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Elizabeth L. Oliver
University of South Florida

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Vision and Disease in the Napoleonic *Description de l'Egypte* (1809-1828): The
Constraints of French Intellectual Imperialism and the Roots of Egyptian
Self-Definition

by

Elizabeth L. Oliver

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Art and Art History
College of Visual and Performing Arts
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Elisabeth Fraser, Ph.D.
Helena Szepe, Ph.D.
Sheramy Bundrick, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the travel conventions manifest in the engravings of the thirty-volume *Description de l’Egypte* produced as a result of the Napoleonic campaign to Egypt in 1798 and published between 1809 and 1828. The first chapter examines the discourse established on Egypt in travelogues throughout the eighteenth century prior to the invasion of the country. I argue that the perceptions developed around the country did not stem from actual experience, but from political and economic motivations that cast Egypt in a light favorable for occupation.

I examine how this perception was challenged during the collapse of distance between the French and Egyptians in the process of colonial encounter. Drawing upon medical records and proclamations of the French medical team in Egypt, I examine a specific epidemic known as ophthalmia that led to swollen, irritated eyes and eventual blindness throughout the French army in Egypt. While it is actually caused by Chlamydia, in every appearance it makes in French medical records throughout the occupation, the disease was blamed on the climate, sunlight, and air specific to the land of Egypt. As a result, I argue that the *Description’s* hyper-real contrasts of light and dark and amplified decay in its representations of the monuments residing in Egypt’s ravaging

climate are determined by the manner vision itself was altered by the epidemic of ophthalmia.

I then contend that there exists a metaphorical parallel between the decaying pharaonic monuments in the *Description* and the perceived decay of modern Egyptian society that are linked by misconceptions of Egypt's climate. I conclude that the effect of Egypt's climate believed to destroy both physical monuments and physiological disposition was used as evidence to support the larger agenda of French imperialism that justified colonization of Egypt.

Lastly, this study examines how Egyptians counteracted the negative discourse of their race by appropriating symbols of their country used in European representations and altering them to develop a national identity. Tracing the time period from French occupation through British colonization, Egyptians were able to galvanize resistance while still working within the confines of colonial control.

INTRODUCTION

When the first installments of the *Description de l’Égypte*¹ appeared to the French public in 1809, its significance as the single most comprehensive study ever devoted to Egypt needed no introduction. The work itself, a twenty-three volume collection² of the antiquity, natural history, and modern state of Egypt, had been anticipated for almost a decade since its conception during the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt from 1798 to 1801. It was not long after receiving word of this massive project’s undertaking in Egypt that patrons were already requesting their own copies, and bookcases in the form of Egyptian temples were being custom designed to store the numerous volumes.

Ten volumes of the twenty-three volume work are grand folios containing approximately 835 copper engravings. Five of these ten volumes are devoted to Egypt’s antiquity, two to its modern state, and three to its natural history. The remaining *grand-aigle* volumes (about double the size of a quarto volume) are a literary commentary of Egypt that, while not always coinciding directly with the engravings, similarly focus around these three categories. Although the first installment of the *Description* appeared to the public in 1809, the sheer immensity of the work would cause its publication to continue well past the reign of Napoleon and into the Bourbon Restoration, when it was finally completed in 1828.

¹ *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 sa Majesté l’Empereur Napoléon le Grand* is the complete, formal title of this work.

² This number can vary depending upon original ownership, however, for the folios were bought and bound depending on the buyers’ own specifications.

For all of the *Description*'s significance, however, there has been considerably little scholarship devoted to it, and hardly any involving a close analysis of its plates.³ Art historians Todd Porterfield and Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby both briefly reference the *Description* in their discussion of the manner in which its classificatory control mimics the military control for which France was striving in its imperial agenda.⁴ Edward Said, too, begins his inaugural *Orientalism* with the *Description de l'Égypte* for the large role it played in creating a systematic classification of the Orient that shaped future colonial projects.⁵ While the *Description* is heralded for initiating modern Egyptology with its empirical and classificatory representations of Egypt, such a view has caused the *Description* to be essentialized and frozen, not allowing for specificities or differences particular to it alone to be revealed.⁶ This thesis is an attempt to put focus back onto the engravings within the *Description* through a close visual analysis and critical study of its plates selected from the volumes of Egypt's antiquity and modern state.

³ Studies and surveys include CC. Gillispie and Michel Dewatcher, eds., "Historical Introduction" and "The Egyptian Collections Formed During the Egyptian Expedition", in *Monuments of Egypt: The Napoleonic Edition. The Complete Archeological Plates from La Description de l'Égypte* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1987), 1-39; Michael W. Albin, "Napoleon's *Description de l'Égypte*: Problems of Corporate Authorship," *Publishing History* 8 (1980): 65-85; Robert Anderson and Ibrahim Fawzy, eds., *Egypt Revealed: Scenes from Napoleon's Description de l'Égypte* (Cairo, 1987); B. Brier, "Napoleon in Egypt: the general's search for glory led to the birth of Egyptology," *Archeology* 52, no. 3 (May/June 1999): 44-50; and Edmund Burke III, "Egypt in the *Description de l'Égypte*," unpublished paper presented at the meeting of the Middle East Studies Association, Phoenix (November 1994). While not focusing entirely on the *Description*, both Peter A Clayton, *The Rediscovery of Ancient Egypt: Artists and Travellers in the 19th century* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1982) and Brian M. Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists, and Archeologists in Egypt* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1975), give considerable attention to the work's significance.

⁴ Todd Porterfield, "Paintings of the Egyptian Campaign," in *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism, 1798-1836* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), and Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, "Plague: Egypt-Syria: "Gros's *Bonaparte visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa, 1804*," in *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).

⁵ *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978). See also Bruce Trigger, *A History of Archeological Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁶ See F. Gladstone Bratton, *A History of Egyptian Archeology* (London: Robert Hale, 1967).

There are three themes to achieve in writing this paper. The first is a synthesis between historical contrivance and early nineteenth-century political fact,⁷ which are the two worlds in which the *Description*, as well as all prior travelogues of Egypt, are caught. This becomes most evident when one considers that for all of its attention to detail from perspective views, elevations, and plans of pharaonic monuments, to the close observation of the dress, *mœurs*, living conditions, and working methods of the modern state of Egypt, the *Description* is almost entirely devoid of any consideration of Egypt's medieval period. An entire era from the end of Roman occupation in Egypt until Napoleon's arrival there some 1300 years later is either absent or fleetingly conflated with Egypt's modern state. The *Description* did not recount Egypt's history to the European audience, it recreated it.

Such an observation is closely linked to the next major theme: the ideological functions of the Greco-Roman past and its relation to revolutionary and imperial propaganda in representations of Egypt. Shifting trends in the debate of the classical past – a debate closely linked with revolutionary ideology – invariably affected the way ancient Egypt was seen and represented by the European mind. It also explains why Egypt's medieval period is void from the *Description*. Unlike ancient Egypt that served as a model of civil order, and Roman occupied Egypt that served as model for imperialism, the medieval period held no significance to France's post-revolutionary or imperial cause.

⁷ Said, *Orientalism*.

Finally, with a more specifically post-colonial approach, a balance needs to be struck between both European and Egyptian⁸ knowledge and perceptions of each other. In the hopes of avoiding a purely Eurocentric perspective on a comprehensive work that deals so much with a country considered separate from the West, I will make an effort to incorporate Egyptians into the debate of the role of their own history and culture.

Of particular methodological importance is Foucault's notion of discourse, referring to a self-contained body of social and political thoughts and beliefs. A discourse possesses no universal truths, but is instead based on power relations.⁹ As colonialism constitutes the power relations between empire and its subject, applying Foucault's notion of discourse to a postcolonial study is in no way original and it must be acknowledged that Foucault's theory has had a flattening effect on our visualization of history by creating a tendency to view historical objects and the modes of thought that produced them as repetitive links in a long chain of discourse. The originality of this thesis lies in locating the *Description's* production within the specificities of the Napoleonic expedition. Exploring the particular historic, geographic, and political perspectives of the *Description* in the seemingly homogenous hegemonic blanket leads to a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of Foucault's concept as applied to the West and its "other."

Closely associated to discourse is the notion of hegemony. It was originally used in a Marxist sense by the philosopher Antonio Gramsci as a means to explain the manner

⁸ Considering that it was not until after World War I that Egypt formed a national identity under which all its diverse inhabitants could be termed by the common name "Egyptian," for the time being, "Egyptian" is being used very loosely to encompass a wide range of ethnic groups in the region of Egypt, including Arabs, Moors, and all the ethnicities that comprised the Mamelukes, among others.

⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

in which the ruling classes of capitalist societies impose their ideology on the masses.¹⁰

Hegemony institutionalizes itself through texts, media, education and popular culture to the point that we no longer realize the extent of our indoctrination.

Both discourse and hegemony influence Said's concept of Orientalism as they play an equal part in how the West has dominated and maintained authority over the Orient. While I align this thesis with the notion that Orientalism is, in Said's terms, an internally cohesive system of thought, I depart from him on one major point. In his conception of Orientalism, he posits that there exists a 'real' and 'authentic' Orient outside of European thought. James Clifford, however, shows this as an impossibility. Identity is not essential, reductive, or pure. It exists only as something interconnected in and created from artificial judgments of value and worth, and therefore always remains "inauthentic" to varying degrees.¹¹ Even in the final chapter of this thesis that explores Egyptians' own forms of resistance and identity, I do not posit their attempts of self-definition to be any more authentic than those identities of Egypt posited by the *Description* itself. They were merely working within an alternate, yet theoretically similar discourse that played a powerful role in the perception of themselves.

Lastly in this list of methodology, something must be said of Homi Bhabha's notion of ambivalence. According to Bhabha, Orientalism remains caught between a constant state of attraction and repulsion, for this is what sustains its existence and determines the success of colonial power because the stereotype of 'the other' can never be resolved. This implies that hegemony is not absolute and as such we should not define

¹⁰ Stuart Sim, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, 2nd ed. (New York and London: Routledge Press, 2005), 235-36.

¹¹ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

colonialism in terms of binary opposition. Rather, ambivalence allows colonialism to occur by calling into question deterministic positions of what it means to be oppressive and discriminatory. It justifies imperialism against a country that is both an attractive fantasy and an inferior object of derision.¹² The very size of the *Description* is a testament to the appeal of Egypt in the European imagination. Yet, the colonial action carried out against it under Napoleon speaks to at least some degree of repulsion, and both of these sentiments make themselves known in the work.

Egypt in the European Imagination

The enthusiasm and excitement over Egypt surrounding such a major work as the *Description* lead many to the conclusion that it was Napoleon's military campaign to Egypt that was responsible for ushering in the Egyptian revival. While this is partially true, in actuality the *Description* was built upon a strong history of Egyptomania on the European continent.¹³

Egypt, for the European mind, has existed as a place of inspiration since antiquity. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus acknowledged as early as the fifth century BC the Greek appropriation of the Egyptian religion when he stated, "Almost all the names of the gods came into Greece from Egypt. My inquiries prove that they were all derived

¹² "The Other Question: Stereotype, discrimination, and the discourse of colonialism," in *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge Press, 1994), 66-84.

¹³ James Stevens Curl's study, *Egyptomania. The Egyptian Revival: a Recurring Theme in the History of Taste* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994) is the only text that thoroughly examines Egyptomania from antiquity to present day. For studies of Egyptomania pertaining specifically to the eighteenth through twentieth century, see Richard G. Garrott, *The Egyptian Revival: Its Monuments and Meanings, 1808-1858* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Jean-Marcel Humbert and Clifford Price, *Imhotep Today: Egyptianizing Architecture* (London: UCL, Institute of Archeology, 2003); and Scott Trafton, *Egypt Land: Race and Cultural Politics of American Egyptomania, 1800-1900* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). See also the major international exhibition catalogue, *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art, 1730-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

from a foreign source, and my opinion is that Egypt furnished the greatest number.”¹⁴ In 10 BC Augustus erected the obelisk of Psammetichus II in front of the *Ara Pacis* in Rome’s Campus Martius to serve as a sundial. This action formed part of his much larger program of “Aegypto Capta,”¹⁵ or capture of Egypt, that took place twenty years early in 30 BC following the battle of Actium against Cleopatra VII and Marc Antony. Augustus paraded many of the spoils through the streets of Rome, including images of Pharaohs, the Nile, and an effigy to Cleopatra. By AD 118 colonized Egypt had become so popular in the Roman world that the design for Emperor Hadrian’s villa in Tivoli flourished with Egyptianizing motifs of the Nile.¹⁶

In the Renaissance, hieroglyphs had come to serve as a common symbol of wisdom due to their indecipherability.¹⁷ One of many Renaissance cultural objects to adapt Egyptian forms, the mysterious *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* of 1499, contains numerous visual references to hieroglyphs and two obelisks: one rests on the back of a fancily clad elephant, and the other atop the professed Mausoleum of Halicarnassus.¹⁸ Bernini later borrowed the elephant design from the *Poliphilo*’s author, Francesco Colonna, for a sculpture in the Piazza della Minerva. But a more well-known work is his fountain of the *Quattro Fiumi* in Piazza Navona, in which the obelisk surmounts and dominates personifications of the four major rivers of the world including the Nile. Also

¹⁴ Herodotus, *Histories*, trans. George Rawlinson (New York: Everyman’s Library, 1997), II.50:149.

¹⁵ This was the legend that accompanied the commemorative coins of Egypt’s capture.

¹⁶ See Anne Rouillet, “The Egyptian and Egyptianizing Monuments of Imperial Rome,” in *Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’empire romain*, 20 (Leiden: EPRO, 1972) for a more in depth history of Egyptomania in ancient Rome.

¹⁷ Hieroglyphs were not deciphered until 1822 by Champollion. It was only with the discovery of the Rosetta Stone during Napoleon’s Egyptian campaign that this was possible.

¹⁸ A recent and comprehensive study of Egyptian antiquities in the Renaissance is Brian A. Curran *Ancient Egypt and Egyptian Antiquities in Italian Renaissance Art and Culture*, 2 vols. (Ph.D. Diss.: Princeton University, 1997).

noteworthy is that Piazza Navona had been the stadium of Domitian, and an obelisk had served as the turning point of the track.¹⁹

It seems that Egyptomania came full circle when, in 1748, fragments of the Psammetichus obelisk were unearthed from the Campus Martius more than 1700 years after it had been installed in that location by Augustus. As the popes, like Augustus, used the obelisks as symbols of authority and conquest, two previous attempts through the Church had already been made to excavate this obelisk in 1587 and 1666: the first by Pope Sixtus V, and the second by the Jesuit priest and scholar, Athanasius Kircher. Both attempts, however, ended in a disappointing failure, resulting in the obelisk's subsequent reburial. Most likely, it was the opening of the Egyptian museum in Rome the same year of 1748 that was responsible for spawning the determination to successfully excavate the Psammetichus obelisk once and for all, where it was later installed at the Piazza di Montecitorio in 1792.

Yet, just as Egypt has always existed as a place of intrigue and inspiration for the European mind, it has equally existed as a place of contradictions. In biblical history, it was at once a land of exile and slavery for the ancient Israelites and a land of safe haven and protection for the infant Jesus; in secular history, a country worthy of a civilization more ancient than that of the Greco-Roman world, yet plagued by the barbaric and savage condition of its modern inhabitants. Herodotus, for example, devoted almost two books of his *Histories* to personal observations mingled with hearsay regarding the land of Egypt and its people. His enthusiasm for this country that “possesses so many wonders” and “has such a number of works which defy description” is quickly tempered

¹⁹ I would like to thank committee member Sheramy Bundrick for this piece of information per email, April 24, 2006.

by his remark that the manners and customs of the inhabitants are so backward, “the women urinate standing up, the men sitting down.”²⁰ One can see from this passage that Bhabha’s notion of ambivalence toward ‘the Other’ did not begin in the colonial era, but has a long history on the European continent.

At the height of the Roman Empire in the second century A.D., the Greek historian Appian recounts a story that similarly shows the fickle nature of the Egyptian. After the First Triumvirate between Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus collapsed in the first-century B.C, pushing Rome further into civil war, personal rivalries flared between the generals, forcing Pompey to flee to Egypt where he hoped for the protection of his presumed longtime ally, Ptolemy XIII. Ptolemy, however, had in mind other plans for Pompey, and when Caesar finally arrived in Egypt in pursuit of the renegade general, Ptolemy was proud to present him with his head. Appian speaks of Caesar’s disbelief and disgust at the Egyptians upon seeing the head of his ex-son-in-law, and the equal confusion felt by Ptolemy when Caesar declared war on him for an action Ptolemy presumed would no doubt lead him to flee from Egypt in fear.²¹

A monument still remains in Egypt that legend claims to mark Pompey’s ill-fated relationship with Ptolemy: Pompey’s Pillar.²² This Corinthian column was made most familiar to the eighteenth-century audience through Benoît de Maillet’s 1733 *Description*

²⁰ *Histories*, II.35:138. For an overview of perceptions of Egypt by Greek historians and writers by secondary sources see Stanley M. Burnstein, “Images of Egypt in Greek Historiography,” in *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Leiden and New York, 1996), 591-604, and François Hartog, “Les Grecs Egyptologues,” in *D’un Orient l’Autre* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1991), 1:45-61.

²¹ Appian, *The Civil Wars*, trans. Horace White (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), 1:books I and II.

²² This pillar technically has nothing to do with Pompey, although it was believed to be associated with him by an eighteenth-century audience. In actuality, this pillar was part of the Temple of Serapis complex. And was built in honor of Roman emperor Diocletian in AD 291 (per conversation with Sheramy Bundrick, April 24, 2006).

de l’Egypte, in which its chic and slender shape is contrasted with the somewhat stout form and scribbled pseudo-hieroglyphs of the so-called Cleopatra’s Needle (figure 1). But perhaps more closely resembling Caesar’s own sentiments toward the Egyptians, this pillar was later appropriated for a political cartoon of 1799, in which members of the Egyptian populace siege horrified French savants atop of it, many of whom will no doubt meet a fate similar to that of Pompey (figure 2).

Despite the apparent theatricality expected from a political cartoon, the subject illustrated is nonetheless grounded in a measure of truth. The frightened savants portrayed here were members of Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt who arrived with the French army in Alexandria in the summer of 1798 (see map, figure 3). The purpose of the expedition was two-fold: to sabotage British trading routes to its prosperous colony of India, and as a side venture, to ‘free’ Egypt from the tyranny of its despotic Mameluke rulers.²³ The campaign was at first relatively successful: a major feat was won against the Mamelukes with the Battle of the Pyramids on July 21, 1798, which allowed the French to take control of Cairo just three days later. Yet the British, under the command of General Nelson, had the upper hand in the matter after it sank almost the entire French naval fleet in a surprise attack at the Battle of the Nile on August 1st.²⁴ Events only

²³ By the eighteenth century the Mamelukes had emerged as the dominant power in Egypt, with the *bey* being considered the most powerful figure of the Mameluke political system. This faction of the Ottoman world started as nothing more than slave soldiers of varying ethnicities and countries of origin throughout the empire, but after their growing numbers and increasing power in the military field they were allowed to maintain their control over Egypt so long as they continued to send tribute to Istanbul and acknowledge through lip service the power of the sultan. For a closer study of Mamelukes in Egypt see Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann, *The Mamluks in Egyptian politics and society*, Cambridge, 1998.

²⁴ Sources on the history of the expedition include J.C. Herold, *Bonaparte in Egypt* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); Henry Laurens, *L’Expédition d’Egypte, 1798-1801* (France: Points Histoire, 1997); Brian Lavary, *Nelson and the Nile: the naval war against Napoleon, 1798* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998); and Jean-Joël Brégeon, *L’Egypte française au jour le jour 1798-1801* (Paris: Perrin, 2003).

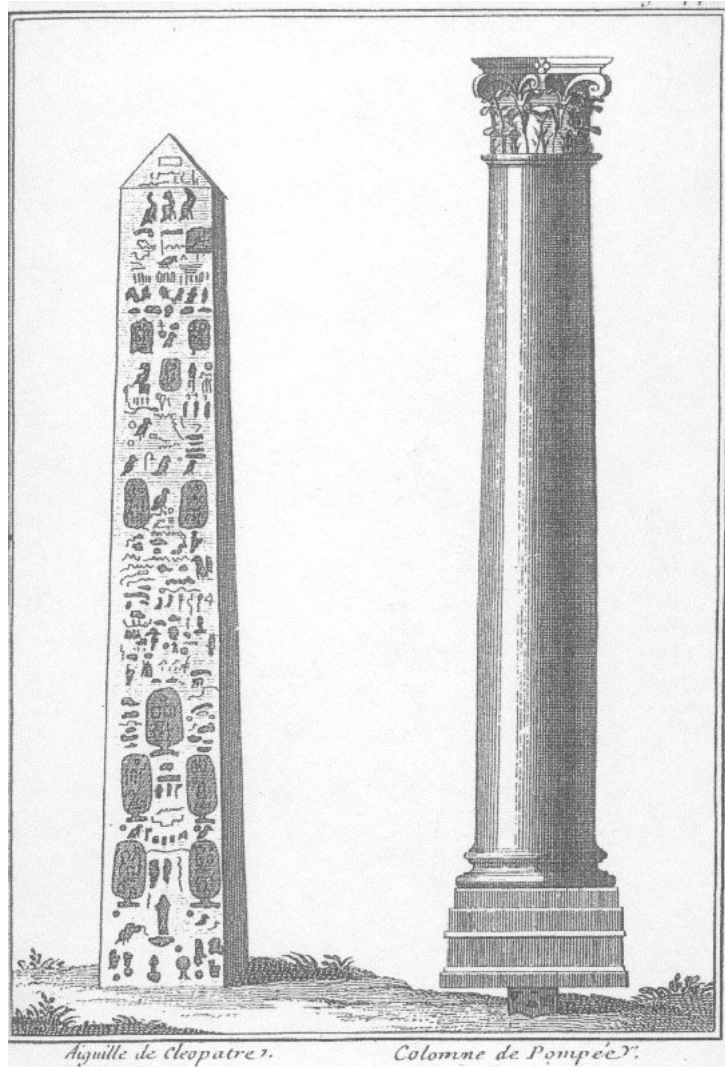


Figure 1. Benoît de Maillet, “Cleopatra’s Needle and Pompey’s Pillar in Alexandria,” from *Description de l’Egypte*, Paris, 1735.

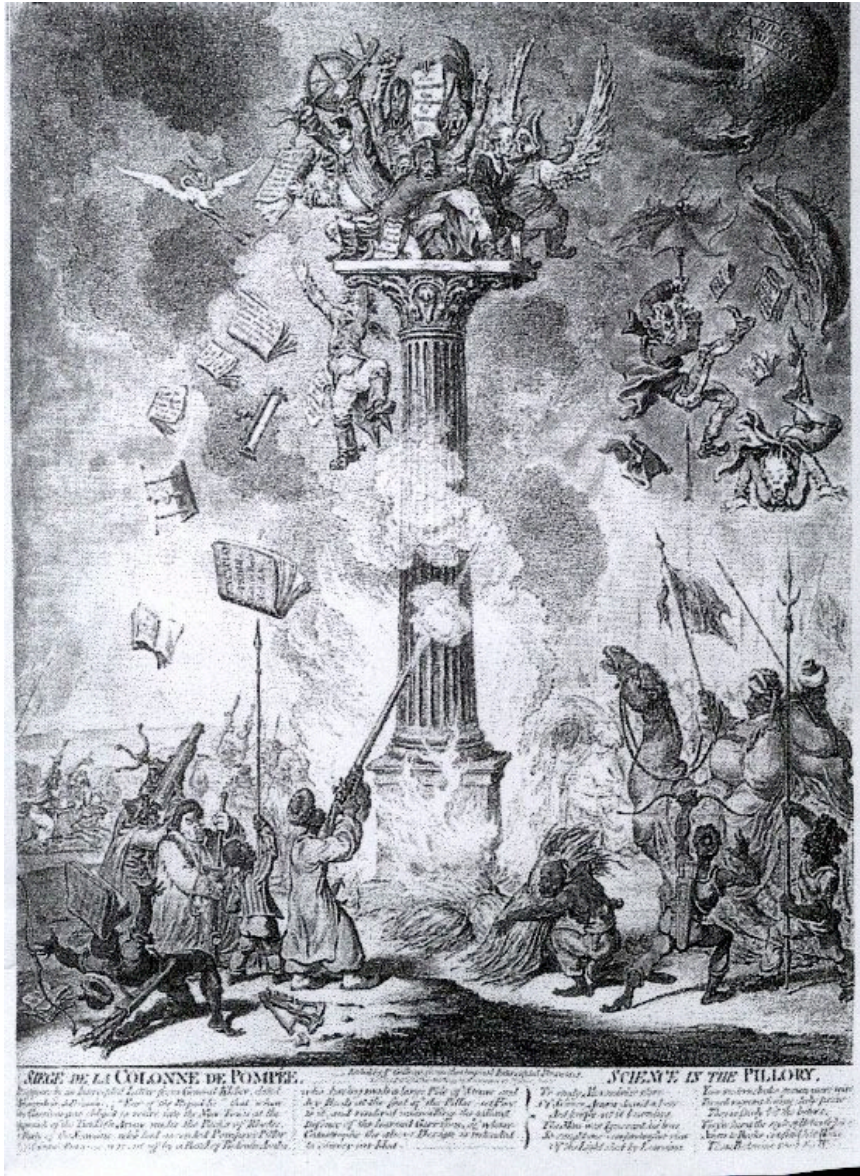


Figure 2. J.G. Gillroy, *Siège de la Colonne de Pompée: Science in a Pillory*, 6 March 1799. From the collection of Patricia Remler, Hill Wood Art Museum, Long Island University.

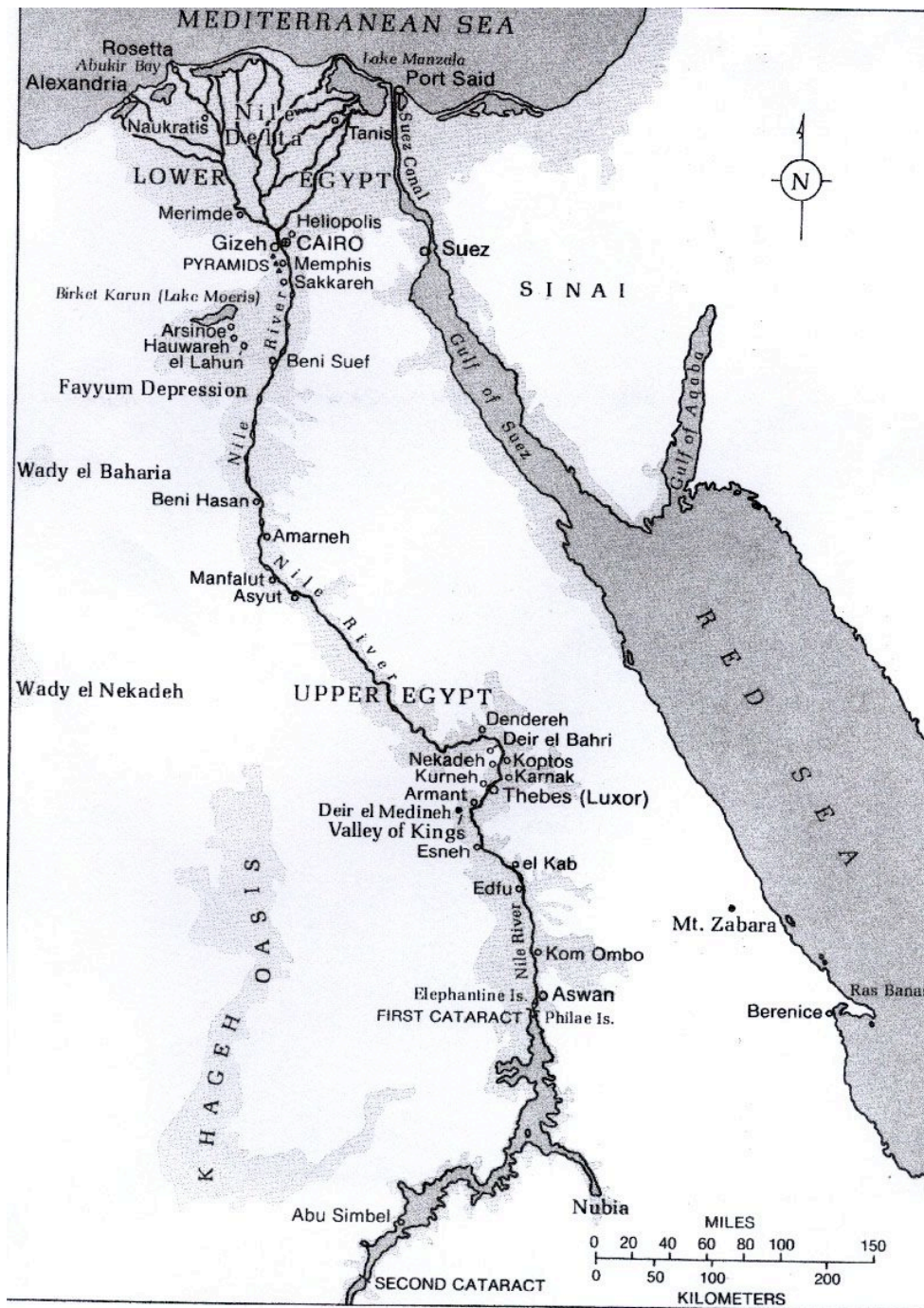


Figure 3. Map of Upper and Lower Egypt

worsened with the Revolt of Cairo in October 1798, during which the French reacted by killing thousands of insurgents, including students and government officials, in the city's mosque, ending all hopes of a tolerant coexistence between the French and Egyptians. General Desaix, meanwhile, was sent on a wild goose chase throughout Upper and Lower Egypt in pursuit of the scattered Mameluke forces that remained elusive despite his army's best efforts to capture them. Soon after, rumors spread of a vicious massacre following the siege of Jaffa, in which surrendered Arab prisoners were forced to line up along the Syrian coast where they were then bayoneted by French soldiers, instead of shot, in order to save the expense of bullets.²⁵ This horrid event was swiftly followed by an outbreak of the bubonic plague among the French army in Jaffa, a subject that Gros later exploited for advancing Napoleon's public image in his painting *Bonaparte visiting the Plague Victims at Jaffa* of 1804 (figure 4). Here, Napoleon's assuming posture and bold contact with a diseased soldier is contrasted with the frailty and limpness of the infected that surround him.²⁶ Such a presentation of bravado was no doubt needed to help Napoleon's reputation, considering that just shortly after the disasters in Jaffa he abandoned the Egyptian campaign to return to France on August 22, 1799, slipping past the British fleet and deserting his army in Egypt.

It was under these tumultuous conditions that the *Description de l'Égypte* was first conceived; it involved the efforts of more than 150 architects, engineers, naturalists, chemists, surveyors, artists, and astronomers, all of whom had been left behind with the

²⁵ Jacques-François Miot, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des expéditions en Égypte et en Syrie*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Le Normant, 1814).

²⁶ For a detailed analysis of this painting and the event represented see Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, "Plague, Egypt-Syria: Gros's *Bonaparte visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa*, 1804," in *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 65-103.



Figure 4. Antoine-Jean Gros. *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa*, 1804. Oil on canvas, 532 x 720 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

army after Napoleon's departure, abandoned atop Pompey's Pillar as the political cartoon would have it. It was Napoleon's successor in Egypt, General Kléber, who formally initiated this intellectual expedition by communicating his concern to the Commission des Sciences et Arts²⁷ about the outcome of the scholarly information produced on Egypt during their exile. As a result, the Institut d'Égypte in Cairo, a colonial revision of the Institut de France, became the central base for all fields of study involved in the compilation of the *Description*.²⁸

The first chapter will trace the development of French views of Egypt as a counterweight prior to the formation of the Institut d'Égypte and the initiation of the *Description*. After discussing the visual and literary discourse established in travelogues to Egypt, I examine the context of their production in relation to the Greco-Roman past. The point cannot be overemphasized that debates and rivalries on the European continent regarding the role of Egypt within the classical paradigm and its political uses influenced visual and literary representations in even the earliest of eighteenth-century travelogues of Egypt, perhaps more than the actual voyage to Egypt itself.²⁹ It is through this filter of classical antiquity that we can come closest to understanding the assignment of value

²⁷ A version of the Commission was originally established by Napoleon prior to his Italian Campaign. The two leading figures, Monge and Berthollet, were responsible for culling Vatican treasures to be sent to the Louvre's collection. The Commission as it is most commonly seen today, however, was not formed until after the French debarkation in Alexandria when the large number of savants who had been brought to Egypt began their cartographic and engineering work to serve the needs of the army. Napoleon was well aware of the cultural significance of Egypt, however, and allowed the Commission to conduct research apart from militaristic purposes under the establishment of the Institut d'Égypte.

²⁸ The Institut d'Égypte speaks of its own formulation and development in its 1801 publication entitled *Memoires sur l'Égypte publiés pendant les campagnes du general Bonaparte dans les années VI et VII, avec la relation de ses campagnes en Égypte et en Syrie. Imprimés en execution de l'arrêté du Tribunal, en date du 7 nivôse an 9 de la République française* (Paris: Baudouin, 1801), 125-148.

²⁹ It is often overlooked that there existed a long tradition of travel writing on Egypt in the eighteenth century prior to the *Description*. These travelogues will be discussed in greater depth in chapter one, but for a brief overview on the voyages of several of the leading figures, including Paul Lucas (1699, 1704, and 1714), Claude Sicard (1712-1726), and Norden (1737), see Maurice Martin, "Aux Débuts de la Description Moderne de l'Égypte," in *D'un Orient l'Autre*, 1:343-350.

to both ancient and modern Egypt and how a discourse developed around Egypt that served the political, imperial, and anthropological³⁰ justifications for colonialism in the eighteenth century. Several of these travelogues will be examined to show how they built upon one another by incorporating the political debates of the leading politicians, *philosophes*, and naturalists that would also be used within the *Description de l’Egypte*.

The second chapter will be devoted to the *Description* itself, focusing primarily on the plates representing antiquity and the modern state. The praise bestowed upon the *Description*’s empirical observation as the beginning of modern Egyptology is understandable when its classical austerity is compared to the whimsical, romantic representations of Egypt from earlier sources (compare figures 5 and 6). Yet this chapter will consider the *Description*’s complex iconography that speaks to the collapse of empirical observation as it is instead replaced with representations rooted in fear, subjectivity, and personal trauma endured during the expedition. After considering such representations, I examine those images that function as attempts to compensate for this collapse of empiricism.

The second section of chapter two considers aspects of the *Description* that promoted the ideology of both the Napoleonic Empire and the Bourbon Restoration. Within just a few years of its first printing, the *Description* found itself being published

³⁰ The term ‘anthropology’ is somewhat anachronistic here as it denotes a field of study not yet invented in the eighteenth century. Still, several major studies apply the term to the eighteenth century to acknowledge the specific way in which natural historians of the time built the foundations of evolutionary theories of ethnicity and race. These studies are M. Duchet, *Anthropologie et Histoire au Siècle des Lumières: Buffon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvétius, Diderot* (Paris: François Maspero, 1971), and Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964).

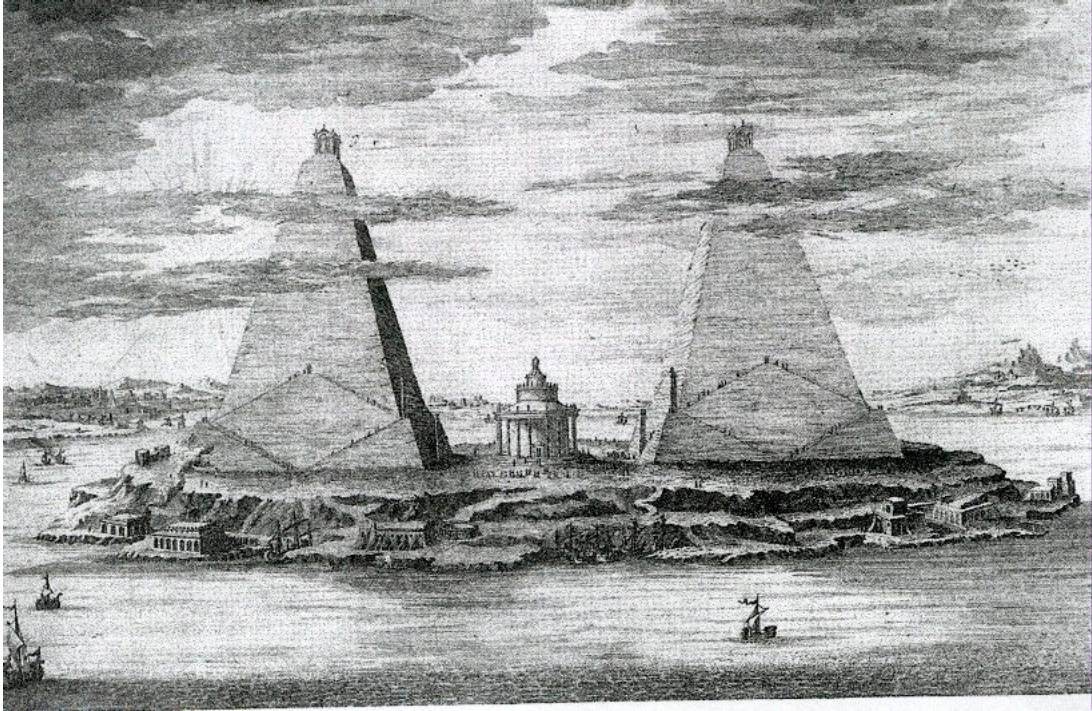


Figure 5. Fischer von Erlach, *Entwurff einer Historischen Architektur*, 1721.

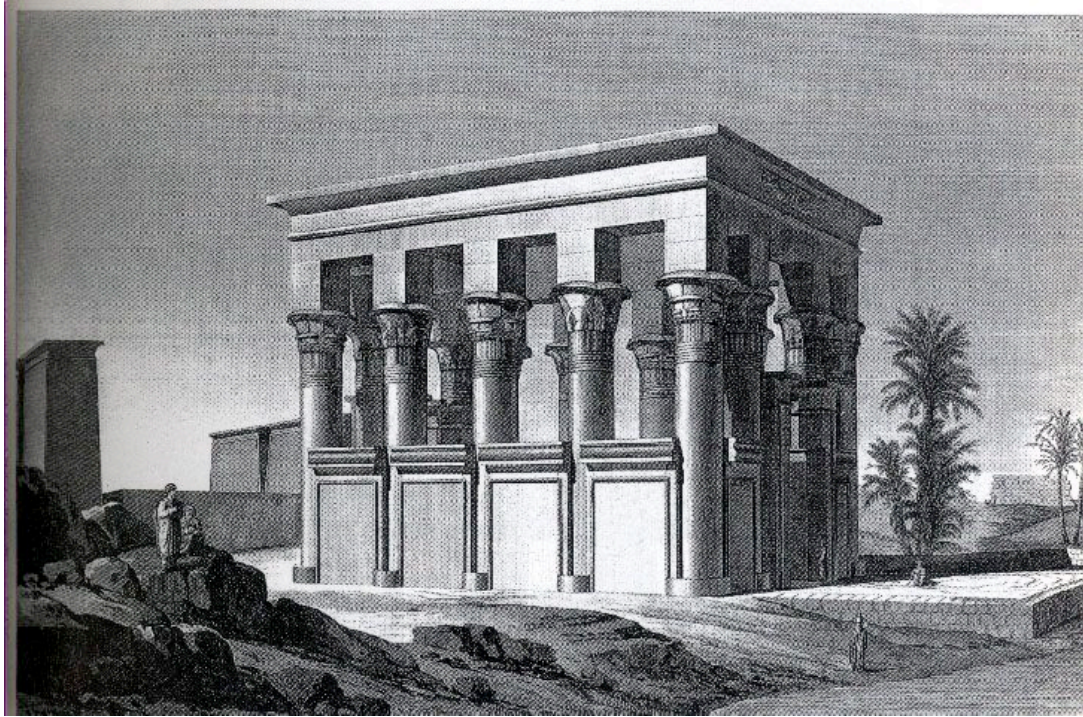


Figure 6. “Vue Perspective de l’Édifice de l’Est,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Antiquités*, vol. I, pl. 28.

under very different circumstances by a regime that espoused an ideology in complete opposition to that of Napoleon. Despite this, however, the visual style and content of the *Description* remain remarkably consistent. The development of various travel tropes and stock figures that continue intact throughout the *Description* will be closely examined to illustrate their role in solidifying what Homi Bhabha terms a “regime of truth”: that which ensures the success and productivity of colonial power.³¹

Lastly, chapter three will attempt to reconstruct an Egyptian perspective of the events during the tumultuous years of Napoleon’s expedition through British colonization. The plates of Egypt’s modern state will be the visual focus of this chapter as an attempt is made to create an alternative perspective of Egypt from the one presented by the French, typified by such views as presented in figure 7. When Napoleon returned from Egypt, he brought with him his personal Mameluke, Roustam, whom he paraded around much in the same way he paraded Raphael’s *Transfiguration* on his return from the Italian campaign, even going so far as to have his portrait put on a set of saucers from his personal Egyptian service.³² Yet we are still left to wonder just what Roustam thought of all this. How did Egyptians view their pharaonic history? How did they view French domination of their country? Was it possible for an Egyptian during the Napoleonic Empire and Restoration to construct his history apart from France’s political

³¹ “The Other Question,” in *The Location of Culture*, 66-84.

³² See Martin Rosenberg, “Raphael’s *Transfiguration* and Napoleon’s Cultural Politics,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 19, no. 2 (Winter 1985-86): 180-205. For more information on Roustam, his role in the Egyptian expedition, and his relationship with Napoleon, see chapter three of Grigsby, “Revolt, Egypt: Girodet’s *Revolt of Cairo*, 1810,” in *Extremities*, 105-163.



Figure 7. “Le faiseur de tuyaux de pipe,” from *Description de l’Egypte, État Moderne – Arts et métiers*, vol. II, pl. XXVII.

and imperial ideology? Perhaps these questions are best articulated by Spivak when she asks, “can the subaltern speak?”³³

Al-Jabarti’s *Chronicle of the first seven months of French occupation, 1798* remains the authoritative primary source for an Egyptian’s thoughts on the events that transpired during the Egyptian campaign. Fortunately other Egyptian writings exist as well dating to the time of the Restoration that can shed further light on the Egyptian predicament. Among these are al-Tahtawi’s *L’Or de Paris: Relation de Voyage: 1826-31* (1834) and Ali Mubarak’s *Al-Khitat al-tawfiqiyya al-jadida* (c.1870). Both of these Egyptian intellectuals traveled to Paris and studied French life much in the same way the French savants at the Institut d’Egypte were studying Egyptian life. Through their writings we can perhaps come a few steps closer in understanding the processes of transculturation³⁴ that took place between these two cultures at a time when the burdensome weight of French and English hegemony would appear to make such interchanges impossible.

The study that follows can best be summarized as a response to an image I came across in a collection of engravings known as the *Mascarade à la grecque* of 1771 (figure 8). In this particular engraving a figure identified as du Tillot, Marquis of Felino and French ambassador to the Duchy of Parma, stands wearing a fictitious Egypto-Roman costume. Noteworthy, however, is the pyramid in the distance, measured by du Tillot against the plan of a Greek temple. The foreground position designated to du Tillot and

³³ *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 66-111.

³⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge Press, 1992). Pratt’s work is one of the main sources that I rely upon for theories of cultural interchange and the development of travel tropes.



Figure 8. Benigno Bossi of Parma, “L’Auteur des figures à la Grecque,” from *Mascarade à la Grecque*, 1771.

his Greek plan in relation to the subordinate pyramid speaks to the filter through which the Egyptian world was measured by the eighteenth-century European audience. It is with such an unbalanced measurement that this thesis begins.

CHAPTER ONE:

A PRELUDE TO THE *DESCRIPTION*: BUILDING A DISCOURSE ON EGYPT

In his highly regarded work *Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism, 1798-1836*, Todd Porterfield argues against any role played by Egypt during France's Revolutionary period and up until the Bourbon Restoration. "In this [revolutionary] history of art, progress, and civilization, there was no place for Egypt."³⁵ He uses evidence such as the fact that in 1795 Egyptian artifacts were placed in the Bibliothèque Nationale alongside stuffed muskrats and other unusual curiosities. Whereas Porterfield believes that the value of Egypt was completely historical, ancient Greece served as a model for democracy and Rome for imperialism.

Yet one must beg the question: can it really be said that Egypt held no contemporary value for eighteenth-century France? One of the major writers on Egypt in the eighteenth century, Constantin-François Volney, believed that the weakness of Egypt's tyrannical ancient government and its espousal of absolute rule was attributed to nothing more than the "delirium of their own misunderstandings [for being] the sacred mysteries of heaven."³⁶ Indeed, while Greece and Rome provided a positive example for France, Egypt proved to be a counterweight. Propaganda such as this, however, was not begun by either Napoleon or Volney, but can be found in the political and

³⁵ (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 91.

³⁶ Rigby, "Volney's Rationalist Apocalypse," in *1789: Reading, Writing, Revolution: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1981*, ed. Francis Barker, et al. (Colchester: University of Essex, 1982), 22-37; quoted in Brian Dolan, *Exploring European Frontiers: British Travellers in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 2000), 121.

anthropological thought of France throughout the eighteenth century and earlier. It further suggests, contrary to Porterfield, that there was indeed a place for Egypt within the revolutionary history of civilization, albeit not a positive one. The intellectual context of eighteenth-century France is not to be seen as merely a benign learning landscape that held Egypt at arm's length. Rather, a discourse existed on the country that was deeply entrenched in the intellectual and political thought of the day; one that proved to be highly influential to the *Description*. Before turning our attention to the *Description*, this first chapter examines the role of Egypt in France during the century leading up to the Napoleonic expedition, arguing that it was far from a merely historical one.

Travelogues and the Simulacra of Egypt

This section traces the development of the travelogue on Egypt in the eighteenth century and the manner in which it created a simulacrum that replaced the country itself. Doing so will elucidate this view of Egypt indicated by Volney above and how it was created and became dominant over other discourses that had the potential to develop in its place.

What is often overlooked in a study of the *Description* is that it relied heavily on a tradition of European travelogues on Egypt that had existed for more than a century: George Sandys's *Travels in Egypt* (1610), Vansleb's *Relation de voyage* and *Histoire de l'Eglise d'Alexandrie* (1675), Paul Lucas's three *Relations de voyage* (1699, 1704 and 1714), Claude Sicard's *Description Parallèle de l'Egypte Ancienne et de la Moderne* (1712 to 1726), Benoît de Maillet's *Description de l'Egypte* (1733), Richard Pococke's *A Description of the East* (1738), Granger's *Relation de voyage* (1745), Norden's *Travels in*

Egypt and Nubia (1757), d'Anville's *Mémoires sur l'Égypte Ancienne et Moderne* (1766), Constantin-François Volney's *Voyage en Égypte et en Syrie* (1787), M. Savary's *Lettres sur l'Égypte* (1786), C.S. Sonnini's *Voyage dans la Haute et Basse Égypte* (1799), and most importantly Vivant Denon's *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt* (1803). Although these writers on Egypt were precise observers, they were not in fact very knowledgeable about the country of Egypt itself. The result is a chain of travelogues that all reference one another, thus containing the same information and categories of interest. All of these travelogues manifest certain repetitive subjects, including entries on the flooding of the Nile, the streets and palaces of Cairo, the government under Mameluke control, commerce, natural history of the plants and animals particular to the country, and popular culture and folklore of the native inhabitants.³⁷

Along with repetitive categories, there is an entire set of repetitive beliefs maintained in these travelogues. Egypt, according to all these writers, was a savage country ruled by a despotic government. Savary proclaimed that the Egyptians' lack of civilization as a result of this despotism led them to know nothing of art or culture before Turkish occupation.³⁸ For Volney, Islam was the original source of this "despotisme ignorant" that permeated every aspect of Egyptian life so deeply that it was believed to be the source of the country's perceived indolence, laziness, and a complete lack of industry.³⁹ These elements and beliefs, repeated in all of the above mentioned travelogues, create what Homi Bhabha refers to as "the discursive conception of

³⁷ Martin, "Aux Débuts de la Description Moderne de l'Égypte," in *D'un Orient l'Autre*, 1:348.

³⁸ Claude-Étienne Savary, *Letters on Egypt, containing, a parallel between the manners of its ancient and modern inhabitants, ... with the descent of Louis IX. at Damietta. Extracted from Joinville, and Arabian authors. Translated from the French of M. Savary. In two volumes* (London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1787), 226-227.

³⁹ Mercier Roger, "Le voyage en Égypte et en Syrie de C.F. Volney: Genèse d'une Pensée Politique," *Modeles et moyens de la reflexion politique au XVIIIe siècle*, (1973): 81-98.

ideology” in which ‘reality’ is *produced* by texts as opposed to something fixed externally from them.⁴⁰ In other words, as we pass from one travelogue to the next, a perspective forms, not from direct observation of Egypt itself, but from an accumulation of observations made by previous writers. It is little wonder that by the time of the Napoleonic expedition, the French *Commission des Sciences et des Arts* in Egypt held the belief that it was their goal to bring these “semi-barbaric and semi-civilized” people the culture and refinement known to Europeans.⁴¹ Here we see an ideal example of Foucault’s theory of discourse as applied by Said in which perception of Egypt becomes completely self-contained and self-perpetuating.

Paralleling the literary discourse established through these travelogues there exists a visual discourse, or iconography, in which Bhabha’s ‘discursive conception of ideology’ is equally manifest. This becomes most evident in a comparison of representations of the pyramids from several travelogues. The views from Sandys’ *Travels* (figure 9), Norden’s *Travels* (figure 10), and Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* (figure 11) share the same characteristics of a general view of the pyramids incorporating staffage of bedouins or camel caravans below the sphinx. By the time of the expedition, this view permeated the canon of Egyptian iconography so deeply that the editors of the *Description* copied it down to the last bit of staffage. In the *Vue de l’Entrée de la Grande Pyramide, prise au soleil levant* (figure 12) the engraver followed the example of Sandys (figure 9) by illustrating the team of French explorers accompanied by Arab tour guides who ‘discover’ the pyramids for readers of the travelogue. In both the *Vue de Sphinx et*

⁴⁰ *Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, 173.

⁴¹ Ahmed Sadeq Saad, “Orientalisme Colonial et Orientalisme Egyptien,” in *D’une Orient l’Autre*, 2:405-419.

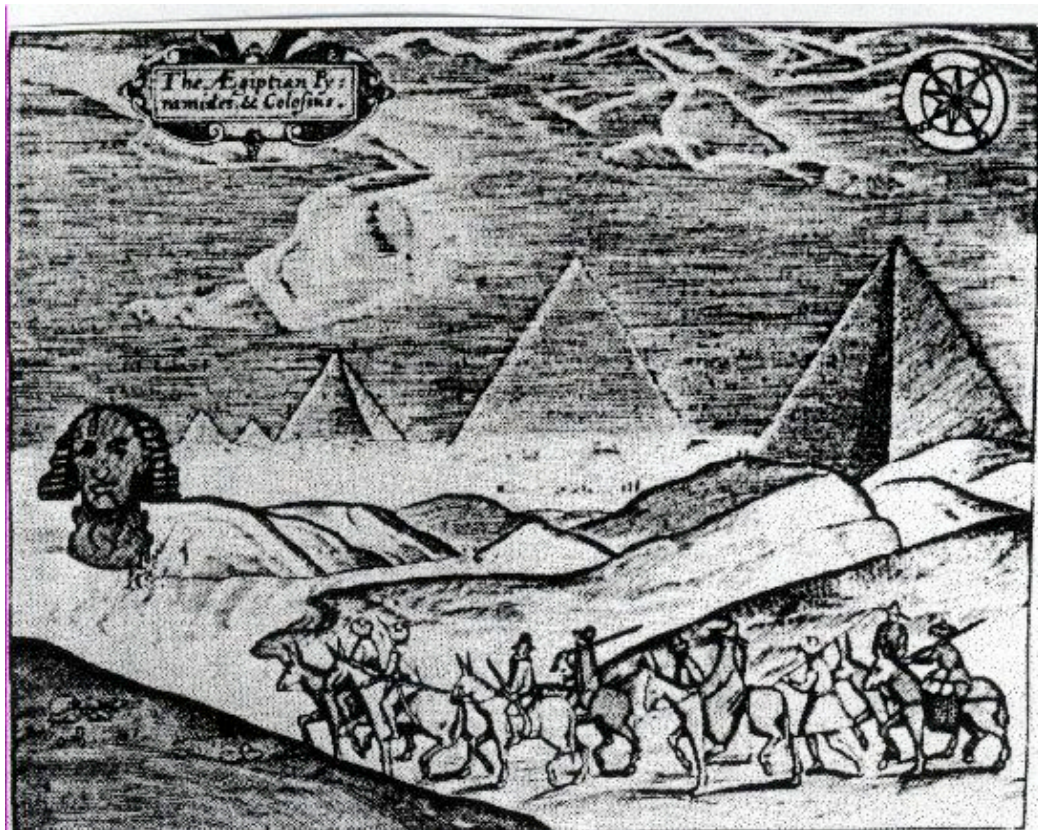


Figure 9. "Sphinx, first English view," from *Travels*, 1610

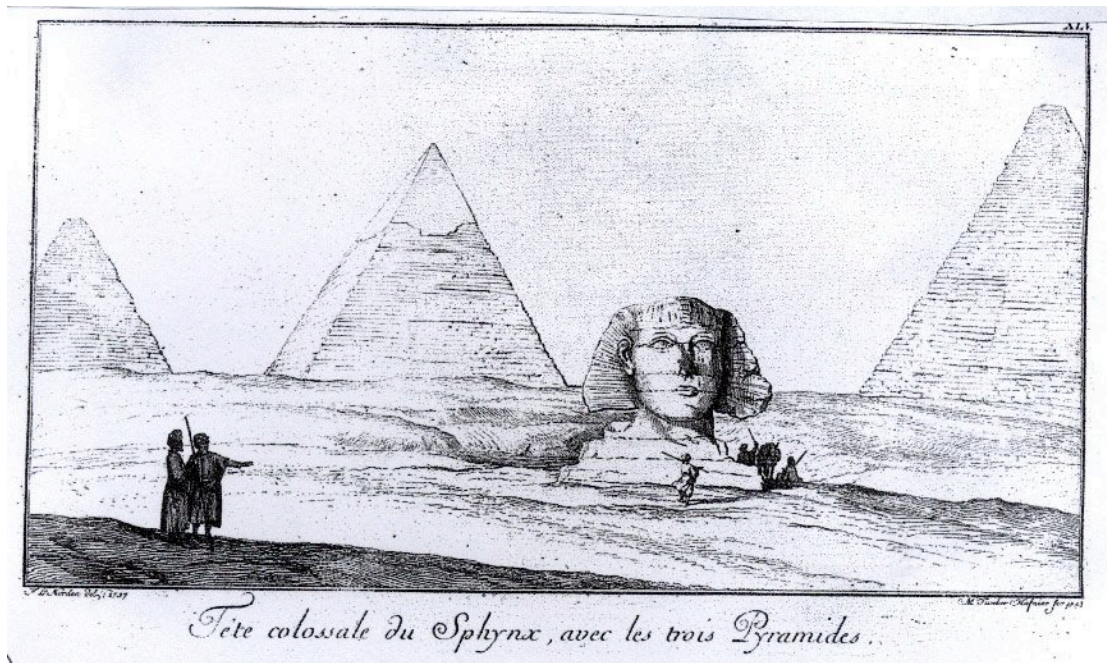


Figure 10. Norden, *Travels in Egypt and Nubia*, 1757

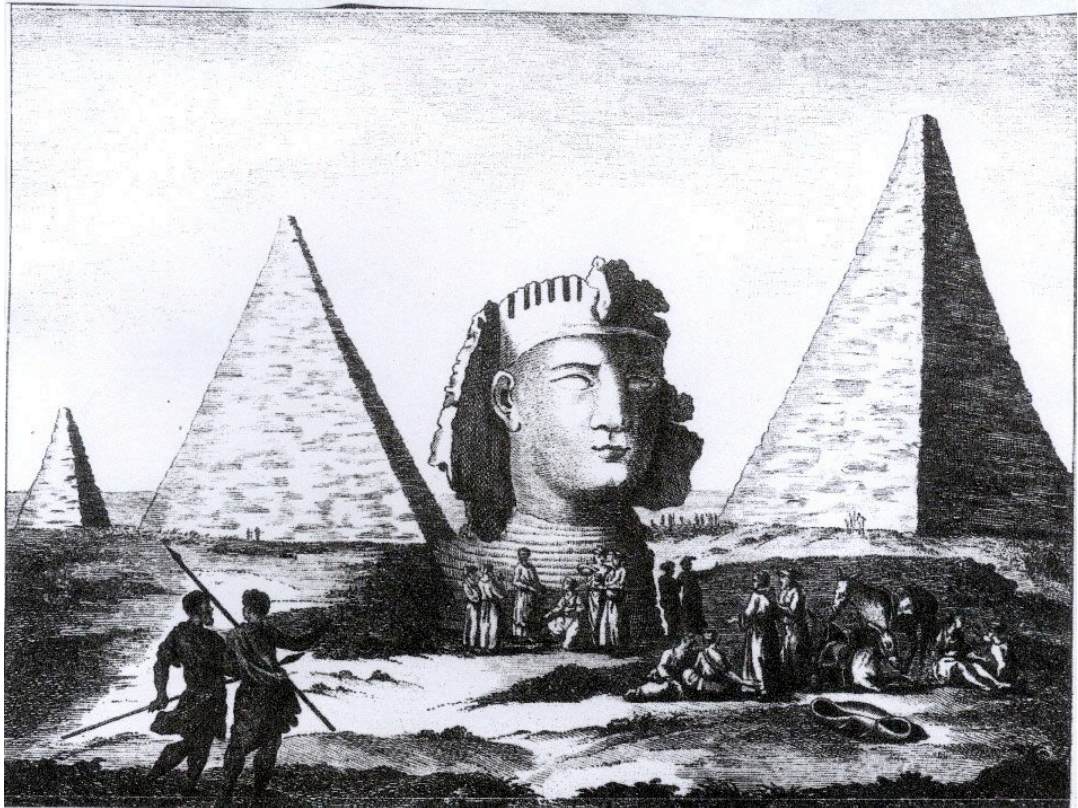


Figure 11. Diderot and d'Alambert, *Encyclopédie*, 1751-1772

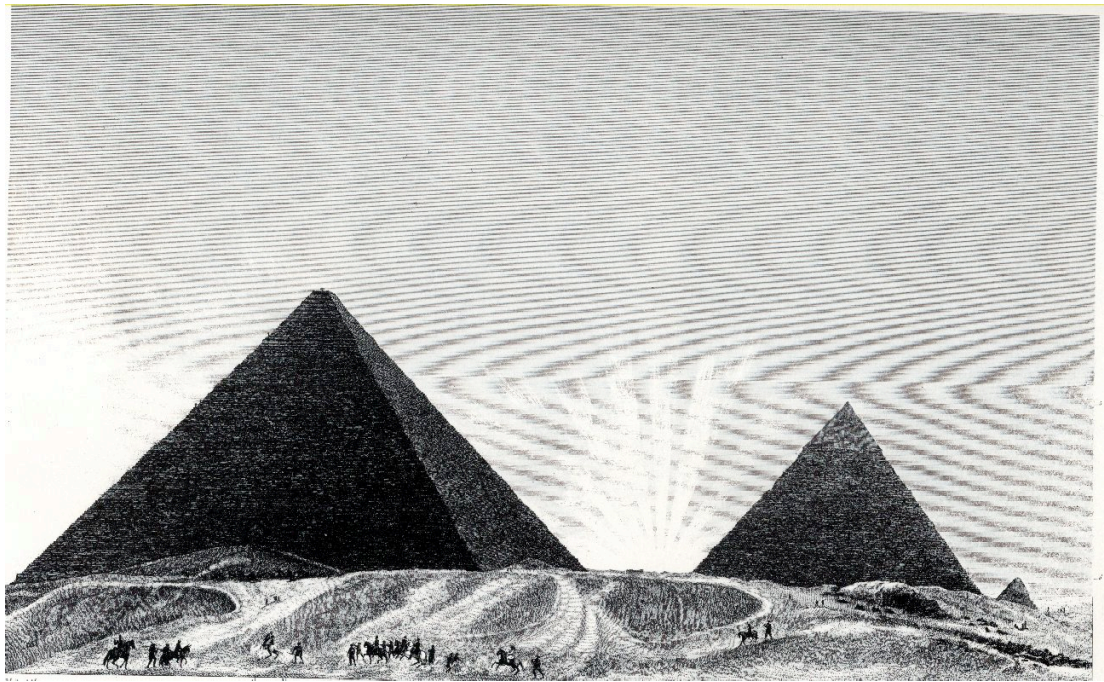


Figure 12. “Vue de l’Entrée de la Grande Pyramide, prise au soleil levant,” in the *Description de l’Egypte, Antiquités*, vol. V, pl. 9.

de la Grande Pyramide, prise du sud-est (figure 13) and *Vue du Sphinx et de la Seconde Pyramide, prise du Levant* (figure 14), the *Description* is again looking back to predetermined views such as Norden's (figure 10) and Diderot's (figure 11) that place the bedouins and various other 'players' in their respective positions on the stage as though they were typecast characters in a performance. We are left to credit these images with as much validity and authenticity as Fischer von Erlach's fictionalized and mysticized Egyptian desert (figure 15). Also common to images of the travelogues are the inventoried and displayed artifacts and objects representing an anthropological view of the country in which objects are isolated from their context and 'naturalized' by their insertion into a larger vignette. This allows for any unknown information of the country to remain obsolete while a seemingly complete picture is presented to us, and it is again another tradition in which the *Description* follows (see figures 16, 17, 18, and 19).⁴² The repetitive elements of these views spanning a century serve to illustrate what art historian Derek Gregory describes as a "highly stylized simulacra": the veil that prevents any other version of the Orient from being seen.⁴³

Further linking these travelogues is the fact that none were the product of personal journeys, but rather those of government patronage or missionary endeavors. The Jesuits, for example, sent Sicard to Egypt as Anglican theologians commissioned Pococke. Maillet, further, wrote his *Description de l'Égypte* as a result of visiting Egypt as consul of the French nation to Cairo, and the king of Denmark commissioned and funded

⁴² Roland Barthes analyzes such displays of objects in Diderot's *Encyclopédie* in "The Plates of the *Encyclopédie*," in *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, ed. Clive Cazeaux (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 392-400.

⁴³ "Emperors of the Gaze: Photographic Practices and Productions of Space in Egypt, 1839-1914," in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, ed. Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 195-225.



Figure 13. "Vue dy Sphinx et de la Grande Pyramide, prise du sud-est," in the *Description de l'Egypte, Antiquités*, vol. V, pl.11.



Figure 14. “Vue du Sphinx et de la Seconde Pyramide, prise du levant,” in the *Description de l’Egypte, Antiquités*, vol. V, pl. 12.

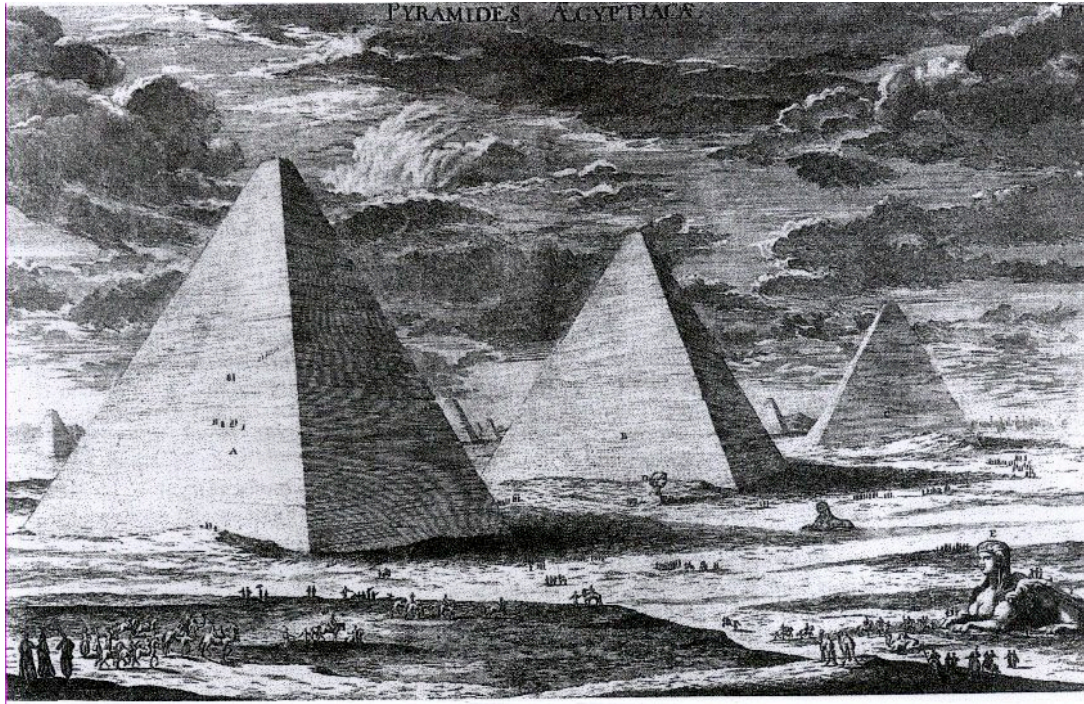


Figure 15. Fischer von Erlach, *History of Architecture*, 1721

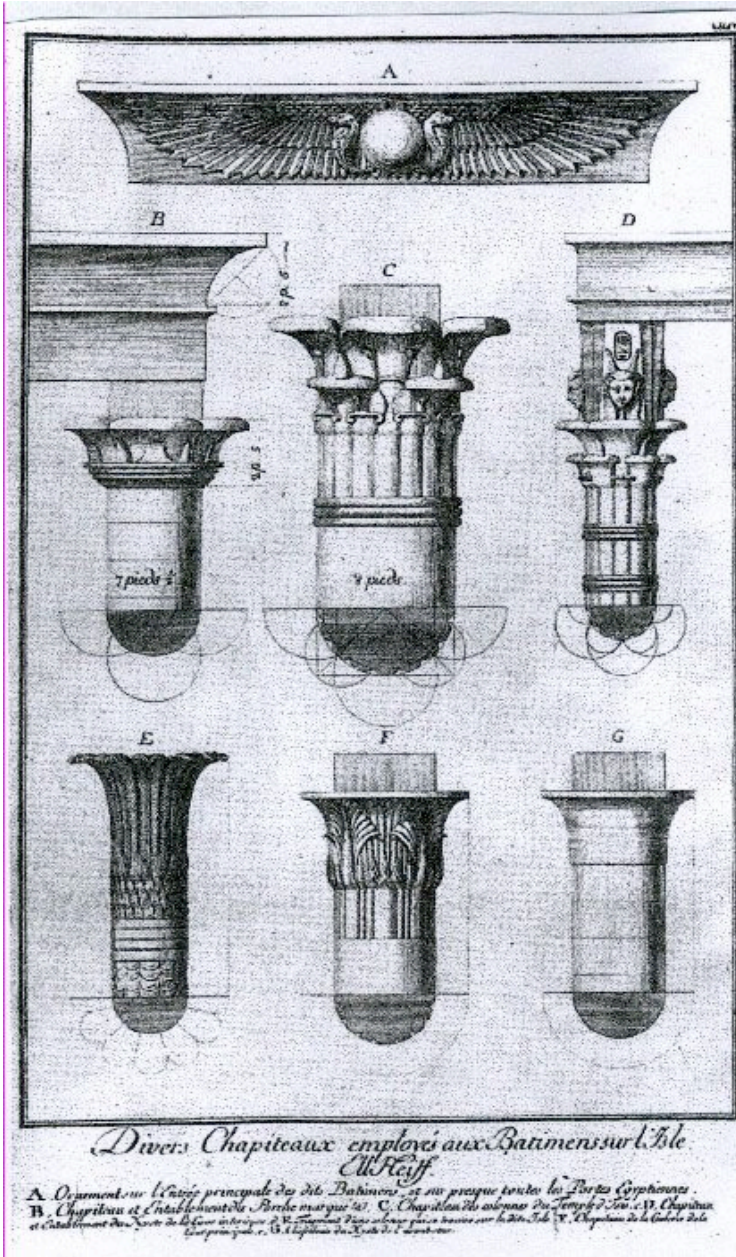


Figure 16. Norden, *Travels in Egypt and Nubia*, 1757.

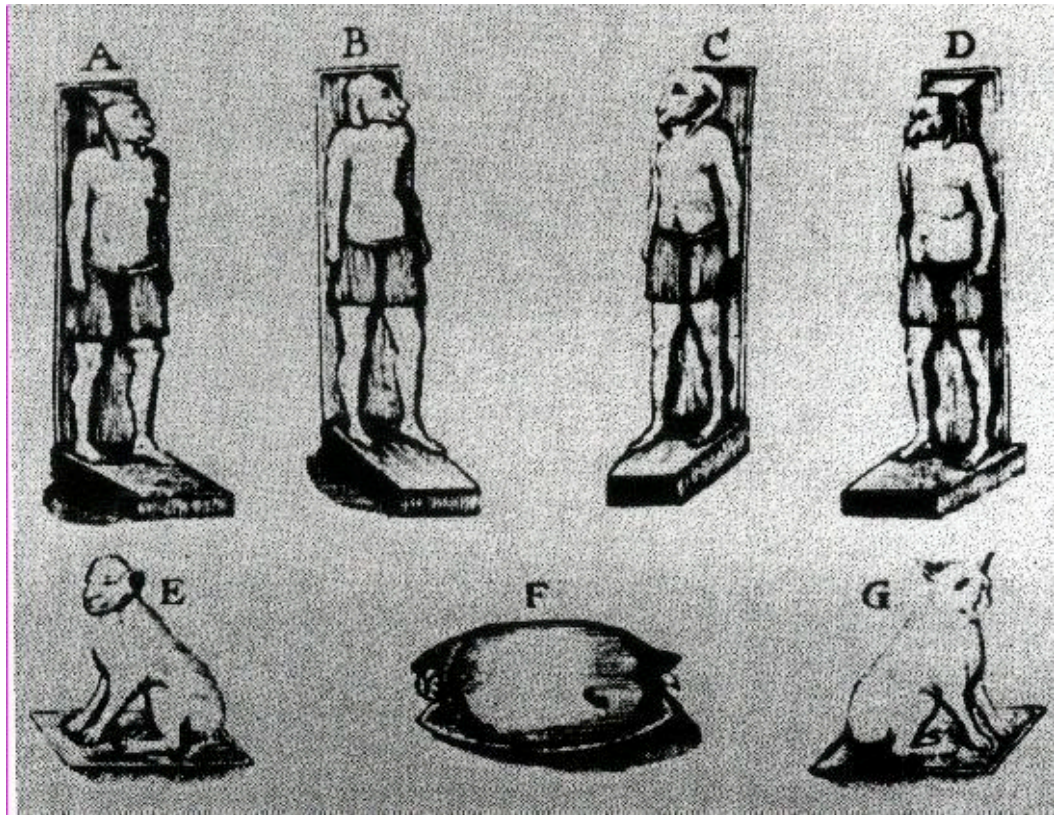


Figure 17. George Sandys, *Travels*, 1610

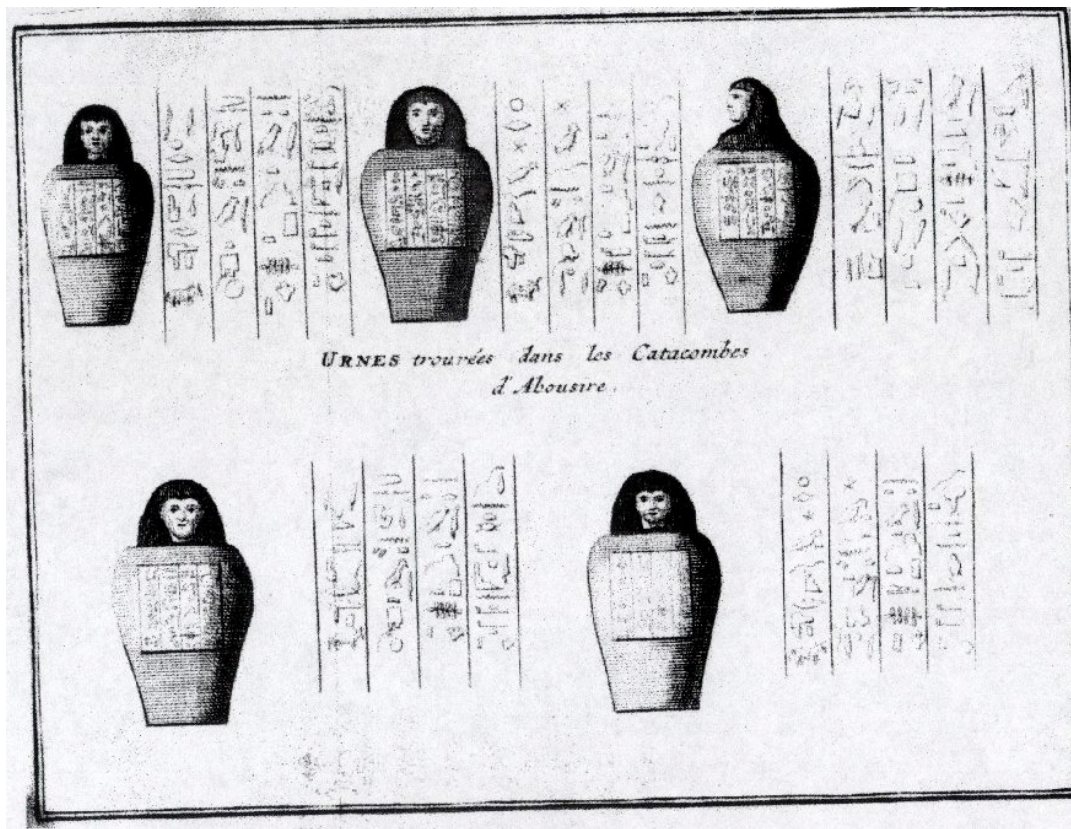


Figure 18. Paul Lucas, “Urnes trouvées dans les Catacombes d’Abousire,” from *Second Voyage in Upper and Lower Egypte*.



Figure 19. "Collection d'Antiques," from the *Description de l'Egypte, Antiquités*, vol. 5, pl. 69.

Norden's voyage and accompanying writings.⁴⁴ In other words, all of these travelogues were informed by much larger institutionalized political, religious, and anthropological perspectives of the time. Government patronage also illustrates that intellectual production resides in the realms of both science and politics.⁴⁵ The following section will appraise the extent to which these travelogues were incorporated into the political justifications for military action and colonialism of Egypt.

The Political Discourse and Naturalist World View

Historian Henry Laurens argues that the expedition to Egypt would have eventually happened with or without Napoleon, and as we shall see, a long history had already developed in which Egypt was envisaged as ripe for the taking.⁴⁶ But the east/west dichotomy brought to light by Said is not ontological, but only believed to be so. Therefore, what other factors contributed to this belief, or discourse, taking hold?

A preliminary answer can be found with historian Vincent Confer who outlines seven justifications and beliefs promoted by various French thinkers in the eighteenth century that allowed for colonialism to occur. Moral justifications include a "moral-racial" justification involving theories of French and European superiority over other races; "moral-ideological" justification to preserve and maintain a culture's way of life, and a "moral-humanitarian" justification to civilize an inferior people. Other justifications included "pretentious" ones relating to prestige and sociological ones

⁴⁴ Martin, "Aux Débuts de la Description Moderne de l'Égypte," 343-345.

⁴⁵ David Prochaska, "Art of Colonialism, Colonialism of Art: The *Description de l'Égypte* (1809-1828)," *L'Esprit Createur* 34, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 69-91.

⁴⁶ *Les Origines intellectuelles de l'expédition d'Égypte: L'Orientalisme islamisant en France, 1698-1798* (Ph.D dissertation: Institut d'études politique de Paris, 1989).

pertaining to settlement, as well as religious and economic ones.⁴⁷ The purpose of this section is to show how these justifications manifest themselves in the political and anthropological fields that contributed to the discourse on Egypt that allowed Napoleon to bring his expedition to realization.

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, France had acquired large holding of colonies in India, North America, and the Caribbean, including islands such as Grenada, Saint Lucia, Martinique, and western Saint-Domingue (Haiti). During this time economics and morals became the major justifications for occupation and colonization, but they were typically manifest with a certain level of ambivalence. This is the case with both Montaigne and Rousseau whose view of the “noble savage” is marked by ambivalence. While both of these Enlightenment philosophers are quick to point out the hypocrisy of European nations when viewing non-European “barbarians” as inferior in comparison to Europeans, they also both accepted an economic justification for colonialism and did not argue for the abandonment of colonies.⁴⁸ In his *Social Contract* Rousseau even argues that the cowardice of the colonized kept them in bondage and thus they deserved their condition.⁴⁹

Ambivalence of a similar sort abounds in even the most egalitarian of philosophers such as Raynal. He condemned all colonial powers on the basis that there was no ontological or biological difference in colonial subjects, but still believed in a moral-ideological and moral-humanitarian sense that France should beat England in

⁴⁷ “French Colonial Ideas before 1789,” *French Historical Studies* 3, no. 3 (Spring 1964): 338-359.

⁴⁸ Confer, “French Colonial Ideas before 1789,” 45.

⁴⁹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Primitive Societies,” in *The Social Contract and The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Susan Dunn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), I.II:156.

acquiring colonial territories. In the end, this would best serve the interests of all European nations while still reaping the most bountiful economic benefits for France.⁵⁰ An engraving opens each of the nine volumes of his *Histoire philisophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* published in 1780. That opening his fourth volume is explicit in its abolitionist message: Nature, represented by a women nursing both a black and white child on either breast, looks on with compassion at mistreated black slaves being beaten by their white masters.⁵¹ Yet in the engraving opening the second and third volumes of his work, Raynal is quick to point out the economic benefits for both France and its colonies of the agricultural advancements brought to countries as a result of imperialism. The second volume's engraving represents natives of France's Indian colonies pushing European agricultural tools in a procession of celebration, while that of the third volume represents colonized subjects being instructed how to use these tools under the tutelage of their patriarchal colonizers.

Voltaire also argues for the economic need of France to secure colonies for the procurement of necessary products and resources, and he does so with very little ambivalence regarding the lack of biological equality among races. While the non-mixed. Pure race of white men was incapable of degeneration, mulattoes were a “bastard

⁵⁰ Confer, “French Colonial Ideas before 1789,” 339, 349.

⁵¹ *Histoire philisophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, vol.4 (Neuchatel Geneve: Chez les Libraires associés, 1783). The caption below the engraving literally reads: “Le Nature représentée par une femme nourrissant à la fois un enfant blan et un noir, garde aven compassion les Negres esclaves maltraités.”

race,” while blacks belonged to a different species altogether.⁵² Justification of colonial aggression was not something he considered necessary.

We find economic motivation tied to moral-humanitarian and moral-ideological propaganda to be the primary justifications for colonization of Egypt. For France, Egypt was the most important overseas region for trade next to the France’s Caribbean colonies. Approximately forty French merchants resided in Cairo, and France held a general consulate in the city whose foreign ministry kept a core of orientalist trained in Arabic as far back as the sixteenth century.⁵³ Further, Egypt’s agricultural industry was decidedly superior to that of France. French agriculture of the eighteenth century was dominated by royal absolutism that prevented a drive toward commercial and capital sectors. Technological advancement in agriculture were also nil as it was contrary to the interests of rich peasants. Thus, by the end of the century, France found itself in a desperate situation, as the grain trade within proved stagnant and forced them to look overseas.⁵⁴

Egypt, in contrast, held one of the most profitable agricultural industries of the Mediterranean, albeit monopolized by the Mameluke ruling class. By 1776, Raynal reports that France imported more from Egypt than any other country in Europe. An estimated 3,997,615 pounds of goods, mainly consisting of agricultural staples such as rice, coffee, saffron, and cotton, were brought from Egypt to France on a yearly basis, over

⁵² Voltaire, *Essai sur les Moeurs et l’Esprit des Nations et sur les principaux faits de l’histoire, depuis Charlemagne jusqu’à Louis XIII* (Geneva: 1769); cited in Confer, *ibid.*, 351; and Doris Garraway, “Race, Reproduction, and Family Romance in Moreau de Saint-Méry’s *Description...de la Partie Française de l’Isle Saint-Domingue*,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no.2 (Winter 2005): 234.

⁵³ Gillispie and Dewatcher, eds, *Monuments of Egypt: The Napoleonic Edition*, 3.

⁵⁴ Peter Gran, *The Islamic Roots of Capitalism: Egypt, 1760-1840* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998).

1,000,000 pounds more than France imported from any other country.⁵⁵ As trade between the two countries increased, France increasingly saw the need to rid itself of the restrictions and taxes placed on it by the Mameluke *beys*, a force that Raynal recognized to be the most powerful opponent to French economic interests in the region.⁵⁶ Toward the end of the century, economic motivation became so strongly linked with moral-humanitarian ideology that the writer and contemporary witness of events in Egypt, Jean-Baptiste Trécourt, argued that the general impoverishment of the country was the result of the *beys*' refusal to support free trade in the grain industry. It was therefore the responsibility of the French to invade to prevent this injustice from continuing, and to procure for themselves and the poor of Egypt the grain each so rightfully deserved.⁵⁷

Other eighteenth-century philosophers go even further than moral or economic justifications in their views toward the colonization of "barbarians." Both Montchretien's *Traité de l'économie politique* and Lescarbot's *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, written at the beginning of the seventeenth century, vehemently defend the religious superiority of the Christian West over ignorant non-believers of prospective colonies. While not religious in his views, naturalist Buffon stated over a century later that "to be and to think are for us the same thing" even for the "stupid" and "savage man."⁵⁸ Besides paying homage to Descartes, he was making a distinction not only between man and animals, but also between man and man. He differs from Voltaire in that he believes racial mixing

⁵⁵ Raynal, *Histoire Philisophique et Politique*, 167.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁸ All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated: "être et penser sont pour nous la même chose" even for "l'homme stupide" and "sauvage." *L'Histoire Naturelle de l'Homme*, in *Œuvres Complètes de Buffon*, vol. 2 (Paris: Garnier Frères Libraires, 1778).

and variation is a natural process, and that even pure races are capable of degeneration.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, nearly a hundred pages of his *L'Histoire Naturelle de l'Homme* (1749) are dedicated to a discussion of the varieties of human species, in which he says of the Near Eastern world, "The people of Persia, Turkey, Arabia, Egypt, and all of Barbary can be regarded as the same nation...they live, as the Tartars, without law, without authority, and almost without society."⁶⁰ Reaffirming such a view, Nicolas Ruault, editor to many of the Enlightenment writers, revealed the following of current European affairs with the Ottoman Empire in a letter dating to the eve of the French Revolution that again reaffirms the stark contrast between Greece and the Orient:

The biggest news of the day is the declaration of war between the German and Turkish emperors. The Russian empress is also on the Muslims' tails. It is assured that the other Christian powers will leave Catherine and Joseph to act with complete freedom in this war. We can therefore hope that these invasive barbarians will at last be chased from Europe and that soon Greece will regain its ancient monarchical splendor [...]⁶¹

Whether the Orient as a whole or Egypt in particular was seen to be in its degraded condition as a result of natural inferiority, devolution, religion, or despotic rule - perhaps the four being mutually inclusive – contrasts between it and Europe were rarely made without a measuring stick of civility premised on the superiority of the Greco-Roman world.

⁵⁹ Buffon, *Histoire Naturelle*, 196-98; quoted in Garraway, "Race, Reproduction, and Family Romance," 234.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:165. "Les peuples de la Perse, de la Turquie, de l'Arabie, de l'Egypte et de toute la Barbarie peuvent être regardés comme une même nation...ils vivent, comme les Tartares, sans règle, sans police et presque sans société."

⁶¹ "La plus grande nouvelle d'aujourd'hui est la déclaration de guerre entre l'Empereur allemande et l'Empereur turc. L'Impératrice russe se met aussi aux troussees des musulmans. On assure que les autres puissances chrétiennes laisseront agir Catherine et Joseph en toute liberté dans cette guerre. Nous pouvons donc espérer qu'enfin ces barbares invaseurs seront chassés de l'Europe et que bientôt la Grèce reprendra son ancienne splendeur sous la forme monarchique [...]" 8 March 1788, in *Gazette d'un Parisien sous la Révolution, lettres à son frère, 1783-1796*, texts reassembled by Anne Vassal (Paris: Librairie académique Perrin, 1976), 104.

Again returning to the parallel between France and ancient Rome, Talleyrand, Napoleon's chief advisor, declared in his address to the Directory regarding the invasion of Egypt:

Egypt was a province of the Roman Republic; she must become a province of the French Republic. Roman rule saw the decadence of this beautiful country; French rule will bring it prosperity. The Romans wrested Egypt from kings distinguished in arts and sciences; the French will lift it from the hands of the most appalling tyrants who have ever existed.⁶²

By the time of the Napoleonic expedition, the belief in the superiority of the Greco-Roman world over Egypt was fully incorporated into the *Description de l'Egypte*. As its frontispiece (figure 20) the country is literally framed as a French exploit in which Napoleon appears in the guise of the next Alexander the Great. Atop the frontispiece, he rides his chariot into Egypt where the Mamelukes fall under his power. Behind him, the arts and sciences of classical, enlightened civilizations are ushered forth. At the bottom of the frontispiece the inhabitants of Egypt flank the symbol of this "autre Alexandre,"⁶³ Napoleon's classical counterpart, while the names of the battles of the expedition enclose a view of the Nile surrounded by the most famous monuments of Egyptian antiquity.

This is not to say that there was no dissent on the subject of colonizing Egypt in particular. On the contrary, one of the leading proponents of the inferiority of the Egyptian race, Volney, discouraged the military occupation of that country as early as 1788. But his argument was not one in defense of the rights of the Egyptian populace, but rather that such an act would tip the balance of power among the European nations,

⁶² Quoted in Dewatcher and Gillispie, eds., *The Monuments of Egypt*, 3.

⁶³ Much can be said of Napoleon's appropriation of the image of Alexander. While he is first and foremost associating himself with the classical conqueror, he may equally be making reference to the LeBrun painting cycle that cast Louis XIV in the light of an "autre Alexandre." In this sense, Napoleon attempts to assert the self-image of one who has not only appropriated and outdone the classical hero, but also the great French monarch of recent history.

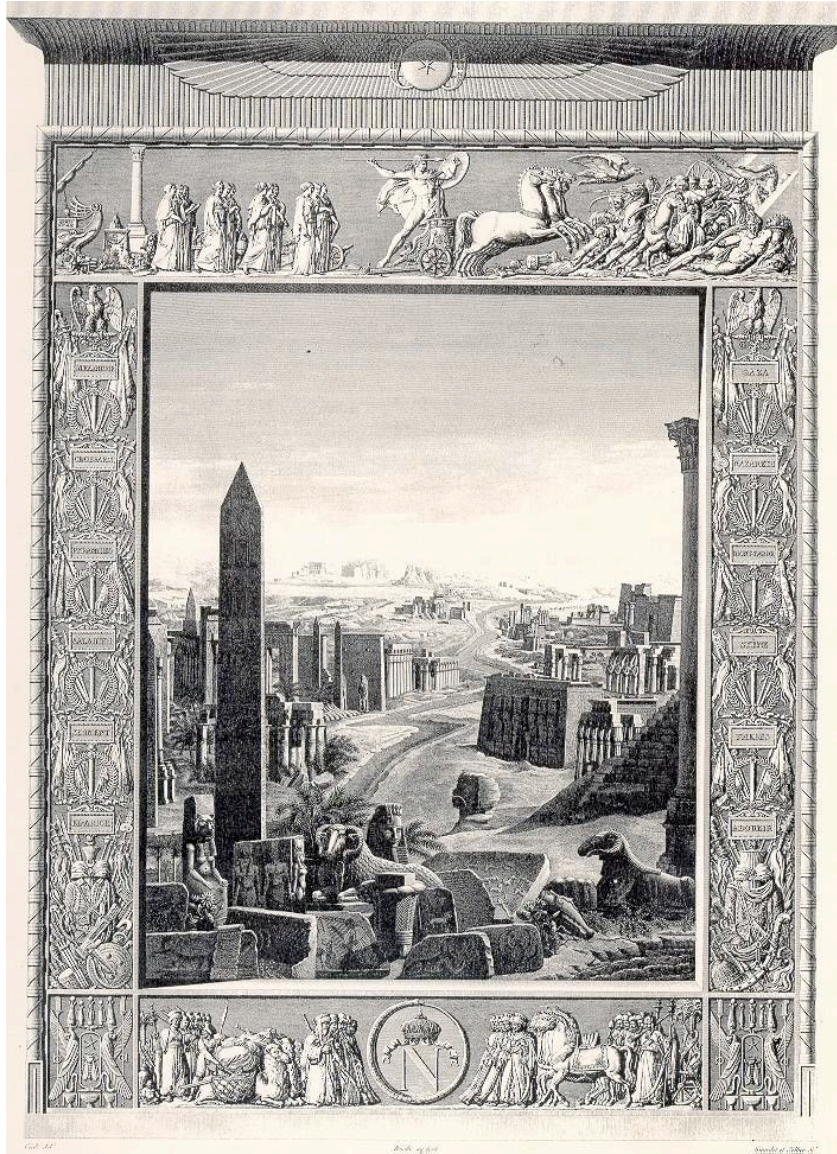


Figure 20. Frontispiece, *Description de l'Égypte*

thus threatening international peace and internal stability.⁶⁴ The European balance of power, however, changed dramatically from when Volney uttered these words to the time that Napoleon was declared First Consul in 1798, leading him to turn his imperial expansion toward the British Isles. Talleyrand, Napoleon's chief advisor, fully understood the backlash that would result from a direct attack on Britain; thus France's attention was turned toward Egypt. Without directly launching an invasion on Britain, an occupation of Egypt would weaken the British Empire by blocking major trading routes to British India, while simultaneously allowing the French to tap into Egypt's resources and economic potential. With the discourse already fully developed regarding Egypt's inferiority and an intellectual hegemony already firmly in place, French invasion and occupation of that country appeared a far less formidable, far more alluring prospect than a direct invasion of the British nation itself. To what extent would the established discourse on Egypt that justified its colonialism hold fast against the actualities of military occupation under Napoleon?

⁶⁴ *Considérations sur la guerre actuelle des Turcs en 1788* (London: 1788); cited in Confer, "French Colonial Ideas Before 1789," 355-356.

CHAPTER TWO:
THE *DESCRIPTION* DECODED: TRAVEL CONVENTIONS OF IMPERIAL
IDEOLOGY UNDER CLOSER SRUTINY

Art historian David Prochaska has argued that the layout of each of the archeological sites within the *Description* follows a consistent format that unveils Egypt from a most general to most specific view of a given site.⁶⁵ Beginning with an aerial map of a particular archeological site (figure 21), it then moves to a general view of the monuments in their environment (figure 22), followed by architectural elevation and plans (figure 23), and plates of any individual artifacts and inscriptions discovered (figure 24). All five volumes of the antiquity plates are in this format as they trace the monuments and archeological sites of the country in order along the Nile from Upper to Lower Egypt (south to north). Along with these major archeological sites, the last volume of antiquities also includes manuscripts and papyrus, hieroglyph inscriptions, medals, antique collections.⁶⁶

Also within the plates of the modern state and natural history, a similarly objective view is presented that seemingly leaves little room for interpretation or misinformation. The modern state plates follow the same trajectory up the Nile focusing

⁶⁵ “Art of Colonialism, Colonialism of Art: The *Description de l’Egypte* (1809-1828),” *L’Esprit Créateur* 34, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 69-91.

⁶⁶ Volume one of the antiquities mainly contains the archeological sites of the Philae Island, Elephantine Island, Kom Ombo, Selseleh, Edfu, El Kab, Esneh and its environs, and Armant. Volumes two and three are both devoted to Thebes. Volume four consists of Quos, Dendera, Abydos, Q’ou el Kebyreh, Syout, Achmouneyn, Antinoë, Heptanomide, and Fayyum and its environs. The last volume of the antiquities plates, volume V, contains the sites of Memphis and its pyramids, the Valley of the Nile, Cairo, Heliopolis, Tanis, the Delta, and Alexandria.

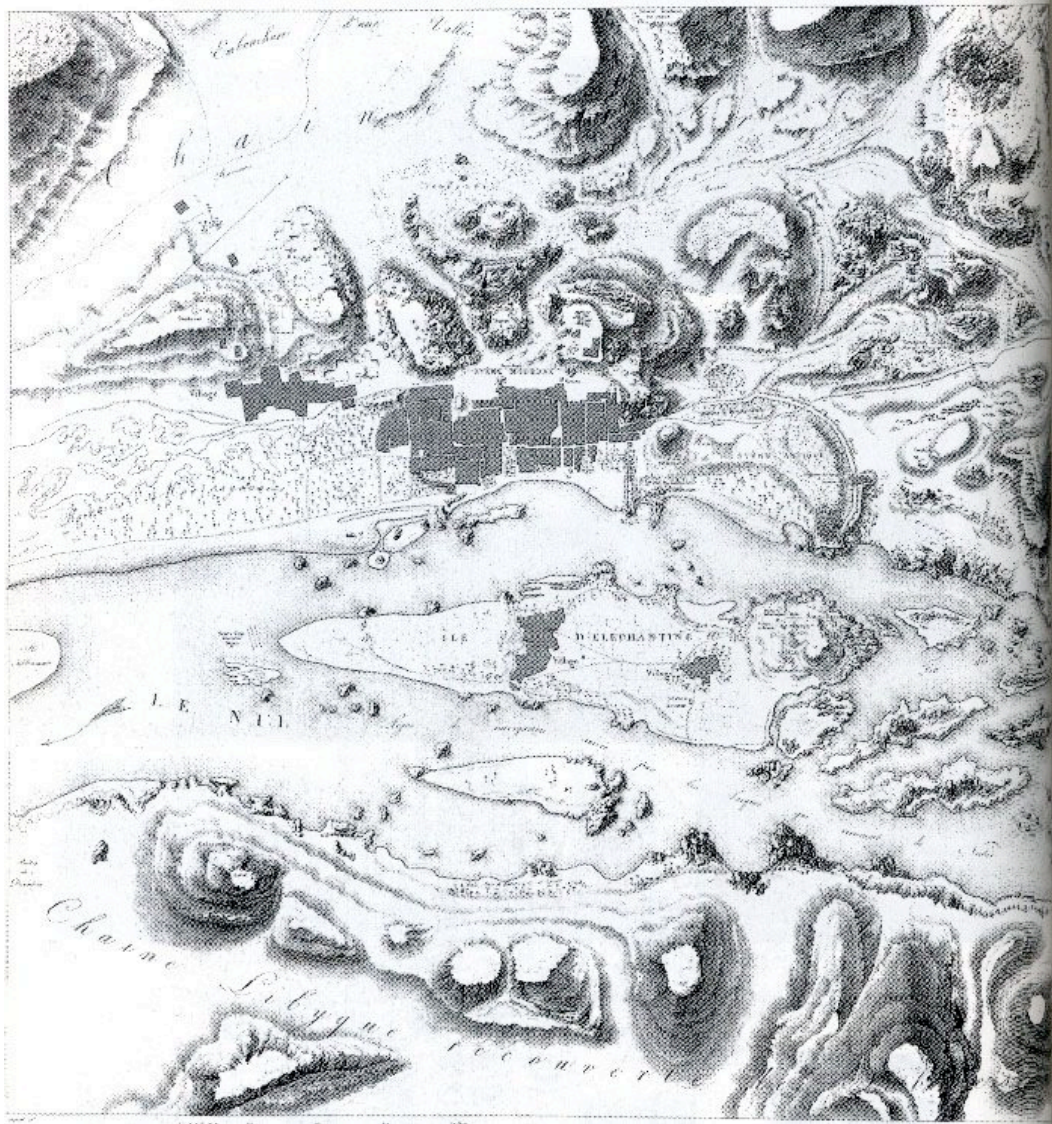


Figure 21. “Plan general de Île d’Eléphantine, de Syène, et des carrières de granit exploitées par les anciens égyptiens,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Île d’Eléphantine et Syène – Antiquités*, vol. I, pl. 31.

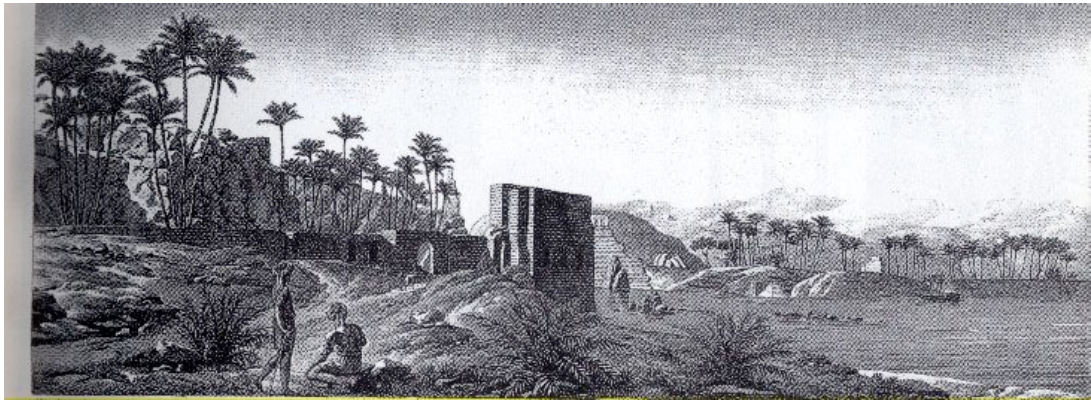


Figure 22. “Vue de Syène,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Île d’Eléphantine et Syène – Antiquités*, vol. I, pl. 32.

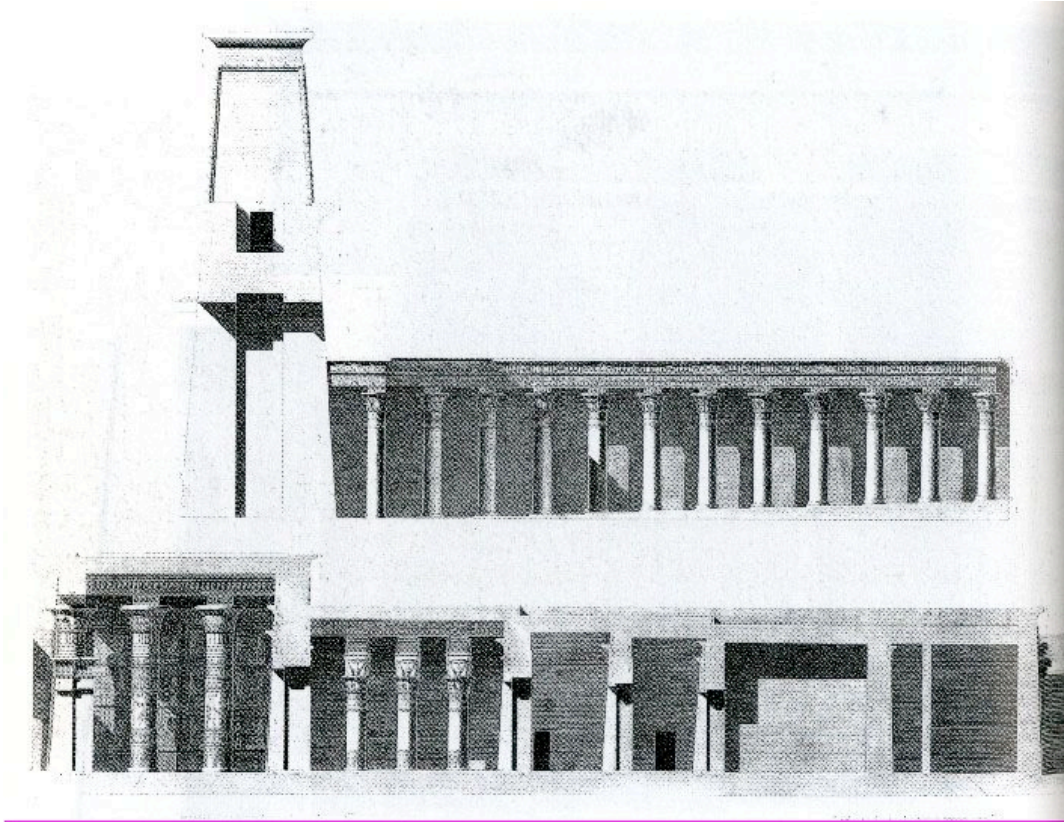


Figure 23. “Coupe longitudinale du grand temple,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Edfou (Appollinopolis Magna) – Antiquités*, vol. I, pl. 54.

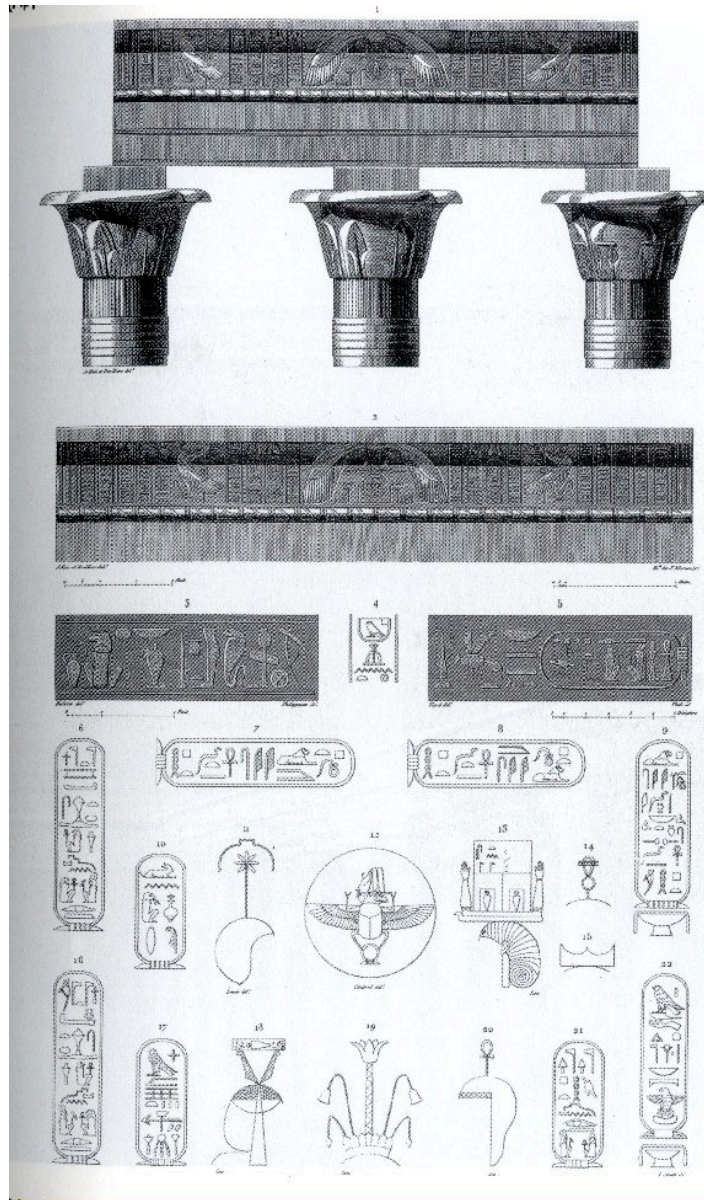


Figure 24. “Détails d’architecture du grand temple; 3,5. Dés de chapiteaux du portique; 4,6,7 à 22. Détails d’hiéroglyphes et de coiffures symboliques,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Edfou (Appollinopolis Magna) – Antiquités*, vol. I, pl. 60.

upon the major inhabited cities and their inhabitants' arts and crafts, costumes and portraits, vases, furniture and instruments, inscriptions, money, and medals. The first natural history volume consists of vertebrae; the second volume invertebrates, botany, and mineralogy (figures 25 and 26).

In short, Prochaska argues for an encyclopedic gaze rooted in the empiricism of Diderot's *Encyclopedia* that attempts to encompass and contain all knowledge within its texts and images. As Roland Barthes argues in his essay, "The Plates of the *Encyclopedia*," when Diderot isolates the objects from their context, naturalizes them into a larger *tableau vivant*, and shows us the objects purpose from "raw substance to finished product," he creates a complete absence of secrecy, and thus the encyclopedic gaze is born (figures 27 and 28, compare to figure 25 of this chapter).⁶⁷ The crux of Prochaska's argument is that the images in the *Description* function in the same manner as those in Diderot's *Encyclopedia* through their attempt to dissect various tools and mechanisms of Egypt and place them as a collection of objects within a larger vignette to be exposed and consumed.

Yet there are several problems in Prochaska's analysis of the *Description*. First, his argument is not a visual one. While he does address the sequence and patterns in the images, his analysis remains generalized, not acknowledging the specificities of the individual plates themselves. Further, the limits of the encyclopedic gaze need to be addressed in relation to the actualities of the Napoleonic expedition, for such a gaze is premised on the ability to distance oneself from his environment and represent objectively that which is pictured. I do not deny the claim of empirical representation

⁶⁷ "The Plates of the Encyclopedia," in *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, 392-400.

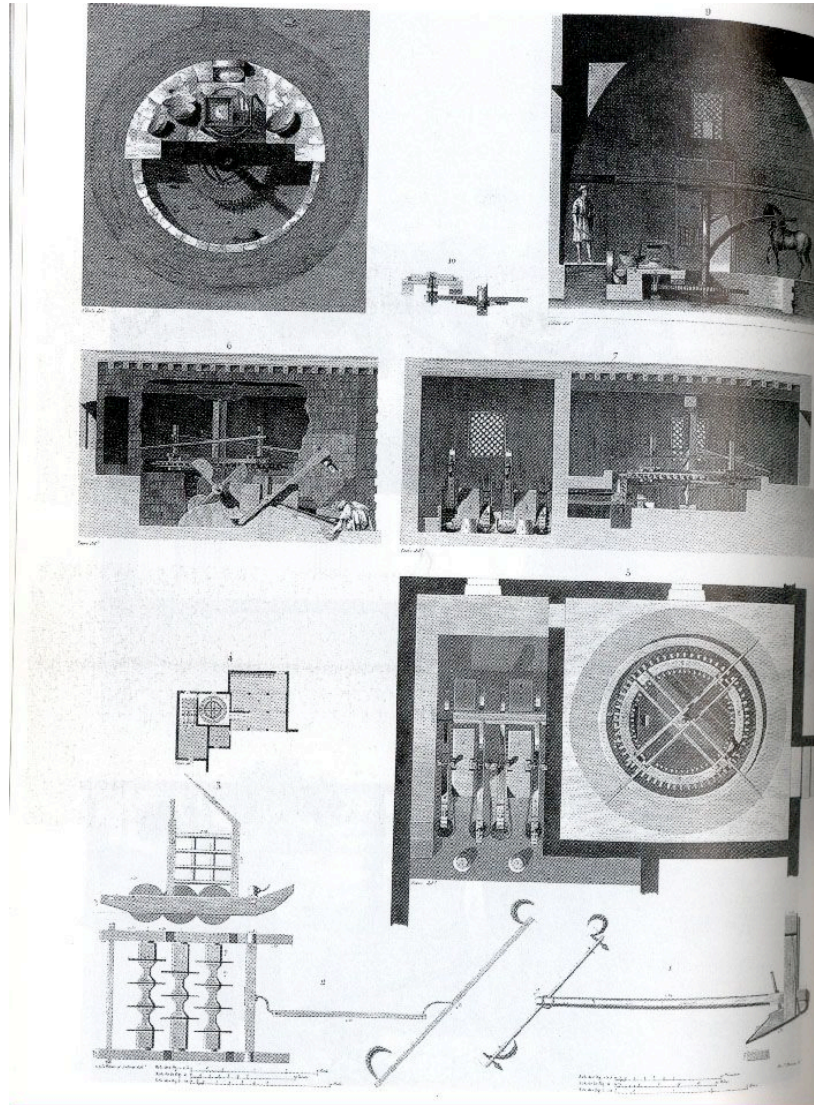


Figure 25. “1. Charrue; 2,3. Machine à battre les grains’ 4 à 7. Machine à blanchir le riz; 8, 9, 10. Moulin à farine,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Arts et métiers – État Moderne*, vol. II, pl. X.

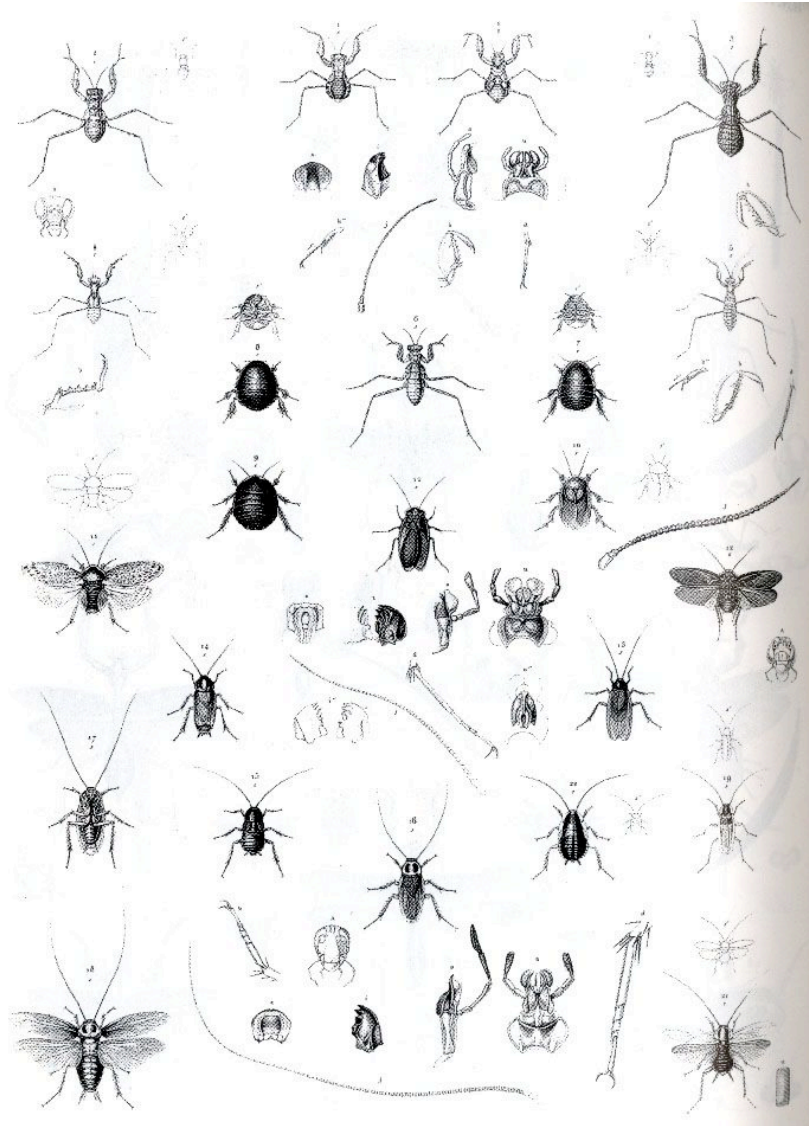


Figure 26. "Mantes, Blattes," from *Description de l'Égypte, Histoire Naturelle - Zoologie - Animaux invertébrés - Orthoptères*, par Jules-César Savigny, pl. III.



Figure 27. Diderot and d'Alambert, *Encyclopédie*, 1751

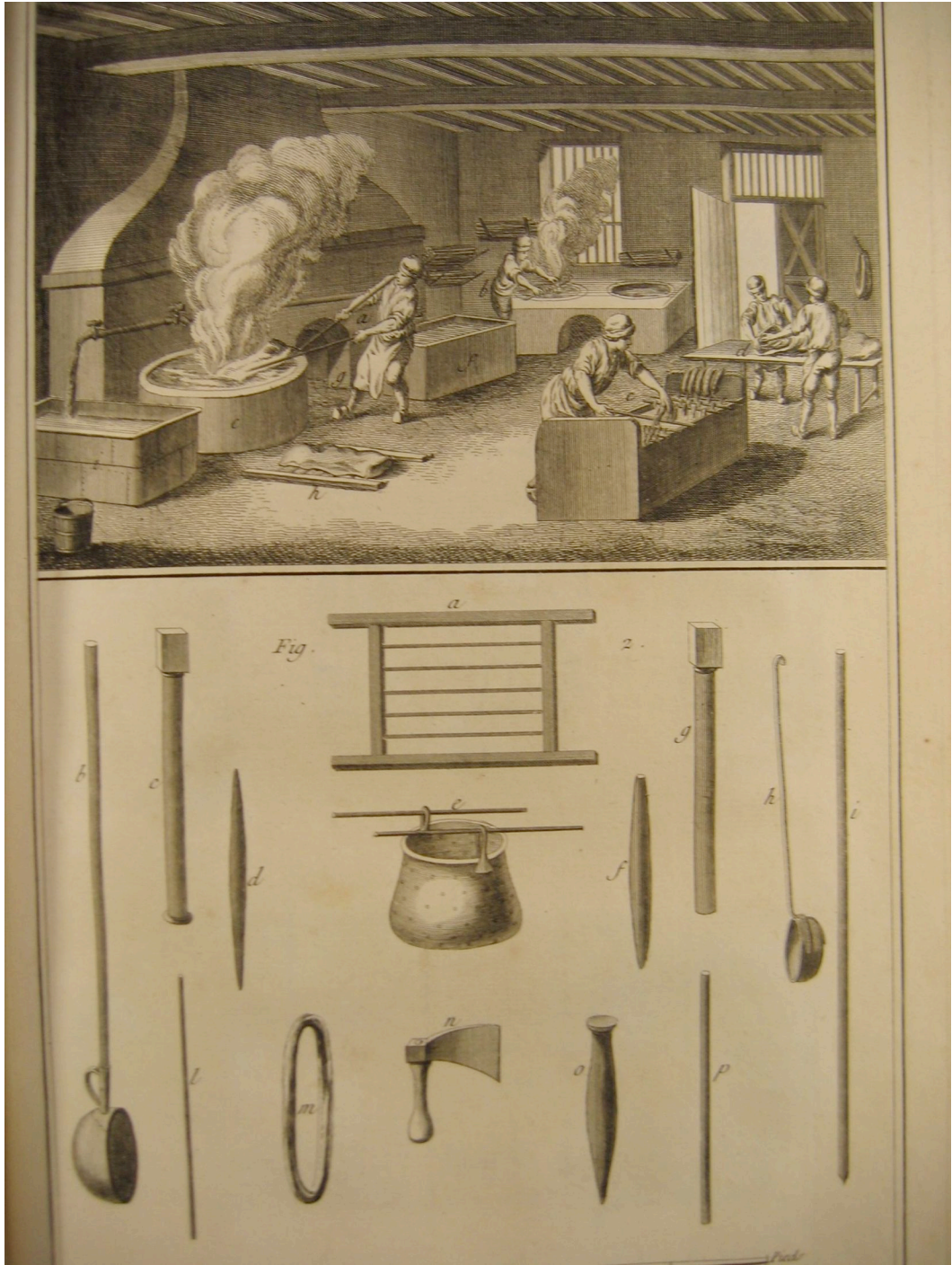


Figure 28. Diderot and d'Alambert, *Encyclopédie*, 1751.

within the *Description* through the French expedition's attempt to establish distance and maintain control over what they see. Yet, it should equally be known that there is much more that needs to be brought to light in this monumental work that acknowledges where this encyclopedic gaze fails due to the collapse of distance between the French and the environment they wished to colonize, a collapse that resulted in instability and lack of control. Indeed, I argue that the encyclopedic gaze itself as outlined by Prochaska functions merely as a defensive response to the catastrophe of the expedition, a means to overcorrect the sense of insecurity experienced.

The overarching goal of this chapter is to highlight certain repetitive themes of the *Description* and how they speak to this collapse of distance and the attempt to regain it, not to survey the *Description* as does Prochaska. The introductory section provides a basic understanding of ways in which the seemingly encyclopedic views of Egypt are negated and its empiricism falls short, thus critiquing the *Description's* classificatory pattern. Uncovering these themes reveals introductory examples to illustrate that the *Description* actually contains a very complex set of conventions not founded on purely empirical observation. After establishing this, I argue for an alternate way of analyzing the images that connects the very notion of seeing to larger discourses at work within the *Description*, specifically those of weather and disease to which the French were exposed while in Egypt. An analysis of this discourse will reveal the moment of the encyclopedic gaze's collapse in the *Description's* antiquity plates.

After pinpointing this collapse and its various manifestations, the following sections of the chapter will be devoted to examining how the French attempted to contain their fears and once again widen the gap between themselves and Egypt. This is first

done through representations that reinforce the natural inferiority of the Egyptian race as briefly brought out in chapter one. Secondly, I discuss representations that serve to perpetuate notions of European tradition, stability, and brotherhood as they correlated directly to what was perceived as the civil order of ancient Egypt. The inevitable anxiety and cultural assault that results during the systematic unveiling of a newly occupied territory is thus first contained within the *Description's* texts and images and then assuaged by the assurance of France's inexorable superiority. This superiority, I will show, carried across France's shifting and volatile governments of the nineteenth century as a means of stabilization.

Allowing for the Possibility of Iconography over Empiricism

The authors of the *Description* strive toward a number of measures to ensure that we as viewers are presented with a totalizing and encyclopedic view of this country. To provide several obvious examples in which gaps in this gaze come forth, we can first turn to the archeological site of Dendera. In figure 29, we encounter the facade of the *Great Temple of Dendera* in which the desert sand heaps around the left side, making invisible the lower portion of the building. Yet in the preparatory watercolor sketch done *in situ* at Dendera in August of 1799, the same view is presented as the previous image, with one minor exception. The dirt and rubble have been removed from the lower left portion of the temple so that the hieroglyphs are fully visible, but the artist has still taken care to denote with a fine gradation the point to where the rubble did reach at the bottom of the monument in figure 29 (figure 30). In this way the final excavated elevation is made ready to be included in the *Description* (figure 31). The amount of care taken to exhibit this temple as an artifact dissected to its smallest detail at this time when in fact

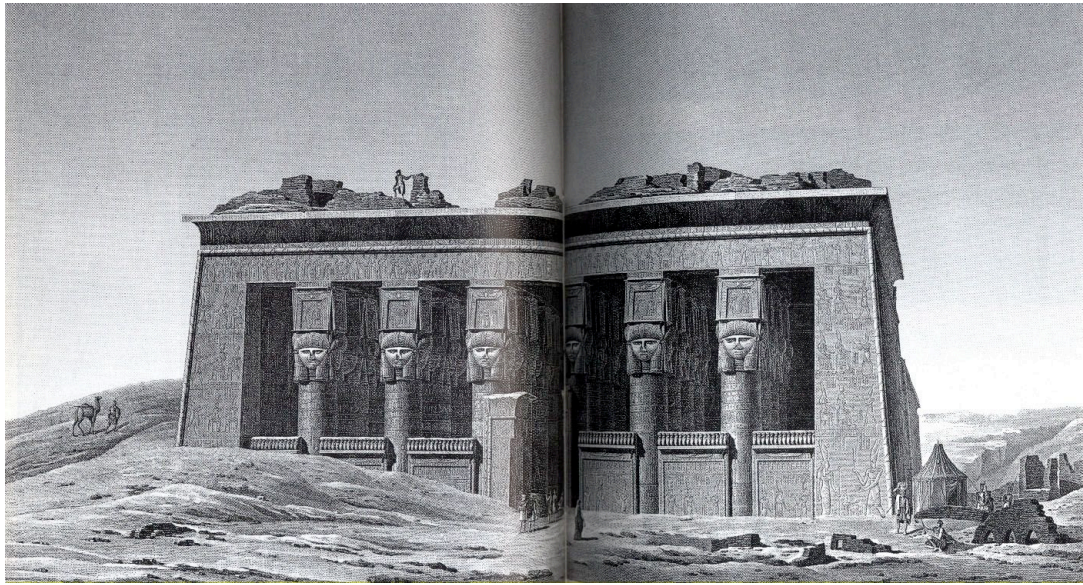


Figure 29. “Vue de la façade du grand temple,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Denderah (Tentyris) – Antiquités*, vol. IV, pl. VII.

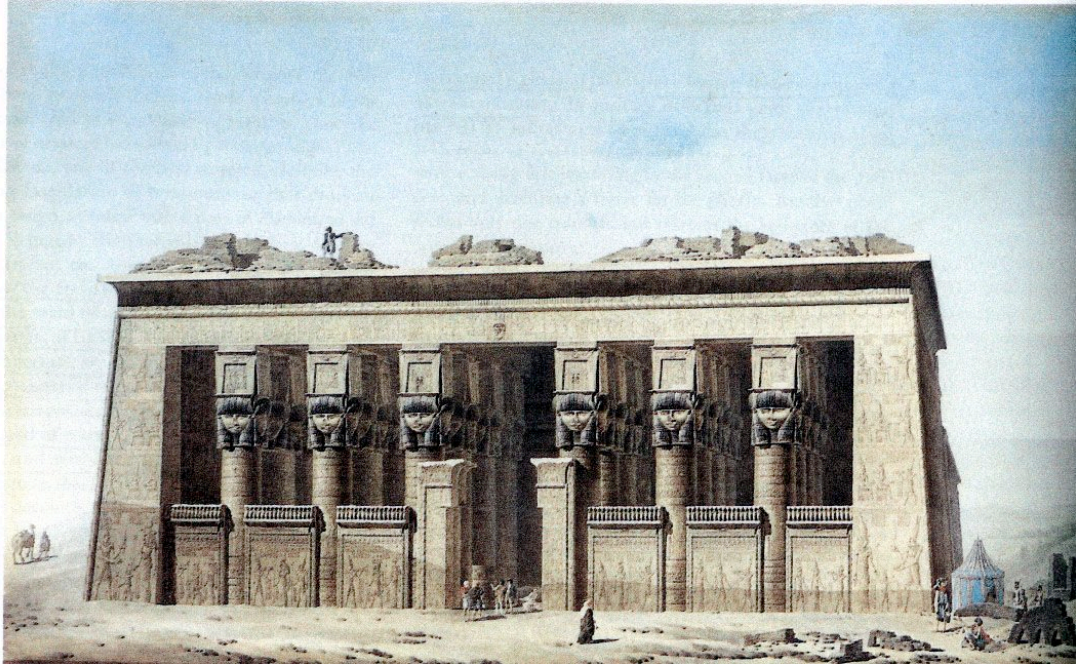


Figure 30. Antoine Cécile, *Facade of the Great Temple at Dendera*, 1799. Sketch made during the Egyptian Expedition, in August-September, 1799. Watercolor on paper, 45 x 75 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes (E 17388).

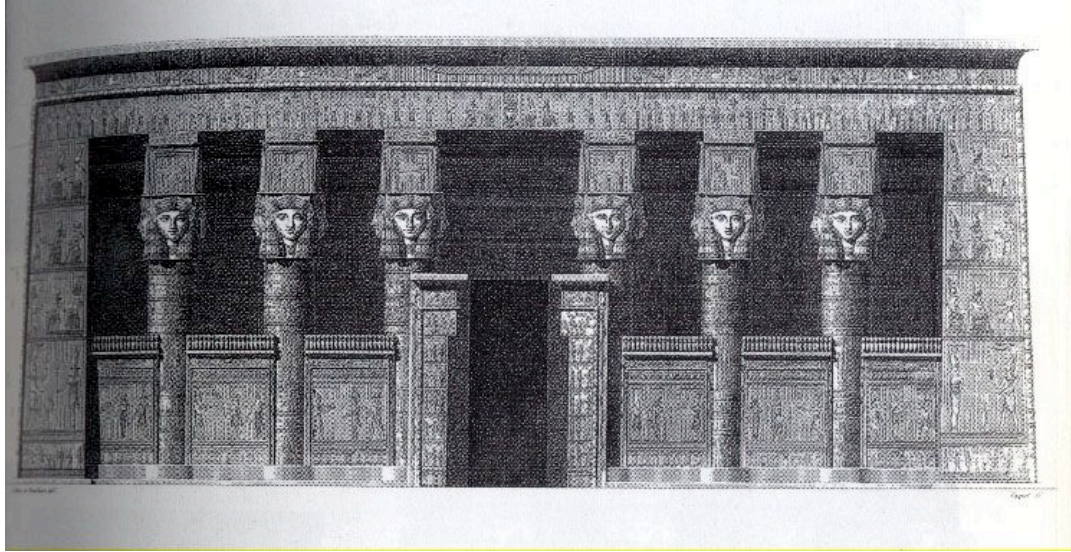


Figure 31. “Elévation du portique du grand temple,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Denderah (Tentyris) – Antiquités*, vol. IV, pl. IX.

hieroglyphs were still indecipherable asserts the artists' attempt to avoid manifesting any gaps in knowledge and its representation. Still, upon closer inspection inconsistencies arise in representations of the hieroglyphs from one image of the Temple of Dendera to the next.

Further, in a comparison of the *General View of the Pyramids and Sphinx* (figure 32) from the *Description* and Vivant Denon's *Profile of the Sphinx near the Pyramids* (figure 33) we discern a dialogue beginning to form. The view from the *Description* that depicts French soldiers atop the Sphinx one afternoon that Napoleon had taken a day trip there is an event cited directly from Denon's work published about a decade earlier. Hence, a narrative unfolds that becomes more personally experiential than empirically observational. In other words, instances such as this make it evident that there is more to look for in the *Description* than mere encyclopedic knowledge and documentary enterprise. Considering the *Description* simultaneously with the work of Denon for his close relationship to the military and intellectual perspectives of the expedition, the following sections explore just what more can be found.

Part I: Developing a Regime of Truth through Travel Conventions

Sunlight, Air, and Decay

In this section, I examine the specific environmental conditions and medical ailments to which the French were exposed while in Egypt to argue that these factors directly affected how the French envisioned Egypt's decaying monuments and evolutionary inferior inhabitants within the *Description*. Richard Wrigley undertakes something quite similar in his analysis of the discourses of travel to Rome that feed into the notion of influence and how it was envisioned by travelers as something inherent to

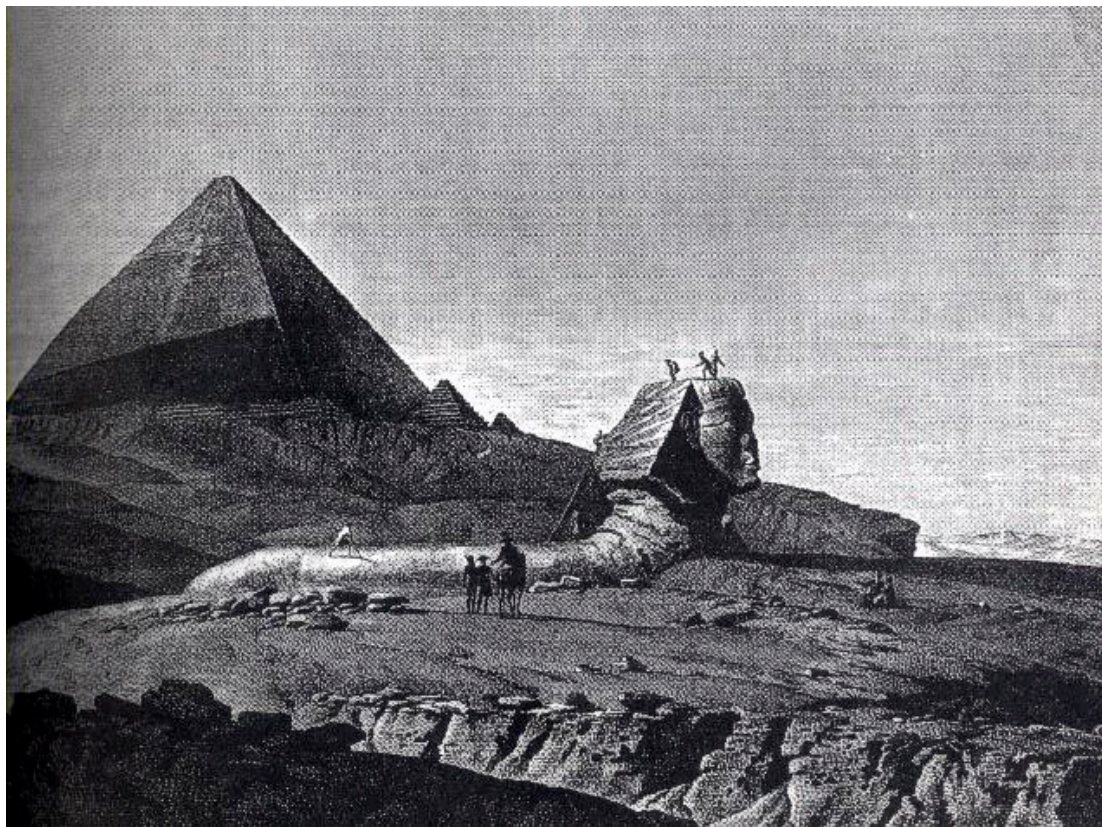


Figure 32. “Vue générale des pyramides et du sphinx, prise au soleil couchant,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Antiquités*, vol.V, pl. VIII, detail.

the city's environment itself.⁶⁸ Attempting to put the notion of "influence" in a larger context than mere pictorial similarity, he convincingly argues that eighteenth-century travelers believed artistic influence and simultaneous moral decay were the result of the contagious quality of Rome's air itself. It is my contention that similar themes of a malignant air are not limited to what was seen as a culturally declining Italian country, but run rampant throughout the *Description* as well as ways of defining the Orient in general and Egypt in particular.

Members of the French expedition imagined Egyptian air and sunlight to affect their general physical condition, which in turn influenced how they envisioned the land of Egypt itself. This is made clear in the medical records and proclamations issued during the expedition by the chief medical officer of the French army, René-Nicolas Dufriche Desgenettes. Of all the recorded lectures given by French scholars at the *Institut d'Égypte* upon its formation, three were on the topic of ophthalmia, more than any other disease even briefly mentioned by Desgenettes and the medical officers, including the plague.⁶⁹ It was also considered the primary disease to infect the French, spreading so rapidly through the army as to be called an epidemic on a number of occasions. Today known as trachoma, this bacterial condition affects the eye by producing excess scar tissue upon infection, enlarging the eyelids until the eyelashes invert and scratch the cornea, thus leading to irritation, redness, and eventual blindness. Trachoma is caused by the sexually transmitted disease Chlamydia and also passes from one person to another

⁶⁸ "Infectious Enthusiasms: Influence, Contagion, and the Experience of Rome," in *Transports: travel, pleasure, and imaginative geography*, ed. Chloe Chard and Helen Langdon (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, the Yale Center for British Art, 1996), 75-116.

⁶⁹ "Formation de l'*Institut d'Égypte*," in *Memoires sur l'Égypte*, 131, 134, and 146.

through direct contact with eye secretions.⁷⁰ It was most likely spread among the soldiers as a result of the cramped and unclean conditions of their quarters. Yet this is not what they believed to cause ophthalmia. Rather, French military personnel put blame on the air and sunlight specific to the land of Egypt in every appearance it makes in medical records. In two letters circulated by Desgenettes and another army doctor, Bruant, through the periodical *La Décade Égyptienne* begun during the French occupation of Egypt, there are at least six instances in which Desgenettes directly links the cause and increased irritation of ophthalmia to Egypt's sunlight and atmosphere.⁷¹ This is not the least bit surprising considering that Desgenettes's chief source for understanding medicine in Egypt was the sixteenth-century doctor, Prosper Alpin, whose *Medicina Ægyptiorvm* also blamed the sunlight and air for the outbreak of ophthalmia that plagued foreign travelers to Egypt, but to which the natives themselves seemed to be at even greater risk.⁷² Baron Larrey, a medical officer under the direction of Desgenettes, published the following regarding the condition in the *Description de l'Égypte*:

⁷⁰ I would like to thank George Brian Bartley, M.D. for his expertise in helping me to identify ophthalmia and its symptoms as the condition today known as trachoma (per conversation October 11, 2005). Dr. Bartley is Director of the American Board of Ophthalmology and C.E.O of Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville. He is also editor emeritus of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and past president of the Cogan Ophthalmic History Society. Dr. Bartley notes that this eye condition was not in any way particular to the French in Egypt, but actually remains the largest cause of preventable blindness throughout the world today, most notably in developing countries.

⁷¹ "Lettre circulaire du Citoyen Desgenettes aux Médecins de l'Armée d'Orient, sur un plan propre à rédiger la Topographique physique et médicale de l'Égypte. Au quartier-général du Kaire, le 25 thermidor an 6 de la République Française," *Décade Égyptienne* 1, no. 1: 29.

⁷² Prosperi Alpini, "De anni temporibus apud Ægyptius visitatis, at que de ipforum tempere. Cap. VII," in *De Medicina Ægyptiorvm* (Venetiis: Apud Franciscum de Franciscis Senensem, MDXCI), 10a-11b. Both Desgenettes and standard medical officer to the army, Bruant, directly reference Alpin in their discussion of ophthalmia. See "Lettre circulaire du Citoyen Desgenettes aux Médecins de l'Armée d'Orient, sur un plan propre à rédiger la Topographie physique et médicale de l'Égypte," *Décade Égyptienne*, 1, no. 1: 30, and "Notice sur l'Ophtalmie régnante, par le citoyen Bruant, médecin ordinaire de l'Armée," *Décade Égyptienne*, 1, no. 2: 58. Also, "Lettre du citoyen Frank, médecin de l'armée d'Orient, Au citoyen Desgenettes, médecin en chef. Au quartier général du Kaire, le 18 pluviôse au 8," *Courier de l'Égypte*, no. 59 (Le 30 Pluviôse VIII.e année de la République): 2.

The sudden passage of European troops into one of the burning hot countries of Africa, where there are extreme vicissitudes and influences, causes in the health of these troops an enormous alteration from which one has almost no necessary precautions to protect oneself, due to the lack of enough positive knowledge of the locality, or by the ignorance of the real cause of the particular illnesses of this climate. In this way, at our arrival in Egypt, we were struck all at once by a rebellious ophthalmia, that immediately caused panic to our battalion, throwing our soldiers into an absolute despair, and caused, among a certain number, the quick loss of vision [...] The eyes had been struck all at once by the ardent sunlight, either direct, or by the whitish ground of Egypt. Such were the first effects of this country. There in is the result of a relentless ophthalmia, that has thrown most of our soldiers into absolute despair, and has caused the loss of vision to a very great number.⁷³

The ardent climate and sunlight of Egypt were considered so extreme as to beget immediate panic, despair, and blindness among a great number of the battalions as soon as they arrived in the country. In fact, the sunlight irritated the eyes so severely that

Volney, as well, reaffirms that ophthalmia is a condition that greatly affects the native inhabitants much worse than travelers: *Travels through Syria and Egypt, in the years 1783, 1784, and 1785. Containing the present natural and political state of those countries, Translated from the French*, vol. 1 (London, 1787), 241.

⁷³ “Memoires et Observations sur Plusieurs Maladies, qui ont affecté les troupes de l’armée Française pendant l’expédition d’Egypte et de Syries, et qui sont endémiques dans ces deux contrées,” in *Description de l’Egypte, État Moderne*, vol. 1, 427 and 431. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated: “Le passage subit des troupes Européennes dans une des contrées brûlantes de l’Afrique, dont les vicissitudes extrêmes et les influences nous étoient, pour ainsi dire, inconnues, devoit produire dans la santé de ces troupes une altération d’autant plus grande qu’on n’avait pas presque aucune des precautions nécessaires pour se garantir de ses effets, soit par le défaut de connaissances assez positives sur les localités, soit par l’ignorance des véritables causes des maladies particulières à ce climat. Ainsi, à notre arrivée en Egypte, nous fûmes frappés tout-à-coup d’une ophtalmie rebelle, qui affolito promptement nos batallions, jeta plusieurs de nos soldats dans un désespoir absolu, et causa, chez un certain nombre, la perte de la vue d’une manière si prompte, qu’on ne put leur apporter aucun secours efficace [...] Les yeux ayant été frappés tout-à-coup de l’ardente lumière du soleil, soit directe, soit réfléchiée par le sol blanchâtre de l’Egypte, ont les premiers senti dans cette contrée, les effets de la répercussion de la transpiration cutanée: il en est résulté une ophtalmie opiniâtre, qui a jeté plusieurs de nos soldats dans un désespoir absolu, et a causé la perte de la vue à un assez grand nombre.”

With regard to perspiration contributing to the discomfort of ophthalmia, Baron Larrey is manifesting his reliance on the writings of Volney, who says of perspiration and its effects in Egypt: “They [diseases] therefore naturally attack the head, because Egyptians, by shaving it once a weeks, and covering it with a prodigiously hot head-dress, principally attract to that the perspiration; and if the head receives ever so slight an impression of cold, on being uncovered, this perspiration is suppressed, and falls upon the teeth, or still more readily on the eyes, as being the tenderest part. On every fresh cold this organ is weakened, and at length finally destroyed. A disposition to this disorder, transmitted by generation, becomes a fresh cause of malady; and hence the natives are more exposed to it than strangers.” *Travels through Syria and Egypt*, 244.

soldiers reportedly rode blindfolded through the desert to lessen the discomfort.⁷⁴ Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby reads the blindfolded soldier in Gros's *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims* as a possible victim of this disease,⁷⁵ but even more telling are the infected, swollen, and bloodshot eyes of the men who lie in the foreground before him (figures 34 and 35).

I believe the plague of ophthalmia that affected vision is partially responsible for the hyper-real contrasts of light and dark and heightened decay of the monuments in the *Description's* antiquities plates. To explain, the antiquity plates are stylistically unique from the plates of the other sections of the work. While all of the prints are copper engravings, those of the modern state appear soft and finely modeled (figure 36). The plates of antiquity, however, are amplified and exaggerated by saturating sunlight. For example, the sun-drenched *Two Colossal Statues of Memnon* (figure 37) and the *Colossal Statue Placed at the Entrance of the Hypostyle Hall of the Palace at Karnak* (figure 38) are not isolated in the manner they reflect steep contrasts of light and dark. Common to the plates of the *Description*, the role we are meant to play as viewers has already been established for us as relationships between figures and their environment cement our relationship to the image itself. In figure 38 in particular, we are transported to the same position as the upward looking Frenchman who squints his eyes in an attempt to gaze at the lone monument in the sweltering heat. Specifically, while the light source in these images is directed from a specific angle, it also saturates the entire composition equally throughout, creating the sense of a persistent, inescapable, and bleaching sunlight. The

⁷⁴ Gillispie and Dewachter, eds., *Monuments of Egypt*, 15.

⁷⁵ "Plague, Egypt – Syria: Gros's *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims*, 1804," in *Extremities*, 99.

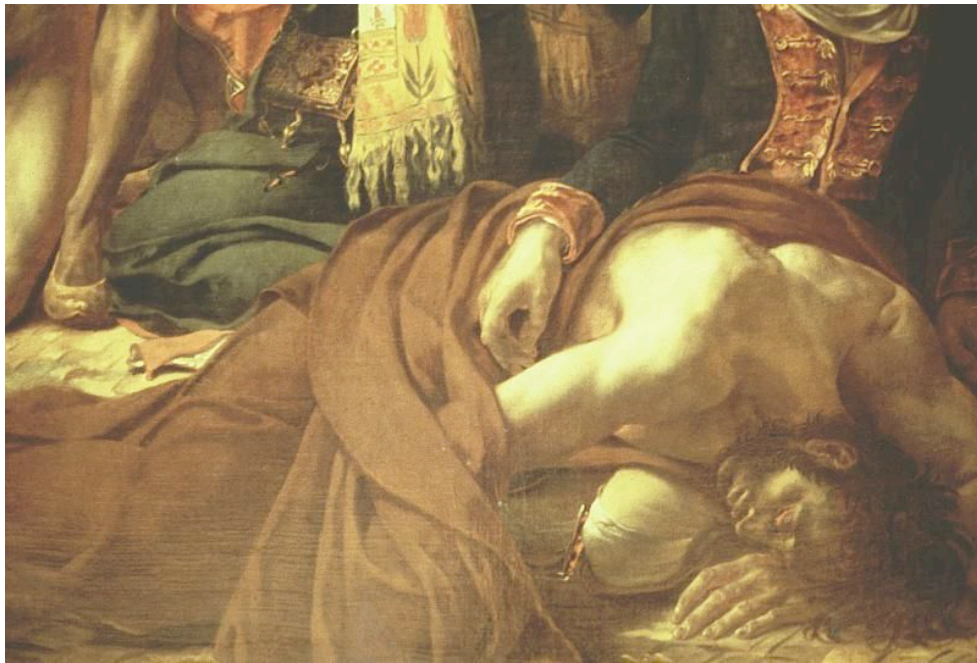


Figure 34. Antoine-Jean Gros, *Bonaparte visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa*, detail of dead soldier with infected eyes, 1804. Oil on canvas, 532 x 720 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

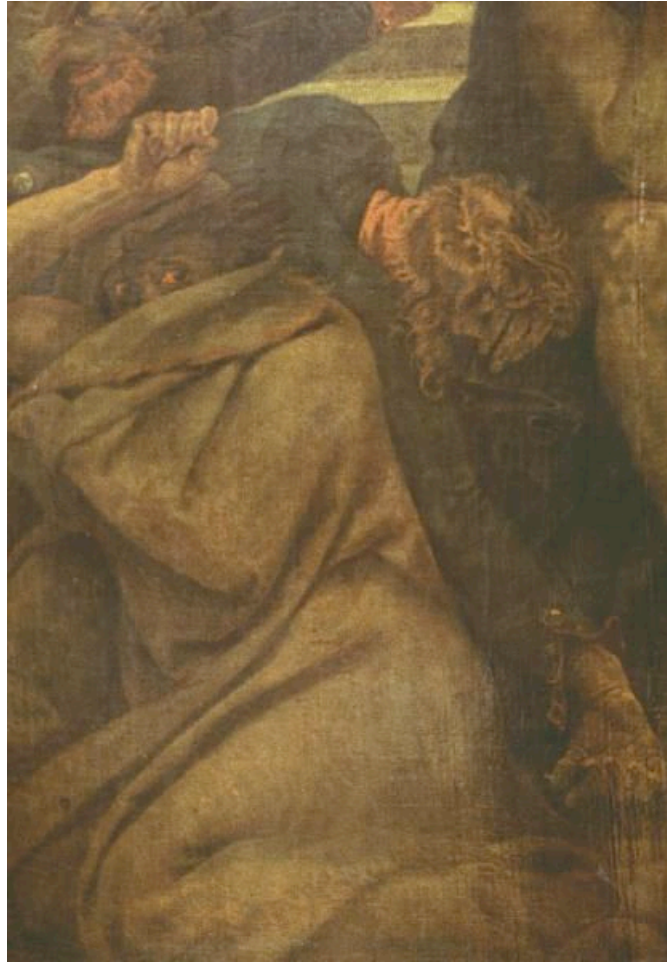


Figure 35. Antoine-Jean Gros, *Bonaparte visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa*, detail of plague victim with infected eyes, 1804. Oil on canvas, 532 x 720 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

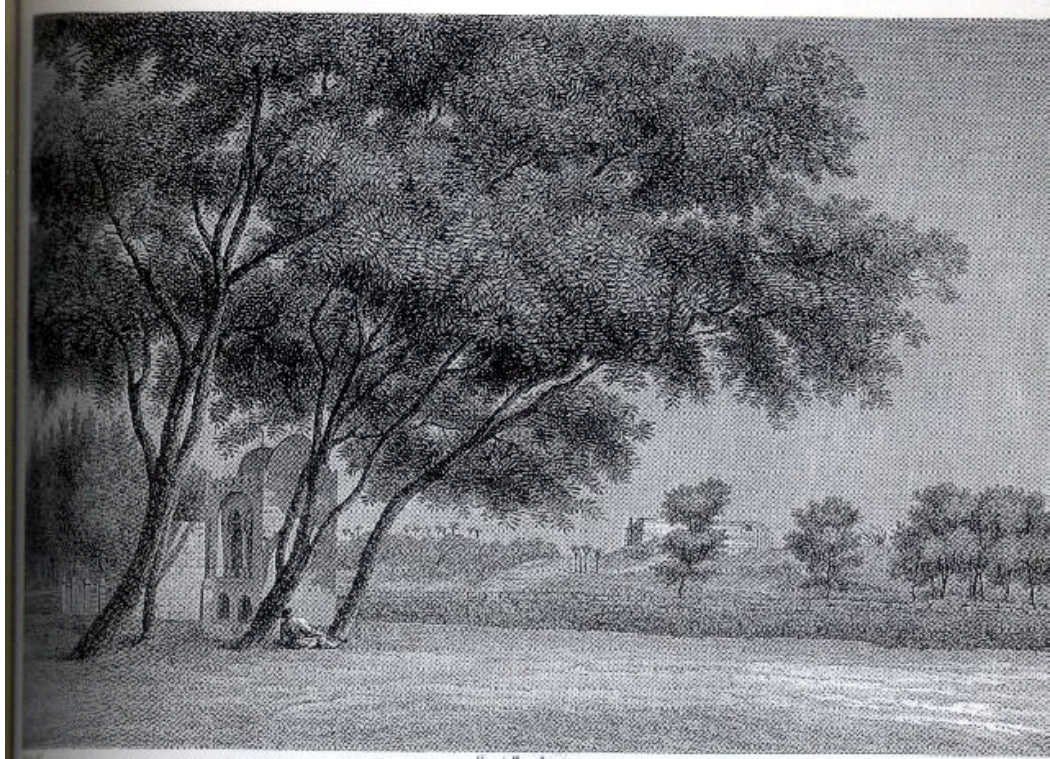


Figure 36. “Vue de la maison de Hasân Kâchef ou de l’Institut,” from *Description de l’Égypte, État Moderne*, vol. I, pl. 57.

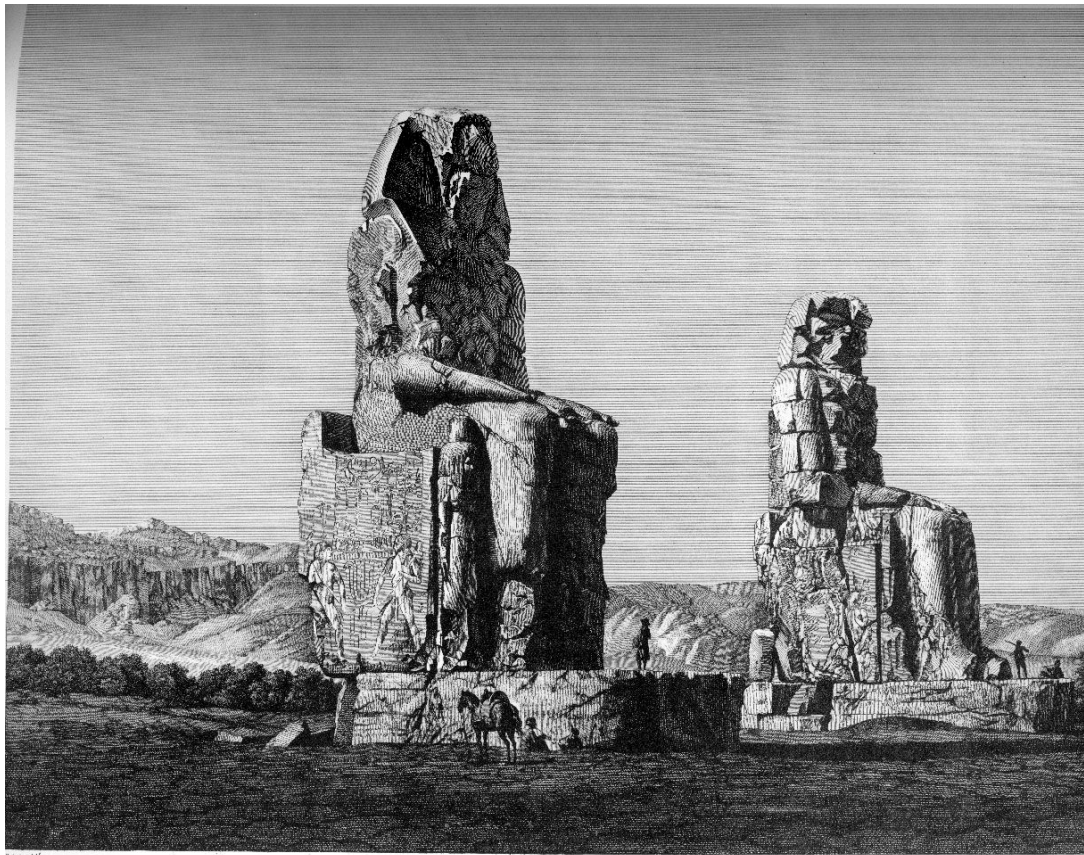


Figure 37. “Vue des deux colosses,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Thèbes, Memnonium -Antiquités*, vol. II, pl. XX.



Figure 38. “Vue d’un colosse placé à l’entrée de la salle hypostyle du palais,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Thèbes, Karnak – Antiquités*, vol. III, pl. XX.

only areas that are not immersed in the sharp sunlight are those in which stones have been broken and hewn from the structure, thus producing a steep shadow that emphasizes the monument's decay. Additionally, the ground of the desertscape appears blackened in the Colossi of Memnon, causing a contrast against the whitened monuments that emphatically jettisons them into our space. We have a sense of the grandeur of what was, but the sharp, rigid lines caused by the gaping holes of fallen stones leave us clearly in the present, immersed in a nostalgia and regret for these monuments whose atrophy and decrepitude is hardly subdued, but made brazenly explicit by the same unrelenting air and sun that induces discomfort and malaise in us.⁷⁶

A comparison of views from Denon's *Travels* with Sandys' *Travels* dating 1610 make this matter all the more visible. Both Denon's *Entrance to the Great Pyramid near Memphis* (figure 39) and an identical view by George Sandys (figure 40) present us with the bottom entrance to the pyramid that recedes back into space, yet Sandys' is ordered, symmetrical, and skillfully modeled. Conversely, the great pyramid in Denon's image possesses neither fortitude nor stability, but instead articulates a decay not present in that of Sandys. The monument of Denon's image has little hope of withstanding the sweltering, sun-drenched environment in which it resides. Denon's feeble stones appear hardly capable of maintaining their respective positions for much longer. The utter lack

⁷⁶ Volney tells of an instance in which he is overtaken by nostalgia almost to the point of tears upon seeing the state of the Pharaonic monuments in Egypt: "In Alexandria, on the contrary, we no sooner leave the New Town, than we are astonished at the sight of an immense extent of ground overspread with ruins [...] The earth is covered with the remains of lofty buildings destroyed; whole fronts crumbled down, roofs fallen in, battlements decayed, and the stones corroded and disfigured by saltpetre. The traveller passes over a vast plain, furrowed with trenches, pierced with wells, divided by walls in ruins, covered over with ancient columns, and modern tombs [...] The inhabitants, accustomed to this scene, behold it without emotion; but the stranger, in whom the recollection of ancient ages is revived by the novelty of the objects around him, feels a sensation, which not unfrequently dissolves him in tears, inspiring reflexions which fill his heart with sadness, while his soul is elevated by their sublimity." *Travels through Syria and Egypt*, vol. 1, 4-5.

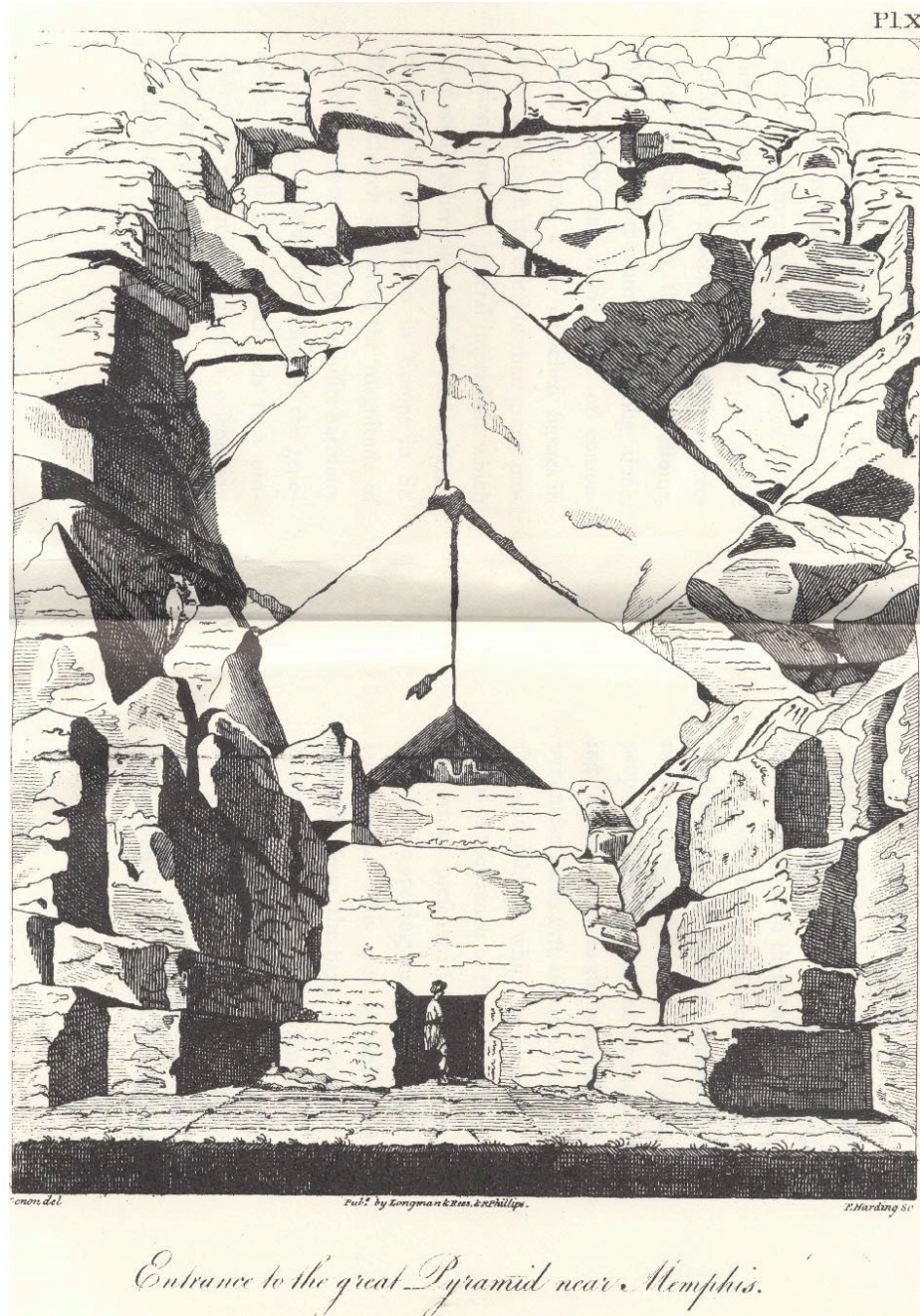


Figure 39. Vivant Denon, "Entrance to the great Pyramid near Giza," pl. X, from *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt during the Campaign of General Bonaparte*, vol. I, 1803.

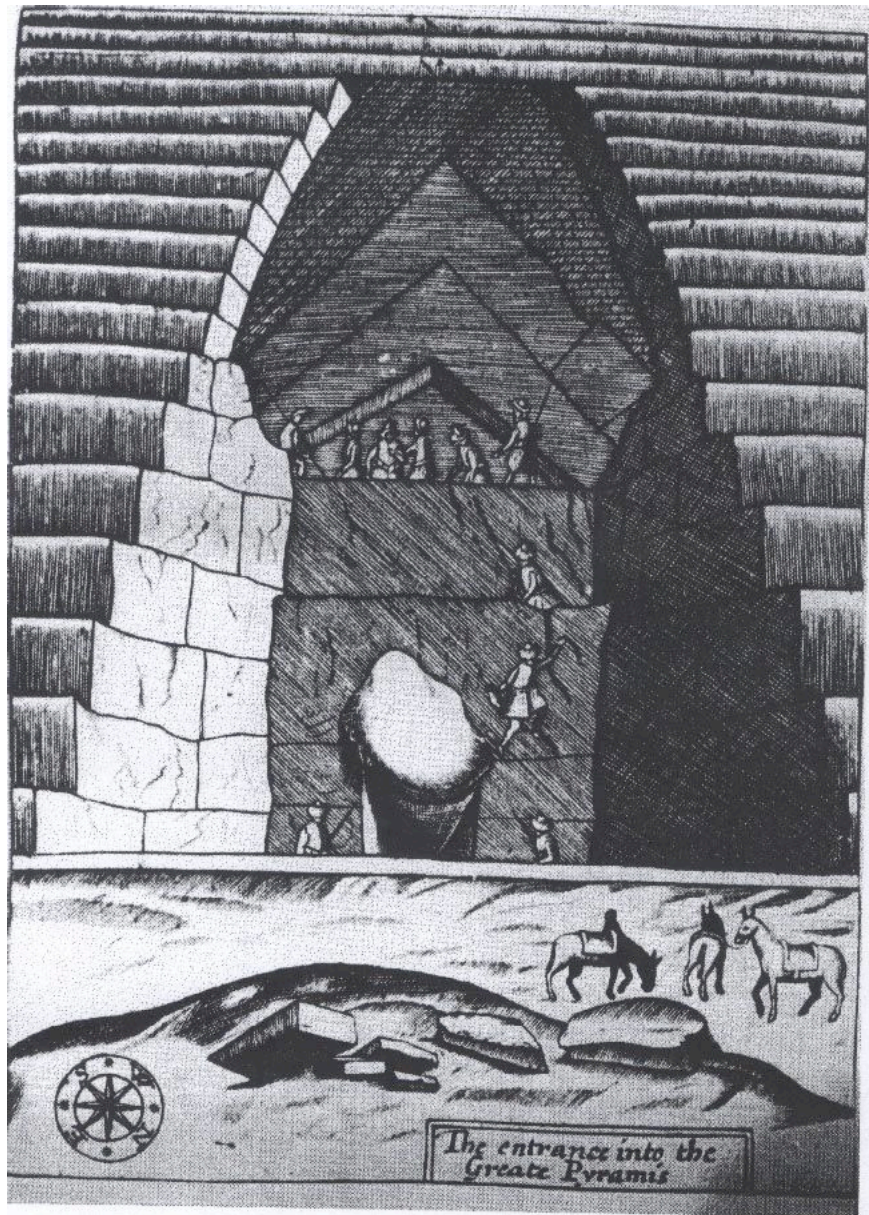


Figure 40. George Sandys, "The first English view to the entrance of the Great Pyramid," from *Travels*, 1610.

of modeling and recession only further punctuates the imminence of these stones' collapse. In short, the identifying mark of all the antiquity engravings of the *Description* and Denon's *Travels* is that of a starkly reflected sun against the whitened monuments of Egypt in which monumental ruination is heightened and dramatized. Such is the result of representation formed out of environmental conditions that caused "absolute despair" among the French as stated by Barron Larrey.

A discussion of the manner in which ophthalmia and the conditions of air and sunlight influenced representations of Egypt, however, leads to a critique of the larger metaphorical meanings that such representations possess. Returning again to the French army's medical records in Egypt, it becomes evident that in the view of the French, Egyptian sunlight and air had far worse effects than merely infecting the eye. Aside from ophthalmia, the two predominant medical problems affecting the soldiers were diarrhea and dysentery, which were also blamed on "the frequent change in temperature."⁷⁷ These, however, were rarely believed to occur without first the onset or symptom of ophthalmia. In a letter sent from Desgenettes to the army's medical officers, he warns that

[...].The ophthalmia endemic in Egypt is part of a rapid progression. This last sickness is sometimes simple or idiopathic; it then goes in the class of ordinary and local inflammations, and is treated as such. Other times it is concomitant or symptomatic of diarrhea and dysentery [...].⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Institut d'Égypte, "Formation de l'Institut sur l'Égypte," in *Memoires sur l'Égypte*, 131. "[...]le changement fréquent de température."

⁷⁸ "Lettre circulaire du Citoyen Desgenettes aux Médecins de l'Armée d'Orient, sur un plan propre à rédiger la Topographie physique et médicale de l'Égypte. Au quartier-général du Kaire, le 25 thermidor an 6 de la République Française," *Décade Egyptienne*, 1, no. 1: 29. "[...] l'optalmie endémique en Égypte commence à s'y joindre avec une progression rapide. Cette dernière maladie est quelquefois simple ou idiopathique; elle rentre alors dans la classe des inflammations ordinaires et locales, et elle se traite de même. D'autres fois elle est concomitante ou symptomatique des diarrhée et des dysenteries."

This provides evidence for the interesting belief that ophthalmia was not only a condition caused by the air and sun of Egypt, it was also a condition linked to ailments infecting the rest of the body. In the same proclamation, Desgenettes states that the observation of these diseases has led him to the conclusion that “[...] there is in almost all maladies a general indication of bringing the perspiration humor from the inside to the outside; this is to say the intestines to the skin.”⁷⁹ Desgenettes may in fact be referring here to a specific condition illustrated in the *Description* of a sarcoma, or fleshly tumor that affected both men and women (figure 41). Volney also believed that the cause of a similar condition produced in the lower stomach and testicles that affects sight was the result of corrupted humors attempting to affix themselves to the exterior of the body where they find least resistance.⁸⁰ While this is most likely another manifestation of Chlamydia as is ophthalmia, once again Barron Larrey attributes this condition in the *Description* to the “strong heat of the Egyptian climate” causing the disease to “develop easier.”⁸¹ The source of an ailment affecting the body so drastically as to cause distension as seen in figure 41 is again blamed on something as basic as air.

Here we see an ideal example of the French medical team espousing a humoral theory of medicine as originally taught by Hippocrates, in which human nature and physical disposition are affected, and even determined by, the external environment to

⁷⁹ Institut d'Égypte, “Formation de l'Institut sur l'Égypte,” in *Memoires sur l'Égypte*, 132. “il y a dans presque toutes les maladies une indication générale de porter l'humeur de la transpiration du dedans au dehors, c'est-à-dire des intestins vers la peau.”

⁸⁰ *Travels through Syria and Egypt*, vol.1, 243-44, 249-50.

⁸¹ “Notice sur la Conformation Physique des Égyptiens et des Differences Races qui Habitent en Égypte, Suivie de quelques Reflexions sur l'Embaumement des Momies,” *Description de l'Égypte, État Moderne*, vol. 2:1, 478-479. “fortes chaleurs du climat Égyptien,” causing the disease to “se développe plus facilement.”

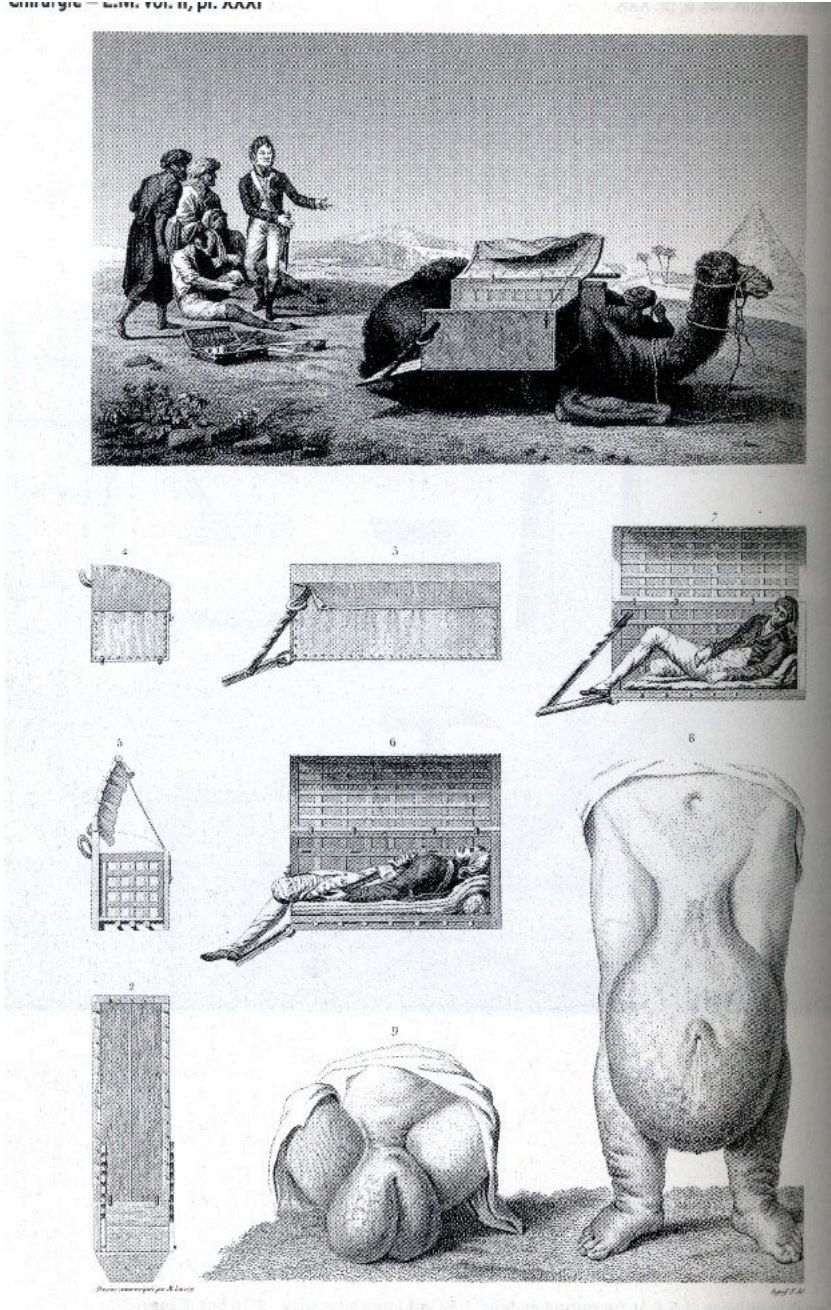


Figure 41. "Sarcocèles d'homme et de femme," from *Description de l'Égypte, Chirurgie, État Moderne*, vol. II, pl. XXXI, nos. VIII and IX.

which they are exposed.⁸² By the eighteenth century, enlightenment philosopher Charles de Secondat de Montesquieu made theories of environment and climate physiologically determining a country's inhabitants key to understanding the manner in which modern Egyptians were perceived by the French as being in a despotic state. His writings directly influenced scientific and popular opinion, particularly those of travel writers who experienced Egypt's climate and culture first-hand. As Volney's writings of the mid-eighteenth century illustrate, the discourse of a despotic and ignorant Egypt was certainly not a new concept by the early nineteenth century, but was perpetuated with enthusiasm during the expedition. More attention will be given to the reasons behind this perceived despotism in the following section, but for now it is my goal to demonstrate that there exists a direct metaphorical linkage between the decay of the monuments and the decay of modern Egyptian society that both stem from the issue of a malignant air, climate, and sunlight in the country as discussed above.

All travel writers to Egypt of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries speak out explicitly on the subject of the decaying modern Egyptian. For example, Denon describes them as "half-barbarians" who present an "assemblage of magnificence, misery, and ignorance. It is, however, to a despotism which always commands and never rewards that we must look for the source and permanent stagnation of industry."⁸³ Denon goes further to characterize Egyptians as a people whose activity and imagination are destroyed and who pass every day in the same tasteless manner by continually

⁸²Jacques Jouanna, "Hippocrates," in *Greek Thought: A Guide to Classical Knowledge* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 649-59.

⁸³ *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, 277, 280.

intoxicating themselves with smoke.⁸⁴ Here we become acquainted with a country whose people are found in an irreparable state of decline, analogous to their country's pharaonic monuments. Connecting this to the French discourse on air and climate, Montesquieu believed that the heat in warmer climates

may be so excessive as to deprive the body of all vigour and strength. Then the faintness is communicated to the mind: there is no curiosity, no enterprise, no generosity of sentiment; the inclinations are all passive; indolence constitutes the utmost happiness; scarcely any punishment is so severe as mental employment; and slavery is more supportable than the force and vigour of mind necessary for human conduct. People are therefore more vigorous in cold climates [...] The inhabitants of warm countries are, like old men, timorous; the people in cold countries are, like young men, brave.⁸⁵

Further showing the pervasiveness of this belief in the writings of travel writers to Egypt, Savary, the eighteenth-century traveler writing one year after Volney, states:

The Frenchman, born in a climate, the temperature of which is continually changing, receives every instant new impressions which keep his soul awake. He is active, impatient, and inconstant as the air he breathes in. The Egyptian who for two-thirds of the year almost invariably experiences the same degree of heat, the same sensation, is slothful, serious, and patient.⁸⁶

Volney goes further to associate this modern decline to a biological decay of the inhabitants:

In this country, as in Syria, experience proves that bleeding is always more injurious than beneficial, even in cases where it appears to be most necessary: the reason of which is, that bodies nourished with unwholesome ailments, such as green fruits, raw vegetables, cheese and olives, have, in fact, but little blood, and a great quantity of humours; their habit is generally bilious, as appears from their eyes and their black eyebrows, their brown complexion and meagre make. Their habitual malady is choleric.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Ibid., 276.

⁸⁵ Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, "Of Laws as Relative to the Nature of the Climate," in *The Complete Works of M. de Montesquieu. Translated from the French. In Four Volumes* (London, 1777), book XIV, 296.

⁸⁶ *Letters on Egypt, with a parallel between the manners of its ancient and modern inhabitants, and an account of the descent of St. Lewis at Damietta: extracted from Joinville, and Arabian authors. Illustrated with maps*, vol. 1 (London, 1786), 160.

⁸⁷ *Travels through Syria and Egypt*, vol. 1, 252.

Volney continues to connect this imbalance of humours in Egyptians to the unhealthy and “peculiar climate of Egypt” that over time has led to “a disposition to this disorder, transmitted by generation[...].”⁸⁸ Further, the same salts from the Nile impregnating the air which Volney believes to be the cause of the corroding stones are likewise blamed for producing malignant humours in the body when drunk by the natives.⁸⁹

Savary and Volney’s words come to life throughout the antiquity plates of the *Description* that consistently portray Egyptians in a lazy state. Of particular prominence is the trope of the native inhabitant who relaxes amid the ruins of his country (figure 42). The same environmental conditions that determined this statue’s demise have equally determined the state in which the native onlooker finds himself. Apathetic and unconcerned with the ruin before him, not even interested in recording the remains of this decomposition as the French would surely do (figure 43), he can only repose in languor and serve as a parallel with the ruin: on the left of figure 42 we are confronted with a physical decay, on the right we are confronted with a physiological one. This image of Egyptian indolence is all the more striking when one considers the strong arm of stone shooting out from the ground, once serving as a symbol of the permanence and strength of the pharaonic past and now only a broken relic.

Joseph Fourier, mathematician and co-editor of the *Description*, speaks out specifically on the notion of the monuments’ permanence and its larger implication in the *Préface Historique*:

⁸⁸ Ibid., 69, 244, 248.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 70, 249.

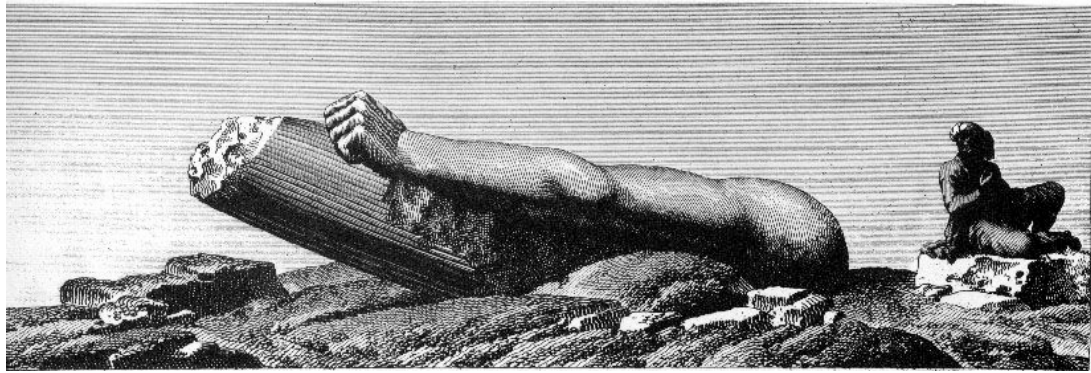


Figure 42. “Fragmens de colosses trouvés dans l’enceinte du sud,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Thébes, Karnak – Antiquités*, vol. III, pl. XXXXV, no. III.

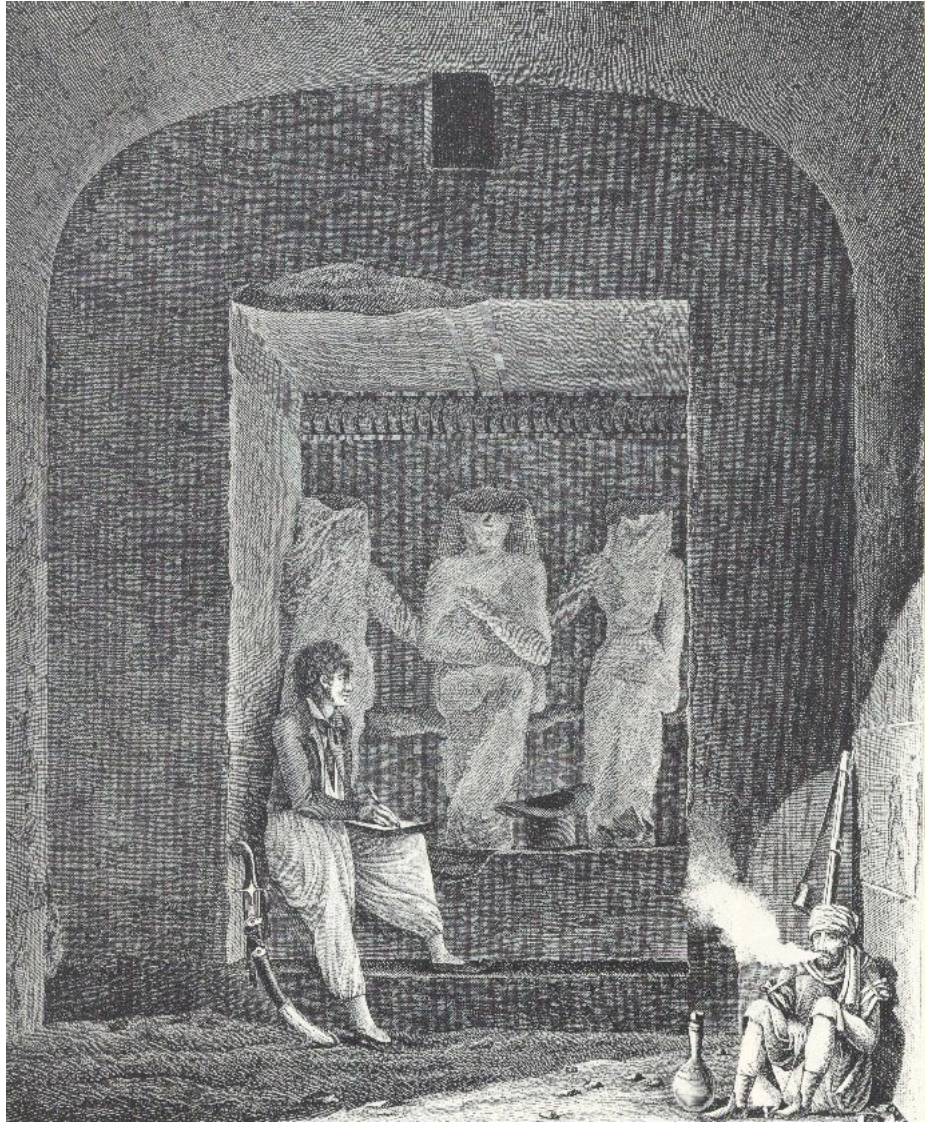


Figure 43. “Vue intérieur de la grotte principales,” from *Description de l’Egypte, El Kab (Elethya) – Antiquités*, vol. I, pl. LXVII.

[The ancient Egyptians] were supported in this thought [of permanence] by the enduring aspect of great public monuments that always seemed to look the same and that appeared to resist the effects of time. Their legislators had judged that this moral impression would contribute to the stability of their empire.⁹⁰

The Egypt discernible to the French expedition must have appeared a far cry from the Egypt of old founded on permanence and stability. The ruins that surrounded them and upon which they focused served as a constant reminder of a lost past whose “moral impression” they believed fell mute upon Egypt’s modern inhabitants, infected by a malignant air of sickness and degeneracy. Yet this degeneracy was one that the French now found themselves plagued by as well, as they were stricken with many of the same diseases and humoral imbalances that were believed to be a biological disposition of the Egyptian alone.

While this section emphasizes aspects of the *Description* that serve as composite images of fear and uncertainty as seen in an analysis of the engravings’ relationship to disease that plagues the French in Egypt, the following sections will be devoted to the representations that attempt to reassert French control and contain their fears by positioning them as superior to the Egyptian populace. The notion of morality as raised by Fourier will be brought into further debate as I continue to appraise the perceived physiological and cultural decay of modern inhabitants in relation to Egyptian male sexuality positioned against French masculinity.

Stock Figures of Male Effeminacy

Unusual for its genre, the *Description* makes no sustained reference to the harem. The closest it comes to portraying women in a compromising situation is in its depiction of

⁹⁰ *Description de l’Egypte, Antiquités*, vol.1 of engravings, I: XC; quoted in Porterfield, *Allure of Empire*, 95-96.

public dancers, represented in the encyclopedic manner typical of the imperial, all-knowing gaze standard throughout Egyptian travelogues of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, figures 44 and 45 show both the isolation of certain types within a larger vignette, as well as the placement of these female types within their ‘natural’ surrounding. For the most part, however, the *Description* images women partaking in domestic duties and household chores. Historian Maurice Martin illustrates that travelogues of the eighteenth and nineteenth century invoked the image of the harem to add an air of objectivity to their accounts of Egypt while still allowing them to remain slightly suggestive and voyeuristic in content.⁹¹ Writer Malek Alloula puts forth that the appeal of travelogues in general is their ability to penetrate the veil shrouding the mysteries of the Orient. Views of the ‘inside’ of a colonial territory forbidden to the foreigner, epitomized by the harem, become the object of a voyeuristic gaze encouraging fantasies that would otherwise be socially unacceptable. Alloula and others have argued that the body of the harem woman in particular functions as the ideal site for the projection of both threats and fantasies that are encountered in contact with the ‘Other.’ For example, in a political cartoon entitled *Rape of the Sultan’s Favorite* (figure 46) that dates to 1830, the same year as France’s conquest of Algiers, the plump harem woman represents a spoil of war ripe for the taking. Her abduction serves as a metaphor for the political and military strength of France. Even Denon makes use of this curious interior space both visually in figure 47, and textually, at one point describing it as a place of

⁹¹ “Aux Débuts de la Description Moderne de l’Egypte,” in *D’un Orient l’autre*, vol. 1, 343-350.

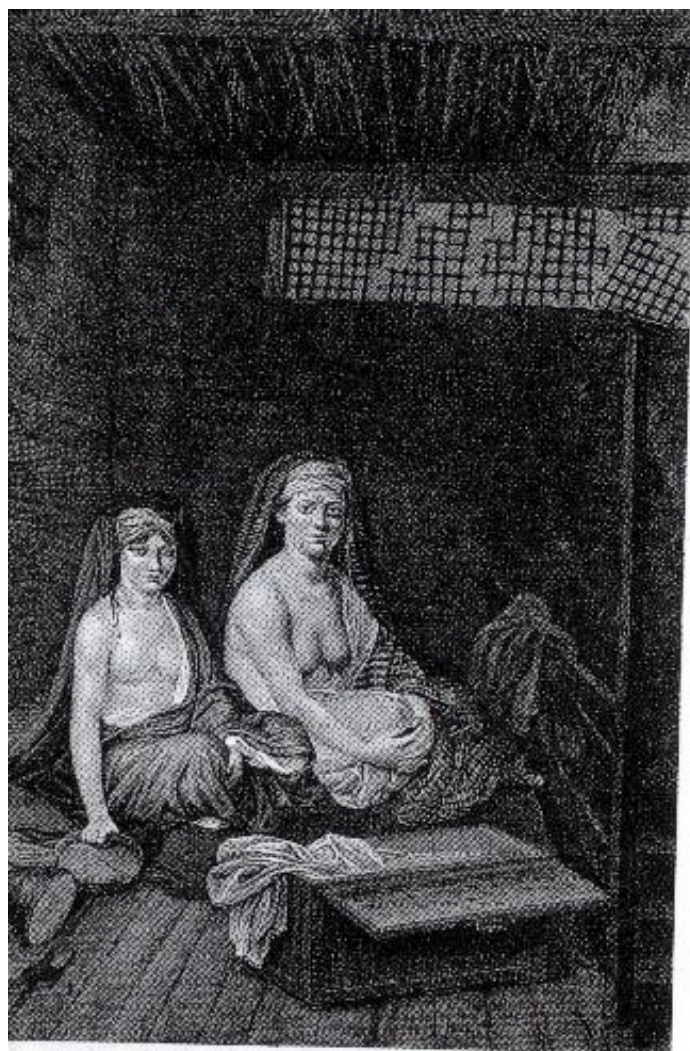


Figure 44. “Aimés ou danseuses publiques,” from *Description de l’Égypte, Costumes et portraits, État Moderne*, vol. II, pl. C, no. I.



Figure 45. “Femmes dans le harem,” (bottom two figures around central grouping of women) from *Description de l’Egypte, Costumes et portraits, État Moderne*, vol. II, pl. K, nos. XXV and XXVII.



Figure 46. A. Meniet, *Rape of the Sultan's Favorite*, 1830. Lithograph, Musée de la Ville de Paris.



Figure 47. "Entertainment in the Harem," pl. L, from *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt during the Campaign of General Bonaparte*, vol. I, 1803.

safe-haven to hide during the revolt of Cairo, in which students and religious leaders were locked in a mosque and massacred after rising against the French.⁹²

A clue as to why the harem is strikingly absent in the *Description* may be found in the “Proclamation from the Assembly of the General Dīwān on Precautions against the Plague” in 1213 A.H. (Egyptian calendar, equivalent to 1798) in which it notifies the French in Egypt that women of “ill-repute” are the primary vehicle for the transmission of the plague, and being caught with them would lead to execution.⁹³ It is noteworthy that the proclamation gives no warning against visiting brothels to avoid contracting Chlamydia, thus emphasizing the ignorance of both the French and Egyptian of this disease’s link with ophthalmia. While the intrigue of the harem had certainly not dissipated,⁹⁴ it no longer existed as the pure and untainted place for the male gaze to penetrate. Other secret spaces of intrigue have now taken its place. For example, Desgenettes is praised for being the first man, not to enter the harem, but to “penetrate into the place where insane women are kept.”⁹⁵

In place of over-sexed women, we find another frequent figure of the *Description*: the homoerotic male, particularly in conjunction with the Mamelukes, the ruling class within Egypt. Both the *Description* and Denon’s *Travels* make use of this type. When

⁹² *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, vol. 1, 294.

⁹³ *Bonaparte’s Proclamations’ as recorded by Al-Jabarti in Journals of Bonaparte in Egypt, 1798-1801* (Cairo: Al-Arab Bookshop, 1979), 65. This is one of two decrees sent out regarding the plague, the second warning that anyone who does not come forward with knowledge of those affected by plague would also be put to death: “Proclamation of Health Precautions against the Plague. Sunday, 17th of Shawwāl, 1213 A.H.,” *Bonaparte’s Proclamations’ as recorded by Al-Jabarti in Journals of Bonaparte in Egypt, 1798-1801*, 53-55.

⁹⁴ For example, citizen Menou speaks with great intrigue of the female baths and harems in Rosetta as being the only place where women can be unsupervised and escape their relationships with men founded on defiance and superstition. “Anecdote,” *Courier de l’Egypte*, no. 34 (Le 12 Thermidor, VII.e année de la République): 2-3.

⁹⁵ “Da Caire, le 13 frimaire,” *Courier de l’Egypte*, no. 19 (14 Frimaire VII.e année de la République): 4. “[...] pénétré dans le logement où sont placées les femmes insensées.”

one glimpses Denon's "Egyptian Bath" (figure 48), the words of Barron Larrey are called to mind in his description of the elegant Mamelukes:

They are all of an advantageous size, of a robust constitution; their form is beautiful, agreeable; they have an oval face, a voluminous skull, a bare forehead, eyes big and well slit, a straight and slightly aquiline nose, an average mouth, a slightly prominent chin, the hair, eyebrows and eyelashes brown or chestnut and the skin a matte white.⁹⁶

His eyes no longer overtaken by the sharp sunlight of the Egyptian desert, Denon depicts these men as softened and effeminate by the domesticated light of the interior.

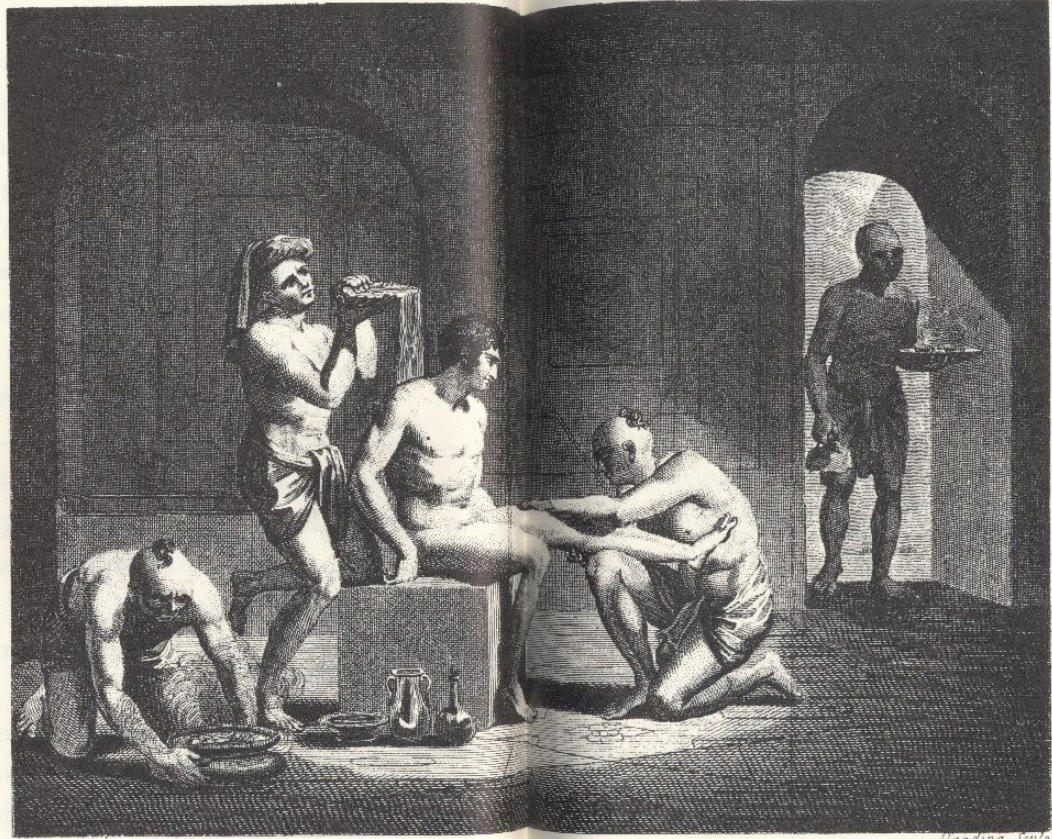
Interestingly, Denon had gone to these baths in attempt to relieve his eyes from the irritation caused by ophthalmia, to which he too fell victim:

Not knowing well what to do for my inflamed eyes, I went to the baths of the town, and found much ease from this remedy. I shall here refer my reader to the elegant description given of these Egyptian baths by Savary, whose rich imagination has set before his readers a very lively picture of the pleasure which they afford, and the voluptuous gratification which they are capable of procuring. I took a drawing of the bath which I used (See Plate XVI.) [figure 48]⁹⁷

Not only is female as a sexual object lacking in this passage, but the Egyptian male baths have gone so far as to replace the harem altogether for Denon by serving as that secret place that cannot be spoken of.

⁹⁶ "Notice sur la Conformation Physique des Égyptiens et des Differences Races qui Habitent en Égypte, Suivie de quelques Reflexions sur l'Embaumement des Momies," in *Description de l'Égypte, État Moderne*, vol. 2:1, 1. "Ils sont tous d'une taille avantageuse, d'une constitution robuste; leurs formes sont belles, agréables; ils ont le visage ovale, le crâne volumineux, le front découvert, les yeux grands et bien fendus, le nez droit et un peu aquilin, la bouche moyenne, le menton légèrement saillant, les cheveux, les sourcils et les cils bruns ou châains et la peau d'un blanc mat."

⁹⁷ *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, 42-43.



Denon Del.

Harding Sculp.

Scene in an Egyptian hot Bath

Published by Longman, Rees, and Richard Phillips.

Figure 48. Vivant Denon "Scene of an Egyptian hot Bath," pl. XVI, from *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt in company with several divisions of the French Army, during the Campaign of General Bonaparte*, vol. II, 1803.

While Denon produces what he claims to be a first-hand drawing of his experience in the bath, he manages to avoid giving any textual account of his own visit, instead referring his reader to the writings of Savary whose “rich imagination” will gratify much better than his own words could.⁹⁸ As with harem imagery, the penetration of this domestic male space now serves as an indicator of French imperial power by indicating the superior political position of the observer to the observed.⁹⁹

The *Description* also makes everyday customs and modes of employment among men sexually suggestive by slight caresses and delicate posturing between participants (figures 49 and 50). With the figure of the barber (figure 49), in particular, although the men partake in a custom no doubt common to their culture, we still have a sense of unveiling that to which we should not have access. Once again, the *Description* formulates what we should interpret from the image by establishing for us our role as onlooker. The young boy to the right of the composition serves as a mirror image of ourselves as viewers as he quite literally peeks into a space of a male-to-male relationship that he appears to recognize he should not enter. Returning again to the recurring notion of biological deficiency as a result of environment, M. Savary affirms, “Effeminacy is

⁹⁸ While Savary does give an in depth account of the baths and its *Maffers*, the boys assigned to attend to the bather with massages and shaves, it is not nearly as suggestive as Denon would have us believe. “LETTER XI. Description of the warm baths, universally used in Egypt; the manner of bathing; the benefits experienced from this practice; the custom of the women, of bathing once or twice in the week; and a comparison of these baths, with those of the ancient Greeks,” in *Letters on Egypt*, vol. 1, 170-181.

Volney even speaks of his lack of enjoyment with the baths as they are a place that caused him “vertigo and a trembling of the knees, which lasted two days.” He also believes the practice of male public baths not to be the result of the Egyptians affinity to the like sex, but to their upholding of the Koran which states that they are to have “complete ablution after the conjugal act.” *Travels through Syria and Egypt*, vol.1, 250.

⁹⁹ Porterfield, “The Women of Algiers,” in *The Allure of Empire*, 133.

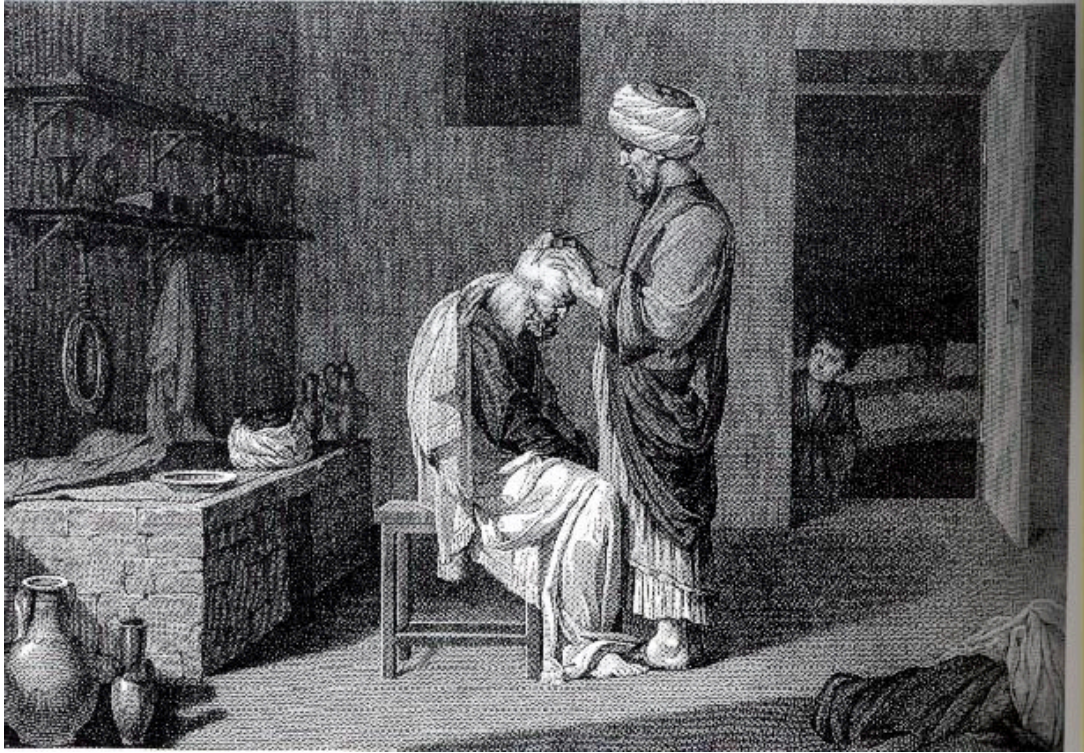


Figure 49. “Le barbier,” from *Description de l’Egypte, État Moderne*, vol. II, pl. XXV, no. II.



Figure 50. “Le fabricant de maroquin,” from *Description de l’Égypte, État Moderne*, vol. II, pl. XXVI, no. IV.

born with the Egyptian, grows up with him as he advances in life, and follows him to his tomb. It is a vice of the climate. It influences his taste, and governs all his actions.”¹⁰⁰

The representation of homoerotic males promotes French power in another way as well: through the reinforcement of theories of Mameluke impotence and inability to procreate.

If the Mamelukes are few in number, it has to be attributed to their custom of marrying foreign women like themselves. In addition, the climate of Egypt opposes the propagation of foreigners in general, even when they marry other Egyptians. In the first case, infants who are born from like unions die after a few years. The Mamelukes, deprived of the natural means to reproduce, are constrained to resort to being with those of their same origin. They buy young slaves who they train with military exercises and then free: these slaves are either Circassian or Muscovite; they are transported to Constantinople where they are then sent and sold to rich men from all parts of the empire. The women of the Mamelukes are also from the same provinces, and arrive in Turkey in the same manner.¹⁰¹

It is not entirely surprising that the French would assume that Mamelukes were unable to procreate without their children dying an early death. In a medical chart compiled by Desgenettes of Egyptian deaths for the revolutionary years 7 and 8 (1798

¹⁰⁰ *Letters on Egypt*, vol. 1, 159.

¹⁰¹ M. de Chabrol, “Essai sur les Moeurs des Habitans Modernes de l’Égypte,” in *Description de l’Égypte, État Moderne*, vol. 2:2, 374. “Si les Mamlouks sont peu nombreux, il faut l’attribuer à l’usage qui leur fait épouser des femmes étrangères comme eux. Au reste, le climat de l’Égypte s’oppose à la propagation des étrangers en général, même quand ils se marient avec des Égyptiennes. Dans le premier cas, les enfans qui naissent des pareilles unions, meurent au bout de quelques années. Les Mamlouks, privés des moyens naturels de se reproduire, sont contraints d’avoir recours à ceux aux quels il doivent eux-mêmes leur origine. Ils achètent de jeunes esclaves qu’ils dressent aux exercices militaire et qu’ils affranchissent dans la suite: ces esclaves sont ou Circassiens ou Mingréliens; on les transporte d’abord à Constantinople, d’où ils sont ensuite expédiés et vendus aux gens riches de toutes les parties de l’empire. Les femmes des Mamlouks sont aussi des mêmes provinces, et arrivent en Turquie de la même manière.”

Volney also speaks of the Mameluke practice of sodomy, even describing it as a contagion which has spread to the regular inhabitants of Cairo: “Ignorant and superstitious from education, they become ferocious from the murders they commit, perfidious from frequent cabals, seditious from tumults, and base, deceitful, and corrupted by every species of debauchery. They are, above all, addicted to that abominable wickedness which was at all times the vice of the Greeks and the Tartars, and is the first lesson they receive from their masters. It is difficult to account for this taste, when we consider that they all have women, unless we suppose that they seek in one sex, that poignancy of refusal which they do not permit the other. It is however very certain, that there is not a single Mamlouk but is polluted by this depravity; and the contagion has spread among the inhabitants of Cairo, and even the Christians of Syria who reside in that city.” *Travels through Syria and Egypt*, vol. 1, 185.

and 1799) infant mortalities were consistently much higher and at times double that of adult mortality rates of men and women combined (reproduced in appendix A).¹⁰² Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby was the first to consider the perception of Mameluke sexuality in relation to France's imperial ideology and the role it played in writings by travelers. Yet, these tropes of both male effeminacy and sterile reproductive abilities are not at all unique to the Mamelukes in Egypt, but are common threads that run through many of French perspectives toward non-white races, particularly those that they have colonized.¹⁰³ For instance, historian Doris Garraway has brought to light how these same notions of race and reproduction played out in French Haiti, and were espoused in the most famous *Description* written on that ex-colony by Moreau de Saint-Méry in 1798, the same year as the French occupation of Egypt.¹⁰⁴ Saint-Méry promoted that the fertility of mulattoes, or mix-race indigenous, decreased the more they continued to join with others of mixed races, as it was a sign of racial degeneration and dilution, the same dilution that Chabrol believed to be the cause of Mameluke infertility. Saint-Méry also depicts the stereotypical mulatto man as being weak, easily manipulated, slothful and lustful, often times verging on what were perceived as feminine characteristics.¹⁰⁵

In the particular case of the Mamelukes, however, Grigsby points out that in seeing Mamelukes as being infertile or producing sickly offspring, the French were

¹⁰² *Courier de l'Égypte*, no. 95 (Le 12 Nivose, IX.e année de la République): 4.

¹⁰³ It is worth noting that the term "mamelouque" is a variation on the Egyptian word meaning "one who is possessed," and was used as far as Brazil to identify mixed-race children of Portuguese men and Indian women. Garraway, "Race, Reproduction, and Family Romance," 230.

¹⁰⁴ The French abandoned Haiti as a colony in 1791 due to indigenous uprisings and revolution, seven years before the publication of Saint-Méry's *Description* of the country. In this way, interesting parallels can be drawn between it and the *Description de l'Égypte* as both were produced shortly after failed attempts at colonization. As of yet, however, no study exists examining the relationship between these two texts.

¹⁰⁵ Garraway, "Race, Reproduction, and Family Romance," 239.

actually confusing Mameluke physiology with culture. While women could and did successfully bear children by their Mameluke husbands, this would have done little to promulgate a family's power as nepotism was a forbidden practice in Mameluke culture.¹⁰⁶ Instead, as is indicated by Chabrol, Mamelukes were comprised of mercenary soldiers bought from slavery from various areas of the Balkan region, Germany, Russia and Africa who gained their power through merit comparable to that of the Ottoman devshirme system in which mercenary soldiers are recruited at youth from non-Muslim families, converted, and trained. This fact, however, did little to change the overall consensus among the French that Mamelukes were impassioned sodomites as likely to rape their defeated male enemies as they were to defend their lovers with their lives.¹⁰⁷ The French both praised Mamelukes for their beauty and luxuriousness and condemned them for their debauched and sterile sexuality. In short, they were fascinating, majestic specimens to observe, but far from capable of being left to their own devices to rule a country. As Volney asserts:

Such are the men who at present govern and decide the fate of Egypt: a few lucky strokes of the sabre, a greater portion of cunning, or audacity, have conferred on them this pre-eminence; but it is not to be imagined that in changing fortune these upstarts change their character; they have still the meanness of slaves, though advanced to the rank of monarchs.¹⁰⁸

Perhaps no better example of this view exists than Lejeune's *Battle of the Pyramids*, 1806 (figures 51 and 52). This image represents a key moment in Napoleon's victory over the Mamelukes that caused them to abandon Cairo and allow the French to take up headquarters there. On the left, the lavishly dressed yet irrational and panicked

¹⁰⁶ "Revolt, Egypt: Girodet's *Revolt of Cairo*, 1810," in *Extremities*, 106.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹⁰⁸ *Travels through Syria and Egypt*, 186.



Figure 51. Louis-François Lejeune, *Battle of the Pyramids*, 1806. Oil on canvas, 180 x 425 cm. Versailles, Musée Nationale du Château.



Figure 52. Louis-François Lejeune, *Battle of the Pyramids*, 1806, detail of fleeing Mamelukes. Oil on canvas, 180 x 425 cm. Versailles, Musée Nationale du Château.

Mamelukes flee in disorder from the French *carrés* illustrated on the right. This military formation of squares invented by Napoleon epitomizes French reason, order, forethought, planning, and strategy, especially as it stands in contrast to the disarray of the Mamelukes. So too within the *Description* we see the same overriding organization that marks the enlightened conqueror (figure 53). While benevolent, the French soldiers are nonetheless ordered and masculine, thus exhibiting a virulent France as redeemer of the impoverished, ignorant Egyptian from his impotent Mameluke ruler. As declared by general Menou, “You groan under the weight of every sort of vexation; I am charged by the Republic and by its first Consul, Bonaparte, to deliver you.”¹⁰⁹

Yet something needs to be said here of the actual presence of French soldiers in the *Description* as seen in figure 53, for this is highly unusual. Later representations of the Orient completely ignore the presence of western influence or a colonizing power, instead turning to a kind of nostalgia for pre-contact authenticity believed to be tainted by the Western presence. Gêrome, Regnault, Fromentin, and even Delacroix and Renoir, to scan just the surface, follow in the tradition of leaving absent a Western presence in their representations of the Orient. What purpose, then, do representations of not just Western presence, but also military power, serve in the *Description*? The above quote by Menou indicates that the soldiers are present for the redemption of the Egyptian population. But they equally function as figures of knowledge inserted among that which they discover,

¹⁰⁹ “Aux habitans de l’Egypte,” *Courier de l’Egypte*, no. 87 (15 Brumaire, IX.e année de la République): 1. “Vous gémissiez sous le poids des vexations de toute especé; je suis chargé par la République et par son premier consul Bonaparte, de vous en délivrer.”

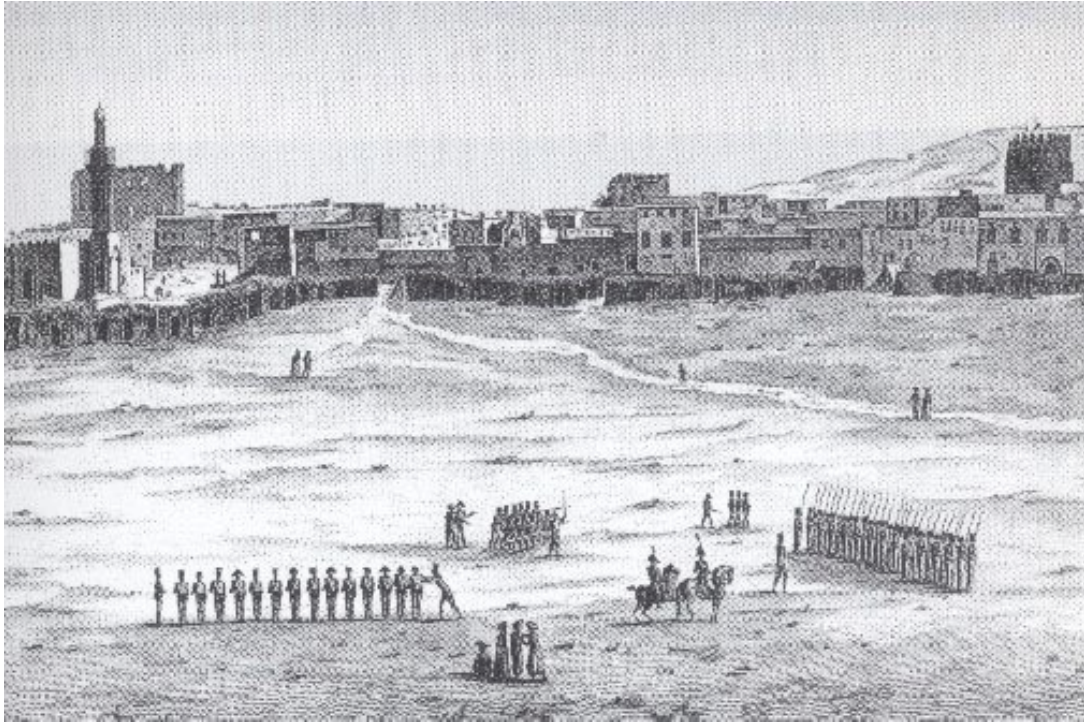


Figure 53. "Vue de l'esplande ou grande place du Port-Neuf et de l'enceinte des Arabes, second partie," from *Description de l'Égypte, État Moderne*, vol. II, pl. LXXXVIII, detail

similar to the figures of Diderot's *Encyclopédie*.¹¹⁰ Scarcely is there a trace of doubt or discomfort among the French soldiers as they survey and scout the number of ancient monuments (figures 30 and 32). As they present their discoveries, they also present their security and comfort within this environment. This serves to reassert their advantage over that which they attempt to conquer. By increasing the gap between themselves and an unstable environment they are again able to objectively dissect it and reassert an encyclopedic gaze, a gaze premised on distance and intellectual supremacy.

I earlier stated that there is a distinct difference of style between the plates of antiquity and those of the modern state, the latter possessing a softened, modeled quality absent in those of the sterile antiquity plates. This, however, does not mean that there is no link to be found between the *Description*'s antiquity and modern state volumes. The connection is just not to be found in style. Rather, the plates are intimately intertwined by the Egyptians and French that inhabit them. In relation to male sexuality, the same metaphorical link that exists between the perceived decay of the monuments and that of the modern inhabitants carries over to the plates of the modern state. The sterility of the ancient landscape and that of Mameluke sexuality, however, functions in two opposite ways. The stark and unproductive landscape of the monuments serves as an example of the collapse of liminal space between the French and their new colonial environment as they were inflicted with disease and sickness that forced them to directly experience the environment around them. Yet, by directly linking this monumental decay to that of the state of modern Egypt, particularly in relation to sexuality, the French are able to reassert their power, and thus their distance and control, over the land they wished to conquer.

¹¹⁰ Barthes, "The Plates of the Encyclopédie," in *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, 400.

Compensation for the anxiety of colonial encounter existed in even more ways than this. We have already seen above how the author of the *Description*'s preface, Fourier, contrasts the decay of Egypt's monuments with the permanence and stability they intended to portray. Of equal value to the French in reasserting their sense of control was to establish ancient Egypt's stability in relation to France's own. The following section appraises how these notions of permanence and stability were asserted in the *Description* through European traditions of freemasonry and fraternal orders.

Freemasonry and the Reenactment of Ancient Rites

It is little wonder that the negative discourse developed around Egypt's modern inhabitants would lead the French to recreate for themselves the splendor of the pharaonic past. It follows that the *Description* is laden with references to ancient Egyptian ceremonies. An example of this is repeated images of priests, recognizable by their shaven heads, whom Herodotus contrasts to the priests of ancient Greece (figures 54, 55 and 56).¹¹¹ Further, these references only appear in engravings that recreate monuments in their original, ancient state. I argue that these recreations serve two functions: first to perpetuate the mystification and exoticization of Egypt, and, less apparently, to appeal to both the aims of the Empire as well as the revolutionary ideal that preceded it.

Porterfield devotes a chapter of *Allure of Empire* to explaining why Egypt in particular had filled the ideological goal for the Napoleonic Empire that Greece and Rome once did for earlier French regimes and Revolutionary culture. He concludes that while the Empire needed to separate itself from past regimes, it was also concerned with

¹¹¹ Herodotus, *The Histories*, II.36: 139.

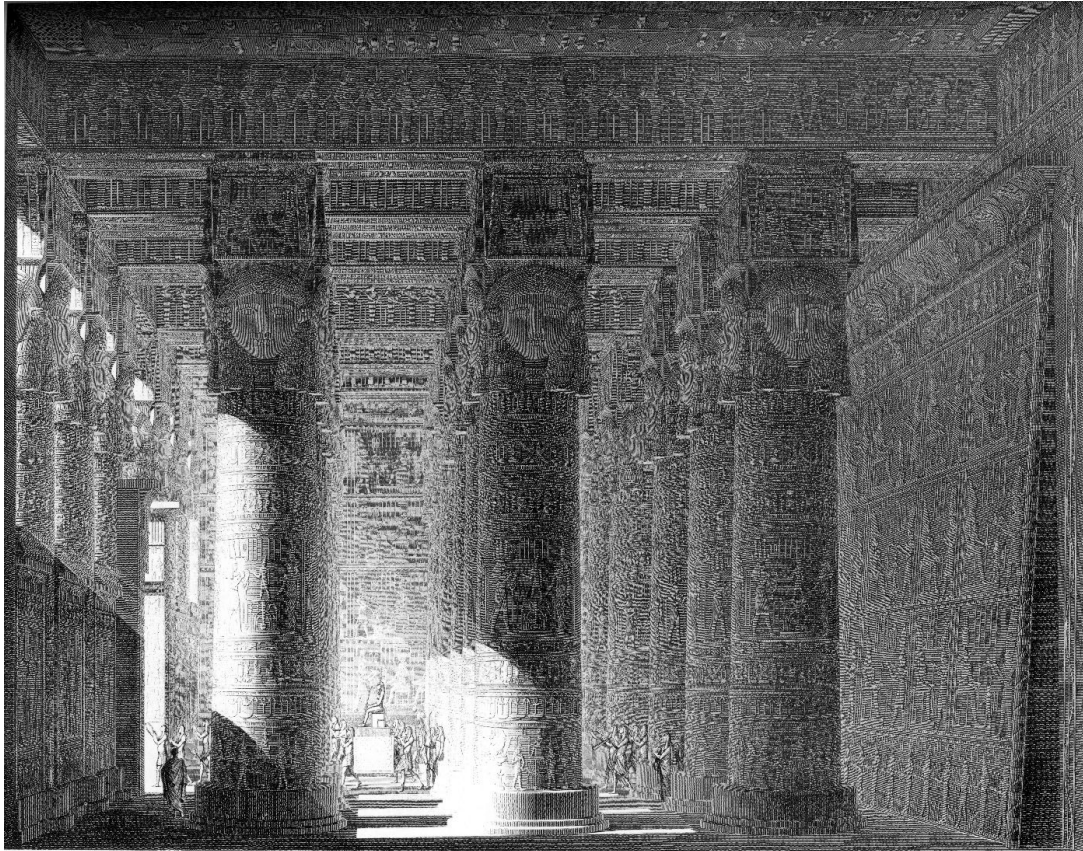


Figure 54. “Vue perspective de l’intérieur du portique du grand temple,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Denderah (Tentyris) – Antiquités*, vol. IV, pl. XXIX.



Figure 55. “Vue perspective intérieure coloriée, prise sous le portique du grand temple,”
from *Description de l’Egypte, Île de Philae – Antiquités*, vol. I, pl. XVIII.

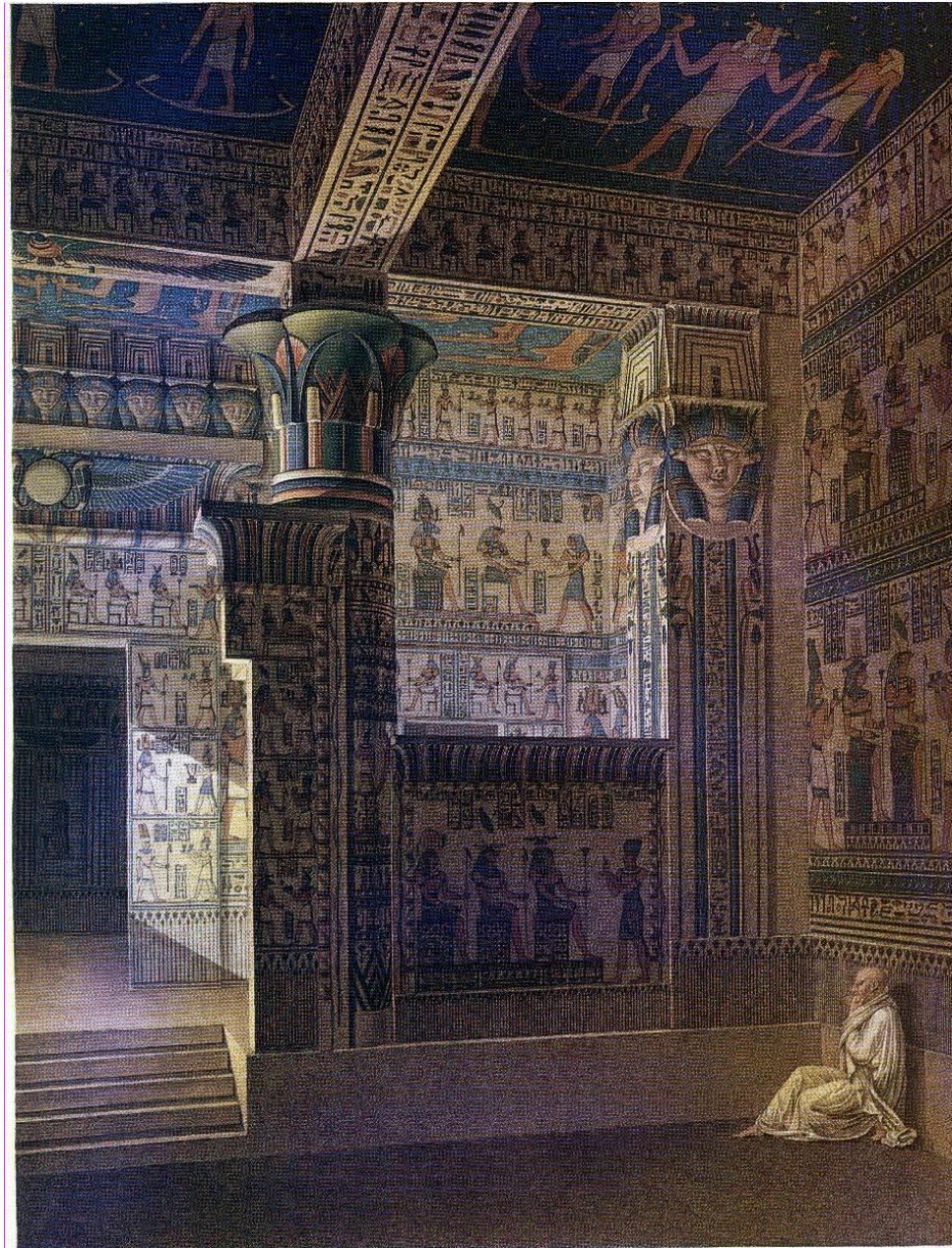


Figure 56. “Vue perspective intérieure coloriée du temple de l’ouest,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Thèbes, Memnonium – Antiquités*, vol. II, pl. XXXVII.

the maintenance of order that the polity of ancient Egypt was seen to embody.¹¹²

Essentially, to a government following the most tumultuous, revolutionary years of French history, the conservation of order was of utmost importance. Again returning to Fourier's fascination with ancient Egypt's call to order through the stability of pharaonic monuments, he links this achievement to the goal of the Empire:

In this way, the study of Egypt, enriching in great thought and useful memory, still teaches us that the development of intelligence and industry is connected to the maintenance of public order; it does us well to know the benefit of laws and of a stable and clear government [...].¹¹³

But I argue that it is not order alone, but also revolutionary notions of fraternity that Fourier embraces here. To understand the manner in which the images of ancient Egyptian ceremonies in the *Description* simultaneously embrace the ideals of the Revolution while still emphasizing order through representations of ancient traditions, one need look at the society of Freemasons, a society deeply rooted in both the Revolution and Egypt. While Freemasons are often studied in relation to the Revolution, no one has yet examined how their teachings influenced the representations of pharaonic rituals within the *Description* and Freemasonry's significance for the Napoleonic expedition.

The ancient secret society of Freemasons, believed to date to the 17th-century, developed out of myths thought to originate in ancient Egyptian religion, but which actually stem from misinformation. For Freemasons, pharaonic Egypt was envisioned as

¹¹² "The Musée d'Égypte," in *The Allure of Empire*, 81-116.

¹¹³ *Préface Historique*; quoted in Yves Laissus, *Jomard: le dernier Égyptien (1777-1862)* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004), 103. "Ainsi, l'étude de l'Égypte, si féconde en grandes pensées et en souvenirs utiles, nous avertit encore que le développement de l'intelligence et de l'industrie est attaché au maintien de l'ordre public; elle nous fait mieux connaître le prix des lois et d'un gouvernement stable et éclairé[...]"

the birthplace of initiation rites into fraternal orders; an example of such a rite is visible in figure 57, an independent drawing by depicting the first degree of initiation at the reception of ancient Memphis.¹¹⁴ During the Revolution and its call to brotherhood, these initiation rites reached an ever important role. In an engraving dating to 1797 a symbol of Egypt is in fact used to commemorate the four-year anniversary of the storming of the Bastille (figure 58). Designed by Jacques-Louis David, a fact in itself telling as his paintings are seen as the epitome of the stoic neoclassical style founded on Greek and Roman ideals, an Egyptianizing personification of Nature ushers forth water from her breasts onto the ruins of the legendary prison. The orator Hérault de Séchelles emphasized the connection between ancient Egypt and the notion of fraternity during the commemorative ceremony:

Oh Nature! Receive this expression of the eternal devotion of the French people to thy laws! And may these fruitful waters springing from thy breasts, this pure draught that quenched the thirst of the first Humans [Egyptians], consecrate this cup of fraternity and equality the oaths that France swears to thee on this day.¹¹⁵

More closely linked to the Egyptian expedition, historian Charles Gillispie establishes that such prominent figures of the *Commission d’Egypte* as Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Louis Costaz, Pierre-Simon Girard, Fourier, and Gilber-Joseph Chabrol, among others were themselves Freemasons.¹¹⁶ Jomard, while not part of the society, is known to have been the annual organizer of an Egyptian banquet for Freemasons. Further, a specific order of Freemasonry was formed directly out the expedition in 1801. The members of this order, known as Sophisiens, were comprised of survivors of the

¹¹⁴ “Absolutism and Enlightenment,” in *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art, 1730-1930*, exh. cat. (Canada: National Gallery of Art, 1994), 146.

¹¹⁵ *Discours Prononcé par Marie-Jean Hérault de Séchelles*, Year II (1793), 3-4; quoted in “Absolutism and Enlightenment,” in *Egyptomania*, 160.

¹¹⁶ Dewatcher and Gillispie, *Monuments of Egypt*.

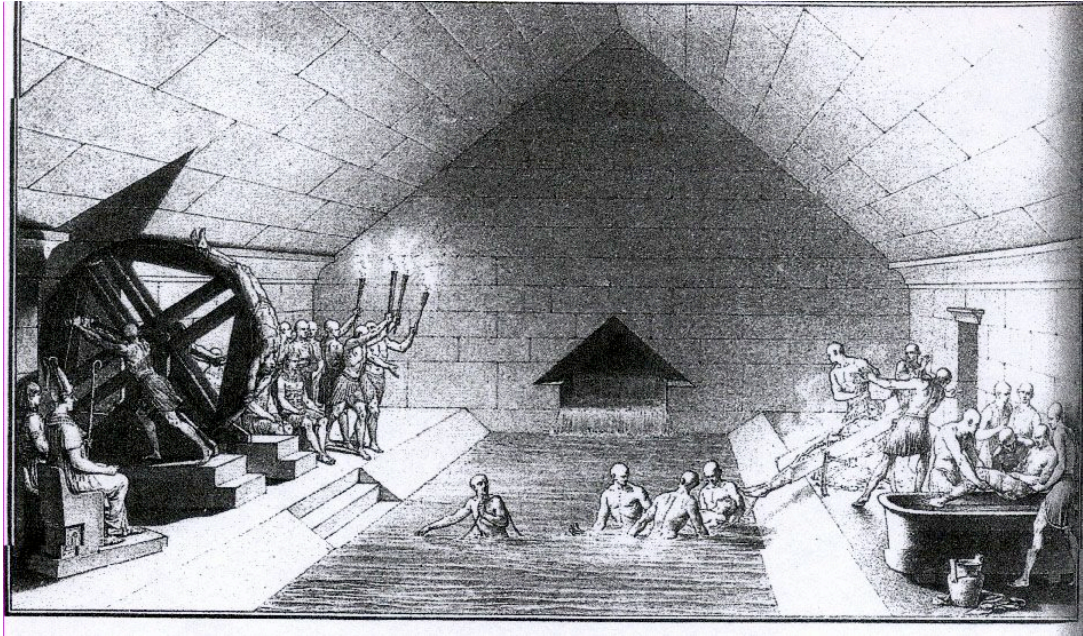


Figure 57. Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune, *Egyptian Initiation Scene*, 1792. Pen and brown ink with brown wash, 26.1 x 38.5 cm. Quimper, Musée des Beaux-Arts (74221).

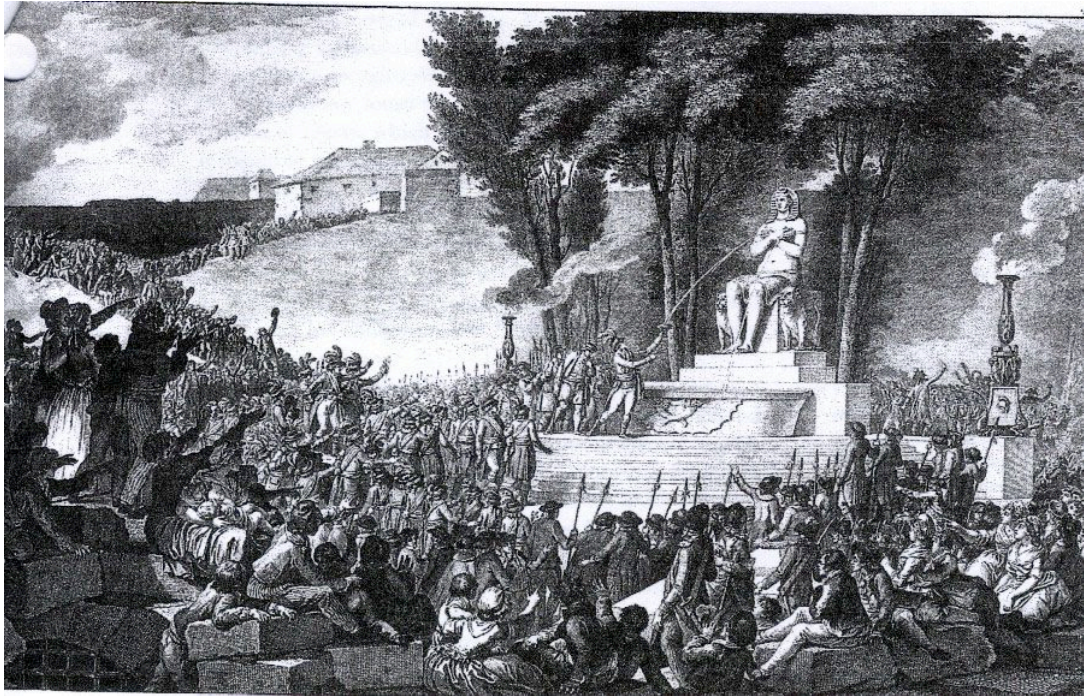


Figure 58. Charles Monnet, *The Fountain of Regeneration, on the Ruins of the Bastille, 10 August 1793*. Engraving by Isidore-Stanislaus Helman, 1797 (26.7 x 43.5 cm). Paris, Musée de l'Armée, Cabinet des Estampes (07802).

Egyptian campaign.¹¹⁷ Clearly, ancient Egypt played a crucial role in both the formation of a sense of brotherhood and equally the provision of a sense of tradition for Freemasons.

While shrouded in secrecy, one collection of ancient writings, published in 1770 and known as the *Crata Repoa*, illuminates the initiation rites of the Freemasons, one which may indeed be referenced in the *Description*. In the *Perspective View of the Interior of the Portico of Esne*, Pharaoh heads a procession wearing the crown of Lower Egypt. He is followed by priests, once again recognizable by their shaven heads, and courtiers. Next is the sacred Apis bull derived from Memphis, and a statue of the ram god Khunu, to whom the temple is dedicated. Last in the procession is the Seth, represented as an amalgam befitting his status as god of chaos (figure 59).¹¹⁸ The *Crata Repoa* describes the third initiation rite of Freemasons as being the only one involving the Pharaoh, in which after consultation with the priests, he presents the initiate with a golden crown that he is meant to reject as a symbol of his rejection of the material world.¹¹⁹ Also published in the *Crata Repoa* is a reproduction of a print of *The Processional of the Mysteries of Isis* taken from Lenoir's *La Franche-Maconnerie*. This processional is based on a scene from the classical legend, *The Golden Ass* by the Roman author Apuleius, and further draws comparisons to processionals represented in the *Description* (figure 60).

¹¹⁷ Laissus, *Jomard: le dernier Égyptien (1777-1862)*, 108.

¹¹⁸ "Absolutism and Enlightenment," in *Egyptomania*, 264.

¹¹⁹ *Crata Repoa* (1770); reprinted in Manley P. Hall, *Freemasonry of the Ancient Egyptians, to which is added an interpretation of the Crata Repoa initiation rite* (Los Angeles: The Philosophical Research Society, Inc., 1937), 81-102.

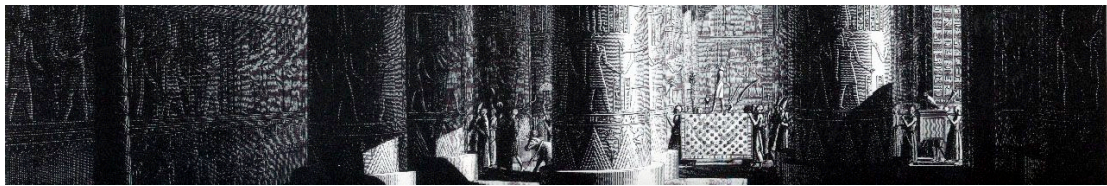


Figure 59. “Vue perspective de l’intérieur du portique,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Esné (Latapolis) – Antiquités*, vol. I, pl. 83, detail.

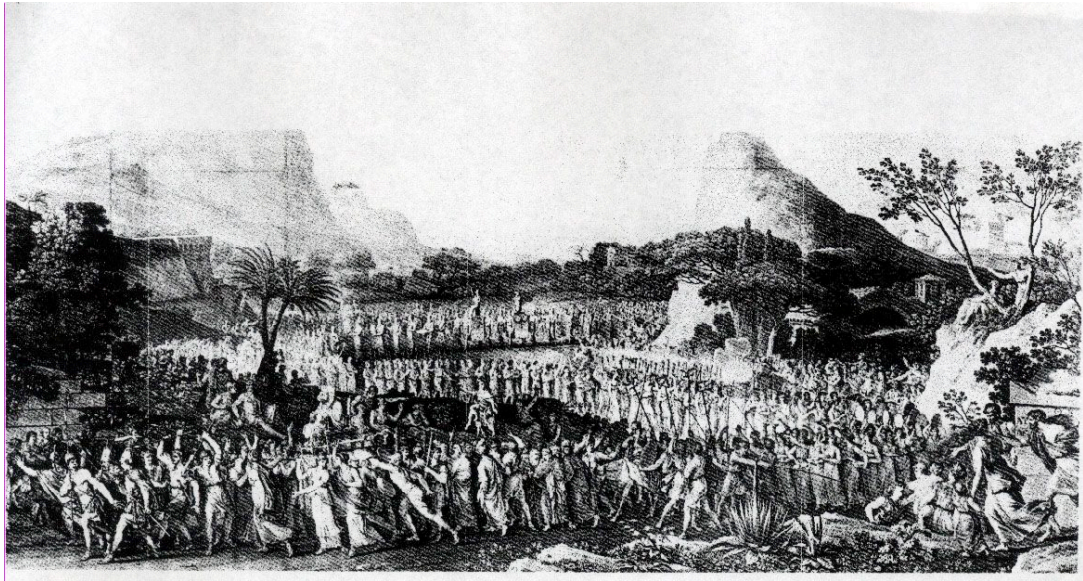


Figure 60. *The Processional of the Mysteries of Isis (according to the description given by Apulius), from Lenoir's La Franche-Maconnerie.*

Images referencing freemasonry within the *Description* served several different functions. Taking into consideration that pictorial surface supplies just as much meaning as that which is represented, ancient temples rebuilt and saturated by an even light throughout where decorative patterns and details are unobstructed by sharp sun have a very different meaning than the same ancient monuments shown in a state of decay. In this sense, representations stemming from freemasonry provide a bridge between Egypt's glorious past and its decayed monuments of the present. Yet it equally provides a bridge between revolutionary fraternity and monarchical stability, between ancient tradition and contemporary imperial ideology. One must now ask if such images also served as a bridge between the Napoleonic Empire and the Bourbon Restoration.

Part II: The *Description* across Two Regimes

Thus far, I have treated the *Description* only as a product of the Napoleonic Empire stemming directly from the Egyptian military campaign, especially in the previous section's discussion of virulent French military power serving the role of redeeming benefactor to the modern Egyptian. But in fact a solid half of the *Description* was published by the Restoration government after the exile of Napoleon (see appendix B). And yet, other than the change of coat of arms on the opening page of the volumes published under the Restoration, the only indicator we have that such a drastic shift in patronage occurred is a one-page advertisement opening the fourth tome of engravings of antiquities (reproduced in appendix C). The question must be asked, is this "regime of truth" uncovered thus far still applicable under the Restoration, or does the meaning of the *Description* shift with shifting government patronage? This question can best be answered by looking at a particular anti-bonapartist journalist, Jean-Gabriel Peltier, and

his periodical *L'Ambigu* that began publication in 1802. In this section I will use the example of the royalist Peltier to show that the only change in meaning within the *Description* from the Bourbon perspective is the role of Napoleonic power within Egypt.

L'Ambigu is unique in that it uses much of the Egyptian imagery stemming from Napoleon's campaign to critique the Napoleonic Empire. Even more noteworthy is this critique's manifestation by means of admiration for pro-Bonapartist figures, especially Vivant Denon. Peltier excused his admiration for Denon by setting apart the work of the savants from the military action of the Egyptian Expedition. Denon is often portrayed by Peltier as a hero of Egypt limited by Napoleonic power. For example, Peltier describes the role of Denon and the other savants in the Egyptian campaign as follows:

We still believe in making something positive out of the French government, in giving the following praise, an extract of its dream of Egypt, pulled from the charming account that has been given by the good Vivant Denon [...] These conquests of the savants are beautiful that cost neither blood, nor tears, that leave mankind as it is [...] At the forefront of this innocent legion of conquerors on the rubble of Memphis and Thebes ... among the turmoil of the armies and in the silence of the tombs, one has seen, I say, one man, Mr. Denon, that neither duty, nor interest, nor ambition, nor grief, nor boredom have made him give up his role of running into such fatigue and such peril; [...] he was above all led by his burning admiration for this antiquity still new, that dominates as queen over all the generations of man [...] The intellectual society who prepares its side of the story of its expedition of Egypt will not miss giving out much new light suitable to guide us in this region of wonder, doubt, and darkness; but whatever easiness that these writings give us to travel through it, whatever care that they take to plan the routes, we will always take pity on those who will not have Mr. Denon to accompany their voyage.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Jean-Gabriel Peltier, *L'Ambigu*, no. 9, (1804): 210-17. "Nous croyons faire encore un chose agréable au chef du gouvernement Français, en donnant à la suite de ces chansons, un extrait de son rêve d'Egypte, tiré de la charmante relation qu'en a donnée le bon Vivant Denon [...] Mais qu'elles sont belles ces conquêtes des savans qui ne coûtent ni sang, ni larmes, qui laissant le genre humain comme il est, en attendant qu'elles le rendent mieux qu'il n'était, et dont le butin à jamais conserve, deviant le trésor de toutes les generations. A l'avant-garde de cette innocente legion de conquérons sur les décombres de Memphis et de Thebes...au milieu du tumulte des armes et dans le silence des tombeaux, on a vu, dis-je, un homme, c'était M. Denon, que ni le devoir, ni l'intérêt, ni l'ambition, ni le chagrin, ni l'ennui n'avaient fait sortir de sa partie pour courir à tant de fatigues et à tant de perils; mais il céda à un enthousiasme invincible pour homme étonnant; il y joignait cette curiosité savante qui voudrait évoquer tous les manes et

No acknowledgment is made on the part of Peltier that, not only was Denon the head arts administrator under Napoleon, but without military ambition in Egypt, Denon's intellectual project would have never been realized. This is attested to by the *nota bene* accompanying the map of Egypt opening the second volume of the *Travels*, in which Denon indicates that his personal expedition in Egypt followed that of the military trajectory of General Desaix. It states, "The dotted lines mark the route of the Troops commanded by Desaix during the Expedition of Bonaparte into Egypt. The same line also shows the track of Citi. Denon's Travels." (see map, figure 61).¹²¹ Denon makes repeated reference within the text of *Travels* itself to situations in which military guards stood watch to protect him from bandits, Mamelukes, and insurgents while he studied and sketched the Pharaonic monuments.¹²² Nonetheless, the above passage emphasizes

disputer au tems toutes ses proies; il était sur-tout entraîné par sa brûlante admiration pour cette antiquité toujours nouvelles, qui domine en reine sur toutes les generations des hommes [...] La société savante qui prépare, dit-on, de son côté un relation de son expedition d'Egypte, ne manquera pas d'y répandre beaucoup de nouvelles lumières propres à nous guider dans cette région de prodiges, de doutes et de ténèbres; mais quelque facilité que ces écrivains nous donnent pour la parcourir, quelque soin qu'ils prennent d'en applanir les routes, nous plaindrons toujours ceux qui n'auront pas M. Denon pour compagnon de voyage."

¹²¹ Map inserted prior to opening of Denon, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, 2nd vol.

¹²² One such example of this can be found in Denon's discussion of his time spent in Tentyra: "I had just discovered, in a small apartment, a celestial planisphere, when the last rays of day-light made me perceive that I was alone here, along with my kind and obliging friend General Beliard, who after having satisfied his own curiosity, would not leave me unprotected alone in the desert. We galloped on, and regained our division, which was already at Dindera, three quarters of a league off Tentyra, where we slept. Every soldier, every officer, without giving or receiving orders, had turned aside from the route, and hastened to Tentyra; and the army had on their own accord remained there the rest of the day – a day of such pleasure, as to reward me for every danger incurred in obtaining it (*Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, vol. 2:11, 78)." Denon also tells of the instance when he arrived at the ruins of Thebes: "The knees of the enthusiastic soldiers served me as a table, their bodies as a shade, whilst the dazzling rays of the burning sun enlightened this magnificent spectacle, and exhibited the electric emotion of a whole army of soldiers, whose delicate sensibility made me feel proud of being their companion and glory in calling myself a Frenchman (ibid.; quoted in Dewatcher and Gillispie, *Monuments of Egypt*, 13)." Furthermore, in the same volume Denon shows gratitude for Murad Bey not having immediately surrendered to the French in Cairo, for this is what has allowed Denon to travel with the army in search of his insurgency and continue to discover more ancient monuments (ibid., vol. 2:11, 24). Although, to provide a possible justification of Peltier's seemingly hypocritical support for Denon and not for the expedition as a whole, there are several instances in which Denon himself denounces the actions of the military. One such

Denon and the savants in general as entirely benevolent intellectual entities within Egypt who leave the inhabitants “as they are” and whose primary goal is neither ambition nor glory, but unselfish enlightenment and education of mankind as a whole. Contrast this to Peltier’s depiction of Napoleonic power in the following hypothetical conversation that occurs between England and France:

English: What is your name?

French: Slave.

English: Who has given you this name?

French: Buonaparte.

English: What has he promised you?

French: That he would make us rich, that he would make us free, that he would make us happy.

English: Has he kept his promise?

French: Yes, we are as rich as poppers, as free as burdens, as happy as misery, war and chains define us.¹²³

Despite the evidence to affirm Denon’s wholehearted support of military action in Egypt, Peltier presents his support of Denon from a wholly anti-Bonapartist perspective. Even Bonaparte’s Italian name is used to emphasize Napoleon as a foreign invader in France much as he was in Egypt.

instance occurs in his text when describing how certain French soldiers had unjustly pillaged a village under the pretense of searching for provisions, raping the women and dishonoring the inhabitants as a whole. “Oh war!” Denon cries, “thou art brilliant in history, but frightful when viewed with all thy attending horrors, naked, and undisguised (ibid., vol. 2:11, 12-13).”

¹²³ Peliter, “Catéchisme Français,” *L’Ambigu*, no. 23, (1804): 102-103. “L’anglais: Quel est votre nom? Le français: Esclave. L’anglais: Qui vous a donné ce nom? Le français: Buonaparté. L’anglais: Que vous avait-il promis? Le français: Qu’il nous rendrait riches, qu’il nous rendrait libres, qu’il nous rendrait heureux. L’anglais: A-t-il tenu sa promesse? Le français: Oui, nous sommes aussi riches que des gueux, aussi libres que des galériens, et aussi heureux que la misère, la guerre et les chains peuvent nous rendre [...]”

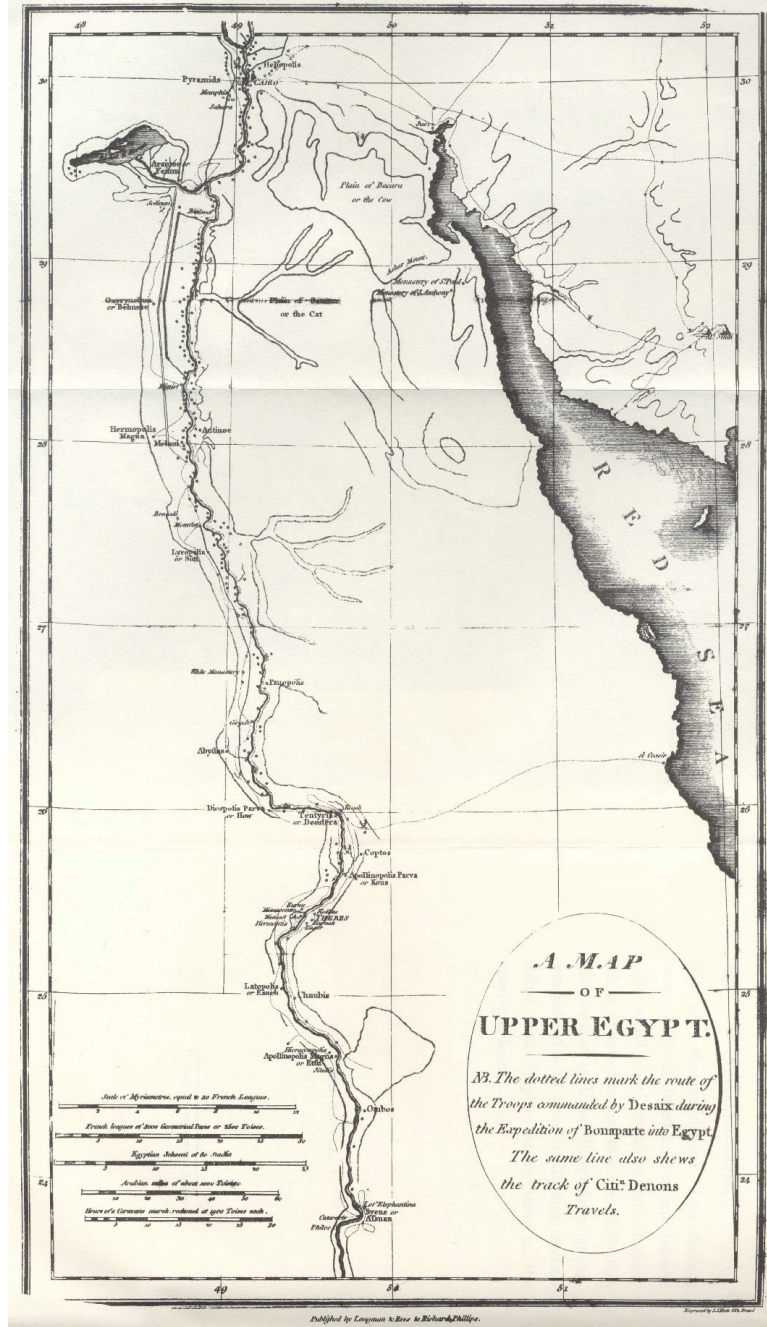


Figure 61. Vivant Denon, “A Map of Upper Egypt” with *nota bene* in lower right: “The dotted lines mark the route of the Troops commanded by Desaix during the Expedition of Bonaparte into Egypt. The same line also shows the truck of Citi. Denons Travels,” from *Travels and Upper and Lower Egypt during the Campaign of General Bonaparte*, opening vol. II, 1803.

Several specific images from *L'Ambigu* will now be considered in which Denonian imagery and Egyptian motifs were appropriated to fit a royalist perspective. The first image served as the vignette of the first page for the first five issues of *L'Ambigu* (figure 62). This image represents Napoleon's head on the body of a sphinx, yet the pseudo-hieroglyphs that surround him are all taken directly from Denon, particularly the bird in the upper right (Denon, pl. 119), the monkey at the bottom right (Denon, pl. 122,3), and the smaller sphinx at the bottom right (Denon, pl. 122,11).¹²⁴ Peltier describes the sphinx as representing Bonaparte's power and its limbs as that power's dissemination, his crown represents anti-republicanism. The "SPQR" written at the base of the statue refers to the Roman republican expression "Senate and People of Rome" (Senatus Populus que Romanus), and calls attention to the hypocrisy of Napoleon's alleged republican values after he coronated himself emperor in the same year of Peliter's publication of this image.

The second image served as the vignette of the first page of the tenth to eighteenth volumes of Peltier's journal and becomes even more overt in its criticism of Napoleon (figure 63). Here, the Egyptian god Tawaret who, despite her appearance is a benevolent goddess, dominates the right of the composition. Despite her size, she merely observes Napoleon, in the guise of what is most likely Ramses II, smite enemy after enemy as he is unable to satiate his appetite for power.¹²⁵ The above inscription cites Psalms 3:9, which states, "Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron and shalt break them in pieces, like a potter's vessel."

¹²⁴ Bernard van Rinsveld, "Une Egyptomanie anti-bonapartiste: le journaliste Jean-Gabriel Peliter," *Chronique d'Egypte, bulletin periodique de la Fondation* 66, no. 131-32, (1999): 5-22.

¹²⁵ I would like to thank Professor Sheramy Bundrick for helping me to identify the god Tawaret and Ramses II.



Figure 62. Vignette of the first page of numbers I to V of *L'Ambigu*.



Figure 63. Vignette of the first page of numbers X to XVIII of *L'Ambigu*.

This selective admiration and appropriation by Peltier of Denon and the work of the savants in general which simultaneously condemns Napoleon raises an interesting possibility for the Bourbon continuation of the *Description* in 1814, as well as for the striking continuity with what had been published of the *Description* under Napoleon. It is, I believe, in a similar way that the images of Napoleonic power within the *Description* served an opposite ideological goal for the Restoration. A change in representation and content within the *Description* was not needed to assimilate it into the Bourbons' political agenda. Rather, all that was needed was a shift in the perspective of what was being represented. For the Empire, the representation of French military power as seen in figure 53 served as a symbol of goodwill¹²⁶; for the Restoration, it symbolized forced, unwanted imperial power, similar to that of Napoleon's conquest of other European nations.

The *Description* provides a unique example of a politically motivated work residing comfortably in the realms of both governments. I earlier argued against Porterfield's statement that there was no place for Egypt within the classicizing paradigms of the Enlightenment; however, the *Description's* easy incorporation into both the Napoleonic Empire and the Bourbon Restoration illustrates the overwhelming validity of Porterfield's major thesis: the consistent Orientalist trend of diffusing internal conflict onto exterior worlds.

This trend took unique shape during the Napoleonic expedition, however. And one is forced to acknowledge how such a model must be reconfigured to understand

¹²⁶ One need only reference Menou, Général en Chef, "Aux habitans de l'Egypte," *Courier de l'Egypte*, no. 87, (15 Brumaire, IX.e année de la République): 1. He declares: "Vous étiez malheureux; l'armée française est venue en Egypte pour vous porter le bonheur."

French imperial formulations of race and difference, not only in relation to internal conflict, but also in relation to the external actualities of colonial contact. The effect of Egypt's climate that was believed to possess the ability to destroy both physical monuments and physiological disposition was used as evidence to support the larger agenda of French imperial ideology that justified colonization of Egypt. Contrasting images of the effeminate Egyptian male to the representations of virulent and masculine French soldiers within the *Description*, the French were able to appropriate these humoral theories of climate to secure themselves as redeemer of the impotent and racially degenerate Egyptian. This redemption was figured in numerous ways, most notably through the recreation of the pharaonic past and its monuments.

Thus far, I have considered French representations that defined "Egyptian" during colonial encounter and how their hegemonic value was applicable to politics across France's unstable regimes of the early nineteenth century. It is now necessary to consider Egyptian perspectives in my final chapter by examining the forms of assimilation and resistance that evolved from the larger political ramifications of French representations of Egypt.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE EVOLUTION AND HYBRIDIZATION OF EGYPTIAN SELF-DEFINITION

The Egyptian world-view before and after the re-ordering of the disciplinary power of colonial rule is sketched out in chapter in order to counteract the strongly entrenched discourse of the country as defined in the *Description*.¹²⁷ First, I review the cultural heritage of Egypt's pharaonic past as it was interpreted in Egypt's Middle Ages ignored in Western narratives. Then I trace how this heritage was transmitted into a language that could communicate Egypt's nationalistic and anti-colonial ideology from the beginning of occupation during the expedition, to its brief period of independence and modernization under Muhammad Ali (ruled 1815-1837), and finally to the era of British colonization during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In doing so, I argue that forms of resistance and nationalism evolved from overtly recalcitrant to increasingly assimilated into a colonial world-view. Under European influence and colonial control, Egyptians formulated a new syntax of history that positioned themselves between their own cultural memory and a colonial language of order, space, and control to which they had become accustomed.

¹²⁷ Donald Reid in particular has written a seminal study on Egypt's manifestations of national identity and self-determination in the post-Napoleonic expedition era. His book, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002), was a key foundation for this chapter's section of forms of resistance during and after British colonial rule.

The *Description*'s Missing Account of the Egyptian Middle Ages

As already established in the introduction of this thesis, the *Description* leaves out a very large portion of Egyptian history. Said states that:

The *Description* [...] displaces Egyptian or Oriental history as a history possessing its own coherence, identity, and sense. Instead, history as recorded by the *Description* supplants Egyptian or Oriental history by identifying itself directly and immediately with world history, a euphemism for European history. This European history's common element was defined by such figures as Homer, Alexander, Caesar, Plato, Solon, Pythagoras, and now Napoleon.¹²⁸

Instead of concentrating consistently on all time periods of the country's history, it emphasizes only the pharaonic past, Roman occupation, and Mameluke rule contemporary to the French expedition. In other words, it emphasizes the glory of a past that no longer exists, the occupation of an imperial power analogous to that of France, and the time period in which imperial intervention of the West is again occurring.

In focusing upon this wholly Western interpretation, the authors of the *Description* intentionally bypass a vital part of Egyptian history that would have been detrimental to the stability of France's imperial ideology as it would acknowledge a period of successful and stable independence. It therefore stands to reason that an Egyptian under colonial rule would have turned to this overlooked history to find the beginning seeds of self-determination. After examining this alternative history, I argue that it was a vital part of the cultural memory of Egyptian intellectuals from the French occupation throughout British colonialism that spawned a resistance to colonialism and inspired a sense of national identity.

¹²⁸ Said, *Orientalism*; quoted in Robert L. Tignor's introduction to Al-Jabarti, *Chronicle of the French Occupation, 1798: Napoleon in Egypt*, trans. and rpt. Shmuel Moreh (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 174 and 177.

It is not entirely unforgivable that medieval Egypt was overlooked in the *Description's* account of Egyptian history. Other than the motivations of a strictly Western interpretation indicated by Said, there is also the problem of Egypt itself seemingly abandoning its pharaonic history as a result of its inability to synthesize the polytheistic idolatry of the past with the monotheistic Muslim faith beginning in the early Middle Ages. Yet, while medieval Egypt was stricken with a wave of anti-pharaonic iconoclasm, it was equally the time when Egyptians learned to synthesize their ancient heritage with Islam.¹²⁹ Muslim intellectuals beginning in the eleventh century formed three interpretations of the past in particular to prove that pharaonic Egypt was not antithetical, but rather anticipatory, of the Muslim faith.¹³⁰ Several interpretations that focus on the purpose of the erection of the pyramids in particular all carry the similar theme of the foretelling of a catastrophic flood from which all knowledge and wisdom recorded by early prophetic figures needed to be protected from destruction. Such interpretations are of importance to this study as they will again come into play with some nationalistic nineteenth-century Egyptian intellectuals.¹³¹

The perspective that the pyramids may in fact have been built to protect the treasures of pre-Islamic prophets allowed for an appreciation free of religious guilt to develop among devout medieval Muslims in Egypt. From this appreciation followed a

¹²⁹ Darrell Dykstra, "Pyramids, Prophets, and Progress: Ancient Egypt in the Writings of Ali Mubarak," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114, no. 1 (January-March 1994): 54-65.

¹³⁰ I begin this study of Muslim's positive view toward their pharaonic past in the eleventh century due to the debate among historians about when this renaissance really did occur. While Dykstra believes that a continuity of appreciation for the monuments existed throughout time, other historians, particularly Michael Cook, argue that it was utterly suppressed by both Christian and Islamic orthodoxies and did not resurge until after several hundred years in the eleventh century. For more, see Michael Cook, "Pharaonic History in Medieval Egypt," *Studia Islamica* 57 (1983): 67-113. While the later interpretation does seem a bit reductive, I will nonetheless write only within a time frame agreed upon by all historians of the subject.

¹³¹ Dykstra, "Pyramids, Prophets, and Progress": 58.

burgeoning interest in the travel to and exploration of the sites of Egypt's great pre-Islamic past. One work of interest by Egyptian historian Abū Ja far al-Idrīsī (1173-1251) declares that it is the duty of all Muslims to visit the pyramids during the *hajj* as they are a site of both piety and curiosity. In Idrīsī's account, even if the pyramids are seen as the creations of men lacking in godly inspiration, they provide a moralizing model for the demise that obviously occurred due to the hubris of the ancients, and hence reinforces Muslim piety.¹³² In Idrīsī's seven-chapter work, *Anār ulwiyy al-ajrām fī al-kashf an asrār al-ahrām*, we encounter both the past and present men who have heeded such advice and made the pyramids a pilgrimage in itself. Among these men are prophets, rulers, scholar, engineers, and just ordinary observers and admirers.¹³³ For example, a great tenth-century dignitary in Egypt reportedly awarded prizes to those who could climb to the top of the Great Pyramid, and the emperor al-Malik (d. 1198) used the pyramids at Giza as grounds for military games and training.¹³⁴ Both of these examples providing a counter-weight to Napoleon's symbolic act of conquest by mounting the great Sphinx at Giza (figures 32 and 33).

Medieval Islamic scholars, likewise, encountered the pyramids with measuring devices and scientific calculations that attempted to understand the mathematic and geometric perfection of the structures.¹³⁵ For instance, along with Idrīsī's account of travelers to the pyramids, he provides information on anything worth knowing about the

¹³² Ulrich Haarman, "In Quest of the Spectacular: Noble and Learned Visitors to the Pyramids Around 1200 AD," *Islamic Studies presented to Charles J. Adams* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1991), 57 and 58.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

pyramids in the Middle Ages, making his text similar to a modern-day travel guide and encourages further visits by all interested parties.

To consider the vital importance of the pyramids in Egypt's religious and cultural heritage brings us to observe with new perspectives the staffage of Egyptians always present in European representations of the monuments (figures 9-15). These images present them as nothing more than mere brigands or caravans, devoid of purpose and present only to conjure images of what it means to be 'native' to this environment. In all actuality they would be more accurately visualized as keenly interested observers and devout pilgrims there to educate themselves equally, yet with a different perspective from the French, about their own history.

Al-Jabarti and the Seeds of Resistance

With this tradition of embracing pharaonic Egypt in Muslim culture, how would modern Egyptians react to a French occupation ignorant of this tradition yet eager to be portrayed as saviors? We have already seen the many ways in which the *Description* illustrates the French as superior to the Egyptian, particular in contrasting the French and Mameluke armies (figures 51 and 53), and in relegating Egyptians to the role of staffage in the pharaonic monuments. The Egyptian intellectual and historian, al-Jabarti tells quite a different story in his illuminating *Chronicle of the French Occupation*. While al-Jabarti's upper-middle class status and erudite family roots distinguish him from the population of most of Egypt, his account nonetheless provides us with the perspective of the invaded during the French occupation and how two narrations of history stemming from differing traditions come into direct conflict. Further, al-Jabarti writes in an era of cultural revival for historical and literary writing that began in 1760. Deeply entrenched

within the tradition of the Islamic chronicle traceable to before and during the Islamic Middle Ages briefly surveyed above, al-Jabarti is not a “unique” figure as he is often described by historians. Instead, he manifests a somewhat traditional view of history that is founded on moral and intellectual utility.¹³⁶

His chronicle of the French expedition is, not surprisingly, marked by the same level of ambivalence that one would no doubt find in any account written from the perspective of the occupier. But the criteria through which al-Jabarti reveals this ambivalence speaks to his unique position as an Egyptian “other” by which the consequences of colonial encounter will be better understood. As al-Jabarti himself states:

It should be known that history is the science which determines and transmits knowledge of the conditions of different peoples, of their countries, their customs, their industries, their origins and their ends.¹³⁷

As historian Robert Tignor brings to our attention in his introductory remarks to his chronicle, al-Jabarti did not speculate on either French motives for coming to Egypt or the consequences it would have for Egypt’s future. While apparently attempting to be a careful chronicler, however, his text did intonate that the invasion created new challenges for Egyptian society.¹³⁸ To be fair, al-Jabarti did indeed praise the French on several occasions for their sophisticated level of learning and scientific knowledge, not to mention their skillful military that he contrasts to that of the Mamelukes’ confusion and lack of preparation. But more often than not, the French are not seen as benevolent conquerors as they are portrayed throughout the *Description*, but rather as predatory

¹³⁶ Peter Gran, “The Cultural Revival of the Late Eighteenth Century: Literature, Language Sciences, and History,” in *Islamic Roots of Capitalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press: 1979), 72.

¹³⁷ *Ajā'ib al-āthār fī l-tarājim wa'l-akhbār*, I, 3; quoted in Gran, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism*, 71.

¹³⁸ Tignor, Introduction to Al-Jabarti, *Chronicle*, 11.

assailants prepared to rob from the general population everything they could through deceit and lies. Even his criticisms of the Mamelukes should not be seen as a passive manifestation of admiration for the French as, returning to al-Jabarti's moralizing view of history, he believed a radical reassertion of power should come from the *ulama*, or religious leaders of the country.¹³⁹

Al-Jabarti reveals his mistrust of the French to us first in his analysis of Napoleon's inaugural address to the Egyptians upon his arrival in Egypt. This address was a key moment for the French in Egypt as it laid out Napoleon's self-definition to the Egyptians as a redeemer, not a conqueror, who revered the Prophet Mohammed and his god (reproduced in Appendix D). This was something that showed through not only in proclamations, but also in visual imagery that attempted to literally associate and synthesize French colonial endeavor with the preservation of Egypt's *mœurs* and religion (figure 64).¹⁴⁰

After transcribing this address in his chronicle, al-Jabarti proceeds to conduct a six-page critique in which he summarizes Napoleon's words as "incoherent, vulgar, and miserable."¹⁴¹ Some of his criticisms are rather humorous as they illustrate both the cultural and linguistic divide separating the two cultures. For example, he strongly insists that "Bonaparte" was not actually Napoleon's name, but rather his title as is "general." The reasoning behind this is that Bonparte's "meaning is 'the pleasant gathering,'

¹³⁹Gran, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism*, 73.

¹⁴⁰ For more on Napoleon's attempt to associate with Muslim Egyptians see F. Charles-Roux, "La Politique Musulmane de Bonaparte," in *Revue des études napoléoniennes* (Paris: Éditions Albert Morancé, 1929), 23-47.

¹⁴¹ Al-Jabarti, *Chronicle*, 27.



Figure 64. Double profile of Bonaparte with French bicorne army hat and turban.

because *Bona* (Būnā) means ‘pleasant’ and *parté* means ‘gathering.’”¹⁴² But other criticisms are both well founded and legitimate as, sentence by sentence, he picks apart Napoleon’s words to show the obvious gaps in his proclamation’s logic and contradictions in reason to reveal his true intentions, not to mention Napoleon’s horrendous Arabic grammar. At a later point in his chronicle, he similarly refers to another proclamation by the French as nothing more than “twisted words and pompous expressions.”¹⁴³

Particularly, al-Jabarti berates Napoleon’s claim to be a follower of God, for if he has already rebelled against the Pope and the Catholic Church (a fact that Napoleon uses to show his support of Islam, then he is clearly opposed to not only Christians, but also Muslims since he shows respect for no religion.¹⁴⁴ This is proof that “they [the French] are all materialists,”¹⁴⁵ again reaffirming his general view of Napoleon as being dishonest and ready to swindle Egypt out of what is rightly its own. This summary of Napoleon’s address, not surprisingly, parallels al-Jabarti’s opinion of the French in general. Throughout his chronicle, the Frenchmen are described as barbaric and devoid of manners. Al-Jabarti finds their customs utterly repulsive, from their habit of rubbing their shoes in their spit to several other more personal matters of hygiene.¹⁴⁶

Yet more pertinent to counteracting the French ideology is al-Jabarti’s description of how the invasion affected the populace: the French sought to instill fear and panic among Egyptians through harassing the women and girls, arresting and imprisoning

¹⁴² Ibid., 29.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 41.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 32.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 32.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 29.

innocent civilians, looting homes, and issuing unrelenting demands including taxation and financial settlements that were beyond all reason.¹⁴⁷ His entire account is replete with incidents of the violation and murder of innocent women and the unjust, arbitrary rules that left the population in a constant state of anxiety and unease. Take, for example, the following passages:

This month ended with the general and particular events that occurred, as for example that a number of soldiers climbed and broke into some houses and alleys for nothing. And it happened on the night of the twenty-seventh that a group of Frenchman came upon the house of Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Jawharī which is in al-Azbakiyya near Bāb al-Hawā. They broke and removed the window of the reception room which looks down upon the pond, entered by it, and ascended to the top of the house where there were three women servants and a girl servant and a porter [...] when they got into the upper part of the house those women woke up and screamed. So they struck them and killed them. But the girl hid in a corner. Meanwhile they wrought havoc in the house and took whatever they wanted and descended.¹⁴⁸

Contrast this incident to that of the assertion of Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, private secretary to Bonaparte:

The mosques, the civil and religious institutions, the harems, the women, the customs of the country, - all were scrupulously respected. [Nonetheless], instead of being aided by the inhabitants [...] No Frenchman was secure of his life who happened to stray half a mile from any inhabited place, or the corps to which they belonged.¹⁴⁹

Regarding the unreasonable demands put on the population, al-Jabarti writes:

Other events of the month included the aggressive behavior of the guards and their severe insistence that the lamps in the roads be lit. When they passed at night and found a lamp which had gone out because of the wind or because of its oil running due to the thickness of the wick and the like, they would nail up the shop or house where this had an arrangement and paid whatever they felt like demanding. Sometimes they would deliberately smash the lamp for this purpose. It happened that it rained at night and a number of lamps were extinguished in

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 49.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 117.

¹⁴⁹ *The French View of the Event in Egypt: Memoirs by Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, private secretary to General Bonaparte, in Napoleon in Egypt: rpt. in Al-Jabarti, Chronicle, 144 and 149.*

Mirjūshī market [...] So they nailed up all those places whose lamps went out and when the owners woke up they made an arrangement in order to have the nails removed. This happened in a number of streets with the result that on that day they collected a great quantity of money. They did the same even in the alleys and cul-de-sacs until people had no other occupation but to mind their lamps and to check them, especially during those long nights of the winter.¹⁵⁰

Again, contrasting this to the French view of matters, we have the words of Vivant Denon:

I have since seen, in Upper Egypt, Arabian artisans, when not under the restraint of their masters [the Mamelukes] , coming to offer their services to the workmen among our soldiers, assisting them in their operations, and, sure of wages adequate to their industry, endeavoring assiduously to give us satisfaction by patient and active services.¹⁵¹

As a comparison of these passages indicates, al-Jabarti's chronicle provides us with the seeds of a history affected by, yet separate from, that implanted by the French; a history marked by an occupation of everyday violence, licentiousness, and fear, not one of ideological redemption and salvation. Yet this is one small hiccup in the history of Egypt not written over by the French, but remembered by the Egyptian populace contemporary to the invasion and after. Al-Jabarti is overt in his and his fellow citizens critique of the Europeans, and with such a strong foundation for dissent in place, one would imagine that it would continue. Yet the Napoleonic expedition was short lived and the political order that followed was drastically different. The common consensus is that with the introduction of Egypt to Western *moeurs* during the expedition, the post-expedition era proceeded with an embrace of all things Europe never seen before within the country. It is my contention, however, that overt resistance merely evolved to the beginning seeds of

¹⁵⁰ Al-Jabarti, *Chronicles*, 117-118.

¹⁵¹ Denon, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, 277.

nationalism as Egypt formulated more discreet usages of its past as a form of self-determination.

Self-Determined Statesmen or Oriental Puppets?: Modernization Under Muhammad Ali

After the Napoleonic expedition, Egypt had a brief period of independence, yet still in close contact with Europe that led it to a process of extreme modernization and technological advancements under the capitalist-minded rule of Muhammad Ali. Among these advancements were educational reforms, new schools, the translation movement from Turkish to Arabic, and a body of European technical instructors.¹⁵²

Not under the imminent threat of assault as the country was during the expedition, Egypt now looked to Europe with a new lens open to what it could offer. Perhaps an ideal example of this new trend can be found in the writings of al-Tahtawi, born in 1801 with no personal memory of the events of the expedition. Al-Tahtawi picked up on al-Jabarti's admiration of French developments in engineering and sciences as he witnessed at the Institut d'Egypte, but without the skepticism and criticisms that accompanied al-Jabarti's work. In 1826 al-Tahtawi was sent to Paris by Muhammad Ali in order to gain as much information as possible to help with Egypt's modernization project. While he still manifests all of the symptoms of the confusion caused by the assault to one's senses as the result of cultural shock, he nonetheless expresses sympathy for the actions of the French, for as he emphasizes:

Sciences in Paris progress everyday. They are constantly growing. A year cannot pass without one making a new discovery. Sometimes, in the space of only one year, one will discover several new arts, or several new industries, or processes and improvements.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Gran, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism*.

¹⁵³ Les sciences à Paris progressent chaque jour. Elles sont en croissance constante. Il ne s'écoule pas une année qu'on ne fasse une nouvelle découverte. Parfois, en l'espace d'une seule année, on découvre

His comments toward Muslims, however, are less commendatory:

This essentially distinguishes the Muslim [...] it is a hatred of science, the belief that research is useless, frivolous, even dangerous; natural science, because it is a phenomenon of God, historical science, because it applies to time before Islam, could only revive ancient errors.¹⁵⁴

Al-Jabarti and al-Tahtawi are frequently considered in the same study by historians as they are both Egyptian intellectuals working within a relatively close period of time. Yet in a comparison of their perspectives, al-Tahtawi has evolved from al-Jabarti as he now whole-heartedly praises Europe and its advanced forms of science and technology. He has, in a sense, completely evolved into a different world-view and political order that has internalized and come to accept the approach of European acculturation.

From this perspective it becomes difficult to draw comparisons between al-Jabarti and al-Tahtawi due to their point in time under two different orders of the world; al-Jabarti when under direct colonial assault, al-Tahtawi when the same system that allows for colonialism's existence equally creates technological advancement and progress discerned as admirable. It is equally difficult to draw comparisons between the Revolt of Cairo at the outset of Napoleon's occupation and any assertions of independence seemingly less benign and passive.

For example, how are we to view the popular image of the pyramids inscribed with Arabic in the official journey of Egypt sanctioned by Muhammad Ali during this time of great modernization (figure 65)? Are we to imagine the re-appropriation of the

plusieurs arts nouveaux, ou plusieurs industries nouvelles, ou des procédés et des perfectionnements. *Takhlîs al-ibrîz*, 2nd ed.; quoted in Anouar Louca, "Rifa'a A-Tahtawi (1801-1873) et la Science Occidentale," in *D'un Orient l'autre*, 207.

¹⁵⁴ Ce qui distingue essentiellement le musulman [...] c'est la haine de la science, c'est la persuasion que la recherche est inutile, frivole, presque impie ; la science de la nature, parce qu'elle est une concurrence faite à Dieu; la science historique, parce que s'appliquant à des temps antérieurs à l'islam, elle pourrait raviver d'anciennes erreurs. Ibid, 215.



Figure 65. Masthead of *Al-Waqai al-Misriyya*, Egypt's official journal, 1829.

pyramid in the background, rarely used as a symbol of the country by Egyptians themselves before this time, as nothing more than a shallow derivative of Europe's appreciation for and categorization of this symbol that we have already seen (figures 9-15). It is my contention that this is hardly how this image should be interpreted.

Egypt's culture is not to be perceived as abandoned in the implementation of western technology. First, upon Ali's rise to power, one of his initial strides was to make Arabic, not French or English, the official language of the state instead of Turkish. Now, the Arabic language became a necessity for playing any part in the bureaucracy of the state.¹⁵⁵ Further, Muhammad Ali was able to maintain control over Egypt for the period he did was not that he sold to country to Europe but that he merely avoided direct confrontation with it, constantly playing one power against another for a hand in Egypt's lucrative agricultural trade.¹⁵⁶ Related to the aspect of Egypt's agricultural industry, it must not be overlooked that even a basic increase in this modernization can be seen as coming from within. In fact, historian Peter Gran contends that the significance of industry was partially realized and under way even before the expedition. Chapter One has already established the superiority of the Egyptian agricultural industry in relation to that of France in the eighteenth century. And for all of the *Description's* attempt to emphasize the desert-like, decrepit condition of modern Egypt, its aerial surveys and maps of the country intended to show the placement of ancient monuments equally portray quite a stable and developed agricultural industry in the process (figure 66). The French abandoning the Egyptian project allowed such industry already initiated before the expedition to continue at a greater pace by promoting increased contact between the two

¹⁵⁵ Gran, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism*, 113

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 115.

cultures to merely accent the country's already burgeoning modernization. This evaluation is somewhat exaggerated, as Ali himself sent a number of Egyptians, including al-Tahtawi, to France for the purpose of equally *creating*, as well as aiding in “a plan for the civilization of Egypt through instruction.”¹⁵⁷ Yet it does shed light on the conclusive, yet overlooked, assertion that Egypt possessed and continued to possess its own standards of progress and modernization both before and after the French occupation. As we shall now see, such a sense of progress was directly akin to its conception of pharaonic Egypt as formulated in the Middle Ages.

Such is epitomized in the writings of Ali-Mubarak, one of the most prominent Egyptian intellectuals, technocrats, and government officials of his time in the late era of Egypt's independence before British colonization in 1882. In 1844, at the height of Ali-Mubarak's early educational career he, like al-Tahtawi, was chosen along with a few other Egyptian men to further his education in France. Upon his return to Egypt he wrote his best known work, *Al-Khitat al-tawfiqiyya al-jadida*, itself a virtual encyclopedia of nineteenth-century Egypt surveying its historical, biographical, and topographical information. Another work belonging to him, *Alam al-din*, contains fictional accounts of conversations and travels of a traditionally educated Muslim.¹⁵⁸ In both his works, he illustrates a changing cultural understanding of ancient Egypt among his generation. While he was familiar with the learned travelers to Egypt during the Napoleonic expedition, including Volney and Jomard among others, he equally emphasizes the importance of Egyptians being responsible for acquiring a knowledge of their own

¹⁵⁷ “...un plan pour la civilisation de l’Égypte par l’instruction.” Jomard, *Banquet de l’Expedition d’Égypte*; quoted in Anouar Louca, *Voyageurs et Écrivains Égyptiens en France au XIXe Siècle* (Paris: Didier, 1970), 3.

¹⁵⁸ Dykstra, “Pyramids, Prophets, and Progress”:57.

history and the value that past generations have ascribed to their monuments.¹⁵⁹ In proving his point, he shows his own knowledge of the medieval interpretations of the pharaonic past as discussed above. In doing so, he was able to come to the conclusion that Egypt was

[...] the place of origin of the science of agriculture, on which rested all other elements of social complexity. From Egypt these fundamental accomplishments were transmitted to all other nations. Egyptians [...] could and should take pride in this primacy; the Egyptian *watan* was not merely the place where one lived, it was a nation marked by genuine historical accomplishment.¹⁶⁰

To associate the glory of the past as indicated in this above quote with the state of the present, Mubarak believed that ancient Egypt was able to reach this level of civilization due to its just and consistent laws that prevailed throughout the country. This allowed for the population to flourish as the ancient system provided a better and more equal way of distributing resources. While Mubarak acknowledged that Egypt did not remain at the peak of this innovated stage of its history due to periods of invasions and foreign domination, ancient Egypt nonetheless provided contemporary Egypt with a model for progress that was not a mere derivative of European advancement and achievement.¹⁶¹ Emphasizing the distinctiveness of Egypt as it directly related to both pharaonic history and its medieval interpretations allowed a uniquely Egyptian appreciation of the past to be made known. The French were not the only ones who believed they could return Egypt to its ancient splendor; Egypt's own leading administrators thought they could do so as well.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 60.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 62.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 64.

Looking again at figure 65 after considering Ali Mubarak, I believe a new interpretation should be drawn. The implementation of the pyramid in this image is not in the same vein as, for example, the tulip craze of the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire that led to the planting of tulips throughout Istanbul only after its exports of tulip bulbs led to an explosion of the tulip industry in the Netherlands themselves. Instead, it is an image that conjures memories of Egypt's own pharaonic past as it was envisioned through the intellectual renaissance of Egypt's Middle Ages. The pyramid's symbolism once again shows its changing nature. Now torn between two alternate histories and ideologies, it hardly serves as a signifier of the pharaonic past anymore. Instead this image carries the weight of both the European tradition of representing the pyramid as a symbol of Western exploit as reiterated in Chapter One, but also the tradition stemming from the medieval Egyptian renaissance that also coveted this symbol.

This is further elucidated in a comparison of this print with that of the image of the duke of Parma discussed in the introduction at the beginning of this study (figure 8). While du Tillot measuring the pyramid in relation to the plan of a Greek temple places it clearly within the realm of a Eurocentric representation, the Arabic inscribed on the pyramid of figure 65 allows for a new interpretive tradition based on Egypt's own system of the classification of its past. Yet, it does so while still cleverly working within the parameters of a language equally translatable to a Western hegemonic ideology as perpetuated by the *Description*. To what degree, we must ask, was this steady balance still maintained under British colonization?

Internalizing the External During and After Colonial Rule

The year 1882 ended the period of Egypt's modernization under its own control, and marked the new era of British colonization lasting until 1882. The modernizing projects established by Muhammad Ali were not strong enough to withstand the invasion of the European market, bringing Cairo to an economic collapse that equally allowed for a physical invasion as well.¹⁶² Within the onset of colonialism came the implementation of different systems and methods of ordering to both control and make most productive the human and natural resources of the country. Timothy Mitchell, in particular, argues for the manner in which the colonization of Egypt was partially aimed at turning the country into an "exhibition" that was fully open and revealed to the colonizer.¹⁶³ This concept was fully realized in a visual and written form within the *Description*, yet was fully brought to fruition by the exhibition of the actual country during British colonization.

Muhammad Ali himself planted the seeds of this exhibition process for the purposes of increasing the country's capital. For example, beginning in 1820, Egyptians were not allowed to travel outside their native districts, as they were prescribed the crops they grew and the manner in which they were cultivated and distributed. Yet, the British exploited this notion to an extreme in a manner typical of colonial alteration. Cairo, for instance, was completely refashioned in a Haussmanian sense as the streets' widening and organization mimicked the same ordering inscribed on the inhabitants to counteract their seemingly disorganized and inactive state. All was made visible to observation in

¹⁶² Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), x.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 10-18.

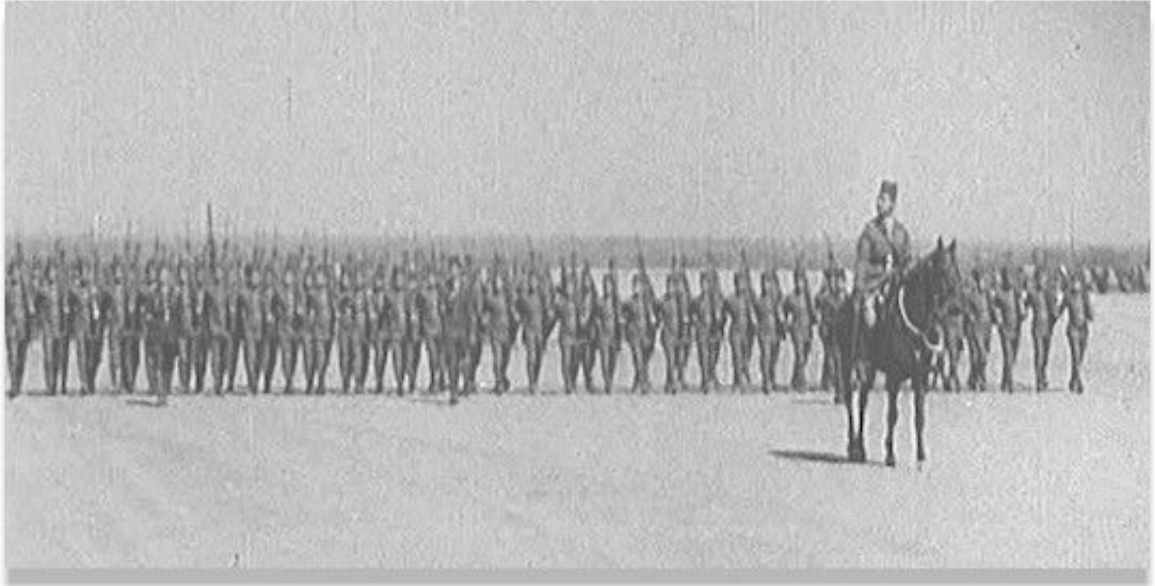
this reordering, including women and their families.¹⁶⁴ In short, to make visible was to penetrate, to penetrate was to control, and to control completely was to displace the fears and insecurities inherent in colonial rule.

This is not to discount members of Egyptian society as active agents in their own history, but rather to illustrate the internalization of the coherence of colonial order; power, in short, is as much an interior restriction as it is an exterior one. If such is true, we may ask how resistance ever occurs at all, and in what form.

An image of the Egyptian military dating to 1918 puts this problem into visual form (figure 67). Over 100 years have passed since the Napoleonic expedition and we see a stark contrast to the disorganized Mamelukes of Lejeune's *Battle of the Pyramids*. The military reforms of Egypt in the late-nineteenth century were a major feat in the new colonial structure of the Egypt. The same notion that led to making visible even women and children within the widened streets of Cairo also led to the structuring of a military with uniforms by which they could be distinguished from common stragglers. Like a play acted out before us, everyone in their respective costume has a duty and role to perform. As the result of a century of military reforms under British colonial control there exists hardly any difference in this 17th infantry battalion (figure 67) from the formidable, organized army under Napoleon (figure 53); an organization that makes external the internal structure of colonial order. Historian Timothy Mitchell states of military reforms beginning as soon as the early nineteenth century that

[...they] transformed groups of armed men into what seemed an 'artificial machine.' This military apparatus appeared somehow greater than the sum of its

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., xv



The 17th Egyptian Infantry Battalion in Sudan

Figure 67. The 17th Egyptian Infantry Battalion in Sudan, from *The Egyptian Chronicles, Egypt's Destiny, Muhammad Nagiyb's Memoires, Egypt's First President*, 1918.

parts, as though it were a structure with an existence independent of the men who composed it.¹⁶⁵

Yet in this image representative of the military reforms as a whole comes a defiance that critiques that very apparatus which created it. For within this image of the 17th Egyptian Infantry is Egypt's first president, Muhammad Nagiyb. Elected to presidency in 1956, his rule was short lived as he was shortly thereafter kidnapped and stripped of power by members of his own military police he once led in the revolution for independence and democracy against both the British and subsequent Egyptian sultans who filled the power vacuum after colonial withdrawal in 1936. Nonetheless, his rise to power within an anti-colonial movement relied on the very existence of a colonial structure.

As historian Timothy Mitchell argues, even anti-colonial movements form within the organizations institutionalized by the colonial state. Mitchell goes on to articulate:

[...] one should also question the traditional figure of resistance as a subject who stands outside this power and refuses its demands. Colonial subjects and their modes of resistance are formed *within* the organizational terrain of the colonial state, rather than some wholly exterior social space.¹⁶⁶

In short, resistance is maintained under colonialism by functioning through its very system; forms of resistance are much more subtle as the processes of assimilation become normalized. Likewise nationalism, a mode of resistance arguably initialized by colonialism, was equally visualized within the frame of a colonial lens. First and foremost this was promulgated by Egypt's re-appropriation of the icons of their country popularized by Europe. These icons were in turn put to the use of galvanizing support among Egyptians to question British colonialism through a nationalist interpretation of their significance. In the era of British colonialism, what we have defined as resistance

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., xii.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., xi.

under al-Jabarti can hardly be considered as such anymore. Resistance has taken the form of compliance, and through this a national self-determination emerged in the form of independence movements. The effectiveness of these nationalist movements in relation to the discourse established by the *Description* will be the focus of the conclusion of this study.

CONCLUSION:

THE LEGACY OF THE *DESCRIPTION DE L'EGYPTE*

The *Description* maintained a long life after its initial publication from 1809-1828. Despite the tenacity of certain Egyptians to reappropriate its history from a dominant Western narrative, the hegemony of the *Description*'s mode of visualizing the country established for at least a century to come proved to be fierce competition.

The reception of the luxury edition of the *Description* within France was at first surprisingly poor. Publication and inventory records show that by 1820, almost 700 out of 1,000 copies of the completed installments still remained unsold. Further, the original publication price ranged from 4,000 to 6,000 francs, depending on the quality of paper, whereas by the mid-1830s the price had dropped to 1,000 francs due to poor sales.¹⁶⁷ Yet just as I argued that the *Description* served the ideological functions of two opposite regimes in France, it also served the ideological functions of France's most formidable imperial competitor, Britain.

In 1820, C.L.F. Panckoucke rescued the *Description* from oblivion when he proposed a more convenient octavo-size edition with less essays and more emphasis on images, which he marketed first and foremost to a British audience with great success. During the French withdrawal of Egypt after their defeat by the British navy, the British stipulated that most antiquities acquired by France during the expedition be relinquished to British control. Therefore the influx of treasures like the Rosetta stone now available

¹⁶⁷ Michael W. Albin, "Napoleon's *Description de l'Égypte*: Problems of Corporate Authorship," *Publishing History*, 8 (1980): 65-85.

to a British audience accompanied by Britain's own colonial trek in the country, initiated a revival in Egypt that drew many eyes to the monumental work of the *Description*.

The popularity of the Panckoucke edition had a ripple effect back to France where the *Description*'s representations of Egypt continued to formulate both British and French imperial ideology throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To name just a few of the British and French travelogues to Egypt that followed in the wake of the *Description*: Edward William Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1833-35), Gardener Wilkinson's *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (1879), and Gustav Flaubert's published travel notes and letters from Egypt (1850). Not only was the Egyptian travelogue rejuvenated by the *Description*, but the pictorial conventions of the country and its inhabitants that the *Description* solidified became the norms of representing colonial lands. Along with Flaubert on his fantastic voyage through Egypt was the esteemed photographer Maxime Du Camp, whose photographs of Hadji Ishmael aside Egypt's classical monuments speak to the *Description*'s long-standing impact. His 1852 edition of *Egypte, Nubie, Palestine, et Syrie: dessins photographiques réunis pendant les années 1849, 1850, and 1851, accompagnés d'un texte explicatif*, contains not only a text of quotations from past experts on Egypt detailing the monument's historical context, in-depth descriptions, measurements and maps. It also contains direct visual quotations of the *Description*'s ordering of modern and ancient Egypt. Du Camp's photographs that use the same model of a contemporary Egyptian amidst the ruins of Egypt parallels the *Description*'s detail of a colossal statue and becomes, as art historian Julia Ballerini states, "a locus for many interwoven

issues.”¹⁶⁸ (figures 68, 69, and 70). As with the *Description*, Du Camp manifests his desire to order and control both past and present Egypt as the monument and the person are conjoined both spatially, visually, and by association, metaphorically.¹⁶⁹ Du Camp’s and the *Description*’s small figures amid their historical backdrop become, in a sense, metonyms for the entire plight of Egypt’s history from the past to the present.

Continuing to another photograph by the English photographer Francis Frith and an image from David Roberts collection of lithographs on Egypt, more comparisons must be drawn between these views of the Colossi of Memnon and that of the *Description* (figures 71, 72, and 73). All three representations are exactly the same in the strictest sense, especially with regard to the position and placement of the viewer in relation to the monuments. Even the camel strategically placed at the foot of the first Colossi is exactly the same in both Frith’s and the *Description*’s representation. While Robert’s lithograph lacks the direct quotation of the camel from the *Description*, it nonetheless contains the all too familiar Egyptian staffage dispersed on the desert plane in various locations. We must ask ourselves when looking at all of the above images: why this one view, why only this perspective? The issue here goes much deeper than mere composition and desired artistic choice. To understand how, we must turn toward a comparison of photographs of a particular street in Cairo.

Further considering Frith, the notion of simulacra formulated through a perpetual discourse as discussed in Chapter One becomes obvious again in a comparison of his photograph of a street in Cairo with a another representation of an almost identical view

¹⁶⁸ “The in visibility of Hadji-Ishmael: Maxime Du Camp’s 1850 photographs of Egypt,” in *Body Imaged: the human form and visual culture since the Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 147-160.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 149-150.

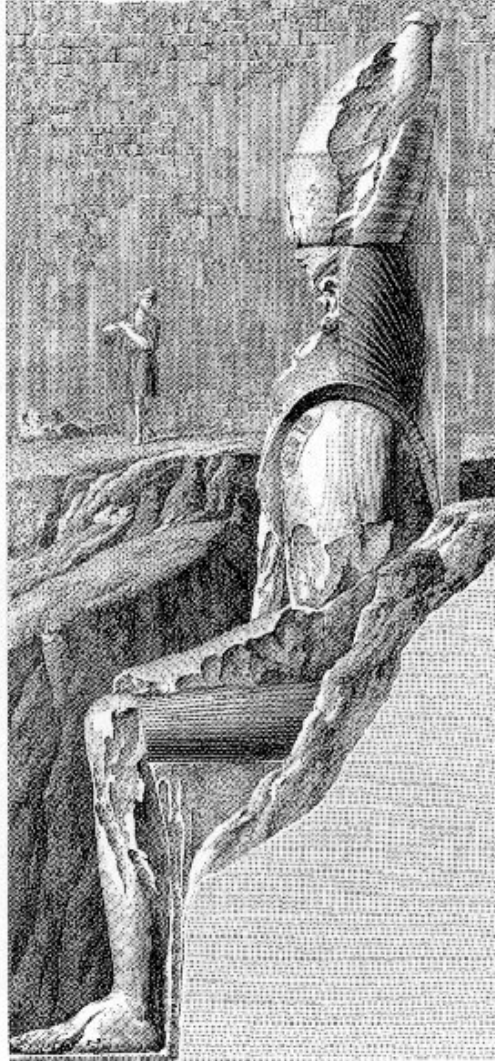


Figure 68. Détails des colosses oriental et occidental placés près de la porte du palais, from *Description de l'Égypte, Antiquités (Thèbes, Louqsor)*, vol. III, pl. 13.



Figure 69. Maxime Du Camp, *Colossal Statue*, 1850.



Figure 70. Maxime Du Camp, *Westernmost Colossus of the Temple of Re, Abu Simbel*, 1850.



Figure 71. “Vue des deux colosses,” from *Description de l’Egypte, Thèbes, Memnonium -Antiquités*, vol. II, pl. XX



Figure 72. Francis Frith, *Colossi of Memnon*, 1858.



Figure 73. David Roberts, *Colossi of Memnon*, c.1838-39

(figures 74 and 75). Yet, the later image is not actually a photograph of a street in Cairo; it is instead a view of the Rue du Caire at the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1889. Despite their identical nature, we recognize the image taken of the Universal Exposition as simulacrum in the most complete definition of the word, while we are more willing to accept Frith's image of an actual street in Egypt as authentic and true to that which it claims to represent. Both images, however, are after all mere representation and their similarity as simulacra lies in their equal use of the concept of framing that is central to a colonial world-view.

The durability of this framing device makes its most overt visualization in a comparison of the frontispiece of the *Description* with an image almost 100 years later of the French colony of New Caledonia in the south pacific. (figures 76 and 77). In the *Description*'s frontispiece, Egypt as a whole is first imaged by a consolidation of a series of monuments from its pharaonic past. In short, it contains that which necessitates French intervention in the country to preserve this history. As a framing device around this summarization of Egypt, we have all of the necessary tools of civilization, culture, and governance that will preserve this ancient history, from the arts and sciences ushered in at the top left to the battles against the Mamelukes that opened the doors for this high culture to enter.

In an uncannily similar fashion, the print in the popular magazine *Les colonies françaises* isolates those aspects of New Caledonia within a frame that justifies European domination, namely indolence and ignorance. The frame enveloping this scene again exhibits all of the accoutrements of French governance and power: two soldiers representing both naval and military strength flank both ends, thus indicating the literal



Figure 74. Francis Frith, *View of a Street in Cairo*, 1858.



Figure 75. Rue du Caire at the Universal Exposition in Paris, 1889.

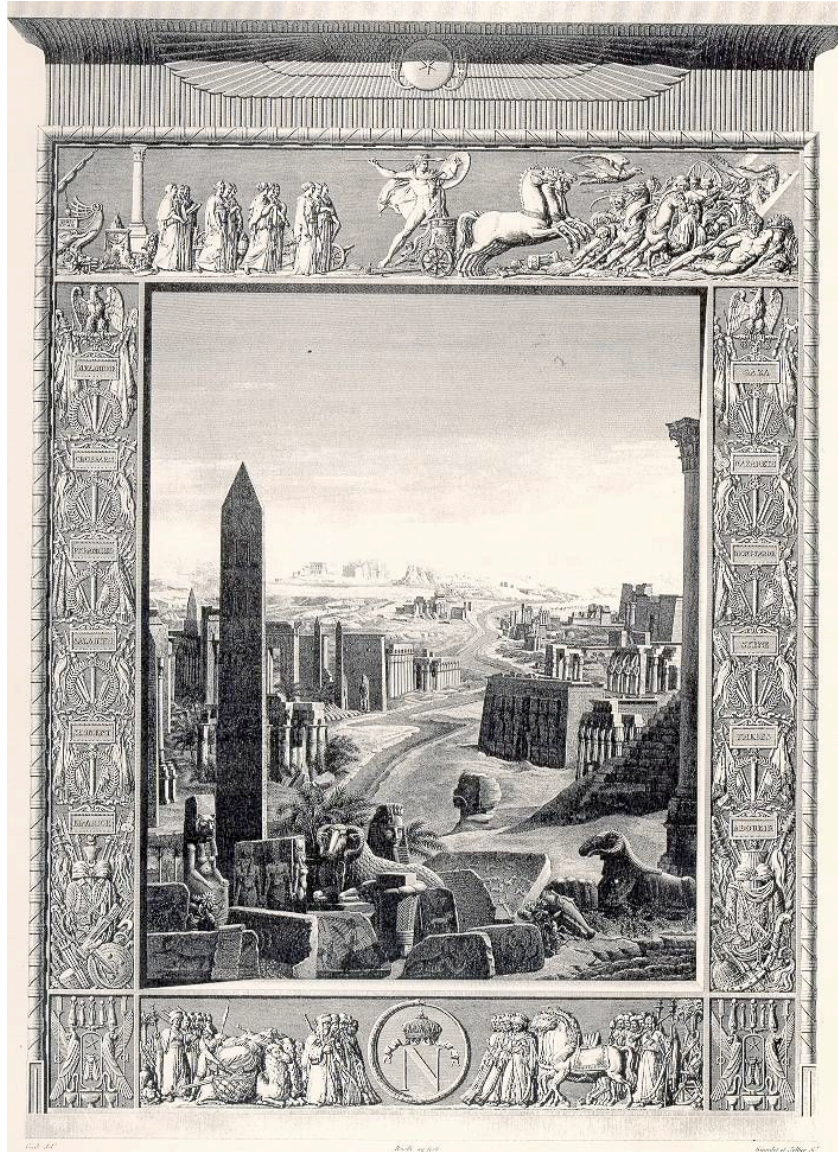


Figure 76. Frontispiece, *Description de l'Égypte*

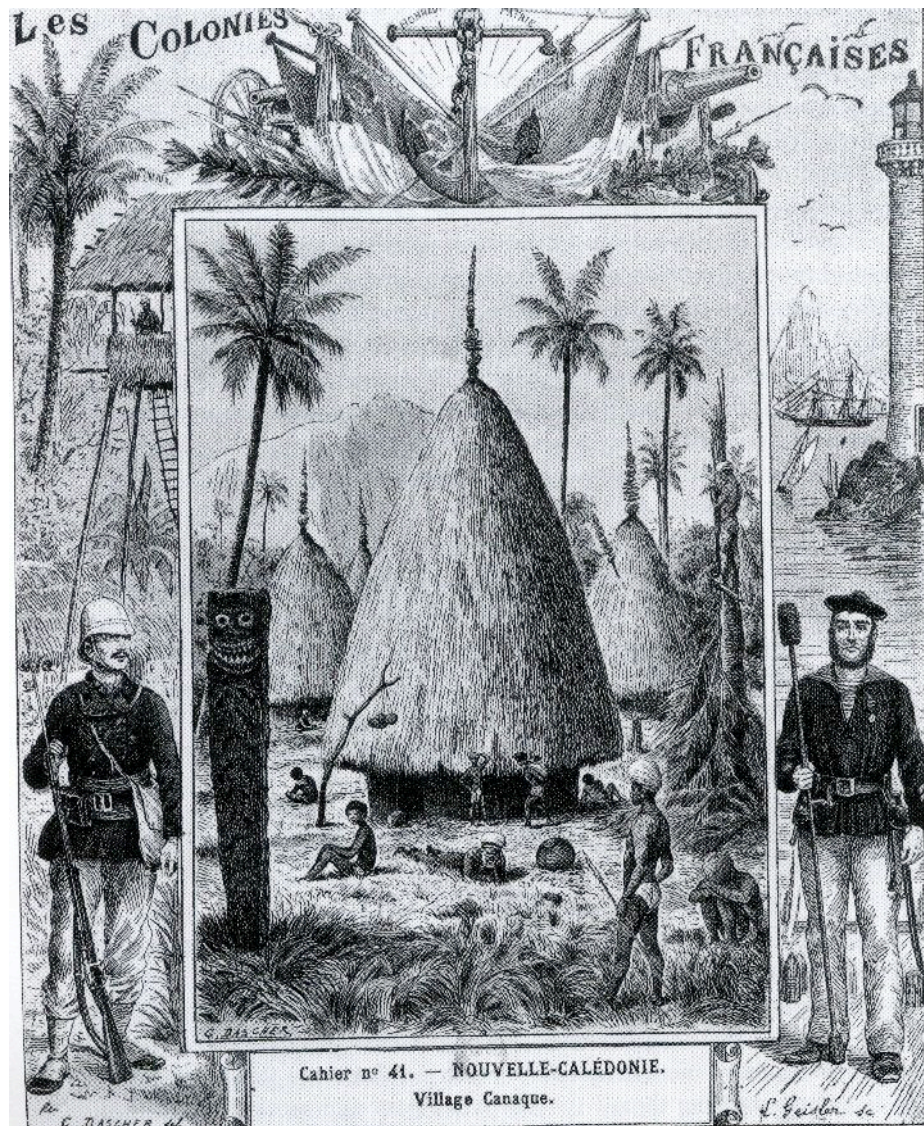


Figure 77. *Nouvelle-Calédonie, Village Canaque*, in *Les colonies françaises*, cahier no. 41, 1892

imposition of “civilization” over a colonized land and the manner in which France structured its knowledge of colonial territories within a political and imperial motivation.¹⁷⁰ Through the lens of this motivation, the colonial experience was translated to the European audience throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, illustrating, as Pratt points out, the need of the imperial metropolis “to present and represent its peripheries and its others continually to itself.”¹⁷¹

In the process of this habitual translation, though, only certain attributes of the colonial society are exhibited in isolation, while others are indefinitely disjointed from clear view and obscured forever. As a result, this thesis has acted as both a counter-framing and counter-translation of the *Description* itself. By isolating the *Description* within the tradition from which it stems and the ideologies that created it, we are confronted with its truly extraordinary feat of classificatory knowledge. Yet by considering Egyptian perspectives during and after the creation of this great monument, we equally come to understand the simultaneous defeat and collapse of that same system’s classification within a different order. The cover of a popular Arabic magazine of 1899 implements a different sort of framing device (figure 78). Instead of the enclosure of Egypt’s pyramids within the strictures of Western civilization, it is instead bordered by the reformist scholars and officials of Egypt’s movement toward modernization, including Al-Tahtawi and Ali Mubarak. Under the same composition, two opposing representations of the same land are expressed successfully to their respective audience, yet fall mute upon its opposition’s imagination and world-view. In

¹⁷⁰ Francis Connelly, *The Sleep of Reason: Primitivism in Modern European Art and Aesthetics, 1725-1907* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 7.

¹⁷¹ *Imperial Eyes*, 1-10 and 204-5.



Figure 78. Arabic magazine cover, 1899.

the end, ideology, no matter with what force it is visually or verbally communicated, cannot sustain itself without the supporting framework that gives it life and allows for its existence.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Medical chart compiled by Desgenettes concerning Egyptian mortality rates for the years 1798 and 1799.

Courier de l'Égypte, no. 95, le 12 Nivose, IX.e année de la République

An VII

Mois.	Hommes.	Femmes.	Enfans.	Total
Vendémiaire	//	//	//	//
Les 29, 30 Br.	2	5	10	17
Frimaire	67	96	138	301
Nivôse	62	101	198	361
Pluviôse	97	102	197	396
Ventôse	98	139	253	490
Germinal	103	152	263	518
Floréal	116	139	320	575
Prairial	71	138	330	539
Messidor	91	148	363	604
Thermidor	96	113	517	726
Fructidor	81	132	404	617
Jours compl.	14	29	76	119
Totaux	898	1294	3071	5263

An VIII

Mois.	Hommes.	Femmes.	Enfans.	Total
Vendémiaire	113	112	325	550
Les 29, 30 Br.	99	147	380	626
Frimaire	128	171	564	863
Nivôse	102	160	813	1075
Pluviôse	77	117	499	693
Ventôse	7	7	37	51
Germinal	//	//	//	//
Floréal	71	86	117	274
Prairial	122	167	285	574
Messidor	107	163	197	467
Thermidor	83	133	128	344
Fructidor	76	92	143	311
Jours compl.	18	21	28	67
Totaux	1003	1376	3516	5895

Appendix B: Publication of the *Description de l’Egypte*

Portion published during the Napoleonic Empire:

- Writings: Antiquities, description vol. 1 and memoires vol. 1
 Modern State, vol. 1 and first half of vol. 2
 Natural History, vol. 1 and 2
- Engravings: Antiquities, vols. 1-3
 Modern State, vol.1
 Natural History, vol. 1

Portion published during the Bourbon Restoration:

- Writings: Antiquities, description vol.2 and memoires vol. 2
 Modern State, second half of vol. 2
- Engravings: Antiquities, vols. 4 and 5
 Modern State, vol. 2
 Natural History, vols. 2 and 3

Appendix C: Advertisement announcing the Restoration's take over of publication on the
Description de l'Égypte.

Avertissement

La troisième livraison de la *Description de l'Égypte* ayant tardé à paroître pendant ces dernières années, on avoit attribué aux événements politiques le retard de la publication. Les annis des arts sembloient même redoiter que l'ouvrage ne fût pas conduit à son terme. La haute bienveillance que le Roi accorde aux sciences et aux lettres a fait cesser toute incertitude sur l'issue de cette entreprise. Sa Majesté s'étant fait rendre compte de la nature et de l'état de l'ouvrage, l'a pris sous sa protection auguste et en a garanti l'exécution. Les fonds nécessaires viennent d'être accordés pour faire paroître les planches dont la gravure étoit achevée depuis long-temps, et les ordres ont été donnés pour imprimer à la publication une marche rapide. L'intention du Roi est qu'il n'y ait pas d'interruption dans ce travail, qui a occupé et occupe encore un grand nombre d'artistes, et qui est destiné autant à l'avancement et aux progrès des arts, qu'à faire jouir les savans et le public des matériaux recueillis dans une contrée célèbre.

Le grand atlas géographique de l'Égypte et de la Syrie, gravé au Dépôt général de la guerre, manquoit à la collection. Une ordonnance royale prescrit la réunion de cette partie importante au reste de l'ouvrage. Cet atlas, attendu impatiemment, par le public Français et étranger, paroîtra dans peu avec la dernière livraison.

Sa Majesté, en offrant l'ouvrage comme un présent royal aux personnages les plus illustres, et en distribuant des exemplaires aux grandes bibliothèques du Royaume, a donné une nouvelle preuve de la faveur dont elle honore cette entreprise littéraire. La Commission des monuments d'Égypte, en faisant, à la fin du recueil, l'histoire de l'exécution des travaux, exprimera la reconnaissance dont elle est pénétrée pour les bontés du Roi; elle exposera tout ce que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté a fait pour le succès de l'ouvrage; et elle indiquera les découvertes les plus importantes qu'on pourrait faire par la suite dans le pays et dans les contrées adjacentes, pour qu'il ne man quât rien au tableau de cette terre classique, berceau des sciences et des arts. Dans ce discours, on exposera quelles étoient avant l'expédition Française, les notions communément répandues en Europe et qu'on devoit aux précédens voyageurs: à quel degré les travaux de la Commission ont porté la connaissance de l'Égypte et des pays limitrophes; enfin ce que semble devoir appeler plus particulièrement l'attention des voyageurs futurs.

Appendix D: Proclamation made by Bonaparte in Arabic upon his arrival in Egypt

Au nom de Dieu, bon et miséricordieux. Il n'y a pas d'autre Dieu que Dieu. Nul ne partage avec lui son empire.

Voici le moment marqué pour la punition des beys; depuis longtemps il est attendu avec impatience. Les beys, descendant des montagnes de la Géorgie, ont désolé ce beau pays; ils insultent depuis longtemps et traitent avec mépris la nation française, et oppriment ses négocians en diverses manières. Bonaparte, général de la république française, arrive pour seconder les principes de la liberté, et le Tout-Puissant, le dominateur des deux mondes, a résolu la destruction des beys.

Habitans de l'Egypte! Si les beys vous disent que les François sont venu pour détruire votre religion, ne les croyez point. C'est une insigne fausseté. Répondez à ces imposteurs qu'ils ne sont venus que pour retirer les droits des malheureux des mains de leurs tyrans; que les François adorent l'être suprême, et honorent le prophète et son divin koran.

Tous les hommes sont égaux aux yeux de la divinité; l'esprit, les talens et les connoissances mettent seuls de la différence entre eux; comme donc les beys ne possèdent aucune de ces qualités, ils ne peuvent être dignes de gouverner le pays.

Ils sont cependant seuls possesseurs d'une grande étendue de terres, de belles esclaves, d'excellens chevaux, de palais magnifiques! Ont-ils donc reçu un privilège exclusif de la part du Tout-Puissant? S'il en est ainsi, qu'ils les produisent. Mais l'être suprême, qui est juste et bon envers tous les hommes, veut qu'à l'avenir aucun des habitans de l'Egypte ne puisse être empêché de parvenir aux premiers emplois, et aux plus grands honneurs.

Le gouvernement déposé entre des mains intelligentes et distinguées par leurs talens, produira le bonheur et la sécurité. La tyrannie et l'avarice des beys ont dévasté l'Egypte, autrefois si populeuse et si bien cultivée.

Les François sont amis des Musulmans. Naguère ils ont marché sur Rome et renversé le trône du pape, qui aigri les chrétiens contre ceux, qui professent l'islamisme (la religion mahométane), bientôt après, ils ont dirigé leur course vers Malte, et en ont chassé les incrédules qui se croyoient appelés de Dieu pour faire la guerre aux musulmans. De tout temps les François furent les fidèles et sincères amis des empereurs ottomans, et les ennemis de leurs ennemis. Puisse donc l'empire du Sultan être éternel; mais puissent les beys de l'Egypte, nos adversaires, dont l'insatiable avarice excita sans cesse la désobéissance et l'insubordination, être réduits en poudre et anéantis.

Appendix D (Continued)

Nous présenterons une main amicale aux habitans de l’Egypte qui s’uniront à nous, ainsi qu’à ceux qui resteront dans leurs habitations, et garderont une stricte neutralité; quand ils auront vu de leurs propres yeux notre manière d’agir, ils s’empresseront de se soumettre à nous; mais la terrible peine de mort est réservée à ceux qui s’armeront contre nous, en faveur des beys. Il n’y aura plus alors d’espoir, et il ne restera d’eux aucun vestige.

ARTICLE PREMIER. Toutes les places éloignées de trois lieues de la route de l’armée française enverront un de leurs principaux habitans, pour déclarer qu’elles se soumettent, et qu’elles arboreront le drapeau français qui est bleu, blanc et rouge.

ART. II. Tout village qui s’opposera à l’armée française sera entièrement livré aux flammes.

ART. III. Tout village qui se soumettra aux Français, arborera le drapeau français et celui de la sublime Porte, leur alliée, dont la durée soit éternelle.

ART. IV. Les cheiks et principaux habitans de chaque ville et village apposeront le scellé sur les maisons et les effets des beys, et auront le plus grand soin que rien ne soit égaré.

ART. V. Les cheiks, cadis et imans continueront à remplir leurs fonctions respectives: ils feront leurs prières et s’acquitteront des exercices du culte religieux dans les mosquées et maisons de prières. Tous les habitans de l’Egypte offriront leurs actions de grâce à l’être suprême, et feront des prières publiques pour la destruction des beys.

Puisse le Dieu suprême rendre éternelle la gloire du sultan des mahométans, verser les trésors de sa fureur sur les Mamelouks, et rendre glorieuse la destinée de la nation égyptienne.

