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The Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition and the Ninetenth-Century Survey Museum

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**THE NAPOLEONIC EGYPTIAN SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION
AND
THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY SURVEY MUSEUM**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of**

**Master of Arts
in
Museum Professions**

**By
Erin A. Peters**

**Seton Hall University
South Orange, NJ**

May 2009

Advisor: Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Ph.D.

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To Steve and Grandma,
whose strength is also a great source of inspiration.

And to Ally and Sierra,
who prove the future will be a brighter place.

And to Ryan—
the day that you are in Marblehead
and I am in Salem
(so that we can throw rocks at
each other across Salem Harbor)
keeps me going.

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ABSTRACT

As part of his military invasion of Egypt in 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte and the French government commissioned a group of intellectuals to accompany the French army to Egypt. The result of the French scholars' efforts in Egypt was the first large-scale systematic study of Egypt. While the military campaign was a failure, the associated cultural appropriation of Egypt had a lasting effect on European culture.

This thesis investigates the impact of the Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition on the development of the museum in the nineteenth century. After examining the chief results of the expedition— Dominique Vivant Denon's personal publication, *Voyage dans la haute et la basse Egypte* (1802); the official endorsed encyclopedic corpus, the *Description de l'Egypte* (1810-1828); as well as the objects that were obtained by the British as per the Treaty of Alexandria (1801) and installed in the British Museum— this thesis proposes that the enthusiasm for Egypt created by Napoleon's campaign decisively influenced the development of the survey museum, both in Europe and the United States.

While the British Museum was the first archaeological museum to boast a substantial Egyptian collection, the Louvre in Paris became the first Western art museum to form an Egyptian department, thus inserting Egyptian art into the Western art canon. By displaying Egyptian art in an art museum that surveyed the development of European art from its origins to the present, the Louvre communicated to the European public not only that Egyptian art was at the root of Greek and Roman art, but also that it had aesthetic value worthy of appreciation. This thesis concludes that it is likely that without the Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition, Egyptian art might not have become a part of the Western art canon, or a standard element in the Western art survey museum.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte headed a military invasion to Egypt. As a part of this campaign, Napoleon commissioned a large group of intellectuals to accompany the French army to Egypt. The scholars of the Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition, as it has come to be known, spent the three years of the French occupation (1798-1801) documenting and researching all aspects of Egyptian civilization as well as collecting objects for the study of modern and ancient Egypt. The result of the French scholars' efforts in Egypt was the first large-scale systematic study of Egypt. While the military campaign was a failure, and the French troops lost to rival Great Britain in 1801, the associated cultural invasion of Egypt had a lasting effect on European culture.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the impact of the Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition on the European nineteenth-century survey museum. By briefly examining the results of the expedition— Dominique Vivant Denon's personal publication of the expedition entitled *Voyage dans la haute et la basse Egypte* (1802); the official endorsed encyclopedic corpus of the scholars' research, the *Description de l'Egypte* (1810-1828); as well as the objects that were obtained by the British as per the Treaty of Alexandria (1801) and installed in the British Museum— this thesis will demonstrate that Napoleon's expedition created a new enthusiasm for the art and culture of ancient Egypt. This thesis will then offer suggestions as to how this enthusiasm was to affect the broad survey museum by considering the formation of the early Egyptian collections in two of Europe's prototypical survey museums, the British Museum and the Musée du Louvre.

Egypt was known to Europeans at the time of the French Invasion. Many travelers, dating even from periods of Greek and Roman antiquity, published numerous accounts of travels in Egypt. Many of the resulting publications were popular in Europe, and included reproductions of the authors' drawings of the colossal monuments of Egypt, and were easily accessible to the interested, and wealthy, European. In the early eighteenth century, travelers became interested in adding documentation for history and science to their accounts of travels and adventures.¹ Such travelers include: Benoît de Maillet, Paul Lucas, Claude Sicard, Richard Pococke, Frederik Ludwig Norden, James Bruce, Constantin-François Chasseboeuf (later known as Comte de Volney), Richard Dalton, and Charles Nicolas Sonnini.²

In the eighteenth-century European imagination, however, ancient Egypt was a place of mystery. Three tangible aspects of Egyptian culture contributed to this view— mummies, hieroglyphs and the ancient Egyptian monuments present in Egypt. Mummies, in ground up form, were a popular medicinal item in apothecary shops prior to the French Invasion.³ The ancient Egyptians' hieroglyphic writing system also contributed to the view of ancient Egypt as a land of mystery. As the script remained unreadable until after the French Invasion, its meaning

¹ European interest in Egypt became less romanticized at this time, as Egyptian and Arabic studies were introduced into British and French academic circles. In 1741, the British set up the first association for the study of Egypt in London, called the Egyptian Society. See W.R. Dawson, "The First Egyptian Society," *JEA* 23 (1937): 259-260. Scholars were also trained in the Turkish, Arabic and Persian languages at the French Academy.

² Alberto Siliotti, *The Discovery of Ancient Egypt* (Edison, NJ: Chartwell Books, 1998), 37-79.

³ Brian Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists, and Archaeologists in Egypt*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2004), 34.

was left to the imagination. The exoticism of the sale of mummies and the theories of the translation of the ancient Egyptian language fed the popular European image of Egypt.⁴

Many historians agree that by the late eighteenth century, living conditions in Egypt had seriously declined compared to earlier eras. The fall of the Ottoman Empire, the constant warring of local Mamluk houses, loss of trade and revenue, low Nile floods, plagues, famines and economic devastation all contributed to this decline, which caused much civil unrest.⁵ Between 1779 and the French Invasion, complete control of Egypt fell to Murad Bey and Ibrahim

⁴ Translation and decipherment of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs was attempted by many before being successfully achieved by Jean-François Champollion in 1822. A manuscript written in the fourth or fifth century C.E.—entitled *Hieroglyphica*— by a Greek scholar based in Alexandria named Horapollon, may be one of the primary resources that influenced the thought behind these early attempted translations and theories. The manuscript was purchased by a Florentine monk who was traveling in Greece during the fifteenth century; it was then brought back to Italy. The manuscript was so popular that it was published in thirty different editions following its initial publication in 1505. For more on the *Hieroglyphica* and early work with ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, see Melanie Byrd, “The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt” (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1992), 7; Fagan, *Rape of the Nile*, 44-45 and Siliotti, *Discovery*, 32-34. See also E. Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁵ For commentaries on Egypt’s conditions during the late eighteenth century, see: Juan Cole, *Napoleon’s Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 56; Daniel Crecelius, *The Roots of Modern Egypt* (Minneapolis, MN: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1981), 19-20; P.M. Holt, “The Last Phase of the Neo-Mamluk Regime,” in *L’Égypte au XIX^e siècle* (Aix-en-Provence: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1982), 147- 148; J.J. Marcel, *Égypte depuis la Conquête des Arabes jusqu’à la Domination Française* (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1848), 239-249; A.A. Paton, *A History of the Egyptian Revolution: From the Period of the Mamelukes to the Death of Mohammed Ali* (London: Trübner & Co., 1863), 73- 88; and Stanford J. Shaw, *Ottoman Egypt in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 6-8. Author Amira El-Azhary Sonbol disagrees with the previously published material concerning Egypt’s contemporary conditions during the last decades of the late eighteenth century. She aims to “refute the principle of decline and chaos” during this time by reviewing the Egyptian court records of the later eighteenth century until the time of the French Invasion. See Amira el-Azhary Sonbol, *The New Mamluks: Egyptian Society and Modern Feudalism* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 1- 31.

Bey, leaders of a new Mamluk house who capitalized on the lack of Ottoman presence in Egypt.⁶ Their rule was a far cry from the strict political and religious regime of earlier Mamluk rulers. Instead of bringing Egypt prosperity, they further increased its misery. It was in this disastrous political and economic situation of Egypt that Napoleon and the French saw an opportunity to invade the country in 1798.

Immediately prior to the French Invasion of Egypt, the country was a ruin of what once had been a prosperous extension of one of the world's largest and most powerful medieval empires. Adverse economic conditions, civic unrest and the alleged usurpation of the people of Egypt by an evil regime offered Napoleon and the French a strategical opportunity as well as a moral excuse to invade Egypt. The picture of Egypt in the popular European imagination as a land of ancient and modern mysteries fed the intellectual interest in Napoleon's expedition. The many travelers that preceded Napoleon and his expedition to Egypt left documentation and accounts that inspired the adventurer and conqueror alike in Napoleon and his ranks. All of these factors made way for the cultural and military domination of the Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition.⁷

As the military and the cultural campaigns of the expedition were designed as two halves of one plan, Chapter I of this thesis will present an overview of the events associated with the military operation of Napoleon's army while in Egypt. Chapter II will then consider the cultural context of the expedition. Based on Denon's *Voyage*, the *Description* and the objects

⁶ Shaw, *Ottoman Egypt*, 6.

⁷ Peter A. Clayton, *The Rediscovery of Ancient Egypt: Artists and Travellers in the 19th Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1982), 14.

collected by the French but seized by the British for installation in the British Museum, these two chapters together will aim to offer background and commentary on the work carried out by the scholars of the expedition. Chapter III will present brief descriptions of the history of the British Museum and the Musée du Louvre, focusing especially on the formation of both institutions, which were two of the earliest public museums in the world. In the nineteenth century, both the British Museum, as an archaeological survey museum, and the Louvre, as a Western art survey museum, attempted to present a survey of man's known achievements in archaeology and art respectively. Special consideration will be paid to the early Egyptian collections of each institution, and the way the Napoleonic expedition may have influenced those early collections. Lastly, the information presented in the previous chapters will be used to draw conclusions as to how the Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition may have influenced the collection and treatment of Egyptian antiquities in the British Museum and the Louvre and how this in turn affected the origins of the nineteenth-century survey museum.

Although my reasons for writing about this topic in a master's thesis are numerous, the most significant factor is that I believe considering the impact of the Napoleonic campaign on the formation and evolution of the survey museum is important to the fields of museology and Egyptology. The campaign's importance in European and Egyptian history, as well as the academic fields of Egyptology, art history and archaeology, and the phenomena of Egyptomania, the Egyptian Revival style, and Orientalist culture is a prevalent topic in a massive amount of scholarly literature and popular sources. I am unaware of a study, however, of how the campaign influenced the collecting strategies of two of Europe's prototypical survey museums, and how this in turn possibly shaped the origins of survey museums. I believe it is important to

attempt to insert the Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition into the context of traditional Western ideologies of the history and theory of museums.

As Egyptian antiquities were collected in earnest at the British Museum and the Louvre following the Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition and the expedition occurred in the early stages of formation of both of these prototypical museums, it is possible that the expedition affected the formation of other survey museums formed contemporarily. The information that will be presented in this thesis leads me to believe that by raising awareness, knowledge and interest about Egypt, the Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition laid the base for the field of Egyptology and for the addition of ancient Egypt as a recognized culture of antiquity in the survey museum, and a culture worthy of appreciation in the Western art canon.

CHAPTER I

FRENCH INVASION OF EGYPT (1798): MILITARY CONTEXT

The first French proposal of an invasion of Egypt occurred as early as 1672, when the German philosopher Leibniz approached Louis XIV on behalf of his employer, the Elector of Mainz. This early mercantile and colonial project outlined the invasion of Egypt for merchant and trade expansion.¹ Although scholars believe that Napoleon was unaware of this proposal before invading Egypt in 1798, the details of Leibniz's design were similar to the invasion executed by Napoleon and the French Army over a century later.² As for the 1798 invasion, Napoleon and the French Directory devised the assault on Egypt as an alternative to directly attacking England, as French control over Egypt would have devastated the British hold on trade throughout the Mediterranean and India.³

A brief discussion of Napoleon's life and early military career will be presented in this chapter to serve as background information for the French Invasion of Egypt. This chapter will also summarize the military events of the French Invasion of Egypt in order to substantiate the discussion of the cultural conquest of Egypt to be described in the following chapter.

¹ Donald Malcolm Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 31. See also Paul Strathern, *Napoleon in Egypt* (New York: Bantam Dell, 2007), 9.

² Along with a military invasion of Egypt, Leibniz's plan outlined the construction of a Suez canal in order to facilitate trade—such a canal was also one of Napoleon's goals of the French Invasion of Egypt. See Strathern, *Napoleon*, 9 and Juan Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 12.

³ Donald R. Come, "French Threat to British Shores, 1793- 1798," *Military Affairs* 16 no. 4 (Winter, 1952): 188.

Napoleon as Revolutionary

The details of Napoleon's life and career have been well preserved in his personal letters and journals and those of his contemporaries.⁴ Although all these documents testify to his ambition, strong personality and intelligence, Napoleon's great successes and failures cannot be attributed to them alone but also were a result of the time in which he lived. France was overtaken by the Revolution (1789-1799), a ten year period of intense political, social and economic upheaval, just as Napoleon was beginning his military career. Fueled by the humanistic ideals of the European Enlightenment, the French Revolution marked the end of the monarchical and absolutist *ancien régime*, and paved the way for the French Republic and ultimately, Napoleon's dictatorship.⁵

⁴ These letters and journals have been collected for publication, reproduced and translated by numerous scholars. There is a wealth of information available about Napoleon's life and career. For the purposes of the current study, general sources have been consulted. Some of the resources available include: Louis Antoine Fauvelet Bourrienne, ed., *Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891); Salahedinne Boustany, ed., *The Journals of Bonaparte in Egypt, 1798-1801* (Cairo: Al-Arab Bookshop, 1977); Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon 1^{er}* 32 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1858); Napoleon, *The Letters and Dispatches of the First Napoleon* 3 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1884). General biographical resources about Napoleon include: Robert B. Asprey, *The Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Jacques Bainville, *Napoleon* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1933); Vincent Cronin, *Napoleon Bonaparte: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Morrow, 1972); Henri Beyle Stendhal, *A Life of Napoleon*, trans. Ronald Gant (London: The Rodale Press, 1956).

⁵ Stuart Woolf states, "the Revolutionary-Napoleonic years, usually treated as a single episode, have always been considered as central to the political history of modern Europe. For historians, as for contemporaries, they mark, in no uncertain manner, a discontinuity and rupture in what is seen as the long-term flow of the evolution of European history, the end of the *ancien régime* (despite its persistence, in more or less overt forms, at least until the emancipation of the serfs in Russia in 1861) and the causal prelude of the "modern" history of Europe (and the world), characterized by the nation state." Stuart Woolf, "The Construction of a European World-View in the Revolutionary-Napoleonic Years," *Past and Present* 137 (November, 1992): 72. The European political, historical and theoretical mindset at this time, in regards to France, and the worldview, is very complicated. The effects of colonization are of vast

Napoleon Bonaparte was born Napolione Buonaparte in Ajaccio on the island of Corsica on August 15th, 1769 to Carlo and Letizia Buonaparte.⁶ The island of Corsica was subjugated by the French just prior to Napoleon's birth, and its citizens were involved in revolutionary uprisings through Napoleon's youth.⁷ As he was born into a mid-level aristocratic family, Napoleon gained entrance to the regional military school at Brienne at the age of ten.⁸ After graduation, he entered the prestigious École Militaire in Paris in 1784, and then went on to

importance to our modern world-view and societal understanding, but an in-depth discussion of colonization is outside the realm of the current study. See Woolf, "World-View," 72-101 and Asprey, *Rise*, 34- 326. For an article on the Western domination of the field of Egyptology and its impact on the imperialist and colonialist attitudes towards Egypt, see Lynn Meskell, "Pharaonic Legacies: Postcolonialism, Heritage, and Hyperreality," in *The Politics of Archaeology and Identity in a Global Context*, ed. Susan Kane (Los Angeles: AIA Monographs/ Costen Institute Los Angeles, 2003), 149-171. See Timothy Mitchell's volume, *Colonising Egypt*, for a discussion of the impact of Europe's colonization of Egypt in the nineteenth century. Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). For a comprehensive look at world history at the time of the French Revolution see C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780- 1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 86-115. See also A. de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1978) and A.J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981). For a discussion of Napoleon's involvement in the French Revolution, see Robert Alexander, "Napoleon Bonaparte and the French Revolution," in *Themes in Modern European History 1780-1830*, ed. Pamela M. Pilbeam (London: Routledge, 1995), 40-64 and Hans Kohn, "Napoleon and the Age of Nationalism," *The Journal of Modern History* 22, no.1 (March, 1950): 22. For general resources dealing with the French Revolution, see: J.F. Boshier, *The French Revolution* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988); William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990); Laura K. Egenderf, *The French Revolution* (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2004); and Georges Lefebvre, *The French Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964).

⁶ Asprey, *Rise*, 8-9.

⁷ This revolutionary atmosphere had a major impact on Napoleon's life, who at first thought adversely of the French. Asprey, *Rise*, 32.

⁸ Kohn, "Napoleon," 21. See also Asprey, *Rise*, 14.

artillery training school at Valence.⁹ Such military training schools were common for members of the elite destined for the French military.

Napoleon experienced a successful military career marked by constant promotions,¹⁰ due in large part to the Revolution, the principles of which were carried outside the French borders by the so-called French Revolutionary wars.¹¹ Immediately prior to the Egyptian campaign, Napoleon successfully rejuvenated an ailing Army of Italy, gaining national attention for defending France's revolutionary principles against the European powers of the First Coalition, which had joined forces against France.¹²

Invasion

After the signing of the Treaty of Campo Formio (1797), Napoleon—the now General Bonaparte— and the French Directory devised a plan to invade Egypt.¹³ As previously stated,

⁹ Kohn, "Napoleon," 21, and Asprey, *Rise*, 18-25. See also Jean Colin, *L'éducation militaire de Napoléon* (Paris: R. Chapelot, 1900).

¹⁰ See David Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York: Macmillan, 1966); Vincent J. Esposito and John R. Elting, *A Military History and Atlas of the Napoleonic Wars* (New York: Praeger, 1964); Alan Forrest, *The Soldier of the French Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Robert S. Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare: The Theory of Military Tactics in Eighteenth Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957); and Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon as General* 2 vols., trans. W.H. James (London: K. Paul Int., 1902).

¹¹ Asprey, *Rise*, 69-70.

¹² Brendan Simms, "The Eastern Empires from the ancien regime to the Challenge of the French Wars, 1780- c. 1806," in *Themes in Modern European History 1780-1830*, ed. Pamela M. Pilbeam (London: Routledge, 1995), 79-80. See also Darrell Dykstra, "The French Occupation of Egypt, 1798-1801," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt Volume 2*, ed. M.W. Daly and Carl F. Petry (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 116.

¹³ During the latter half of the French Revolution, after the period known as "The Terror," the French Republic had a two-chamber legislature: the Council of Five Hundred and the Council of the

Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign was not the first proposal of its kind in France. Whereas the earlier proposal aimed to conquer Egypt in order to expand trade and merchant routes, Napoleon's campaign had different goals. Both the publicly projected and surreptitious motives of the campaign can be identified as colonialist. The official goal of the campaign was a morally-inspired colonization of Egypt—France intended to 'save' Egypt from the rule of the Mamluks.¹⁴ The actual goal was a step towards world colonization, as France desired to attack the British, but did not feel a victory was possible in a direct assault.¹⁵

After Napoleon received the directive to invade Egypt, he and the Army of the Orient set sail from Toulon on May 19th, 1798.¹⁶ The expedition was led by the flagship *L'Orient* and included the *savants* that would make up the members of the Egyptian Scientific Expedition. The Army first sailed to Malta, and captured it from the Order of the Knights Hospitaller of St.

Ancients. The latter elected a five-man joint executive called the Directory. Strathern, *Napoleon*, 12-14 and Asprey, *Rise*, 249-250. For an informative summation of the French occupation, see Dykstra, "The French Occupation of Egypt," 113-138.

¹⁴ The foreign minister, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand, explained to the French Directory that the purposes of the Egyptian campaign were "to make Egypt a French dependency, to restore the cradle of civilization and, by the destruction of barbarous tyranny, to bring back material prosperity." Woolf, "World-View," 86. The directive issued to Napoleon for the campaign instructed him "to improve by all means at his disposal the fate of the natives." Kohn, "Napoleon," 28.

¹⁵ Come, "French Threat," 188. If the French had succeeded in conquering Egypt, it would have been a starting point to a conquest of Asia, and an advance on India, which would have made for a decisive battle in the heart of the new British Empire. Kohn, "Napoleon," 26. See also Woolf, "World-View," 86.

¹⁶ The directive ordered the Army of the Orient to "drive out the English from all their possessions in the Orient, to cut the isthmus of Suez and to take all necessary measures to assure the French Republic free and exclusive possession of the Red Sea." Kohn, "Napoleon," 26.

John of Jerusalem, in order to gain control of the Mediterranean.¹⁷ After the success at Malta, Napoleon and the French Army continued to Egypt, and landed in Alexandria on July 1st, 1798. The French met little resistance from the native Egyptians and were soon in control of the city.¹⁸ Three weeks later, the French Army marched to Cairo, where they met the Mamluk army near the Great Pyramids, in what is known as the Battle of the Pyramids.¹⁹

The French were victorious in the Battle of the Pyramids, and forced the Mamluk army to flee south to Upper Egypt. Napoleon and the French took control of Cairo and quickly set up residence there.²⁰ The French victory was short-lived, however, as on August 1st, 1798, the British Navy commanded by Admiral Horatio Nelson defeated the defensively-placed French ships stationed in Abukir Bay in the Battle of the Nile. In effect, the British left the French army

¹⁷ Bob Brier, *Napoleon in Egypt* (Brookville, NY: Hillwood Art Museum, 1990), 3. See also David Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York, Macmillan, 1966); Christopher Herold, *Bonaparte in Egypt* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963); and Christopher Lloyd, *The Nile Campaign: Nelson and Napoleon in Egypt* (Newton Abbot, UK: David & Charles, Ltd., 1973), 10-24.

¹⁸ Asprey, *Rise*, 260-263; and Brier, *Napoleon*, 3. By the time the French Army landed in Alexandria, their numbers had grown to approximately 55,000 men and 400 ships.

¹⁹ John Dellinger, "Battle of the Pyramids," *Military History* 15 (August, 1998): 66-71. Although there is much debate on the actual numbers involved in the Battle of the Pyramids, it is possible that the Mamluk forces totaled approximately 40,000, with 6,000 of that number being trained cavalry. 25,000 French participated in this battle.

²⁰ Upon taking Cairo, Napoleon delivered the following proclamation to the Egyptian people, as further evidence of the goal of saving the fate of the natives: "Peoples of Egypt, you will be told that I have come to destroy your religion. Do not believe it! Reply that I have come to restore your rights and to punish the usurpers, and that I respect God, his prophet, and the Koran more than the Mamelukes do... tell them that all men are equal before God..." Castelot then explains "as Napoleon would frankly acknowledge later, this was a form of demagoguery called "charlatanism." André Castelot, *Napoleon*, trans. Guy Daniels (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106. See also Asprey, *Rise*, 271. For the Egyptian contemporary reaction to Napoleon and the French, see Abd al-Rahman Jabartî, *Napoleon in Egypt: Al-Jabartî's Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation, 1798*, trans. Edward Said (Princeton, NJ: M. Wiener, 1993).

stranded in Egypt with no access to reinforcements or replenishment from France.²¹ This would ultimately affect the whole military campaign in Egypt.

Even as the scholars and *savants* of the Egyptian Scientific Expedition formalized their organization and began the undertaking of the scientific study of Egypt, Napoleon was forced to Syria to head off a Turkish incursion at Acre.²² While en route to Acre, a major battle was fought at Jaffa. Although victorious at Jaffa, Napoleon's army was decimated by the plague and malnutrition. By the time they arrived at Acre in 1799, the army was too weakened to win against the Turks, who were aided by the British, and Napoleon was forced back to Cairo.²³

Encouraged by the French retreat to Cairo, a Mamluk army led by Murad Bey assaulted the French in Abukir Bay on July 14th, 1799.²⁴ After defeat, the Mamluks were forced again to Upper Egypt by General Desaix, while Napoleon remained in Lower Egypt to retain control there. Soon after, on August 23rd, 1799, Napoleon secretly sailed back to France, leaving the command of the army to General Jean-Baptiste Kléber.²⁵ Kléber was victorious in the Battle of Heliopolis against the Turks on March 20th, 1799, but the French Army sustained damages from which it could not recover. The tenuous French hold on Egypt dissolved when Kléber was assassinated in Cairo and leadership was passed to General Menou.²⁶ Seeing the weakened

²¹ See Lloyd, *Nile Campaign*, 25- 55.

²² Brier, *Napoleon*, 5.

²³ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁴ Lloyd, *Nile Campaign*, 87.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 92- 95.

²⁶ Brier, *Napoleon*, 6-7. See also Milton C. Finley, Jr., "Reynier, Menou and the Final Siege of the Egyptian Campaign," *The Consortium on Revolutionary Europe*, 1983.

position of the French Army, the British seized the opportunity to assault the French, and again landed at Abukir Bay. The British were victorious in the Battle of Canopus, and on September 2nd, 1801, the Treaty of Alexandria was signed and the military invasion of Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign ended.²⁷

Conclusion

The military and cultural campaigns to Egypt were devised as two halves to one plan; the latter could not have developed without the former. Although the French military invasion of Egypt failed, and Napoleon's rule of the country was short-lived, the cultural campaign of the *savants* was to have a lasting effect on European culture. As we shall see in the following chapter, it marked the beginning of modern Egyptology.

²⁷ Brier, *Napoleon*, 6-7.

CHAPTER II

FRENCH INVASION OF EGYPT (1798): INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

Napoleon commissioned 167 *savants* to accompany the Army of the Orient on its expedition to Egypt. Like Alexander the Great before him,¹ he bolstered his military campaign to Egypt with a team of intellectuals—engineers, artists, cartographers, botanists and mathematicians to study every aspect of Egyptian civilization.²

Although ordered by Napoleon to follow the army throughout Egypt and document, study and record every aspect of ancient and modern Egypt,³ the members of the Egyptian Scientific Expedition did not participate in the multiple wars and skirmishes that marked the French military invasion of Egypt.⁴ It cannot be overemphasized, however, that the scholarly expedition was an essential part of the military campaign, as the rationale was that the information collected would assist in the French mission of conquering Egypt.⁵ This chapter will consider the presence and activities of the *savants* in Egypt and the results of the Egyptian

¹ Robert Anderson and Ibrahim Fawzy state: “[Napoleon’s] model, as in much else, may have been Alexander the Great, who also marched with *savants* in attendance. There was a precedent too, unknown to Napoleon, in Egypt itself, where Tuthmosis III of the 18th dynasty left in the temple of Karnak a zoological and botanical record of his third campaign to Syria and Palestine.” Robert Anderson and Ibrahim Fawzy, eds. *Egypt Revealed: Scenes from Napoleon’s Description de l’Egypte* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1988), 7.

² Melanie Byrd, “The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt” (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1992), 39.

³ Alberto Siliotti, *The Discovery of Ancient Egypt* (Edison, NJ: Chartwell Books, 1998), 100.

⁴ See Chapter I of this thesis for a brief description of the military campaign to Egypt.

⁵ Stephanie Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 66.

Scientific Expedition in order to document the enormous impact that this intellectual campaign had on the European understanding of Egypt in the nineteenth century.

The Egyptian Scientific Expedition

As the invasion of Egypt was in a large part devised by Napoleon himself, it is possible that his personal interests and goals influenced the selection of the intellectuals that accompanied the Army of the Orient to Egypt. An avid reader of history, Napoleon had been introduced to Egypt early in his military training. While attending the academy at Auxonne he had read the famous *Voyage en Egypte et en Syrie* (1787) by Constantin François de Chassebœuf, comte de Volney, which later became a great inspiration to his cause.⁶ It is also likely that Napoleon desired to align himself with the idea of France as a cultural benefactor to the Egyptians.⁷ Napoleon's election into the prestigious Institut de France also played a major role in the establishment of the Egyptian Scientific Expedition.⁸

As the military goals of the campaign were not only to cut off British trade routes to India and the Mediterranean, but also to secure Egypt as a French colony, it is likely that beyond Napoleon's personal goals, the decision to create the Egyptian Scientific Expedition was based

⁶ Robert B. Asprey, *The Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 50.

⁷ Abigail Harrison Moore, "Voyage: Dominique-Vivant Denon and the Transference of Images of Egypt," *Art History* 25, no. 4 (September 2002): 535. Moore continues that the expedition established a link "between the present empire builders [French] and the most long-lived period of rule in history [Egyptians]." Moore, "Voyage," 534.

⁸ Napoleon was elected into the Institut de France after he returned from the first Italian campaign, shortly before devising the plan to invade Egypt. Byrd notes that he was "proud of the honor, and signed his decrees and letters, 'Bonaparte, member de l'Institut.'" The later Institut d'Egypte was modeled after the Institut de France. Byrd, "The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt," 40.

on the need to gather as much information as possible in order to assimilate the new colony into French control.⁹ Melanie Byrd states:

“Geography, topography, agriculture, hydrography, commerce and manufacture were necessary areas of inquiry for successful colonization. Specialists who could study the various ethnic populations of Egypt, and interpreters were crucial to the French conquest of Egypt. Scientists, artists, architects, and antiquaries were needed to study the natural history and cultural legacy of Egyptian civilization.”¹⁰

All of these subjects were included in the systematic study of modern Egypt, ancient Egypt and the natural environment of Egypt by the members of the Egyptian Scientific Expedition.¹¹

For the three years of the occupation, the members of the expedition traveled with the army and amassed an enormous amount of information. The scholars drew the Egyptian monuments and studied them to obtain accurate plans, measurements and cross-sections. The engineer Conté, whose many accomplishments in Egypt were notable, designed a tool to investigate structures still buried beneath the sand.¹² The scholars traveled throughout Egypt, from the Arabian Desert to the Sinai and below the First Cataract of the Nile, in order to gain their information.¹³ The result was the first systematic scientific study of Egypt.

⁹ Byrd, “The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt,” 39.

¹⁰ Ibid., 39-40.

¹¹ Andrew Bednarski, *Holding Egypt: Tracing the Reception of the ‘Description de l’Égypte’ in Nineteenth Century Great Britain* (London: Golden House Publications, 2005), 15.

¹² Siliotti, *Discovery*, 103. Nicolas Conté, who was also responsible for inventing the Conté crayon, was one of the campaign’s most successful engineers, and was promoted to director of the machine shops in the Institute Quarter in Cairo. Fernand Beaucour, Yves Laissus, Chantal Orgogozo, *The Discovery of Egypt*, trans. Bambi Ballard (Paris: Flammarion, 1990), 92.

¹³ Ibid., 108.

The *Savants*

The campaign to Egypt was organized surreptitiously, and many of the *savants* were not told what their mission was to be, or where it was to take place. They were only informed that it was of service to the Republic and that Napoleon would be the leader.¹⁴ While Napoleon oversaw the details for the military invasion, the recruitment and plans for the organization of the members of the Egyptian Scientific Expedition, later known as the Commission des Sciences et Arts d’Egypte, were left to men whom Napoleon trusted.¹⁵ One such person, General Louis Caffarelli du Falga, was responsible for the administrative aspects of the preparation, as well as recruiting the *savants* and gathering the necessary supplies and equipment.¹⁶

Many notable scholars and scientists were recruited to be a part of the project, but the majority of members of the Commission were skilled students, some of whom had not even graduated.¹⁷ Among the established scholars and intellectuals that were recruited to be a part of the Commission were Nicholas Nouet, François Quesnot, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Henri-Joseph Redouté, Jean-Baptiste Fourier, Gaspard Monge, Dominique-Vivant Denon, Déodat Dolomieu

¹⁴ Byrd, “The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt,” 46.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 44. The members of the Egyptian Scientific Expedition will hereafter be called the Commission.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Some of these necessary supplies were books for inclusion in the portable library of the expedition. This library included some several hundred volumes, with works by Volney, Voltaire, Plutarch and Herodotus among them.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 47. All of the major scientific institutions in France were asked to propose their candidates, as such Beaucour, Laissus and Orgogozo state that students and scholars were selected from “the École Polytechnique, the École Normale, the École des Mines, the Ponts et Chaussées, the Conservatoire de Arts et Métiers, the Muséum d’Histoire Naturelle and the Observatoire.” Beaucour, Laissus, Orgogozo, *The Discovery of Egypt*, 71.

and Claude Louis Berthollet.¹⁸ No original list of members survives, but contemporary sources and modern scholars cite anywhere from 144 to 197 members of the Commission.¹⁹ In these sources, a commonly reoccurring number is 167. Melanie Byrd has divided the number into these categories:

“Mathmematicians-21; Astronomers-3; Naturalists and mining engineers-15; civil engineers- 17; geographers-15; architects-4; student construction engineers-3; draughtsmen-8; sculptor-1; mechanical aritists-10; powdermakers and saltpeter makers-3; secretaries and men of letters-10; consuls and interpreters-15; medical practitioners-9; quarantine specialists-9; printers-22; musicians-2.”²⁰

Despite the lack of certainty about the exact number of participants in the project, it is clear that many of France’s leading scholars and intellectuals went to Egypt as a part of Napoleon’s campaign.²¹

The Institut d’Egypte, Cairo

After the French were victorious in the Battle of the Pyramids and set up residence in Cairo, Napoleon and the Commission’s leading *savants* created the Institut d’Egypte. Hereafter called the Institut, it was organized as a specialized extension of the Commission that served to

¹⁸ Ibid., 46-48. See also Donald Malcolm Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 32.

¹⁹ Byrd, “The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt,” 49-52.

²⁰ Ibid., 49. Other scholars that put the expedition’s total number at 167 include: Beaucour, Laissus, Orgogozo, *The Discovery of Egypt*, 73; Rosalie David, *The Experience of Ancient Egypt* (London: Routledge, 2000), 89, Jonathan Downs, *Discovery at Rosetta* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008), xix; Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, 65; and Siliotti, *Discovery*, 100.

²¹ See Jean Edouard Goby, “Composition de la Commission des Sciences et Artes d’Egypte,” *Bulletin de l’Institut d’Egypte* 38 (1955-1956): 315-342.

shape and direct the research of the larger body of scholars.²² Settling in the palaces of defected Mamluk leaders in Cairo, the charter for the Institut was drawn up on August 21st, 1798, and the organization of the *savants* was formalized (Figure 1).²³

The members of the Institut were divided into four sections, according to discipline: Mathematics, Physics, Political Economy and Literature and Art. Although each discipline was intended to have 12 members, initially there were only a total of 36 members.²⁴ Gaspard Monge was elected as the first president of the Institut, while Napoleon himself was named vice-president.²⁵ In each of the disciplines, at least one scholar appears to have been prominent. For instance, Jean-Baptiste Fourier stood out in the mathematics section, Vivant Denon in literature and art, Déodat Dolomieu and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire in political economy, and Claude Louis Berthollet in physics.²⁶

²² Byrd, "The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt," 71.

²³ Bob Brier, *Napoleon in Egypt* (Brookville, NY: Hillwood Art Museum, 1990), 4. The charter of the new Institut stated: "there will be an Institute dedicated to the sciences and the arts in Egypt, which will be based in Cairo. The principal objectives of this establishment are: (1) the advancement and propagation of learning in Egypt (2) the research, study and publication of the natural, industrial and historical facts about Egypt (3) to advise on the various questions on which it will be consulted by the government." Beaucour, Laissus, *Orgogozo, The Discovery of Egypt*, 81.

²⁴ Beaucour, Laissus, *Orgogozo, The Discovery of Egypt*, 81.

²⁵ Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?*, 32.

²⁶ *Ibid.* For the memoirs of the Institut d'Egypte, see Institut d'Egypte, *Memoirs Relative to Egypt, Written in that Country During the Campaigns of General Bonaparte, in the Years 1798 and 1799, By the Learned and Scientific Men Who Accompanied the French Expedition* (London: R. Phillips, 1800). Many of the scholars that were a part of the campaign published memoirs or journals of their experiences in Egypt after returning to France. Some of these were published directly after the evacuation from Egypt, others were published posthumously and include: René-Edouard Devilliers, *Journal et souvenirs sur l'expedition d'Egypte* (Paris: Plon, 1889) and Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, *Lettres écrites d'Egypte*, ed. E.T. Hamy (Paris: Hachette, 1901). The modern scholar Jean Edouard Goby has also contributed much to the subject

Once the Institut was formed, its leaders decided upon the frequency of meetings, the rules of membership, the recording of minutes and the process for selecting subjects for deliberation. The main purpose of the Institut was to serve as a headquarters for the learned elite based in Cairo that directed and compiled the research of the members of the Commission working throughout the country. The Institut's alternative purpose was to serve as an instrument of colonization which supported the French Republic's interests in Egypt.²⁷ Within the Cairo headquarters, the scholars of the Institut had a library, laboratory, botanical garden, workshops, collections of antiquities and natural phenomena at their disposal (Figure 2).²⁸

Although a variety of publications were circulated by the French during the occupation, two periodicals reported primarily on the activities of the Institut—the newspaper, the *Courier de l'Égypte* and the Institut's own journal, *La Décade Égyptienne*.²⁹ These publications were widely distributed and although they were intended for a French readership, some issues were even sent to the British.³⁰ The *Courier* offered memoranda and articles informing readers of all

of the Institut d'Égypte, see Jean Edouard Goby, *Premier Institut d'Égypte: restitution des comptes rendues des séances* (Dijon: Imprimerie Darantière, 1987).

²⁷ Beaucour, Laissus, Orgogozo, *The Discovery of Egypt*, 81.

²⁸ Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?*, 32.

²⁹ Beaucour, Laissus, Orgogozo, *The Discovery of Egypt*, 96-97. Napoleon brought two printing presses to Egypt, one that was capable of printing in French and one in Arabic. For a discussion of the two printing presses that Napoleon ordered to have taken to Egypt, see Beaucour, Laissus, Orgogozo, *The Discovery of Egypt*, 88-93. Timothy Mitchell notes that after "landing at Alexandria and advancing upon Cairo, Napoleon's first act had been to issue a printed proclamation to the Egyptian people, prepared in Arabic by French Orientalists." Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 133.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 97.

manner of French activities and events in Egypt, while the *Décade* was reserved for news about the scholarly exploits of the Commission and the Institut.

Voyage and the Description

The *savants* produced two major publications, the Commission's massive corpus, *Description de l'Égypte*, and its precursor, Vivant Denon's *Voyage dans la haute et la basse Égypte*. In French popular thought, these two publications largely erased the army's failure, and instead represented Napoleon's cultural expedition to Egypt as a political and social success story.³¹ Indeed, even though the Egyptian campaign was a loss in military terms, in France it was long heralded as one of the most glorious achievements of the Napoleonic era.³²

Of the two publications, Vivant Denon's *Voyage dans la haute et la basse Égypte* was the more popular. Baron Dominique Vivant-Denon, an aristocratic artist, antiquarian and art historian, was one of the Commission's leading *savants* and a member of the Institut. When he traveled to Egypt as part of Napoleon's campaign he was over 50, which made him one of the oldest members of the Commission. Before joining the ranks of scholars as a part of the cultural campaign to Egypt, Denon had had a cosmopolitan career as an illustrator, artist, diplomat and courtier.³³ During the years known as 'The Terror' in the French Revolution, he was protected

³¹ Moore, "Voyage," 539.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Denon is often referred to as a larger-than-life character— an adventurer whose personal charm, intelligence and lust for life affected those he came into contact with, including Napoleon. Terence Russell notes that "Denon was a man of many accomplishments. At various times in his life he was a diplomat, artist and engraver, collector of antiquities, director of museums and minister for the fine arts." Terence M. Russell, *The Discovery of Egypt: Vivant Denon's Travels with Napoleon's Army* (Thrupp, UK: Sutton Publishing, Ltd., 2005), xvii. Timothy Wilson-Smith states that "Denon was to Napoleon what

by the artist Jacques-Louis David.³⁴ Denon also traveled to Italy during the Revolution and became a scholar of Roman art and antiquities, and this knowledge greatly affected his reception of Egyptian antiquities.³⁵

Although a member of the Institut in Egypt, Denon's short stay in Cairo prevented him from being particularly active in the research work of the Institut. Denon only had enough time to deliver one paper at the eleventh session of the Institut before leaving to accompany General Louis Desaix and General Augustin Belliard to Upper Egypt.³⁶ Desaix and Belliard were ordered by Napoleon to pursue the fleeing Mamluk leader, Murad Bey.³⁷ While in Upper Egypt, Denon was fortunate to accompany two generals who were interested in antiquities, as this allowed for him to freely sketch and record the monuments in Upper Egypt, which had been rarely recorded in earlier travel publications.³⁸ Denon remained in their company exploring and sketching the

Colbert had been to Louis XIV and what Malraux would be to de Gaulle. As with them it was his role to run the artistic policy of his master." Napoleon's respect for Denon only intensified after returning from Egypt, and three years later Napoleon promoted Denon to "the highest office that Napoleon could give him,"—the directorship of the Central Museum, which included the Louvre Museum. Wilson-Smith continues, "running museums brought together all his gifts—his enthusiasm, his knowledge, his connoisseurship, his social charm, his drive. With the help of two principal assistants, Visconti and Lavallée, he was to be in charge of the Central Museum till 1815. He was to be the first great museum administrator in French history, and perhaps the greatest of all." Timothy Wilson-Smith, *Napoleon and His Artists* (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1996), 247, 258.

³⁴ Russell, *Discovery*, xviii.

³⁵ Melanie Byrd, "Denon and the Institute of Egypt," *Consortium on Revolutionary Europe* XIX (1989): 440.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 439.

³⁷ Melanie Byrd, "Denon and Desaix: The Artist and the General," *Consortium on Revolutionary Europe* XVII, no. 2 (1989): 138-150.

³⁸ Byrd, "The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt," 158-159.

Egyptian ruins for nine months, from November 1798 until July 1799 (Figure 3).³⁹ The research and drawings that Denon collected and completed in this nine month journey through Egypt was the basis for his 1802 publication, *Voyage dans la haute et la basse Egypte*.

Napoleon had secretly fled Egypt to return to France while Denon was traveling in Upper Egypt. Shortly after Denon's return to Cairo, Napoleon instructed Denon to leave Egypt and join him in Paris. It was this hasty return to France that allowed for the early publication of *Voyage*.

Some modern scholars categorize *Voyage* as a travelogue of Denon's journey through Egypt, or an illustrated journal.⁴⁰ Although this may be accurate, as Denon himself referred to *Voyage* as a journal,⁴¹ it is important not to count Denon's *Voyage* among the earlier travel publications produced by visitors to Egypt, because Denon's mission as part of Napoleon's Commission and a member of the Institut, required that he gather as much information as possible about every aspect of his journey.⁴² As such, *Voyage* is much more wide-ranging, systematic, and scientific than a travelogue and it is profusely illustrated. As a consequence, the book had a huge impact on the European understanding of Egypt.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Melanie Byrd refers to *Voyage* as a "travelogue," and Abigail Harrison Moore calls it an "illustrated journal." See Byrd, "Denon and the Institute of Egypt," 439 and Moore, "Voyage," 531.

⁴¹ Vivant Denon, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt, Volumes I-III* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), i.

⁴² In the first paragraph of the preface to *Voyage*, Denon stated that his principal aim for the recording of his journey was to be the presentation of paper at a session of the Institut. Being ordered back to France early, Denon was unable to give the paper as intended, and it was instead reproduced as a part of the publication. Denon, *Travels*, i.

The original edition of *Voyage* was published in two volumes, one containing text written by Denon and the other containing the plates of Denon's drawings.⁴³ It first appeared in France in 1802, the same year in which Denon was made director of the Central Museum in the Louvre. It was easily accessible to the public, and its popular reception was immediate, as an English edition was produced the following year. After the original publication appeared, over forty editions of *Voyage* were published into many languages, and through them Egypt entered Europe's popular consciousness.⁴⁴

The *Description de l'Égypte, or Description de l'Égypte ou recueil des observations et des Recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte, pendant l'expédition de l'armée française, publié par les ordres de H.M. l'Empereur Napoléon* was the official product of Napoleon's cultural campaign to Egypt. The sheer magnitude and scale of this project, which took hundreds of people decades to complete, was enormous. Like Denon's *Voyage*, the *Description* was very influential as it affected many levels of political, social and cultural thought in Europe from the time it was published.

The original edition of the *Description* consisted of at least twenty folio volumes, divided into nine folio volumes of text, composed by members of the Commission and the Institut, eleven folio volumes of plates and a three-volume atlas. The twenty folio volumes were divided into three major categories: Egypt's antiquities, Egypt as a modern state, and Egypt's natural

⁴³ Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte* (Paris: P. Didot l'Ainé, 1802).

⁴⁴ Moore, "Voyage," 531. Alberto Siliotti also states that "the book was an immense success, becoming a bestseller of the day; translated into English and German, it was printed in no fewer than forty editions and thousands of copies were sold." Siliotti, *Discovery*, 97.

history.⁴⁵ The size of the *Description* reflected the enormous amount of information that was collected by nearly two hundred scholars traveling throughout Egypt during a three year time period.⁴⁶ The *Description* contains 897 plates and the text presented personal memoirs and notes of the scholars as well as subjects that were collaboratively researched by the Institut.⁴⁷

Like Denon's *Voyage*, the *Description* was an immediate success. Egypt was further established in the European mindset, not only popularly but in academic circles as well. The sensation created by the release of the *Description* made up for the political reception to Napoleon's campaign, and it was endorsed as a state project in 1802.⁴⁸ Soon after its release, the first edition sold out and the first abridged version was published by Pankoucke as a commercial venture.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Bednarski, *Holding Egypt*, 3.

⁴⁶ For modern interpretations of the *Description de l'Égypte*, see Anne Godlewska, "Map, Text and Image, the Mentality of Enlightened Conquerors: A New Look at the *Description de l'Égypte*," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* 20 (1995): 5-27; Anne Godlewska and Edward H. Dahl, *The Napoleonic Survey of Egypt, a Masterpiece of Cartographic Compilation and Early Nineteenth-Century Fieldwork* (Toronto: Winter College York University, 1988); William H. Peck, *Description de l'Égypte: A Major Acquisition from the Napoleonic Age* (Detroit: Detroit Institute of the Arts, 1972); and Terence M. Russell, *The Napoleonic Survey of Egypt: Description de l'Égypte: The Monuments and Customs of Egypt: Selected Engraving and Texts, Two Volumes* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2002).

⁴⁷ Siliotti, *Discovery*, 100.

⁴⁸ Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?*, 32.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 34. See also Siliotti, *Discovery*, 102.

Artifacts

The Institut also selected the artifacts that were to be taken to France as tangible evidence of the project.⁵⁰ The most famous among them was uncovered accidentally during the military campaign in July 1799.⁵¹ The Rosetta Stone, arguably the most important Egyptian artifact ever discovered,⁵² was unearthed by soldiers under the command of Lieutenant Pierre Bouchard while building fortifications against British forces north of the town of el-Rashid, known to the Europeans as Rosetta. The stone is a fragment of a commemorative stela, which presents a bilingual decree that was issued at Memphis by the Egyptian priesthood to honor the anniversary of the succession of Ptolemy V. The text dates to March 27 196 B.C.E., and is written in Egyptian (in both hieroglyphic and demotic scripts) and Greek.⁵³

Lieutenant Bouchard apparently immediately recognized the stone's importance as a possible key to deciphering the ancient Egyptian language and had it brought to the scholars of

⁵⁰ Nicholas Reeves notes that the antiquities were chosen by the scholars as models for the plates of the *Description de l'Égypte*. Nicholas Reeves, *Ancient Egypt: The Great Discoveries: A Year-by-Year Chronicle* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 17. Melanie Byrd concludes that some of the objects were chosen for topics discussed at the Institut. Byrd continues that "the engineers and artists affiliated with the Scientific and Artistic Commission and the Institute of Egypt used their varied talents to study ancient Egypt as it had not been studied previously...At the third meeting of the Institute, Monge gave a brief memoir on some antiquities found in Cairo, particularly a granite vase covered in hieroglyphs. He suggested to his colleagues that a sarcophagus and fragment of a polished basalt obelisk be transported to the Institute and then to France for further study." Byrd, "The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt," 151. See also Institut National, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, "Liste des membres de l'Institut et process-verbaux des séances 3818 (3)," 4.

⁵¹ Reeves, *Ancient Egypt*, 14. See also David, *Experience*, 74.

⁵² Downs, *Discovery*, xviii.

⁵³ Reeves, *Ancient Egypt*, 14.

the Institut in Cairo.⁵⁴ They made numerous casts and lithographic prints of the stone that were used to begin work on its decipherment. Bouchard had been correct in his estimation of the stone's importance, as the scholars all agreed that it was indeed the key to decoding ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. But it would take several decades before the decipherment of the stone was complete, an accomplishment that was a major step in unlocking the mysteries of the ancient Egyptian civilization.

The Treaty of Alexandria, 1801

As early as May 1800, the British cabinet ordered that an expeditionary army be sent to the Mediterranean to extricate French forces from Egypt.⁵⁵ Over several months, the British, aided by Ottoman forces, launched a military campaign throughout Egypt in order to dislodge the French army. The French were unable to hold the British and Ottoman forces at bay, and with the signing of the Treaty of Alexandria on September 2nd, 1801, the French surrendered to the British and the three-year French occupation of Egypt ended.⁵⁶

The Treaty of Alexandria mandated that the French army and the scholars of the Commission and Institut evacuate Egypt. The British remained in occupation of Egypt for the following two years, but unlike the French, they were committed to seeing that Egypt was

⁵⁴ Ibid. The stone's importance was even recorded in the *Courier de l'Egypte*, where in the August 1799 issue, the discovery of the stone was described, and it was stated that "the stone offers great interest for the study of hieroglyphic characters; perhaps it will even give us the key at last." Brier, *Napoleon*, 36.

⁵⁵ Darrell Dykstra, "The French Occupation of Egypt, 1798-1801," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt Volume 2*, ed. M.W. Daly and Carl F. Petry (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 130.

⁵⁶ For an in-depth narrative of the events of the British invasion in 1801, see Piers Mackesy, *British Victory in Egypt, 1801: The End of Napoleon's Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

returned to Ottoman sovereignty.⁵⁷ They did not share France's goal of colonizing Egypt and therefore had little interest in Egyptian culture, customs or native population.

According to Article XVI of the Treaty, all antiquities collected by the French for transport to France were considered public property and were left to the disposal of the generals of the British Army.⁵⁸ Apparently supported by the Ottoman liaisons to the British,⁵⁹ Article XVI of the Treaty mandated that the larger antiquities—including the Rosetta Stone—were to be sent to Britain to be handed to King George III, who in turn passed them to the British Museum.⁶⁰ As this clause caused much outrage from the French scholars, the smaller objects, research and natural history specimens were permitted to remain in the possession of the French.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Dykstra, "The French Occupation of Egypt," 132.

⁵⁸ M.L. Bierbrier, "The Acquisition by the British Museum of Antiquities Discovered During the French Invasion of Egypt," in *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities: A Tribute to T.G.H. James*, ed. W.V. Davies (London: The British Museum Press, 1999), 111.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Reeves, *Ancient Egypt*, 17.

⁶¹ Some of the *savants* exclaimed that they would rather see the research and specimens be burned, akin to the manuscripts of the Library of Alexandria of antiquity, than to see them in the hands of the British. Paula Young Lee quotes Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire as stating, "Oui, nous le ferons... c'est de la célébrité que vous visez. Eh bien! comptez sur les souvenirs de l'histoire: vous aurez aussi brûlé une bibliothèque à l'Alexandrie!" [emphasis in original] Paula Young Lee, "The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-Century France," *The Art Bulletin* 79, no. 3 (September 1997): 409. Other scholars pronounced that they would rather follow their collections to Britain than be separated from them. As such, the smaller objects, including papyri, were allowed to be taken back to France in the scholars' personal baggage. Reeves, *Ancient Egypt*, 17. The research and few objects that returned to France were added to the collections of Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle. Lee, "The Musaeum of Alexandria," 410.

The objects that were sent to London and deposited in the British Museum, too, had an enormous impact on the European idea of Egypt.⁶² Although Egyptian antiquities existed in numerous collections throughout Europe before the Napoleonic campaign, most were small, portable objects brought back by travelers to Egypt. With the installation of the objects collected by the French scholars in the British Museum, Europeans could see colossal statuary and sculpture which further sparked the public interest in Egyptian antiquities.⁶³

Conclusion

Together with Denon's *Voyage* and the *Description*, the installation of Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum shaped a new awareness of Egypt and created an unprecedented interest in Egyptian antiquities. The work of the scholars and *savants* that were a part of the Commission and the Institut d'Égypte was the first systematic and ordered study of Egypt. Disseminated to the larger European community, it led to the new scientific field of Egyptology. On the popular level, the new interest in Egypt led to further developments of the Egyptian revival style, marked by the use of Orientalist designs and motifs, and the popularity of Orientalist literature.⁶⁴ The resulting "Egyptomania" in early nineteenth-century Europe

⁶² Bierbrier, "Acquisition," 111-113.

⁶³ The installation opened at the British Museum in 1808, just prior to the first release of the *Description* in France. See Bierbrier, "Acquisition," 111-113; Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, 65-92; and Reeves, *Ancient Egypt*, 17. See also W. Alexander, *Egyptian Monuments from the Collection Formed by the National Institute Under the Direction of Bonaparte... Now Deposited in the British Museum* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1805-1807) and J.-J. Fiechter, "La Pierre de Rosette et les autres antiquités égyptiennes prises par les anglais en 1801," *Revue d'égyptologie* 48 (1997): 283-289.

⁶⁴ See Richard Carrott, *The Egyptian Revival: Its Sources, Monuments, and Meaning 1808-1858* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); James Sevens Curl, *The Egyptian Revival: Ancient Egypt as the Inspiration of Design Motifs in the West* (New York: Routledge, 2005); G. Dickie, *The Century of Taste:*

contributed to the race to secure Egyptian antiquities for the collections of the major European museums and to the creation of Egyptology as a museum science.⁶⁵

The Philosophical Odyssey of Taste in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); J.-M. Humbert, M. Pantazzi and C. Ziegler, eds. *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art, 1730-1930* (Paris: Musée du Louvre and National Gallery of Canada, 1994); J.M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Todd Porterfield, "Egyptomania," *Art in America* 82, no.11 (November 1994): 84-90; Diego Saglia, "Consuming Egypt: Appropriation and the Cultural Modalities of Romantic Luxury," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 24, no. 3 (2002): 317-332; and Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1978).

⁶⁵ Byrd, "The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt," 262.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY EGYPTIAN COLLECTIONS OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM AND THE LOUVRE

Napoleon's Egyptian Scientific Expedition had a direct impact on the formation of the Egyptian collections of the British Museum and the Musée du Louvre. Both prototypical survey museums—the British Museum, a public national natural history and archaeological museum and the Louvre, a public national art museum —were in an early stage of formation when Napoleon invaded Egypt.¹

Although scholars debate which museum was founded first, this is not important for my thesis.² What is important is their status as exemplary survey museums, of archaeology and art, respectively, because of the inclusion of objects from major civilizations from world history. In each museum's didactic approach, these objects were intended to present a survey of the

¹ Carol Duncan begins her chapter on the Louvre in her seminal work, *Civilizing Rituals*, with the statement, "The Louvre was the prototypical public art museum." See Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995), 21. Edward Alexander notes that "there were other scattered prototype museums [other than the Louvre]... Sir Hans Sloane's collection opened as the British Museum in 1759... but was devoted chiefly to natural history." Edward P. Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 1996), 23. Giles Waterfield, in his paper presented for the symposium *The Genesis of the Art Museum in the 18th Century* held by the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, states that "the tradition of museum collecting in the sense of scientific or natural specimens, grew through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the British Museum, which originally contained everything but paintings (with some of those added in its first 70 years), was the earliest national museum of its type at its foundation in 1753." See Giles Waterfield, "The Development of the Early Art Museum in Britain," in *The Genesis of the Art Museum in the 18th Century*, ed. Per Bjurström (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 1993), 83.

² The crux of the debate is that the British Museum was founded in 1753, but restricted its audience to a scholarly gentleman's public until later in the nineteenth century, and the Louvre's creation is linked to the first public exhibition at the Luxembourg Gallery in 1750, but did not open at the Louvre palace until 1793.

height of man's achievements. In the early nineteenth century, the British Museum's archaeological collection was used to communicate the 'proper' origins of civilization by juxtaposing the curious and unknown against the more celebrated and familiar cultures of Greek and Roman antiquity. The Louvre, in the nineteenth century, also attempted to present a survey of the achievements of man as reflected in the Western art canon, which prior to the Napoleonic campaign, comprised the art of the ancient Greeks and Romans and paintings and sculptures from the Renaissance onward. As the treatment of Egyptian antiquities is equally linked to the fields of art history and archaeology— and Egyptology combines these two fields—the current study is concerned with the impact of Napoleon's expedition on the formation of the Egyptian collection in the British Museum as the prototypical archaeological museum and the Louvre as the prototypical art museum.

This chapter will consider the early history of the British Museum and the Louvre, as well as the history of the Egyptian collections at each institution immediately preceding and after the Napoleonic expedition in order to document how the expedition affected the treatment of Egyptian antiquities and collection strategies of the two survey museums.³ This chapter will also briefly address the collecting of Egyptian antiquities by European museums later in the nineteenth century, in the wake of the pioneering efforts of the British Museum and the Louvre.

³ The objects gained by the British from the Treaty of Alexandria and placed in the British Museum are part of the museological survey of the early Egyptian collection at the British Museum by author Stephanie Moser, entitled *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum*. See Stephanie Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006).

The British Museum

Although not the first museum to open to the public in England,⁴ the British Museum is considered the first great national museum in the world.⁵ Established by an act of Parliament in 1753, it was founded as a repository for the collection of Sir Hans Sloane.⁶ Sloane, a well-connected doctor and academician, spent years assembling his natural history collection.⁷ This collection, which Carol Duncan calls the Enlightenment equivalent of the cabinet of curiosities,⁸ consisted mainly of natural history specimens, manuscripts and research volumes, coins and medals, antiquities of classical, medieval and oriental origin, drawings, and ethnographic objects.⁹

⁴ The first public museum in Britain was the Ashmolean Museum, created from the private collection of Elias Ashmole, who donated his collection to his alma mater, Oxford University. Oxford University constructed a building to house the collection and it opened in 1683. Jeffrey Abt, "The Origins of the Public Museum," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 124. See also Giles Waterfield, "Anticipating the Enlightenment: Museums and Galleries in Britain before the British Museum," in *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. R.G.W. Anderson, et al. (London: British Museum Press, 2003), 5-10.

⁵ Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 44.

⁶ For histories of the British Museum, see: D. Cash, "Access to Museum Culture: The British Museum from 1753 to 1836" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1992); Majorie Caygill, *The Story of the British Museum*, 2nd ed. (London: British Museum Press, 1992); J. Mordaunt Crook, *The British Museum* (London: Books That Matter, 1972); Edward Miller, *That Noble Cabinet: A History of the British Museum* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973); and David M. Wilson, *The British Museum: Purpose and Politics* (London: British Museum Press, 1989).

⁷ Richard Yeo, "Encyclopaedic Collectors: Ephraim Chambers and Sir Hans Sloane," in *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. R.G.W. Anderson, et al. (London: British Museum Press, 2003), 29-34.

⁸ Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, 142n37.

⁹ Miller, *That Noble Cabinet*, 37-38.

In his will, Sloane outlined the purposes of his collection as well as how it was to be secured after his death and for whom it was intended.¹⁰ He appointed a board of trustees to oversee the collection, and in his will he directed that the trustees offer it to the nation, through the King, for the return payment of £20,000.¹¹ After Sloane's death in 1753, the Trustees met several times in order to carry out Sloane's wishes. Although the efforts of the trustees were rebuffed by Parliament at least twice, the British Museum Act was passed on June 7th, 1753 and the old Sloane museum at Chelsea was replaced by the new museum in Montagu House in 1759.¹²

Although there was some debate among the trustees about how broadly to interpret the "public" to be admitted,¹³ it was agreed that, although the museum existed primarily for the scholarly endeavors of learned men, the term "public" should be taken as general as possible. It was not until later, after 1810, that the gentlemanly connotations of the museum's audiences began to lift and larger numbers of visitors from different backgrounds and classes were permitted into the museum.¹⁴

The plan to create a museum for Sloane's internationally-renowned collection was only accepted by Parliament when Sloane's offer was linked to saving the deteriorating Cottonian

¹⁰ Cash, "Museum Culture," 11.

¹¹ Miller, *That Noble Cabinet*, 41.

¹² Marjorie L. Caygill, "From Private Collection to Public Museum: The Sloane Collection at Chelsea and the British Museum in Montagu House," in *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. R.G.W. Anderson, et al. (London: British Museum Press, 2003), 19.

¹³ Abt, "Origins," 126.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

Library, of which Parliament had accepted responsibility earlier in the sixteenth century. Thus, the Sloane collection, along with the addition of the Harleian manuscripts and the Cottonian Library became the British Museum. The British Museum was to be maintained by the English government, overseen by a government-appointed board of trustees and function as a public repository of objects and texts.¹⁵

True to form of a cabinet of curiosity, the early British Museum contained a vast collection of wonders and rarities.¹⁶ Other than the manuscripts and texts of the national library and Sloane's natural history collection, the early British Museum offered its public the opportunity to see relics of ancient Greek, Roman and Egyptian civilizations first-hand.¹⁷ Later in its history, it would become known primarily for its exceptional collection of antiquities, which included no less than the Elgin marbles. Its reputation was also aided by the acquisition of the objects ceded by the French in the Treaty of Alexandria as a result of the Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition.

The Early Egyptian Collection of the British Museum

The collection of Sir Hans Sloane comprised some Egyptian antiquities and these became part of the original British Museum installation in Montagu House upon opening in

¹⁵ Ibid., 126.

¹⁶ Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, 1. For a series of essays about the development of cabinets of curiosities, see Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, ed. *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1985).

¹⁷ Ibid.

1759.¹⁸ Sloane's collection of Egyptian antiquities was not substantive: and of the 1,125 antiquities in the Sloane collection, only 160 were from Egypt.¹⁹ These objects included bronze figures, shabtis, scarabs, a mummy, a stela, and small pieces of sculpture.²⁰ This type of collection is representative of seventeenth and eighteenth-century European Egyptian collections, which typically included portable objects meant to be used for didactic purposes.²¹

The Sloane collection of Egyptian antiquities was rounded out through numerous donations from the Lethieullier family,²² King George III, John Stewart, the third Earl of Bute, and Matthew Duane. Objects that were included in these donations were architectural slabs of Nectanebo I and Psamtek, a limestone relief, a sphinx, a mummy complete with coffin, statuettes, and small sculptures.²³ Sir William Hamilton's collection of antiquities, the first

¹⁸ T.G.H. James, *The British Museum and Ancient Egypt* (London: The British Museum Press, 1981), 3-4.

¹⁹ Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, 34.

²⁰ Morris L. Bierbrier, "The Sloane Collection of Egyptian Antiquities," in *Aegyptus Museis Rediviva: Miscellanea in Honorem Hermann de Meulenaere*, ed. Luc Limme and J. Strybol (Brussels: Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, 1993), 15-33.

²¹ See David Boyd Haycock, "Ancient Egypt in 17th and 18th Century England," in *The Wisdom of Egypt: Changing Visions Through the Ages*, ed. Peter Ucko and Timothy Champion (London: UCL Press, 2003), 133-160. It is important to note that William Stukeley, the acclaimed eighteenth-century English antiquarian, was one of the first trustees of the British Museum to be appointed by Sir Hans Sloane. Miller, *That Noble Cabinet*, 42.

²² Morris L. Bierbrier, "The Lethieullier Family and the British Museum," in *Pyramid Studies and Other Essays Presented to I.E.S. Edwards*, ed. John Baines and I.E.S. Edwards (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1988), 220-228.

²³ Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, 39.

major purchase for the antiquities department at the British Museum, although mainly known for its Greek vases, also included Egyptian objects.²⁴

The fact that a considerable number of Egyptian objects entered the British Museum early on suggests that they were widely collected in the eighteenth century. The collecting of Egyptian antiquities had classical origins, and it is therefore not surprising that in the Renaissance, specifically in the sixteenth century, Egyptian objects began to be collected again. At that time, they were prized as curiosities of a strange and mysterious past. In the seventeenth century small Egyptian items tended to be included in the encyclopedic and didactic study collections of scholars.²⁵ By the time the British Museum opened in the eighteenth century, the inclusion of Egyptian antiquities in scientific collections was common.²⁶ To the Enlightenment philosophers of the time, they were vestiges of the earliest history of man.²⁷

The first truly significant addition to the collection of Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum was the group of objects acquired through the Treaty of Alexandria from the French in 1801 (Tables 1a and 1b). The objects were collected by the French while in Egypt in order to supplement the research of the Commission des Sciences et Arts d’Egypte and the Institut d’Egypte, and the French scholars selected specific pieces that they considered fine examples of

²⁴ Ibid., 41.

²⁵ Ibid., 39.

²⁶ Ibid., 41.

²⁷ Ibid., 42.

Egyptian art.²⁸ After the antiquities were surrendered to the British in Egypt, Colonel Turner of the British Army took possession of them and presented them to King George III who in turn gave them to the British Museum.²⁹ Arriving in London in 1802, the objects were installed in the Townley Gallery in 1808.

Joseph Fourier, the secretary of the Institut d’Egypte, drafted a list of the confiscated antiquities (Figure 18), and this list remained in the possession of Turner.³⁰ Notes and sketches of the objects were prepared as they entered the collection (Figures 19-22). The objects in this collection were some of the largest yet seen in Europe, as military transport made it possible to move colossal objects. The addition of these objects saw the beginning of the British Museum’s Egyptian sculpture collection. Stephanie Moser states that “what is most significant, however, is the fact that the acquisition of this set of objects saw the museum’s Egyptian collection instantly transformed from a limited and disparate one that was primarily made up of smaller antiquities, to a substantial and more cohesive one that was characterized by larger sculptural works.”³¹

In this group of objects, two of the sarcophagi, four statues of the goddess Sekhmet, two obelisks of Nectanebo II, the colossal ram’s head, the colossal fist of Ramses II, the statue of Roy sitting, and the Rosetta Stone, were the most prized by the museum (Figures 23-28). These

²⁸ Ibid., 73.

²⁹ Morris L. Bierbrier, “The Acquisition by the British Museum of Antiquities Discovered During the French Invasion of Egypt,” in *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities: A Tribute to T.G.H. James*, ed. W.V. Davies (London: British Museum Press, 1999), 111-113. See also J.-J. Fiechter, “La Pierre de Rosette et les autres antiquités Egyptiennes prises par les Anglais en 1801,” *Revue d’Egyptologie* 48 (1997): 283-289.

³⁰ Bierbrier, “Acquisition,” 111.

³¹ Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, 67.

objects were installed in the Townley Gallery by 1808,³² where they were displayed as trophies of war. The public's interest in these objects was spurred by national pride; they were seen as emblems of Britain's supremacy in the ever present Franco-British rivalry. This collection of objects was not acquired by the British as a result of scholarly interest in ancient Egypt, or with the aim of advancing knowledge about ancient Egypt,³³ although that is precisely what the French *savants* had intended.

Because it was comprised of colossal pieces, the collection obtained through the Treaty of Alexandria drastically influenced the position and treatment of Egyptian antiquities in the museum. Stephanie Moser, in her volume *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum*, states that "this profound change in the nature of the collection had major implications for the way ancient Egypt was defined in the galleries of the museum. No longer simply inconsequential items of a curious nature, the Egyptian antiquities were now featured as key participants in a dialogue on art and taste."³⁴ As the French *savants* had exercised care in the selection of the objects for the collection, which reflected the research and scholarship of their three year stay in Egypt, the British had fortuitously acquired the first major collection of Egyptian antiquities that had been gathered in a systematic and focused manner.³⁵

After the acquisition of numerous collections of Greek and Roman antiquities between 1808 and 1823, most notably the Phigaleian marbles in 1815 and the Elgin marbles in 1816, the

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

next major collection of Egyptian antiquities to enter the British Museum was purchased from the consul Henry Salt.³⁶ Salt's collections exemplified the practice of "consular collecting" in the early nineteenth century. There are several factors that contributed to this practice, but most important was that Europeans were granted increased accessibility to Egypt under the country's new ruler, Muhammad Ali. Indeed, Europeans were encouraged to visit Egypt and help in the "modernization" of the country, and as a result many European countries had consuls stationed in Egypt. Muhammad Ali also granted permits to the European consuls in order to excavate ancient sites, which facilitated the removal of colossal sculptures and monuments from Egypt.³⁷ The French consul Bernardino Drovetti and the British consul Henry Salt established some of the largest collections of Egyptian antiquities created for purchase.³⁸ The consuls were zealous in their collecting, and Drovetti and Salt set the precedent for the whole-sale collecting of Egyptian antiquities in the mid-nineteenth century in many of Europe's museums.

The Musée du Louvre

Just as Napoleon's career and life were linked to the French Revolution, so was the formation of the Musée du Louvre. The building in which the museum is housed was originally built as a royal stronghold by the late-twelfth-century king Phillippe Auguste, and later adapted as the royal residence of France's monarchy by Charles V. The Louvre's use as a display and

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

storage area of France's royal art collections prompted its transformation into a public art museum.³⁹

The first public showing of the royal art collections did not take place at the Louvre, but instead at the Luxembourg Gallery in 1750.⁴⁰ Even as this occurred, plans were initiated for a larger art museum in the Grand Gallery at the Louvre.⁴¹ It was not until the accession of Louis XVI in 1774, however, that the execution of these plans began in earnest, and the project of making the Louvre a national public art museum began.

Upon accession to the throne, Louis XVI appointed the Comte d'Angiviller as the director general of royal buildings. D'Angiviller had a vision of a new art museum in the Louvre that would be the most magnificent and perfect in Europe as well as a source of national pride and royal glory.⁴² Andrew McClellan states that "d'Angiviller was at one and the same time a child of the Enlightenment and a fiercely loyal servant of the Crown."⁴³ And although the outbreak of

³⁹ For histories of the Louvre, see: Christiane Aulanier, *Histoire du Palais et du Musée du Louvre* 9 vols., (Paris: Editions des Musées Nationaux, 1947-1964); André Blum, *Le Louvre: Du Palais au Musée* (Geneva, Paris and London: Éditions du Milieu du Monde, 1946); Alexandra Bonfante-Warren, *The Louvre* (Berkeley, CA: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, Inc., 2000); Cecil Gould, *Trophy of Conquest: The Musée Napoléon and the Creation of the Louvre* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965); Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-century Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and *La Commission du Muséum et la Création du Musée du Louvre (1792-1793)*, documents edited and annotated by A. Tuetey and J. Guiffrey, Archives de l'art français vol. 3, 1909.

⁴⁰ McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, 13.

⁴¹ Andrew McClellan, "The Museum and its Public in Eighteenth-Century France," in *The Genesis of the Art Museum in the 18th Century*, ed. Per Bjurström (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 1993), 69.

⁴² McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, 49.

⁴³ McClellan, "The Museum and its Public," 69.

the Revolution put a halt to d'Angiviller's Louvre project, his plans, which were well-known throughout Europe, paved the way for the newly public Louvre.⁴⁴

The Louvre opened to the public on August 10th, 1793, the first anniversary of the storming of the Tuileries Palace. The decision to open the Louvre on that date aligned the museum with the Republic and its revolutionary principles. As McClellan states, "on that day the public was first permitted to inspect works of art that had once belonged to the king, *émigrés*, and the Church but which now belonged to the Republic, in a space that was no longer a royal palace but a palace of the people."⁴⁵

Soon after the opening of the Louvre, Napoleon began his military campaign to Italy.⁴⁶ Following the precedent of the ancient Romans, Napoleon plundered the art collections of those he conquered for installation in the Louvre, and in so doing created the greatest collection of Western art ever to have been on display in one place.⁴⁷ Intentionally or not, Napoleon realized

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 74. Duncan and Wallach state that "with the Revolution, the transformation of the Louvre became urgent. In a series of decrees of 1792 and 1793, the new state nationalized the King's property, confiscating his art collection and declared the Louvre a museum. This declaration dramatically made visible the reality of the new Republican state. What had been the King's by right was now decreed the property of the nation." See Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, ed. Bettina Messias Carbonell (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 56.

⁴⁶ See David Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

⁴⁷ See Cecil Gould, *Trophy of Conquest: The Musée Napoleon and the Creation of the Louvre* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965) and Dorothy Mackay Quynn, "The Art Confiscations of the Napoleonic Wars," *The American Historical Review* 50, no. 3 (April 1945): 437-460. Duncan and Wallach state that "the early Louvre deliberately evoked the Roman tradition of triumphal display: captured enemy arms were exhibited along with works of art, and cartloads of art pillaged from conquered nations arrived at the Louvre in triumphal processions designed to recall those of ancient Rome. The visitor entering

d'Angiviller's vision of a magnificent and perfect Louvre that was a source of national pride and glory.

After Napoleon returned from Egypt, he became the First Consul of France, and later he installed himself as Emperor. Having called Vivant Denon back from Egypt early, Napoleon named him the director of the Central Museum in the Louvre, as well as director of all artistic services.⁴⁸ Together, Napoleon and Denon devised a comprehensive system of museums for France and the newly conquered outlying territories. France dominated the European museum world and the Louvre was the center of that world. Denon, like d'Angiviller before him, envisioned a perfect Louvre, and for a short time his goal of making the Louvre the world's most beautiful institution was realized.⁴⁹ But when Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo and his empire fell, the Allies from whom Napoleon had plundered so much valuable art during his military campaigns demanded that it be returned. In all, the French museums returned approximately 2,065 paintings and 130 sculptures, including the *Bronze Horses of San Marco*, the *Apollo Belvedere*, and the *Laocoön*.⁵⁰

As the rest of Europe scrambled to install representative collections of art in newly created museums, the French attempted to fill the holes left in the Louvre collection by the return of Napoleon's plundered loot, in order to restore the Louvre as a monument of national glory. In addition, there was an attempt to make the collection of the museum more complete

Napoleon's Louvre passed through triumphal arches decorated with trophies and victories." Duncan and Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," 52.

⁴⁸ Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 25.

⁴⁹ Bonfante-Warren, *The Louvre*, 33.

⁵⁰ Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 27.

by adding art from periods that previously had not been covered.⁵¹ In this vein the Egyptian division at the Louvre was formally created by Jean-François Champollion in 1826.

The Early Egyptian Collection of the Louvre

In the early stages of the Louvre's existence as a museum, before the Napoleonic campaign to Egypt, there were few Egyptian objects in the collection. The few that entered were acquired during the Convention in 1793 and placed in the newly established department of antique sculpture.⁵² Although Napoleon brought a few Egyptian objects into France with the Borghese collection, which were purchased in Italy from a private collection of antiquities,⁵³ the first major acquisition of Egyptian objects for the Louvre were those collected as a part of the Egyptian expedition.

After the signing of the Treaty of Alexandria in 1801, the largest pieces in the French collections went to the British. The scholars and *savants*, however, were able to keep some smaller items and their research. Upon returning to France, none of these items or research made it to the Louvre's collections.⁵⁴ They were installed instead in the *savants'* personal

⁵¹ Marie-Claude Chaudonneret, "Historicism and 'Heritage' in the Louvre, 1820-40: From the Musée Charles X to the Galerie d'Apollon," *Art History* 14, no. 4 (December 1991): 488, 491.

⁵² Bernadette Letellier, "A Short History of the Louvre's Department of Egyptian Antiquities," in *Pharaohs: Treasures of Egyptian Art from the Louvre*, ed. Lawrence M. Berman and Bernadette Letellier (Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1996), 15; and Christiane Ziegler with Christophe Barbotin and Marie-Hélène Rutschowskaya, *The Louvre: Egyptian Antiquities* (London, Scala Publications, Ltd., 1990), 5.

⁵³ Letellier, "Short History," 15.

⁵⁴ In their review of the Egyptian Department at the Louvre, Andreu, Rutschowskaya and Ziegler state: "À commencer par la Pierre de Rosette, don't la triple inscription a permis le déchiffrement de l'écriture hiéroglyphique, aucune de antiquités rassemblées par l'expédition de Bonaparte n'est parvenue au Louvre. Considérées comme butin de guerre, elles ont été transportées en Grande-Bretagne où elles

collections, or sent to the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle.⁵⁵ Many of the objects went to the private collections of Napoleon, Josephine and Vivant Denon.⁵⁶ Michel Dewachter states that “a good number of the participants of the Expedition made a point of offering Josephine, Napoleon, or members of his entourage, Egyptian souvenirs that they had themselves obtained on the banks of the Nile.”⁵⁷ If any of these objects entered the Louvre, it was at a later date.⁵⁸

It is clear, however, that although the British may have claimed the largest and finest pieces in the *savants'* original collection destined for the Louvre, there were considerably more objects that left Egypt than those claimed by the British. As discussed above, there were no more than thirty objects taken to the British Museum as a part of the Treaty of Alexandria, and

constituent l'un des fleurons du British Museum. Quant aux œuvres de la collection Denon, compagnon de Bonaparte puis directeur du Musée imperial, elles se montent à peine à une vingtaine.” Guillemette Andreu, Marie-Hélène Rutschowscaya and Christiane Ziegler, *L'Égypte ancienne au Louvre* (Paris: Hachette, 1997), 14.

⁵⁵ Paula Young Lee, “The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-Century France,” *The Art Bulletin* 79, no. 3 (September 1997): 410.

⁵⁶ For a catalog of a recent exhibition of Josephine's collection in the Louvre held at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, GA, see: Martine Denovelle, Sophie Descamps-Lequime and Marc Etienne, *Eye of Josephine: The Antiquities collection of the Empress in the Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Musée du Louvre and Atlanta: The High Museum of Art, 2008).

⁵⁷ Michel Dewachter, “The Egyptian Collections Formed During the Expedition de l'Égypte,” in *The Monuments of Egypt: The Napoleonic Edition: The Complete Archaeological Plates from La Description de l'Égypte*, ed. Charles Coulston Gillespie and Michel Dewachter (Old Saybrook, CT: Konecky and Konecky, 1987), 33.

⁵⁸ In Dewachter's discussion of the objects depicted in the plates of the *Description de l'Égypte*, he notes the case of a pair statue of Amenope and Tamerout now in the Louvre (N 1594). The provenance was originally thought not to precede 1824, but the statue appears in Plate 64 of Volume V of the *Description* (Figure 15), and as such it was found as part of the expedition's collections. It is unknown, however, who the scholar was that took the object back to France, and when it entered the Louvre's collections. See Dewachter, “The Egyptian Collections,” 31.

there are dozens more objects depicted in the plates of the *Description de l’Egypte* (Figures 4-15).⁵⁹

After posing the question, “why has no one until now thought of making a bibliographical catalogue of everything engraved in the [*Description’s*] plates?,” Michel Dewachter concludes that such a project would be next to impossible.⁶⁰ Although he and Charles Gillespie had intended to tell readers of their book what became of the objects depicted in the *Description’s* plates, such a task eluded them. Dewachter continues: “In attempting to carry out that perfectly reasonable task, we have discovered, first of all, that finding the information is rarely easy and secondly, that the *Description* has never yet been used for what it was meant to be, that is, a real Register of Monuments.”⁶¹

After Denon was appointed director of the Central Museum, he and Napoleon succeeded in securing some of the world’s finest art treasures for display in the newly created French system of museums. Although both Denon and Napoleon used the cultural success of the Egyptian expedition in order to further their personal and political goals—Denon as Napoleon’s artistic director and Napoleon as Emperor—after losing the collections of the expedition to the British, adding to the small number of existing Egyptian objects in the Louvre

⁵⁹ These figures show a small number of the plates from the *Description* that are dedicated to the antiquities collected by the members of the Egyptian expedition, and are not meant to be a representative collection of all of the plates that illustrate these antiquities.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.* See the remainder of Dewachter’s article for remarks on several case studies in which he and Gillespie attempted to uncover the provenance information about the objects depicted in the *Description*.

was not a part of their agenda.⁶² Evidence of this is that after the fall of Napoleon's Empire, there were few purely Egyptian works in the Louvre and they had been part of the royal collections.⁶³ Most of them were Greco-Roman Egyptian objects dating from the time that the country was part of the Hellenistic and Roman Empires. Most important among them was a colossal Roman Isis from Hadrian's villa at Tivoli.

During the reign of Louis XVIII (1814-1824), there were sixteen known Egyptian objects in the collections of the Louvre.⁶⁴ Of these, at least two were acquired during Louis XVIII's reign. The first, a kneeling statue of Nakhthorheb, was purchased in 1816 from the famed French collector, François Sallier (Figure 16).⁶⁵ The second was a statue of Sekhmet that was acquired by the French director-general of museums, the comte de Forbin, in 1817 (Figure 17).⁶⁶ In

⁶² This is interesting not only because of Denon's and Napoleon's projected alliance with the Egyptian campaign, but also because the Egyptian Revival Style was extremely popular during the Napoleonic era. See Jean-Marcel Humbert, "Denon and the Discovery of Egypt," in *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art 1730-1930*, ed. Jean-Marcel Humbert, Michael Pantazzi and Christiane Ziegler (Paris: Musée du Louvre and National Gallery of Canada, 1994), 202-205; and Jean-Marcel Humbert, "The Return from Egypt," in *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art 1730-1930*, ed. Jean-Marcel Humbert, Michael Pantazzi and Christiane Ziegler (Paris: Musée du Louvre and National Gallery of Canada, 1994), 252-256. A possible explanation for this is as Stuart Woolf states: "As Napoleon's control of Europe grew more complete, the less "useful" of the sciences—such as the anthropological quest for the stages of civilization—lost favor and tended to go underground." Stuart Woolf, "The Construction of a European World-View in the Revolutionary-Napoleonic Years," *Past and Present* 137 (November 1992): 87. Perhaps too, Napoleon's utilization and promotion of the Egyptian style did away with the need for acquiring new Egyptian objects for the French museums. Jean-Marcel Humbert states: "the new surge of Egyptomania following the Egyptian campaign was propelled in large part by political considerations." Humbert, "The Return from Egypt," 252.

⁶³ Letellier, "Short History," 15.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 15; 21n2.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 15; 21n1.

addition, the sarcophagus of Inuya was given to Louis XVIII by the son of the collector Thédénat-Duvent and it was also installed at the Louvre.⁶⁷

By the time Charles X ascended the throne in 1824, there were still only a few Egyptian sculptures on exhibit in the Louvre.⁶⁸ Other than the Nakhthorheb and Sekhmet statues, these included the Roman Isis, three block statues of Akhamenru, Padimenemipet and Wahibre, two sphinxes of Akoris and Nepherites and the sarcophagus of Inuya.⁶⁹ This small collection of Egyptian antiquities was about to be vastly altered in accordance with the wishes of Jean-François Champollion, the scholar who had deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphs two years prior to Charles X's accession.⁷⁰

Champollion not only deciphered hieroglyphic writing, arguably the most important achievement in the modern study of ancient Egypt, he also instituted the first Egyptian museum in Turin. During the early nineteenth century, many of the European consuls stationed in Egypt were the major suppliers of antiquities to European nations. The first major consul collection to be offered for sale to France was that of Italian-born French consul-general, Bernardino

⁶⁷ Andreu, Rutschowskaya and Ziegler, *L'Égypte ancienne*, 14.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ For general resources on Champollion and the translation of Egyptian hieroglyphs, see: Morris L. Bierbrier, *Who was Who in Egyptology*. 3rd ed. (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1995); Etienne Combe and Mahmoud Saba, *L'archéologie française en Égypte: l'œuvre de Champollion* (Alexandria: Société de Publications Égyptiennes, 1920); Michel Dewachter and Alain Fouchard, *L'égyptologie et les Champollion* (Grenoble, Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 1994); R.B. Parkinson, *The Rosetta Stone* (London: British Museum Press, 2005); Robert Solé and Dominique Valbelle, *The Rosetta Stone* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2001); and Christiane Ziegler and Monique Kanaway, *Hommage à Champollion (1790-1832)* (Paris: Conseil des musées nationaux, 1990).

Drovetti. This collection was refused by the French because of its high price, and went instead to the newly established Egyptian Museum in Turin in 1824.⁷¹

In the same year, the first substantial collection of Egyptian antiquities was purchased for the Louvre. In addition to classical antiquities and medieval works of art,⁷² the collection of Edme Auguste Durand contained 2,500 Egyptian pieces. In addition to smaller works such as amulets, figurines, and mummies—the collection included several major works, including the sarcophagi of Soutmes, the stele of Senwosret and Usirur, the statue of Merimut and the statuettes of Imenemipet and Tamerut.⁷³ This collection became the impetus to formally create the Egyptian Department in the Louvre.⁷⁴ And two years after the approval of its purchase by Charles X on December 14, 1824, the department was newly named the Musée Charles X.⁷⁵

The new Musée Charles X was officially created on May 15th, 1826, when Charles X instituted an ordinance which formally created the *Division des monuments égyptiennes*, and

⁷¹ See Silvio Curto, *Storia del Museo egizio di Torino* (Turin: Centro studi piemontesi, 1990) and Alessandro Roccati, *The Egyptian Museum, Turin* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1991).

⁷² Ziegler, *The Louvre*, 5.

⁷³ Andreu, Rutschowskaya and Ziegler, *L'Égypte ancienne*, 15.

⁷⁴ Georges Bénédite, "La Formation du Musée Egyptien au Louvre," *Revue de l'Art Ancien et Moderne* 43 (January-May 1923): 275-293.

⁷⁵ Musée Charles X and Musée d'Égypte are sometimes used interchangeably. Todd Porterfield notes that "the term "Musée d'Égypte" was always used to mean at least the rooms curated by Champollion... Contemporaries sometimes called the Musée d'Égypte and Musée Charles X and vice versa." Todd Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism 1798-1836* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 182n4.

Champollion was named its first curator.⁷⁶ The Egyptian department consisted of nine rooms on the second floor of the Seine wing of the Cour Carrée.⁷⁷ Four rooms were designated for Greek and Roman antiquities, but for the first time in the history of the Louvre, four rooms were devoted to Egyptian antiquities.⁷⁸ This space was used to display the Durand collection as well as the next two major collections to come to the Louvre—the Salt and Drovetti collections.⁷⁹

Following the procedure of other large European museums,⁸⁰ Champollion instituted a massive acquisitions policy over the next two years. Securing over 9,000 objects for the Louvre from the two consular collections— those of Henry Salt (obtained in 1826)⁸¹ and Bernardino Drovetti (obtained in 1827) — Champollion quickly amassed one of the largest and richest Egyptian collections in the world. Contained in these two collections were rare treasures like a statuette of Amenemhat III, a seated statue of Sobekhotep IV, a seated statue of Akhenaten,

⁷⁶ Sosthenes de La Rochefoucauld, “Établissement du Musée Royal Égyptien de Paris,” *Bulletin des sciences historiques, antiquités, philologie* 6 (1026): 31-37; and Pierre Quoniam, “Champollion et le Musée du Louvre,” *Bulletin de la Société Française d’Égyptologie* 95 (October 1982): 47-49.

⁷⁷ Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire*, 84.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ See Christiane Aulanier, *Le Musée Charles X et le Département des antiquités Égyptiennes* (Paris: Éditions des Musées Nationaux, 1961), 20-55; and Nestor L’Hôte, “Beaux-Arts—Ouverture du Musée d’antiquités égyptiennes au Louvre,” *Revue Encyclopédique* 36 (1827): 827-831.

⁸⁰ See Christiane Ziegler’s and Jean-Luc Bovot’s introduction to the Egyptian collection at the Louvre, *Manuels de l’Ecole du Louvre: Art et archéologie: l’Égypte ancienne*, for a summation of the major nineteenth-century acquisitions in large European museums. Christiane Ziegler and Jean-Luc Bovot, *Manuels de l’Ecole du Louvre: Art et archéologie: l’Égypte ancienne* (Paris: Ecole du Louvre, 2001), 312-313.

⁸¹ Salt was the British consul-general in Egypt, and had previously sold a large collection to the British Museum in 1818.

and a head of a statue of Amenhotep III.⁸² After these three major collections were acquired, Champollion then led a scientific expedition to Egypt in 1828 that continued the earlier work of Napoleon's scholars.⁸³

Although the formation of the Egyptian collection at the Louvre was not a direct result of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, as the objects collected by the *savants* went to London rather than Paris, the early institution of the Egyptian Department at the Louvre can be contextually tied to the Egyptian expedition. Champollion, whose vision was at the origin of the Egyptian department at the Louvre, grew up during the Napoleonic Empire. He was undoubtedly influenced by the explosion of interest in Egypt that was created by the Egyptian expedition and the subsequent publication of Denon's *Voyage* and the *Description*.⁸⁴

It may seem surprising that the foundation of the Egyptian department of the Louvre took place during the Restoration. Yet, although the Bourbons outwardly disassociated

⁸² Letellier, "Short History," 15.

⁸³ Christiane Ziegler, "Egyptian Antiquities," in *The Louvre and the Ancient World: Greek, Etruscan, Roman, Egyptian and Near Eastern Antiquities in the Musée du Louvre*, ed. The High Museum of Art (Paris: Musée du Louvre and Atlanta, GA: The High Museum of Art, 2007), 51. See also Christian Leblanc, Angelo Sesana and Benoit Lurson, *Treasures of Egypt and Nubia: Drawings from the French-Tuscan Expedition of 1828 led by Jean-François Champollion and Ippolito Rosellini* (Kent, UK: Grange Books, 2006).

⁸⁴ Melanie Byrd states, "the career of Champollion was closely linked to the work of the Napoleonic scholars, and he knew some of the *savants* personally. Fourier became the prefect of Isère, where the Champollion family resided and he promoted the academic career of Jean-François Champollion... [Champollion also] made extensive use of the *Description*... Despite the errors that the Napoleonic scholars made, their work was still significant. Without the *Description*, the collections of antiquities and the Rosetta Stone, Champollion could not have made the contributions that he did to Egyptian archaeology and linguistics, which helped establish Egyptology as an academic discipline." Melanie Byrd, "The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1992), 265-266; 268.

themselves from the Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras, the Restoration monarchs still patronized Napoleonic Egyptological works, despite the links of these works to the fallen empire.⁸⁵ For instance, the first volume of the *Description* was released in 1810, but the massive corpus was not complete until 1828. The Bourbon monarchy did not stop the publication of the *Description*, but instead supported it as a political tactic to legitimize their return.⁸⁶ Indeed, in the founding document of the Egyptian department in the Louvre,⁸⁷ the vicomte Sosthènes de La Rochefoucauld, then the director of the Beaux-Arts in the Maison du Roi, linked the creation of the department to Napoleon's Egyptian Scientific Expedition in 1798.⁸⁸

Egyptian Art in the Survey Art Museum

While it would seem that Egyptian culture naturally belongs in an archaeological museum like the British Museum, its presence in an art museum like the Louvre, the purpose of which was to present a survey of European art from Antiquity to the present, is less obvious. After all, Egypt was not part of Europe and its culture seems only loosely related to later Greek and Roman culture.

To put this in context, it is important to realize that the idea that Egypt was the cradle of European civilization was not entirely new. The Greeks and Romans believed that their own cultures were rooted in Egyptian culture. But this idea was not carried over to the Renaissance,

⁸⁵ Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire*, 82-83.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁸⁷ See La Rochefoucauld, "Établissement," 31-37.

⁸⁸ La Rochefoucauld, "Établissement," 32 and Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire*, 83.

at which time Greece and Rome were thought to contain the origins of European culture. In the eighteenth century, Egyptian art and culture were known to have inspired that of Greece and Rome (and vice-versa in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods of Egyptian history) but it was thought that the Greeks and Romans perfected what was considered strange, mystic and exotic. The first major art history book ever written, Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, published in 1764, was critical of Egyptian art. Winckelmann's work was fueled by the Renaissance notion that the origins of the Western tradition were found in ancient Greece and Rome.⁸⁹

With the formation of the Egyptian department at the Louvre and the purposeful addition of Egyptian art to the Louvre's collections, the Louvre inserted Egyptian art into the Western art canon. By displaying Egyptian art in a Western canonical art museum, the Louvre communicated to the public that Egyptian art was not only at the root of Greek and Roman art, but that it also had aesthetic value worthy of appreciation. Until this time, appreciation of Egyptian art was tied to its links with Greek and Roman art, rather than being valued for its own aesthetic qualities. It is likely that without the consequences of the Napoleonic Egyptian Scientific Expedition, Egyptian art might not have become a part of the Western art canon, or a standard element in the Western art museum.

⁸⁹ See Johann J. Winckelmann, *History of the Art of Antiquity*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2006); Guillemette Andreu, Marie-Hélène Rutschowskaya and Christiane Ziegler, *L'Égypte ancienne au Louvre* (Paris: Hachette, 1997), 15; and Vernon Hyde Minor, *Art History's History*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), 19, 85-90.

The Evolution of Collecting Egyptian Antiquities

The collecting of Egyptian antiquities that began in the British Museum and was later continued in the Louvre, an archaeological museum and an art museum, respectively, soon became the norm in other major European museums (Figures 29-31). It would lead to the whole-sale removal of Egyptian objects from Egypt first by the consul collectors of the early nineteenth century, then by the many travelers that went to Egypt during the later nineteenth century.⁹⁰ Eventually, the interest of museums, European as well as American, in building Egyptian collections led to the great excavations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a period when massive teams of archaeologists descended upon Egypt to attempt to uncover ever more treasures for the museums that sponsored them.

⁹⁰ Fernand Beaucour, Yves Laissus, Chantal Orgogozo, *The Discovery of Egypt*, trans. Bambi Ballard (Paris: Flammarion, 1990), 229.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have discussed the early formation of the Egyptian collections of the British Museum and the Musée du Louvre against the backdrop of the French Invasion of Egypt. I have shown that the *savants* who accompanied the Napoleonic expedition conducted the first systematic study of Egypt. Their scholarly work was as much a product of Enlightenment thought as a matter of imperial military tactics, since the goal of the expedition was to make Egypt a French colony. Napoleon and the French Directory desired to know as much about this intended colony as possible.¹ The Commission des Sciences et Arts d’Égypte and the members of the Institut d’Égypte, which was modeled after the Institut de France, spent three years completing their mission. The results were released to the European public in the form of Dominique Vivant Denon’s *Voyage*,² and the official publication of the Commission and the Institut, the *Description de l’Égypte*.³

¹ The expedition can be linked to the new found Enlightenment principle of philology, which was “regarded as providing the clue towards an understanding of all societies.” Stuart Woolf, “The Construction of a European World-View in the Revolutionary-Napoleonic Years,” *Past and Present* 137 (November, 1992): 78.

² Abigail Moore comments on the importance of visual images in the formation of one’s opinion of history. She notes that “visual images have always played an important part in the construction of history. We look for visual signs to confirm written statements and in isolation these visual signs have a powerful effect on our imagination when it seeks the ‘truth.’ Denon reconstructed Egypt’s archaeology using a scientific system of standardization, a legible language of signs recognizable to both his French and English audiences.” Abigail Harrison Moore, “*Voyage: Dominique-Vivant Denon and the Transference of Images of Egypt*,” *Art History* 25, no. 4 (September 2002): 532-533.

³ Andrew Bednarski, *Holding Egypt: Tracing the Reception of the ‘Description de l’Égypte’ in Nineteenth Century Great Britain* (London: Golden House Publications, 2005), 15. The work of the French scholars was also released to the European public through the *La Décade Égyptienne* and the *Courier de l’Égypte*. Although Byrd states that “the *Description*, the *Décade*, the *Courier*, Denon’s *Voyage*, and the various diaries, journals and memoirs of the individuals who participated in the expedition and the

These two publications presented Europe with the first detailed, scholarly, and richly illustrated body of knowledge about ancient and modern Egypt. In France, these publications, particularly the *Description*, were strongly promoted by Napoleon, who hailed the expedition as a scientific success in order to disguise the failure of his military campaign and his defeat by Britain.⁴ The publications led to a strong interest in Egypt, both in the scholarly and the popular realms, where it led to true Egyptomania. In Britain, these publications had less of an effect. Instead, the British view of Egypt was affected by the objects that came to the British Museum, including the famous Rosetta Stone.⁵

Britain's accidental fortune in securing the largest and most prized objects from the French *savants'* collection by the Treaty of Alexandria led to the formation of the early Egyptian collection in the British Museum, which, for the first time confronted Europeans with important Egyptian objects. Prior to the Napoleonic campaign, most Egyptian objects found in Europe—didactic study collections or part of travelers' personal collections—had been small. After the objects gained from the French were installed in the British Museum, the public, for the first time, could see monumental Egyptian statuary. Although this acquaintance with Egyptian sculpture for many contemporary viewers confirmed the alleged supremacy of ancient Greek

Institute all played a role in the development of Egyptology," the other publications did not have the same widespread impact on the European view as *Voyage* and the *Description*. Melanie Byrd, "The Napoleonic Institute of Egypt" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1992), 272.

⁴ Moore, "Voyage," 539.

⁵ Bednarski, *Holding Egypt*, 96.

and Roman art, the new-found access to Egyptian objects laid the basis for later developments in the collecting of Egyptian antiquities in museums.⁶

Not only the British Museum, but also the Louvre owed the formation of its Egyptian department to the Napoleonic expedition, although in a more indirect manner. Its creator and first curator, Jean-François Champollion, grew up while the interest in the Egyptian expedition was at its height. He was familiar with *Voyage* and the *Description*, which he used in his work of deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphs.⁷ Because of Champollion's enterprise and because of the continued exploitation of the cultural success and popularity of the Egyptian expedition in France by the Bourbon monarchs of the Restoration, the first Egyptian department was created at the Louvre in 1824.

Champollion not only unlocked the key to the language of the ancient Egyptians, he also was the first to appreciate Egyptian art *as art*.⁸ Previously, Greek and Roman art had been

⁶ Stephanie Moser notes in relation to the installation of the objects gained from the French at the British Museum: "here the presentation of Egyptian antiquities in association with recently acquired Greek and Roman sculptures saw ancient Egypt firmly established as a primitive precursor to these more "civilized" ancient cultures. More specifically, the arrangement of Egyptian antiquities was presented as a comparative aid for demonstrating the supremacy of ancient Greek art..." Stephanie Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 65.

⁷ Bednarski, *Holding Egypt*, 96.

⁸ Bernadette Letellier states that Champollion "was without a doubt the first to become aware of Egyptian art when he visited the country in 1828-29. In his correspondence he criticized the Napoleonic Expedition for praising the Ptolemaic and Roman temples, whose bas-reliefs appeared ugly to him, at the expense of those in Thebes, which they did not properly appreciate." Letellier continues, "he fought to modify the taste of his contemporaries to make them share his love of ancient Egypt." Bernadette Letellier, "A Short History of the Louvre's Department of Egyptian Antiquities," in *Pharaohs: Treasures of Egyptian Art from the Louvre*, ed. Lawrence M. Berman and Bernadette Letellier (Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1996), 15.

firmly established in Western art historical and museological traditions as the fountainhead of Western art. As Alain Pasquier states,

“[the] department of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities, together with the Department of Paintings, is the oldest at the Musée du Louvre... the grouping together of the three classical cultures is the result of a deliberate choice, based on the common characteristics of the three cultures and the awareness that together they form the basis on which our Western civilization is founded.”⁹

The formation of the Egyptian department at the Louvre caused Egyptian art to be seen once more as the fountainhead of Greek and Roman art and hence as a part of the Western artistic canon.¹⁰ It is possible, if not likely, that without Napoleon’s Egyptian Scientific Expedition this development might not have happened.

⁹ Alain Pasquier, “Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities,” in *The Louvre and the Ancient World: Greek, Etruscan, Roman, Egyptian and Near Eastern Antiquities in the Musée du Louvre*, ed. The High Museum of Art (Paris: Musée du Louvre and Atlanta, GA: The High Museum of Art, 2007), 21.

¹⁰ Egyptian art was the first non-Western art to be collected at the Louvre. The Department of Near Eastern Antiquities was created in the mid-nineteenth century at the Louvre. Béatrice André-Salvini, “Near Eastern Antiquities,” in *The Louvre and the Ancient World: Greek, Etruscan, Roman, Egyptian and Near Eastern Antiquities in the Musée du Louvre*, ed. The High Museum of Art (Paris: Musée du Louvre and Atlanta, GA: The High Museum of Art, 2007), 78. For instance, although Champollion criticized the work of the expedition’s *savants* and Denon’s *Voyage* as being biased with the classical preference of Greek and Roman art, Moore notes that in *Voyage*, “Denon deliberately replaces the Grecian bias of previous pattern books with Egyptian architecture and aims to support the vitality of these designs by linking them visually and textually to the classical orders... Thus, by adopting and attempting to usurp the domination of Grecian design, Denon posits Egyptian design as suitable for study in the academies, for display in the museums, and for illustration in historical theses about mankind which discussed ideas of ancient development useful for those involved in cultural, national or personal ‘revolution.’” Moore, “*Voyage*,” 536. It is likely, then, that Denon, by linking Egyptian design with the already accepted cultures of antiquity, aided in Champollion’s later study of Egyptian art removed from the Greek and Roman stigma of appreciation.

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FIGURES

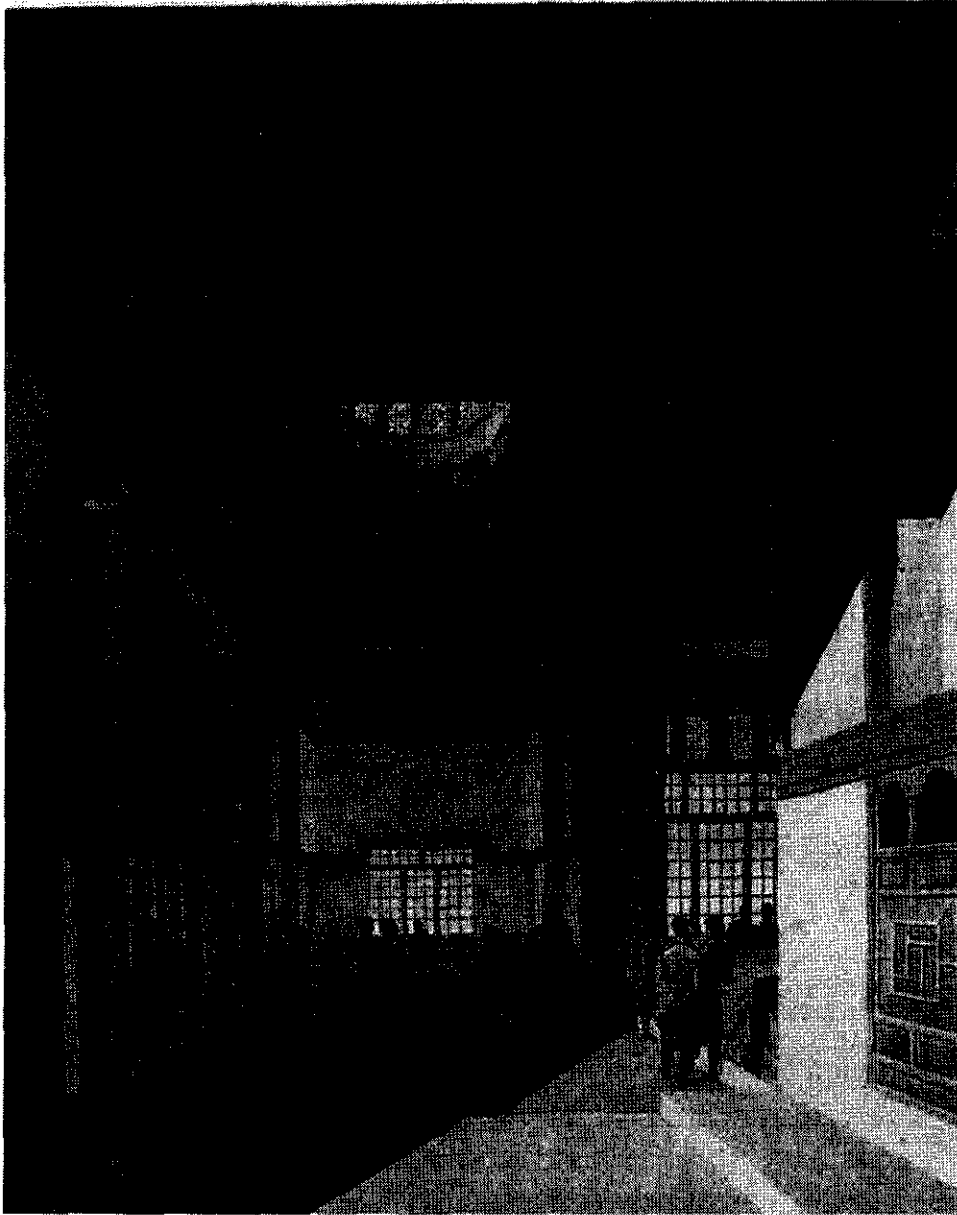


Figure 1. Jean Constantin Protain. *View of the Interior of one of the Great Halls in Hasan Kachef's House, Used for Meetings of the Institute, 1798-1799.* Pen, wash and gouache. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale.

Beaucour, F. Y. Laissus, and C. Orgogozo. *The Discovery of Egypt.* Translated by Bambi Ballard. Paris: Flammarion, 1990, Plate 82.



Figure 2. André Dutertre. *A Meeting of the Scholars from the Commission for Arts and Sciences in the Gardens of the Institute, 1798-1799*. Pen and watercolor. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale.

Beaucour, F. Y. Laissus, and C. Orgogozo. *The Discovery of Egypt*. Translated by Bambi Ballard. Paris: Flammarion, 1990, Plate 82b.

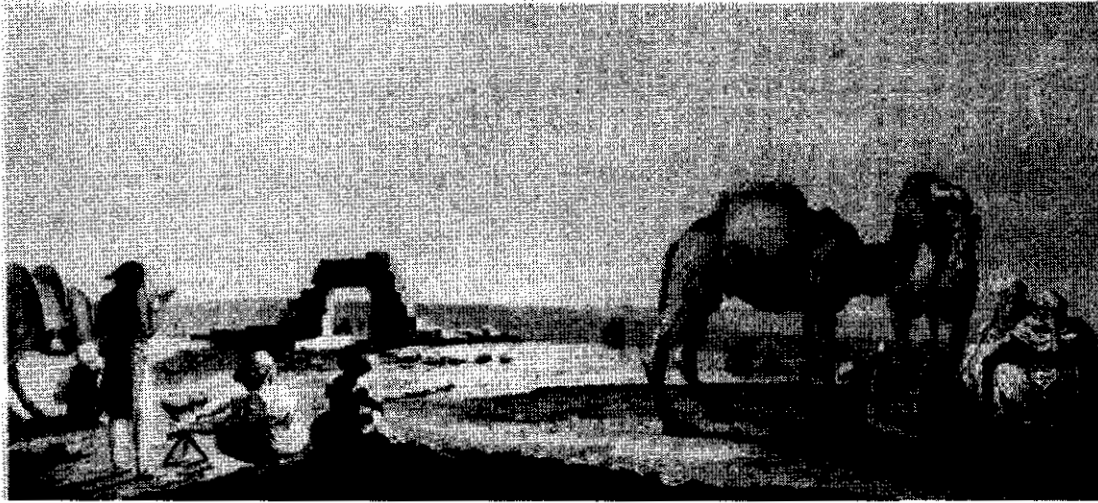


Figure 3. Vivant Denon Drawing During the Egyptian Campaign.

Brier, Bob. *Napoleon in Egypt*. Brookville, NY: Hillwood Art Museum, 1990, Figure 3.

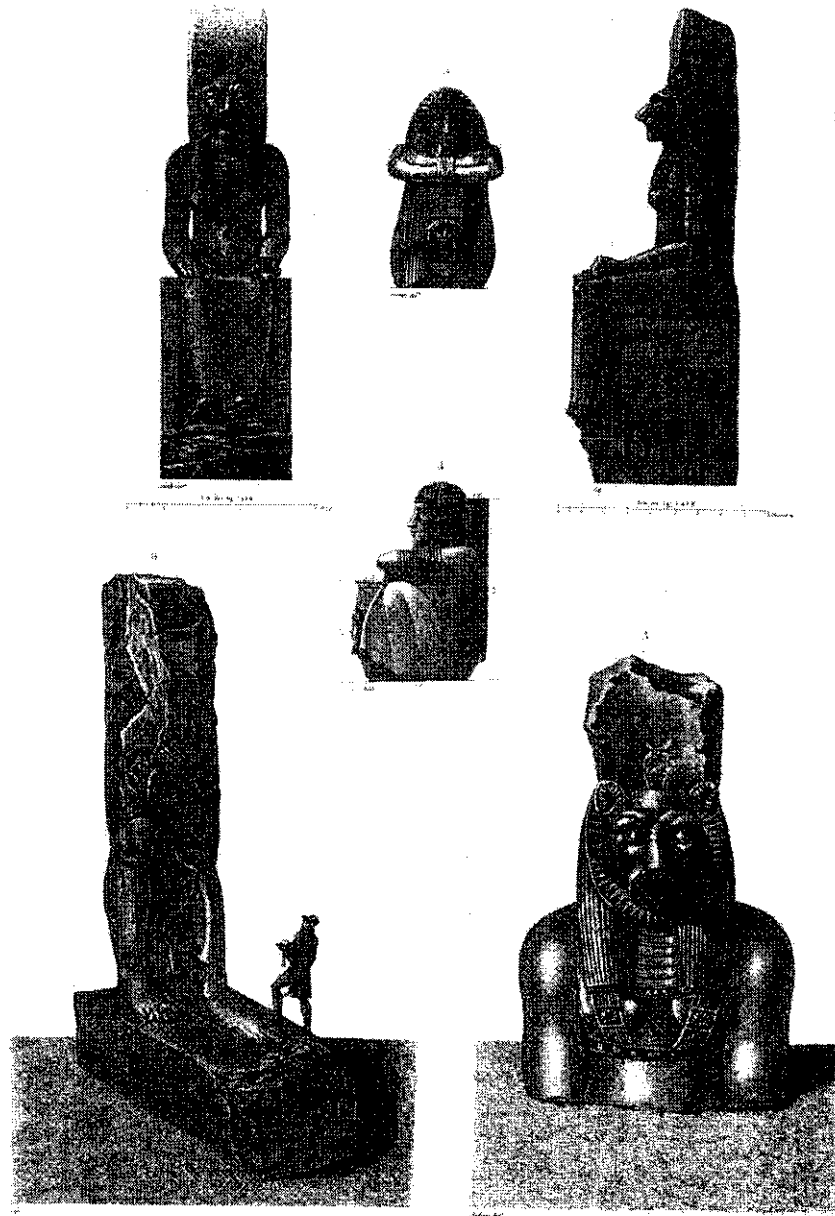


Figure 4. *Description III*, Plate 48.

Néret, Gilles, ed. *Description de l'Égypte*. Los Angeles, CA: Taschen American, LLC, 2007, A.vol.III, Plate 48.



Figure 5. *Description V*, Plate 3.

Néret, Gilles, ed. *Description de l'Égypte*. Los Angeles, CA: Taschen American, LLC, 2007, A.vol.V,
Plate 3.

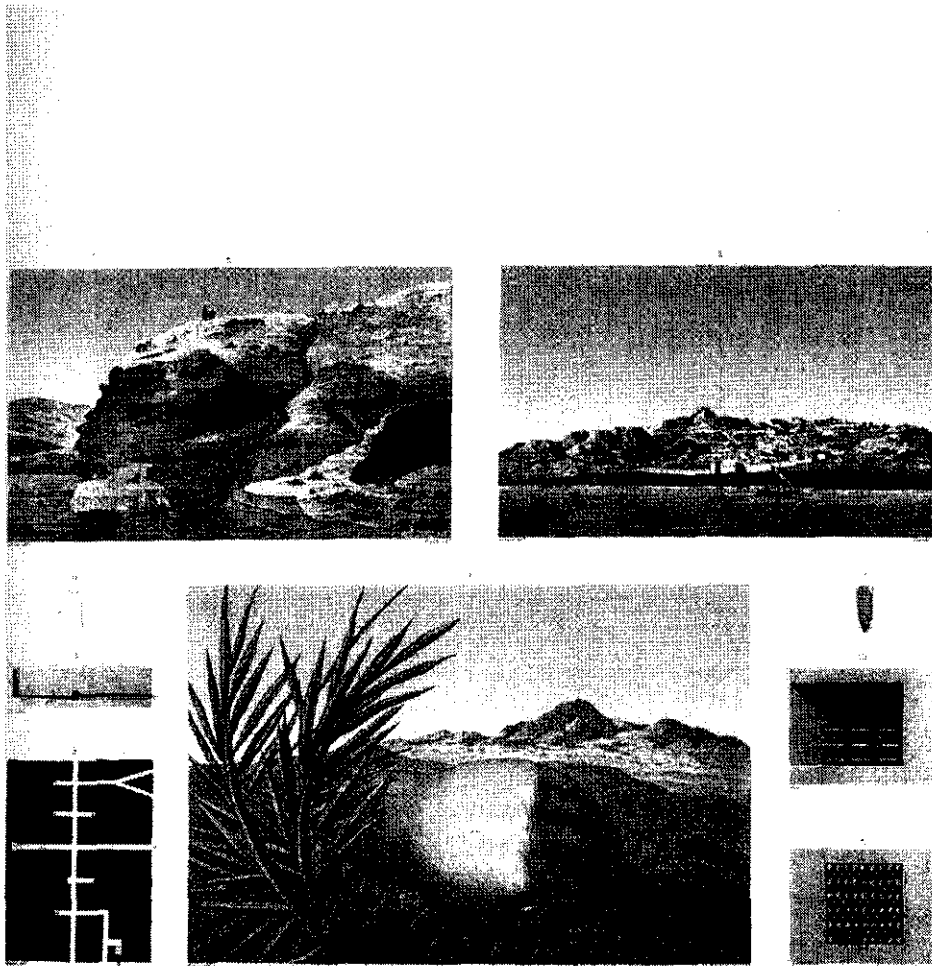


Figure 6. *Description V*, Plate 4.

Néret, Gilles, ed. *Description de l'Égypte*. Los Angeles, CA: Taschen American, LLC, 2007, A.vol.V,
Plate 4.

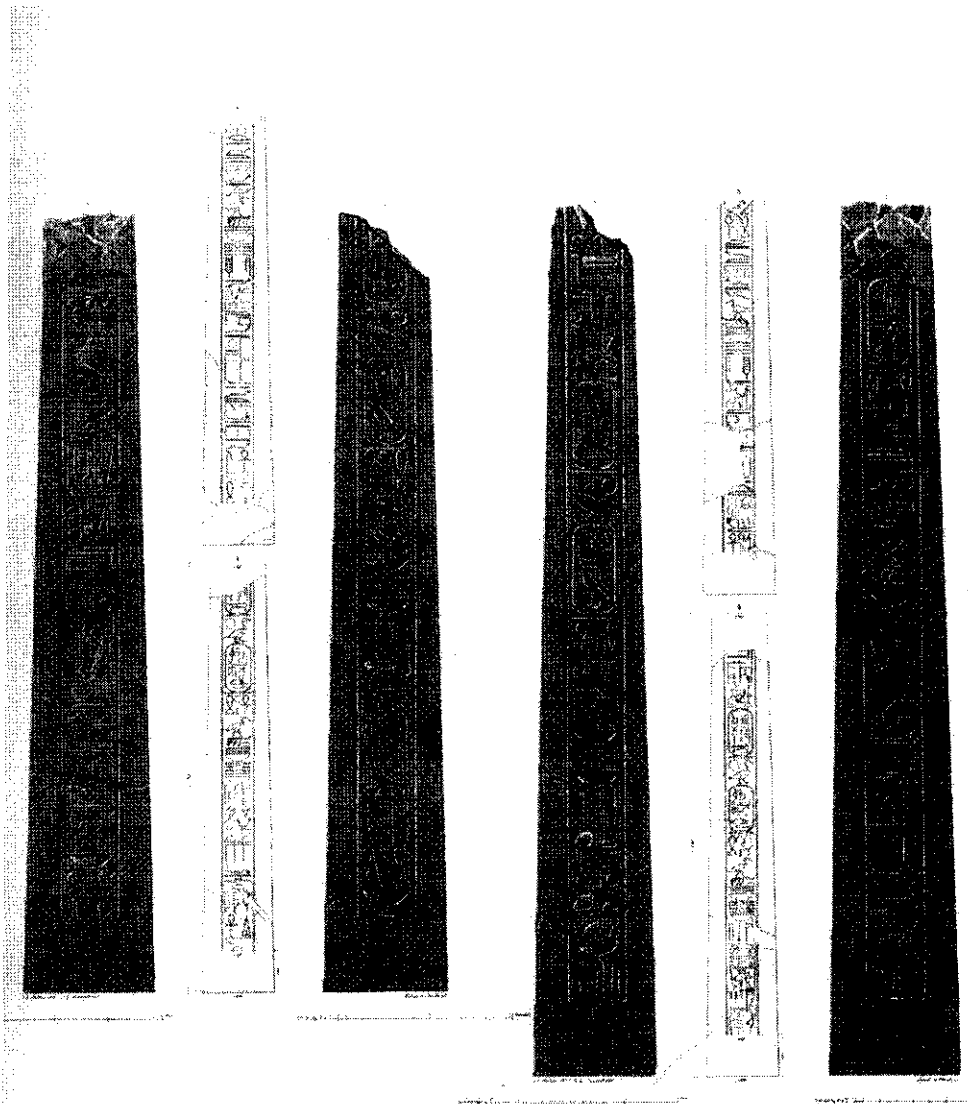


Figure 7. *Description V*, Plate 21,22.

Néret, Gilles, ed. *Description de l'Égypte*. Los Angeles, CA: Taschen American, LLC, 2007, A.vol.V, Plates 21, 22.

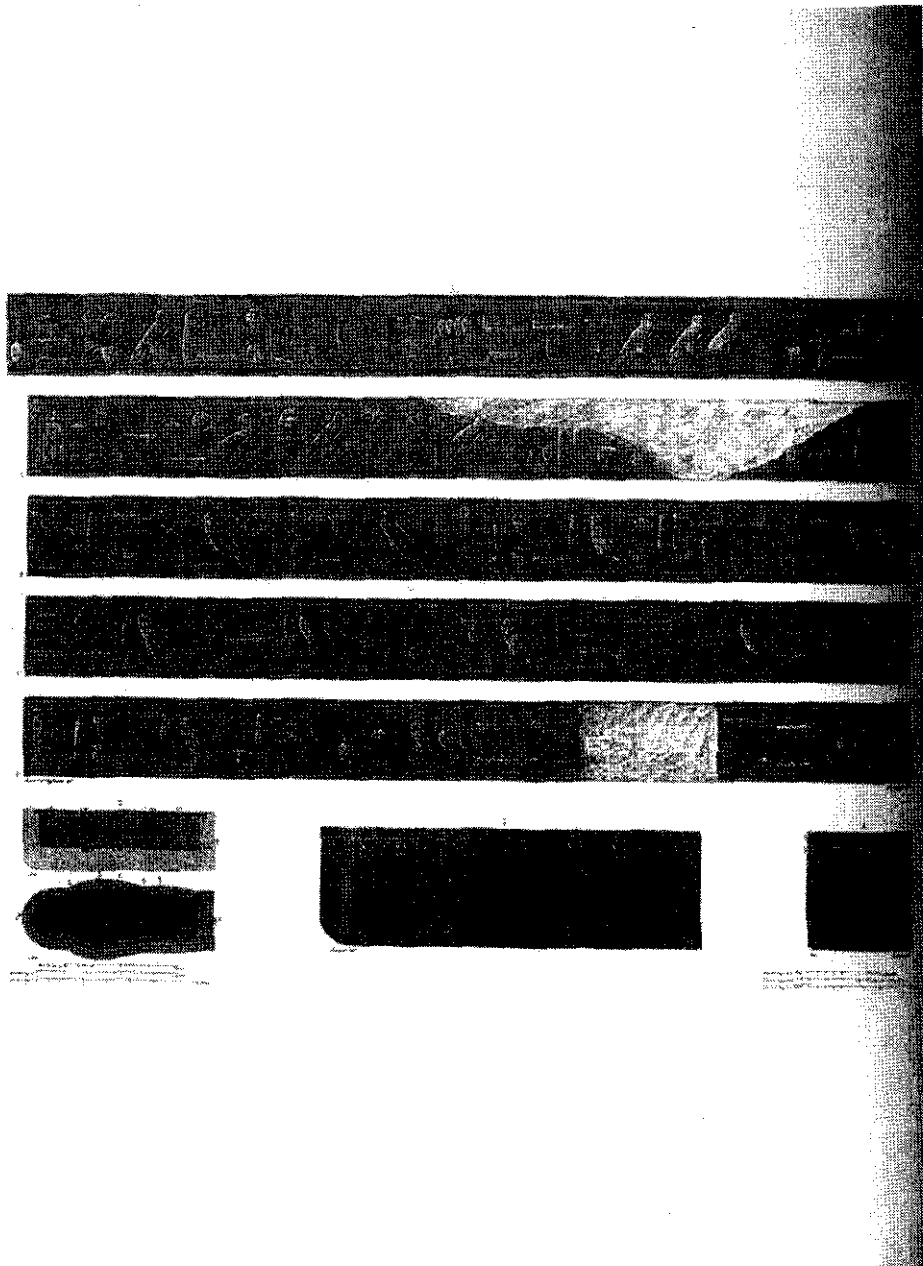


Figure 8. *Description V*, Plate 23.

Néret, Gilles, ed. *Description de l'Égypte*. Los Angeles, CA: Taschen American, LLC, 2007, A.vol.V,
Plate 23.

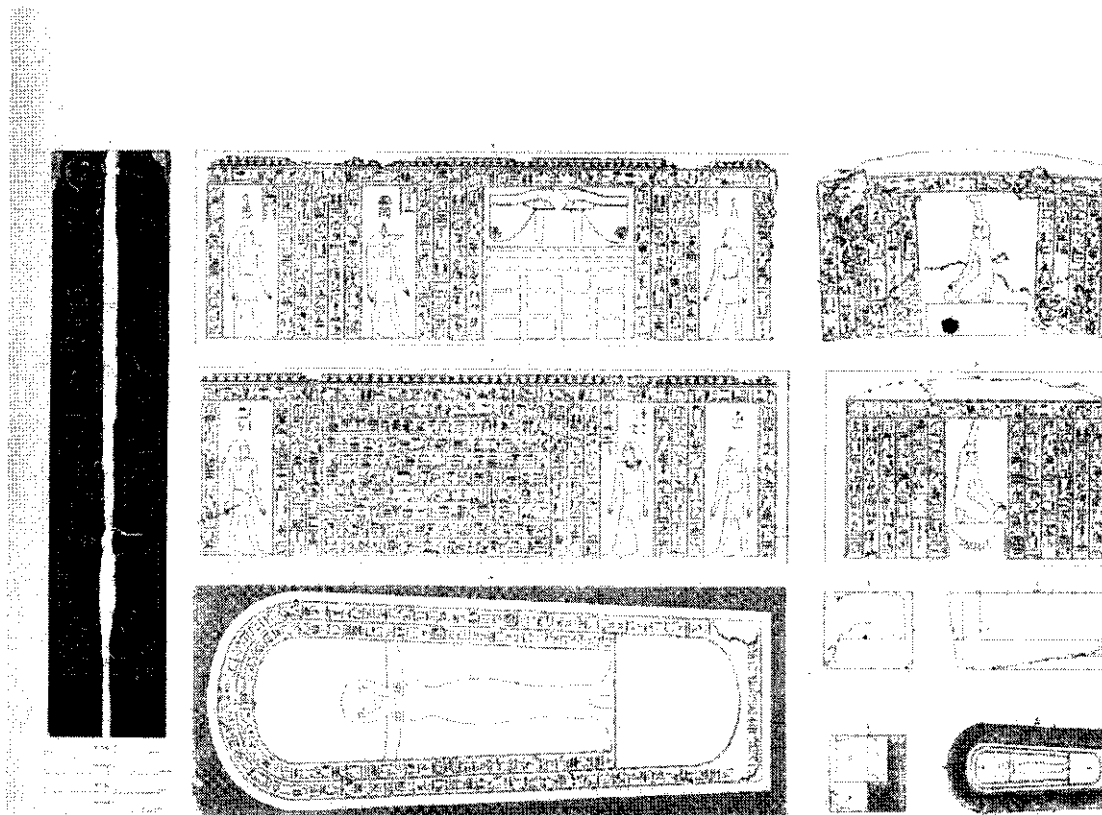
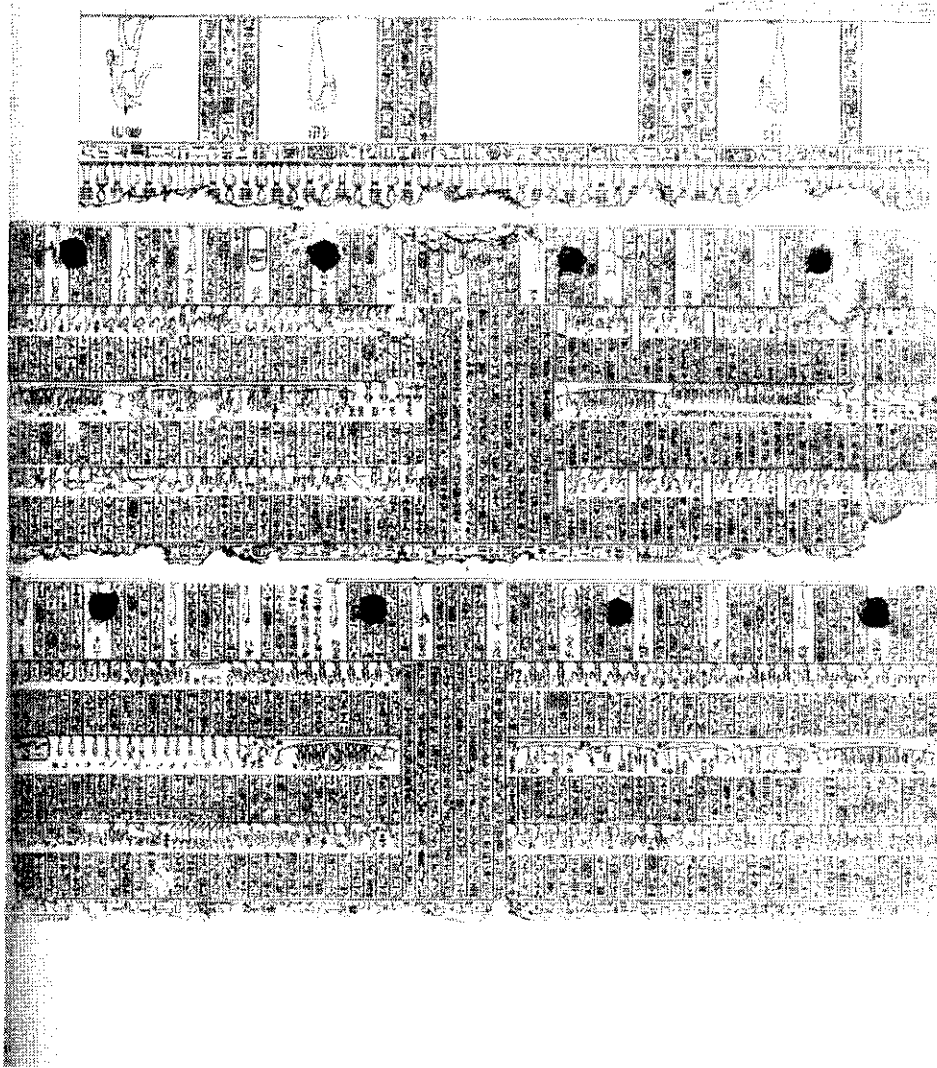


Figure 9. *Description V*, Plate 24.

Néret, Gilles, ed. *Description de l'Égypte*. Los Angeles, CA: Taschen American, LLC, 2007, A.vol.V, Plate 24.

Néret, Gilles, ed. *Description de l'Égypte*. Los Angeles, CA: Taschen American, LLC, 2007, A.vol.V,
Plate 40.

Figure 10. *Description V*, Plate 40.



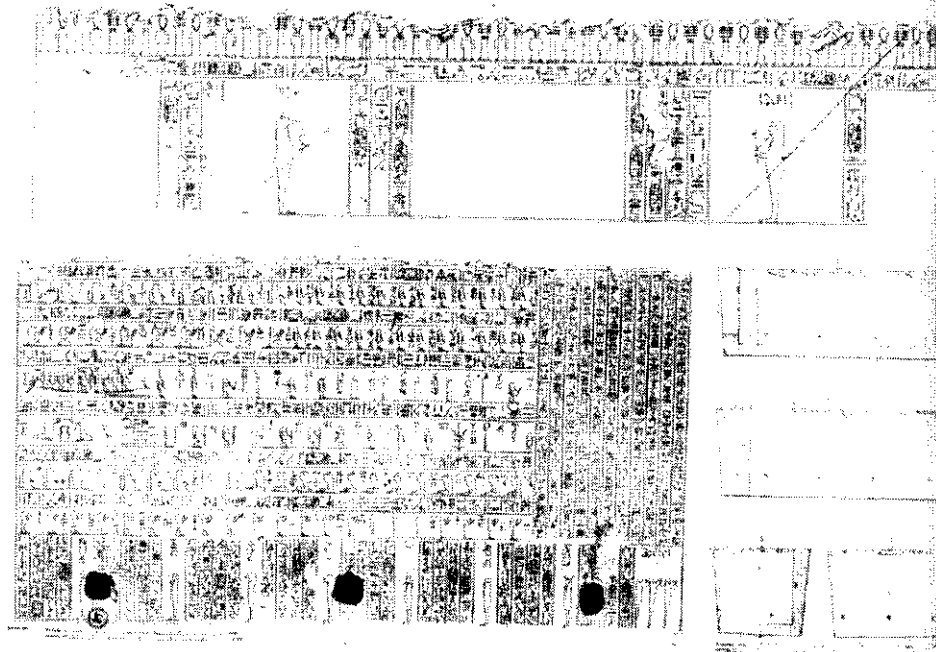


Figure 11. *Description V*, Plate 41.

Néret, Gilles, ed. *Description de l'Égypte*. Los Angeles, CA: Taschen American, LLC, 2007, A.vol.V, Plate 41.

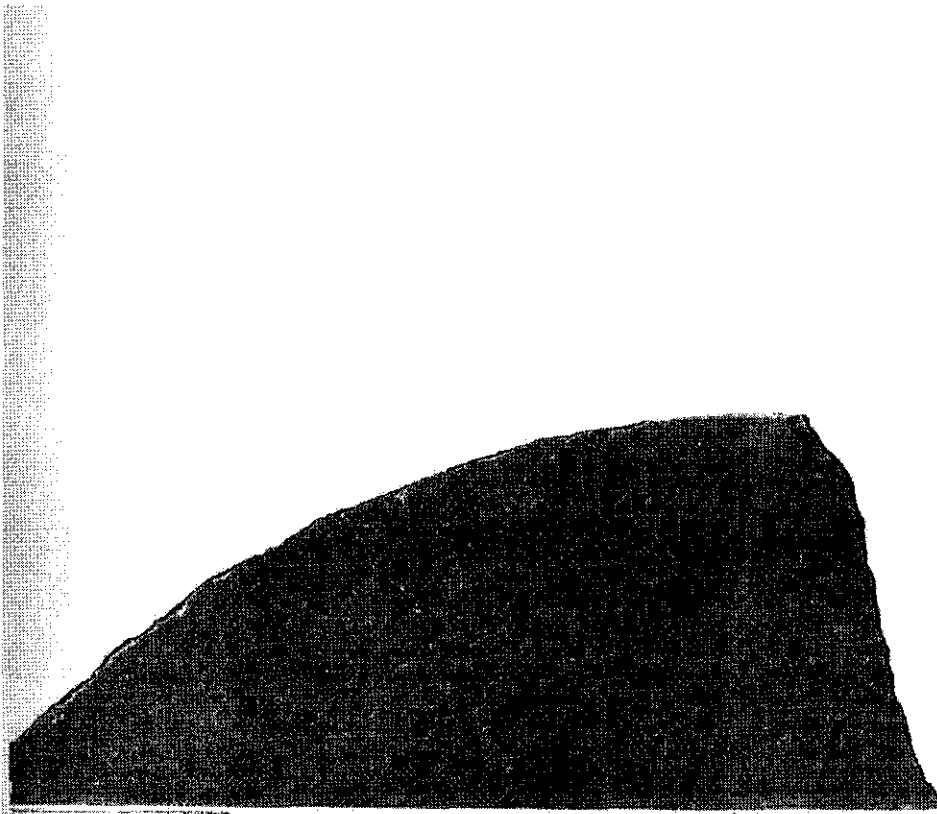


Figure 12. *Description V*, Plate 52.

Néret, Gilles, ed. *Description de l'Égypte*. Los Angeles, CA: Taschen American, LLC, 2007, A.vol.V, Plate 52.

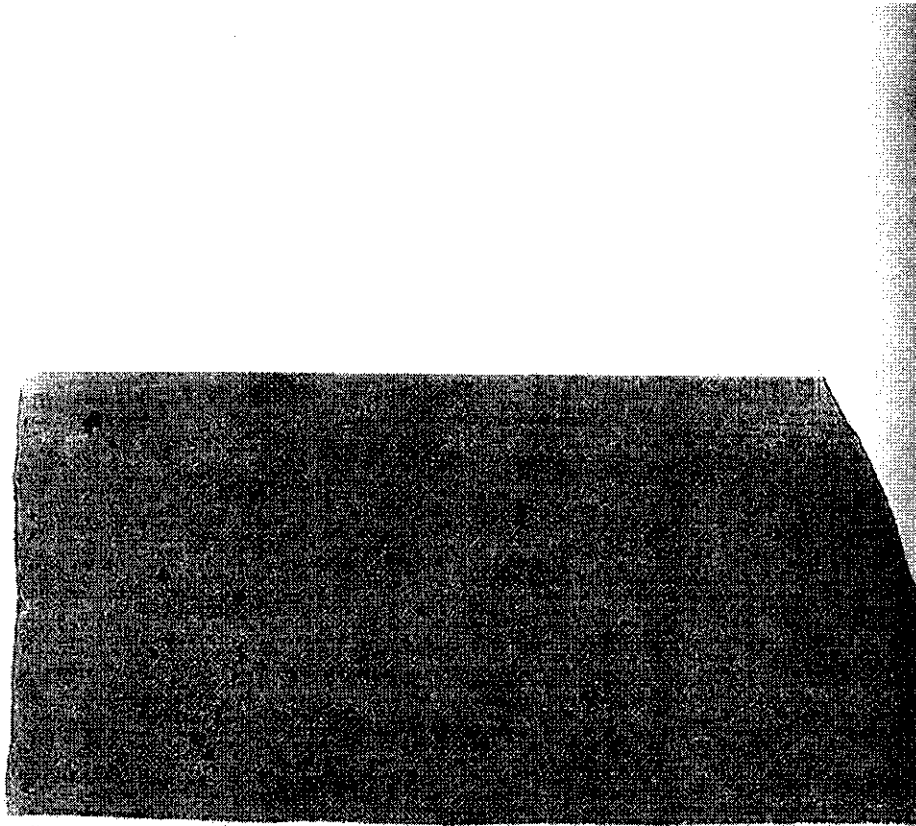


Figure 13. *Description V*, Plate 53.

Néret, Gilles, ed. *Description de l'Égypte*. Los Angeles, CA: Taschen American, LLC, 2007, A.vol.V,
Plate 53.

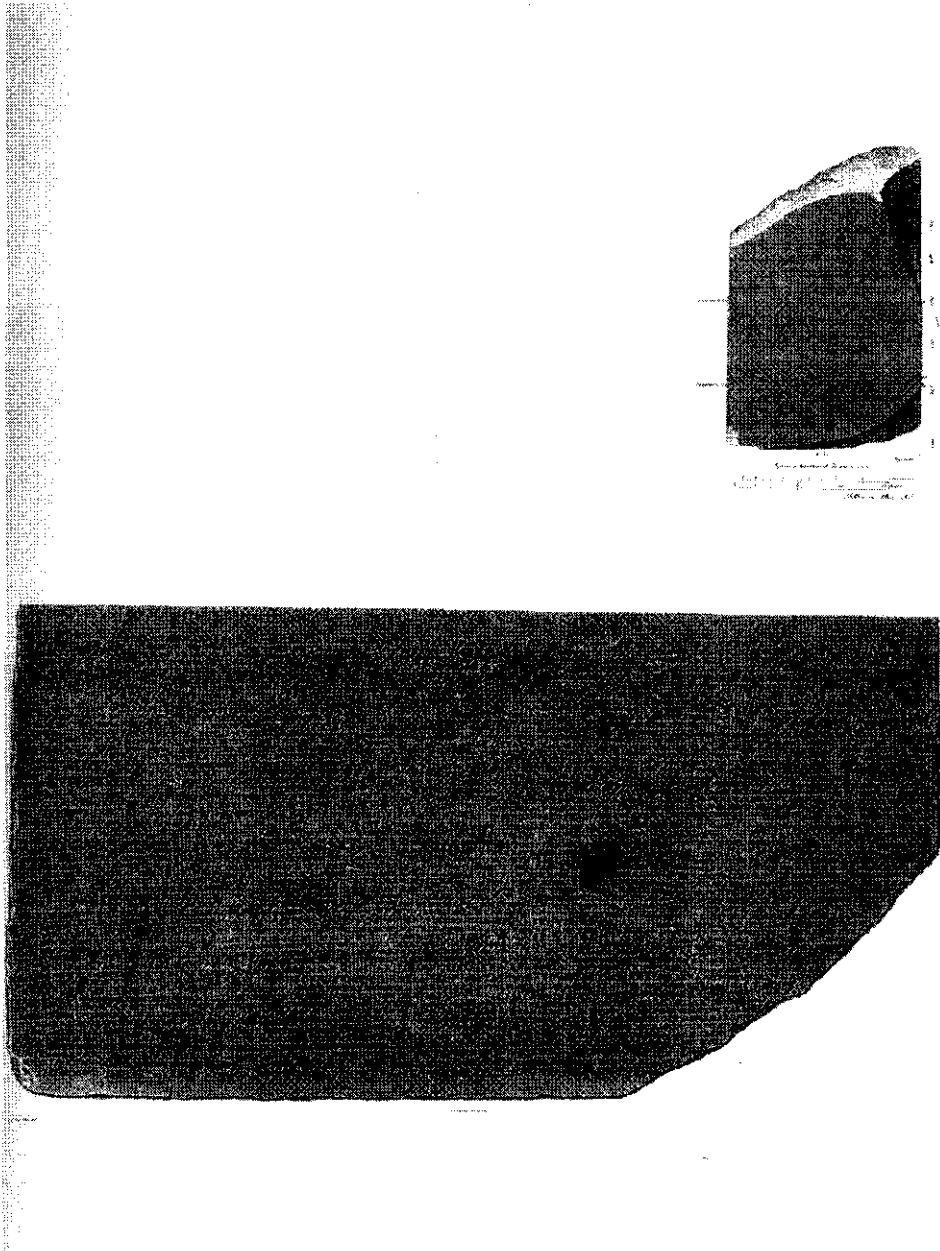
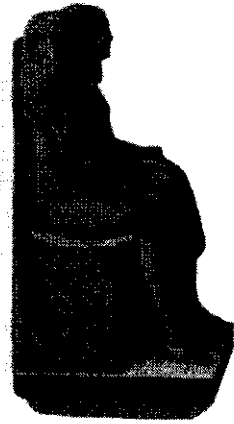


Figure 14. *Description V*, Plate 54.

Néret, Gilles, ed. *Description de l'Égypte*. Los Angeles, CA: Taschen American, LLC, 2007, A.vol.V, Plate 54.



GRUPE EN BASALTE.

Figure 15. *Description V*, Plate 64.

Gillispie, Charles C. and Michel Dewachter, eds. *The Monuments of Ancient Egypt: As Commissioned by Napoleon Bonaparte*. Old Saybrook, CT: Konecky and Konecky, 1987, Plate 64.



Figure 16. Kneeling Statue of Nakhthorheb, Louvre A 94.

Ziegler, Christiane, et al. *The Louvre: Egyptian Antiquities*. London: Scala Books, 1990, 76.



Figure 17. Seated Statue of Sekhmet, Louvre A 2.

Ziegler, Christiane, et al. *The Louvre: Egyptian Antiquities*. London: Scala Books, 1990, 96.

État des Monumens trouvés en plusieurs lieux de l'Égypte en l'année 1799

<i>Énumération des Monumens</i>	<i>Noms des propriétaires</i>	<i>Lieu où se trouvent les Monumens</i>
1. Des fragments d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui ont été trouvés dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
2. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
3. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
4. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
5. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
6. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
7. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
8. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
9. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
10. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
11. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
12. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
13. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
14. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
15. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
16. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
17. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
18. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
19. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire
20. Un fragment d'obélisque de Thèbes, qui a été trouvé dans le temple d'Ammon	Le Gouvernement	Le Caire

Georges Antiquaire de l'École des Beaux-Arts

Figure 18. Fourier's List of Objects.

Bierbrier, Morris L. "The Acquisition by the British Museum of Antiquities Discovered During the French Invasion of Egypt," In *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities: A Tribute to T.G.H. James*, Edited by W.V. Davies, 111-113. London, British Museum Press, 1999, Plate 26.

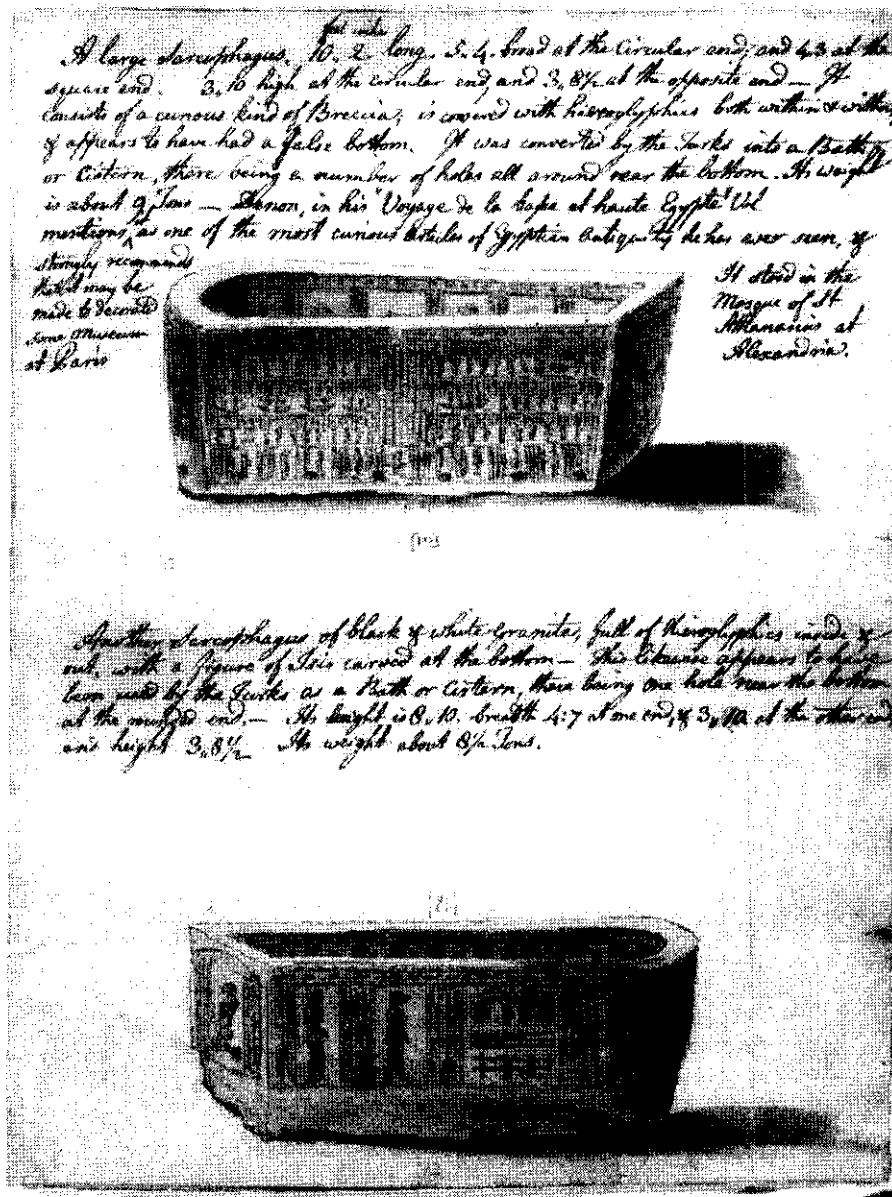


Figure 19. Drawings and notes of British Acquisitions, EA 10 & EA 23.

Bierbrier, Morris L. "The Acquisition by the British Museum of Antiquities Discovered During the French Invasion of Egypt," In *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities: A Tribute to T.G.H. James*, Edited by W.V. Davies, 111-113. London, British Museum Press, 1999, Plate 27.

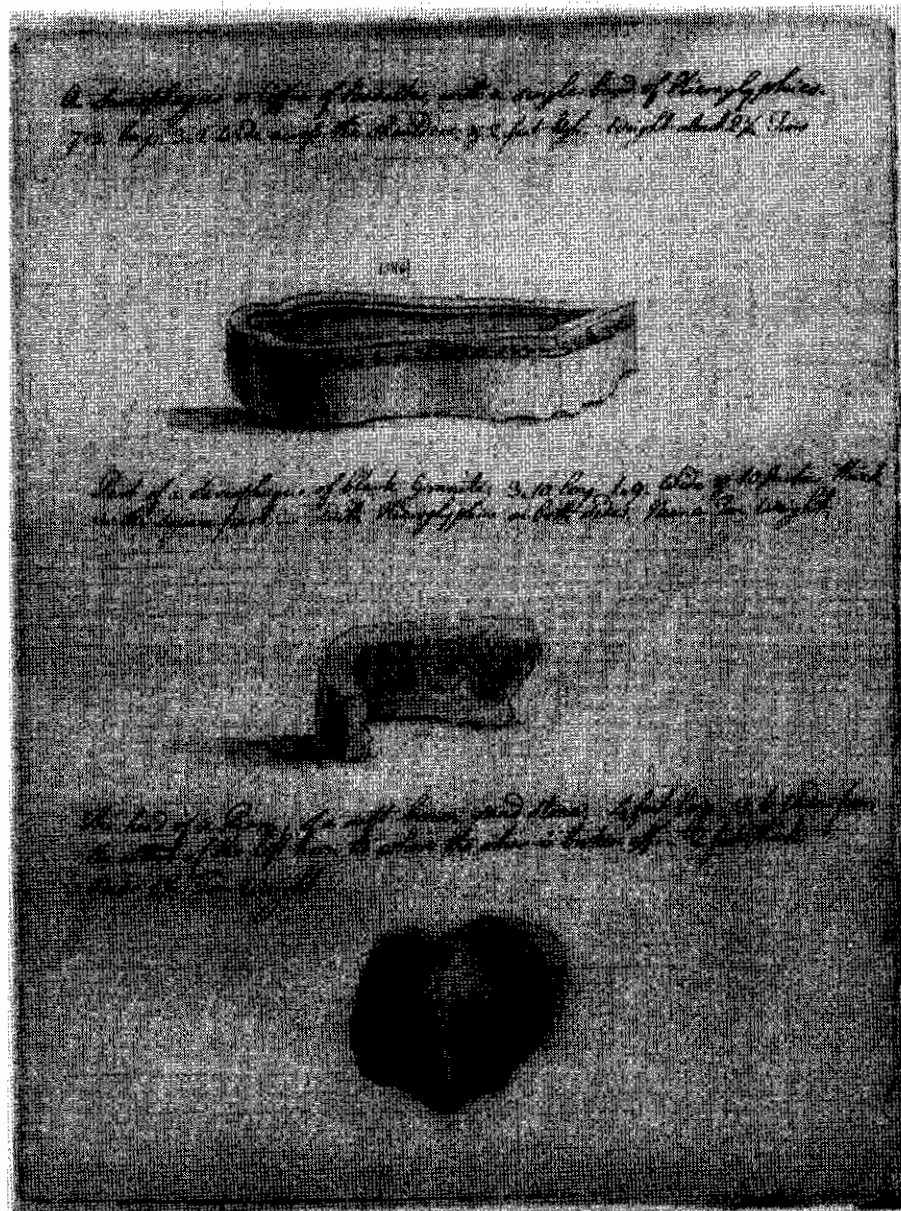


Figure 20. Drawings and notes of British Acquisitions, EA 86, EA 66, & EA 14.

Bierbrier, Morris L. "The Acquisition by the British Museum of Antiquities Discovered During the French Invasion of Egypt," In *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities: A Tribute to T.G.H. James*, Edited by W.V. Davies, 111-113. London, British Museum Press, 1999, Plate 28.



Figure 21. Drawings and notes of British Acquisitions, EA 9, EA 88, EA 523/524, EA 25, EA 81/137.

Bierbrier, Morris L. "The Acquisition by the British Museum of Antiquities Discovered During the French Invasion of Egypt," In *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities: A Tribute to T.G.H. James*, Edited by W.V. Davies, 111-113. London, British Museum Press, 1999, Plate 29.

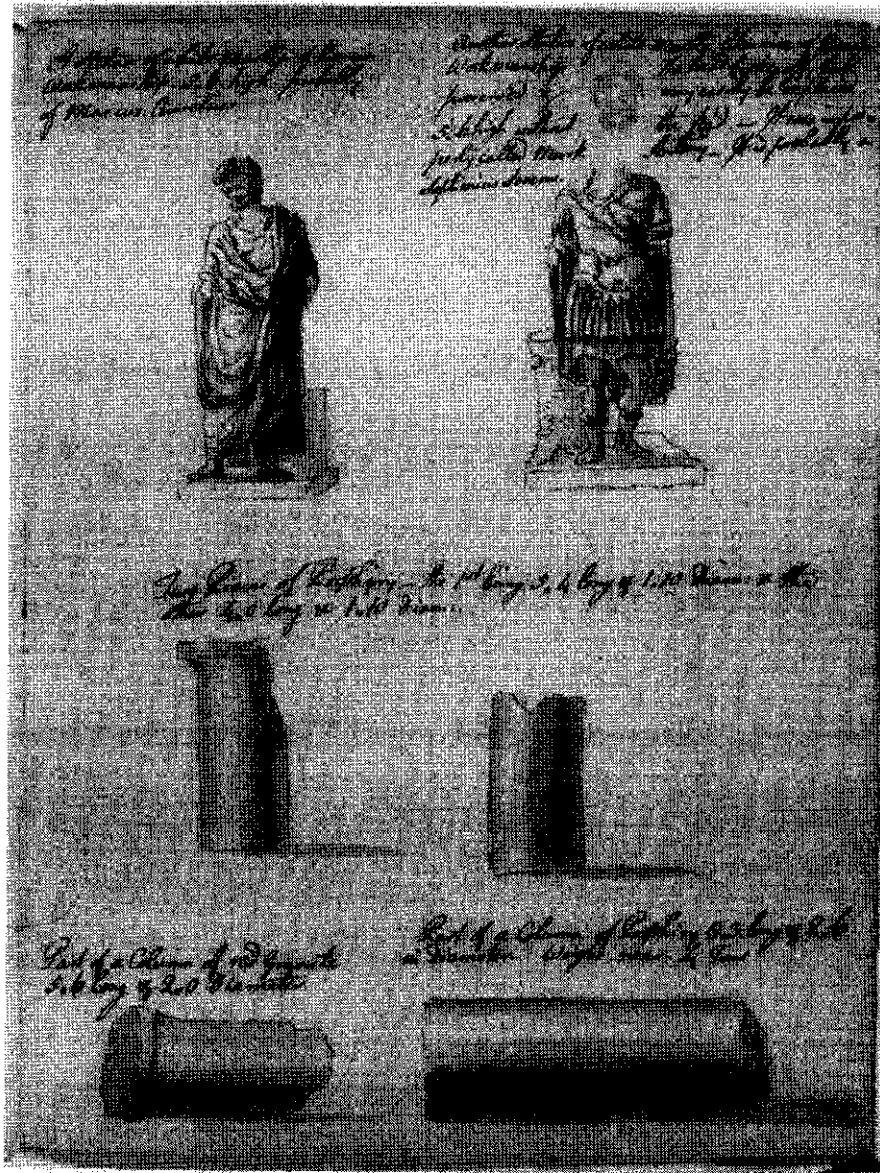


Figure 22. Drawings and notes of British Acquisitions, GRA 1802.7-10.1-2, EA 536, GRA 1802.7-10.3.

Bierbrier, Morris L. "The Acquisition by the British Museum of Antiquities Discovered During the French Invasion of Egypt," In *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities: A Tribute to T.G.H. James*, Edited by W.V. Davies, 111-113. London, British Museum Press, 1999, Plate 30.

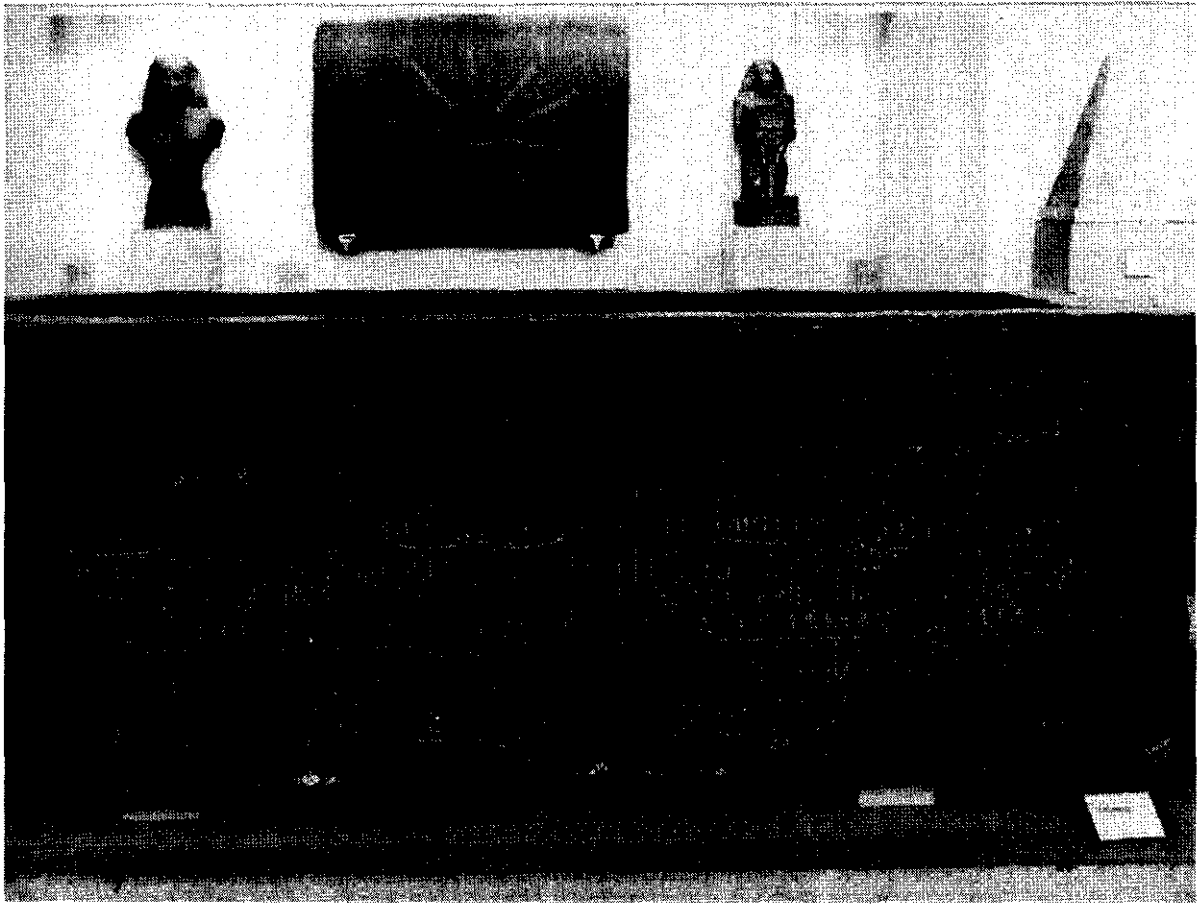


Figure 23. Sarcophagus of Nectanebo II, British Museum, EA 10.

Reeves, Nicholas. *Ancient Egypt: The Great Discoveries: A Year-by-Year Chronicle*.
London: Thames and Hudson, 2000, 17.

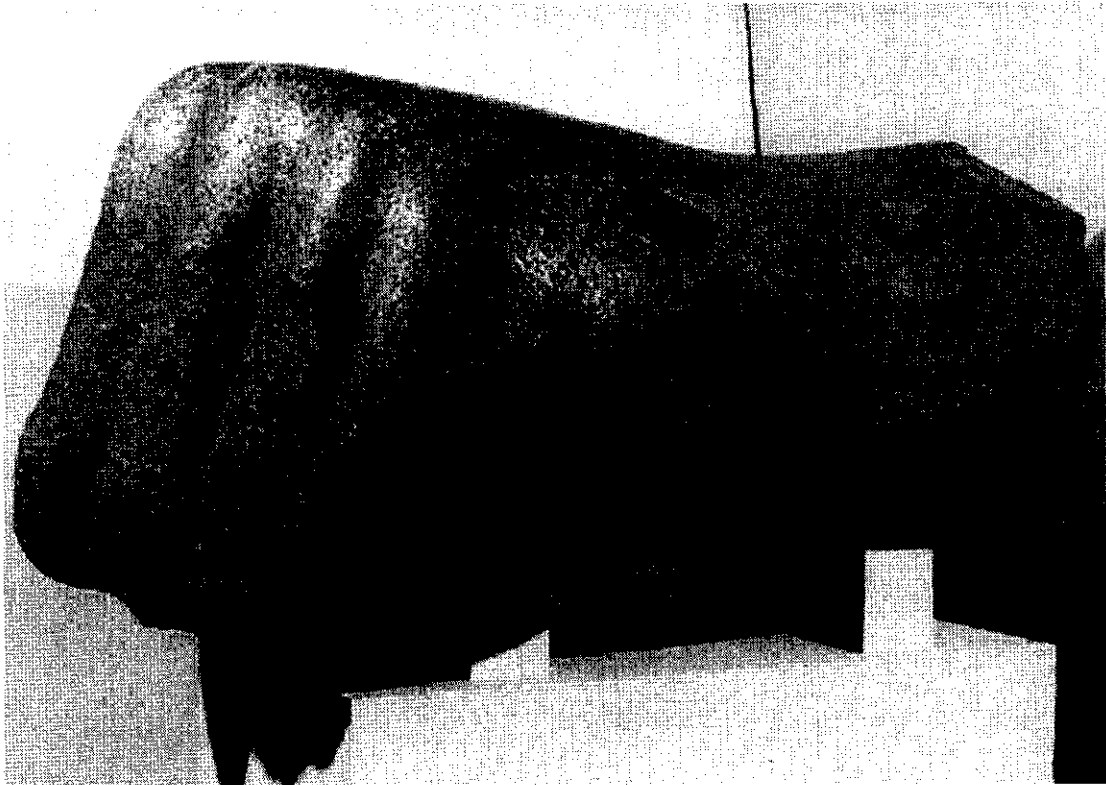


Figure 24. Colossal Fist, British Museum, EA 9.

Moser, Stephanie. *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006, Figure 3.4.

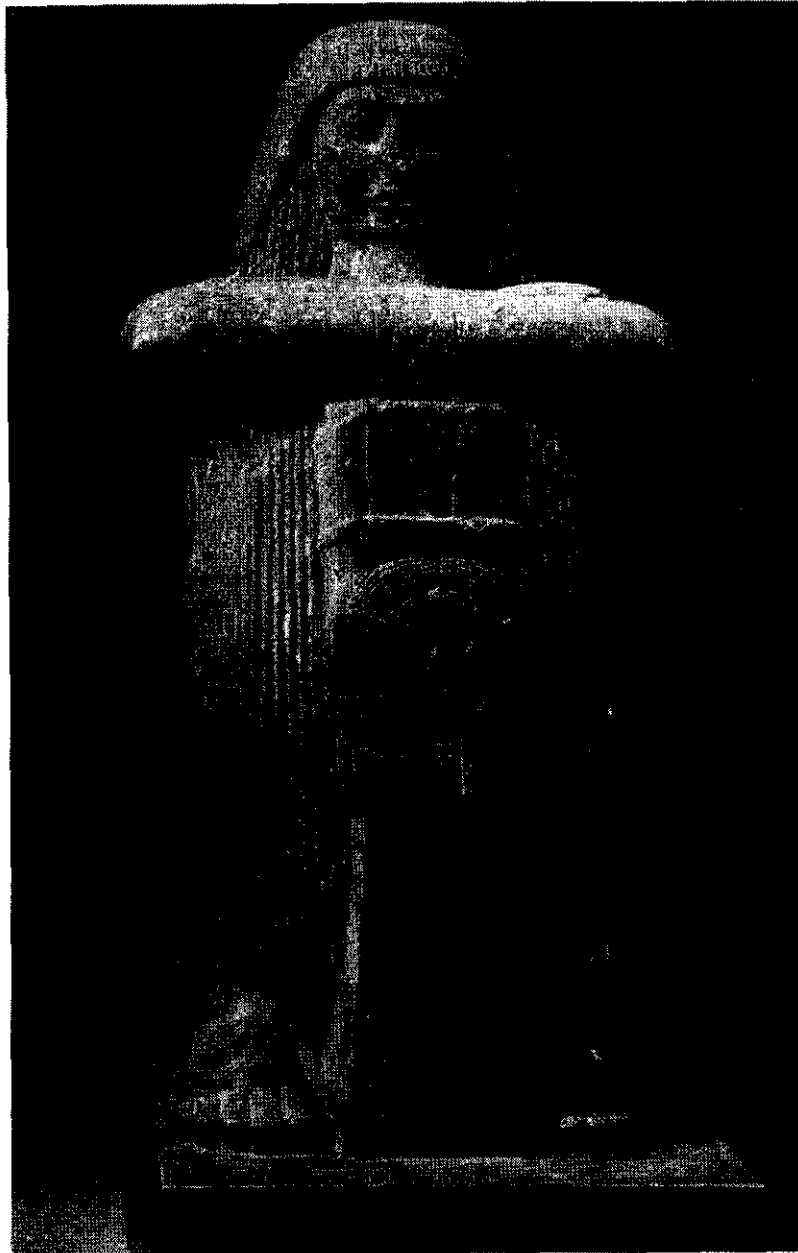


Figure 25. Statue of Roy, British Museum, EA 81.

Moser, Stephanie. *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006, Figure 3.5.

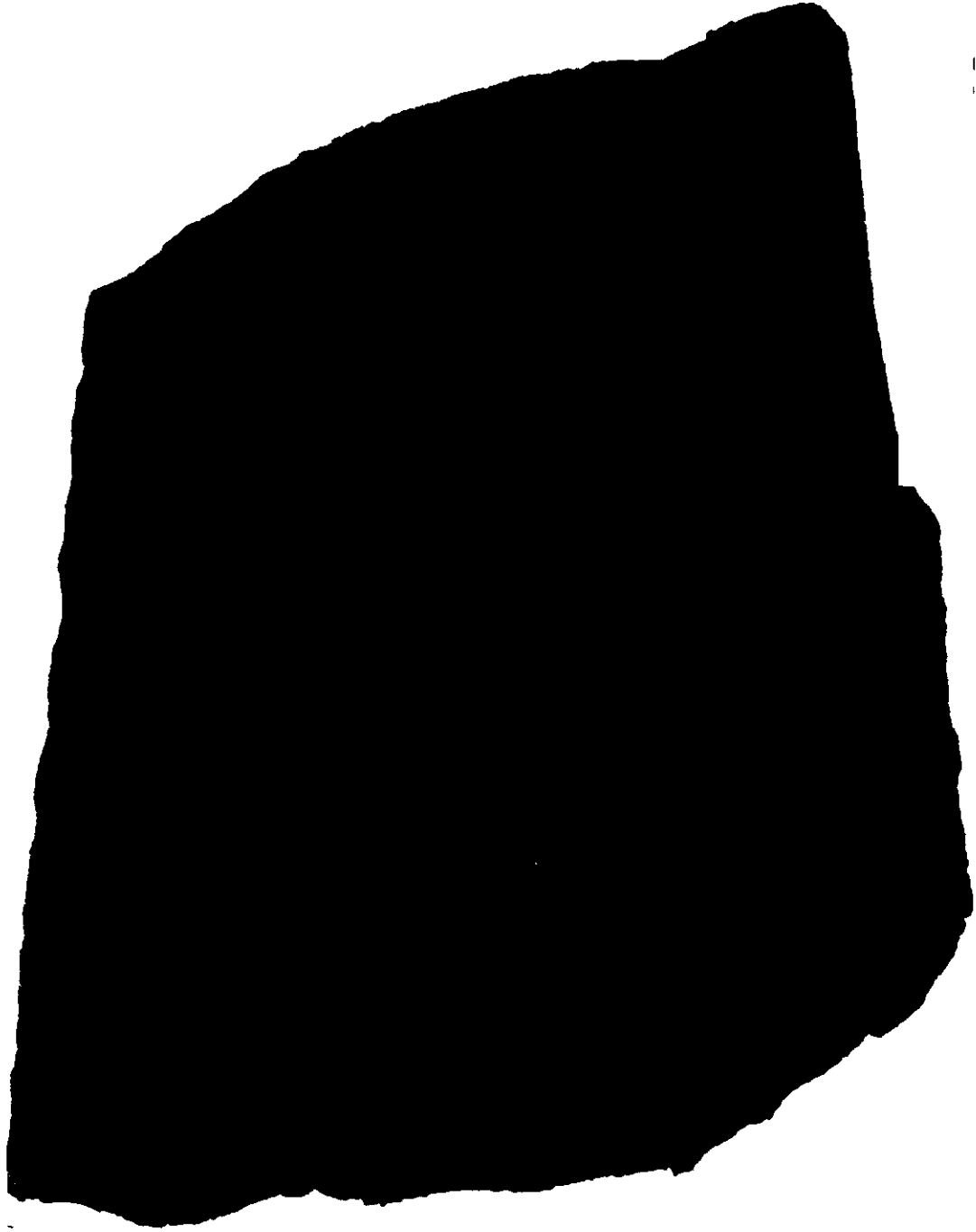


Figure 26. The Rosetta Stone, British Museum, EA 24.

Reeves, Nicholas. *Ancient Egypt: The Great Discoveries: A Year-by-Year Chronicle*.
London: Thames and Hudson, 2000, 15.



Figure 27. Complete Sekhmet Statue, British Museum, EA 88.

Moser, Stephanie. *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006, Figure 3.1.

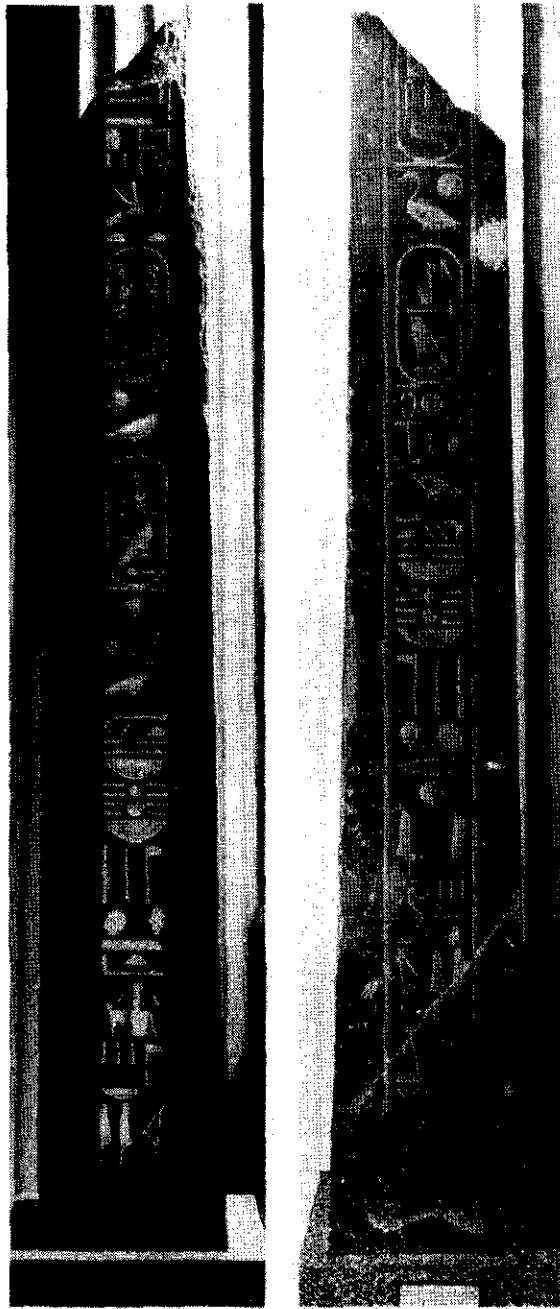


Figure 28. Two Obelisks of Nectanebo II, British Museum, EA 523-524.

Moser, Stephanie. *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006, Figure 3.2a and 3.2b.

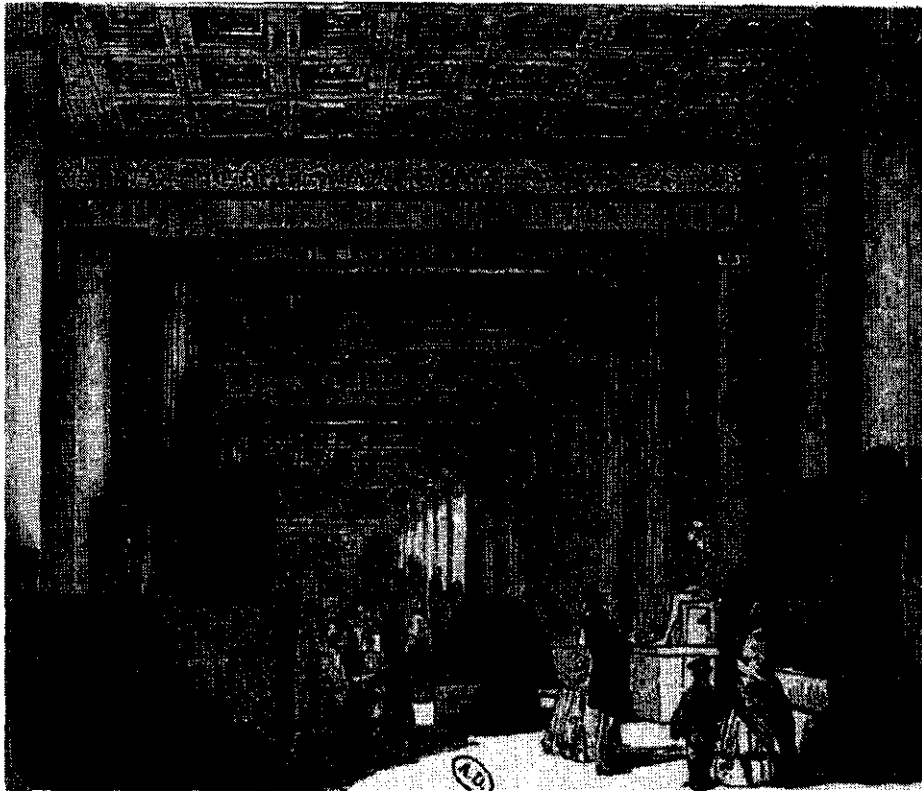


Figure 29. *The Large Egyptian Gallery in the British Museum, 1854.*

Beaucour, F. Y. Laissus, and C. Orgogozo. *The Discovery of Egypt*. Translated by Bambi Ballard.
Paris: Flammarion, 1990, 225.

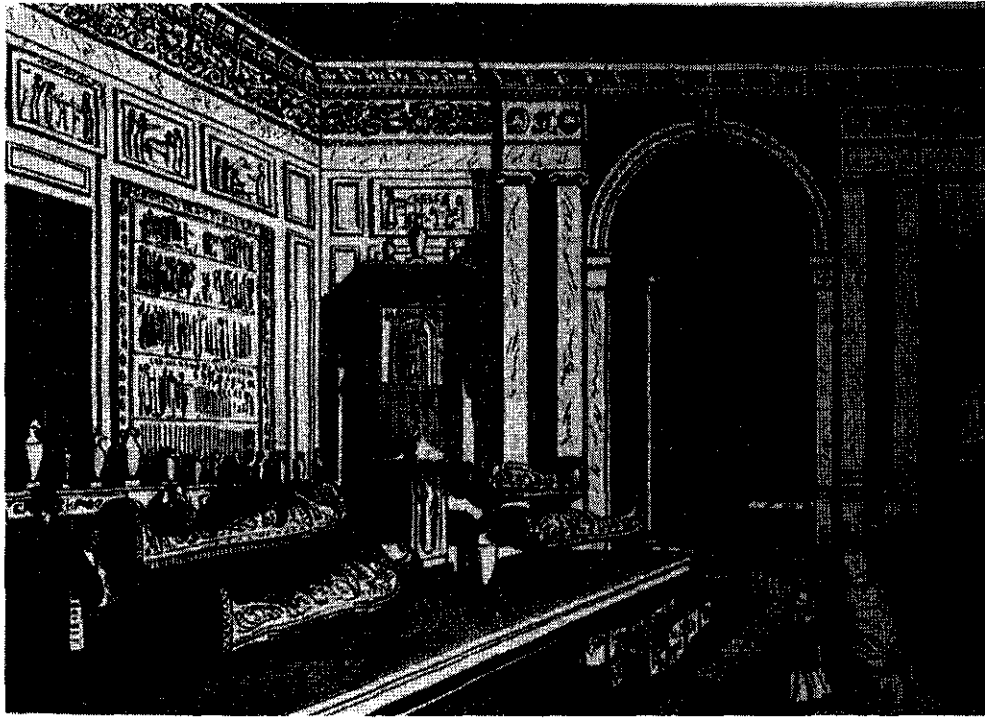


Figure 30. A. Reagis. *Egyptian Room in the Musée Charles X, 1863.*

Beaucour, F. Y. Laissus, and C. Orgogozo. *The Discovery of Egypt.* Translated by Bambi Ballard.
Paris: Flammarion, 1990, 225.



Figure 31. M. Nicolosino. *A Hall in the Egyptian Museum in Turin.*

Beaucour, F. Y. Laissus, and C. Orgogozo. *The Discovery of Egypt.* Translated by Bambi Ballard.
Paris: Flammarion, 1990, 226.