Egyptology’. What with even Japan identified as a significant player in international Egyptology yet mentioned only in passing, *Wonderful Things* qualifies as a largely Eurocentric celebratory narrative of an Egyptology that revolves around players situated in the North Atlantic. Similarly, African strains of Egyptology surrounding Cheikh Anta Diop do not appear at all,⁶² nor do the fault lines within United States Egyptology between the hegemonic discourses and African American approaches to ancient Egypt.

A quantification of the collected bibliometric data (Fig. 1) leads to the following observations. Publications on the history of Egyptology focus primarily on Central and Western Europe and Egypt. Egypt aside, the countries that appear most frequently are Britain and Germany.⁶³ The recent years saw a surge in chapters on Egyptology in Brazil, China and Russia – given their limited clout in the field from a global perspective, one may speak of an over-representation of these countries in the literature at this point. Conversely, American Egyptology appears peculiarly under-represented in the literature, especially when considering the power the United States holds in global academic publishing and in shaping discourses in Egyptology; one has to wonder whether that under-representation was a deliberate move to obfuscate or understate these circumstances. The following section delves into global fault lines of Egyptology.

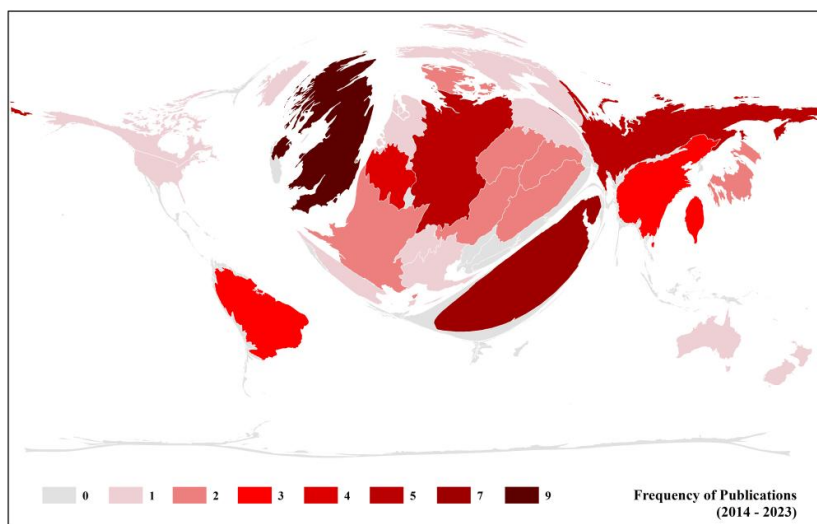


Figure 1. Cartogram of the frequency countries appear in the supra-national literature on the history of Egyptology between 2014 and 2023. Source: Author.

⁶¹ J. THOMPSON, *Wonderful Things*, position 7689.

⁶² On the exchange between Cheikh Anta Diop and Western Egyptology, see more recently Heinrich BALZ, *Afrika und Ägypten: zwischen Cheikh Anta Diop und Jan Assmann – die Schwierigkeiten einer Begegnung*, Berlin, EB-Verlag Dr. Brandt, 2022.

⁶³ It is important to note that German Egyptology has received special attention for its national socialist past. Related volumes (Susanne BICKEL, Hans-Werner FISCHER-ELFERT, Antonio LOPRIENO and Sebastian RICHTER (eds.), *Ägyptologen und Ägyptologien zwischen Kaiserreich und Gründung der beiden deutschen Staaten: Reflexionen zur Geschichte und Episteme eines altertumswissenschaftlichen Fachs im 150. Jahr der Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag Berlin, 2013; Thomas SCHNEIDER and Peter RAULWING (eds.), *Egyptology from the First World War to the Third Reich: Ideology, Scholarship, and Individual Biographies*, Leiden, Brill, 2013) are not included in the dataset This is because they were released before the focal period and due to their focus on Germany and, in individual cases, North Atlantic players like Britain or the United States. If all contributions on German Egyptology or Egyptologists from that volume were included here, that would skew the dataset strongly in favour of Germany.

III. Discussion: Global Fault Lines

The previous section showed that the existing literature largely focuses on the traditional centres of Egyptology and that the aspirations to do justice to the global nature of the field have succeeded only to a limited extent. The growing number of works on Egyptology in BRICS countries – here Brazil, China and Russia – demonstrates that awareness of scholarly engagement with ancient Egypt outside the traditional centres of the West has been increasing. Yet, on the other hand, strikingly absent are discussions of the contributions by actors in West or East Africa or Sudan; when it comes to West Africa, the absence from mainstream Egyptological consciousness of the Cheikh Anta Diop school is especially striking. Likewise, absent are treatments of Egyptology in Ghana and India, although these two countries did actively contribute to the UNESCO campaign in Nubia in the 1960s, as Carruthers outlined recently.⁶⁴

A reason for the absence of Sudan may well be that Sudan archaeology is increasingly developing into a field of its own, perhaps combined with the circumstance that more scholars still work in and on Egypt than Sudan. The latter aspect comes with a heightened reliance on Egyptian institutions and pressure to render Egyptian contributions more visible. The influence of Sudanese institutions appears diminished by comparison and under-represented in comparison to Egypt. While Sudan has been in a state of civil war fueled by external interference (including by Egypt),⁶⁵ one can only hope that Sudanese scholars will become as visible as Egypt in disciplinary historiography in the future.

The United States deserves a closer look. As noted above, the impact of United States scholarship on Egyptology is arguably under-represented in historiographical works now. This is even more apparent from the vantage point of the mid-2020s, what with the number of publications released in English every year, the American clout to shape global perceptions of ancient Egypt via the dream factory of Hollywood, and generally global American power. One cannot but wonder whether the decolonization debate of the past decade has resulted in shifting attention away from North America to post-Soviet and Global South Egyptology; the flipside is that the real power relations in global academic publishing and actual influence in Egyptology become obfuscated. As in not talking about it means it is not happening. Whether that is deliberate or incidental has to remain open at this point. Yet even within United States Egyptology, a rift is apparent. That rift goes between mainstream (or Anglo-American) Egyptology and African American Egyptology, the history and contributions of which are absent from the works introduced here.

While fault lines between Global North and South are generally visible from the data, such fault lines also appear internally. In the Global South, the differential between attention paid to Egypt and Sudan has already been noted. In the Global North, there is the internal chasm in United States Egyptology; in Europe, there is the traditional focus on Western European Egyptology while post-Soviet spaces receive more attention than in the past. Yet within European regions formerly under Soviet influence, attention is selective either. For instance, Romanian or Serbian/Yugoslavian Egyptology remain a blank.

⁶⁴ William CARRUTHERS, *Flooded Pasts: UNESCO, Nubia, and the Recolonization of Archaeology*, Ithaca (NY) and London, Cornell University Press, 2022, p. 251. Note that Ghana was active in Sudan, which may affect its perception as an historical player in Egyptology, if we assume that Egyptology and Sudan archaeology should be disentangled.

⁶⁵ Charles A. RAY, "Foreign Influence is Fueling the War in Sudan", *Foreign Policy Research Institute*. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2025/07/foreign-influence-is-fueling-the-war-in-sudan/>.

All that points to Egyptology not only being unequal when it comes to access to fieldwork opportunities in the field and in academic publishing power,⁶⁶ but also in terms of attention. The historiographical focal points appear distributed unevenly, which point to an implicit hierarchy that sees Europe and North America at the top of the agenda, with select Global South countries ranking second depending on their influence in the field or their relevance in global affairs. Hence, mainstream publications render West Africa invisible. Some world regions (or Egyptologies) appear more isolated or less integrated than others, both in terms of Egyptology generally and as object of scholarly interest.

Another observation relates to the quality and substance of publications and relate to a tension between *depth* and *breadth*. The record attests historiographical *depth* in the Global North and *breadth* in the Global South. In other words, the history of Egyptology in Europe has advanced to the point where specific aspects like individual biographies or gender are at the centre of attention; in turn, the history of Egyptology in China or Brazil is about providing broad sweeps.

Geopolitics aside, another reason for the historiographical differential may be of a more practical sort and ultimately has to do with access. Egyptologists like to think of their field as so small that everyone knows one another. That may be largely true of the North Atlantic and Egyptian spaces. Yet, as seen above, not every world region is equally well integrated into the field. That results in a dual challenge. Editors of thematic volumes need to accomplish two things: 1) they need to be aware of an Egyptological tradition outside the core region of the field; 2) they need to be able to contact scholars from these regions. In the end, unless researchers from specific regions happen to be at hand in the core, editors need get out of their way to find contributors. For instance, by scanning the internet for possible contributors or by going outside the core and meeting people in person. Needless to say, the latter requires a certain transnational mobility as well as overcoming language barriers and structural obstacles. Often that may be a substantial addition to an already full work schedule so that it becomes a matter of intrinsic motivation. Only a few privileged individuals in Egyptology can transgress geographic and epistemic boundaries and shape scholarly discourses globally. In the end, in many cases sticking to European discourses may simply be the most viable thing to do.

On that note, it is worth discussing briefly Bloxam and Shaw's addition of Chinese Egyptology as a voice outside European discourses to their *Oxford Handbook of Egyptology*. More recent research shows that Chinese Egyptology has been influenced greatly by Western Egyptology and its research strains; since the 1990s even more so as Chinese Egyptologists have largely abandoned the Marxist lens of decades prior in favour of a cultural turn. In other words, Chinese Egyptology has westernized to an extent. The early Chinese efforts to understand Egypt of the nineteenth and early twentieth century were often mediated by Western diplomats or institutions, like UCL in the case of the Chinese archaeologist Xia Nai.⁶⁷ Epistemologically, Chinese Egyptology was thus well touched by European discourses from the onset. If there is in any particular tradition that represents a voice outside European discourses, it is probably the West African school of Cheikh Anta Diop. Although that may still be regarded a response to the European appropriation of ancient Egypt and its removal out of the wider African context.

⁶⁶ Christian LANGER and Uroš MATIĆ, "Postcolonial theory in Egyptology: Key concepts and agendas", *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 19(1), 2023, pp. 1–27.

⁶⁷ Christian LANGER and Kexin ZHAO, "The Nile and the Yellow River: Comparative studies between ancient Egypt and China", *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 35(2), pp. 305–316; T. TIAN, *Budding Lotus*; T. TIAN, *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*; T. TIAN, *Encountering Egypt*.

Overall, the awareness of Egyptology as a *field of global engagement* has been increasing of late – with the caveat that this is *Western* awareness, given the publications introduced here emanated from institutions of the Global North. The question is why that has been the case and why it has been occurring only in recent years. The answer may lie in geopolitics again. Three of the additions (Brazil, China, Russia) are BRICS countries. A vehicle for comprehensive South-South cooperation, the BRICS project has been surging over the past decade, representing roughly half the global population and surpassing the hitherto leading G7 countries in GDP expressed in purchasing power parity (PPP) in 2022; the year 2024 saw Egypt admitted to the group next to the other new members Iran, Indonesia, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates.⁶⁸ Where the role of Egyptology in Global South countries other than Egypt could be *ignored* in the past, that has become less defensible in the geopolitical and intellectual climate fostered by BRICS. What we are likely seeing is a conjuncture of an Egyptological and a geopolitical trend: Egyptology has undergone a postcolonial, self-reflective turn since the 2000s that has sought to situate the field in a more global framework; the parallel emergence of multipolarity as promoted by BRICS made the idea of *plural centres of expertise* more familiar and legitimate in broader academic discourse. This environment likely encouraged Egyptologists to recognize that non-Western Egyptologies were not marginal footnotes but parallel traditions worth integrating. The surge of BRICS created a conjuncture where the discipline's internal push toward global inclusivity and the external shift toward multipolarity reinforced each other. In other words, integrating Egyptological traditions from the Global South in the history of the field became feasible only recently.

IV. Conclusion and Outlook

This paper has asked if and to what extent there is an emerging understanding of Egyptology as a global field, employing a bibliometric approach to resolving that question in the process. The resulting dataset has revealed that the scope of disciplinary historiography has increasingly become more global since the mid-2010s. Whereas the focus is arguably still on the European powerhouses of old, a shift toward players outside that core and Global South countries has occurred. For instance, Central and Eastern Europe have attracted more interest, with BRICS countries like Brazil, China and Russia equally featuring more often in scholarship. At the same time, omissions like Sudan – the other country and government Egyptologists have to work with besides Egypt – and other African traditions stand out; within the traditional regions of Egyptology, African American lines of enquiry appear marginal and subaltern.

The bibliometric approach shows that historiography can serve as a useful proxy to track global awareness, or an awareness of the globality of an academic field like Egyptology. Besides unveiling that trajectory, the bibliometric approach is another way to display geographic inequalities in Egyptology. From a global vantage point, regions receive different

⁶⁸ On the BRICS, see e.g. Mihika CHATTERJEE and Ikuno NAKA, "Twenty years of BRICS: political and economic transformations through the lens of land", *Oxford Development Studies* 50(1), 2022, pp. 2–13; Stewart PATRICK, Erica HOGAN, Oliver STUENKEL, Alexander GABUEV, Ashley J. TELLIS, Tong ZHAO, Gustavo DE CARVALHO, Steven GRUZD, Amr HAMZAWY, Etsehiwot KEBRET, Elina NOOR, Karim SADJADPOUR, Ebtesam AL-KETBI, Victor MIJARES, Ovigwe EGUEGU, Abdulaziz SAGER, Gilles YABI, Sinan ÜLGİN, and Trinh NGUYEN, "BRICS expansion and the future of world order: Perspectives from member states, partners, and aspirants", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/03/brics-expansion-and-the-future-of-world-order-perspectives-from-member-states-partners-and-aspirants?lang=en>.

amounts of attention in historiography. The discussion above suggests that there are (geo)political, economic, epistemic and professional causes at work.

The more global shift toward Global South traditions reflects wider trends that have developed over the past decade and that seem to gain more traction in the wake of the Covid pandemic and renewed great power competition. That trend has been a shift from a unipolar to a multipolar world order, in which especially BRICS takes a leading role. Like the hitherto United States-led unipolar world order, Egyptology as a field may appear unipolar with its focus on Europe and North America, but underneath that veneer there is a multipolar potential.

The globalizing trend in Egyptological historiography raises issues over the future trajectory of that trend as well as the associated global awareness. The underlying question is how scholarship can do the global character of Egyptology justice, given the shortcomings in global integration outlined in this paper. One possible way forward on that path may be the inclusion of Sudan and other African traditions. The exploration of other regions' engagement with the legacy of ancient Egyptian civilization beyond those two may present avenues for further research as well.⁶⁹ That would undoubtedly result in an enhanced understanding of the global nature of Egyptology and do justice to the fact that many peoples around the world seem to take interest in ancient Egypt one way or another. If a more global understanding of the field is the goal, another issue concerns how global integration can be achieved, given language and structural barriers, and whether that is that something Egyptologists want – irrespective of where they may be located. The wider shift toward multipolarity further raises the question what a global Egyptology would be – is it unipolar or does it necessitate, or presuppose, that it is multipolar? The answer to these questions would directly impact the equitability of Egyptology. To think even further: Is a global Egyptology collaborative, inclusive, cosmopolitan space or competitive, exclusive, isolationist space of parallel Egyptologies? In the context of great power competitions and a new or resurging cold war, the next few years will likely offer answers to these questions.

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⁶⁹ On that note, any future editions of *Who Was Who in Egyptology* will ideally include more entries on individuals from outside the traditional core. For the latest edition, see Morris L. BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, London, Egypt Exploration Society, 2022.

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