FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HOMER, PLATO, CAESAR AND AUGUSTUS: FRENCH-BRITISH COMPETITION TO RE-CLAIM ANCIENT EGYPT AFTER THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

by

Jillian Mitchell

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in
History

Charlotte

2021

Approved by:

_____
Dr. Christine Haynes

_____
Dr. David Johnson

_____
Dr. Ella Fratantuono

ABSTRACT

JILLIAN MITCHELL. Following in the Footsteps of Homer, Plato, Caesar and Augustus: French-British Competition to Re-Claim Ancient Egypt after the Napoleonic Wars. (Under the direction of DR. CHRISTINE HAYNES)

Napoleon's disastrous campaign in Egypt was a military and political failure; however, it opened up Egypt to European attention and competition. The campaign's aftermath yielded two significant developments, the Capitulation of Alexandria and the publication of the *Description de l'Egypte*. These transformed the military failure of the French into a cultural victory for Europeans. Although the British thoroughly bested the French in Egypt, both would now compete to better understand ancient Egypt. In my research, I compare the different modalities (textual description, cartography, and museums/exhibitions) through which France and Britain sought to acquire, curate, and disseminate knowledge about ancient Egypt from 1801-1830. In doing so, I examine how ancient Egypt was "rediscovered," really re-imagined, through the British-French rivalry. My research demonstrates that Egypt was originally valued for its connection to the Greco-Roman World – a concept that would haunt the British collection mindset. However, the French got out from under the shadow (or out of the footsteps) of the Greco-Roman World, recognizing the value of ancient, if not modern, Egypt on its own terms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am incredibly grateful for all the support I received when researching and writing this thesis. First, I want to thank my advisor Dr. Haynes. Her advice has been invaluable for my research, writing, and turning this into one cohesive narrative. I would also like to thank Dr. Johnson for helping me hone the conceptual background of my project. Lastly, I want to thank Dr. Fratantuono for helping push me to add the survey modality into my study, which strengthened my argument significantly in chapter 2. Thank you all for your continued feedback, support, and encouragement. This project would not have been possible without all of you. Thank you for not only caring about my research but investing in me, helping me work towards being a full-fledged historian.

In addition to my committee, I am incredibly grateful for the History department at UNCC. From graduate students to faculty, thank you for listening to me constantly talk about Belzoni, Champollion, the *Description de l'Egypte*, and several other things. Thank you all for not only listening but offering constructive feedback and encouragement.

This research would not have been possible on my own. I am indebted to several archives and archivists who worked with me to digitize content from France and Britain. I owe my thanks to the archivists in the Archives des Musées Nationaux -Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes du Musée du Louvre, the Archives Nationales de France, the British Museum Central Archive, the Society of Antiquaries of London, and the British Library Manuscript Collections. I am also incredibly grateful for the support of the Pharr-Buchenau Grant that the UNCC History Department generously awarded me to allow me to digitize sources from these archives. The grant also funded a trip to Washington D.C., where I accessed the manuscript collection, geography division, and prints and photographs rooms in the Library of Congress.

Finally, I owe my thanks to my friends and family. Thank you for constantly listening to me talk about my thesis and sharing my enthusiasm for my research. Thank you for constantly supporting and encouraging me, either by peer-reviewing my work, letting me talk out my ideas, or getting me coffee. Most of all, thank you for believing me.

I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to present this work. Thank you to everyone who helped make it happen.

DEDICATION

For my mom and dad. Dad, you started it all. Thank you for teaching me the value of historical study from a young age and supporting me unconditionally. Mom, thank you for teaching me to believe in my dreams and pushing me to pursue them. This would not have been possible without both of you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

LIST OF FIGURES:

INTRODUCTION:

It is well known that Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798-1801 was a military disaster. However, by provoking the publication of the *Description de l'Egypte*, and the acquisition of artifacts by the British under the Capitulation of Alexandria (1801), it was a cultural victory for Europeans in their growing effort to use knowledge about the ancient world to colonize the East. These events also ushered in a century of competition between Britain and France, as they tried to best each other in "understanding" Egypt, especially ancient Egyptian history and culture. From their hunt for acquiring Egyptian antiquities to their obsession with translating the Rosetta Stone, understanding Egypt became a point of pride and competition between the two countries and a way to distinguish themselves from other nations. The struggle comprised a wide range of elements, ranging from essays, conferences, and exhibitions of artifacts in London and Paris, to travelogues and expeditions. Comparing the different modalities through which France and Britain sought to acquire, curate, and disseminate knowledge about Egypt, this thesis examines how ancient Egypt was "rediscovered," really re-imagined, through the Anglo-French rivalry.

My comparative study reveals three primary elements of the British-French collection of ancient Egypt. First, I demonstrate how British-French rivalry not only prompted the trip to Egypt but also informed which modalities the French and British focused on. For example, the aftermath of the Egyptian campaign encouraged the British to turn towards the museological modality. They displayed their bounty from the Capitulation of Alexandria as imperial trophies taken from the French. Second, Europeans laid claim to ancient Egypt. Ancient Egypt was a form of legitimization (tying themselves to the great conquerors such as Alexander the Great), but more importantly, Europeans saw an opportunity to make it their own. For example, ancient Egyptian language was lost to time, meaning its history was only available through classical accounts such as Herodotus. In applying the scientific

methodology of classification, the British and French actively described and collected ancient Egyptian history. They "rediscovered" and retold the history of ancient Egypt, tying it to their own history in the process. Third, although the British and French "unearthed" Egypt, ancient Egyptian history was only valuable for its ties to the British-French rivalry or in its relation to the Classics. Ancient Egypt was considered mysterious and not as elegant as the renowned and respected Classics. However, Egypt shared its past with the Greco-Roman world, making it an acceptable study. This mindset would haunt the British collection of ancient Egypt, but fortunately, for the French, they would get out from under the shadow of the Classics and recognize the value of ancient Egypt on its own terms.

Historians tend to note the competition between Britain and France in Egypt in terms of the quantity and quality of artifacts acquired by each or else comment on the race to translate the Rosetta Stone. Broadly, when discussing this subject, historians analyze it through five categories: Egyptomania, Egyptology, Orientalism, individual biographies (of collectors or linguists), and museum building/collecting. To discuss them individually, Egyptomania is the nineteenth-century European fascination with ancient Egypt. Brian Fagan's analysis of the travelogues of ancient Egyptian artifact collectors illustrates this category well. Arguing that these travelogues were important because they allowed the public to partake in the expeditions, Fagan discusses the most famous travelogue writer in the early nineteenth-century: Giovanni Belzoni, a collector for the British. Belzoni was incredibly popular amongst the British public because of his book, *Travels in Egypt and Nubia*. Not only did he publish his travelogue, but he also held exhibits in London to show off his collections. Through his publication and exhibitions, he played an active role in Egyptomania

and is credited with encouraging well-known scholars such as William Edward Lane to travel to Egypt to study it.[1]

Other scholars like Nina Burleigh, Jonathan Downs, and John Ray have written on the development of Egyptology. These three authors credit the development of Egyptology to the *Description de l'Egypte* and the Rosetta Stone. Addressing the question of why Napoleon brought scientists to Egypt, Burleigh argues that studying Egypt legitimized the *mission civilisatrice*. Additionally, she speculates that Napoleon was following Alexander the Great, who had brought philosophers on his Persian invasion. Napoleon was also working to accommodate the Enlightenment goals of categorizing and classifying, giving birth to the *Description de l'Egypte*. She concludes that, although the savants were incredibly meticulous and their records are so valuable that Egyptologists use them to this day, they were ultimately unable to "unlock Egypt," as they could not translate hieroglyphs.[2] Similarly, Downs argues that "the Rosetta Stone is arguably the most important Egyptian artefact ever discovered. Without it, Egypt would have stayed a silent civilization, the hieroglyphs inscribed upon its tombs, temples, monuments and memorials remaining so much elegant and artistic incomprehensibility."[3] In his book he analyzes the French discovery of the Rosetta Stone and how they tried to hide it from the British even after the Capitulation of Alexandria was signed. The Rosetta Stone had become a topic of discussion before it was taken by the British, as French newspapers had already reported on it in 1799. Additionally, Downs analyzes the Institut d'Égypte correspondence with the l'Institut national de France, from August 19, 1799, to July 19, 1799, as intellectuals speculated on what the Rosetta Stone

[1] Brian M. Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists and Archeologists in Egypt* (Westview Press, 2004), 98.
[2] Nina Burleigh, *Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 23.
[3] Johnathan Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt* (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2020), 1.

could mean for linguists.[4] Thus, the French recognized the value of the Rosetta Stone and were incredibly bitter when it was taken.

Unlike Burleigh and Downs who focus on the initial acquisition of the Rosetta Stone, John Ray analyzes the intellectual debate over who was able to translate it. Although the French linguist Jean-Francois Champollion received the credit, the British thought that it was their linguist Thomas Young who laid the foundation for the translation since he had begun working on translating the demotic script. It is unclear whether or not Young helped, but the British demanded that he receive partial credit. Ray concludes that this rivalry and debate over who translated the Rosetta Stone persisted at least a hundred years, as is evidenced by the Hundredth Anniversary Celebration of its translation in France. At this celebration, images of Champollion and Young appeared side by side. Although the pictures were of equal size, the French filed complaints about Young's picture being larger than Champollion's and vice versa.[5] Additionally, Young is buried in Westminster Abby and is credited on his gravestone with assisting Champollion with the translation.

The third category of historiography is influenced by the theory of Orientalism, which reflects the European suggestion that, as a civilization and culture, ancient Egypt was superior to modern day Egyptians. Both Malcolm Donald Reid and Ian Coller argue that Egyptology belongs to the Europeans. Reid argues that ancient Egyptian history was dominated by Europeans, as evidenced by the name Egyptology. Reid makes the case that, logically, Egyptology should mean Egypt's entire history; however, to this day, Egyptology is the study of ancient Egypt. This reflects European attitudes that ancient Egypt was superior to modern-day Egyptians who had gone from a glorious past to barbarism. As Reid claims,

---

[4] Johnathan Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta,* 44.
[5] John Ray, *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 34.

"Egypt ceases to be Egypt when it ceases to be ancient."[6] In discussing notable contributions to Egyptology, including the Institut D'Egypte, *Description de l'Egypte*, *Voyage dans la basse et l'haute Egypte*, and *Monuments de L'Egypte et de la Nubie*, Reid contextualizes the European fascination and attempts to understand ancient Egypt through scholarly interpretations of it.[7]

Coller's book touches on Orientalism, but his larger argument is about Arab nationalism. Coller analyzes the lives of Egyptians who settled in France after Napoleon's expedition, arguing that they created a new culture, one that fully identified neither with their Egyptian roots nor their new land in France; instead they cultivated an "Arab France." As Arab men gained entrance into metropolitan society (often as Arabic interpreters, instructors, or intellectuals), they participated in debates about Arab access to modernity. However, when Napoleon was defeated, and a new regime rose, the Egyptians faced racist backlash. Although violence ensued (royalist mobs killing Arab emigrants and pillaging their neighborhoods), Coller argues that these episodes helped create and mobilize the French Arab community. One aspect of Coller's book is his emphasis of the role of French Arabs in the "Oriental Renaissance" of the early nineteenth century and how Egyptians contributed to commodifying ancient Egyptian history first during the Napoleonic expedition, when Egyptian intellectuals partnered with Napoleon's savants in the Institut d'Egypte, and second when they served as confirmation of Napoleon's propaganda that the Egyptian campaign was a cultural success.[8]

The fourth category of scholarship on the subject is individual biographies, particularly of French collector Bernadino Drovetti and British collector Belzoni. Many

---

[6] Donald Malcom Reid, *Whose Pharaohs? Archeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 8.
[7] Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?* 46.
[8] Ian Coller, *Arab France: Islam and the Making of Modern Europe, 1798-1831* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 102.

biographies often compare the two and conclude that Belzoni was more successful. In a biography of Drovetti, Ronald Ridley argues that French collectors in Egypt post-Napoleon have been overshadowed in the wake of British narratives discussing Belzoni. Drovetti was quite successful in Egypt and had much better luck dealing with the Pasha, Muhammad Ali. All the Pasha cared about was money, which Drovetti understood, and Belzoni did not. This explains why Drovetti was able to get his hands on some antiquities before Belzoni.[9] However, Belzoni was ultimately more successful than Drovetti because Belzoni discovered the "impressive" artifacts and temples such as Abu Simbel, the Head of Memnon, and Seti I's tomb and sarcophagus. Europeans liked the "big finds." Ridley also brings up the tension between Belzoni and Drovetti, as the latter often found the artifacts first. However, Belzoni's engineering background enabled him to move them and thus get the credit.

Ivor Noël Hume contextualizes Belzoni's journal *Travels in Egypt and Nubia*. Although Hume marvels at Belzoni's incredible success in opening temples and moving large busts, he argues Belzoni's real success was because his writings had both a scholarly and popular readership.[10] Belzoni's meticulous documentation made his work valuable to scholars, but his colorful and flowery writing fit in with the adventure and discovery genre gaining momentum in Europe. This, combined with the exhibitions he held in London, made him a public figure and celebrity.

The final category of analysis is museum studies. James Delbourgo analyzes the evolution of the British Museum from a cabinet of curiosities to a public museum. He argues that this transition was a result of the Treaty of Alexandria (1801). This transition is significant because, in making the museum public, it invited the nation's citizens to partake in the history displayed. No longer was intellectual curiosity reserved for the intellectuals.

---

[9] Ronald T. Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul in Egypt: The Life and Times of Bernardino Drovetti* (London: The Rubicon Press, 1998), 47.
[10] Ivor Noël Hume, *Belzoni: The Giant Archeologists Love to Hate* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 74.

Additionally, he discusses how the British Museum based the organization of its collections on the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle.[11] In trying to surpass the French, the British used the French model of public museums. Maya Jasanoff also analyzed the British Museum's expansion in 1803. She argues it had been a relatively small museum until the artifacts confiscated from Napoleon were sent to it. The museum was not large enough to house the collection, so it was reconstructed. Thus, from the beginning, the Anglo-French rivalry shaped museum culture and expansion. Rather than merely a cabinet of curiosities, the British Museum began to take shape as it was separated into different galleries and became a public institution.

My thesis draws most closely on Jasanoff's analysis. She argues that the British and French failure to colonize Egypt was channeled into antiquities as they were a substitute for real power but still brought glory to themselves. One example of this was with the Rosetta Stone, which became an object associated with British superiority to the French. Forced to surrender all their antiquities to the British, Napoleon's savants tried to push back by creating a tangible contribution to Egyptology in publishing the *Description de l'Egypte*.[12] Jasanoff argues that the collection of artifacts and publication of material relating to Egypt became a tug of war between the British and French to claim supremacy over ancient Egypt. Although Jasanoff analyzes the British and French struggle to establish intellectual authority over ancient Egypt, she does not examine the range of methods through which the French and British deployed their control over knowledge about Egypt to colonize it – that is, how political control was predicated on various ways of controlling knowledge about the colonial subject. She delves into how the Treaty of Alexandria changed British museum culture. She also analyzes the rivalry over the acquisition of the Rosetta Stone. Yet she does not provide

[11] James Delbourgo, *Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017), 210.
[12] Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 125.

an in-depth examination of the *Description de l'Egypte*, nor does she look at the publication of travelogues. In contrast, this thesis explores the multi-modal ways in which the British and French competed over using knowledge about ancient Egypt to colonize Egypt– not only through museums and collections, but also via travelogues, celebrated collectors, and the translation of the Rosetta Stone.

A bird's-eye view thus shows that historians who write on this topic focus on three issues: (i) Napoleon in Egypt, (ii) collectors trying to acquire antiquities in Egypt, or (iii) translation of the Rosetta Stone. All of these ways of understanding Egypt are underpinned by the structure of Anglo-French rivalry. After Admiral Horatio Nelson forced Napoleon out of Alexandria, the British took the Rosetta Stone alongside other artifacts that would be the beginning of the British Museum's Egyptian wing and set back the Louvre's collecting efforts. In the midst of the British and French competition, each collector fought for the best objects to profit from, and some had their journals published and their artifacts exhibited in Paris and London. As noted above, in trying to translate the Rosetta Stone, Champollion, a Frenchman, was successful, yet the British would claim that Young created the foundation for Champollion. As France and Britain sought to understand and exhibit ancient Egypt, they battled to be the dominant force that understood the civilization.

In my research, I ask how historical knowledge--specifically in relation to information collection and imperialism--was produced and competed over through various modalities, a topic addressed at length by Thomas Richards, Bernard Cohn, and Timothy Mitchell. Richards explains that the narratives produced in the nineteenth century are full of "fantasies about an empire united not by force but by information."[13] He refers to this as an informal empire in which nineteenth-century British writers were obsessed with the "control of

[13] Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*, (London: Verso, 2011), 1.

knowledge," for the "control of empire."[14] Furthermore, he argues that knowledge is linked to national security, as the British perceived knowledge as a means to overpower threats to their empire. Recording and classifying the empire became tantamount to controlling it, and he calls the culmination of this process the imperial archive. Richards often emphasizes that the imperial archive was a "fantasy of knowledge." It was imperial fiction often based on constructed stories more so than realism.[15] Similar to Richards, Cohn argues that power is derived from classifying "space" through "investigative modalities." His investigative modalities encompass the ability to define a body of knowledge, order, classify, and transform it into functional reports such as encyclopedias.[16] Cohn emphasizes the power to define the past as a key instrument of political power. Mitchell adds to this foundation with his "world as exhibition" argument. He argues textual description, cartography, and public exhibitions (by way of museum displays or limited-run exhibitions held in London) exemplified the "world-as-exhibition" in which power appeared as a generalized abstraction as the British and French constructed a framework of meaning.[17] In simpler terms, world exhibition refers not to an exhibition of the world but to the world "conceived and grasped as though it were an exhibition."[18] Mitchell brings together Richard's and Cohn's analyses of how information is gathered, emphasizing how France and Britain attempted to display their scientific prowess to the world as a form of national pride. I apply their methodologies to my project to examine how the French and British used "investigative modalities" to acquire, curate, and disseminate knowledge about ancient Egypt. Although Cohn, Richards, and Mitchell provide a conceptual framework for this project, their analyses do not answer the question, why Egypt?

---

[14] Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*, 5.
[15] Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*, 8.
[16] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge the British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 10.
[17] Timothy Franck Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), xvi.
[18] Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 13.

In my research, I demonstrate that Europeans had a different appreciation for ancient Egypt compared to modern Egypt, as they sought to take ownership over its ancient past by removing modern Egyptians from their history, claiming they did not preserve it. Europeans did not overlook modern Egypt; they had a very different approach to interpreting it. Modern Egypt was something that was clearly observable and, as shown by Edward Said, it was Orientalized for European consumption. This is not to say ancient Egypt was not a European construct, but ancient Egypt carried a sense of European ownership as they "rediscovered" its history and artifacts. This is most clearly articulated by Donald Malcolm Reid, who argues that this ownership is visible in the inscription on the façade of Cairo's Egyptian Museum (1902), which honored the "Heroes of Egyptology" since Napoleon. The inscription includes six French Egyptologists, five Britons, and a few others but does not include a single Egyptian. Moreover, the façade's inscription is in Latin, not Egyptian. Reid claims this was another way of telling Egyptians that "Egyptology is a science which has rediscovered the greatness of ancient Egypt, a forerunner of Western civilization. Modern Egyptians are unworthy heirs of ancient ones and incapable of either national greatness or serious Egyptology."[19] Although this example originates from the twentieth century, it shows that throughout the nineteenth century Egyptians were considered to have "lost" their past. Furthermore, the representations of Egyptians in the textual descriptions explain how modern Egyptians are removed from their history as they are not a part of the process to "rediscover" it. One of the clearest accounts of this is given by Belzoni: "When the Arabs found that they received money for the removal of a stone, they entertained the opinion, that it was filled with gold in the inside, and that a thing of such value should not be permitted to be taken away."[20] In this quote Belzoni is arguing that the Egyptians do not recognize the worth of their history.

[19] Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?* 8.
[20] Giovanni Battista Belzoni, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries Within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia*. (London: John Murray, 1820), 37.

They did not value the "stone" (a reference to a bust he was trying to move) and assumed there must be gold hidden inside to make it valuable. Belzoni thinks that artifacts such as these will be put to better use in Britain where Europeans will appreciate the busts. The French also actively portray the Egyptians as lazy. In the *Description de L'Egypte,* there are several images of Egyptians and Frenchmen documenting Egypt, with the Egyptians lazing around in the background while the French are actively cataloguing artifacts or measuring monuments. Both the verbal and visual descriptions serve to categorize the Egyptians as lazy, unworthy inheritors of one of the most important civilizations. Edward Said reflects on this idea of the Orient as an empowering concept to Western nations that had modernized, as the idea of the Orient allowed the West to define itself as the opposite, the Occident, or the civilized. Said discusses how studying Oriental nations and claiming knowledge over them was a means for the West to dominate, restructure, and have authority over the Orient--in Napoleon's case, intellectual authority over Egypt.[21] It also provided Europeans the means to distance the modern Egyptians from their ancient past, painting them as "unworthy inheritors."

This still does not clarify why "owning" or writing ancient Egyptian history added to the national prestige to Britain and France. This answer can be found in the preface of the *Description de l'Egypte:*

> Placed between Africa and Asia, and communicating easily with Europe, Egypt occupies the center of the ancient continent. This country presents only great memories; it is the homeland of the arts and conserves innumerable monuments; its principal temples and the palaces inhabited by its kings still exist, even though its least ancient edifices had already been built by the time of the Trojan War. Homer, Lycurgus, Solon, Pythagoras, and Plato all went to Egypt to study the sciences, religion, and the laws. Alexander founded an opulent city there, which for a long time enjoyed commercial supremacy and which witnessed Pompey, Caesar, Mark Antony, and Augustus deciding between them the fate of Rome and that of the entire world. It is therefore proper for this country to attract the attention of illustrious princes who rule the destiny of nations. No considerable power was ever amassed by any nation,

[21] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House Inc, 1979), 3.

> whether in the West or in Asia, that did not also turn that nation toward Egypt, which was regarded in some measure as its natural lot.[22]

This statement, written by Joseph Fourier, who accompanied Bonaparte in Egypt, demonstrates the monumental and historical significance of ancient Egypt. The language used harks back to the great scholars and conquerors, implying that the French are literally following in the footsteps of Homer, Plato, Caesar, and Augustus. Above all, the last sentence demonstrates that it is natural for a "considerable power" to turn towards Egypt. There is the implication that ancient Egypt was sought after by the ancient powers and is now being uncovered by a new power, France. The British would not allow the French alone to lay claim to ancient Egypt and the prestige that it offered. Both would actively fight to stake their claim and secure the glory in associating themselves with the ancient world.

For this project, the modalities I will focus on (which are laid out in Cohn's book) are historiographic, observational/travel (travelogues), museological (collection and exhibition), survey (maps/cartography), and language. Cohn argues that the historiographic modality is the West's ideological construction of the nature of civilization. For my project, this is France and Britain writing Egypt's ancient history both as a way to organize assumptions about "how the real social and natural worlds are constituted" and legitimize their presence in Egypt.

The observational modality, which usually constituted travel accounts, set a standard for "aesthetic principles." They defined what is sublime, picturesque, romantic, and realistic. Thus, Europeans examined Egypt through the lens of European interpretation. This allowed the British and French to control how Egypt, and more specifically, ancient Egypt was perceived.

---

[22] *Description de L'Egypte, ou recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Egypte pendant l'expedition de l'armée française,* 1st ed,. 22 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1809-1828), 1.

The museological modality is the transmission of knowledge of the antiquities of a civilization (in my project, Egypt) and the power to classify a nation. In their exhibitions, the British and French assigned value and meaning to the objects they exhibited. They classified what was valuable and would be preserved as "monuments of the past," which needed to be kept in a museum, and what was unworthy of exhibition and could be taken from Egypt as mementoes and souvenirs.[23]

The survey modality, which usually encompasses mapping as a means to examine a location for the purpose of controlling it, is not a concept fully developed in Cohn's book. He does not analyze the "politics of mapping." Jeremy Black argues that map-makers make the decision of what to show and what not to show in a map (similar to how museums pick what to exhibit and what not to). He argues that the choice of what to show on a map is "designed to show certain points and relationships, and, in doing so, creates space and spaces in the perception of the map-user and thus illustrates themes of power."[24] John Brian Harley also argues that maps are tools of power as they represent a belief in progress. Maps are seen as a scientific advancement that can be used to better understand the location. Maps are the first step in creating "more precise representations of reality."[25] Thus, mapping is another tool that establishes and assigns value to Egypt.

The final modality I analyze is language. Cohn argues that language is the first step in enabling a society to classify and categorize a colony so that it can be controlled. However, Egypt is a peculiar case. While there were British and French who could speak with modern day Egyptians, understanding ancient Egypt was something else entirely. Ancient Egyptian history had not been preserved by the Egyptians, and the text that could explain the past was in an unfamiliar language. It was not until the Rosetta Stone was translated that this modality

[23] Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 77.
[24] Jeremy Black, *Maps and Politics*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 4.
[25] John Brian Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization* 26 (1989): 9.

would shift European understanding and classification of ancient Egypt. By using Cohn's model of modalities, I have taken his case study of India and applied it to Egypt to compare how the French and British used knowledge as a form of power.

My research expands on previous historiography by analyzing how the Anglo-French rivalry contributed to the development of Egyptology and comparing the different modalities to examine how the British and French used knowledge (differently) to colonize Egypt. This research is significant as it demonstrates the European imperialist mindset of "owning" or feeling entitled to ancient Egyptian history and how the two nations tried to be the dominant authority on the topic. The French and British had not only rediscovered Egypt but needed to surpass the other in their understanding of it. Another aspect of this research that is interesting is seeing what the French and British considered as a valuable contribution to Egyptology. In most cases, it was academia for the French, and for the British, it was engaging the public.

Chapter Outline

My thesis includes four chapters. The first chapter provides background information and relevant historiography. The second and third chapters compare the French and British modalities of colonizing knowledge from 1809-1822. Chapter three ends at the year 1822, because this is the year the Rosetta Stone was translated. As briefly introduced earlier, understanding the language of ancient Egypt shifted the ways the British and French worked to establish dominance over ancient Egypt. Chapter four focuses on the modalities from 1822-1830.

Chapter 1 provides background information about the Napoleonic Expedition in Egypt up to the publication of the *Description de l'Egypte*, covering the years 1798 to 1809. In this chapter, I address Napoleon's reason for being in Egypt (to cut off the British access to India) and analyzes why he brought scientists to study, map, and dissect Egypt's ancient and

modern history. During Napoleon's campaign, on July 19, 1799, the Rosetta Stone was discovered at Rosetta. However, the French excitement over the Rosetta Stone was cut short when the French military was defeated, and the terms of the French expulsion from Egypt were drawn up under the Treaty of Alexandria, which forced the French to hand over all the artifacts they had compiled to the British, including the Rosetta Stone.[26] General Menou attempted to hide the Rosetta Stone to smuggle it back to France. He was unsuccessful and had to give the Stone and fifty tons of artifacts to the British. The aftermath of the Napoleonic expedition yielded two important developments for the academic field of Egyptology: the Capitulation of Alexandria and the publication of the *Description de l'Egypte*. Inspired by the ideals of scientific classification from the Age of Enlightenment and the burgeoning growth of history as a "scientific" discipline, Napoleon's savants compiled all their sketches and knowledge into the *Description de l'Egypte* (1809). It was the first comprehensive study of ancient Egypt with accurate maps, clear drawings, and imprints of architecture and artifacts. The *Description* rebranded Napoleon's military failure as a cultural success, as he was heralded as the hero who rediscovered ancient Egypt.[27] The French failure in Egypt also turned British attention to ancient Egypt, as the artifacts they acquired under the Treaty of Alexandria reshaped the British Museum as a public museum. This allowed the public to partake in the British success over the French and encouraged the study of Egyptology, as it became a popular topic. My argument for chapter one is in line with Burleigh, Downs, Ray, and Jasanoff, who argue that the publication of the *Description* and the artifacts from the Treaty of Alexandria turned European attention to ancient Egypt as a field of study. However, I would also argue that the circumstances of the publication (to rebrand the military failure as a cultural success) and the Capitulation of Alexandria (which further humiliated the French)

[26] Ray, *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt*, 35.
[27] Nina Burleigh, *Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007),

would encourage both the French and British to compete to establish dominance over ancient Egypt.

The final topic explored in chapter one is how Egyptians themselves contributed to the savants' knowledge. Coller analyzed Arab intellectuals such as Rufa'il Zakhur, who, during the French occupation, worked at first as a personal interpreter for Napoleon and was later appointed as a member of the Institut d'Egypte.[28] Zakhur wrote that he considered his role in the Institut as contributing to an Egyptian national project. Zakhur took pride in his work as he thought it benefited Egypt as well as France. In 1803, he visited Paris with the expectation that he would be able to engage with European intellectuals about cultural projects, but was sorely disappointed when he realized Arab intellectuals were not accorded the same prestige as the savants Napoleon had brought.

In chapters 2 and 3, I compare and contrast the modalities of colonial knowledge employed by the French and British *prior to* the translation of the Rosetta Stone, spanning the years 1809 to 1822. Although both France and Britain were attempting to be the leading intellectual authority on ancient Egypt, both agreed that the conquest of knowledge was a critical part of conquering the East. Britain focused on displaying artifacts in museums and public exhibitions (outside of museums), publishing travelogues, and celebrating collectors as celebrities. France used cartography and comprehensive books. Both used academic journals. The British approach to appropriating ancient Egypt's history was faced towards the pubic, while the French was initially more scholarly.

In chapter 4, I analyze the modalities of colonial knowledge employed by the French and British after the translation of the Rosetta Stone, spanning the years 1822 to 1830. After the translation of the Rosetta Stone, the British turned their attention to the intellectuals, and fought for Thomas Young's recognition in translating the Rosetta Stone, whereas the French

[28] Coller, *Arab France*, 112.

began collecting (far more than they had pre-translation) and building up the Louvre's Egyptian wing.

Elizabeth Buhe argues that Champollion was a driving force in the Louvre's efforts to collect. She claims that, although the Louvre purchased the collections of Edmé-Antoine Durand in 1824, Salt in 1826, and Bernardino Drovetti in 1827, it had earlier rejected several Egyptian collections, in 1821. She argues this rejection was due to a common perception that ancient Egyptian history was new and not yet well established. The Louvre still preferred to collect Greek and Roman antiquities.[29] However, Champollion was determined to collect Egyptian artifacts for the Louvre and argued for the notability of Egyptian art. In 1824 he published *Précis du système hiéroglyphique des anciens égyptien,* which linked his translation of hieroglyphs to the works of art onto which they were inscribed. Buhe speculates that Champollion was essential in changing French reluctance to collect. While her article is valuable, it is based on Champollion's methodology of connecting the translation to the artifacts to give it meaning rather than how Egypt was exhibited and how this compares to Britain. In my research I compare the British Museum exhibition strategy, which displayed only monumental artifacts constructing the "grand Egypt" narrative, to Champollion's curation style of exhibiting a wide array of artifacts and showing both the mundane and grand Egypt. In exhibiting mundane Egypt, Champollion also fought for Egypt to be recognized independently of its association with Greece and Rome. The British constantly chose to exhibit pharaonic Egypt and highlight artifacts connected to Greece, such as the supposed Sarcophagus of Alexander I. The British Museum focused their budget on purchasing Greco-Roman antiquities, such as the Elgin Marbles, which opened the museum up to criticism and

[29] Elizabeth Buhe, "Sculpted Glyphs: Egypt and the Musée Charles X," *Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide* 13, no. 1 (2014), 1.

nearly halted their collection of Egyptian artifacts. As the Louvre began collection under Champollion's watch, they far surpassed the British Museum.

In this chapter, I argue that translating the Rosetta Stone pushed the British to focus their energies on claiming credit for the role Young played in the translation. The translation also gave the French the push to exhibit. The translation made Champollion into a public figure, not just a scholar. His fame and determination to show ancient Egyptian art on par with Greek and Roman art helped him push for the Louvre to collect and exhibit and, ultimately, surpass the British.

CHAPTER 1: UNEARTHING THE LAND OF THE PHARAOHS

Figure 1: The British Army in Egypt. "To his Royal highness the Prince of Wales. This engraving representing a fragment of Egyptian architecture bearing medallions with portraits of the generals commanding the British army in Egypt, and otherwise illustrative of the ever memorable conquest of that country from the arms of France A.D. 1801." Engraved by Anthony Cerdon, Drawn by F.J. Loutherbourg Esq. R.A. [30]

[30] Engraved by Anthony Cerdon, Drawn by F.J. Loutherbourg Esq. R.A. *The British Army in Egypt*, 1801, Library of Congress.

In 1801 the British successfully foiled the French plot to capture Egypt to cut off British access to India. The French returned home humiliated, forced to deal with the aftermath of a military and political blunder. Proud of their victory, the British commissioned an art piece to present to King George III, calling their military accomplishment the "ever memorable conquest" of Egypt from France. The image, which shows the British soldiers hanging the British generals' portraits on an Egyptian monument, is telling. The image demonstrates that the British associated the concept of Egypt with its ancient past. They are laying claim to modern Egypt but using an ancient monument to claim victory. Further proof of their reliance on the ancient civilization is found in the left side of the image. Pictured in the distance is the pillar of Pompey, a well-known ancient monument in Alexandria. Ancient Egypt is exhibited instead of modern-day Cairo or Islamic monuments. However, despite the focus on ancient Egypt, a closer look at the hieroglyphs demonstrates just how little is known about the civilization. Several symbols are "Europeanized." For example, the eye. While the eye is a well-known Egyptian hieroglyph, the British artists added an eyebrow above it, something not seen in the original symbol. Another example of this is the hand in the bottom left side of figure 2. Here again, the hand is a famous Egyptian hieroglyph, but the original does not have the index finger longer in length as though it is pointing to something. Instead, all fingers except the thumb are close in length. Additionally, the hieroglyphs lack the precision seen in the original Egyptian script. Precision was key to decipherment, and this image shows several hieroglyphs with a more fluid structure.


Figure 2 (On the left): Closeup of the British Army in Egypt. Notice the peculiar hieroglyphs.[31]
Figure 3 (On the Right): Closeup of the hieroglyphs on the Flamino obelisk in Rome. This image demonstrates the precision of hieroglyphs and also shows what the eye hieroglyph is meant to look like.[32]

This less than perfect rendition of hieroglyphs clearly demonstrates how little was actually known about the script and the civilization. However, this was about to change.

Napoleon's attempted conquest opened the door for Europeans to study and document ancient Egypt, later resulting in the field of Egyptology. Napoleon's expedition made the study of ancient Egypt possible for two reasons. First, he made Egypt safely traversable, allowing for Europeans to visit and study Egypt. Prior to the Egyptian campaign, the Mamelukes fought for control against the Ottomans, often resulting in dangerous skirmishes. Napoleon successfully defeated the Mamelukes, making it safer to travel to Egypt than it had been in the last 200 years. Secondly, when Napoleon sailed to Egypt, he brought not only soldiers, but also scientists to document the land so that it might be controlled. During this documentation, the scientists, better known as the savants, began to study ancient Egypt and

[31] Engraved by Anthony Cerdon, Drawn by F.J. Loutherbourg Esq. R.A. *The British Army in Egypt*, 1801, Library of Congress.
[32] *Flamino obelisk*, n.d., Rome, Italy.

collected several artifacts, resulting in the first formal study of the ancient civilization.[33] However, ancient Egypt was not the focal point of the expedition. Instead, the French sought to control Egypt to wound the British Empire. Unable to perform a direct attack on Britain, the French settled for claiming Egypt to cut off British access to India. In the aftermath of the failed expedition, the French like the British would only focus on ancient Egypt, specifically, collecting and exhibiting it for Europeans. Two actions turned British and French attention to ancient Egypt. The first, the Capitulation of Alexandria, which forced the French to surrender the antiquities they had collected during their time in Egypt. These artifacts served as imperial trophies for the British and, as will be explored in chapter 3, encouraged them to exhibit the objects for the public. Second, to rebrand their disastrous military and political failure, the French published the *Description de L'Egypte* to portray their time in Egypt as a cultural success, a topic explored in chapter 2.

For this chapter it is necessary to investigate the original European interest in Egypt and explain how ancient Egypt piqued the interest of the British and French, who would compete to establish dominance over it. In undertaking this investigation, it is clear that British-French rivalry was at the core of this expedition. The rivalry informed why the mission went forward in the first place, and it colored how the British and French dealt with the Capitulation of Alexandria.

The Road to Egypt

[33] Savant was a term that usually referred to a distinguished scientist, but in Napoleon's case, he promised to turn new scholars into savants if they were willing to undertake an exploration and documentation of a "secret destination." Several astronomers, mathematicians, naturalists, physicists, doctors, chemists, engineers, botanists, and artists signed on for this "voyage into the unknown." Although they were independent scientists, they were hired by the French to document the expedition.
Nina Burleigh, *Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 5.
Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge the British in India*, 10.

British-French rivalry long served as a staple of British nationalism. This is a topic addressed at length by Linda Colley who argues that the British defined their sense of self by organizing their ideas of the "other," France. Specifically, she demonstrates this through opposing ideals and war. The British and French were consistently drawn into religious wars – The Nine Years War (1689-97), War of Spanish Succession (1702-13), and the War of Austrian Succession (1739-48).[34] These wars challenged the religious foundations of Britain. The British viewed themselves as Protestants fighting for survival against Catholic France. In addition to religious conflicts, France threatened Britain's political interests. In allying with the Americans, the French assisted with stripping Britain of its American colonies. The rivalry amongst the two-furtherer continued in the Napoleonic Wars which directly threatened British security as the British feared the possibility of an invasion. The British were understandably concerned about the French. France had a larger population, larger land mass, a stronger army, and was Catholic. Colley analyzes that fear of French was a powerful motivator in British history as people from Wales, Scotland, and England gathered to confront a common enemy, France. What is most important to take away from Colley's analysis is her argument that the British defined themselves not of any sense of being British, but in reaction to the "other." British identity was crafted as a result of contact and conflict with France. The British imagined the French as their "vile opposites."[35]

Unlike the British who derived their sense of nationalism from anti-French sentiment, the French had a self-conscious French identity. After the French Revolution the French saw themselves as having overthrown the oppressive Old Regime stuck in the past with ideas of hierarchy and privilege. Now, the French were in a new era of equality, liberty, and fraternity. This new French identity was actively promoted through festivals, monuments, liberty trees,

[34] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 6.
[35] Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, 376.

and clothing. All of these symbols represented a new French nation and showed breaking with the past as the French distanced themselves from everything of the Old Regime going so far as to rename streets. Llyod Kramer analyzes that the Revolutionary Wars further cemented French identity as breaking with the old oppressive regime.[36] Alexander Mikaberidze argues that originally the Revolutionary Wars were a matter of defending revolutionary gains. However, it evolved and French armies spread revolutionary ideals to neighboring states. It further developed under Napoleon as he reverted to traditional military territorial expansion.[37] Although the French possessed a self-conscious French identity, they remained stuck in the British-French rivalry, which provided the motivation to go to Egypt.

In the late 1700s, political power in Egypt had become unstable. The Ottomans ruled over Egypt since 1517, but in the eighteenth century the Ottomans' continuous rule was made difficult by the constant change in pashas.[38] This was made all the more complicated by the Mameluke beys who carried out assassinations and usurpation plots.[39] This came to a head in 1769, when Ali Bey the Sheikh al-Balad declared Egypt an independent state and named himself Sultan.[40] This forced the Ottomans to reconquer Egypt in 1772. Although Ali was

---

[36] Lloyd S. Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America Politics, Cultures, and Identities Since 1775, (*Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 43.
Kramer looks at the declaration of war on Prussia and Austria in 1792 and shows how the National Assembly declares the intent behind the conflicts. In this declaration France is described as "free…. conscious of its liberty." Kramer argues that France views itself as "awake," free from the tyranny of the old regime. Now, the French intend to defend this freedom.

[37] Alexander Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), xi.

[38] The pasha was a Turkish officer of high rank who the Ottomans put in charge of a territory, in this case, Egypt.
Juan Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 34.

[39] Mamluke literally translates to "owned." In Egypt this represented "an aristocratic class recruited by the purchase and training of slaves rather than by birth." The Mamelukes were a warrior caste who served as nominal vassals of the Ottoman Empire since 1517. They took advantage of the Ottoman decline in the 1700s to work towards autonomy under the Georgian Mamlukes.
Juan Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 34
Alexander Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 74.
Ian Coller, *Arab France: Islam and the Making of Modern Europe, 1798-1831* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 28.

[40] Sheikh al-Balad meant "chief of the city." While there were several chiefs (beys), the chief of the city was recognized by the other beys as the head chief.

defeated, the Mamelukes remained, and in 1791 Ibrahim Bey and Hurad Bey seized power in Egypt.[41] Upon their seizure of power, the Mamelukes targeted French merchants in Egypt to punish the French, who at the time enjoyed a good relationship with the Ottomans. Charles Magallon, the French consul (diplomat) in Egypt, requested that the French Foreign Ministry intervene with a military occupation to establish armed trading posts in Alexandria and Cairo to protect the French merchants. This was the excuse needed to intervene in Egypt, but it was not the primary objective for going. The primary objective was to harm Britain. The French wanted to use Egypt as a means to block the British access to India, as they were unable to invade Britain directly.

At the time, Napoleon was quickly rising in his military accomplishments in the War of the First Coalition. He had successfully invaded Italy, defeated the Sardinian and Austrian forces, and after the settlement with the Austrians in 1797, the First Coalition crumbled. Napoleon seemed invincible. The only challenger left standing was Britain, but the French could not face the British as they did the rest of Europe. With the Royal Navy a serious threat, the French knew they could not engage the British at sea.[42] In lieu of a direct invasion of Britain, the French Foreign Minister Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord recommended to the Directory an expedition to Egypt. Johnathan Downs argues that Talleyrand wanted to expand into the Levant to bolster French trade and saw the late 1700s as the perfect time to go after Egypt, as the Ottoman Empire seemed on the verge of collapse. Thus, he valued Egypt for its trade possibilities, and he wanted France to take "the jewel in the sultan's silken crown."[43] Talleyrand's objectives coupled with Magallon's urgent

[41] Ibrahim Bey and Hurad Bey chose to seize power after the death of Ismael Bey, a Sheikh al-Balad who helped govern Egypt on behalf of the Ottomans who enjoyed a good relationship with the French but died suddenly from an epidemic in 1791.
Johnathan Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt* (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2020), 23.
[42] Johnathan Downs explains that in lieu of a direct invasion of Britain the French considered supporting an uprising in Ireland to provoke a revolution in England.
Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 21.
[43] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 34.

warnings that Egypt was descending into anarchy and that Mamelukes were attacking French merchants provided the original rationale to go. However, when Talleyrand appealed to the Directory, he also included that taking Egypt was a wise decision because it would cut off British access to India. Additionally, he linked control of Egypt to ancient Rome. "Egypt was once a province of the Roman republic; it must now become that of the French Republic. The Roman conquest was the era of decadence for that great country; the French conquest will be the era of its prosperity."[44] The connection with Rome is persuasive as the Classics were considered the height of civilization, and Talleyrand was calling for France to follow in their footsteps. The Directory was persuaded, and the French considered themselves the would-be saviors of Egypt, rescuing them from Mameluke barbarity while also besting their longtime rival.

Bonaparte envisioned the Egyptian expedition as his chance to achieve "glory everlasting."[45] He felt that he was following in the footsteps of Alexander the Great. He had already achieved great success. The Rhineland and Low Countries had been annexed, and he conquered and defeated the Italians and Habsburgs. However, this was not enough for him, and in 1797 he also took the Ionian Greek Islands of Corfu, Zante, and Cephalonia.[46] Still, he was not satisfied. Next he looked to Egypt and pictured himself as embarking on a "heroic rescue mission" to help the merchants and utterly destroy Britain's source of commercial power.

The Directory required the Egyptian expedition to accomplish three directives: to seize and occupy Malta and Egypt, eject the British from their positions in the East, and maintain good relations with the Ottoman Empire.[47] The last was an impossible task. The

[44] Alexander Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 74.
[45] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 12.
[46] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 37.
[47] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 40.

Ottomans were already upset that Napoleon took the Ionian Islands, and they did not take kindly to the French trying to take Egypt. The official order was released April 12, 1798, and Napoleon was appointed commander in chief of the Armée d'Orient.[48] Accompanying the soldiers was the Commission of Sciences and Arts comprised of 151 scientists, engineers, surveyors, artists, and scholars. A scientific commission tasked with accompanying military conquest was nothing new. Similar commissions had already been launched when the Low Countries and the Rhineland were conquered. Specifically, painters and art scholars were tasked with cataloguing and collecting artworks for France's growing museums. Similarly, in Italy, the Governmental Commission for the Research of Scientific and Artistic Objects in Conquered Countries collected Italian sculpture and artwork. Scientists on military campaigns went back even farther, all the way back to Alexander the Great, who traveled with philosophers when he invaded Persia.[49] Having scientists accompany the expedition not only fulfilled the Enlightenment ideals of categorizing and classifying, but they were a key method of rulership. For example, the scientists were a great help in administration, as they mapped the land. For Egypt, another reason to bring along scientists was to legitimize the *mission civilisatrice*. The French claimed to bring French culture and democracy to a land they considered overrun by tyrants. This offered them moral cover for the invasion.[50]

Recruitment for scientists for the Egyptian expedition began in March 1798 with calls put out to major institutions in Paris: the École Polytechnique, the École Normale, the École des Mines, the École des Ponts et Chaussées, the Conservatoire Nationale des Arts et Métiers, the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, and the Observatoire. Very little information was given to the potential recruits. They did not even know the location of the expedition.[51] Down's argues

[48] Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars*, 74.
[49] Nina Burleigh, *Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 23.
[50] Burleigh, *Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt*, 4.
[51] Established scholars were told that their academic post would remain available upon their return from the expedition.

this secrecy incentivized the recruits. The scholars who went to Egypt were "promising and prominent men in the French sciences."[52] They were a versatile group, with specialties ranging from painting to math and science. Of the 151 men, only five of them were well established scholars: Gaspard Monge, Claude Louis Berthollet, Jean-Baptiste Joseph Fourier, Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, and Déodat de Dolmieu.[53] The majority were either young teachers and researchers who dreamed of using the expedition to advance their careers or students of the scholars. For example, Fourier, a famous mathematician at École Polytechnique, drafted five colleagues and about forty students and graduates for the mission.[54]

The expeditionary force first set their sights on Malta. Malta was a strategically located island and control of it was essential for the French to have a presence in the Mediterranean.[55] Controlling Malta meant the Egyptian force could be reinforced and supported, as troops could remain there as a "halfway house."[56] After securing Malta the expedition sailed for Alexandria, where they arrived July 1. Napoleon originally secured quick victories. The French easily pushed back the Mameluke forces who still relied on medieval warfare methods, allowing Napoleon to quickly capture Alexandria. By July 21 Napoleon defeated the Mamelukes under Murad Bey at the Battle of the Pyramids. Within the span of three weeks, Napoleon successfully destroyed the enemy, occupied the key ports and seized Alexandria.[57] However, on August 1 British commander Horatio Nelson located the French fleet anchored in the shallows of Aboukir Bay. In the Battle of the Nile, Nelson

---

[52] Burleigh, *Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt,* 25.
[53] Charles Coulston Gillispie and Michel Dewachter. *Monuments of Egypt: The Napoleonic Edition: the Complete Archaeological Plates from La "Description De L'Egypt,"* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 5.
[54] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 70.
[55] Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars*, 75.
[56] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 84.
While this was a necessary move, it had dangerous political consequences. Mentally unstable Tsar Paul I changed allegiance and allied with Britain and the Ottomans. This isolated the French in the Levant.
[57] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 93.

obliterated the French fleet, leaving them stranded and isolated in Egypt. Within the course of one battle, the British reasserted their control of the Mediterranean.[58]

Stranded in Egypt, Napoleon began reorganizing Egyptian society. He introduced French administrative and judicial systems, abolished the remnants of the feudal system, and established the Institute of Egypt in Cairo August 22, 1798.[59] The Institute served as propaganda, encouraging the adoption of European culture in "the East," but it also involved the research and study of Egyptian culture.[60] It was a project meant to further understand the history of the East. The Institute was modeled after the Institut de France founded two years prior by the Directory. The Institut de France replaced the French Academy (language and literature), the Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture (fine arts), Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (inscriptions and letters), and the Académie Royale d'Architecture (architecture). Similar to the Institut de France, the Institut d'Egypte included four main branches, but their focus was on mathematics, physical sciences, political economy, and arts and letters.[61] The organization was directed by a committee that included Napoleon, two of his generals, Andréossy and Caffarelli, and senior members of the Scientific and Artistic Commission (Monge, Berthollet, Saint-Hilaire Louis Costaz, and the army chief medical officer, General Desgenettes). Each of the departments were allotted twelve seats, totaling forty-eight men. At the first meeting Monge was elected president, Napoleon vice-president and Fourier secretary. The Institut d'Egypte members conducted studies in agricultural improvements and irrigation and evaluated the potential of reopening the ancient Suez Canal. They also crafted geographical and geological surveys. As best said by Brian Fagan, the Institut's goals were to "study all of Egypt, spread enlightened ideas and

[58] Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars*, 76.
[59] To garner the Egyptian's support Napoleon proclaimed his army was willing to convert Islam but only one Frenchman did, General Menou.
[60] Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars*, 76.
[61] Toby Wilkinson, *A World Beneath the Sands: The Golden Age of Egyptology*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2020), 25-26.

habits, and furnish information to the occupying authority."[62] Originally, the Institut d'Egypte was focused on modernizing Egypt and evaluating it as a potential colony; however, it would gradually turn its attention towards ancient Egypt after the discovery of the Rosetta Stone.

Prior to the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, the savants already began documenting ancient Egypt. As Napoleon continued his military campaign, the savants were largely left to their own devices. Some of them had duties to fulfill for the Institut d'Egypte but overall they embarked on separate excursions, leaving for different regions of Egypt. One group of savants accompanied General Desaix to explore Upper Egypt, where they documented, drew, and surveyed the giant Memnonium of Thebes and the ruins of Karnak and Luxor. This trip made the savants some of the first Europeans to explore Upper Egypt. Specific accomplishments of the savants were Charles Louis Balzac's drawings of Philae and the temple of Karnak, Prosper Jollois and Édouard de Villiers du Terrage's highly accurate drawings and descriptions of the Dendera zodiac, and the discovery of the tomb of Amenhotep III in the Valley of the Kings. Additionally, Edme François Jomard made detailed and accurate records of the temple of Karnak and the Valley of the Kings, and Dominique Vivant Denon recorded hieroglyphic inscriptions meticulously for his colleagues at the Institut d'Egypte. Another landmark accomplishment was their measurement of the Pyramids and the head of the Great Sphinx. Despite the detailed drawings, records, and measurements, the savants had no idea how to interpret the data. For example, the Sphinx. Locals called the object the "Father of all Terrors," and actively avoided it.[63] The Egyptians did not know its history but considered it to be an object of superstitious paranoia. Similarly, the Europeans could not understand the Sphinx beyond its mathematical values and in lieu of

[62] Brian M. Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists and Archeologists in Egypt* (Westview Press, 2004), 49.
[63] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 54.

understanding, emphasized rigorous classification and description – a trend that would continue until the decipherment of hieroglyphics.

Although ancient Egypt was not originally at the forefront of the expedition, it did intrigue scholars and it would become increasingly important with the discovery of the Rosetta Stone. During Napoleon's expedition, the savants not only made notes, drew pictures and maps, and took measurements of various ancient structures but also collected artifacts. Although they engaged in collecting, this was not their primary objective. In total, they collected fifteen "pristine" artifacts - unfortunately, other crates of their collections were lost as the savants fled from the British to Alexandria.

Stranded in Egypt, Napoleon was not aware of the perilous political situation he was in.[64] The Ottomans, enraged by the French actions, allied with Britain, and the Ottoman sultan proclaimed a jihad against France. Up until this point Napoleon had tried to curry favor with the locals. He dressed in Egyptian clothing (though this was short lived), claimed he and his army were willing to convert to Islam, and made it seem as though he enjoyed a good relationship with the Ottomans, saying they were united in their efforts to dispel the Mamelukes. The declaration of holy war made it clear that Napoleon's assertions were lies.[65] Downs explains that Foreign Minister Talleyrand had not reached out to the Ottomans to soothe diplomatic relations in the midst of the expedition. Even more damaging was that neither Talleyrand or the Directory informed Napoleon of the political situation.[66] The situation became clear when Turkish warships joined the British blockade off Alexandria. Napoleon now knew that he was threatened by the British and the Ottomans. He planned a Syrian campaign to take Gaza, Jaffa and Acre, target the Royal Navy and deprive them of

---

[64] Downs has argued that it was possible to get a message to Napoleon to explain what was happening with the Ottoman Empire, he does not understand why no message was sent.
Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 59.
[65] Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 142.
[66] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 63.

their Levantine bases, and force the Ottoman Empire to negotiate. Napoleon made it to Acre, but a small British squadron destroyed his artillery, forcing him to pull back on May 21, 1799.[67] Although he was overall unsuccessful, he had wounded the Ottoman Empire enough to prevent an Ottoman overland attack from the Sinai desert. Regardless, he knew that Egypt was no longer in his grasp, as the Ottomans could send more troops by sea, thanks to their British allies who controlled the Mediterranean. Counting his losses and seeing an opportunity to seize power in France, Napoleon abandoned his army. This did not mean the French fight was over. The French, now led by General Jean-Baptiste Kléber anticipated an Ottoman attack and speculated it would come from a target along the Nile Delta, specifically, Damietta, Alexandria, or Rosetta. In working to reinforce Fort St. Julien at Rosetta, the intellectual focus on Egypt would shift to ancient Egypt because of a major discovery, the Rosetta Stone.

The Rosetta Stone was a topic widely discussed, beginning with a notice in the Cairo Newspaper *Le Courier de l'Egyte* on August 19, 1799, a month after its discovery.[68] In July during the process of fortifying Fort St. Julien at Rosetta, officer Pierre François Xavier Bouchard reported to General Abdallah-Jacques Menou the discovery of a large black slab inscribed with three scripts. Menou asked to see the stone and quickly realized a portion of the stone was in Greek script. When Menou ordered the savants to translate the Greek, they determined that the final sentence proclaimed, ". . . shall be engraved on a solid stone in sacred, in vernacular, and in Greek characters . . ."[69] This sentence confirmed that the three different texts – hieroglyphs, ancient Egyptian, and Greek – all said the same thing, meaning it could be the key to a translation. The French immediately made prints of the stone and sent them to linguists in France and to the Institut d'Egypte to begin the process of translation. In

[67] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 65.
[68] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 83.
[69] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 74.

addition to sending prints, the savants compiled detailed descriptions of all the hieroglyphs they could find in hopes that they could help decipher the Rosetta Stone. In their search, they encountered another stone, but it was bilingual, not trilingual. It only bore Greek and demotic Egyptian inscriptions - it was, however, thought to have originally been a trilingual tablet. The inscription proved to be of no help to the translation. However, in 1800 another trilingual tablet was discovered by civil engineer Philippe Caristie. The tablet was used as the top step to a local mosque in Nasriyah.[70] It was larger than the Rosetta Stone but overall illegible. Menou gave the savants permission to remove the tablet from the mosque. Yet this too was ineffective at assisting with the translation. Their lack of luck in the quality of the stones they found made the Rosetta Stone all the more valuable. As the savants tried desperately to translate the Rosetta Stone and find more trilingual tablets, the British closed in on the French army in Egypt.

On March 7, 1801, the Institut d'Egypte met for the last time. Realizing that the British were closing in, the French agreed to evacuate the accumulated antiquities, notes, drawings, and all other material compiled during the course of the expedition to Alexandria – their only stronghold able to withstand a siege. The savants fled to Alexandria as swiftly as they could, but in their haste, one of their crates filled with mineralogy samples and priceless antiquities was lost. Ultimately, the British defeated the French, and during negotiations, Menou requested that the savants be allowed to keep all the papers, plans, notes, and monuments of art and antiquity collected by them. He was denied.

Article 16 of the Capitulation of Alexandria read:

> The members of the Institute may carry with them all the instruments of arts and science which they have brought from France; but the Arabian manuscripts, the statues, and other collections which have been made for the French Republic, shall be

[70] Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*, 98.

> considered as public property and subject to the disposal of the generals of the combined army.[71]

Although they were allowed to keep their notes – which would become the basis of the *Description de l'Egypte* – the fifteen artifacts that remained now belonged to the British. Menou was furious the artifacts were to be taken to England. Historian John Ray recounts the interaction between an angry Menou and British general Hutchinson: "Hutchinson explained to his opponent [Menou] that in demanding these antiquities he was only following the example of the French themselves, who had looted the *Apollo Belvedere* and the *Lacoön* and other things from Rome, and were notorious for appropriating other people's treasures. Menou retorted that the English had long set an example to the entire universe of laying their greedy hands on anything that suited them."[72] The French and British engaged in a back and forth argument about who began looting. Menou, perhaps realizing he could not save all the antiquities, focused on the Rosetta Stone. Desperate to protect it, he first claimed the Rosetta Stone was his own private property, not the property of the French. When this did not succeed, he hid it. British commander Edward Daniel Clarke wrote about the British efforts to locate the stone:

> Thus finding himself stripped of the Egyptian trophies with which he had prepared to adorn the Museum at Paris, Menou gave no bounds to his rage and mortification . . . the valuable Tablet found near Rosetta, with its famous trilinguar inscription, seemed to be, more than any other article, the subject of his remonstrances.[73]

Despite Menou's best attempts to keep the stone for either himself or the French, it ultimately went to the British. Menou and the French were understandably upset. However, they would not let this stop them from trying to translate the stone, as a young Jean Francois

---

[71] *Capitulation of Alexandria* (1801) accessible in: William Cobbett, *A Collection of Facts and Observations relative to the Peace with Bonaparte, chiefly extracted from the "Porcupine" and including Mr. Cobbett's Letters to Lord Hawkesbury, etc.* (London: Cobbett & Morgan, 1801).
[72] John Ray, *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 35.
[73] Edward Daniel Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa, 4th edn, vol. 5: Greece, Egypt and the Holy Land, Part II, Section II* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1810), 327.

Champollion would get his hands on one of the prints Menou had ordered the savants to make of the stone. Disheartened, and thrown out of Egypt, the French savants channeled their energy into the *Description*. The British, however, celebrated their new acquisitions.

Although the Rosetta Stone was considered the most valuable acquisition by both the French and the British, the savants were infuriated with the Capitulation, going so far as to threaten to destroy the monuments or to return them to the sands. This sentiment was most clearly expressed by savant Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire:

> We spent three years conquering these treasures one by one, three years collecting them in every corner of Egypt, from Philae to Rosetta; each of them is associated with a peril surmounted, a monument etched and engraved in our memories. . . . Rather than let this iniquitous, vandalous spoliation take place, we will destroy our property: we will throw it into the Libyan sands, or throw it into the sea. . .[74]

This quote clearly expresses the heightened tensions and negotiations that took place amongst the savants and the British diplomats. Historian Maya Jasanoff explains that the savants' complaints were somewhat effective. Although the savants did not succeed in procuring the Egyptian antiquities for themselves or France, the British ambassador Edward Daniel Clarke and his assistant William Richard Hamilton allowed the French to keep 55 cases of specimens and scientific papers. However, the large antiquities were trophies for Britain. The fifteen artifacts constituted physical evidence of Britain's victory over France, a victory that would haunt the Louvre's ability to collect.

Consequences of the Campaign

The Egyptian expedition was a military and political disaster for Napoleon. Rather than hinder Britain, the French drove their ally, the Ottomans, to side with their enemy. Not only did they alienate their ally, but the sudden removal of the old order created a political

---

[74] Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, *Lettres écrites d'Égypte à Cuvier, Jussieu, Lacépède, Monge, Desgenettes, Redouté jeune, Norry, etc., aux professeurs du muséum et à sa famille. Recueillies ... avec une préface et des notes par le Dr. E.T. Hamy*. (Paris: Hachette, 1901), p. xxiv.

vacuum filled by Kavalali Mehmet Ali Pasha. Mehmet Ali (also known as Muhammad Ali) was a commanding officer of an Albanian unit loyal to the Ottoman sultan who in 1801 was ordered to reoccupy Egypt and gain control of it for the sultan. In Egypt Muhammad Ali was greeted by a power struggle between the Mamelukes, who had regrouped after the French left, and forces loyal to the Ottoman sultan. Cleverly he worked with both sides and built up popular support for himself until 1805 when he engineered the fall of the Ottoman viceroy and rose to the post himself. The sultan – left with little to no choice – confirmed Muhammad Ali as pasha of Egypt in 1806.[75] Muhammad Ali's reign laid the foundation for a modernized Egypt and he played a large role in the antiquities game, using his position to force the Europeans to pay to transport antiquities. He also influenced the British-French rivalry, often helping the French diplomat Drovetti with whom he enjoyed a good relationship.

Although France was unable to secure Egypt for themselves, shaking up the old order was a necessary step in the development of Egyptology. With the constant Mameluke and Ottoman aggression, it was not safe to travel to Egypt. Now, it was. Both the British and French scholars were able to travel to Egypt for themselves – something that had been sorely lacking in previous scholarship. Ancient Egypt was not an undiscussed topic, but those who discussed it and even mapped it relied on Classical accounts such as Herodotus. Now, more accurate and detailed observations could be made from first-hand experience.

Aside from creating the possibility to study ancient Egypt, the expedition secured the control of its history as a matter of pride and competition for the British and French. The British used the artifacts from the Capitulation as imperial trophies and proof of their military prowess and superiority over the French. The Rosetta stone especially was a major blow to

[75] Muhammad Ali was clever but ruthless. He consolidated his rule through two actions. First, he defeated a small British invasion in 1807. Second, he invited the Mamluk leaders to a celebration and upon their arrival he had them surrounded and killed. He then wiped out the remaining Mameluke forces. He began a dynasty that would rule Egypt for a century and a half.
Wilkinson, *A World Beneath the Sands*, 29-30.

the French, and they would continue to remind Europe that although they failed to possess it, they found it.

In looking towards the progression of the formal study of Egypt, the aftermath of the Napoleonic expedition yielded two important developments for the academic field of Egyptology: the Capitulation of Alexandria and the publication of the *Description*. Napoleon's savants compiled all their sketches and knowledge into the *Description de l'Egypte* (1809). It was the first comprehensive study of ancient Egypt with accurate maps, clear drawings, and imprints of the architecture and artifacts. The *Description* rebranded Napoleon's military failure as a cultural success, as he was heralded as the hero who rediscovered ancient Egypt.[76] The French failure in Egypt also turned British attention to ancient Egypt, as the artifacts they acquired under the Capitulation of Alexandria reshaped the British Museum as a public museum. This allowed the public to partake in the British success over the French and encouraged the study of Egyptology, as it became a popular topic. Both chose different modalities to display their knowledge of ancient Egypt and claim dominance over the other.

Most importantly, without the French expedition, Egyptology would not have developed as early as it did. Without the French expedition the Rosetta Stone would not have been found, the Capitulation would not have taken place, nor would the *Description* be published. Modern Egyptology would have emerged but in a different time and context.[77]

What about the Egyptians?

Upon their arrival in Egypt, the French were met by an Egypt they had not envisioned. For Europeans, Alexandria was always recounted as a city of classical splendor

[76] Nina Burleigh, *Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007),
[77] Donald Malcom Reid, *Whose Pharaohs? Archeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 14.

in antiquity. The French knew of the political strife but they did not expect the land to be run down. Egypt had been battered by epidemics, political fights that turned violent, and earthquakes and was considered altogether in disarray, with the ancient monuments in particularly bad shape. One of the French officers, Captain Moiret, argued that nothing remained of Alexandria's ancient monuments except Pompey's Column and two obelisks of Cleopatra (one of which was already on the ground).[78] Juan Cole argues that the French perceived the classical city as having degenerated. This specification is important as "degeneration allowed the French to appropriate classical civilization for their own, displacing its splendor into the distant past and positioning its present heirs as unworthy, such that the mantle of those glories fell on the French instead."[79] The British and French both actively worked to distance the Egyptians from their ancient past to claim it and study it for their own. They considered the Egyptians "unworthy inheritors." In creating this distance, the Europeans could make Egypt a part of their own history.

Arabs actively participated in assisting the French in their Egyptian expedition. Mikha'il Sabbagh, a Lebanese scholar, translated French books into Arabic and was appointed librarian to the Institut d'Égypte. Syrian priest Rufa'il Zakhur worked as personal interpreter for Napoleon and was later appointed as a member of the Institut d'Égypte. Arabs were a necessity to the expedition, as the savants lacked expertise in Arabic and the Institute members needed to acquaint themselves with the administration and society of Egypt. The Arabs provided a window into their world and helped guide French administration and research. Coller argues that for Rufa'il assisting the French was an Egyptian national project.[80] He saw the Institut d'Égypte and French administration as a potential help to modernize and strengthen Egypt.

---

[78] Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt,* 28.
[79] Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt,* 29.
[80] Ian Coller, *Arab France: Islam and the Making of Modern Europe, 1798-1831* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 113.

Several Egyptians followed Napoleon back to France after his failed expedition and several Arab intellectuals hoped they would find more career advancement opportunities in Paris. As documented by Ian Coller, Egypt was restrictive for Christian Arab intellectuals because of the traditional restrictions on the dhimmi. This hindered the burgeoning scholars in two ways. First, the most significant positions at the university of al-Azhar were restricted to Muslims. Second, the millet system made it so that "Christians were subject to the authority of their own community, which could be parochial and restrictive, particularly for a relatively small and regionally contained minority such as the Copts."[81] If a Copt desired to rise in their station they had to convert. Paris intellectual opportunities were not nearly as restrictive; and with the Enlightenment, the Egyptians hoped to advance their careers in Paris. However, it was highly competitive and as Coller examines, opportunities for Egyptians were limited. Some positions were created by the École des Langues Orientales which opened in 1795. This school was intended to teach foreign languages, including Arabic, to train interpreters and diplomats. In 1803 Syrian priest Rufa'il Zakhur received the position of adjunct professor of colloquial Arabic at the École des Langues Orientales Vivantes, an action which Sylvestre de Sacy, the first president of this school abhorred. De Sacy is a prime example of why Arab intellectuals were a necessity. He never traveled outside of Europe and was criticized for his proficiency in Arabic. On one occasion he was accused of needing an Arabic book in his hands to read Arabic. He was also heavily criticized for his pronunciation. Rufa'il's perfect pronunciation and experience clashed with de Sacy's flawed language proficiency. Additionally, Coller explains that de Sacy and other dominant scholars enjoyed "considerable cultural prestige" and only made "rhetorical gestures toward the values of 'civilization…'" They were unwilling to accept the Arabs as their equals. Although the Arabs assumed France had a universalist culture, which would favor their own research and

[81] Coller, *Arab France*, 103.

projects, they were disappointed when they encountered an environment which considered them sub-par. Despite his position in the École des Langues Orientales, Rufa'il published nothing during his thirteen years there.[82] However, upon his return to Egypt in 1816, he quickly began publishing.[83]

The reception in Paris demonstrates how although the Arabs were a necessity in Egypt, in France the Parisian scholars retained the "cultural prestige." Additionally, although some Arabs such as Youhanna Chiftichi collaborated with the French on the grand *Description de l'Égypte*, the collection and exhibition of ancient Egypt was primarily a product of the French.[84] The Egyptians were not given nearly as much credit as the French scholars, who used the *Description* as a chance to establish themselves in the world of academia.

Even though the Arab intellectuals formed strong bonds with the savants – for example Rufa'il who stayed with Joseph Fourier until he got settled – modern Egyptians were often overlooked and broadly categorized as the unworthy inheritors of their history. Egyptians would come up in discourse over the next thirty years, but Europeans would engage with them through travelogue descriptions of them. The travelogues painted modern Egyptians as lazy and unconcerned about the ancient monuments. Belzoni demonstrates this as he explains the locals assumed the artifacts must have been filled with gold to be so valuable. [85] Belzoni is clearly demonstrating how the locals do not understand the value of the objects. Here again we see Europeans distancing Egyptians from their history, a trend that

---

[82] Rufa'il quit after the Restoration authorities lowered his salary. In 1816 they began reducing the pensions of refugees across the board, and Rufa'il was caught in the middle of it.
Coller, *Arab France,* 117.
[83] In Egypt Muhammad Ali allowed and encouraged Arab scholars to publish modernizing ideas as part of his push to modernize Egypt.
Coller, *Arab France,* 103.
[84] Coller, *Arab France,* 83.
[85] Giovanni Battista Belzoni, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries Within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia*. (London: John Murray, 1820), 38.

would continue and allow the Europeans to control how ancient Egypt was perceived and collected.

CHAPTER 2: TEXTS AND MAPS: FROM MUTUAL COOPERATION TO BRITISH FRENCH RIVALRY

"As I entered these ruins, my first thought was to examine the colossal bust I had to take away. I found it near the remains of its body and chair, with its face upwards, and apparently smiling on me, at the thought of being taken to England."[86] – Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1820)

With this quote, Giovanni Battista Belzoni, celebrated collector of ancient Egyptian artifacts for the British, captured both the attention and the imagination of Europe regarding this ancient civilization. Yet his beautiful words had a consequence: they would shake up the culture of mutual cooperation the British and French travelogue authors had sought to establish after the French campaign in Egypt. Previously, there had been a system in which writers from both nations built on each other's knowledge to make Egyptian history more readily accessible. Although Belzoni eloquently narrates his accumulation of Egyptian artifacts for England, his major impact was recasting the scenario in Egypt as one of British-French rivalry, with the British besting the French to acquire and display the spectacular artifacts Egypt had to offer. In both textual description and artifact collection, the British sought to assert their dominance over ancient Egypt by disseminating information about it to the public. They accomplished this through popular travelogues, children's fictional literature, and exhibitions. Conversely, the French asserted their dominance, not through popular writing or public-facing exhibitions, but rather by establishing a network of information through travelogues, cartography, and an encyclopedic enterprise known as the *Description de l'Egypte*.

The modalities I focus on in this chapter are historiographic, observational/travel (travelogues), museological (collection and exhibition), and survey (maps/cartography). Cohn argues that the historiographic modality is the West's ideological construction of the nature

[86] Giovanni Battista Belzoni, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries Within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia*. (London: John Murray, 1820), 33.

of civilization. In other words, it is an effort to define what and who was "civilized." By examining the construction of the *Description*, I argue that the savants constructed Egypt's ancient history both as a way to organize assumptions about "how the real social and natural worlds are constituted" and legitimize the French presence in Egypt.[87] The observational modality, which usually constituted travel accounts, set a standard for "aesthetic principles." I argue that Europeans examined both modern and ancient Egypt through the lens of European interpretation, which allowed the British and French to control how Egypt, and more specifically, ancient Egypt, was perceived (often as superior to its modern-day counterpart). The next modality I analyze is the survey modality, which usually encompasses mapping as a means to examine a location for the purpose of controlling it. The survey modality will be interwoven with the discussion of the historiographic and observational modality as the maps were often incorporated into the textual descriptions. Investigating these modalities reveals not only how the British and French collected ancient Egypt and how British-French rivalry was at the heart of this collection, it also demonstrates how dissemination of this knowledge was a form of "othering." The British and French interpreted ancient Egypt for the world similar to how Said argues that the Europeans defined the "other." The British and French classified the Egyptians as unworthy inheritors of their ancient civilization and used these modalities to collect it for themselves. With this collection came prestige from the scholarly community and the public.

Concerning the organization of this chapter, the observational and historiographic modality is analyzed first and together under "textual description." This modality is presented first because it provides a foundation to analyze the existing information about ancient Egypt prior to the Egyptian expedition, and it is also the best modality to compare the French and

[87]Nina Burleigh, *Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 5.

British approaches as both were actively involved in it. The second modality discussed is cartography. This is best analyzed after the textual description as the travelogues and the *Description* often included maps of ancient Egypt and included a discussion of the process of exploring and mapping Egypt, but they deserve a separate analysis so that I can fully dissect the importance of collecting ancient Egypt through this modality.

In analyzing this question of how the British and French collected ancient Egypt prior to the translation of hieroglyphs, this chapter demonstrates how the imperialist mindset played a role in the establishment of Egyptology and identifies a sense of British and French ownership over ancient Egyptian history. The Europeans believed that the Egyptians did not preserve ancient Egypt, the British and French unearthed it, thus ancient Egypt belonged to the Europeans, and both the French and British asserted their dominance and claimed intellectual superiority over their rival. Moreover, the two different approaches show the value they assigned to various forms of knowledge and identify the consumers they viewed worthy of that knowledge.

Textual Description

Among historians of Egyptology, one of the main sources of debate is whether the *Description* was the foundational text of Egyptology. The *Description* was an encyclopedic document published by the French from 1809-1829. In 1987, Charles Coulston Gillispe and Michel Dewachter undertook the monumental task of compiling the plates from the *Description* with a preface explaining its historical significance. In it, they argue, "it gave a modern [European] reading public the first comprehensive view of the architectural and artistic legacy of ancient Egypt."[88] Their examination of the *Description*'s production and

[88] Charles Coulston Gillispie and Michel Dewachter. *Monuments of Egypt: The Napoleonic Edition: the Complete Archaeological Plates from La "Description De L'Egypte,"* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 1.

expensive cost demonstrates how this work was clearly marketed to the elite and meant to be an authoritative document, based on its size and wealth of information. Thus, their analysis implies that this book was an expensive means to stake a claim on understanding ancient Egypt. Nina Burleigh challenges this assertion and claims that the *Description* did not end up being an intellectual inspiration but rather influenced the commercial success of Egyptology. Her epilogue concludes with the scholar's likely surprise that the "chief consequence of their efforts would be on European fashion, art, and architecture."[89] Thus, Burleigh argues that rather than intellectual curiosity, the *Description* began Egyptomania in France, which focused on integrating ancient Egyptian motifs into popular culture and art. She argues that the chief reason the *Description* did not primarily influence intellectual study was its inability to translate hieroglyphs; thus, the *Description* could never amount to a comprehensive book, though its "encyclopedic gaze" may make the reader believe otherwise. Other interpretations of the *Description* from David Prochaska and William H. Peck have sided with Gillispe and Dewachter as they label the *Description* the "foundational text for Egyptology."[90] Peck argues that although the history could not be fully understood, it was still created in the Age of Enlightenment, when its readers would welcome a document that bore a remarkable resemblance to an encyclopedia.[91] Furthermore, although all of Egypt's history may not have been knowable, it still served as "a compilation of all known or observable facts concerning a country rich in history and tradition."[92] He asserts that through its production of the first accurate maps and its clearly drawn and classified contents, it gave birth to the science of

---

Gillispie and Dewachter explain that Europeans were the intended audience as the original publication was gifted to several scholarly institutions including the British Museum, the House of Commons, and the Russian Tsar.

[89] Nina Burleigh, *Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 241.

[90] David Prochaska, "Art of Colonialism, Colonialism of Art: The "Description De L'Égypte" (1809-1828)." *L'Esprit Créateur* 34, no. 2 (1994): 74.

[91] Encyclopedias were created and popularized by Denis Diederot in the mid-1700s. The *Description* did not set a new standard for encyclopedias, but drew on the style of encyclopedias to inform its own format.

[92] William H. Peck, ""Description De L'Egypte" A Major Acquisition from the Napoleonic Age," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 51, no. 4 (1972): 113.

Egyptology. Prochaska echoes this argument, explaining that the *Description* was the first accurate (or as accurate as it could be at the time) account of Egypt that was not from classical antiquity. Clearly, there has been a lively debate on the influence of the *Description* on French and European study of ancient Egypt. Although Burleigh is right that the *Description* contributed to Egyptomania, my paper will focus on the development of Egyptology and demonstrate that it was not only a foundational text for the discipline, but it also shifted a system of mutual scholarly cooperation to one based on British-French rivalry.

Unfortunately, historians have often chosen to study such well-known and recognized intellectual contributions as the *Description*, at the expense of other textual descriptions. Although the travelogues may seem less perfect than the *Description*, there are similarities. Similar to the *Description*, the travelogue writers (ranging from soldiers to scholars) rely on verbal and visual description to classify and collect ancient Egyptian history. Although they may seem less informative than the encyclopedic *Description*, they were considered to be academic and were frequently reviewed by academic journals such as the *British Monthly Review* and the *British Quarterly Review*.[93] Yet they still offer a unique perspective the *Description* does not show – how writers built off of other scholars' work, as they mention each other by name in the text. The *Description* does not note recent scholarship but harks back to the classical antiquarian historians such as Herodotus. Additionally, the travelogues were more accessible to the public based on their cost. The least expensive copy of the *Description* sold for seven hundred and fifty francs. The French travelogues were still expensive, with Dominique Vivant Denon's costing approximately four hundred francs, but the British travelogues were more reasonable, averaging four to eight pounds (Belzoni is an

[93] It should be noted that the French had no equivalent of the academic review journals in the early nineteenth century. However, the British academic review journals often reviewed the French publications and provided insight into how well they were received in the scholarly community.

exception at twenty-one pounds, but the cost was due to his popularity) and the British translation of Denon's travelogue was sold at eighteen pounds.

Research on travelogues has tended to examine the relative importance of Egyptology's so-called founding fathers.[94] This work is valuable but leaves out other travelogues and fails to engage with the question of rivalry or the establishment of consensus/borrowing among writers. However, analyzing the other travelogues reveals an unexpected story of British and French scholars seeking to establish a network of information that did not necessarily hold British-French rivalry as the motivation for study of Egypt. My analysis and use of the terminology network centers on the conclusion that the French savant Dominique Vivant Denon established a foundation for traversing and collecting ancient Egypt. Subsequent writers added to it, creating a nexus of information for scholars seeking to improve or confirm the existing information that was readily accessible.

Before analyzing the travelogues that came after the Egyptian expedition, it is important to analyze the pre-existing accounts of ancient Egypt. Accounts ranged from Homer and Herodotus from classical antiquity, Paul Bleser's *Voyages en Égypte, des années 1589, 1590 et 1591* and Oleg Volkoff's *Voyages en Égypte des années 1611 et 1612,* and, most well-known, Frederik Ludvig Norden's *Travels in Egypt and Nubia* (1741) and Richard Pococke's *A Description of the East and some other countries* (1743). Despite these existing accounts, Ridley argues, they did not spark European interest in ancient Egypt. He explains that, prior to the Egyptian campaign, most Europeans preferred to study the classics (Greece

[94] When analyzing travelogues, a majority of historians analyzed the success of individual travelogues. Most notably, Ivor Noël Hume and Stanley Mayes thoroughly researched Belzoni and concluded that his approach to collecting Egypt both through his travelogue and his acquisitions (for the British Museum and his personal exhibitions) made him both a scholar and public figure. Belzoni's success is not something that has been challenged. The closest challenge to this has come from Ronald T. Ridley, who used the journal of Bernardino Drovetti (the rival of Belzoni, whom Belzoni claims is a menace in his published travelogue) both to contextualize the rivalry and ask if Drovetti was actually more successful than Belzoni. Ultimately, though, Ridley concludes that Belzoni was far more celebrated in Britain than Drovetti ever was in France, despite Drovetti's political astuteness in Egypt. Unfortunately, Belzoni's success overshadowed several other notable travelogues.

and Rome) and considered ancient Egyptian art primitive. Through an analysis of three major works, Ridley shows how Europeans preferred the Classics of Greece and Rome over Egypt. He also points to the fatal flaw shared by all three: none of these authors had ever been to Egypt.[95] Inspired by the savants' newly published accounts, the British and French actively traveled to Egypt to record their journeys and findings. After reading through the travelogues, I found that these early authors after the expedition often use the works of Homer, Herodotus, Norden, and Pococke as the foundation for their work. They also prefer to spotlight classical antiquity accounts but still credit Norden and Pococke as the most recent accurate accounts.

Travelogues

The Frenchman C.S. Sonnini published the first textual description to appear around the time of the Egyptian campaign. Sonnini was a French naturalist who served under the Old Regime as an explorer tasked with documenting the natural world. Sonnini was not a part of Napoleon's expedition. In 1777, Louis XVI tasked him to scout Egypt to see if it could be a colony of France. Although his expedition was in the 1770s, his account was not published until 1798, the same year Napoleon sailed to Egypt. Although his book was not a part of the material collected by the savants, an analysis of his book's reception in Britain helps us lay a foundation for why the British would celebrate the savants but dislike Sonnini.

Sonnini's publication was not well received by the British. Originally published in France in 1798, it was translated a year later into English by Henry Hunter. The translator

[95] Ronald T. Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul in Egypt: The Life and Times of Bernardino Drovetti*, (London: The Rubicon Press, 1998), 15.
He demonstrates this through his analysis of three texts, Johann Wincklmann's *Geschite der Kunst des Altertums* (1764), Giambattista Piranesi's *Apologetic essay in defense of Egyptian and Tuscan architecture* (1769), and the Comte de Caylus's *Recueil d'antiques egyptiennes, etrusques, grecques, romaines et gauloises* in seven volumes (1752-1767). Ridley explains that Wincklmann argued that the Greeks represent perfection in ancient art; in comparison, the Egyptians lacked beauty, were uninspired by nature, and were "devoted to the mysterious." Piranesi also focused on celebrating the classics, as he argued the Romans were better than the Greeks, but unlike Wincklmann, who dismissed ancient Egyptian art and culture, the subtlety and variety in Egyptian art intrigued him. Lastly, the Comte de Caylus was the first to give Egyptian art an equal weighing with the classical world (Rome and Greece).

considered it an interesting and informative read but openly criticized it, as Sonnini often sings the praises of the French as the saviors of Egypt.

> A dawn of hope appears that Egypt, now so vilely degraded, abandoned to plunderers and barbarians, may at length recover the luster which once distinguished her among the nations of the globe. Transferred into the possession of a people as renowned as that which was once the boast of antiquity, this celebrated country, which ages of unrelenting destruction have completely disguised, will re-assume her departed glory. The men as well as the foil; the territory as well as its inhabitants, are hastening to wear a new aspect; and the period is at hand when Egypt shall no longer be what she lately was.[96]

Henry claims that Sonnini got ahead of himself as the French had already been subdued by Admiral Horatio Nelson and forced to flee from Egypt.

> Our author is a very good observer of what is, but he knows nothing of what will be: he is an excellent naturalist, but a most wretched prophet: he has mistaken the fond dreams of a patriotic imagination for a revelation from heaven.[97]

Throughout the text, Henry pauses to share his thoughts on Sonnini's writing and often comments on how Sonnini has delusions of grandeur. For example, in chapter one, when Sonnini exclaims that the French are helping modernize Egypt, Henry comments that Sonnini demonstrates the "vain-glory of a Frenchman," which is an "insult to the common-sense of mankind."[98] Despite his many criticisms of Sonnini, Henry writes that his decision to translate this travelogue was his "obligation to render an account to his country of the knowledge which he had acquired." Henry despises Sonnini's constant celebration of the French, yet he recognizes that Sonnini describes several new areas in Egypt, which made it more easily traversable. Additionally, his descriptions of the ancient monuments are well done – not as thorough as those of the savants, but considering that most of the recent accounts relied on scholars who had never set foot in Egypt, Sonnini's book was a valuable

---

[96] Charles S. Sonnini, *Voyage Dans La Haute Et Basse Egypte: Fait Par Ordre De L'ancien Gouvernement, Et Contenant Des Observations De Tous Genres*, (Paris: Buisson, 1798), ix.
[97] Charles S. Sonnini, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt: Undertaken by Order of the Old Government of France*, Preface by Henry Hunter, (London: John Stockdale, 1799), vi.
[98] Sonnini, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt: Undertaken by Order of the Old Government of France*, Preface by Henry Hunter, 13.

piece of scholarship. Henry's inclination to translate this book for the "public good" demonstrates how the British were already turning towards creating a network of knowledge about ancient Egypt that both the British and French would add to; however, there was not yet mutual respect for the scholarship as Henry painted Sonnini as a glory hound. The British would, however, welcome French scholar Denon with open arms. Whereas Sonnini used his publication to overtly celebrate the French, Denon's narrative contains a preface in which he explains how he is an impartial scholar whose job is to disseminate his findings to other scholars so that the knowledge he gained would be shared amongst the historical community.

In 1802, Dominique-Vivant Denon published a travelogue of his voyage with Napoleon and the other savants. His book, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte pendant les campagnes de Bonaparte* was an instant success both in France (where it underwent twenty editions) and in Britain, where less than a year after its publication, it was translated into English.[99] In his book, Denon recounts how the expedition was a perilous undertaking. There are stories of robbers, seasickness, and exhaustion. Yet Denon's tale tells a story of a man and the other savants who pushed through the brutal conditions to attain and disseminate knowledge, an admirable undertaking that allowed his book to become instantaneously popular. Denon's travelogue was popular for its relevance, intriguing content, and thorough description. It was relevant as it came a few years after Napoleon's expedition in France. It was intriguing as it talks not only about the battles Napoleon engaged in but how he and the other savants traveled through Egypt to document the ancient civilization. It was thorough, as, although the drawings were nothing compared to the *Description* and showed no indication of the luxury and decadence the French scholars craved, his verbal descriptions were incredibly detailed, and in many cases, he tried to picture the hieroglyphs even though

[99] Bednarski, *Holding Egypt: Tracing the Reception of the 'Description de L'Égypte' in Nineteenth-century Great Britain*, 37.

he admits he did not know what they mean. Examining his discussion of the hieroglyphs is a perfect starting point for understanding how Denon would begin a dialogue amongst the travelogues:

> I sought, in the course of these latter excursions, to complete by approximations the voluminous collection of hieroglyphical paintings I have formed. In thinking of you, citizens, and of all the literati of Europe, I felt the resolution to copy, with a scrupulous nicety, the minute details of these dry and unmeaning paintings, which could not otherwise interest me than by the aid of your intelligence.[100]

In this quote, we see Denon trying to network with other scholars as he envisions "all the literati of Europe" partaking in this project of understanding ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. In many cases, Denon calls the French the "masters of that territory" (that, referencing Egypt). Yet, in some cases, he openly admits that ancient Egyptian history is not fully understandable currently and uses his travelogue to disseminate information about a topic he does not understand, but hopes will catch another scholar's attention. We see this goal of creating an intellectual exchange further explained in his later descriptions of the artifacts in the temples of Egypt.

> In the middle of the court-yard of this mosque is a small octagonal temple, which contains a bowl of Egyptian black marble, with white and yellow spots, of incomparable beauty, both on account of the substance of which it is formed, and of the innumerable hieroglyphical figures with which it is covered, both with inside and without. This monument, which is, without doubt, a sarcophagus of ancient Egypt, will, perhaps, be hereafter illustrated by volumes of dissertations. It may be considered as a very valuable antique, and as one of our most precious spoils in Egypt, with which it is to be wished that our national museum may be enriched.[101]

In this clear description, he also indicates how intriguing the materials are and how they will be a source of dissertations, suggesting how Denon expects ancient Egypt to be a network of information in which scholars create a dialogue about what the objects are and the history behind them.[102]

---

[100] Dominique Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*, (Paris: Promeneur, 1801), 7.
[101] Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*, 47.
[102] Denon had hoped that his travelogue would be accompanied by several artifacts housed in the Louvre as he was named the first director of the Louvre by Napoleon from 1804 to 1815. Denon was not solely focused on

The British wholeheartedly embraced Denon's intellectual spirit, and in a preface to his translation of Denon's work, E.A. Kendal remarks that Denon was "an elegant writer, an accurate and picturesque observer, a lively historian, he has brought forward a mass of information of the most varied nature, and such as only the union of his talents and situation could have permitted him to procure and afford."[103] Academic reviewers further sang Denon's praises, with *The Monthly Review* proclaiming, "we are now to announce the splendid work of M. Denon; the Parisian edition of which, combining a multitude of most superb engravings with an interesting and amusing narrative, and edited in a style of distinguished magnificence…"[104] While the translator and reviewers often celebrated Denon's rigorous classification and description as a means to reveal Egypt to Europe, the reviews also indicate that they consider Denon to have put aside British-French rivalry in the pursuit of a more important endeavour, knowledge:

> The English reader will peruse the journal of such a man with an interest which will be increased by the humanity of his disposition, and by the traits of fairness in those parts of the narrative in which he might be expected to have been biased by his national prejudice.[105]

Thus, they credit Denon with abandoning his prejudice, and commend him as a genuine historian who impartially observes and disseminates information, explaining why other British travelogue authors would hark back to Denon, rather than Sonnini, as the forefather of this network of communication.

Some of the most notable travelogues published after Denon came from William Richard Hamilton in 1809, Thomas Legh in 1816, and Henry Light in 1818, all of whom were British. Like Denon, these men based their books on their first-hand experiences of

---

ancient Egypt, he traveled to Austria and Spain to collect for the Louvre. Unfortunately, and as will examined later, the Louvre did not collect ancient Egyptian artifacts at the same volume the British Museum did.

[103] Dominique Vivant Denon, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt, during the Campaigns of General Bonaparte*. Preface by E.A. Kendal. (London: B. Crosby, 1802), 1.

[104] *The Monthly Review* 1802, vol. 39, 149-150.

[105] *The Monthly Review* 1802, vol. 39, 151.

traversing Egypt. The travelogues bear a remarkable resemblance to Denon's format, minus the battles he witnessed alongside Napoleon. The first publication came from Hamilton, who served as a soldier for the British in Egypt tasked with finding ancient Egyptian antiquities. What is unique about his book is a statement in his preface explaining his reluctance to publish his travelogue, as it was a personal journal meant for himself. However, he explains that he was surprised that the French had yet to publish their findings (which were in the final stages of publication in the *Description*), and believed the public deserved to share in the knowledge he had gained:

> My survey, however, of these objects, interesting as it was to myself upon the spot, and in the recollections it still furnishes to me, was not intended for the public eye : and, indeed, I have often experienced how inadequately provided I was, during the course of my tour in Egypt, with the means of obtaining information such as the public have a right to expect from those who enter the list of writers of travels. I conceived too for some time, in common with, others, that it was the intention of the French government to make public the result of those inquiries, which, while their troops were in possession of the country, they could make with every requisite advantage; and which so many individuals of their Institute were so well qualified to pursue. These expectations of the public have as yet been disappointed; and I am not aware of any circumstances which might encourage a hope of their being accomplished for some years[106]

Hamilton's preface orients us to an interesting conversation taking place: where is the French publication? Hamilton's words also reveal that the travelogues were not seen as having the same authority as the encyclopedic *Description* that would be published later that year. It is only because of the lack of published material from France that he is willing to publish his personal account. However, this is not to say that he thinks what he or Denon has done is not valuable. Like Denon, he admits that his work is imperfect (especially his drawings) but wants to put the information to the public and academic community so that it can be studied, further establishing a sense of common intellectual endeavor. Yet even in his preface, he still claims to follow the work of Denon:

---

[106] William Richard Hamilton, *Remarks on Several Parts of Turkey: Part 1. Ægyptiaca, or Some account of the antient and modern state of Egypt, as obtained in the years 1801, 1802*, (London: T. Payne, Pall Mall; and Cadell and Davies, 1809), iv.

> Pococke and Denon have already said so much, and that so well, upon the subject, that my task is necessarily confined to a partial correction of their errors, and a minute detail of what escaped their notice.[107]

Throughout his narrative, this statement of only filling in the holes from Denon's narrative holds true. In most cases, however, he often omits description and instead recommends the reader look into Denon's work, as he says: "On the subject of the two small temples that remain, little need be added to the animated narrative of Denon."[108] In a few cases, however, he does indicate that Denon's description is not entirely suitable. Reviewers of his work indicated that Hamilton strengthened the network of information Denon set out to create, As the *Critical Review* proclaimed:

> Mr. Hamilton's work, (for almost all that relates to political economy is our avowed translation from recent French accounts) is chiefly confined to a description of these interesting monuments; and though they have already, in some degree , become familiar to us from the writings and the drawings of Pococke, Denon, and other travellers, we are willing to acknowledge, that Mr. Hamilton, by the addition of new and important facts , has considerably enlarged or corrected the mass of information of which we were before in possession.[109]

This review demonstrates the academic recognition of a network of information that was created and is actively being added to.

Similar to Hamilton, Legh helped enlarge this network. Whereas Denon and Hamilton focused on describing the monuments —which Legh does as well— his primary focus is to highlight the process of exploring Egypt, as he admits how well-done descriptions produced by the French are, particularly the *Description de l'Egypte*:

> The traveller who sees for the first time the pyramids of Gizeh, or the ruined temples of the Thebaïd , feels as if he had never heard or read of them before ; but an author must have very considerable confidence in his own powers of writing, who would

---

[107] Hamilton, *Remarks on Several Parts of Turkey: Part 1. Ægyptiaca, or Some account of the ancient and modern state of Egypt, as obtained in the years 1801, 1802*, 18.
Pococke was an English traveler and antiunitarian who produced the first modern account of the temple at Karnack and Luxor in 1752.
Chris Naunton, *Egyptologists' Notebooks: The Golden Age of Nile Explorations in Words, Pictures, Plans, and Letters*, (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2020), 34.
[108] Hamilton, *Remarks on Several Parts of Turkey*, 57.
[109] *The Critical Review* 1817, vol. 21, 140.

> venture to add to the descriptions of Denon, Hamilton, and, above all, of the costly and elaborate work lately published by the French government[110]

Legh tried to give travelers the necessary information of how and where to find the ruins to experience them for themselves. His narrative often draws on Denon more so than Hamilton, and he often credits Denon as the authoritative voice:

> The account given by Denon of the interior of the large Pyramid, the only one that has been opened, and indeed which it is practicable to ascend, is so correct and complete, that it would be difficult and quite unnecessary to attempt to add to his description.[111]

In claiming Denon's work is so "complete," Legh forgoes a description and instead creates the opportunity for the reader to access the information from Denon's book. Legh's narrative, aside from demonstrating whom he considers to be the authority on documenting ancient Egypt, also tells us more about the travelogues' audience. In several cases, some passages are in French, and even one small section in Hebrew, and no translation is offered. Presumably, this indicates that the travelogues, or at least Legh's book, was intended for an educated audience.

Whereas Denon and Hamilton were well regarded by academic reviewers, Legh did not receive the same praise, partially for his lack of description,[112] as the *Quarterly Review* proclaims, "the apology is scarcely admissible for 'passing too hastily over places of famous antiquity,' because Mr. Hamilton, M. Denon, or any other traveler, however celebrated, has gone over them before."[113] Yet, despite criticism, the reviews still demonstrate a recognition of a common purpose.

---

[110] Thomas Legh, *Narrative of a Journey in Egypt and the Country Beyond the Cataracts*, (London: John Murray, 1816), 7.
[111] Legh, *Narrative of a Journey in Egypt and the Country Beyond the Cataracts*, 23.
[112] Said comments on the importance of repetition in *Orientalism*. He argues that Orientalism was made on a scientific and rational basis. Similar to what we see with early Egyptological works, it was based on description and classification. Said goes further explaining that a key element of Orientalism is reconstruction and repetition. He argues there seems to be a lack of originality because Orientalism requires ideas to be "repeated and re-repeated." He argues that this repetition is about reinforcing a decision about the Orient. This methodology also seems present in ideas of discourse surrounding ancient Egypt. By omitting descriptions, Legh is failing to reinforce the system.
Said, *Orientalism*, 122,277.
[113] *Quarterly Review* 1817, vol. 16, 10.

> Mr. Legh gives no description, which indeed without engravings would have been of little use; but we are told that 'the hasty sketches of the ruins of Thebes, to be found in the Travels of Denon, and the minute description of the paintings which Mr. Hamilton's book is enriched, may be consulted for the details of this wonderful spot.[114]

This reviewer acknowledges that Denon and Hamilton are creating a network – arguing that the network is not complete – and faults Legh for not contributing to it.

Whereas Legh was heavily criticized for not adequately using or adding to the network of information, Light is incredibly well regarded for doing both. As the *Quarterly Review* proclaims:

> In his progress upwards as far as the northern limits of Ethiopia, by the aid of Pococke, of Denon, and of Hamilton, he knows the spot on which he is to look for the tombs and the temples, the pillars, the pyramids, and the colossal statues of Egypt, almost with as much precision as he knows the situation, from his road-book.[115]

The reviewer acknowledges, as does Light in his own book, that Light properly used the network of information, and was able to know what to add to it, hence his detailed descriptions of Philae, which Hamilton and Denon had not remarked on.[116] In choosing a location untouched but similar, Light adds to the network of information and received commendation for doing it. Ironically, despite the *Quarterly Review*'s slander of Legh, the reviewer explains that Legh's book assisted Light with his travels in working out how to traverse Egypt.

Light's book is the perfect example of the culmination of the network of information established by Denon. Light utilizes previous accounts to inform his own, but unlike Legh, he does not omit descriptions but simply finds a new location to add to the network. He adds to the network in a different way than Hamilton did, Hamilton filled in holes and Light traveled to a new location to further expand the network from Thebes to Philae. As the historical

---

[114] *Quarterly Review* 1817, vol. 16, 9.
[115] *Quarterly Review* 1818, vol. 19, 178.
[116] Thomas Legh, *Narrative of a Journey in Egypt and the Country Beyond the Cataracts,* (London: John Murray, 1816), 23.

community was growing, and focused on seeking to establish this network rather than be the authority on the subject, everything changed with the publication of Belzoni's book.

Belzoni's book in 1820 followed a similar layout to Denon's. It explained the rigors of travel, the perilous aspects of the journey, and the exhaustion of it all. It told a similar tale—a story of a man who was able to persevere, all in the goal of pursuing knowledge. However, unlike Denon's book, which claimed to be free of bias, Belzoni's book was clearly in favor of the British. Additionally, Belzoni did something the previous authors had been unable to do. His book was not merely descriptions of artifacts, but it also detailed how he moved them and brought them back to England for the British Museum. In doing this, he not only described what he saw but was able to show physical proof of his superiority over the previous travelogue writers and the French who had been collecting far longer than he had – a topic that will be addressed in chapter 3. Belzoni was, perhaps, attempting to add to this network, as in his preface he acknowledges the existence of the network of information:

> Much has been written on Egypt and Nubia by the travellers of the last century, by Denon, and the French sçavans [savants], whose general account of these countries has scarcely left anything unnoticed, and by Mr. Hamilton, to the accuracy of the latter of whom I can bear the most ample testimony.[117]

However, unlike previous scholars, Belzoni does not make a claim to be unbiased in pursuit of an objective, observable Egypt.[118] Additionally, Belzoni was far more of a public figure than the previous British authors. He became a topic of conversation in the newspapers before his book was published and began his acquisition of fame after securing the Head of Memnon (an artifact that the French had tried unsuccessfully to acquire before him) for the British Museum. Belzoni's engineering background enabled him to do amazing things. He

---

[117] Giovanni Battista Belzoni, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries Within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia*. (London: John Murray, 1820), 3.

[118] Said addresses the idea of an objective observable Egypt as he argues Orientalism was created through a seemingly scientific and rational basis. This led to the creation of a vocabulary and ideas specifically associated with the Orient, and in this case ancient Egypt.
Said, *Orientalism*, 122.

was able to move heavy objects and ship them to England, he was able to open one of the pyramids, the temple Abu Simbel, and, he even located one of the most impressive tombs in the Valley of the Kings, the tomb of Seti I (which spans the length of St. Paul's cathedral).[119] Additionally, Belzoni not only acquired artifacts to sell to collectors and the British Museum, but he held an exhibition of his own in the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly. In breaking free from solely describing Egypt, Belzoni made himself a public figure and celebrated collector.[120] As a result of his fame, his book was more widely sought after. Whereas the British travelogues had only gone through one or two editions. Belzoni's went through three. Belzoni's book was also considerably easier for the public to read. Unlike some of the previous travelogues that included French and Hebrew words with no translation, Belzoni's writing was entirely in English. Thus, Belzoni's book represented the British turn to the public to justify their dominance over France in understanding and collecting ancient Egypt. Yet Belzoni's book did not only represent a turn towards the public, it also emphasized the narrative of British-French rivalry.

Belzoni's book is littered with references to a Mr. Drovetti and their rivalry in Egypt. Bernardino Drovetti was Piedmontese but joined the French army under Napoleon and was appointed as a French diplomat in Egypt by Napoleon. Early on, Drovetti recognized that he could make a profit if he collected and sold Egyptian artifacts. When Belzoni arrived in Egypt, he and Drovetti originally connected positively, as Belzoni was from Padua.[121] However, once Belzoni was commissioned by British consul (diplomat) Henry Salt to collect the Head of Memnon for the British, Drovetti turned on him.[122] Whereas Belzoni was an

---

[119] Stanley Mayes, *The Great Belzoni: The Circus Strongman Who Discovered Egypt's Ancient Treasure*, (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2006), 34.
[120] Ivor Noël Hume, *Belzoni: The Giant Archeologists Love to Hate*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 32.
[121] Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul in Egypt: The Life and Times of Bernardino Drovetti*, (London: The Rubicon Press, 1998), 76.
[122]Belzoni was originally in Egypt in 1815 to meet with the Muhammad Ali Pasha to convince him to build hydraulic machines for irrigation. When this failed, he met Henry Salt, a British diplomat trying to remove the

independent collector and was only in Egypt for a few years, Drovetti was a French diplomat who collected Egyptian artifacts on the side and spent 25 years in Egypt. Belzoni saw himself as a champion for the British opposed by Drovetti, collecting for the French. In his book he recounts the escalation of their rivalry. Early on, Belzoni and Drovetti merely tried to beat each other to the artifacts. In their race to get as many artifacts as they could they would often leave a note or engraving on the artifact to indicate who got to it first. However, Belzoni writes in his journal that the French would engage in statue smashing:[123]

> On our arrival at the island, on my second voyage, we found these stones had been mutilated, and written upon in the French language, "operation manquée." The hand writing could not be ascertained, as it was done with charcoal, but we knew there had been only three French agents there, Mr. Caliud, Mr. Jaques, and the renegade Rosignana, all in the employ of Mr. Drovetti.[124]

The conflict continued to escalate from statue smashing to supposed assassination attempts.

> By this time my servant was assailed by a number of Arabs, two of whom were constantly in the service of Mr. Drovetti. At the same moment, the renegade Rossignano reached within four yards of me, and with all the rage of a ruffian, levelled a double-barrelled gun at my breast, loading me with all the imprecations that a villain could invent, by this time my servant was disarmed, and overpowered by numbers, and in spite of his efforts, took his pistols from his belt.[125]

In numerous accounts such as these, Belzoni demonstrates how he literally put his life on the line for Britain. Although Belzoni often described the monuments and ruins he encountered

---

Head of Memnon. Salt recognized Belzoni's engineering background and recruited him to collect the artifact for the British Museum. After Belzoni was successful, Salt urged him to continue collecting for the British. Unlike Belzoni, Drovetti did not publish a travelogue. The reason why is unclear, but it allowed Belzoni to narrate their exchange. Drovetti was a name familiar to the British only through Belzoni's words.

[123] To try and acquire artifacts as quickly as they could, Belzoni and Drovetti would carve their names onto the artifacts and continue sailing down the Nile. On the voyage home, they would rent a boat to pick up all the artifacts they had marked along the way. Belzoni argues that Drovetti would smash his finds because Belzoni's name was on it so Drovetti could not take credit for it. Thus, Drovetti would engage in statue smashing so that Belzoni and the British did not outdo him.

[124] Belzoni, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries Within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia*, 208-209.

[125] There is no proof if it happened as Belzoni said. However, in the last chapter of his book Belzoni mentions a trial of some men (Drovetti's agents) who "roughed him up." In Drovetti's personal correspondence he does write a letter to the Pasha which indicates the trial went forward but the men were ultimately acquitted. Belzoni speculates that this was because of Drovetti's close connection with the Pasha.
Belzoni, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries,* 303-304.

in great detail, his new finds, adding to the network of information, were often overshadowed, as the public focused on the story of the French-British rivalry.

Popular Literature

Adding to Belzoni's fame and further straining the existing network of information was the publication of a children's book entitled *Fruits of Enterprize Exhibited in the Travels of Belzoni in Egypt and Nubia: Interspersed with the Observations of a Mother to her Children* written by Lucy Sarah Atkins Wilson in 1821. *Fruits of Enterprize* is directly based on Giovanni Belzoni's book, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia* published barely a year before. Whereas Belzoni's book centered around his travels, self-glorification, and Anglo-French rivalry, Wilson's book is both a teaching tool about ancient Egypt and a celebration of Belzoni and his accomplishments for the British that centers around orientalist tropes. Wilson's book begins with a young child (Bernard) struggling to draw a wheel who requires his sister's (Laura) help to do it. However, Laura is focused on drawing the pyramids of Egypt. The mother (Mrs. A) then tells the children (including her other son and daughter, Owen and Emily), about why Laura's pyramids are more interesting than Bernard's cart drawings. The story reads like a play, with the mother systematically quizzing her children on ancient Egypt and Egyptian geography, while also telling the tale of famous collector Belzoni. In this book Belzoni is celebrated for his perseverance, and the mother hopes to use him as an example for her children to emulate.

While it is true that British-French rivalry is not at the core of *Fruits of Enterprize*, it does rear its head. For example, we can compare a description of French collecting to Belzoni's. "Mrs. A- He there found two more agents of Mr. Drovetti busied in digging the ground in all directions, and who had been tolerably successful in their pursuit after

mummies."[126] Wilson describes the French as "tolerably successful," but her description of Belzoni's accomplishments is far grander than her description of the French.

> Mrs. A- He says that this day gave him more pleasure and more gratification than wealth could purchase, arising from the discovery of what had long been sought in vain, and of presenting the world with a new and perfect monument of Egyptian antiquity. Which can be recorded as superior to any other in point of grandeur, style, and preservation, appearing as if it just finished on the day they entered it: indeed what was found in it will shew its superiority to the others.[127]

In comparison to Drovetti's "tolerable success," Belzoni presented Britain with the honor of finding a "perfect monument of Egypt." Yet more than simply celebrating Belzoni over the French, the last few sentences of the book clearly show how there is a sense of ownership of ancient Egypt:

> Owen- Belzoni was quite a boy when his attention was first turned to the science of hydraulics, otherwise he might never have gone into Egypt, for he went there, you know, Mama, in hopes of convincing the Bashaw that a hydraulic machine would be of use to irrigate his fields. Had he not done so, the great pyramid might have remained unopened 1000 years longer, the tomb of Psammuthis, in the Valley of Beban el Malook [Valley of the Kings], might never have been explored, and we should never have heard this amusing narrative of Belzoni's discoveries in Egypt and Nubia.[128]

Owen's words are key to the celebration of Belzoni. The implications are that, without him, some of the greatest accomplishments to date, opening up a Pyramid, uncovering the Valley of the Kings, would not have been accomplished for the next thousand years. This quote reflects the common perception that the French had been in Egypt far longer than the British, but this one man, equipped with his engineering knowledge has been able to do in a matter of three years what the French had been unable to do for two decades. Thus, in celebrating Belzoni, the British asserted their dominance over the French.

---

[126] Lucy Sarah Atkins Wilson, *Fruits of Enterprize Exhibited in the Travels of Belzoni in Egypt and Nubia: Interspersed with the Observations of a Mother to her Children*. (London: John Harris, 1821), 34.
[127] Wilson, *Fruits of Enterprize Exhibited in the Travels of Belzoni in Egypt and Nubia: Interspersed with the Observations of a Mother to her Children*, 130.
[128] Wilson, *Fruits of Enterprize*, 238.

Scholarship

While the British constructed a narrative of national superiority through travelogues, the French relied on scholarly description to assert their dominance.[129] Work on the *Description* began immediately after Napoleon Bonaparte issued a Consular decree of February 1802 that called for the publication of all the notes, observations, drawings, maps, and other material compiled by the savants in Egypt paid for by the French government. The *Description* was a monumental endeavor whose creation began after the decree but was not seen until 1809. From 1809-1829 several tomes were published and added to the *Description*. It was a carefully crafted and executed project that aimed to embody perfection. Scholars who wished to work on this project were invited to submit an inventory of what they proposed to contribute, drawings, memoirs, or both.[130] Every drawing, text, and word was submitted to the Assemblée Généale des Collaborateurs and was carefully scrutinized.[131] This careful process of deciding what was good enough for publication as well as the process of printing the document took a long time as it was difficult to make sure the images corresponded with the thousands of pages of text.[132] In its final form it included ten folio volumes and two atlases, eight hundred and thirty-seven copper engravings, and over three thousand illustrations. The document itself was so grand that people who owned this colossal work might order a cabinet of mahogany veneer to accommodate the set. This case cost one thousand francs and was crafted for the 1827 edition. Even if an owner decided to decline purchasing the case, the *Description* was still incredibly expensive. The first edition in 1809

[129] It should be noted that the *Description* did not only provide information on ancient Egypt. It was spilt amongst three sections, first, antiquities of Egypt, second, natural history, and finally, the modern state.
[130] Charles Coulston Gillispie and Michel Dewachter. *Monuments of Egypt: The Napoleonic Edition: The Complete Archaeological Plates from La "Description De L'Egypte,"* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 23.
[131]The Assemblée Généale des Collaborateurs was a group of scholars appointed by the French Government to oversee the publication of the *Description*. They were not however, in charge of the project. That was the responsibility of the Commission de la Description de l'Egypte. The Assemblée Généale des Collaborateur primarily scrutinized the submissions.
[132] Gillispie and Dewachter. *Monuments of Egypt: The Napoleonic Edition: the Complete Archaeological Plates from La "Description De L'Egypte,"* 24.

produced one thousand copies of four different qualities. The least expensive cost 750 francs and contained only one plate in color, printed on ordinary stock. The second, priced at eight hundred francs, included sixteen plates in color. The third, fetched 1,200 francs, printed on *papier fin* with a complete collection of plates in color. The last and most expensive was one thousand three hundred and fifty francs and included two hundred first impressions of each plate on paper velin with all color plates retouched by hand.[133] Because of its cost, —even the cheapest copy—the *Description* was an example of luxury.

The *Description* was meant to reflect a higher caliber than the travelogues. One of the notable differences between the travelogues and the *Description* was the plates' attention to detail. An example of British failure to print as well as the French can be found in the example of Edward Lane. Lane, most well known for his book *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* published in 1835, had first tried to publish a book entitled *Description of Egypt* following his initial voyage to Egypt in 1825. However, Timothy Mitchell argues that he was unable to publish this book because he could not find a publisher whose printing techniques would "reproduce the minute and mechanical accuracy of the drawings."[134] Whereas the British images were intriguing, the French plates were precise, and the monumental *Description* could include images nothing short of perfection. In 1803, Nicolas-Jacques Conté, appointed Secretary of the Commission of Sciences and Arts tasked with overseeing the *Description*'s publication, invented the Conté machine to automate the engraving process. His invention proved invaluable to the *Description*. It corrected specific problems (such as the large expanses of sky, background to the figures in the bas-reliefs) posed by the preparation of the *Description* and sped up the production by mechanizing the engraving process. Conté's machine achieved a degree of perfection that no

[133] Gillispie and Dewachter. *Monuments of Egypt,* 42.
[134] Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 23.

artist could replicate. In addition to being particular about the images, the Commission deemed certain prints of the text unsatisfactory. In seeking to treat each page with such care, the *Description* took a considerable amount of time to print. A report from August 20, 1807, reveals that in five years, only four hundred and forty-two plates had been completed with three hundred and thirty-eight still left to complete.[135] In 1806, Napoleon pushed the *Description* to appear before it was completely done and ordered that he see something by 1809. As the artifacts from his expedition were seized under the Capitulation of Alexandria, Napoleon needed something to show the public to justify the Egyptian expedition as a success. Initially, it was intended to be published all together at one time; however, Napoleon's order made it so that when the copper plates were engraved, they would be issued in batches of ten or twelve at a time.

The care exhibited in each plate also appealed to the aesthetic principles of the time. David Prochaska asserts that, at the time of the publication of the *Description*, there was a growing demand for naturalistic images based on first-hand observation (empirical naturalism).[136] Specifically, Europe was interested in the descriptive natural sciences. The images in the *Description* represented this need for observational images that catered to the scientific standards of classification. Thus, the *Description* reflects popular taste. Prochaska also argues that the *Description*'s set up is immersive as "the sites are presented as moving camera sites. By the end of each sequence, the viewer has a clear idea how the site fits together."[137] The travelogue writers also tried to cater to this standard of observational images, but as their images were often the result of their own drawings, they lacked the

[135] Gillispie and Dewachter. *Monuments of Egypt: The Napoleonic Edition: the Complete Archaeological Plates from La "Description De L'Egypte,"* 25.
[136] David Prochaska, "Art of Colonialism, Colonialism of Art: The "Description De L'Égypte" (1809-1828)." *L'Esprit Créateur* 34, no. 2 (1994): 75-77.
[137] Prochaska, "Art of Colonialism, Colonialism of Art: The "Description De L'Égypte" (1809-1828)," 80.

clarity shown in the images of the *Description*. The production of the *Description* was so precise, that Egyptologists to this day are able to use it as a resource.

Another notable difference is that the publication of the *Description* could be lengthy and expensive, as it was financed by the government rather than a publishing house. The length and precision of the *Description* imply it is an all-knowing and comprehensive document. Best said, by Prochaska, nowhere in the document is there the implication that anything is unknown: "The overwhelming impression of these five huge folio volumes is what we know, not what we do not."[138] Instead, the *Description* has an "encyclopedic gaze." The *Description* was meant to be similar to an encyclopedia; the travelogues, however, were about the process of collecting ancient Egypt and creating a network of information. This is not to say that the *Description* did not add to the network of information; it certainly improved it; however, the reason for its inception was to rebrand the Napoleonic expedition as a cultural success and try to prove their intellectual authority over ancient Egypt.[139]

In undertaking this comparative study of textual description, I uncovered a network of information that both the British and French contributed to. However, Belzoni's book and the *Description* preferred to spotlight their individual nation's intellectual superiority rather than add to the network of mutual cooperation. Just as Britain was trying to assert dominance over Belzoni's ingenuity and engineering prowess that had allowed him not only to accurately describe the ancient ruins, but open them up (something the French had been unable to accomplish), the French sought to use the monumental publication of the *Description* as their assertion of dominance over understanding and collecting ancient Egypt. These focal points, the *Description*, and Belzoni's journal demonstrate how the French sought to collect ancient

[138] Prochaska, "Art of Colonialism," 81.
[139] All of the travelogues published after 1809 – excluding William Richard Hamilton's – referenced the *Description* in the introduction. Hamilton's did not include a reference to it as the first edition of the *Description* was published right after his book.

Egypt by appealing to the intellectual community, but the British did so through engaging the public.

Survey Modality

Both the British and French actively used mapping as a means to affect their collection of ancient Egypt. Although numerous maps were created of modern Egypt as a means of traversing it, some maps were commissioned that focused on the ruins in Egypt or constructed what they imagined ancient Egypt looked like based on specific markers such as the Nile, modern cities, and ruins. This section focuses on the production of the maps specifically labeled "ancient Egypt," and maps used to assist with finding antiquities. Maps under this header usually fall into two categories: First, those produced to accompany the travelogues and second, a hybrid produced by the French in the *Description de l'Egypte*. Nearly every travelogue discussed in the previous section included a map that combines modern and ancient Egypt's features in its early or later pages. The *Description* was produced by the French government, but it was a tool for both the government and European academics. In addition to its textual description and plates, it also included several new maps of ancient Egypt. This section analyzes why the British and French sought to map ancient Egypt and demonstrates how the travelogue authors' inclusion of maps is key to understanding that, despite establishing a network of information, mapping was a form of competition and rivalry. Additionally, the decision of what to include in a map indicates what the map maker considered important. The maps created by the ancient Egyptians varied from their nineteenth-century counterparts as ancient Egyptian maps faced towards the South to assign importance to the Nile. European maps assigned value to locations such as Alexandria, Cairo, and most importantly, Rosetta. The French and British maps demonstrate that ancient Egypt was valued for its association with Europe's "rediscovery" of Egypt.

Before analyzing mapping as another way for the British and French to compete to collect ancient Egypt, it is important to explain the preexisting maps that the French and British used prior to Napoleon's Egyptian expedition. Similar to some of the earliest writers on Egypt, most pre-existing maps shared a common flaw: the cartographer had never set foot in Egypt. The most notable example of this is Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville. D'Anville is a famous French cartographer who revolutionized the concept of blank space in the map. Rather than draw whimsical creatures over unexplored areas, he allowed the space to remain blank. Lucy Chester argues that this was important for two reasons: first, it made maps increasingly accurate, and second, it allowed the viewers' "imagination more room to wander."[140] His use of blank space was first put to use in his maps of India in the 1750s and later in Egypt in 1765 when he created the most recent and accurate account of Egypt prior to the Egyptian campaign. Chester argues that d'Anville pushed for the usage of blank space as he could not stand "guesswork." Yet ironically, d'Anville, driven to pursue perfection, never visited Egypt to map it. His own map was informed by preexisting maps and classical accounts from the Greeks. However, unlike the original travelogue authors whose accounts were often heavily flawed, d'Anville's map marvelously withstood the test of time. This is partially because of the preexisting cooperation amongst European cartographers. In Chester's study of map-making in colonial India, she analyzes how d'Anville shared his map collections with British cartographer James Rennell. Rennell used both d'Anville's personal collection as well as other Frenchmen's accounts and maps to inform his own, demonstrating that, "despite Anglo-French conflict, international scientific cooperation was the norm."[141] Thus, prior to Napoleon's campaign, map-makers exhibited a system of mutual cooperation. However, Napoleon's campaign shifted this prerogative. Although both the French and

[140] Lucy P. Chester, "The Mapping of Empire: French and British Cartographies of India in the Late-Eighteenth Century," *Portuguese Studies* 16 (2000): 257.
[141] Chester,"The Mapping of Empire," 260.

British still sought to create the most accurate maps, they also aimed to be the first to do so. The public often engaged in this race through reading the travelogues, which often included a recent map.

John Brian Harley argues that maps are tools of power as they represent a belief in progress. This is most clearly demonstrated symbolically by the French. In his analysis of the aftermath of the Egyptian expedition, Ian Coller included two images of Napoleon standing next to two different maps, one of Egypt and one of Italy. Figure 4 is taken from the frontispiece of a book entitled *Bonaparte au Caire*, anonymously published in Paris in 1789-1799. Although Coller uses this image to analyze Napoleon's relationship with Islam, this image is useful for my interpretation of maps as a belief in progress. Coller explains that figure 5 shows a filled-out map of Italy and behind Napoleon is an obelisk with the great rulers' names chiseled on it. The last and most recent name is Napoleon. Compare this to figure 4 which has no names on the obelisk. Coller argues the symbolism of this blank space is a demonstration that the French are ready to "monumentalize this new stage of 'civilization.'"[142] The relatively blank map – that only includes markers such as the pyramids, the Nile, and Alexandria – and obelisk represent the belief that the French were reinventing or rediscovering Egypt, as the image does not acknowledge the preexisting maps by d'Anville.[143]

[142] Ian Coller, "Egypt in the French Revolution," In *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*, edited by Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 89.
[143] D'Anville's map would later be recognized in the *Description de l'Egypt*e in 1809.

Figure 4 (On the left): Napoleon in front of a map of Egypt.
Figure 5 (On the right): Napoleon in front of a map of Italy.[144]

Analyzing these images shows how the French and British would seek to complete the most accurate accounts of ancient Egypt, but this rivalry was not as clearly visible as it was with the textual description. This competition instead was facilitated by the travelogues.

Travelogue Maps

In her children's book, Lucy Sarah Atkins Wilson constantly wrote that the children would locate the areas Belzoni was exploring in the story on a map nearby. This story tells us quite a bit about why mapping was so important. At one point in the story, a child struggles to locate an area on the map.

> Emily – Will you be so good as to show me its situation? It is not marked on the map mamma.
> Mrs. A – No, not on our modern maps. But I believe it is just by that point of land projecting into the sea, called Cape Lepte, a little beyond the 24th degree of latitude.
> Emily –I have made a dot with my pencil, and I shall not forget…[145]

[144] Coller, "Egypt in the French Revolution," 89.
[145] Wilson, *Fruits of Enterprize Exhibited in the Travels of Belzoni in Egypt and Nubia: Interspersed with the Observations of a Mother to her Children*, 191.

Modern maps were not able to locate this new area of Egypt Belzoni has rediscovered. Thus, the children make up for this lack of existing information and mark it on their own map. This trend is evident in the children's book and the travelogues. Although the maps may have focused on ancient Egyptian history, the travelogue authors were rediscovering the lost ruins and land through maps. Thus, the places marked on the map also served as indicators of who rediscovered what first and whose map it appeared on first. As the maps did not specifically indicate who discovered what first, the accompanying text in the travelogue was vital to interpreting the map.

Similar to the travelogues' textual description, the newly produced maps helped verify the network of information. This is most clearly articulated by William Richard Hamilton. "There is here a great inaccuracy in the maps of the Delta, and Pococke seems to have mistaken the ruins in question for those of Bubastus [modern day Tell Basta, an ancient Egyptian city] "[146] In this sentence Hamilton is correcting the inaccurate information and informing his audience of why his map is a more accurate presentation of the location of ancient Egyptian ruins. He does this several times for both modern Egyptian locations but more commonly corrects mapmakers such as d'Anville who focuses on ancient Egyptian ruins:

> This evening we reached the entrance of the old Tanitic branch, now called the canal of Moes, where D'Anville has incorrectly placed the Pelusiac branch; whereas this last diverged from the main stream considerably higher up. Directly facing it, on the Delta side of the river, are the remains of an ancient city, probably Xois, which according to Ptolemy was between the Permuthiac and Athribitic branches.[147]

Rather than relying on the ancient accounts as d'Anville does, in this case on Ptolemy (which Ptolemy is unspecified), Hamilton explains how his first-hand experience informs his account. Yet it is still not his goal to overshadow d'Anville's work. If that was his goal he

[146] Hamilton, *Remarks on Several Parts of Turkey*, 364.
[147] Hamilton, *Remarks on Several Parts of Turkey*, 364.

would have had to produce a significantly more detailed map. He is simply verifying information.

In addition to verifying the network, the maps were a key part of telling the story of exploration. In most travelogues, a map is on the first page accompanied by images of the ancient ruins. The map served to highlight the travelogue author's journey, as it was not meant to be a detailed account of all of Egypt. Often the maps would include key locations such as Alexandria, but the focus was on the locations they name in the text or show in the images.

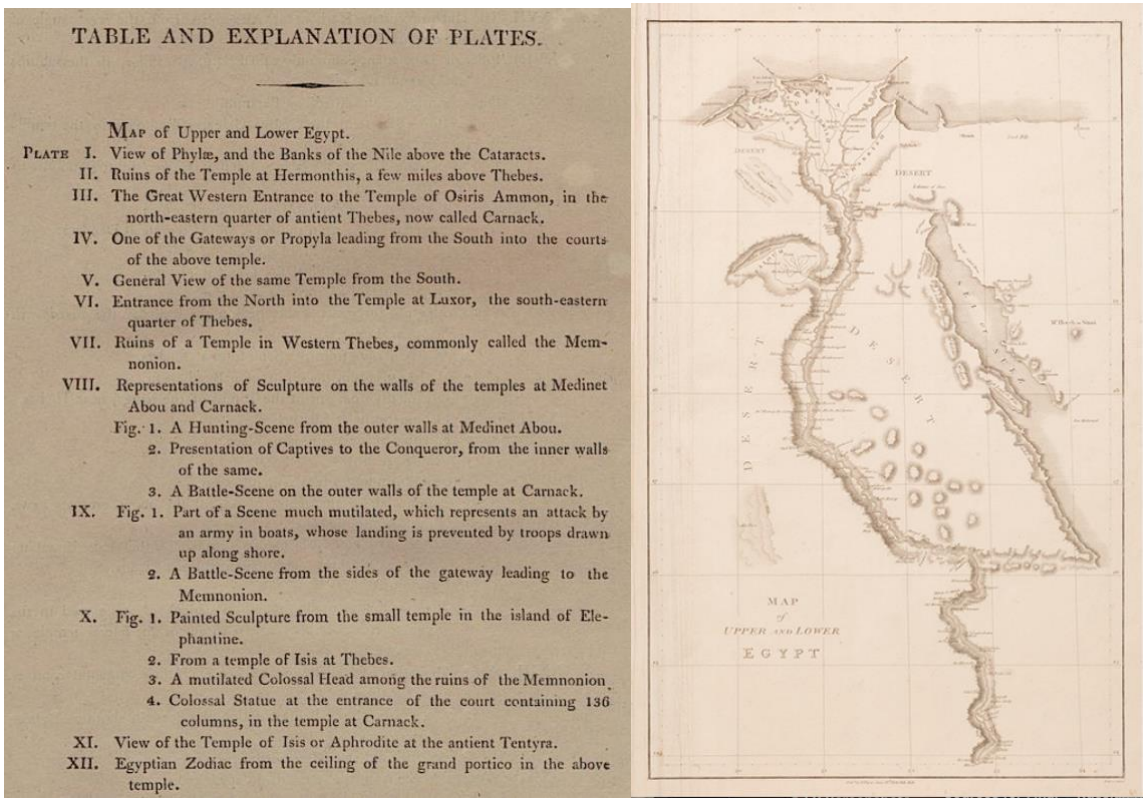


TABLE AND EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

MAP of Upper and Lower Egypt.

PLATE I. View of Phylæ, and the Banks of the Nile above the Cataracts.
II. Ruins of the Temple at Hermonthis, a few miles above Thebes.
III. The Great Western Entrance to the Temple of Osiris Ammon, in the north-eastern quarter of antient Thebes, now called Carnack.
IV. One of the Gateways or Propyla leading from the South into the courts of the above temple.
V. General View of the same Temple from the South.
VI. Entrance from the North into the Temple at Luxor, the south-eastern quarter of Thebes.
VII. Ruins of a Temple in Western Thebes, commonly called the Memnonion.
VIII. Representations of Sculpture on the walls of the temples at Medinet Abou and Carnack.
Fig. 1. A Hunting-Scene from the outer walls at Medinet Abou.
2. Presentation of Captives to the Conqueror, from the inner walls of the same.
3. A Battle-Scene on the outer walls of the temple at Carnack.
IX. Fig. 1. Part of a Scene much mutilated, which represents an attack by an army in boats, whose landing is prevented by troops drawn up along shore.
2. A Battle-Scene from the sides of the gateway leading to the Memnonion.
X. Fig. 1. Painted Sculpture from the small temple in the island of Elephantine.
2. From a temple of Isis at Thebes.
3. A mutilated Colossal Head among the ruins of the Memnonion.
4. Colossal Statue at the entrance of the court containing 136 columns, in the temple at Carnack.
XI. View of the Temple of Isis or Aphrodite at the antient Tentyra.
XII. Egyptian Zodiac from the ceiling of the grand portico in the above temple.

Figures 6 and 7: Both pictures are taken from William Richard Hamilton's travelogue published in 1809. Pictured on the left is the title page describing the placement of the plates. Note that several references to ancient ruins are included. On the right, the map of Upper and Lower Egypt is listed as Plate I.[148]

Figures 6 and 7 are taken from Hamilton's travelogue to demonstrate how the map served as a tool to locate the inspiration of the plates. The maps could also serve as a visual representation of the new locations the authors were rediscovering. Although Hamilton

[148] Hamilton, *Remarks on Several Parts of Turkey*, 1-2.

focuses on a previously explored location, Thebes (which is highlighted in his map as well as the Nile Delta), Henry Light expands and focuses on Philae. Noticeably Alexandria is absent from his map. This is irregular but most likely purposeful to highlight the new location he is adding.

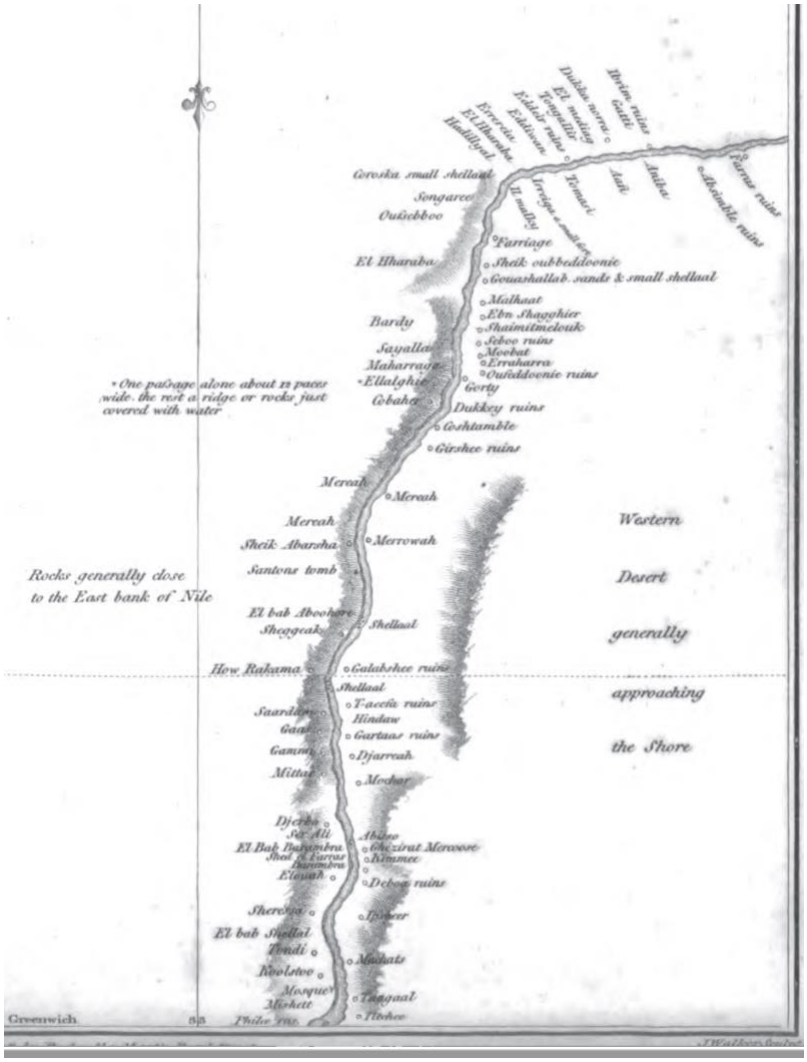
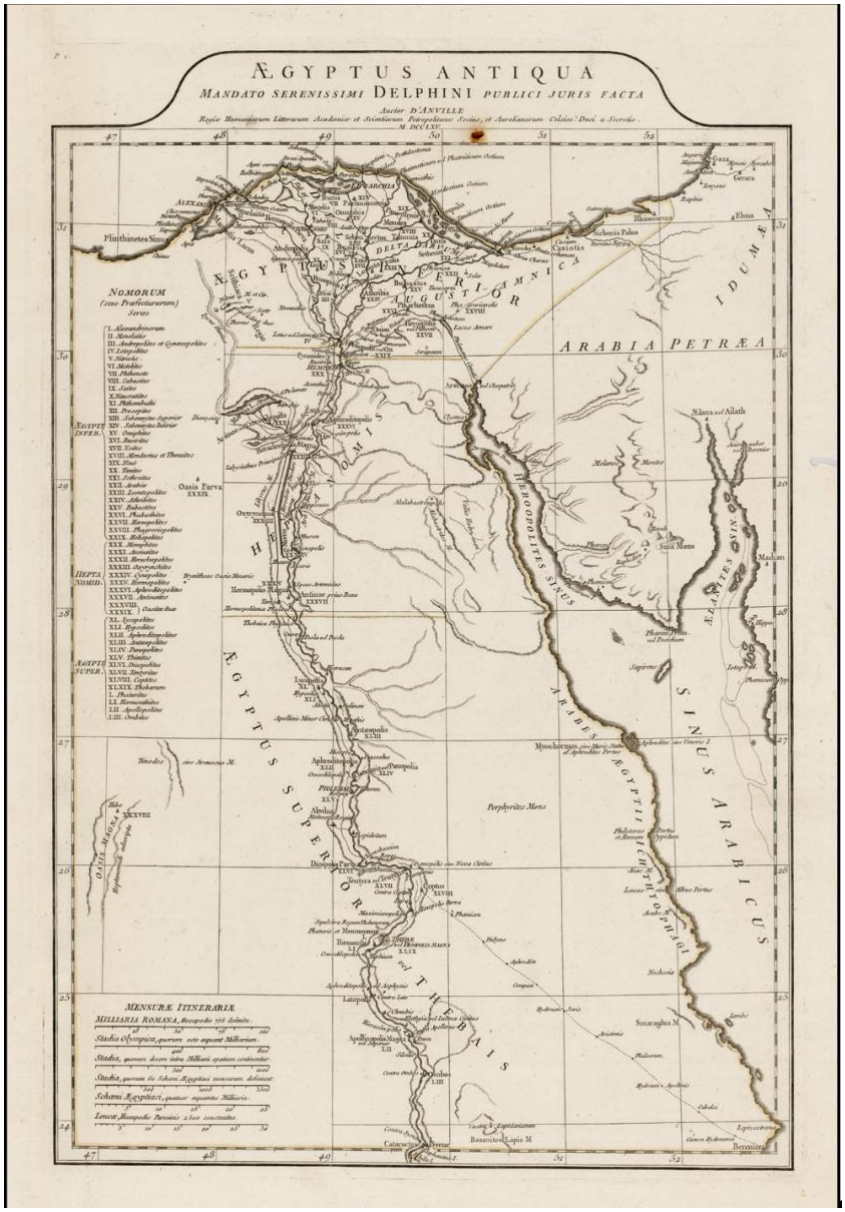


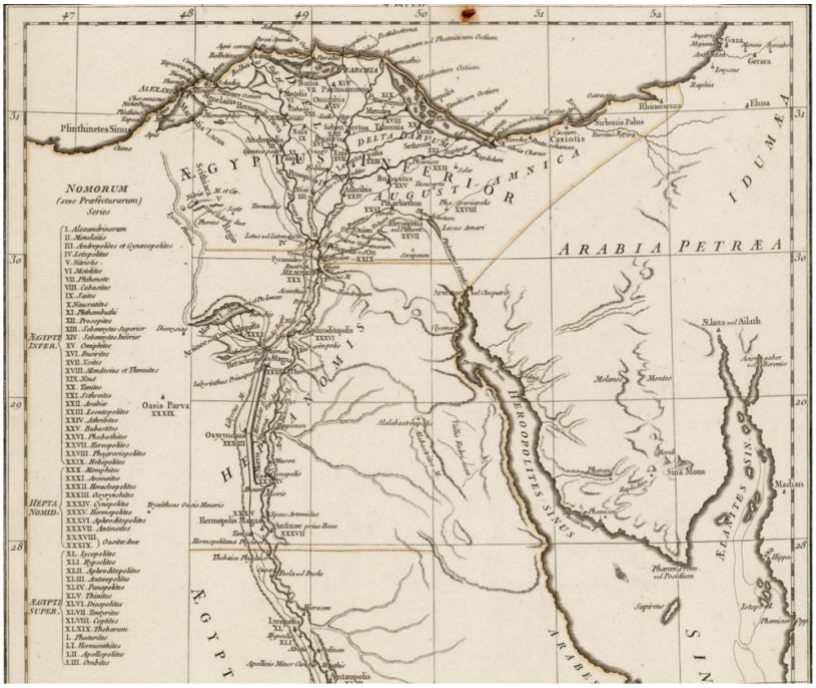
Figure 8: *Map of Egypt from Henry Light's travelogue published in 1818.*[149]

Unlike Hamilton, who refers to his map throughout his book, Light expects the reader to follow along independently as he describes the locations, monuments, and ruins. He also does not directly reference preexisting maps as Hamilton does. This is most likely due to Light's move away from Alexandria and the Nile Delta, which is not as well documented. However, as Light references Hamilton on several occasions in the text, he should be familiar with

[149] Light, *Travels in Egypt, Nubia, Holy Land, Mount Libanon, and Cyprus, in the Year 1814*, 1.

d'Anville's maps, which briefly cover Philae. However, d'Anville's map is primarily focused on Lower Egypt (the upper half of the map) as detailed accounts from the Ptolemies, Herodotus, and Homer inform his map.



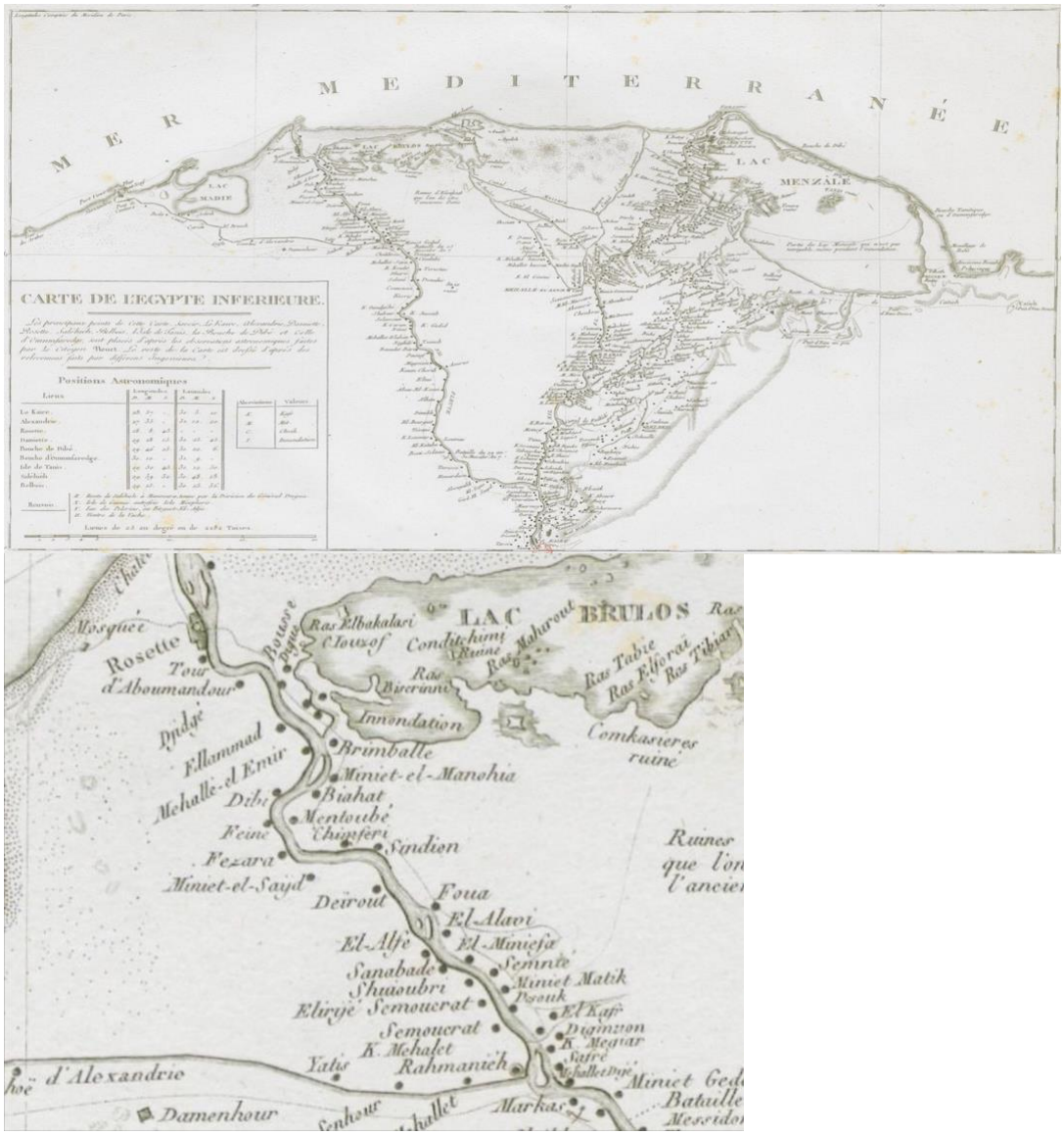


Figures 9 and 10: D'Anville's map of Ancient Egypt produced in 1765.[150]

Regardless of why Light does not reference preexisting maps, his text demonstrates the idea found in Wilson's book: he was writing on a new location and his documentation of it would not be forgotten. Thus, he was adding to the network, but also taking credit for his new addition.

Aside from adding to the network of information, the maps also indicate what the French aimed to claim credit for – their discovery of the Rosetta Stone. Although seized under the Capitulation of Alexandria, the French would compete for the recognition of having found the Rosetta Stone and later translating it. Travelogue author Vivant Denon's map reveals something previously unseen in maps of Egypt: he marked Rosetta on his map.

[150] Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville. Aegyptus Antiqua [map], (Paris: J.B.B. D'Anville, 1765).

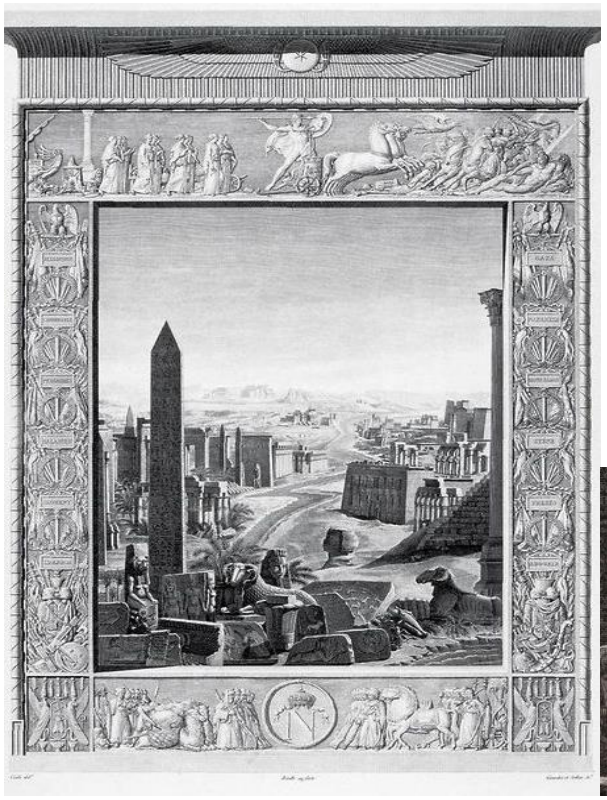


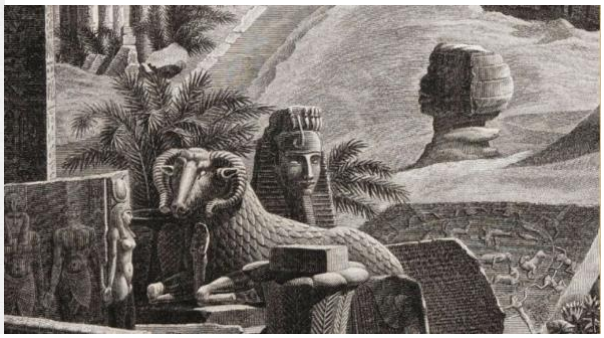
Figures 11 and 12: Map from Vivant Denon's travelogue published in 1802. Note the addition of "Rosette" in the top left-hand corner.[151]

As Denon accompanied Napoleon to Egypt he was well aware of the existence of the Rosetta Stone and knew the lengths General Jacques-François Menou went to hide it from the British. Since its discovery, Menou speculated it might be the key to translating hieroglyphics and ordered copies of it to be sent to French linguists. Additionally, the Rosetta Stone was a topic of discussion before it was taken by the British, as French newspapers had already reported on it in 1799.[152] Thus, the French recognized the value of the Rosetta Stone and were

[151] Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*, 47.
[152] Johnathan Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt* (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2020), 44.

incredibly bitter when it was taken. This bitterness is most evident in the frontispiece of the *Description*. On the frontispiece, in the lower left-hand corner sit fifteen artifacts, the artifacts seized under the Capitulation of Alexandria. Front and center is the Rosetta Stone. This image serves to show that the British may have taken these artifacts but the French discovered them, and they produced a more valuable text, the *Description*. Thus, it is significant that Denon marked Rosetta on his map, as the only significance of this location at that time was the discovery of the Rosetta Stone. He holds Rosetta to the same standard as Alexandria on his map. In looking at Denon's map, it is visible how the French are subtly using maps to stake a claim on who discovered what first.





Figures 13 and 14: The Frontispiece of the Description de l'Egypte. Note that the Rosetta Stone along with the other fourteen artifacts seized under the Capitulation of Alexandria are on the cover.[153]

[153] Description de L'Egypte, ou Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Egypte pendant l'expedition de l'Armée française, 1[st]ed,. 22 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1809-1828), 1.

It should be noted that the maps in the *Description* of ancient Egypt were not published until 1826. This topic was explained by Anne Godlewska who examines the fight between the civilian Commission for the Description *de l'Egypte* and the Minister of War over who should publish the map. Edme-François Jomard, the general editor in charge of the Commission de la *Description de l'Egypte,* fought for several years for the control of the production and publication of the maps. Godlewska argues that during this fight, Jomard "claimed that the text added nothing but details to the maps and that the maps were the essence of the *Description*."[154] Jomard was ultimately successful. Aside from the inward battle of who should publish the maps, Godlewska argues that the maps were so well done that "Napoleon feared their utility to others."[155] It was due to these complications over the publication of the maps that Denon's map in the travelogue is one of the few maps to be accessible to the public. The publication of the maps would take place under the reign of Charles X, who used ancient Egypt as a means to legitimize his rule and paint himself as a patron of the arts and history – a topic which will be analyzed in chapter 4. In lieu of a new map to accompany the early volumes of the *Description*, the book includes d'Anville's map of ancient Egypt (figures 6 and 7).

Mapping not only provided a visual to accompany the travelogues, but also served to inform the reader of what locations the author thought was significant to show. This is significant as only Denon's map highlights the entirety of Egypt in great detail. Other authors such as Hamilton and Legh show smaller potions in relation to their personal journeys. Thus, they limited how ancient Egypt was to be perceived by their readers. They tied the significance of what they showed on the map directly to their journey. Although Denon provided a more substantial map of Egypt, he was not immune from hiding messages in his

[154] Anne Godlewska, "Map, Text and Image. The Mentality of Enlightened Conquerors: A New Look at the Description De L'Egypte." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20, no. 1 (1995): 10.
[155] Godlewska, "Map, Text and Image," 10.

map and tying it directly to his experience as a savant. His map demonstrates the monumental significance he ascribed to Rosetta, a direct reflection of the French's discovery of the Rosetta Stone, an artifact that Denon perceived to unlock ancient Egypt.

Although both the French and British participated in the survey and textual description modalities, the British would focus their attention on presenting ancient Egypt through public-facing exhibitions. With the artifacts acquired from the Capitulation of Alexandria the British had a substantial collection of monumental artifacts to exhibit as imperial trophies. This would become their primary mode of collection until 1822, when Jean Francois-Champollion translated hieroglyphs. The next chapter will focus on the British push to collect and exhibit ancient Egyptian artifacts in public exhibitions.

CHAPTER 3: MUSEUM MANIA: ANCIENT EGYPTIAN IMPERIAL TROPHIES

Figure 15: Egyptian antiquities in the Townley Gallery of the British Museum.[156]

Ancient Egyptian artifacts exhibited in the British Museum were a way to share the British imperial trophies with the public. It allowed them to actively engage in the collection of ancient Egyptian history. Walking through the Townley Gallery as pictured in Figure 15 presented the visitor with the narrative of a grand pharaonic Egypt that had been conquered by the British. It was also physical proof of the headway the British were making in understanding ancient Egypt. The public exhibitions allowed the British to feel superior to the French from whom they had taken the artifacts to form the gallery in the first place.

Unlike the textual description and observational modalities that exhibited mutual cooperation in the beginning amongst soldiers and scholars, the museological modality was fueled by British-French competition from the start. For this chapter, I first explain the competition over the Rosetta stone and its claimant, the British, who used this artifact along

[156] Anonymous, *View through the Egyptian Room, in the Townley Gallery at the British Museum*, 1820, watercolour, 36.1 x 44.3 cm. Collection of the British Museum.

with fourteen others seized from the French to expand the British Museum. I return to Egypt where collectors competed to sell their artifacts to the French and British. I then analyze stand-alone exhibits held in England to emphasize how the British appealed to the public. I conclude with a discussion of the complications the British and French faced when collecting and exhibiting artifacts, and I also include a small discussion of why the Louvre did not collect as the British did until after the translation of the Rosetta stone. My research conclusively shows that the British adopted a mode of appealing to the public, yet their success was at times limited, as they struggled to turn the British Museum into a public institution. Instead, exhibits such as Giovanni Belzoni's were the most successful at engaging the public.

This chapter serves as a continuation of chapter 2. In it, I expand on the modalities used by the British and French pre-translation. Whereas I introduced the textual description and survey modalities in the last chapter, here I focus solely on the museological modality The museological modality is the collection and dissemination of knowledge of the artifacts of a civilization and the power to classify a nation. For this chapter, it centers around the British Museum's collection and exhibition from 1800 to 1822 as well as Belzoni's personal exhibitions held in Britain in 1821. In these exhibitions, the British assigned value and meaning to the objects they exhibited. Although chronologically it would make the most sense to introduce this modality first, analyzing the travelogues prior to this modality in the last chapter helps explain how the British and French would compete, as the French were unable to collect for some time after the Capitulation of Alexandria and would not actively purchase collections until 1822.

Museological Modality

As the museum modality became the prime British approach, a discussion of the conceptual historiography of museum building is necessary. Walter Benjamin argues that when objects are placed in a museum they are "re-collected." Not only is the object classified, it is separated from its original context to fit into the narrative the curator is trying to tell. According to Benjamin, "In the act of collecting it is decisive that the object be disassociated from all of its original functions in order to enter into the closest possible relationship with its equivalents… collecting is a form of practical memory."[157] Daniel Sherman argues this logic results in museums treating each object "independently of the material conditions of its own epoch" – instead they are reassigned meaning and context to fit with the existing collections. In an earlier book, Sherman argues that institutions such as museums serve a purpose for the fundamental human need of order and coherence in the world of social interaction.[158] Thus it is important to organize an exhibit and make sure that the various artifacts "fit in." In ensuring the objects "fit in" with the existing collection, museums can efface the "complexity of their history and [are] replacing it with a sanitized version that serves their own purposes."[159] Furthermore, Sherman argues that visual arts and exhibits create the opportunity for legitimation and self-glorification.[160] This trend is evident in both the British Museum and the Louvre. For the British, this project would begin as early as 1801, when the museum acquired its first fifteen Egyptian artifacts. For the French, their collection and self-glorification through exhibition of Egypt did not begin until the reign of Charles X (1824-1830), which will be explored in the next chapter.

The audience of a museum is also important to analyze. Chantal Georgel describes a museum as an "encyclopedic institution devoted to the education of all."[161] Yet the idea of a

---

[157] Daniel J. Sherman, *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), xvi.
[158] Sherman, *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, 9.
[159] Daniel J. Sherman, *Worthy Monuments*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 10.
[160] Sherman, *Worthy Monuments*, 17.
[161] Sherman, *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, 113.

public museum was not yet fully developed, and there were growing pains as curators struggled to figure out how to display the artifacts. Originally, there were no labels, and little thought was put into the placement of the objects. There was no clear storyline aside from what a two-hour-long tour guide could provide. However, despite the lack of narrative, Richard Altick argues that museums were popular as well as academic.[162] Additionally, he clarifies that nothing could beat the evidence provided through the display of objects. Despite the growing pains, a museum was more accessible than a document such as the *Description*. A museum is a place both literate and illiterate people can enjoy and learn from. Georgel takes this a step further and explains how objects in museums are commodities: "There is little doubt that to the eyes of most visitors, untrained in the history of art, the masterpieces, art objects, and "curiosities" exhibited in the museum appeared first of all as expensive objects – "commodities" that were exceptionally expensive, to be sure, but commodities all the same."[163] Even if the meaning behind the objects could not be grasped, the public was still told a story of the prestige and grandeur of their nation as it had collected several treasures and placed them on display. She continues by explaining the symbolic ownership over these objects visitors could experience: "The museum allowed its visitors symbolically to possess the objects that were inaccessible - objects that could neither be bought, since they were inalienable, nor fully understood, except by an elite of amateurs or art appreciators- and as such invested with high cultural prestige."[164] Although in the eighteenth-century wealthy collectors often possessed vast private collections, the nineteenth-century public museums routinely encouraged the donation or sale of private collections for the public good. This increased the cultural value of the objects as they were no longer the possession of a

[162] Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London*, (New York: ACLS History E-Book Project, 2005), 1.
[163] Sherman, *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, 118.
[164] Sherman, *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, 119.

nobleman, but of the nation. With this new distinction, every citizen was invited to partake in the collection of ancient Egypt.

The British Museum

In 1802 the artifacts acquired under the Capitulation of Alexandria arrived in Britain and were gifted by King George III to the British Museum. This was the first step in collecting ancient Egypt, in which the British government played an active role. However, the British Museum had no room to house the collection. Only recently, the British Museum had relocated from Sir Hans Sloane's home to the Montagu House in London.[165] Originally, the British Museum was the private collection of Sir Hans Sloane; however, upon his death in 1753, in his will, Sloane declared his intention that his collection be open to all persons for the public benefit in London. He did not, however, offer his collection free of charge; he asked for £20,000 to purchase the collection, which would be distributed between his two daughters.[166] Parliament was given twelve months to purchase the collection; otherwise it would be sold to a museum in Paris, Berlin, Madrid, or St. Petersburg. The threat of sending his collections abroad was effective and after six month of deliberation Parliament purchased the collection.[167] They also purchased the Montagu House in London for £10,000 to house it. On June 17, 1753, the British Museum Act was passed, which stated the collection would be kept and used for the public who would enjoy free access to peruse it. The museum opened on Monday January 15, 1759 – admission was free but had to be requested in advance in writing. Initially, the tours were small, with two groups of five admitted together; a few years later this was expanded to fifteen. Each visit lasted a total of two hours, originally on

[165] The Montagu House was transformed from a house into a museum by architect Henry Keene. The Montagu House still remains as the base of the British Museum. Several galleries were built and added to it, but the original location remains the same.
[166] James Delbourgo, *Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017), 210.
[167] Delbourgo, *Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum*, 311.

Mondays and Thursdays only.[168] Although the museum was technically a public institution, Maya Jasanoff argues it more closely resembled a cabinet of curiosities than a full-fledged museum. Despite the British Museum Act, in practice, it limited who was allowed to enter, as only select visitors approved by the principal librarian could enter. The museum would, however, begin its evolution into a public museum with the arrival of the Egyptian antiquities.

In order to accommodate the new Egyptian collection, in 1803 the British Museum's first-ever purpose-built wing, the Townley Gallery, was constructed. Jasanoff argues this construction altered the British Museum in a fundamental way, as it transformed it from a "gentleman's townhouse" into a "genuine museum."[169] The gallery was opened to the public in June 1808 with the artifacts from the Capitulation of Alexandria front and center. It should be noted that access to these artifacts was available for those who received approval from the principal librarian. Prior to these acquisitions, Sloane, in his personal collecting efforts, had acquired several Egyptian objects, but they were all small items—bronzes, terra-cotta figures, and amulets. He did, however, boast the acquisition of four mummies, which were displayed alongside the artifacts seized from the French. This was the first Egyptian Gallery Exhibit in Britain.

By 1808 the British Museum had in practice become a slightly more public museum. Richard Altick argues that, until 1805, the museum was exclusively reserved for "true scholars" rather than "casual visitors" due to its admission policies.[170] However, in 1807 the policy was revamped, and 120 people were admitted each day without requiring prior approval by the principal librarian. Yet, despite the influx of visitors, there was no time to leisurely browse the collections; instead, tour guides hurried the groups through the

---

[168] Delbourgo, *Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum*, 320.
[169] Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850*, 225.
[170] Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London*, (New York: ACLS History E-Book Project, 2005), 17.

exhibits.[171] Unfortunately, as the British Museum wrestled with what it meant to be a public museum, it was largely still a service for scholars, as Altick argues that after looking through the records of who visited the British Museum, he found that it was mostly the elite.[172] Aside from the guided tour limiting the visitors' interactions with the artifacts, the exhibits themselves were fairly disorderly. The exhibits were unlabeled and sometimes not properly cared for. Furthermore, the objects were often thrown together rather than storyboarded.[173] This was particularly evident in the Egyptian Gallery, as not much was known about the civilization.

Despite the apparent lack of organization in the early exhibition, the tour guides and a book entitled *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum* assisted visitors with sorting out the exhibit. This book provided the reader with a history of the museum and its collections, details on the artifacts in each exhibit hall, and clarification of where the object originated (from a private collector or a gift from the government).[174] The *Synopsis* was published as early as 1803 and was reworked every year to include new additions. The *Synopsis* did not detail all the artifacts in the museum, only the antiquities. This book provides insight into the physical layout of the exhibitions.

Before analyzing the actual exhibits, it is important to note that the *Synopsis* was available in two formats. One was the plain *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum.* A second version included an additional document, *Acts and Votes of Parliament: Statues and Rules*. The version that contained both documents was entitled *Acts and Votes of Parliament: Statues and Rules and Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum.* This version included the entire history of the British Museum in relation to the British Museum Act and its early acquisitions gifted by King George III. The document also credits King

[171] Altick, *The Shows of London*, 440.
[172] Altick, *The Shows of London*, 445.
[173] Altick, *The Shows of London*, 439.
[174] *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, (United Kingdom: Cox, Son, and Baylis, 1803), 15.

George III with contributing to the expansion of the museum. The language used in this is important to examine:

> His Majesty having been graciously pleased to Order the valuable Egyptian Antiquities which were acquired by His Majesty's victorious Arms during the late Expedition to Egypt, to be deposited in the British Museum, the Petitioners provided temporary Coverings for their Preservation, which, nevertheless, are found to be insufficient for protecting them from the Injury of the Weather; and it is apprehended that, unless better secured, they may, in a short time, be materially Defaced, whereby His Majesty's gracious Intentions will be frustrated, to the Detriment of Science, and the Disparagement of these memorable Trophies of National Glory; and that the Petitioners, desirous to prevent Consequences so much to be regretted, have caused a Plan and Estimate to be prepared of an Addition to the present Building , for the Purpose of effectually preserving these valuable Monuments in a suitable Manner, as well as for the Reception of other important Specimens of the fine Arts already in their Possession, and to which, it is hoped, that material Additions may be made from Time to Time…[175]

The author argues the building has been constructed to adequately house and protect the collections as well as add to them. However, he also clarifies that these artifacts are "memorable trophies of national glory." Their status as trophies justifies the expansion of the museum. The *Acts of Parliament* briefly mentions the Egyptian campaign, but the *Synopsis* more clearly articulates how the French failure became the British success. In a brief explanation of the collection of the various exhibits, the author explains the origins of the Egyptian collection.

> Lastly, our army in Egypt having acquired, by the capitulation of Alexandria in 1801, many articles of Egyptian antiquities, which had been selected and shipped with a view of being transported to France; these acquisitions were sent to England in 1802 and were immediately ordered by His Majesty to be placed in the British Museum.[176]

This passage informs the reader that the artifacts they are viewing were directly snatched from the hands of the French. After explaining the origins of the collection, the *Synopsis* explains the significance of providing a worthy space to house these objects.

---

[175] *Acts and Votes of Parliament, Statutes and Rules,and Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, (United Kingdom: Cox, Son, and Baylis, 1803), 33.
[176] *Acts and Votes of Parliament, Statutes and Rules,and Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, xii.

> The original building being by no means sufficiently spacious for the reception of this and the Egyptian collections, Parliament has, from time to time, voted sufficient supplies for the purpose of erecting an additional edifice, which is now completed; and a magnificent collection of ancient sculptures is at length opened for the inspection of strangers, as well as for the improvement of artists, an advantage which the students in the fine arts have never before enjoyed in this country…[177]

This quote is taken from under the header "opened to students and artists." This quote and header explain that the government helped fund this project with the goal of creating a suitable living space for the artifacts and opening it up to the public. While in practice this would take time, in principle, the museum was meant to be a place for all as well as a monument of knowledge and ownership over antiquities, including ancient Egypt.

Regarding the layout of the ancient Egyptian antiquities, they were split amongst two rooms (rooms eight and nine). The first, room eight, was the smaller of the two and housed "Egyptian antiquities." The 1803 edition of the *Synopsis* (the original copy) lists three specific artifacts in this room – two mummies and one "manuscript from a mummy" (likely a book of the dead). The *Synopsis* also mentions everyday items (vases, bronze trinkets, fragments of statues, and amulets) that are too numerous to count or list in the book. The second room, room nine, was "Egyptian sculptures." This room contained thirty-nine artifacts ranging from coffins to columns and sphinxes.[178] The collection was a mix of artifacts taken from the French and some artifacts collected by the British army (including travelogue author William Richard Hamilton).[179] Considering that Egyptian antiquities were newly acquired, this was quite the collection as the Greco-Roman sculptures room (room ten) possessed 86 artifacts. The jewel of the collection, the Rosetta Stone, was in room nine.

---

[177] *Acts and Votes of Parliament, Statutes and Rules,and Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, xv.
[178] *Acts and Votes of Parliament, Statutes and Rules,and Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, 84.
[179] It should be noted that although Hamilton collected like Belzoni, he primarily collected Greek artifacts and was often not associated with collecting ancient Egyptian artifacts as Belzoni was known for. Hamilton's preference of association with the Greco-Roman world reflects the general European consensus that the Classics were more well regarded and established compared to Egyptology which was just getting its start.

Whereas the *Synopsis* made sure the public was aware a majority of the artifacts were taken from the French, the author did not say much about the significance of the Rosetta Stone:

> No. 23. The Rosetta stone, containing three inscriptions of the same import, one in hieroglyphics, another in the ancient vernacular language of Egypt, and another in Greek. These inscriptions record the services which Ptolemy the Vth had rendered his country, and were engraved, after his death, by order of the High Priests, during the minority of his son, Ptolemy the VIth. This stone was found near Rosetta.[180]

Whether or not the tour guides clarified the importance of this artifact is unclear, but this quote constitutes what we might consider a traditional label. It is a matter-of-fact description meant to clarify the object's relation to the ancient world rather than its involvement in the British-French rivalry. Yet this description is still vastly more substantive than a majority of the other artifacts. Take, for example, artifact no. 24: "A colossal head of Jupiter Ammon, who was represented by the Egyptians with the head of a ram."[181] Some objects include an even shorter description with no. 25 simply explained as "an Egyptian obelisk." It should be noted this same pattern is evident in the descriptions of the Greco-Roman artifacts. This implies it was meant to serve the sole purpose of describing the artifacts. Thus, the *Synopsis*, while hinting at the British-French rivalry in its introduction to the collections, did not further this narrative in the description of the artifacts. Although the museum downplayed the importance of the stone's backstory, the public was evidently familiar with it. Aside from the tale in the *Synopsis's* introduction, the story was also found in London newspapers:

> The conquest of Egypt, independent of its political consequences, has enriched our country with a number of rare and ancient monuments, some entirely perfect, and of the highest and most undoubted antiquity. Colonel Turner has brought home in His Majesty's ship Egyptienne, a stone of black Granite, found by Menou. At Rosetta, and intended to be sent by that General the first convenient opportunity to France; it is charged with three inscriptions, in three different languages and characters, commemorating a Gift of Corn from Ptolemy…[182]

---

[180] *Acts and Votes of Parliament, Statutes and Rules,and Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, 98.
[181] *Acts and Votes of Parliament, Statutes and Rules,and Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, 98.
[182] *London Courier and Evening Gazette* (London), March 24, 1802.

This article not only describes the stone, but explains the circumstances of how precious it was to the French as Menou tried to send it to France as soon as he could. The *British Monthly Magazine* also informed its readers of how the stone was found:

> The stone itself was afterward removed with other rarities of ancient art to Alexandria, and when the city surrendered to the English, was claimed by General Menou, as his own private property. The artifice, however, was too shallow to attain its purpose; and "The Gem of Antiquity," as the French termed it, was at last shipped for England...it was deposited in the library of the British Museum. It has now engaged the attention of the learned nearly three years… [183]

This quote not only further elaborates on Menou's attempt to secure the stone for France, but demonstrates the significance of the stone as "the gem of antiquity."

The Rosetta Stone was not the only treasure of the exhibition. Almost equally beloved was a sarcophagus that was speculated to have belonged to Alexander the Great. This was later disproved by modern-day Egyptologists, but this claim persisted into the early nineteenth century. Although the sarcophagus was always beloved for its beauty (a sarcophagus made entirely of black granite), detail (completely covered in hieroglyphs), and size, it was originally only described in the Synopsis as "No. 2. Another large Egyptian sarcophagus, of black granite, also covered with hieroglyphics both inside and outside. This sarcophagus, which was brought from Grand Cairo, was used by the Turks as a cistern, which they called 'The Lover's Fountain.'"[184] In the original layout of the museum it was towards the front of the museum seated next to another large Egyptian sarcophagus. Although the *Synopsis* does not say more about the sarcophagus, the artifact was a popular topic of conversation as scholars speculated that the sarcophagus belonged to Alexander the Great. Although it is unclear if this was information included in the guided tour, in a letter to the editor of the *Monthly Magazine*, a reader recounts his awe over seeing the sarcophagus for himself:

---

[183] *The Monthly Magazine Part 1 1804*, vol 17, 407.
[184] *Acts and Votes of Parliament, Statutes and Rules,and Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, 94.

> Sir,
> A few mornings ago I paid a visit to the British Museum where, among other reliques of Egyptian grandeur, I saw the large sarcophagus, now affirmed to be the *actual tomb* of Alexander the Great. Whatever value it might derive from its beauty or antiquity, was, in my mind, superseded by the reflection, that it had been once the little tenement, where… the bones of a conqueror had mouldered in silence.[185]

The author is well-read, as he mentions Sonnini and Denon's travelogues and argues Sonnini was the first to describe the artifact. He faults both of them for not recognizing the true value of the artifact when they first laid eyes upon it:

> Sonnini, it appears, though minute in his description of the sarcophagus now at the Museum, had no idea that it could have any relation to the Macedonian hero; and Denon, though he thought the hieroglyphics inscribed upon it would furnish materials for whole volumes of dissertations, never guessed that Alexander would be the subject of a single chapter[186]

This quote shows the author believes the French overlooked the true value of this artifact now housed in the British Museum. However, this quote also shows how intertwined the textual description and museological modalities are. The author directly references Denon's travelogue (quoted earlier) in which he argues the hieroglyphs he describes will become the source of dissertations. It is both a confirmation of what Denon argued, as scholar Edward Daniel Clarke wrote a dissertation on exactly the artifact Denon singled out, as well as a jab at Denon for not recognizing the value of the artifact. The author stresses that the French are "minute" in their descriptions and only gave the sarcophagus attention by means of a quick description despite their claim that the object was so interesting it would furnish "whole volumes of dissertations." Furthermore, they never detect nor mention Alexander the Great in any relation to this artifact. Although the French singled it out as a curious object, they failed to link it to the Greco-Roman context which the British claimed credit for.

The belief that the French overlooked the value of the sarcophagus was popularized by the publication of Edward Daniel Clarke's dissertation in 1805 entitled, *The Tomb of*

---

[185] *The Monthly Magazine Part 1 1804*, vol 17, 1.
[186] *The Monthly Magazine Part 1 1804*, vol 17, 3.

Alexander: A Dissertation on the Sarcophagus Brought from Alexandria and Now in the British Museum. The Dissertation was published by R. Watts at the University Press and was available for purchase of 4 pounds and 18 shillings. In the dissertation, Clarke argues that he knows where Alexander the Great was buried; this hypothesis is based on his analysis of the sarcophagus the French seized that sat in the British Museum, which he claimed belonged to Alexander the Great. Prior to his argument, Clarke offers an account of how the artifact came to reside in the museum:

> The Gentlemen of the British Museum, during the last year, have been amused or perplexed by various discussions respecting the Alexandrian Sarcophagus. They have witnessed the curiosity which its present appellation has excited. They will also recollect, that, for some time after its arrival with the other Egyptian antiquities, no information was given respecting its history further than what related to its capture at Alexandria. No inquiry had been made respecting the origin of any of those monuments; nor had the subject received illustration by a knowledge of the motives which induced the French army to take possession of them, and to use such efforts in retaining them, as, in moments of privation and defeat, and … protracted the capitulation, by which their sufferings were to end.[187]

Clarke criticizes British scholars for not flocking to study the artifacts aside from the Rosetta Stone. He later goes on to say that the artifacts were "considered curious but unimportant monuments of Egyptian art, glorious to the nation as trophies of its valour, but whose dark and mystic legends, impervious to modern inquiry, excited despair rather than hope of explanation."[188] Clarke attributes the importance of these artifacts to their backstory as they previously belonged to the French. He justifies this in his previous quote, "no information was given respecting its history further than what related to its capture at Alexandria." All the information of the collection – aside from the Rosetta Stone – was directly tied to British-French rivalry. Clarke, is trying to break free from this and argue the artifacts deserve attention regardless of their affiliation with the French and uses his dissertation to

[187] Daniel Edward Clarke, *The Tomb of Alexander: A Dissertation on the Sarcophagus Brought from Alexandria and Now in the British Museum*. (London: R. Watts at the University, Press, 1805), 6.
[188] Clarke, *The Tomb of Alexander: A Dissertation on the Sarcophagus Brought from Alexandria and Now in the British Museum*, 24.

demonstrate the monumental significance of another artifact, the sarcophagus of Alexander the Great.

Returning to Clarke's argument in his dissertation, his hypothesis that the sarcophagus is Alexander the Great's is based on where it was found by the French. "Among other objects of curiosity, a small temple, containing, according to the account given by the Arabs at this hour, The Tomb of Iscander, The Founder of the City, was shewen to them in the mosque of St. Athanasius."[189] In the mosque, the sarcophagus in question was located and believed to be the sarcophagus of Alexander the Great. This classification by the Arabs and the sarcophagus led Clarke to believe this mosque is the location of Alexander's resting place or close to it. He argues that the French did not continue this research as it "is no longer a theme of triumph" for the French. Instead, he hoped to continue the research and establish the significance of this artifact for the British.

His research had mixed reviews. From academic reviewers he was both celebrated and criticized. The *Critical Review* argues that he "spared no pains to ascertain the authenticity" of the sarcophagus, but his argument about the location of the "Tomb of Alexander" was flawed and in need of more substantial evidence.[190] This theme of recognizing his efforts in verifying the sarcophagus is evident in the reviews. This trend is also evident in newspaper articles. The *London Courier and Evening Gazette* proclaimed, "Dr. Clarke, in his elegant work, entitled 'The Tomb of Alexander,' has evinced from accumulated evidence to have been the very coffin in which that hero was enshrined."[191] Clarke successfully gained the attention of both scholars and the public in recognizing that there was at least one other significant monument in the exhibit.

---

[189] Clarke, *The Tomb of Alexander: A Dissertation on the Sarcophagus Brought from Alexandria and Now in the British Museum*, 25.
[190] *Critical Review 1805*, vol 5, 275.
[191] *London Courier and Evening Gazette* (London), May 8, 1805.

Despite the predominantly scholarly audience, as early as 1803 travel guides recommended the British Museum as a tourist location, claiming that the artifacts were better than the descriptions in the travelogues.[192] The most notable travel guide was *The Picture of London, for 1803: Being a Correct Guide to All the Curiosities, Amusements, Exhibitions, Public Establishments, and Remarkable Objects, in and Near London; with a Collection of Appropriate Tables. For the Use of Strangers, Foreigners, and All Persons who are Not Intimately Acquainted with British Metropolis.* The author of this guide, John Felham, sang the praises of the collections housed in the British Museum, claiming it is "impossible to convey to the reader an adequate idea of the infinite number of remarkable artifacts," but also singles out the Egyptian collection, explaining that "the rooms containing Egyptian, Etruscan, and Roman antiquities… deserve particular attention."[193] Yet his most important argument was in relation to the significance of the objects themselves, as he argues they "convey a clearer conception of the people who make and use them than can ever be obtained from descriptions."[194] This is an interesting passage considering that at this point, the only modality the British government involved itself in is the museological one. Whereas the French government was involved in each modality, the descriptions from the British were brought forth by independent travelers. As King George III gifted the fifteen artifacts seized from the savants to the British Museum, and Parliament approved and paid for the expansion to house the collections, we can see the value ascribed to this collection. However, the value may have had less to do with the artifacts themselves, and more with the meaning behind them as Clarke guessed. This rivalry was further inflamed by the competition between collectors in Egypt.

---

[192] John Felham, *The Picture of London, for 1803: Being a Correct Guide to All the Curiosities, Amusements, Exhibitions, Public Establishments, and Remarkable Objects, in and Near London; with a Collection of Appropriate Tables. For the Use of Strangers, Foreigners, and All Persons who are Not Intimately Acquainted with British Metropolis, (*London: Lewis and Company, 1803), 186.
[193] Felham, *The Picture of London, for 1803,* 186.
[194] Felham, *The Picture of London, for 1803,* 186.

The battle of the collectors, specifically between Belzoni and Drovetti, was previously and briefly analyzed in chapter 2. The two Italians were well known in Britain as the British were apprised of the rivalry in Egypt through Belzoni's travelogue -when it was published in 1821- and newspapers celebrating Belzoni's triumphs. Although there are several examples of their rivalry, the most useful example is of the competition to acquire the artifact that made Belzoni famous, the Head of Memnon. Before examining the rivalry, the process of collecting and selling the collections should be clarified.

Drovetti was a French diplomat appointed Deputy-Commissioner of Commercial Relations at Alexandria by decree of the First Consul in 1802, who arrived in Egypt in 1803.[195] Drovetti would stay in Egypt for the next 25 years. Although his primary job was to secure French relations with the pasha Muhammad Ali, Drovetti recognized the market for Egyptian goods. He did not necessarily want to collect for France, but wanted to make money however he could. Long before Belzoni's arrival, Drovetti had accumulated a collection of artifacts and explored several areas Belzoni would take credit for opening or excavating. Most notably, Drovetti attempted to open the temple at Abu Simbel. He tried to pay local Egyptians to dig it up but he could not convince them, as they did not know what value Drovetti saw in the temple.[196] It is important to reiterate that Drovetti's collection was an enterprise separate from his official role. The French government did not hire him to collect the artifacts, but the Louvre would later purchase one of his collections after the Rosetta Stone was translated.

Belzoni arrived in Egypt in 1816. His original goal was to present a proposal to install hydraulic engines for irrigation in Egypt to the pasha. Belzoni was turned down. However, British diplomat Henry Salt sought to use his engineering skills. Salt hired Belzoni to move

---

[195] Ronald T. Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul in Egypt: The Life and Times of Bernardino Drovetti* (London: The Rubicon Press, 1998), 21.
[196] Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul in Egypt: The Life and Times of Bernardino Drovetti,* 70.

the Head of Memnon, a widely sought out artifact by the French and British in Thebes – not because of its historical significance, but because it was well preserved. It was originally found by the French, but in trying to move it, they made a hole in the right breast of the statue. Belzoni, however, devised a plan to move the giant object with levellers, rollers, a cart built by a local carpenter, and several local Egyptians.[197] Amazingly, Belzoni successfully moved the artifact and boarded it on a boat to England.

Although this sounds like a simple story, it was continually complicated. The main difficulty Belzoni encountered was acquiring a *firman* from the pasha. A firman was a work order permitting him to hire Egyptians to move the artifacts. Even after finally securing a firman, he struggled to hire workers. To hire workers Belzoni had to go to the local cacheff, a man who designated the supply of labor. The cacheff refused Belzoni, saying all his men were busy, but Belzoni threatened him with the firman from the pasha. After workers were finally procured, the first few days they intended to move Memnon, no one showed up.[198] Belzoni returned to the cacheff and offered him coffee and gunpowder in exchange for workers. Belzoni's "gift" was a veiled threat of his willingness to use force via gunpowder.[199] The threat was effective, and Belzoni finally had his workers. This narrative was put forth to the public as the hero who triumphed through adversity to bring a beautiful monument that would sit front and center in the Egyptian Gallery at the British Museum.

Ironically, this artifact involved the least amount of British-French rivalry compared to other collections. At this time, Belzoni and Drovetti were cordial in their letters. Memnon, Ivor Hume argues, was the turning point in that relationship. Drovetti wanted to collect Memnon for years but was unable to. Now he had been outdone and it was being shipped to London. Drovetti and Belzoni would now be cast as enemies.

---

[197] Ivor Noël Hume, *Belzoni: The Giant Archeologists Love to Hate* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 74.
[198] Hume, *Belzoni: The Giant Archeologists Love to Hate*, 67.
[199] Hume, *Belzoni: The Giant Archeologists Love to Hate*, 68.

The *Synopsis* 1821 edition lists Memnon as "No. 11. The head and upper part of the body of a colossal statue, brought from the ruins of the Memnonium, a building dedicated to Memnon, at Thebes. This fragment is composed of one piece of granite of two colours, and the face, which is in remarkably fine preservation, is executed in a very admirable manner."[200] The description concludes, giving Salt credit for its acquisition. This may seem perplexing, but Salt was the man directly employed by the British Museum. However, the public was acutely aware of who truly moved Memnon. This was a result of newspaper coverage, and the travelogues. In his travelogue Henry Light meets with Belzoni and argues that his readers will be excited to see what Belzoni has acquired. Belzoni's name appeared in newspapers as early as 1818, but his fame associated with Memnon would be a result of his book, and his public exhibition in Piccadilly.[201] His book, as already discussed, placed British-French rivalry at the heart of his collection, and although indirectly Memnon was a product of this rivalry and competition – the French had tried to move it first – it would become a monument of Belzoni's accomplishments and valor.

Belzoni's book cast everything related to his acquisitions in the light of British-French rivalry. Memnon and Abu Simbel were examples of directly besting the French, but other discoveries such as Seti I's tomb, which would form his public exhibit in Piccadilly, served as an example of beating the French to the best finds. Thus, Belzoni's exhibit indirectly told the story of British-French rivalry. Whereas the British Museum emphasized the story based on the Capitulation, Belzoni focused on his struggle with Drovetti. Belzoni's exhibit however, was not created in the goal of telling the story of British-French rivalry. For Belzoni, it was about creating an immersive experience and bringing ancient Egypt to London so that the British might glimpse its excitement. By 1821, when Belzoni arrived in

---

[200] *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*. (United Kingdom: Cox, Son, and Baylis, 1821), 107.
[201] Light, *Travels in Egypt, Nubia, Holy Land, Mount Libanon, and Cyprus, in the Year 1814*. (London: Rodwell and Martin, 1818), 86.

London, the British Museum was a much more public museum. Gone were the days of limited entry, and the collection of Egyptian antiquities expanded to boast 64 artifacts.[202] However, Belzoni's exhibit was arguably more successful. Although his exhibit cost one shilling to enter, it was widely celebrated, and he had a marketing strategy. His book served as a must-read before visiting the exhibition and was more informative than the *Synopsis,* and the children's book by Lucy Sarah Atkins Wilson directly advertised it. After describing Belzoni's discovery of the tomb of Seti I, Emily says, "Emily- Now we shall hear the description of the tomb, the model of which Laura saw in London, and which I hope to see very soon."[203] The children make it clear that the exhibit is a replica. They also describe the tomb as a "perfect monument of Egyptian antiquity"[204] Belzoni's exhibit was clearly an attraction Londoners were excited to visit. Before the exhibit was open, there was already excitement about it. In March 1821 the newspaper the *Sun* proclaimed "Mr. Belzoni- This learned and persevering traveller intends, we understand, to shew to the public, in the Museum in Piccadilly, all the curiosities which he has brought into this country…"[205] Belzoni's exhibit was also clearly popular as it appeared in a watercolor painting (figure 16) in 1840 by George Scharf who indicates what the most popular shows of London were from 1818-1825.

[202] *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*. (United Kingdom: Cox, Son, and Baylis, 1821), 107.
[203] Wilson, *Fruits of Enterprize Exhibited in the Travels of Belzoni in Egypt and Nubia: Interspersed with the Observations of a Mother to her Children*, 130.
[204] Wilson, *Fruits of Enterprize Exhibited in the Travels of Belzoni in Egypt and Nubia: Interspersed with the Observations of a Mother to her Children*, 130.
[205] *Sun* (London), March 23, 1821.

Figure 16: Advertisements of London's shows and news. Belzoni's exhibit is advertised in the middle. The signs range from 1818-1825.[206]

The exhibit was also informative. It does not appear that Belzoni's exhibit had any labels or tour guide; however, his book clearly explained the exhibit as a recreation of the tomb.[207] In comparison to the British Museum, the Seti I exhibit was more aptly organized. The British Museum still had objects that did not belong together and had no coherent story. Belzoni's exhibit, in contrast, was a perfect recreation and allowed the ancient Egyptian walls to do the storytelling for him. In creating an informative and immersive environment, Belzoni successfully captured Londoners' attention more successfully than the British Museum.

Whereas the British sought to exhibit to garner public attention, the French turned their attention towards the *Description de l'Egypte*. However, this was not what Napoleon and the savants originally intended. As they were acquiring artifacts before they were ceded to the British, the French presumably intended to place them in the Louvre. This is indicated by Denon and Clarke, Denon in his travelogue, and Clarke in his dissertation. However, as the objects were taken, and the French were expelled from Egypt, this was not realized. The Capitulation of Alexandria was a crushing blow to the Louvre's ability to collect Egyptian antiquities, but it was not the only reason. France was dealt two crushing blows: the Capitulation, which forced the savants and Napoleon to push for the publication of the

[206] George Scharf, *Men with billboards advertising the results of the election in 1818, Belzoni's Egyptian tomb and various exhibitions. c.1818-1825*, 1840.
[207] Susan M. Pearce, "Giovanni Battista Belzoni's exhibition of the reconstructed tomb of Pharaoh Seti I in 1821," *Journal of the History of Collections* 12, No. 1 (2000), p 109.

Description de l'Egypte rather than collect Egyptian artifacts, and the Rape of the Louvre. After the *Description* was published, it is possible that collecting Egyptian artifacts would have resumed. There were several collectors in Egypt of various nationalities who were selling the artifacts to the highest bidder. The Louvre could have bid on these, especially considering that French diplomat Drovetti was one of the collectors. However, when Napoleon lost at Waterloo and the Allied occupation happened, this shook up the Louvre. Vivant Denon was forced to resign as Director of the Imperial Museum. After publishing his travelogue and working on the *Description*, Denon had worked to secure artifacts for the Louvre in the goal of making France the "museum capital of the world."[208] However, he came into his position and prominence under Napoleon and with his leader gone, his position was no longer secure. As the allies reclaimed the booty taken by Napoleon such as the Apollo Belvedere, Denon resigned. Denon's dream of creating the "museum capital of the world" ended. Denon's position would later be taken over by Jean-Francois Champollion, who would rapidly establish an impressive collection of Egyptian artifacts in the Louvre, finally realizing the savants' hopes that the artifacts would supplement their research.

For the British, whose main mode of claiming ancient Egypt was public facing, the textual and exhibition modalities were complementary, creating synergy around the British-French rivalry. Londoners read about the rivalry in Belzoni's travelogue and then visited the British Museum, which housed the Head of Memnon, or, if they were lucky, they attended Belzoni's personal exhibit in Piccadilly. The complementary nature of these modalities solidified the British-French rivalry narrative.

Despite public engagement with the rivalry through travelogues and exhibits, the British did not value the ancient Egyptian antiquities for their ancient past, but rather for their

[208]Christine Haynes, *Our Friends the Enemies: The Occupation of France After Napoleon*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 43.

association with the French. This is most clearly seen in the financial spending decisions of the British Museum. From 1759 to1816 the British museum was allotted 120,000 pounds by Parliament. Half of this money was spent on books and manuscripts for the library, the other half on two large antiquity collections: the Elgin Marbles and the Townley collection. Both of these collections are Greek antiquities.[209] Aside from individual purchases, such as the Head of Memnon, the money was funneled into the Greco-Roman department. As Clarke surmised, the British Museum valued ancient Egypt as an imperial trophy, and remained disenchanted with the civilization in comparison to the well-regarded classics department. This was partially due to the fact that the British did not know what to make of the Egyptian artifacts. Take, for example, the sarcophagus assumed to have belonged to Alexander the Great. The hieroglyphs on the side of the object, which would have informed them it belonged to a Ptolemy, were not translatable. Instead, the physical location of where the object was found informed the interpretation of whom it belonged to. With such little information, no translation, and reliance on classical accounts, ancient Egypt was collected through description and assumptions, not concrete evidence.

Egypt was only celebrated by the French and British for its ancient nature when it was linked with the Greco-Roman world. In the case of textual descriptions, the *Description* conveniently referenced Homer, Herodotus, Plato, and Caesar to call to mind the great scholars and conquerors as a marketing tool. Similarly, in exhibition, the supposed sarcophagus of Alexander the Great was beloved for its association with the famous Greek conqueror. This focus on ancient Greece and Rome ultimately doomed the British Museum to lag behind the Louvre. As discussed previously, the British Museum was putting the majority of their budget in the Greco-Roman department. Some Egyptian collections, such as Salt's

[209] Altick, *The Shows of London*, (New York: ACLS History E-Book Project, 2005), 439.

first collection, were purchased for 2,000 pounds, but this number was nothing compared to what was spent on the Greek artifact collections.[210]

Additionally, not only did the British Museum value Egyptian art less than Greek, it was caught up in the controversy of the Elgin Marbles. The Elgin Marbles were brought to England in 1806 by Lord Elgin. It stayed as his private collection until 1816, when the crown purchased it for 35,000 pounds.[211] This price was about half of what it cost Elgin to get them, but it was sold at such a low cost because of his actions' controversy. Scholars who judged his actions were split into two categories: those who considered Elgin's actions as saving the artifact from the Turks and those who thought it was sacrilege.[212] Lord Byron subscribed to the latter view, in his famous poem "The Curse of Minerva," which deemed Elgin's actions so terrible that not just he but also Britain should be punished.[213] Lord Elgin was investigated by a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1816, which ruled that his actions were legal. With the verdict in, the sculptures were transferred to the British Museum by an Act of Parliament. However, although they were declared legal, the controversy continued. The British scholars thought that the Elgin Marbles did not belong to them – they deserved to remain in Greece (despite Lord Elgin's original worries that the Ottomans would damage them). This perspective shows how they treated Greece as a stand-alone civilization, as compared to Egypt, which was constantly compared to Greece and Rome, and unallowed to stand on its own. Ancient Egypt would remain at the periphery of the classics until the Rosetta Stone was translated and offered a new, knowable Egypt. This knowable Egypt also brought to light questions about whether Egypt was the "fountain of civilization" which informed the Greeks

[210] Peta Rée and Deborah Manley, *Henry Salt: Artist, Traveller, Diplomat, Egyptologist*, (United Kingdom: Libri, 2001), 34.
[211] St. Clair, *Lord Elgin and the marbles*, 45.
[212] William St. Clair, *Lord Elgin and the marbles*, (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1998), 45.
[213] Lord Byron, *The Curse of Minerva*, March 17, 1811.

and Romans, making it potentially more valuable than their Greco-Roman preference. This debate will be further explored in the next chapter.

Although ancient Egypt was not yet on the same pedestal as the Greco-Roman World, the travelogues and exhibits sparked a fascination with the civilization and inspired several British and French scholars to travel to Egypt to experience it for themselves in the 1820s and 1830s. One of the most notable travelers was Edward William Lane, who later received recognition as a famous orientalist for his book: *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* in 1836. Lane was inspired to travel to Egypt after visiting Belzoni's exhibit in London. He originally went to document ancient Egypt but shifted his focus to modern Egypt. The ability to travel to Egypt and the increase in literature about it made it more easily accessible and some scholars now turned to evaluate modern Egyptians. This evaluation of modern Egyptians sparked conversations about the colour of the ancient Egyptians – a debate famously explored by Martin Bernal and Edith R. Sanders.[214] This debate further alienated Egyptians from their ancient past and solidified the opinion that they were unworthy inheritors, allowing the Europeans to claim ancient Egypt as their own.

The modalities of knowledge employed by the British and French not only sparked a fascination with ancient Egypt, but later helped birth Oriental study as seen with Lane. Although this is a fascinating debate, the next chapter will focus on the continuation of the collection of ancient Egypt, as the exhibition of Modern Egypt is a separate discussion. Instead, the next chapter demonstrates that when Egypt became "knowable" through the translation of hieroglyphs, its history and artifacts became increasingly more valuable to

---

[214] Bernal and Sanders argue that nineteenth century Europeans wrestled with the idea that if Egypt set the standard for the ancient world, it must have been done by "the noble Caucasian." Debates surrounding the biology of blacks informed this idea as how could the fountain of civilization been crafted by blacks if they were incapable of civilization? Bernal argues that three solutions were suggested. First, Europeans could deny ancient Egyptians were black, second, deny that ancient Egypt was a "true civilization" or third, deny both.
Martin Bernal, Black *Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization Volume I: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985.* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 258.
Edith R. Sanders, "The Hamitic Hypothesis; Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective." *The Journal of African History* 10, no. 4 (1969): 521.

Europeans not for its connection to the Greco-Roman world but for its connection to the British-French rivalry, as the British and French would fight to secure the credit for translating the Rosetta Stone.

CHAPTER 4: LANGUAGE CHANGES THE GAME

> I will say it once more: Egyptian art owes to itself alone all that it has brought forth in greatness, pureness, and beauty; whatever the scholars may say who seem to have turned it into a religion to believe unshakably in the spontaneous genesis of the arts in Greece, it is as clear to me as it is for anyone who has really studied Egypt or has a genuine knowledge of the Egyptian monuments in Europe that art started in Greece only as an ancillary imitation of the Egyptian arts, which were much more advanced at the time when the first Egyptian colonies came in contact with the savage inhabitants of Attica or the Peloponnese than is popularly believed. Ancient Egypt taught the arts to Greece who gave them their most sublime expression, but without Egypt Greece would probably not have become the cradle of the classical fine arts. This captures my entire creed on this great matter. I am writing these lines looking at the bas-reliefs which the Egyptians crafted with the most elegant polish 1700 years before the Christian era. What were the Greeks up to then…?[215]
> - Jean Francois Champollion to his brother Champollion-Figeac –June 18, 1829

Although Ancient Egypt was more widely studied and exhibited in Europe than ever before, it was still considered a second-tier study compared to the renowned Classics of Greece and Rome. Prior to the translation of the Rosetta Stone, this was somewhat understandable. European knowledge of ancient Egypt was intertwined with the ancient Greek texts that explained it, as formal study of the civilization was limited to description and guesswork. However, with an available translation, ancient Egypt became a formalized field no longer based around description, but based on educated conclusions.

The topic of the translation process, which unlocked ancient Egypt, and the immediate results of it, is a topic most notably covered by John Ray, Maya Jasanoff, and Andrew Robinson. All of them argue that the translation is a story of British-French rivalry that resulted in the professionalization of Egyptology. I do not dispute this fact. However, their analysis is based on the process of translation, whereas I intend to focus on Champollion's efforts to professionalize Egyptology in his role as the curator of the Louvre. Surely, the translation was necessary, but so too was Champollion's efforts to have Egypt recognized as a glorious civilization apart from its connection with Greece. For even though the translation

[215] Jean Francois Champollion to his brother Champollion-Figeac –June 18, 1829 in Thebes.

unlocked ancient Egypt, that civilization's value remained in its attachment to Greece. Yet as shown by the letter to his brother Champollion-Figeac, Champollion argued that Egypt was a greater civilization than Greece as it had birthed the Classics. Champollion's assertion that Egypt deserved recognition of its own pushed French scholars to consider whether ancient Egypt could be "the cradle of the classical fine arts."[216] This conversation drastically shaped the Louvre's efforts at collection and exhibition. Conversely, the British had no equivalent of Champollion, who fought for the recognition of ancient Egypt. It was because of Champollion that the French studied and presented ancient Egypt as a whole, whereas the British portrayed only the grand pharaonic Egypt.

The translation also drastically changed the modalities the French and British focused on. Whereas the British government focused on collecting ancient Egypt for the public, the French had emphasized scholarly collection through textual and pictorial description. Now, with the civilization "unlocked" by the translation, the French turned their attention to purchasing collections for the Louvre and publicly exhibiting them. Additionally, in a period of political instability, Charles X saw an opportunity to invest in Champollion and the Louvre's Egyptian wing to consolidate his rule and portray himself as a patron of the arts. Conversely, the British focused their attention on receiving credit for the academic accomplishment of translating the Rosetta Stone, as they were embroiled in the controversy over the Elgin Marbles, halting their purchase of Egyptian antiquity collections. Thus, after the translation, the French focused on a public-facing approach as the British had in the early 1800s; however, the controversy over the Elgin Marbles encouraged the British to focus their energies on scholarly pursuits in the academic community rather than public engagement through exhibition.

[216] Champollion to his brother Champollion-Figeac. June 18, 1829.

The lack of recognition for ancient Egypt in its own right – apart from Greece – was what allowed the French to surpass the British in the museum modality. The British continued to value Egypt only for its relation to Greece, a mindset which fueled the purchase of the Elgin marbles, which as I explored in the previous chapter, ultimately complicated the collection of all ancient artifacts for the British Museum. Furthermore, Champollion's fight resulted in a more realistic exhibition of Egypt in the Louvre as he chose to exhibit a range of artifacts, not only the monumental ones. His translation coupled with his exhibition strategy made mundane Egypt an acceptable form of study, making even the smallest trinket from ancient Egypt a more valuable imperial trophy. Yet before Champollion could fight to have Egypt recognized as on par with Greece and Rome, and surpass the British in public exhibition, he needed to translate the Rosetta Stone.

Although the race to translate is a topic well covered by historians, it deserves some attention. Specifically, the process of translation yields two important observations. First, the translation was not a system of mutual cooperation, like in the textual description and observational modalities in the second chapter. Instead, the translation was about individual ego. Second, although Thomas Young fervently pursued a method to translate the Rosetta Stone, he did not care about ancient Egypt in the same way Champollion did. For this reason, although both were celebrated for their roles in the translation in their respective country, only Champollion used his fame and academic acclaim to fight for ancient Egypt's recognition.

The Race to Translate

Unlike in the early 1800s, when studying ancient Egypt through description and cartography was a system of mutual cooperation, with translation the various scholars wanted the glory for themselves. Historian Michael Allen provides valuable insight into why scholars

flocked to translate the Rosetta Stone: "What is discovered with the Rosetta Stone is less a prized object than a scholarly frame in which the object is understood as a key to translation, as a set of codes and an invitation to decipher.[217] As this object becomes text, it is fractured into signs, copied, and read, disseminated across a scholarly world as the puzzle of its age."[218] Initially, Allen's interpretation of the Rosetta stone as an "initiation to decipher" and the "puzzle of its age" certainly held true, and it was not simply a race between the French and the British. Instead, as I will show, French scholars were in some cases more willing to work with established British scholar Thomas Young over Champollion because of petty jealousy between them. In fact, the race to translate was not about British-French rivalry; it was about who could claim the title of puzzle master.

Despite interest from many well-known French scholars, the race to translate famously took place between Thomas Young and Jean Francois Champollion. Both were certainly geniuses, but their backgrounds and personalities could not be more different. Whereas the translation established Champollion as a scholar, Young had received that recognition long ago. Young was professionally and academically trained, educated in Edinburgh, Göttingen, and Cambridge, where he earned the nickname "Phaenomenon

---

[217] The struggle to translate hieroglyphs began long before Champollion and Thomas Young. The knowledge of hieroglyphs was lost to time under the several foreign occupations of Egypt, starting under the Ptolemies. It was not until the Renaissance that an effort to translate them began. In 1505 Horapollo Niliacus published a treatise entitled *Hieroglyphika*. In Hieroglyphika, Horapollo addressed one of the main questions surrounding hieroglyphs: whether they were phonetic, alphabetic, or symbolic. He argued they were symbolic allegorical emblems used by scribes to describe natural and moral aspects of the world. This meant, that a hieroglyph was "bound to resist decipherment by virtue of its impenetrability." Horapollo's thesis remained the prevailing view until the discovery of the Rosetta Stone. Upon realizing that the stone was the exact same in three different languages or scripts, scholars knew a translation was possible. As best said by Andrew Robinson, it was the "Holy Grail of decipherment." The Greek was quickly deciphered by the French, who informed readers that the stone was a document about one of Ptolemy V's decrees at Memphis. Although they knew what it was, the translation of the hieroglyphs took twenty years. Many French linguists and scholars tried their hand and made progress at translation, but young upstart Jean-Francois Champollion would claim the glory for a complete translation.
Niliacus, Horapollo. *Hieroglyphika*, (1505).
John Ray, *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 44.
Andrew Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 23.

[218] Michael Allan, "Translation: The Rosetta Stone from Object to Text." In *In the Shadow of World Literature: Sites of Reading in Colonial Egypt*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 41.

Young."[219] He originally worked as a doctor. He was a man of science – his revolutionary ideas about the wave theory of light and the anatomy of the human eye won him scholarly acclaim.[220] In his free time, he was an avid lover and learner of foreign languages, going on to review approximately 400 languages for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.[221] Historian John Ray asserted Young's sheer genius by comparing his "universal knowledge" to that of Francis Bacon.[222]

Unlike Young, an accomplished scholar and genius, Champollion was still very young: he was only 32 when he translated the stone, but he had begun working on it as early as 15 years old. Within his first fifteen years of life, he read Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, and Chaldean.[223] In 1804, when he was only thirteen years old, Jean-Francois published his first paper, "Remarks on the fable of the Giants as taken from Hebrew etymologies." The paper was about the possible Oriental origins of European fables about giants.[224] Two years later, this paper was discussed by General de La Salette at the Society of Arts and Sciences – Champollion was considered too young to speak. Although he later dismissed this paper, it is important to demonstrate how he was a published scholar even at such a young age. This would initially help Champollion, as other scholars sought to mentor him, but it would later hurt him in the translation, as he was considered too young to be the one to break the code.

In the process of translating the Rosetta Stone, Champollion visited Paris, where he met and sought advice from Silvestre de Sacy.[225] De Sacy thought the demotic script was

---

[219] Ray, *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt*, 39.
[220] Ray, *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt*, 40.
[221] Young "reviewed" 400 languages in an article entitled "Languages" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica.* In this article he compared the grammar and vocabulary of 400 languages.
[222] Ray, *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt*, 42.
[223] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 62.
[224] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 84.
[225] De Sacy was the residing professor at the Special School of Oriental Languages in Paris. Like Young and Champollion, he had a great capacity for learning languages. In addition to German, English, and Spanish, he boasted his knowledge of Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldean, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. De Sacy was originally asked to study the Rosetta Stone by Jean Chaptal, a chemist and member of the Academy of Sciences.

alphabetic. He noted words in the Greek inscription such as "god" or "king" and sought their equivalents in Coptic. He then tried to identify the same words alphabetically in the Egyptian demotic inscription. He was somewhat successful as he located a few names such as "Alexander" and "Ptolemy," but his method was fraught with errors, which he recognized.[226] In 1802 de Sacy published a short paper detailing his disappointments and suggesting that a scholar more competent in Coptic might have greater success. It is because of de Sacy's failure to make meaningful progress in a translation that Robinson theorizes he did not offer much help to Champollion.

Champollion did not enjoy a good relationship with the other savants from Egypt. Most notably, he and Edme Jombard – the primary geographer of the *Description de l'Egypte* – were at odds. Jombard considered Champollion to be too young and inexperienced. Instead, Jombard envisioned himself for the task of translation.[227] However, as Champollion's first biographer, H. Hartleben, explains, neither Jombard nor anyone else in the Egyptian Commission had the necessary expertise to take on the translation, which Champollion made abundantly clear, going so far as to call out the savants for their inadequate work in the *Description* in letters to his brother.[228] Champollion praised the *Description*'s geography and architecture but took issue with its depictions of hieroglyphs, calling them incomplete or inaccurate. Jombard disliked Champollion to the extent that he supported Champollion's rival Thomas Young. De Sacy's and Jombard's attitudes demonstrate how Champollion's age and their personal desire to be the puzzle master made them unwilling to assist Champollion, fearing the young upstart would outdo them. Despite their fears, Champollion made little to no progress, abandoning his translation from 1809 until 1814.[229]

---

[226] Solé and Valbelle, *The Rosetta Stone: The Story of the Decoding of Hieroglyphics*,98.
[227] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 62.
[228] H. Hartleben, *Lettres Et Journaux De Champollion*, (Paris: Leroux, 1909), 34.
[229] Despite incurring the ire of other scholars, Champollion attempted to fix de Sacy's method of translating the demotic using Coptic in 1808. However, in a letter to his brother, he expressed how difficult this would be, as a comprehensive dictionary of Coptic did not exist. As he feared, he made little to no progress, abandoning his

Unlike Champollion, who would make it his life mission to study and understand ancient Egypt, Young had no such interest. He desired neither to travel to Egypt nor to dedicate his life to it. He thought ancient Egypt was too superstitious, which is perhaps why he originally published all his work on Egyptology anonymously. Additionally, Robert Sole and Dominique Valbelle argue that Young may have feared for his reputation as a man of science, which led him to publish under the label "ABCD" until 1824.[230] Despite his anonymity, many scholars still knew who he was because of his correspondence with them.

In 1814 Young first set out to translate the Rosetta Stone after coming across a demotic papyrus. He quickly acquainted himself with the state of the field, reaching out to de Sacy, explaining his hypothesis about the number of lines of text corresponding with the different languages, and focusing on one line at a time.[231] De Sacy was cordial but expressed reservations and explained the need for knowledge of Coptic – advice which Young heeded. Initially, like de Sacy and Champollion, Young believed that the demotic script was alphabetic. However, Young had a breakthrough that de Sacy and Champollion had not discovered. First, there was a relationship between the demotic and hieroglyphic texts. Second, the hieroglyphic cartouche expressed royal or religious names.[232] The first conclusion was particularly revolutionary, as he noted that the pictures of humans, animals,

---

translation from 1809 until 1814. During this time, he perfected his Coptic and crafted a complete Coptic dictionary. He also received an appointment as the assistant professor of ancient history in Grenoble. Although he was not actively working on the translation, his work was regarded as exemplary, and Fourier used his connections with Napoleon to excuse Champollion from compulsory military conscription. Champollion's appointment in Grenoble, combined with Fourier's pleas to excuse him from military service, created the opportunity for Napoleon and Champollion to cross paths during the Hundred Days. During the political upheaval caused by the Hundred Days, Napoleon ventured to Grenoble, where the Champollion brothers were adamant supporters of him, and Champollion-Figeac served as Napoleon's secretary. It was because of Champollion-Figeac's connections that his younger brother had the opportunity to present his research on Coptic to Napoleon. Napoleon was impressed by Jean-Francois's Coptic dictionary and promised to publish it after he secured his reign. However, this was not to be, as Napoleon lost, and the Champollion brothers were exiled from Grenoble for supporting him. As Champollion was caught up in the Hundred Days, Young made progress on the translation.
Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 104.

[230] Solé and Valbelle, *The Rosetta Stone: The Story of the Decoding of Hieroglyphics*,114.

[231] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 123.

[232] Cartouches are hieroglyphs encased in an oval.

objects, etc., had a demotic equivalent.[233] The main question Young was left with was whether or not the hieroglyphic and demotic script operated with the same linguistic principles. This question was a problem, as the pervading view was that hieroglyphs were symbolic and demotic alphabetic. Although there was no full breakthrough in making the connections between the different scripts, Young was confident enough to publish a vocabulary offering English equivalents for 218 demotic and 200 hieroglyphic words in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in 1819.[234] Young successfully equated about 80 demotic words with their hieroglyphic equivalents, a number that was quite successful given the lack of progress from other scholars.

Young certainly knew of Champollion's efforts to translate the Rosetta Stone, but de Sacy warned Young about sharing his thoughts on the translation with Champollion, claiming he might plagiarize Young's ideas:

> If I might venture to advise you, I would suggest you do not communicate too many of your discoveries to M. Champollion. It could happen that he might afterwards lay claim to the priority. He seeks, in many parts of his book, to make it believed that he has discovered many words of the Egyptian inscription from Rosetta. I am afraid this is mere charlatanism; I may add that I have very good reasons for thinking so.[235]

In this letter, de Sacy references a 67-page booklet published by Champollion entitled *L'Égypte sous les Pharaons* published in 1814. In this book, Champollion explained the already familiar hypothesis that Coptic was the key to a translation. It did not offer much in the way of hieroglyphics translation as Young did. Instead, it was mostly focused on the chronology of the pharaohs – a concept that would serve him well later in life as a curator. De Sacy's warning of Champollion's potential plagiarism is essential. It shows how de Sacy is not only unwilling to help Champollion but is actively working against him to isolate him from Young, who so willingly shared his conclusions and hypotheses with de Sacy. This is a

---

[233] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 126.
[234] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 129.
[235] Thomas Young, *Miscellaneous Works of the Late Thomas Young*, (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1972), 51

clear example of how the translation is not about mutual cooperation nor British-French rivalry but about individual ego.

Although Champollion was unaware of de Sacy's warning, he was laying the groundwork to be Young's rival, as an undated letter to his brother shows his disdain of Young:

> The Englishman knows no more Egyptian than he does Malay or Manchu … The discoveries of Dr Young announced with such pomp are merely ridiculous boasting. The vaunted discovery of the supposed key provokes pity … I am truly sorry for the unfortunate English travellers in Egypt obliged to translate the inscriptions of Thebes with the master-key of Dr Young in their hands[236]

The comparison to Malay and Manchu is likely intentional, as early translators compared Horapollo's thesis about hieroglyphic symbolism to that of the Chinese characters- meaning that a translation is improbable. Additionally, Champollion does not give Young credit for his important contributions, and during his life, he never credited Young for his breakthrough in cartouches or the relationship between demotic and hieroglyphic text.[237] Instead, Champollion later claimed he came to the same conclusions on his own. How likely this may have been is highly debated by historians.

Champollion's breakthrough came in 1821 when he realized three things: 1) The demotic script is only a simple modification of the hieroglyphic system – hieroglyphic text is the original text, the demotic is a variation of the original. This was a nearly identical conclusion to Young's. 2) Demotic script is not alphabetical. 3) The demotic characters are signs of things and not sounds.[238] Robinson, Sole, and Valbelle lament how little is known about how Champollion reached these conclusions.[239] Robinson argues that the lack of source material may have been "polemical subterfuge, intended to diminish the importance of the

[236] Jean-François Champollion, *Champollion Inconnu: Lettres Inedites*, (Sydney: Wentworth Press, 2018), 65.
[237] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 159.
[238] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 170.
[239] Robinson breaks Champollion's breakthrough into three periods based around his lecture series.

work of his English rival, Young."[240] Regardless of how, Champollion revealed his conclusions to the world through a series of lectures during 1821-1823. However, this did not mean he was entirely correct. In 1822, Champollion proposed phonetic transliterations for the cartouches of many Greek and Roman rulers of Egypt. He also suggested the existence of a hieroglyphic and demotic 'alphabet' used only for writing foreign names.[241] Champollion's perspective on the phonetic element to both texts was entirely new – a conclusion that Young never came to accept.

Champollion rightfully claimed the credit for the final translation, but Young was bothered that Champollion refused to give him any credit. In the midst of this controversy, the translation became an all-out British-French rivalry, with British scholars seeking credit for Young, and the French universally subscribed to the view that Champollion was intellectually independent of Young. Even de Sacy publicly supported Champollion over Young.[242] The British clung to this fight, demanding Young receive credit, whereas Champollion set out to pursue his dream of studying ancient Egypt.

Young Seeks Credit

When Champollion originally published his findings, Young was supportive of his research. In 1822, Champollion presented one of his most famous papers, *Lettre à M. Dacier, secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie royale des Inscriptions et BellesLettres, relative à l'alphabet des hiéroglyphes phonétiques* at a meeting of the Academy of Inscriptions and Literature.[243] Thomas Young was in attendance, and two days later, he wrote a letter to William Hamilton, in which he expressed his support of Champollion and amazement of all

[240] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 179.
[241] Ray, *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt*, 90.
[242] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 121.
[243] Brian M. Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists and Archeologists in Egypt*, (Westview Press, 2004), 162.

he had accomplished. In it, he not only called Champollion's observations and steps towards translation "gigantic," but also addressed his own role in the translation.

> It may be said that he found the key in England which opened the gate for him, and it is often observed that c'est le premier pas quoi compte; but If he did borrow an English key, the lock was so dreadfully rusty, that no common arm would have had strength enough to turn it; and in a path so beset with thorns, and so encumbered with rubbish, not the first step only, but every step, is painfully laborious; especially such as are retrograde; and such steps will sometimes be necessary: but it is better to make a few false steps than to stand quite still… My life seems indeed to be lengthened by the ascension of a junior coadjutor in my researches, and of a person too, who is so much more vested in the different dialects of the Egyptian language than myself. I sincerely wish that his merits may be as highly appreciated by his countrymen, and by their government, as they ought… [244]

Young is alluding to his own advancements, but at the same time acquitting Champollion of any plagiarism, as he claims his own work was not of the same caliber as Champollion's. Instead of seeking credit for potentially laying a foundation for Champollion's work, Young expresses enthusiasm that someone has cracked the code. However, despite Young's celebration of Champollion, and diminishment of his own achievements, Young would seek credit for the translation. This letter was signed "ABCD," Young's known anonymous signature. This anonymity is important because his fear for not receiving any credit for the translation ultimately forced him to publish under his own name. In 1823 Young published *An account of some recent discoveries in hieroglyphical literature and Egyptian antiquities: Including the author's original alphabet, as extended by Mr. Champollion, with a translation of five unpublished Greek and Egyptian manuscripts* under his own name. In the preface to this book, Young explains why his publications were previously under "ABCD."

> I cannot resist the natural inclination, to make a public claim to whatever credit may be due, for the labour that I have bestowed, on an attempt to unveil the mystery, in which Egyptian literature has been involved for nearly twenty centuries. If, indeed, I have not hitherto wholly withheld from the public the results of my inquiries , it has not been from the love of authorship only, nor from an impatience of being the sole possessor of a secret treasure; but because I was desirous of securing, at least, for my

[244]Thomas Young to William Hamilton -September 29, 1822 in Paris.

> country, what is justly considered as a desirable acquisition to every country, the reputation of having enlarged the boundaries of human knowledge, and of having contributed to extend the dominion of the mind of man over time, and space , and neglect, and obscurity…. It would indeed have been a little hard, that the only single step, which leads at once to an extensive result, should have been made by a foreigner, upon the very ground which I had undergone the drudgery of quietly raising, while he advanced rapidly and firmly… I should not have repined even if no counterpart to his good fortune had occurred for my own advantage and assistance; but the exhilaration of a success, so unexpected, has brought me more immediately and more openly before the public, than it was previously my intention to appear….[245]

Young's preface again demonstrates the monumental significance of a translation, but also his effort to obtain credit for it. He does not deny Champollion's ingenuity, but he does seek recognition that he also underwent "the drudgery." Young's specific claim to the translation is more openly stated later in his book when he comments on his groundbreaking discovery that Egyptian cartouches are names.

> It had, however, been one of the greatest difficulties attending the translation of the hieroglyphs of Rosetta, to explain how the groups within the rings, which varied considerably in different parts of the pillar, it occurred in several places where there was no corresponding name in Greek, well they were not to have been found in others where they ought to have appeared, could possibly represent the name of Ptolemy; and it was not without considerable labor that I had been able to overcome this difficulty. The interpretation of the female termination had never, I believe, been suspected by any but myself: nor had the name of a single God or goddess, out of more than five hundred that I have collected, been clearly pointed out by any person. But, however Mr. Champollion may have arrived at his conclusions, I admit them, with the greatest pleasure and gratitude, not by any means as superseding my system, but as fully confirming and extending it.[246]

Although Young does not outright claim Champollion plagiarized his findings, he does seem to question how Champollion arrived at a conclusion so many scholars failed to draw. Additionally, Young uses Champollion's work as a means to confirm his own. He does this throughout his book to show how his own work could serve as a foundation for Champollion's. In a few instances, he shows his surprise that Champollion failed to mention

---

[245] Thomas Young, *An Account of Some Recent Discoveries in Hieroglyphical Literature and Egyptian Antiquities: Including the Author's Original Alphabet, as Extended by Mr. Champollion, with a Translation of Five Unpublished Greek and Egyptian Manuscripts*, (London: John Murray, 1823), 2.
[246] Young, *An Account of Some Recent Discoveries in Hieroglyphical Literature and Egyptian Antiquities: Including the Author's Original Alphabet, as Extended by Mr. Champollion, with a Translation of Five Unpublished Greek and Egyptian Manuscripts*, 45-46.

him at all. Specifically, when Champollion presented his *Letter to Mr. Dacier* paper he says, "I did certainly expect to find the chronology of my own researches a little more distinctly stated."[247] This sentence is not veiled in Young's cordial approach to seeking credit; instead, it shows how he genuinely believes he deserves credit and how hurt he is that he was not given his due. Champollion responded in anger to Young's claims and in a letter in 1823, he told Young, "I shall never consent to recognize any other original alphabet than my own … and the unanimous opinion of scholars on this point will be more and more confirmed by the public examination of any other claim."[248]

Young was not alone in his fight to secure recognition for his part in the translation. Most notably, Henry Salt wrote a seventy-two-page essay on how Champollion's translation was genius, but how Young undoubtedly created the foundation.

> The first idea of certain hieroglyphs being intended to represent sounds was suggested by Dr. Young (Mons. Champollion fils seems To be unwilling to allow this; but the fact is evident; and surely he has accomplished too much to stand in need of assuming to himself the meritis of another), who from the names of Ptolemy and Berenice, had pointed out nine, which have since proved to be correct; the former taken from the Rosetta inscription, in the latter deduced with singular ingenuity from the enchorial of the same monument (Dr. Young seems to me to stand alone with regard to the progress he is made in the enchorial, as well As for his having led the way to the true knowledge of hieroglyphs; Of which, in fact, little more is yet known, than that contained in his "Vocabulary."[249]

Salt, who was once an adamant supporter of Young's method, came to agree with Champollion's method of translation, yet he still fought for Young to receive recognition. British scholars knew that Champollion rightfully deserved the title of puzzle master. However, what irked them was that Young was overlooked. They would not let the French claim sole credit for the translation.

---

[247] Young, *An Account of Some Recent Discoveries in Hieroglyphical Literature*, 43.
[248] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 219.
[249] Henry Salt, *Essay on Dr. Young's and M. Champollion's Phonetic System of Hieroglyphics*, (United Kingdom, 1825), 1-2.

Despite other scholars claiming Young deserved credit, the only recognition that Champollion gave Young was when his name was secured as the translator of hieroglyphs.

> I recognize that he was the first to publish some correct ideas about the ancient writings of Egypt; that he was also the first to establish some correct distinctions concerning the general nature of these writings, by determining, through a substantial comparison of texts, the value of several groups of characters. I even recognize that he published before me his ideas on the possibility of the existence of several sound-signs, which would have been used to write foreign proper names in Egypt in hieroglyphs; finally that M. Young was also the first to try, but without complete success, to give a phonetic value to the hieroglyphs making up the two names Ptolemy and Berenice.[250]

Champollion never claimed Young's work helped him unlock hieroglyphs, but he did admit that Young published first. Despite the overall lack of recognition from Champollion, the British credited Young for the discovery, and when Young died, he was buried in Westminster Abbey. His tombstone read "First penetrated the obscurity which had veiled for ages the hieroglyphicks of Egypt."[251]

By 1825, Champollion's legacy as the puzzle master of hieroglyphs was secured, but this would not be his only mark on Egyptology. His fame and academic acclaim earned from the translation would be instrumental in tackling his next challenge, the Louvre. Champollion's fame secured him the backing of Charles X. This allowed Champollion to mold the Louvre into a museum focused on exhibiting the spectrum of Egypt, unlike the British Museum which was solely focused on the monuments of Egypt.

History of the Louvre

Unlike the British Museum, which originated as a private collection and struggled in the transition to a public museum, the Louvre was already a public institution. The Louvre opened in 1793 – ironically, it was originally intended to strengthen Louis XVI's regime –

[250] Quoted in Toby Wilkinson, *A World Beneath the Sands: The Golden Age of Egyptology*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2020), 72.
[251] Ray, *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt*, 90.

meant to be a "point of national pride and royal glory."[252] However, the opening of the Louvre coincided with the French Revolution. The Revolution touched many aspects of French life, imbuing them with Revolutionary rhetoric, principles, and symbolism, including public institutions such as the Louvre. One example of this was the principle that everyone should share in the grandeur of the collections to foster national pride. More specifically, Andrew McClellan argues that the Louvre was about collective ownership.

> The Royal Collection came to be seen as national property; part of the nation's cultural patrimony that had to be preserved for posterity. The French case thus anticipated modern national museums in which the rhetoric of collective ownership and the fostering of national pride remained crucial - accepting responsibility on behalf of the nation, the crown turned the maintenance of the Royal Collection to its advantage by forging an equation in the public eye between careful conservation of valued art treasures and good government - portraying itself as a politically and culturally superior nation, France claimed to be uniquely qualified to safeguard the world's treasures for the benefit of mankind.[253]

French pride was bolstered as protectors of the world's treasures, and Paris became a tourist hub as everyone flocked to see the grand exhibit halls. As the Louvre continued to develop under the Revolution and later Napoleon, the museum became a monument to military might, as many collections were from military conquests. McClellan argues that the "visitors were encouraged to regard captured paintings and sculptures as trophies of war."[254]

From its inception, the Louvre was a public project. It was founded on the Enlightenment ideals of public institution, and it was tied to the idea of the birth of a new nation. It was meant to stay true to the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity – all citizens were invited to partake in the communal ownership of the artifacts. Although the Louvre was available to citizens of all classes, the labels were aimed at the higher classes, as not everyone

---

[252] Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 20.
The idea for the Louvre started in in 1770-1780 but the project did not get underway until the time of the Revolution.
[253] McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, 7.
[254] McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, 8.

could read. McClellan candidly remarks that "many who came to the Louvre in the late 1790s to admire the paintings and sculptures acquired as the spoils of war were evidently unaware that Bonaparte's booty represented the greatest art ever brought together under one roof."[255] Despite its limits, from the outset the Louvre functioned far more effectively as a public museum than the British Museum.

The Struggle to Collect

Under Napoleon's tutelage, the Louvre's collections grew exponentially. However, ancient Egyptian artifacts severely lagged behind the British Museum until Champollion stepped in as curator. This was the result of two major setbacks, the Capitulation of Alexandria and the Rape of the Louvre. During Napoleon's expedition in Egypt the savants collected a wide assortment of artifacts with the intent to transport them to Paris for exhibition. However, when they lost to the British, they were forced not only to leave Egypt, but to hand over their spoils. Ironically, this setback became the British driving force in collection and exhibition. Despite the loss, a French diplomat was sent to Egypt to gain a foothold: Bernardino Drovetti, the man who would become Belzoni's rival. Drovetti was politically savvy and quickly gained the support of Muhammad Ali Pasha. In his free time, he became a private collector of Egyptian artifacts and essentially established a monopoly on Egyptian antiquities pre-Belzoni. After about fifteen years of preparation and collection Drovetti was ready to sell it. The collection was already well known, as it was seen by several notable travelogue authors who hoped he would sell it to England. Most notably, Henry Salt saw the collection and tried to encourage the British Museum to purchase it; however, the collection was too expensive, with Drovetti expecting payment of 3000-4000 pounds.[256]

---

[255] McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, 11.
[256] Ronald T. Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul in Egypt: The Life and Times of Bernardino Drovetti*, (London: The Rubicon Press, 1998), 251.

Drovetti's collection was highly sought after as he was approached by the Piedmontese. The French also had their eyes on his collection. In 1818, Auguste Forbin (French general director of museums) pushed to have Drovetti reappointed as French consul in hopes that it would turn the sale in their favor. Drovetti was offered a position as Consul-General and received the Légion d'Honneur in 1819. However, despite the French efforts, the Piedmontese offered to buy the collection by paying in instalments. Ronald T. Ridley, biographer of Drovetti, explains that Drovetti was offered "20,000 livre per annum, the equivalent of 5% interest on a capital of 400,000 livre… the capital was to be paid off at 10,000 lire per annum- in another forty years!"[257] Although Drovetti sold the collection to the Piedmontese in 1821, as their offer was more tempting, he was still offered the position of consul in Egypt by the French – likely a result of his connections with the pasha. Drovetti likely sold the collection to the Piedmontese because they were far more direct than the French. Whereas they sent him a clear financial offer, the French gave him titles and jobs as they waited to finalize an offer. Why they waited so long is not entirely clear, but it may have to do with the state of the Louvre.

Napoleon's loss at the Battle of Waterloo resulted in an allied occupation in France. During this occupation, the Prussians and Austrians, took paintings, sculptures, antiquities, maps, and other objects in the Louvre. This caused a snowball effect, with leaders from the Netherlands, Brunswick, Hesse, Spain, Venice, Sardinia, and the Papacy also demanding the return of items Napoleon had pilfered from around Europe. It was such a shock and blow to the French that it has been termed "the Rape of the Louvre."[258] The removal of such significant numbers of art works was a blow to French morale. As British consul Henry Salt describes it:

---

[257] Ridley, *Napoleon's Proconsul in Egypt: The Life and Times of Bernardino Drovetti*, 254.
[258] Christine Haynes, *Our Friends the Enemies: The Occupation of France After Napoleon*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 35.

> Nothing has produced so strong a sensation among the French as the taking away of the pictures and statues from the Louvre. This very sensible and politic measure has rendered the malignant part of the populace perfectly furious, as it at once lowers their pride in the face of the world, and will serve as an everlasting testimony of their having been conquered.[259]

Salt's description demonstrates how devastating this was not only to the Louvre, which had its exhibitions stripped away, but also to French national pride, as an "everlasting testimony of their having been conquered." Maya Jasanoff argues that it was these empty galleries that encouraged the French to turn to Egypt to rebuild; however, the only major collector in Egypt was Drovetti. He was tasked with being a diplomat, not an antiquities dealer. Although the French likely wanted to use Drovetti's collection to replenish the Louvre's halls, they were too indirect and unable to secure the bid. This was most likely due to finances, as several notable scholars wanted to purchase Drovetti's collection, including several savants from the Egyptian expedition. Another reason for their late negotiation may have been their focus on securing an object they hoped would surpass the Rosetta stone, the Dendera Zodiac.

Before examining the significance of the purchase of the Dendera Zodiac, it is necessary to explain the priorities of the French monarchs in terms of what they wished to purchase and exhibit. Napoleon, Louis XVIII and Charles X all collected and presented a "grand Egypt" narrative. This means they focused their attention on big ticket items that told the story of pharaonic Egypt rather than trinkets which exemplified mundane Egypt. Furthermore, the grand Egypt narrative frequently linked Egypt to Greece, making it more palatable. Napoleon consistently demonstrates this in his collection and celebration of Egypt. Napoleon emphasized the "grand Egypt" narrative, relating his association with Alexander the Great, most clearly seen in the *Description de L'Egypte's* preface. Additionally, Napoleon himself focused more on Greek and Roman motifs, as seen in the famous painting of his coronation as Emperor, showing that he valued Classical history over ancient Egypt.

---

[259] Quoted in Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750-1850*, 239.

Napoleon is adorned with coronation robes similar to the Roman emperors and wears the famous Greek laurel wreath on his head (Figure 17). These serve as symbols of triumph and directly connect him to the great rulers and conquerors in history.

Figure 17: Napoleon's Coronation as Emperor.[260]

Louis XVIII's support of the "grand Egypt" narrative came in the form of authorizing the purchase of the Dendera Zodiac – a monumental artifact. In recovering from the Rape of the Louvre, the French pursued the purchase of an object they considered greater than the Rosetta Stone, the Dendera Zodiac. The Dendera Zodiac was an object familiar to the French as early as 1798 when savant Dominique Vivant Denon wrote about the temple it was housed in. He described it as "the sanctuary of the arts and sciences."[261] Denon was in awe of the bas-relief ceiling that depicted Egyptian astronomy. Specifically, the object is a depiction of constellations in the form of Egyptian gods (Figure 18).

[260] Jacques-Lous David, *Coronation of Napoleon I as Emperor of the French*, 1806, 6.21x9.79m, Louvre.
[261] Quoted in Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750-1850*, 204.

Figure 18: A sketch of the Dendera Zodiac. Image taken from Denon's travelogue.[262]

While all the savants marveled at it and wanted to take it to France, they worried about how to remove it. Denon settled for making a drawing of it and carving his name on a nearby wall.[263] This was fortunate for the French as it would have been surrendered to the British under the Capitulation of Alexandria. The French still carried bitterness about losing the antiquities and especially the Rosetta Stone – so much so that in 1821 Sébastien Louis Saulnier sponsored an expedition to Egypt with the sole goal of finding an artifact better than the Rosetta Stone, and he set his eyes on the prized ceiling that became known as the Dendera Zodiac.[264] Saulnier believed, "the acquisition of the Zodiac was, in some measure, compensating for the absence of these noble monuments [the artifacts taken under the

[262] Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*, 47.
[263] Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750-1850*, 204.
[264] Toby Wilkinson, *A World Beneath the Sands: The Golden Age of Egyptology*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2020), 41.

Capitulation of Alexandria].”[265] The Zodiac was purchased for 150,000 francs by King Louis XVIII.[266] When it arrived in Paris it was greeted with enthusiasm and celebration. Robinson explains that the Parisians were so excited about the object that a vaudeville theatre production, *Le Zodiaque de Paris*, was composed. This production included actors playing each sign of the zodiac and “a chorus of wailing mummies.”[267] While the play may not have been sponsored directly by Louis XVIII, he inspired it through the purchase of the object. The object was revered as an intellectual accomplishment. It provided a gateway into ancient Egyptian astrology, similar to how the Rosetta Stone gave insight into the lost language of hieroglyphics. The Zodiac was constantly juxtaposed with the Rosetta Stone, with the French claiming the Zodiac surpassed it.

Like his predecessors, Charles X actively promoted the “grand Egypt” narrative; however, indirectly, he supported a turn towards mundane Egypt. In 1821, the Louvre undoubtedly lagged in comparison to the British Museum. It had acquired its shining star, the Dendera Zodiac, but the Louvre could not compare to the numerous grand objects housed in the British Museum such as the Head of Memnon, the Sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, or the Rosetta Stone. However, that would change as the Louvre found a patron in king Charles X, who even before appointing Champollion as curator of the Louvre, invested in it. In 1824 Charles X first supported ancient Egyptian art by authorizing the purchase of the Durand collection for the Louvre.[268] Auguste Forbin, who served as the general director of museums at the time, encouraged Charles to purchase the Durand collection to repair the Rape of the Louvre, writing that, “ever since the fate of war has come to strip the museum of the trophies it had accumulated, never has a more favorable opportunity presented itself to

[265] Quoted in Wilkinson, *A World Beneath the Sands: The Golden Age of Egyptology*, 41.
[266] Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists and Archeologists in Egypt*, 157.
[267] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 62.
[268] Elizabeth Buhe, “Sculpted Glyphs: Egypt and the Musée Charles X,” *Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide* 13, no. 1 (2014), 1.

return this great establishment to all its splendor"[269] Forbin, like Charles X, likely wanted the collection not for its ancient Egyptian artifacts, but rather for its medieval and Renaissance works. The Durand collection was a variety of objects. It was comprised of medieval and Renaissance art, and it included 2,500 Egyptian artifacts - mostly amulets and figurines – plus some wooden sarcophagi.[270] Although ancient Egypt was certainly not the highlight of the collection, Elizabeth Buhe argues that this purchase demonstrates the willingness to collect on a large scale for the Louvre, something that would happen widely during the Restoration.[271] Additionally, although it was not purchased for the sole purpose of acquiring ancient Egyptian artifacts, this was the start of collecting and exhibiting a very different Egypt than by the British or by Charles X's predecessors. Napoleon, Louis XVIII, and Charles X all used the Louvre in some capacity to legitimize their reign. Napoleon used it to house his military exploits, Louis XVIII used it to celebrate the Dendera Zodiac as a replacement for the Rosetta Stone, and now Charles directly attached his name to it (as Napoleon had) in calling it Musée Charles X. Charles X remained focused on the "grand Egypt" narrative. This is most clearly seen in his creation of the Musée Charles X in the Louvre. On May 15, 1826 Charles X issued a royal decree establishing two sections and four galleries for the display of the ancient civilizations of Greco-Rome and Egypt.[272] The Musée Charles X only displayed artifacts from ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt. Egypt was accorded four rooms, which Champollion would heavily influence the design of. However, before Champollion was appointed curator, Charles X commissioned artists to paint the ceilings in the four rooms. The ceilings vary from themes of antiquity to the Renaissance, but two paintings deserve special attention. The first, located in the first room, was painted by famous artist Antoine-Jean Gros entitled "The King Giving the Musée Charles X to the Arts."

[269] Quoted in Buhe, "Sculpted Glyphs," 3.
[270] Archives de Musées Nationaux 7DD*2 (Durand Inventory)
[271] Buhe, "Sculpted Glyphs: Egypt and the Musée Charles X," 5.
[272] Buhe, "Sculpted Glyphs: Egypt and the Musée Charles X," 1.

At the entrance of the gallery, greeting all the visitors, this image holds symbolic importance. Charles X is shown dedicating the museum to the arts and sciences (Figure 3). This paints him as a benevolent ruler and loyal patron committed to helping the Louvre recover and sharing his purchases with his people. In addition to the image itself, in 1828 Alexandre Martin published a booklet entitled, "*Visit to the Louvre Museum, or Amateur's Guide to the Exhibition of Works of Painting, Sculpture, Engraving, Lithography and Architecture of the Living Artists (1827-1828).*" In this booklet, the author provides the names of the ceiling paintings but gives special attention to room 1. Whereas most of the ceiling's names are simply stated the author includes a description of "The King Giving the Musée Charles X to the Arts."

> His Majesty is seated on his throne between Abundance and Peace; behind him is Justice who shows the list of the honors he has just obtained, and thus signals the attention of the King for the happiness of his people. His Majesty, after having rendered justice, concerns himself with the arts and points to the new Museum that his munificence dedicates to the arts and sciences.[273]

This description explains how Charles's role in the Musée Charles X is to celebrate the people and to improve the available knowledge about the ancient civilizations.[274] Aside from the clear celebration of his magnanimous action, the picture itself deserves attention. The museum building shows no trace of Egyptian art. The only nod to Egypt is a sphinx in the bottom right hand corner of the image. Instead, the building is supported by Corinthian columns, a classic and familiar Greek design. Similarly, the people in the image are seen wearing Classical clothing and the women representing Abundance and Peace seated

[273] Alexandre Martin, *Visite au Musée du Louvre, ou Guide de L'Amateur à L'Exposition des Ouvrages de Peinture, Sculpture, Gravure, Lithographie et Architecture des Artistes Vivans . (Année 1827-1828) Suivi de la Description des Plafonds, Voussures, Grisailles, etc., du Musée Charles X ; par une Société de Gens de Lettres et D'Artistes.* Paris: Leroi, 1828.

[274] Another way Charles portrayed himself as a patron of the arts and knowledge was his decision to publish the maps from the *Description* in 1826.Whereas Napoleon withheld them for fear of their accuracy and use by others, Charles chose to share it with the French public.

alongside Charles X are wearing Greek laurels. The Classics are highlighted consistently in this image whereas Egypt seems to be an afterthought.

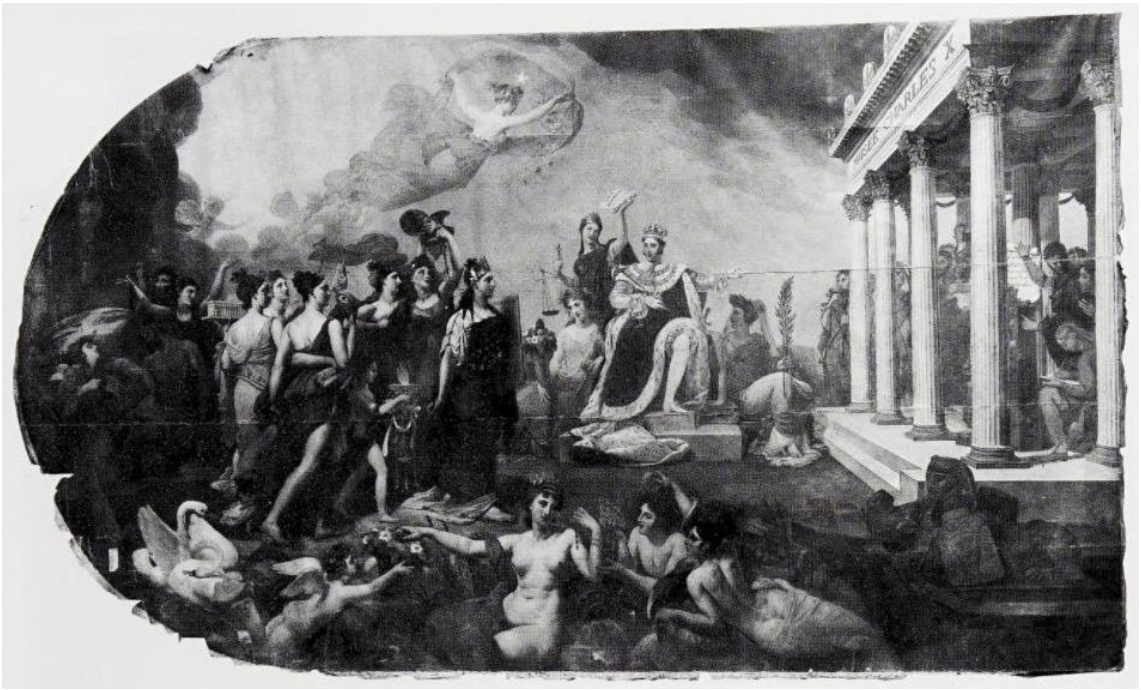


Figure 19: The King Giving the Musée Charles X to the Arts[275]

Further proof of Charles's adoration of the Classics over Egypt is available by examining the ceiling in the fourth room. This image painted by Picot Francois Eduoard is entitled, "Study and Genius Unveiling Ancient Egypt to Greece." This image shows Egypt being revealed to the Greeks, specifically Minerva, the goddess commonly associated with knowledge (Figure 20).[276]

[275] David O'Brien, *After the Revolution: Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda Under Napoleon (University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).*
Antoine-Jean Gros, *The King Giving the Musée Charles X to the Arts*, 1827. Oil on canvas, 580x930 cm. Versailles.
[276] Buhe, "Sculpted Glyphs: Egypt and the Musée Charles X," 5.

Figure 20: Study and Genius Unveiling Ancient Egypt to Greece.[277]

This image directly links Egypt to the Classics. However, it was not originally meant to look this way. In May 1826 Champollion wrote a letter to his brother in which he explained that the artist, Picot, reached out to him and asked for his opinion on the painting. It was originally described as,

> An allegory representing the genius of France, raising and unveiling with one hand ancient Egypt, seated, leaning near an old temple decorated with cartouches of the greatest kings, showing with the other hand in the distance Paris with the towers of Notre-Dame, a few remains and an obelisk in honor of Charles X.[278]

Champollion was undoubtably surprised when he saw the ceiling for himself and realized France was replaced with Greece. As will be discussed later in this chapter, this is very upsetting to Champollion, as he fought for Egypt to be recognized on its own, not for its relation with Greece or Rome. But what caused Picot to drastically alter the image? Buhe argues that it has to do with Egypt not being recognized as an established discipline. In many ways ancient Egyptian society was still considered mysterious. By the time this painting was

[277] Picot Francois Eduoard, *Study and Genius Unveiling Ancient Egypt to Greece*, 1827, 2.3x2.9 m, Louvre.
[278] Jean Francois Champollion to his brother Champollion-Figeac –May 15, 1826.

commissioned in 1826 hieroglyphs were translated, making the society more understandable, but it was still seen as somewhat barbaric compared to Greece or Rome, specifically when analyzing its art.[279] Objects such as the Zodiac were revered. However, ancient Egyptian art as a whole was not. It was considered stagnant and predictable. French critics thought it could not possibly attain the perfection exhibited in Greek sculpture – a concept which Champollion would fight against.

Champollion Steps In

On May 15, 1826, Charles X established the division of Egyptian art in the Musée Royal du Louvre and soon after appointed Champollion as curator. By 1826 Champollion was well known by the public for his translation of the Rosetta Stone. He was recognized by the scholarly community and well known to the French public, making him the perfect candidate. However, before Champollion could collect and exhibit how he wanted to, he had to first fight for ancient Egyptian art. This fight is well documented by Buhe.

Most scholars took issue with Egyptian art believing, it could never be the "beau ideal" – perfect form- like Greek sculpture. Champollion agreed that it was not the *beau idéal*, but he considered that idea to be close-minded and limiting. Additionally, one of the dominant views was from Johann Joachim Winckelmann in the mid-eighteenth century. Winckelmann believed that "the source of Egyptian art's deficiency lay in the unappealing physiognomies of the Egyptian people themselves, so different from what he thought of as the physical beauty of the ancient Greeks, which he believed to be at the root of the perfection of art."[280] Winckelmann's idea remained popular in the nineteenth century. In 1803, Winckelmann was challenged by Antoine Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy, who

[279] Buhe, "Sculpted Glyphs: Egypt and the Musée Charles X," 4.
[280] Buhe, "Sculpted Glyphs: Egypt and the Musée Charles X," 7.

argued that Winckelmann based his perspective on no direct evidence, as he never traveled to Egypt and saw the monuments himself. Despite Quatremère's criticism of Winckelmann, Quatremère considered Egyptian art to be too similar, never changing in taste – all together bland.[281] He championed the view of Egyptian art as stagnant and uninventive.

As early as 1824, Champollion sought to correct this view. Champollion argued that Egyptian art was not uninventive; instead, Egyptian artists focused on nature. Specifically, he articulated how the work could provide details on historical figures and how each statue with a face was a signifier of identity as each nose, eye, chin, and every other facial feature was crafted in a manner in which the identity of the statue was clear. He confirmed this suspicion in 1828 when he was able to discern which statues represented Rameses II. Champollion argued that while there was a certain uniformity in Egyptian art, it could not be called unchanging or uninventive. Additionally, Champollion argued that Egyptian art functioned inherently differently than Greek art. Greek art was about graceful sublime forms forged out of precious materials, but for Egyptians, it was not about reconstructing the most perfect and beautiful things in nature; therefore, it did not submit to the same aesthetic evaluation.[282] Champollion's most useful contribution to this debate was his comparison of Egyptian art to hieroglyphs. Just as a hieroglyph conveys meaning, Egyptian sculptures possess the ability to tell the history of the Egyptians. Egyptian art was not just about nature, but it was about sculptural form as a sign, a system of meaning that can be interpreted. While Buhe's art history analysis of how Champollion fought for Egyptian art's recognition is thorough, she does not analyze how the fruits of this fight not only made Egypt on par with Greece, but also made the mundane Egypt an acceptable form of study – compared to the British who were focused on the monumental items.

[281]Quatremère, Letter to the Academy, Archives de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, MS E305.
[282] Buhe, "Sculpted Glyphs: Egypt and the Musée Charles X," 10.

Champollion's appreciation of the mundane artifacts is first visible in his trip to Egypt before he was appointed as curator. His letters about his voyage read like an archeological diary. He uses smaller artifacts to uncover the bigger finds, thus he develops an appreciation for the small that reveals the big. Yet he still takes the time to clearly describe something as small as a shard of pottery.

> Yet we found an unbelievable number of pottery shards of all types…Sais pottery consists for the most part of shards of ancient manufacture. Thus I gathered green and blue glazed Egyptian earthenware, a fragment with a lotus flower engraved on it, the lower part of an earthenware funerary figure [ushabti] decorated with hieroglyphs, and a very pretty glazed fragment portraying a lion's head.

Champollion carefully describes the pottery and uses it to draw conclusions about the ancient civilization. This is a stark contrast to earlier descriptions of pottery. For example, we can compare it to Belzoni, "I met with a few of these vases of alabaster in the tombs of the kings, but unfortunately they were broken. A great quantity of pottery is found, and also wooden vessels in some of the tombs, as if the deceased had resolved to have all he possessed deposited along with him."[283] Belzoni does not describe what the pottery looks like, he only indicates the vast amount of pottery located in a tomb. William Richard Hamilton's description provides even less information. "These ruins were covered, as usual, with a prodigious quantity of broken pottery, the consumption of which must have been immense."[284] Something that the famous travelogue authors deemed inconsequential, Champollion takes time to describe in great detail. He is rewarded for his efforts when it helps him develop a deeper appreciation for a location. Unlike his fellow scholars, Champollion deeply appreciated every facet of ancient Egyptian culture. This informed his collection strategy, as he was determined to secure the purchase of smaller artifacts that

---

[283] Giovanni Battista Belzoni, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries Within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia*. (London: John Murray, 1820), 144.
[284] William Richard Hamilton, *Remarks on Several Parts of Turkey: Part 1. Ægyptiaca, or Some account of the antient and modern state of Egypt, as obtained in the years 1801, 1802*, (London: T. Payne, Pall Mall; and Cadell and Davies, 1809), iv.

demonstrated the full spectrum of Egypt to present a more realistic representation of the society and imbue the French with a deep appreciation of it.

During his involvement in the Louvre, Champollion prompted the purchase of two significant collections. First, he encouraged Charles X to purchase the Salt collection in 1826. Salt originally tried to sell it to the British Museum, but Champollion heard about the collection, went to see it, and decided it belonged in the Louvre. Salt was baffled when the British Museum rejected his collection. He assumed he would collect a hefty sum and a nice pension.

> I have collected, and my collection is now in Leghorn, antiquities to the value of four thousand pounds: the finest collection of papyri existing, the best assortment of Egyptian bronzes, several paintings in encaustic, and rich in articles of gold and porcelain, - in fine, what would make the collection at the [British] Museum *the choicest in the world*, as an Egyptian collection; and this I would willingly present at once to the museum could I obtain a pension of 600l… on which to retire.[285]

Salt greatly desired to enrich the British Museum with Egyptian antiquities as evidenced by his actions to hire Belzoni to secure the Head of Memnon. Additionally, he sold his first collection to the British Museum for 2000 pounds only a few years before. However, he was rejected. It is unclear what exactly happened or how he was turned down, but Salt next writes, "It would be a great pleasure to me that it should go to England; but no more dealings with the British Museum."[286] About ten days after Salt's original letter expressing enthusiasm at the prospect of his collection in the British Museum, Salt wrote that Champollion visited his collection and wanted to purchase it: "Monsieur Champollion has been to Leghorn to see my collection, sent by the French Government to purchase it; that he was much delighted, and that it is likely to be bought at a very advantageous price for my interest…"[287] Later in April 1826 Salt writes that his collection was "disposed of much to my advantage to the King of France. I am very sorry the treatment I received from the Trustees of the British Museum,

[285] Henry Salt to B. Richards Esq – June 18, 1825 in Alexandria
[286] Henry Salt to B. Richards Esq – June 1825 in Alexandria
[287] Henry Salt to B. Richards Esq – June 29, 1825 in Alexandria

prevented the possibility of my sending this fine collection to England."[288] Unfortunately, Salt's letters do not explain why the British turned down such a fine collection, but they do show how Champollion backed by Charles X actively sought to purchase it for the Louvre. The collection consisted of 4,000 pieces with a variety of artifacts from statuary and sphinxes to wall paintings and depictions of everyday life.[289] Champollion's collection strategy was to collect objects that told the history of Egypt, not "grand Egypt" but simply Egypt. This strategy informed his purchase of Drovetti's collection in 1827 when he acquired 500 artifacts, from statues, to stelaes and papyri.[290] Later in 1828, Champollion took a trip to Egypt to collect for the Louvre and although he did not acquire a large quantity of antiquities, he did make two notable additions – the large sarcophagus of Djedhor and the statue of Karomama in bronze encrusted with gold. Champollion describes the success of these acquisitions in a letter to Baron de la Bouillerie, a General Intendant of the Royal Household:

> I felt a duty to allocate all savings that I was in a position to make regarding excavations in Memphis and Thebes, etc., to enriching the museum Charles X with new monuments. I have been fortunate enough to gather a mass of objects which will complete various series of the Egyptian museum of the Louvre, and I moreover succeeded, after many considerations, to acquire the most beautiful and precious sarcophagus which has ever emerged from the Egyptian catacombs. No museum in Europe possesses such a magnificent Egyptian work of art. I have in addition a collection of choice objects of very great importance, among which is a bronze statue of an exquisite workmanship which is entirely encrusted with gold and represents an Egyptian Queen from the dynasty of the Bubastites. It is the most beautiful object known of its kind.[291]

Although Champollion celebrates the mundane, he also considers his two major acquisitions as the "most beautiful and precious" artifacts. He believes that his additions make the Louvre's Egyptian gallery unrivalled. Champollion's fervent collecting for the Louvre helped the French far surpass the collections in the British Museum. Upon Champollion's death in

---

[288] J.J. Halls, *The Life and Correspondence of Henry Salt: Consul General in Egypt*, (United Kingdom: R. Bentley, 1834), 262.
[289] Archives de Musées Nationaux 7DD*5 (Salt Inventory)
[290] Archives de Musées Nationaux 7DD*8 (Drovetti Inventory)
[291] Champollion to Baron de la Bouillerie– December 26, 1829, Lazaret of Toulon

1832 the Louvre possessed over 9,000 Egyptian artifacts.[292] The collections Champollion gathered depict a variety of Egyptian life – from day to day to the pharaoh's grandeur. This was a very different approach from the British Museum.

Champollion intended to do something very different from the British Museum. Not only would he exhibit Egypt in a way he considered to be true to its history, but he would do so in a manner in which the objects were organized according to their purpose and chronology – compared to the British Museum which lacked a meaningful design. Champollion divided the Egyptian wing into four rooms based on theme: two funerary rooms, one of civil life, and a room of the gods.[293] In his exhibition, he not only intended for Egyptian art to surpass Greek and Roman art, but he also sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of ancient Egyptian life for all the visitors. He wanted to transform the Louvre from a focus on aesthetic pleasures to a museum of history. He did this through his thoughtful grouping and presentation of artifacts as well as publishing a booklet entitled *Notice Descriptive Des Monumens Égyptiens Du Musée Charles X* in 1827. In his *Notice*, he explains how the Louvre collection varies from any other.

> Collections of Egyptian monuments … are generally formed with the sole aim of clarifying the history of art – the techniques of sculpture and of painting from different periods and diverse national traditions … But the important and numerous collections of Egyptian monuments with which royal munificence has recently endowed the museum of Charles X, must, as it were, serve as a source and as evidence for the entire history of the Egyptian nation, and so need to be coordinated on a different plan; it is necessary, indeed essential, to consider both the subject matter and the particular purpose of each monument, and that rigorous knowledge of one or the other of these things should determine the position and rank that the monument ought to occupy. In short, it is necessary to display the monuments in a manner that presents as completely as possible the sequence of gods, and of Egyptian rulers, from the primitive period up to the Romans, and to label objects in a systematic order that relates to the public and private life of the ancient Egyptians.[294]

---

[292] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 164.
[293] Buhe, "Sculpted Glyphs: Egypt and the Musée Charles X," 8.
Champollion visited the Drovetti collection purchased by the Piedmontese when it was moved to Turin. This visit likely informed his decision on how to exhibit the artifacts.
[294] Translated into English in Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 182.

Champollion clarifies that the exhibition strategy is not based around the artistic qualities of the monuments, but rather about creating a complete database of knowledge about ancient Egypt. This information is provided to the visitor primarily through the *Notice*. This booklet, similar to the British Museum *Synopsis,* informs the reader about the background of the collections and the artifacts themselves.[295] The *Notice* far surpasses the detail and description of the *Synopsis,* showing how much more the French valued the objects. Champollion was able to make mundane artifacts an acceptable and worthy form of study. No longer was the "grand Egypt" the only version of Egypt in the French minds. Additionally, Egypt was no longer grand merely for its association with Greece; it could stand on its own. However, this conversation, which was facilitated by Champollion in France, did not take place in Britain. Here, ancient Egypt's importance remained in "grand Egypt," often associated with Greece.

Despite Champollion's overall success, the British-French rivalry pulled Charles X back into the "grand Egypt" narrative. By 1829 the Louvre was leaps and bounds ahead of the British Museum. As analyzed in the previous chapter, the Elgin Marbles controversy nearly halted all collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts. Despite the lack of new content for the museum, the British acquired another famous artifact that continued to support the "grand Egypt" narrative, the Philae obelisk.

Obelisks were significant symbols of imperialist control of Egypt as early as 10 BC. When Caesar Augustus bested Cleopatra, he tore down two obelisks and carried them home to Rome where they stood as symbols of victory. Several other Roman emperors followed this trend, from Caligula to Theodosius (1st century AD to 4th Century AD). Obelisks were symbols of military might and with eighteen total obelisks resting in Rome, they were clearly linked to the image of success in the ancient world.[296] Thus, it was no surprise that Europeans

[295] Jean-François Champollion *Notice descriptive des monumens égyptiens du Musée Charles X*, (France, 1827), 34.
[296] J.C. Zietsman, "Crossing the Roman Frontier: Egypt in Rome (And Beyond)." *Acta Classica* 52 (2009): 2-4.

would desire to have an obelisk themselves, especially Britain, which linked its appreciation of Egypt directly to Greece and Rome. The British acquired their first obelisk in 1821, the Philae obelisk.[297] Unfortunately, the transportation of obelisks was by no means perfect and for six years the Philae obelisk remained in a damaged state until William John Bankes persuaded the duke of Wellington to create a foundation for the obelisk to rest on in 1827.[298] The obelisk was not able to be raised and displayed publicly until 1839. The French envied the British. Specifically, Charles X came to desire an obelisk for himself and France. In 1829 he received a letter from Baron d'Haussez that explained the value of obelisks.

> France owes to the most beautiful monuments that decorate it, and Paris, which does not cede its place to a single capital of modern Europe, will contest for position with the most famous cities of ancient times; but its places and its public places have not yet, it must be admitted, attained the degree of splendor attained by Rome, which your capital anyway rivals in magnificence. One sees there none of these obelisks transported from Egypt to Europe. . . . if Paris possessed them, it would have nothing more to envy Rome, and their elevation in public squares, beyond making them even more beautiful, would provoke profound recognition among these laborious and erudite men, who have devoted their existence to the study of antiquity.[299]

Interestingly, Baron d'Haussez does not mention Britain, instead he focuses on Rome. He believes that obtaining an obelisk is yet another step in achieving the splendor associated with Rome. Here again, the "grand Egypt" narrative rears its head. Egypt, specifically its obelisks, are valuable for its connection with Rome as a symbol of triumph. Baron d'Haussez's lack of mention of Britain in this specific letter does not mean that he or Charles X is unfamiliar with the British acquisition of an obelisk. This is made clear in Champollion's correspondence.

> I remain rather unmoved by the fact that that scholarly English engineer thought up the brilliant idea of a three-hundred-thousand-franc ramp to make his government, and ours at the same time, go after the poor obelisks of Alexandria. Having seen the ones in Thebes I pity them …But I will never give my support…to a project which

---

[297] This artifact was yet another great example of the British-French rivalry. Specifically, Drovetti and Belzoni. Drovetti's agent Leblo convinced the locals it belonged to the French. Leblo claimed he could decipher hieroglyphs and that the inscription told of its relation to Drovetti's ancestry. He also bribed a local judge to secure the artifact for the French. However, Belzoni paid them off with a gold watch. After lots of difficulty, Belzoni ultimately claimed the obelisk for the British.
Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750-1850*, 254-255
[298] Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists and Archeologists in Egypt*, 268.
[299] Baron d'Haussez to Charles X – November 25, 1829 in Paris.

> splices one of these magnificent monoliths in three. This would be sacrilege: all or nothing… [300]

Champollion acknowledges the damage that was done to the British obelisk and laments that it has encouraged other Europeans and even his own countrymen to follow suit. Champollion cannot understand why the French were so willing to desecrate Egypt in pursuit of besting the British. This is not the first time he is vocal about defacing Egypt. Champollion also voiced his displeasure about the acquisition of the Dendera Zodiac. Although the French celebrated the acquisition of the Dendera Zodiac, its removal severely damaged the temple it was housed in--a topic which Champollion warned his colleagues about:

> France has done so much towards unveiling the antiquities of Egypt that it has a strong claim to some of its most precious works; she should likewise take pleasure in being able to show foreigners a monument which compensates for the loss of the Rosetta Stone…we would nonetheless like to offer a defence for the expression of some regret that this magnificent temple was dispossessed of one of its most beautiful ornaments; we ask ourselves whether our ardent compatriots weren't suffering from an excess of otherwise noble and generous sentiments. Absorbed by the desire to honour their fatherland, did they consider all the consequences of their undertaking? Here we are not dealing with statues, detached stones, obelisks even, or so many other monoliths which conquerors and visitors have taken from Egypt over twenty-three centuries. This is an exceptional building, intact until now, whose demolition of sorts has now begun. Where Persians, Greeks, Romans or Arabs have disfigured the temples of Egypt, we are far from able to excuse them; but we must take heed of either blind fanaticism or the terrible scourge of war. Why imitate them in peacetime? Would we in France dare to take Lord Elgin's example as our lead? [301]

Champollion's statement reveals that even he believed the Dendera Zodiac was such a great artifact that it compensated for the loss of the Rosetta Stone and the other objects lost under the Capitulation of Alexandria. However, he also cautions future collectors, as he notes the damage left to the temple from which they removed the Zodiac, and warns there are potential consequences. Specifically, he compares its removal to the controversy of the Elgin marbles. Despite Champollion's warning, the Dendera Zodiac was never as controversial as the Elgin Marbles. Nor was the removal of the obelisks particularly controversial. Champollion shows

---

[300] Jean-François Champollion, *My Journey to Egypt*. Edited by Peter A. Clayton, (Gibson Square, 2019), 332.
[301] Jean-François Champollion, *My Journey to Egypt*. Edited by Peter A. Clayton, 183-184.

his deep appreciation of ancient Egypt, an appreciation which he worked tirelessly for, hoping that the French would share. However, whenever the rivalry was highlighted amongst the British and French, decorum for the Egyptian monuments was abandoned. While Champollion was successful in displaying a more realistic Egypt, unfortunately, he was not successful at making others care for and respect Egypt as deeply as he did.

The British Museum

Although the Louvre far surpassed the British Museum, the exhibits remained a topic of conversation. This is evident in George Long's book *The British Museum: Egyptian Antiquities Volume 1*. Long was a member of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge founded in 1826 and published this book through the Society. The Society was not solely focused on ancient Egypt, though it was the subject of several books and maps produced by George Long. Books such as Long's represented a public but more scholarly and methodical approach to collecting ancient Egypt. The book represented a more academic and systematic approach than the *Synopsis* as it was far more detailed. Long referenced the travelogues in conjunction with the artifacts displayed in the British Museum to present the public with a more holistic picture of ancient Egypt. The book itself was less about the museum collection (despite its name) and more about general knowledge of ancient Egypt – as Long explains, "to give both additional interest and value to these volumes, it has been thought advisable not to confine the description to a bare account of what the Museum contains, but to treat generally of the history of art among the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, illustrating the text principally, but not entirely, by the specimens in the Museum."[302] Even Long, trying to make the public more aware of Egyptian history, found its

[302] George Long, *The British Museum: Egyptian Antiquities*, (United Kingdom: Charles Knight, 1832), 1.

true value in its connection with Greece, a concept that constantly made the British lag behind the French.

Concluding Thoughts

By 1832, when Champollion suddenly died, the French had far surpassed the British in collecting and exhibiting ancient Egypt. They had a more robust collection and range of artifacts– not just busts and grand monuments but also papyrus and more day-to-day objects. The thematic presentation of the exhibit hall made ancient Egypt more understandable to the public, and the *Notice* did not merely describe the physical qualities of the artifacts (like the *Synopsis*), but also their history. The Louvre functioned as a true imparter of knowledge, whereas the British Museum remained attached to showing "grand Egypt," leaving its history a mystery to its public. This exhibition was only made possible by the recognition of Egypt on par with Greece and Rome. This conversation never took place in Britain, explaining why it lagged so far behind the French. It was because Champollion helped Egypt achieve recognition that he was appointed the world's first professor of Egyptology, at the Collège de France in 1829. It was the first available form of academic study of Egyptology.[303] Although his position was short-lived due to his death, the department carried on in his absence. Champollion's legacy went far beyond translating hieroglyphs: in taking up the gauntlet to fight for ancient Egypt's recognition, he not only engaged with the public through the Louvre and presented a true ancient Egypt, he also helped it become a formalized study. Without Champollion, Egyptology would have developed, but it would have done so under the shadow of the Classics. Yet, regardless of all of Champollion's efforts and success, even he was unable to establish European respect for ancient Egyptian monuments.

[303] Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*, 203.

CONCLUSION

Figure 21: Erection de l'Obélisque du Luxor, Le 25 octobre 1836.[304]

On October 25, 1836, 200,000 spectators watched as the Luxor Obelisk was erected in the Place de la Concorde.[305] The French had finally succeeded in acquiring an obelisk to match Britain, and ancient Rome. This artifact is a perfect example of how British and French rivalry remained at the heart of collecting ancient Egypt. Muhammad Ali Pasha gifted one of the coveted Obelisks of Luxor to the French and in 1830 it was transported to Paris.[306] The obelisk originally stood in the front of Luxor Temple alongside another obelisk. They were the only two still in an upright position. Although Champollion was against taking obelisks, he did ultimately support the acquisition claiming, "If the government wants an obelisk in Paris… it is [a matter of] national honor to have one of those from Luxor."[307] Originally,

[304] Théodore Jung, *Erection de l'Obélisque du Luxor, Le 25 octobre 1836*. Déro-Becker, éditeur, rue neuve Saint Augustin, 43. -et chez A. Jeanne, passage Choiseul, 66 et 68. 1836.
[305] Brian M. Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists and Archeologists in Egypt* (Westview Press, 2004), 166.
[306] Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile*, 166.
[307] Quoted in Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750-1850*, 293.

both obelisks were promised to the British; however, after persistent lobbying by the French, they secured one of the two obelisks. The French now owned their own obelisk; however, it was not able to be raised until 1836. Neither Champollion nor Charles X witnessed this. By 1832 Champollion had already died of a stroke and Charles X was in exile after the July Revolution. Instead, Louis Phillipe claimed the victory associated with raising the obelisk. The obelisk served as a symbol of the French foothold in Egypt as the French diplomats successfully negotiated the acquisition of the obelisk, it represented triumph over the British who were the original intended recipient, and it also represented the familiar European "grand Egypt" narrative. Although the French continued to tell the "mundane Egypt" through the exhibitions in the Louvre, the monument represented a continued focus on "grand Egypt."

Consequences of "Opening" Egypt

Although the French expedition opened up Egypt to Europe and allowed it to be studied, it also opened up Egypt to widespread collection, looting, and destruction of archeological sites. The damage was so widespread that Brian Fagan refers to the early 1800's antiquity game in Egypt as the "Rape of the Nile." Fagan argues that Egypt was divided between French consul Bernardino Drovetti and British consul Henry Salt. The two pursued antiquities so aggressively that demarcation lines were drawn in the middle of temples.[308] They were both politically savvy and kept in good relations with Muhammad Ali Pasha, who left them to their own devices, as he benefited from the monetary gains with exporting antiquities. Antiquarian Sébastien Louis Saulnier, the man who excavated the Zodiac of Dendera, compared the two consuls to monarchs. "They concluded a peace treaty. Like kings who, in accommodating their differences, want to preclude all causes that could renew them, they took a river for the border of the respective possessions that they granted

[308] Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile*, 166.

themselves in Egypt. For two or three years now, it is the flow of the Nile that has separated them."[309] Aside from the tension amongst the two in Egypt, Fagan analyzes their obsession with ancient Egypt, considering it their own personal property, explaining their vigor to collect. In trying to best one another, ancient Egypt had been torn asunder by the battle of the consuls.

Upon his visit to Egypt in 1828 Champollion was so surprised by the destruction that he encountered that he wrote to Muhammad Ali Pasha pleading he do something. Muhammad Ali was less concerned with ancient Egypt than he was about his project to modernize modern Egypt. He saw antiquities as a bargaining chip for European diplomatic and technical support and as a way to fund his modernization project. Champollion knew that Muhammad Ali saw antiquities for their monetary value and in an effort to convince him to protect the artifacts he reasoned that tourism had dramatically increased with Europeans coming to visit Egypt to see the monuments. The tourists poured money into the economy and in the long run was a greater profit than looting. Specifically, Champollion tried to have Muhammad Ali institute rules about controlling excavation, forbidding quarrying stones from temples, and closely monitoring the export of antiquities. Fagan argues that Champollion's pleas were effective because on August 15, 1835 Muhammad Ali issued a government ordinance. First, it forbade the export of all antiquities. Second, he proposed the establishment of a museum in Cairo.[310] The ordinance also made it illegal to destroy monuments and endorsed efforts at conservation.[311] Maya Jasanoff explains the historical importance of this action – it was one of the first pieces of legislation passed by any nation to preserve its cultural heritage.[312] This was Egypt's first attempt to take control of their history and move away from European intervention. Unfortunately, the ordinance was

[309] Quoted in Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile*, 116.
[310]Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750-1850*, 299.
[311] Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile*, 170.
[312] Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile*, 300.

unenforceable. Reid argues that collectors could easily bribe officials to get around it and Muhammad Ali himself tried to break it on several occasions. Muhammad Ali remained focused on his modernization project, which in some cases directly damaged ancient ruins. In 1836 he considered quarrying the Pyramids to build the Nile barrage.[313] He was met with pushback from Europeans, specifically French consul Jean Francois Mimaut, who during the appeal argued that the Pyramids could not be damaged as, "The Pyramids are regarded in Europe as the most venerable monument of the ancient human race."[314] It is telling that to save the Egyptian monument the French mention how the Europeans value it and therefore it should not be destroyed. This was also an effective plea that successfully stopped Muhammad Ali's project. In Muhammad Ali's eyes ancient Egypt was valuable because the Europeans found it interesting and invested in it. This is most clearly seen in his vision for the museum. It was intended to appeal to '"travelers who visit this country,' not to Egyptian visitors."[315] As Jasanoff explains, the "Westerners, not Egyptians, were and always would be the primary consumers of Egyptian antiquities." But why was this? Why did the Egyptians seem to care so little for their history? Some historians point to religious perspectives. The majority of Egyptians were Muslims and because of their faith, they perceived the ancient civilizations and monuments as idolatrous, "vestiges of the age before the Prophet—negligible at best, at worst offensive."[316] Very few Egyptians were actively involved in the collection and preservation of ancient Egyptian history.

In Donald Malcom Reid's landmark study of how ancient Egypt was Europeanized, he is only able to identify six Egyptian Egyptologists who played an active role in Egyptology from 1800-1870. Of the six, only one fervently fought to teach Egyptians about

[313] Donald Malcom Reid, *Whose Pharaohs? Archeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 60.
[314] Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?* 61.
[315] Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750-1850*, 300.
[316] Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750-1850*, 300.

ancient Egypt. Rifaa al-Tahtawi worked in Muhammad Ali's antiquity service and museum in 1835. Although he helped collect and exhibit for the public, his biggest contribution came much later, his publication in Arabic of the history of ancient Egypt in 1868.[317] In Egyptian nationalism studies, this is often recognized as the first turning point in Egyptian national awareness.[318]

Egyptian nationalism is important to analyze in the aftermath of the European collection and presentation of ancient Egypt. Unlike most civilizations that use ancient history to inspire nation building, Egyptian identity rests on Islam and pan-Arabism.[319] Historian Michael Wood undertook a study to evaluate why Egyptians do not use their pharaonic past as the forefront of their nationalist movement.[320] Their ancient Egyptian past became termed Pharaonism. He defines Pharaonism as identifying Egypt "as a distinctive territorial entity with its own history and character separate from that of the rest of the Arab and Islamic world."[321] He clarifies that this idea typically identified Egypt as a part of the Mediterranean, and by extension western. Thus, Egypt was seen as a part of Europe's history, a western nation, not an eastern Islamic nation.

There were some efforts through Egypt's history to incorporate Egyptian past into their curriculum and help Egyptians identify themselves with it. For example, in 1868 the Egyptian Minister of Education Ali Mubarak sponsored talks on Egyptology and in 1874 incorporated ancient Egyptian history into secondary education. Wood argues that his efforts had no discernible impact.[322] He also argues that the major reason education was later unsuccessful was because of imperialist control. During the British occupation, the British

---

[317] Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?* 53.
[318] Michael Wood, "The Use of the Pharaonic Past in Modern Egyptian Nationalism," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 35 (1998): 180.
[319] Pan-Arabism is the idea to unify the countries of North Africa and Western Asia. It reasons that Arabs constitute a single nation and is often connected to Arab nationalism.
[320] He does recognize their ancient past is of marginal importance.
Wood, "The Use of the Pharaonic Past in Modern Egyptian Nationalism," 183.
[321] Wood, "The Use of the Pharaonic Past in Modern Egyptian Nationalism," 181.
[322] Wood, "The Use of the Pharaonic Past in Modern Egyptian Nationalism," 181.

thoroughly controlled the education system and avoided teaching ancient Egyptian history. Wood speculates they feared that teaching the Egyptians their past would stimulate national pride leading to independence. Wood demonstrates that European interference slowed the development of Egyptian Egyptology. It was not until 1922 that Egyptians actively began claiming their past and celebrating it.

In 1922 the standing rule set forth by Egyptian Antiquities Service was that artifacts discovered in a fully intact (undisturbed) tomb were the legal property of the Egyptian government. Any artifacts found in a plundered tomb were divided amongst the Egyptian government and the foreign archaeologist. Because of these rules when Tutankhamun's tomb (a fully intact tomb) was found in 1922, it was legally the property of the Egyptians. Tutankhamun's tomb is considered one of the most valuable pieces of ancient history.[323] Well aware of this fact, its discoverer, Howard Carter, was perturbed by the Egyptian law. Despite Carter's annoyance, the Egyptian government insisted the tomb and all its belongings were their rightful property. The discovery prompted a celebration. On March 6, 1922 ministers and members of parliament departed from Cairo on a train for Luxor. Thousands of Egyptians gathered alongside the tracks all the way to Luxor. In Luxor the government officials were met by yet another large crowd. The turnout alerted the politicians to the Egyptian people's excitement over their glorious past.[324] This was a major turning point when Egyptians began celebrating their Pharaonic heritage.

Despite this seemingly new appreciation for ancient Egypt, it was still at risk of being labelled unimportant in the face of modernization. Jasanoff demonstrates this control when analyzing how the proposed Aswan Dam threatened Abu Simbel. The temple was saved by a project funded by the United States in which the stones were painstakingly moved to higher

[323] Wood, "The Use of the Pharaonic Past in Modern Egyptian Nationalism," 183.
[324] Wood, "The Use of the Pharaonic Past in Modern Egyptian Nationalism," 183.

ground. Egyptian leader Nasser gifted the Temple of Dendur (now residing in the Metropolitan Museum of Art) as a thank you. Even in the mid-1900s, antiquities were traded for modern technology and developmental aid.[325]

Benefits of "Opening" Egypt

Although there was a price to "opening" Egypt which resulted in the looting and destruction of ancient Egyptian monuments and linking ancient Egyptian history to Europe, it contributed to the development of Egyptology. Without Napoleon's expedition, the Rosetta Stone would not have been found, allowing ancient Egyptian script to remain a mystery for some time. Another benefit was the beginning of the Egyptian wing at the British Museum. Although this led to a war of the collectors, it also gave the British the push to transform Cabinets of Curiosities into public institutions and spark general interest in ancient Egypt. Another benefit of the expedition was Champollion's translation. His translation made him a famous figure which allowed him to step into the position of curator of the Louvre. In this position he began exhibiting a more realistic and mundane Egypt, fighting for Egypt's right to be recognized independent of its association with the Classics. It is because of him that Egyptology did not develop under the shadow of the Classics. He also began campaigning for the preservation of Egyptian monuments. While he at times endorsed the removal and collection, he often fought for ancient Egypt to be preserved and protected. This fight may not have come to anything when he was alive, but in his death, he left a lasting impact. Not only did he persuade Muhammad Ali to enact an ordinance to protect ancient Egypt, but he also indirectly turned European attention to the idea of preservation instead of only collection. However, this too had a consequence. Although several collectors ignored Muhammad Ali's ordinance, others used it as an opportunity to intervene in Egypt. Unable to

[325] Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750-1850*, 305.

collect, Europeans focused on preservation, arguing the Egyptians could not appreciate, understand or look after the monuments and temples as well as they could.[326] Jasanoff argues that this need to preserve was really a surrogate for more overt forms of territorial occupation and a new form of collection. Rather than only collect antiquities, now the British and French also collected the sites and landmarks of ancient Egypt and took them under Western control.

[326] Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750-1850*, 300.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Acts and Votes of Parliament, Statutes and Rules,and Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum. United Kingdom: Cox, Son, and Baylis, 1803.

Anonymous, *View through the Egyptian Room, in the Townley Gallery at the British Museum*, 1820, watercolour, 36.1 x 44.3 cm. Collection of the British Museum.

Antoine-Jean Gros, *The King Giving the Musée Charles X to the Arts*, 1827. 580x930 cm. Versailles.

Archives de Musées Nationaux 7DD*2 (Durand Inventory)

Archives de Musées Nationaux 7DD*4 (Salt Inventory)

Archives de Musées Nationaux 7DD*5 (Salt Inventory)

Archives de Musées Nationaux 7DD*8 (Drovetti Inventory)

Baron d'Haussez to Charles X – November 25, 1829 in Paris.

Belzoni, Giovanni Battista. *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries Within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia*. London: John Murray, 1820.

Capitulation of Alexandria (1801) accessible in: Cobbett, William. A Collection of Facts and Observations relative to the Peace with Bonaparte, chiefly extracted from the "Porcupine" and including Mr. Cobbett's Letters to Lord Hawkesbury, etc. United Kingdom: Cobbett & Morgan, 1801.

Clarke, Edward Daniel. *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa, 4th edn, vol. 5: Greece, Egypt and the Holy Land, Part II, Section II.* London: Cadell and Davies, 1810.

Champollion, Jean-François. *Champollion Inconnu: Lettres Inedites*. Sydney: Wentworth Press, 2018.

Champollion, Jean-François. *My Journey to Egypt*. Edited by Peter A. Clayton. Gibson Square, 2019.

Champollion, Jean-François. *Notice descriptive des monumens égyptiens du Musée Charles X*. France, 1827.

Champollion, Jean-Francois. Lettre à M. Dacier, secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions est Belles-Lettres, relative à l'alphabet des hiéroglyphes phonétiques. Paris, 1822.

Champollion, Jean-Francois. Précis du système hiéroglyphique des anciens égyptiens ou recherches sur les élémens premiers de cette écriture sacrée, sur leurs diverses

combinaisons, et sur les rapports de ce système avec les autres méthodes graphiques égyptiennes, 1824.

Champollion to Baron de la Bouillerie, General Intendant of the Royal Household, – December 26, 1829, Lazaret of Toulon

D'Anville, Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon. *Aegyptus Antiqua* [map]. Paris: J.B.B. D'Anville, 1765.

Denon, Dominique Vivant. *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt, during the Campaigns of General Bonaparte*. Preface by E.A. Kendal. London: B. Crosby, 1802.

Denon, Dominique Vivant. *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte*. Paris: Promeneur, 1801.

Description de L'Egypte, ou Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Egypte pendant l'expedition de l'Armée française, 1st ed,. 22 vols. Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1809-1828.

Drovetti, Bernardino, and Sylvie Guichard. *Lettres de Bernardino Drovetti, consul de France, à Alexandrie (1803-1830)*. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2003.

Engraved by Anthony Cerdon, Drawn by F.J. Loutherbourg Esq. R.A. *The British Army in Egypt*, 1801, Library of Congress.

Felham, John. *The Picture of London, for 1803: Being a Correct Guide to All the Curiosities, Amusements, Exhibitions, Public Establishments, and Remarkable Objects, in and Near London; with a Collection of Appropriate Tables. For the Use of Strangers, Foreigners, and All Persons who are Not Intimately Acquainted with British Metropolis.* London: Lewis and Company, 1803.

Flamino obelisk, n.d., Rome, Italy.

Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, *Lettres écrites d'Égypte à Cuvier, Jussieu, Lacépède, Monge, Desgenettes, Redouté jeune, Norry, etc., aux professeurs du muséum et à sa famille. Recueillies ... avec une préface et des notes par le Dr. E.T. Hamy*. Paris: Hachette, 1901.

Halls, J.J. *The Life and Correspondence of Henry Salt: Consul General in Egypt*. United Kingdom: R. Bentley, 1834.

Hamilton, William Richard. *Remarks on Several Parts of Turkey: Part 1. Ægyptiaca, or Some account of the antient and modern state of Egypt, as obtained in the years 1801, 1802*. London: T. Payne, Pall Mall; and Cadell and Davies, 1809.

Hartleben, H. *Lettres Et Journaux De Champollion*. Paris: Leroux, 1909.

Henry Salt to B. Richards Esq – June 18, 1825 in Alexandria

Henry Salt to B. Richards Esq – June 1825 in Alexandria

Henry Salt to B. Richards Esq – June 29, 1825 in Alexandria

Jacques-Lous David, *Coronation of Napoleon I as Emperor of the French*, 1806, 6.21x9.79m, Louvre.

Jean Francois Champollion to his brother Champollion-Figeac –June 18, 1829 in Thebes.

Jean Francois Champollion to his brother Champollion-Figeac –May 15, 1826.

Jung, Théodore. *Erection de l'Obélisque du Luxor, Le 25 octobre 1836*. Déro-Becker, éditeur, rue neuve Saint Augustin, 43. -et chez A. Jeanne, passage Choiseul, 66 et 68. 1836.

Legh, Thomas. *Narrative of a Journey in Egypt and the Country Beyond the Cataracts*. London: John Murray, 1816.

Light, Henry. *Travels in Egypt, Nubia, Holy Land, Mount Libanon, and Cyprus, in the Year 1814*. London: Rodwell and Martin, 1818.

London Courier and Evening Gazette (London), March 24, 1802.

London Courier and Evening Gazette (London), May 8, 1805.

Long, George. *The British Museum: Egyptian Antiquities*. United Kingdom: Charles Knight, 1832.

Lord Byron, *The Curse of Minerva*. March 17, 1811.

Martin, Alexandre. *Visite au Musée du Louvre, ou Guide de L'Amateur à L'Exposition des Ouvrages de Peinture, Sculpture, Gravure, Lithographie et Architecture des Artistes Vivans . (Année 1827-1828) Suivi de la Description des Plafonds, Voussures, Grisailles, etc., du Musée Charles X ; par une Société de Gens de Lettres et D'Artistes.* Paris: Leroi, 1828.

Picot Francois Eduoard, *Study and Genius Unveiling Ancient Egypt to Greece*, 1827, 2.3x2.9 m, Louvre.

Quatremère, Letter to the Academy, Archives de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, MS E305.

Quarterly Review 1817, vol. 16, 98.

Quarterly Review 1818, vol. 19, 98.

Quarterly Review 1821, vol. 24, 98.

Salt, Henry. *Essay on Dr. Young's and M. Champollion's Phonetic System of Hieroglyphics*. United Kingdom, 1825.

Scharf, George. *Men with billboards advertising the results of the election in 1818, Belzoni's Egyptian tomb and various exhibitions. c.1818-1825*. 1840.

Sonnini, Charles S. *Voyage Dans La Haute Et Basse Egypte: Fait Par Ordre De L'ancien Gouvernement, Et Contenant Des Observations De Tous Genres*. Paris: Buisson, 1798.

Sonnini, Charles S. *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt: Undertaken by Order of the Old Government of France*. Preface by Henry Hunter. London: John Stockdale, 1799.

Sun (London), March 23, 1821.

Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum. United Kingdom: Cox, Son, and Baylis, 1821.

The Critical Review 1805, vol 5. 76.

The Critical Review 1817, vol. 21, 98.

Théaulon, Langlé, and Brisset. *Le Zodiaque de Paris, a Propos du Zodiaque de Denderah: Vaudeville-Épisodique en un Acte*. Paris: Chez Duvernois, 1822.

Thomas Young to William Hamilton -September 29, 1822 in Paris.

The Monthly Review 1802, vol. 39, 98.

The Monthly Magazine Part 1 1804, vol. 17, 34.

William Cobbett, *A Collection of Facts and Observations relative to the Peace with Bonaparte, chiefly extracted from the "Porcupine" and including Mr. Cobbett's Letters to Lord Hawkesbury, etc.* (London: Cobbett & Morgan, 1801).

Wilson, Lucy Sarah Atkins. *Fruits of Enterprize Exhibited in the Travels of Belzoni in Egypt and Nubia: Interspersed with the Observations of a Mother to her Children*. London: John Harris, 1821.

Winckelmann, Johann Joachim. *History of Ancient Art, vol. 1*. Trans. G. Henry Lodge. Boston: James R. Osgood, 1873.

Young, Thomas. *An Account of Some Recent Discoveries in Hieroglyphical Literature and Egyptian Antiquities: Including the Author's Original Alphabet, as Extended by Mr. Champollion, with a Translation of Five Unpublished Greek and Egyptian Manuscripts*. London: John Murray, 1823.

Young, Thomas. *Miscellaneous Works of the Late Thomas Young*. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1972.

Secondary Sources:

Allan, Michael. “Translation: The Rosetta Stone from Object to Text." In *In the Shadow of World Literature: Sites of Reading in Colonial Egypt*, 39-54. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.

Bednarski, Andrew. *Holding Egypt: Tracing the Reception of the 'Description de L'Égypte' in Nineteenth-century Great Britain*. United Kingdom: Golden House, 2005.

Bernal, Martin. *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization Volume I: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987.

Black, Jeremy. Maps and Politics. London: Reaktion Books, 1997.

Buhe, Elizabeth. “Sculpted Glyphs: Egypt and the Musée Charles X.” *Digital Humanities and Art History* 13 No. 2 (2014).

Burleigh, Nina. *Mirage: Napoleon’s Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

Chester, Lucy P. "The Mapping of Empire: French and British Cartographies of India in the Late-Eighteenth Century." *Portuguese Studies* 16 (2000): 256-75.

Cohn, Bernard S. *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge the British in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Cole, Juan. *Napoleon’s Egypt: Invading the Middle East*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007.

Coller, Ian. *Arab France: Islam and the Making of Modern Europe, 1798-1831*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011.

Coller, Ian. “Egypt in the French Revolution.” In *The French Revolution in Global Perspective,* edited by Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.

Colley, Linda. *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Delbourgo, James. *Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017.

Downs, Jonathan. *Discovery at Rosetta: Revealing Ancient Egypt*. New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2020.

Fagan, Brian M. *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists and Archeologists in Egypt*. Westview Press, 2004.

Fahmī, Kālid Mahmūd. *All the Pasha’s men: Mehmed Ali, his army and the making of modern Egypt.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Gillispie, Charles Coulston, and Michel Dewachter. *Monuments of Egypt: The Napoleonic Edition: the Complete Archaeological Plates from La "Description De L'Egypte."* Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994.

Godlewska, Anne. "Map, Text and Image. The Mentality of Enlightened Conquerors: A New Look at the Description De L'Egypte." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20, no. 1 (1995): 5-28.

Harley, John Brian. "Deconstructing the Map." *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization* 26 (1989): 1-20.

Haynes, Christine. *Our Friends the Enemies: The Occupation of France After Napoleon*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018.

Hilts, Victor L. "Thomas Young's "Autobiographical Sketch"." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 122, no. 4 (1978): 248-60.

Hume, Ivor Noël. Belzoni: The Giant Archeologists Love to Hate. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011.

Jasanoff, Maya. *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850*. New York: Vintage Books, 2005.

Kramer, Lloyd S. *Nationalism in Europe and America Politics, Cultures, and Identities Since 1775.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Mayes, Stanley. *The Great Belzoni: The Circus Strongman Who Discovered Egypt's Ancient Treasure*. London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2006.

Mikaberidze, Alexander. *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Mitchell, Timothy Franck. *Colonising Egypt*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

McClellan, Andrew. *Inventing the Louvre: art, politics, and the origins of the modern museum in eighteenth-century Paris*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Naunton, Chris. *Egyptologists' Notebooks: The Golden Age of Nile Explorations in Words, Pictures, Plans, and Letters*. Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2020.

O'Brien, David. *After the Revolution: Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda Under Napoleon. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006.*

Pearce, Susan M. "Giovanni Battista Belzoni's exhibition of the reconstructed tomb of Pharaoh Seti I in 1821," *Journal of the History of Collections* 12, No. 1 (2000), p 109-125.

Peck, William H. ""Description De L'Egypte" A Major Acquisition from the Napoleonic Age." *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 51, no. 4 (1972): 112-21.

Prochaska, David. “Art of Colonialism, Colonialism of Art: The “Description De L'Égypte” (1809-1828).” *L'Esprit Créateur* 34, no. 2 (1994): 69-91.

Ray, John. *The Rosetta Stone and the Rebirth of Ancient Egypt*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Reid, Donald Malcolm. *Whose Pharaohs? Archeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002.

Rée, Peta, and Deborah Manley. *Henry Salt: Artist, Traveller, Diplomat, Egyptologist*. United Kingdom: Libri, 2001.

Ridley, Ronald T. *Napoleon’s Proconsul in Egypt: The Life and Times of Bernardino Drovetti*. London: The Rubicon Press, 1998.

Richards, Thomas. *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*. London: Verso, 2011.

Robinson, Andrew. *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-Francois Champollion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Random House Inc, 1979.

Sanders, Edith R. "The Hamitic Hypothesis; Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective." *The Journal of African History* 10, no. 4 (1969): 521-32.

Solé, Robert and Dominique Valbelle. *The Rosetta Stone: The Story of the Decoding of Hieroglyphics*. New York: New York, 2002.

St. Clair, William. *Lord Elgin and the marbles*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Westerfeld, Jennifer. "Decipherment and Translation: An Egyptological Perspective." *The New Centennial Review* 16, no. 1 (2016): 29-36.

Wilkinson, Toby. *A World Beneath the Sands: The Golden Age of Egyptology*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2020.

Wood, Michael. “The Use of the Pharaonic Past in Modern Egyptian Nationalism.” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 35 (1998): 179–96.

Zietsman, J.C. “Crossing the Roman Frontier: Egypt in Rome (And Beyond).” *Acta Classica* 52 (2009): 1–21.