



# Antiquity Imagined: The Remarkable Legacy of Egypt and the Ancient Near East

*Robin Derricourt*

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**Antiquity Imagined: The Remarkable Legacy of Egypt and the Ancient Near East** Robin Derricourt  
Outsiders have long attributed to the Middle East, and especially to ancient Egypt, meanings that go way beyond the rational and observable. The region has been seen as the source of civilization, religion, the sciences and the arts; but also of mystical knowledge and outlandish theories, whether about the Lost City of Atlantis or visits by alien beings. In his exploration of how its past has been creatively interpreted by later ages, Robin Derricourt surveys the various claims that have been made for Egypt—particularly the idea that it harbours an esoteric wisdom vital to the world’s survival. He looks at ‘alternative’ interpretations of the pyramids, from maps of space and time to landing markers for UFOs; at images of the Egyptian mummy and at the popular mythology of the ‘pharaoh’s curse’; and at imperialist ideas of racial superiority that credited Egypt with spreading innovations and inventions as far as the Americas, Australia and China. Including arcane ideas about the Lost Ten Tribes of biblical Israel, the author enlarges his focus to include the Levant. His book is the first to show in depth how ancient Egypt and the surrounding lands have so continuously and seductively tantalized the Western imagination.

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