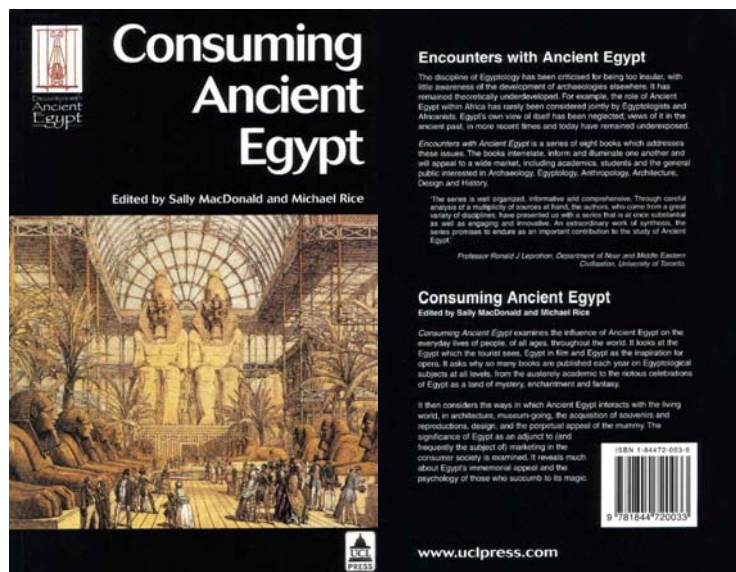


MacDonald, S. & M. Rice. Eds. 2003. Consuming ancient Egypt. – London, UCL Press (Encounters with ancient Egypt)

Book review by M. Maessen



‘Consuming ancient Egypt’ is just one volume in a series of eight books¹ that resulted from the conference ‘Encounters with ancient Egypt’, which was held at the ‘Institute of Archaeology, University College London’ (UCL) in December 2000.

The volume ‘Consuming ancient Egypt’ discusses the influences of ancient Egypt on peoples of all ages and backgrounds during their everyday lives in modern-day society. Divided in fourteen chapters, seventeen authors share their visions on how ancient Egypt is used and misused in all aspects of the present-day consumer market. Although probably far from exhaustive, the authors have attempted to present how ancient Egypt can be encountered in our everyday life in all its diversity and variations.

The several chapters discuss, in as far as possible, all different facets of this subject: from the costumes and décor of the opera *Aida* to other ‘appearances’ in books, films, music, Egyptian tourism, souvenirs, authentic and/or fake antiquities trade, television, computer games, etc.

Compliments to the publisher for the timely fashion in which this book was put together, but the content of the articles is often difficult to follow. Several references to preceding or following chapters and/or quotations see to it that the book falls apart after just one time reading (which of course also is a reflection on the book binder).

One of the least discussed areas with regard to ancient Egypt, is it’s presence on the Internet. This area should be more thoroughly dealt with considering the fact that this is the place where the search for information about ancient Egypt is begun by many, especially non-professionals, rather than books, films or other media.

Surprisingly one of the biggest ‘suppliers’ of information to the average household was overlooked, namely, the National Geographic Channel. As the Media division of the National Geographic Society (who contributes financially to many scientific expeditions), they excel in making highly popularised documentaries.

The contributors have endeavoured to explain in clear, concise language where all of the above-mentioned situations were encountered, but as explained, some topics need elaboration. All in all, this book is a worthy addition to the bookshelf; especially for those interested in the relation of ancient Egyptian aspects in our daily lives.

MacDonald, S. & M. Rice. Eds. 2003. Consuming ancient Egypt. – London, UCL Press (Encounters with ancient Egypt). 239 pp. ISBN 1844720039. Price £25.00 (paperback).

¹ See the archive of PalArch’s Centre of Book Reviews for reviews of the other parts in this series.