Encountering Egyptian Mummies, 1753-1858

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Angela Stienne – Encountering Egyptian Mummies, 1753-1858

The Egyptian mummy poses something of a conundrum to researchers in museum studies. The mummy is familiar, and yet the history of its insertion into European culture and scientific Egyptology remains largely unmapped. In recent decades, human remains have entered conversations regarding their retention and display in museums. The Egyptian mummy had been largely ignored until, recently, several museums removed some specimens from display. The question remains: how can museums negotiate the Egyptian mummy, both object and human remains?

This thesis examines the cultures of participation with Egyptian mummies in London and Paris between 1753 and 1858, with a view to understanding who collected and studied these objects, and what they meant to them. This research produces a cultural history which grounds stories of encounters and engagements with Egyptian mummies within their contemporary intellectual and cultural contexts. It contends that a cultural history of the Egyptian mummy is an ethical lens to look at the mummy as a category of object that poses a set of questions.

This thesis argues that the Egyptian mummy was a multi-faceted object, embedded in cultural and intellectual debates, on collecting, the body, and race. This thesis re-evaluates physical interventions on mummies (including dissections and unrollings) and argues that these practices must be considered within their wider contexts.

This thesis contributes a new lens to look at the Egyptian mummy in contexts, and in doing so, offers a new interpretation of the mummy as a cultural object. This historical research allows further reflection on the presence of human remains in museums, and contends that museums can only assess the value, responsibility, and ethics of their Egyptian human remains collections through an in-depth study of the history of modern engagements with the Egyptian mummy – as both object and human remains.

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At the origin of the three-year journey which led to the submission of this thesis was a thirteen-year-old girl who decided to dedicate her life to her silent friends, the Egyptian mummies, and to liberate them from their dusty storage rooms.

The journey towards the completion of this research has been paved with discoveries, new encounters and many challenging moments. Researching and writing a thesis is no easy task, but battling a chronic illness throughout the project transformed it into a challenging, and yet fulfilling, experience. The final work would not have been possible without the constant support of my supervisor, Professor Simon Knell. From the first day of this Ph.D., Prof Knell believed in this project and in my ability to conduct it. More so, he envisioned ways to address this research, and the stories attached to it, and led me on a path of intellectual self-discovery. Through hard work, fascinating discussions, constant support and slightly unrealistic deadlines, my vision of this topic and my place in academia have been transformed and for this, I am very grateful. I am also thankful to my second supervisor, Dr Janet Marstine, for the support in challenging times and feedback on my research. My thanks extend to the staff and community at the School of Museum Studies for their support. It has been an honour to work with such a talented and inspiring team of museum practitioners, academics and administrators; I am proud to have called this place home since 2013.

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Angela Stienne, September 2017.

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 – Introduction

> The collection of Egyptian mummies at the British Museum is one of the most comprehensive of its kind in the world and enjoys a high public profile. These embalmed bodies have long been a prominent feature of the permanent displays, with the 'mummy galleries' attracting more visitors per year than any other area of the Museum's public space. While they have had a major impact on public perceptions about ancient Egypt, the mummies as a whole have not been consistently studied.[1]

To extend John Taylor's assertion, above, the Egyptian mummy – a recipient of high public interest and scrutiny in the museum – has not been consistently studied *as an object of modern cultural engagement in general*. At the heart of this research is the aspiration to tackle, from a historical perspective, an issue which is relevant to contemporary museum debate and which has been largely overlooked in scholarship: the impact of modern intellectual engagements with Egyptian mummies on shaping, transforming, and defining the mummy. Traditionally regarded as a well-received, well-understood museum object, the Egyptian mummy has nevertheless, until recently, been neglected as a rich object of material culture, embedded in a long history of engagements, inside and outside the museum.

The Egyptian mummy poses something of a conundrum for researchers in museum studies. The mummy is not an unfamiliar object, nor is it understudied. Studies of the ancient Egyptian practice of embalming the dead are extensive[2] and the furthering of technological advances such as the use of Computerized Tomography has immensely aided the development of our understanding of the history, the scope, and the practical applications of mummification practices. This acquired knowledge has been widely communicated to a public audience, through publications, television documentaries, and exhibitions, including, more recently, the introduction of enhanced technology such as virtual 3D scans on touch screens in exhibition spaces. These latter have allowed the

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[1] John H. Taylor, 'The collection of Egyptian mummies at the British Museum' in Alexandra Fletcher, Daniel Antoine and J.D. Hill (eds), *Regarding the Dead: Human Remains at the British Museum* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 2014), pp.103-114 (p.103).

[2] Bob Brier, *Egyptian Mummies: Unravelling the Secrets of an Ancient Art* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996); Salima Ikram and Aidan Dodson, *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt: Equipping the Dead for Eternity* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1998); John H. Taylor, *Egyptian Mummies* (London: British Museum Press, 2010).

public to perform what is often referred to as virtual autopsies, allowing the visitor to *unroll* (a procedure discussed at length in this thesis) Egyptian mummies and, by doing so, assimilate the process of mummification. These screens were used during the 2014 *Ancient Lives: New Discoveries* exhibition at the British Museum, which also demonstrated the extensive knowledge Egyptologists have today of the ancient Egyptians. It proved immensely popular with the public.[3] Such exhibition approaches, which have been adopted by numerous museums around the world,[4] confirm that Egyptian mummies are numerous and accessible in museums, and that they seem not to cause issues to the visiting public.[5]

The mummy is, therefore, familiar. And yet, the lack of a detailed history of the mummy's entry into European culture, and its subsequent admission into scientific Egyptology, has meant that many of the reasons why mummies were collected in the first place have been lost and forgotten. The emphasis in the history of Egyptology has, instead, been on the birth of the formal discipline which has meant that any attempts to locate activity before the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt (1798-1801) has been greatly under-appreciated. This problem has been compounded by historians of Egyptology being preoccupied with the second half of the nineteenth century. This trend has only recently been countered by such works as William Carruthers's *Histories of Egyptology*.[6] The entry of the mummy into European culture, in private collections and later in public museums in the eighteenth century, as well as its insertion into intellectual (cultural and scientific) conversations, has been neglected, and yet can reveal a rich history that can

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[3] *Ancient Lives: New Discoveries: Eight Mummies, Eight Stories* [exhibition]. British Museum, London. 22 May 2014-12 July 2015. John H. Taylor and Daniel Antoine, *Ancient Lives: New Discoveries: Eight Mummies, Eight Stories* (London: British Museum Press, 2014).

[4] To name a few: two interactive exhibitions based on 3D visualisation were used in the revamp of the Egyptian galleries at Dutch National Museum of Antiquities (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden), an interactive exhibition at The Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm, and the *Mummies* exhibition at the Field Museum in Chicago, on tour in 2017 at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. These projects were developed by Swedish 3D digitisation company Interspectral. See: <http://www.interspectral.com/> [accessed 20 August 2017].

[5] Series of consultations and interviews in museums have revealed a largely favourable (although not unanimous) opinion on the retention of Egyptian mummies. See, for example: Hugh Kilmister, 'Visitor perceptions of ancient Egyptian human remains in three United Kingdom museums', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 14 (2003), pp.57-69; Hedley Swain, *An Introduction to Museum Archaeology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), especially pp.154 and 157. See, also, the study of visitor interactions with the mummy rooms at the British Museum in Suzanne Keene and Francesca Monti, *Museums and Silent Objects: Designing Effective Exhibitions* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), pp.129-150.

[6] William Carruthers (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures* (London: Routledge, 2014).

contribute to the understanding of what the mummy meant then and also what it means now.

Although this thesis is historical in nature and focuses on intellectual (and physical) engagements with Egyptian mummies between 1753 and 1858, this history arises from contemporary concerns. The twenty-first-century museum is no longer unchallenged in its retention and interpretation of human remains. Although criticism has mostly been directed at those collections that hold direct links to living communities, the Egyptian mummy has also been drawn into these ethical debates. Expressions of such concerns over the past ten years led to a series of removals of Egyptian specimens from display, for example, at the Manchester Museum in 2012 and more recently the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. Nevertheless, the Egyptian mummy remains, for the time being, peripheral to this debate. A greater understanding of the historical circumstances of the accessioning of this object into European culture will help museum researchers and curators understand and assess the ethical issues.

However, it is not the ambition of this thesis simply to produce a long history of the Egyptian mummy; this has been attempted by Renan Pollès in *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood* which offers a linear historical overview of the mummy in Europe.[7] This thesis takes a different approach by looking at contexts in which the mummy was presented, during a period which has largely been ignored by historians. Offering a prelude to present-day scholarly research, it considers the Egyptian mummy as an object of intellectual inquiry, and places it in changing frames of understanding, in the hands of men in Paris and London who, curious sometimes, functionalist at other times and – more surprisingly perhaps – occasionally emotionally-engaged, shaped and transformed the mummy through a series of engagements. Drawing upon a wide range of written sources from the Early Modern period up to the Victorian era, in Paris and London, this thesis produces a cultural history of the Egyptian mummy: it treats mummies as cultural objects, framed by the research communities which formed around them.

The following sections introduce the aim and objectives of this thesis, the intellectual context in which the research sits, a literature review of existing scholarly research on the consumption of ancient Egypt, the histories of Egyptology and the

[7] Renan Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood, Généalogie d'un Mythe* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Amateur, 2001).

histories of material culture and collecting, in order to situate the Egyptian mummy within those discourses. Following the intellectual context, this chapter considers the methodological approaches used to pursue this research, including the theoretical framework, the focus and scope of the research, the location of sources and the personal trajectory that led to this project. Finally, it outlines the structure and content of the thesis.

1.1 Aim and objectives

The *aim* of this thesis is to frame the cultures of participation with Egyptian mummies between 1753 and 1858, in London and Paris, which fundamentally shaped the mummy as a museum specimen.

This research aim has been pursued through the investigation of focused objectives:

1. To map the creation and development of private and public (institutional) collections of Egyptian mummies in London and Paris, between 1753 and 1858;
2. To understand how contemporary actors investigated the mummy;
3. To investigate the motivations and social practices of dissections of Egyptian mummies in London and Paris;
4. To frame mummy dissections and collecting in contemporary debates concerning the body and race;
5. To investigate the performance of mummy unrolling;
6. To understand how individuals reconciled the dichotomy of body-object through encounters in collections.

1.2 Intellectual context

The complexity of locating the secondary literature on the Egyptian mummy relevant to this study is twofold. First, a large compendium of literature exists on the mummy which is popular in nature and historically restricted to ancient Egypt, or to specific events which have impacted the popularity of ancient Egypt (one being the discovery of the tomb and remains of Tutankhamun in 1922). Secondly, scholarly, in-depth research often has a particular disciplinary focus (in particular, the scientific study of Egyptian mummies)

which is not a central concern here.[8] Historical studies of the reception of Egyptian mummies in specific cultural contexts are surprisingly scarce, considering the extent of their history. To frame the intellectual context of this research, it is necessary to locate – and at times, to extract – the Egyptian mummy from other historical and museological contexts. The following sections consider 'mummy studies' within scholarly research on the consumption of ancient Egypt, as well as within the histories of Egyptology and material culture more generally. These provide an overview of the contexts within which the Egyptian mummy has been considered in recent scholarship; it will become evident later in the thesis that other contexts, which have been neglected, are equally important to understanding the mummy as a cultural object. This study demands not an exhaustive literature review on Egyptian mummies *per se*, but rather an investigation into studies that examine cultural contexts within which the mummy has been located.

The consumption of ancient Egypt

In order to frame the intellectual context of this research, it is necessary to introduce questions which led to its conduct. At the inception of this research is one moment in the history of Western collections of Egyptian material culture: the acquisition by the British Museum, in 1756, of the coffins and remains of two authentic Egyptian mummies which were then displayed from the first day of the opening of the Museum to the public in 1759.[9] How strange would the remains of an ancient Egyptian individual be to a contemporary Englishman? How common were Egyptian mummies in the British, or the French, cultural landscape in the mid-eighteenth century? These simple questions opened more reflections: what do historians know about the collection, display and reception of Egyptian mummies in this period? Is it possible to map engagements with ancient Egyptian human remains in the landscape of scholarly research? There are a number of elements that are worth stressing. Western attitudes to ancient Egyptian material culture have been the object of extraordinary pieces of research, especially by William

[8] Rosalie David, *Mysteries of the Mummies, The Story of the Manchester University Investigation* (London: Book Club Associates, 1978); Aidan T. Cockburn, *Mummies, Disease and Ancient Cultures*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Arthur C. Aufderheide, *The Scientific Study of Mummies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Zahi A. Hawass and Sahar Saleem, *Scanning the Pharaohs: CT Imaging of the New Kingdom Royal Mummies* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2015).

[9] On Egypt at the British Museum: T. G. H. James, *British Museum and Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 1981); Stephanie Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities, Ancient Egypt at the British Museum* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006); Taylor, 'The collection of Egyptian mummies'.

Carruthers, Jasmine Day, Jean-Marcel Humbert, Stephanie Moser, Christina Riggs and Alice Stevenson, to name a few.[10] They have clarified in different ways how individuals and institutions have responded to this material, including its human remains.

In the late twentieth century, Humbert looked at the re-appropriation of symbols and visual tropes of the ancient Egyptian civilisation in architecture, what has been coined *Egyptomania*.[11] Other investigations of the phenomenon of *Egyptomania* have been conducted by Bob Brier and James Stevens Curl.[12] *Egyptomania* has received a lot of attention in the Western world, for it appeals to, and somewhat explains, an obsession with the Egyptian civilisation, materialised in artistic and architectonic representations.

This rich engagement with ancient Egypt, its history and its material culture, became the subject of thorough study with the publication of UCL Press's eight-book series, *Encounters with Ancient Egypt*.[13] The series was effective in addressing unexplored spatial, temporal, and intellectual territories, such as the reception of ancient Egypt in ancient times, from diverse perspectives. Of particular interest for this research are three volumes: David Jeffreys's *Views of Ancient Egypt Since Napoleon Bonaparte*, Michael Rice and Sally MacDonald's *Consuming Ancient Egypt* and Peter Ucko and Timothy Champion's *The Wisdom of Egypt*.[14] These three volumes question changing attitudes to ancient Egypt in specific contexts, both temporal and spatial. While Jeffreys draws a picture of both the reception of Ancient Egypt and interactions with contemporary Egypt in the complex political and cultural context of the aftermath of Napoleon's

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[10] Some publications by these authors include: Carruthers, *Histories of Egyptology;* Jasmine Day, *The Mummy's Curse, Mummymania in the English-Speaking World* (London: Routledge, 2006); Jean-Marcel Humbert, Michael Pantazzi and Christiane Ziegler, *Egyptomania* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1994); Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*; Christina Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014); Alice Stevenson, 'Artefacts of excavation, the British collection and distribution of Egyptian finds to museums, 1880-1915', *Journal of the History of Collections*, volume 26, issue 1 (2014), pp.89-102.

[11] Jean-Marcel Humbert, *L'Egyptomanie dans l'Art Occidental* (Paris: Art Creation Realisation, 1989); Humbert, Pantazzi and Ziegler, *Egyptomania*; Jean-Marcel Humbert and Clifford Price (eds), *Imhotep Today* (London: UCL Press, 2003).

[12] Bob Brier, *Egyptomania: Our Three Thousand Year Obsession with the Land of the Pharaohs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013); James Stevens Curl, *The Egyptian Revival: Ancient Egypt as the Inspiration for Design Motifs in the West* (London: Routledge, 2005).

[13] The eight volumes are: David O'Connor and Andrew Reid (eds), *Ancient Egypt in Africa* (London: UCL Press, 2003); Roger Matthews and Cornelia Roemer (eds), *Ancient Perspectives on Egypt* (London: UCL Press, 2003); Sally MacDonald and Michael Rice (eds), *Consuming Ancient Egypt* (London: UCL Press, 2003); Humbert and Price, *Imhotep Today*; Stephen Quirke and David O'Connor (eds), *Mysterious Lands* (London: UCL Press, 2003); John Tait (ed.), *'Never Had the Like Occurred'* (London: UCL Press, 2003); David Jeffreys (ed.), *Views of Ancient Egypt since Napoleon Bonaparte* (London: UCL Press, 2003); Peter J. Ucko and Timothy Champion (eds), *The Wisdom of Egypt* (London: UCL Press, 2003).

[14] Jeffreys, *Views of Ancient Egypt*; MacDonald and Rice, *Consuming Ancient Egypt;* Ucko and Champion, *The Wisdom of Egypt*.

expedition to Egypt,[15] Rice and MacDonald question engagements with the material culture of Ancient Egypt in different contexts, including a chapter on the Egyptian mummy in museums.[16] Ucko and Champion examine sources of evidence about ancient Egypt, how these were available to scholars involved in the study of ancient Egypt, and how they changed in time and space, leading to a reframing of how the idea of ancient Egypt was constructed over time.[17] This series of publications forms a solid foundation to begin asking questions about mummies: how did the mummy enter discourses on ancient Egypt? What is the place of the Egyptian mummy – both object and human remains – in scholarly research on the consumption, or reception, of ancient Egypt in modern and contemporary history? And, where is this thesis located in the seemingly abundant, and yet rather contained, literature on the Egyptian mummy?

Researchers of mummy collecting are indebted to the contribution of Pollès's historical work *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*.[18] Pollès reviewed previous historical studies on mummy collecting, including archival documents (mainly French) and visual collections (including an important contribution from private collections). The publication provides a basis for the study of mummy collecting, although its French-only edition poses evident limitations; as a result, it is rarely mentioned in any publication on mummy studies. Although Pollès's research is a thorough linear history of the development of mummy collections, its limitation lies in its chronological structure, which limits the extraction of themes and contexts of engagement. In addition, it focuses heavily on collecting, over other forms of engagement. Pollès accepts too readily contemporary thinking on the significance of the unrolling of Egyptian mummies as mere spectacle and a symbol of *mummymania*. Although rarely referred to in other studies, Pollès's publication is a staple for research into mummy collecting, at the very least because it provides a good picture of the history of mummy collecting through the ages, without falling too deeply in the pitfalls of popularisation.[19]

Two other publications consider the consumption and contextualisation of mummy engagements: Jasmine Day's *The Mummy's Curse, Mummymania in the*

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[15] Jeffreys, *Views of Ancient Egypt.*
[16] Sally MacDonald, 'Lost in time and space: ancient Egypt in museums' in Macdonald and Rice, *Consuming Ancient Egypt*, pp.87-100.
[17] Ucko and Champion, *The Wisdom of Egypt*.
[18] Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*.
[19] Another historical contribution to mummy studies is Sydney H. Aufrère, *La Momie et la Tempête* (Paris: Alain Barthelemy, 1990).

English-Speaking World and Roger Luckhurst's *The Mummy's Curse, The True History of a Dark Fantasy*.[20] Day's publication considers the popular culture of the Egyptian mummy, looking at ways the mummy has been viewed by the mass media. Of particular interest is the section dedicated to museum displays, which involved interviewing and gathering feedback from visitors: this study demonstrates that there is a multiplicity of engagements with Egyptian mummies, which have not necessarily been addressed by museums.[21] Luckhurst's publication is a historical review of the curse narrative, embedded in a geography of spaces of engagement, which has the important merit of locating the Egyptian mummy outside of the constraints of the museum – it does also look at the museum, exploring the curse myths of mummies at the British Museum – and considers the cultures of engagement which see Egyptian mummies as threatening figures. Luckhurst's cultural approach to curse narratives is a useful resource in drawing a picture of the cultural history of engagements with Egyptian mummies.

Both publications have the merit of considering notions of engagement, reception, and the construction of knowledge (the curse narrative being one form of *knowing* the mummy, a constructed one); both sit outside of the timeframe of this research. From Day's and Luckhurst's publications, questions can be raised: why do people engage with Egyptian human remains? What draws them to encounters? Where do contemporary engagements such as curse stories, and museum displays, take root?

Although the production and reception of the ancient Egyptian past has been considered at formidable length, it is useful to point out here the limitations of current research on Egyptian mummies. Indeed, in many respects, the Egyptian mummy has been left in the margins of serious academic research and often considered purely as a by-product of popular culture. For example, there is no comprehensive study of *mumia*, the medicinal product made from Egyptian mummies, although its history is extensive and its use both curious, revealing, and important in understanding the consumption (here, both literal and metaphorical) of the Egyptian mummy. Another example is the absence of comprehensive research on racial studies of Egyptian mummies: Debbie Challis recently published a study of the links between British archaeologist Sir William Matthew

[20] Day, *The Mummy's Curse*; Roger Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse, The True History of a Dark Fant*asy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Also, Roger Luckhurst, 'Science versus rumour: artefaction and counter-narrative in the Egyptian rooms of the British Museum', *History and Anthropology*, volume 23, issue 2 (2012), pp.257-269; Roger Luckhurst, 'The mummy's curse: a study in rumour', *Critical Quarterly* 52 (2010), pp.6-22.
[21] Day, *The Mummy's Curse*, pp.129-168.

Flinders Petrie (1853-1942) and explorer Francis Galton (1822-1911) and eugenics,[22] and extensive work has been published on Afrocentrism as a response and critique of Eurocentric appropriations of ancient Egypt.[23] This thesis aims to resolve in part the lack of study of pre-Victorian racial dissections of mummies.[24] A final example is the tardiness in exploring unwrapping as an embedded cultural practice and, at the same time, revising misconceptions about the performance of human remains through unrolling. This was in part resolved by Gabriel Moshenska's important studies of mummy unroller Thomas Joseph Pettigrew (1791-1865).[25]

The central and abiding question of engagements with the human remains of ancient Egypt – and, why and how Westerners came to engage in collection and dissection practices – was a focus of Christina Riggs's *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt*.[26] Riggs reappraised engagements with Egyptian human remains through a study of the concept of wrapping and unwrapping (of both human remains and objects), considered as a relational practice between individuals and objects, located in anthropological contexts of collecting, possession and colonialism. Riggs's publication was a defining moment in the cultural study of Egyptian mummies (although it is a textile study, rather than mummy study *per se*). The multi-disciplinary approach, its critique and review of Egyptological scholarship and the new and provocative approach to concealment and revelation – unwrapping – provided a new history of Egyptology that is rooted in a theoretical framework of anthropology, material culture and museum studies. Riggs's publication inserted into what are called the histories of Egyptology, a historical and cultural reappraisal of the collection, consumption and reception of ancient Egypt throughout history, but more specifically from the Modern period up until now.

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[22] Debbie Challis, *The Archaeology of Race: The Eugenic Ideas of Francis Galton and Flinders Petrie* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).
[23] Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, third edition (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1974).
[24] A reference on mummy dissections is Riggs's *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt*.
[25] Gabriel Moshenska, 'Unrolling Egyptian mummies in nineteenth century Britain', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, volume 47, issue 3 (2013), pp.451-477; Gabriel Moshenska, 'Thomas "Mummy" Pettigrew and the study of Egypt in early nineteenth-century Britain' in Carruthers, *Histories of Egyptology*, pp.201-214. See also: Gabriel Moshenska, 'Esoteric Egyptology, seed science and the myth of mummy wheat', *Open Library of Humanities*, volume 3, issue 1 (2017), pp.1-42.
[26] Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt*.

Histories of Egyptology

One of the main issues at stake in the history of Egyptology is the question of whether historians can talk about the birth of Egyptology as a constructed field of inquiry occurring after the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt, and whether this historical event created a dramatic shift in the collection, study and reception of ancient Egypt. Historians are now more or less in agreement that the expedition created momentum for a developing field of inquest, rather than the birth of a discipline. How then, can they approach attitudes to the ancient Egyptian civilisation at the turn of the nineteenth century? Historians of archaeology are now turning to what Carruthers coined 'histories of Egyptology', asking: 'what, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, constitutes the history (or histories) of Egyptology? What does this history consist of, and what (or who) should it be for? How can Interdisciplinary Measures suggest the direction the writing of that history (or those histories) might take?'[27]

With different perspectives and nuances, the individuals involved in *Histories of Egyptology* structured their arguments along the lines of these interrogations.[28] Carruthers assesses the recent developments of Egyptology, in particular the multiplicity of approaches in recent years.[29] Disciplinary histories are not novel, nor is the attempt to theorise archaeological studies,[30] the representation of the past[31] and, as seen above, the consumption of ancient Egypt. The history of Egyptology is not, however, just a history of archaeology: histories of Egyptology can, as this thesis does, look at spaces of engagement which are remote from the archaeological field – although, as will be considered in the methodological section, Stevenson, Libonati and Baines propose that in

[27] William Carruthers, 'Thinking about Histories of Egyptology' in Carruthers, *Histories of Egyptology*, pp.1-15 (p.1).
[28] Carruthers, *Histories of Egyptology*.
[29] Carruthers, 'Thinking about Histories of Egyptology'. Other papers relating to the histories of Egyptology include: Dmitri Levitin, 'Egyptology, the limits of antiquarianism, and the origins of conjectural history, c.1680-1740: new sources and perspectives', *History of European Ideas*, volume 41, issue 6 (2015), pp.699-727; Jean Leclant, 'De l'égyptophilie à l'égyptologie: érudits, voyageurs, collectionneurs et mécènes', *Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, volume 129, issue 4 (1985), pp.630-647.
[30] Bruce Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
[31] For example: Richard Pearson, *The Victorians and the Ancient World: Archaeology and Classicism in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006); Stephanie Moser, 'Reconstructing ancient worlds: reception studies, archaeological representation and the interpretation of Ancient Egypt', *Journal of Archaeological Method Theory*, 22 (2015), pp.1263-1308.

fact, object habits are very much connected and part of a network of engagements.[32] Histories of Egyptology have added new ways to look at the construction of knowledge surrounding the ancient Egyptian past: new lenses, new geographies of space, new theoretical and methodological approaches.

It is worth considering some of the papers included in this publication, in light of their relevance to this thesis. Stevenson – who has used archives and museum collections to explore a range of themes, including the histories of disciplines – explores Egyptology at Oxford, and its relations with anthropology, and a wider British context. [33] In locating Egyptology within wider contexts, especially Victorian material anthropology, Stevenson notes the benefits of looking outside of disciplinary structures to explore knowledge cultures and communities. Riggs considers the constructed nature of knowledge, looking at ways theorists such as Bruno Latour have influenced our understanding of knowledge construction in Egyptology.[34] In her paper, Riggs reviews other contributions in this publication, including Bednarski's study of travellers' accounts. Bednarski has conducted extensive research on Frédéric Cailliaud (1787-1869), a contemporary of Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825), both of whom are discussed in this thesis.[35] Bednarski studied the unpublished archival documents compiled by Cailliaud, exploring ways to publish these while framing the contexts in which they were written. Another study of an individual is Moshenska's important study of Pettigrew and unrolling, mentioned above.[36] Finally, Moser's paper, which concludes the compendium, considers representations of ancient Egypt, looking at ways the manifestations of ancient Egypt in public discourses may have affected the creation and development of Egyptology.[37]

The authors share a specific interest in understanding the extent to which histories of Egyptology were constructed and whether they reflected the existence of a connected network of practitioners or, if, as suggested by recent studies – including theirs – they are instead confronted with examples of various groups with different interests, communities

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[32] Alice Stevenson, Emma Libonati and John Baines, 'Introduction – object habits: Legacies of fieldwork and the museum', *Museum History Journal*, volume 10, issue 2 (2017), pp.113-126.
[33] Alice Stevenson, 'The object of study: Egyptology, archaeology and anthropology in Oxford, 1860-1960' in Carruthers, *Histories of Egyptology*, pp.19-33.
[34] Christina Riggs, 'Discussing knowledge in the making' in Carruthers, *Histories of Egyptology*, pp.129-138.
[35] Andrew Bednarski, 'Beyond travellers' accounts and reproductions, unpublished nineteenth-century works as histories of Egyptology' in Carruthers, *Histories of Egyptology*, pp.81-95.
[36] Moshenska, 'Thomas "Mummy" Pettigrew'.
[37] Stephanie Moser, 'Legacies of engagements, the multiple manifestations of ancient Egypt in public discourse' in Carruthers, *Histories of Egyptology*, pp.242-252.

and constructs which responded to specific agendas and were shaped by common interests in the ancient past and cultural models. These questions will be of interest in considering the framing of the mummy by knowledge communities.

Another important contribution to the histories of Egyptology, of relevance to this research, is Elliott Colla's publication, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity*.[38] *Conflicted Antiquities* offers a rich cultural history of European and Egyptian interests in ancient Egyptian material culture. In particular, Colla offers an important contribution in combining medieval and modern Arabic literature with European travel accounts and historical accounts of modern museums, therefore offering a more complete view of Egyptology, which often has a European bias. The first chapter of this publication is especially important in approaching Egyptian material culture in museums. Indeed, Colla identifies forms of 'artifaction', looking at ways objects were taken out of Egypt and transformed into artefacts in their country of reception. He notes that Egyptian material culture in museums was subject to ongoing and often incomplete processes of recontextualization and reframing. Colla's publication is critical of disciplinary histories of Egypt; it is important in looking at material culture in context, what Colla calls 'the tensions and contradictions which permeate and link it [the artefact] to intense political, social and cultural conflicts'.[39]

Finally, a publication which greatly influenced the inception of this project is Stephanie Moser's *Wondrous Curiosities, Ancient Egypt at the British Museum* which investigates the development of the Egyptian galleries at the British Museum, focusing on the first one hundred twenty years of the museum's history.[40] This publication is located at the crossroads of the histories of Egyptology and the histories of collecting and the construction of knowledge considered hereafter. Divided into five episodic studies, the publication concentrates on acquisitions and architectural developments which shaped the history of the museum. Moser's publication points towards a mixed methodology using extensive archival documents and museum studies methods in order to assess the language of display and reception of Egyptian material culture. In particular, Moser combines extensive and valuable archival research with contemporary museum studies,

[38] Elliott Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007).
[39] Ibid, p.60.
[40] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities.*

such as the work of Eilean Hooper-Greenhill on the shaping of knowledge in museums.[41] Hooper-Greenhill has looked at museums and the interpretation of visual culture extensively, for example looking at the Classical episteme.[42] The ways in which Moser looks at these frames of understanding and knowledge construction at the British Museum is crucial in understanding the framing of Egyptian material culture, and forms the basis in looking at the role of the museum in engagements with Egyptian mummies. Moser's publication is so extensive that it will be returned to in chapters 2 and 3, and forms the underpinning for these chapters; however, the current thesis is more concerned with knowledge cultures than it is with reception. Moser's publication is a major resource in mapping the early years of the British Museum. However, the idea that the presence of Egyptian material culture in the private collection of Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) and later at the British Museum, was accidental and with little impact on the reception of the mummy derives from the limitation of Moser's approach to the museum space. For example, Moser states that the inclusion of Egyptian mummies in the early years of the British Museum was accidental, a mere by-product of larger acquisitions and donations.[43] However, by stepping outside of the museum, it becomes evident that there was a culture of engagement with Egyptian mummies which was very much real and active during the second half of the eighteenth century; by excluding other spaces of engagement, an incomplete picture is drawn.

Histories of collecting and material culture

This research is located in the histories of collecting and material culture history and has been influenced by the research conducted by cultural historians Samuel Alberti, Simon Chaplin and Simon Knell. The history of the collection of human remains has been explored on various occasions by Chaplin, especially in his research on John Hunter's (1728-1793) collection, mapping his collection of *preparation*s, their reception and what Chaplin calls a museum oeconomy.[44] Chaplin's approach to the anatomy museum as a

[41] In particular, see: Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museum and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).
[42] Hoooper-Greenhil, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, 'The repository of the Royal Society', pp.133-166.
[43] Ibid. pp.33-64.
[44] The term 'museum oeconomy' coined by Chaplin describes the system of relationships between dissections and the preserving, collecting and displaying of dissected body parts, which he examines in the context of London in the second half of the eighteenth century in Simon Chaplin, 'John Hunter and the

site for the display of the material products of dissection practices is paradigmatic in approaching the museum not as the site of performance of objects, but rather as the site where the *results* of such performances are made visible. This is essential for the study of Egyptian human remains in this research and understanding that the museum was not necessarily the place where knowledge was constructed. The performance of anatomy in and out the museum is explored in the important contribution of Alberti's *Morbid Curiosities*, a first comprehensive study of nineteenth-century medical museums in Britain, in which the author traces what he calls 'the passage of bodies' between cultures of collecting.[45] *Morbid Curiosities* is a phenomenal work by its content, but it is also an interesting work in that it is not a history of medical museums,[46] but rather a cultural history of the material culture of medical specimens, in and out the museum. Alberti has worked extensively on the relation museum-object, including the construction of knowledge in museums in *Nature and Culture* and *The Afterlives of Animals*.[47]

The study of collecting has been greatly enhanced by the pioneering work of Susan Pearce, who has contributed a great deal on material culture, human relationships with objects, and the nature of collecting.[48] In *On Collecting*, Pearce looks at the way that we collect, as well as what this tells us about people and society, while *Interpreting Objects and Collections* asks questions of interpretation, setting out the philosophical and historical contexts of object interpretations and questions of collection in their historical and conceptual contexts.[49] Pearce's important contribution is in looking at collecting as a human phenomenon, asking why do we collect and what this can tell us about human

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Museum Oeconomy' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 2009). <https://wellcomelibrary.org/content/documents/john-hunter-and-the-museum-oeconomy> [accessed 20 August 2017]. Also, Simon Chaplin, 'Nature dissected, or dissection naturalized? The case of John Hunter's museum', *Museum and Society*, volume 6, issue 2 (2008), pp.135-151.

[45] Samuel J. M. M. Alberti, *Morbid Curiosities: Medical Museums in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.5.

[46] Alberti looks at the medical museum in: Samuel J. M. M. Alberti, 'The history of medical museums in Edinburgh', *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 46 (2016), pp.187-197; Samuel J. M. M. Alberti and Elizabeth Hallam (eds), *Medical Museums: Past Present Future* (London: Royal College of Surgeons, 2013).

[47] Samuel J. M. M. Alberti, *Nature and Culture: Objects, Discipline and the Manchester Museum* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009); Samuel J. M. M. Alberti (ed.), *The Afterlives of Animals: A Museum Menagerie* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011). Also, Samuel J. M. M. Alberti, 'Objects and the museum', *Isis*, 96 (2005), pp.559-571.

[48] Susan Pearce, *Objects of Knowledge* (London: Athlone, 1990); Susan Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992); Susan Pearce (ed.), *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London: Routledge, 1994); Susan Pearce, *Experiencing Material Culture in the Western World* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1997); Susan Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1999).

[49] Pearce, *On Collecting*; Pearce, *Interpreting Objects*.

relationship with material culture, and society at large. However, Pearce's study of the performance of ancient Egypt, and of Egyptian mummies, through the practice of unrolling, is somewhat problematic.[50] Her reliance on theories of consumerism means she looks at unrolling through the lens of spectatorship as a pejorative way of consuming ancient Egypt. This tendency to look at unrolling as a grotesque spectacle of Western actors performing shows as a way of owning the 'oriental other' is not new, and is very much present in studies of early fiction narratives on mummies, which describe emotional encounters as sexual.[51] The approach – or, should I say, the method – in looking at material culture is therefore crucial when looking at engagements with material culture in the past, and will be considered again in the next section.

Alongside the works of Pearce, who clearly inspired much research in material culture studies, Simon Knell and Sandra Dudley have both looked at material culture, with differing approaches to the agency of engagements and attitudes towards objects. Knell's research on understanding the museum as a culturally-situated concept was the main reference when developing this research. Knell has published extensively on institutional and disciplinary cultures across a range of fields.[52] In particular, he looked at knowledge communities and the constructive use of material objects in disciplinary culture. He used this approach in works on situating the study of fossils – treating geology as a cultural field and fossils as cultural objects.[53] Crucially, Knell looked at science communities, investigating research cultures that emerged around geological objects.[54] While Knell places the agency within the individual, Dudley's research has been

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[50] Susan Pearce, 'Bodies in exile: Egyptian mummies in the early nineteenth century and their cultural implication' in Sharon Ouditt (ed.), *Displaced Persons: Conditions of Exile in European Culture* (Farnham: Surrey, 2002), pp.54-71.

[51] See for example, Claire Lyu, 'Unswathing the mummy: body, knowledge, and writing in Gautier's Le Roman de la Momie', *Nineteenth-century French Studies*, 33 (2005), pp.308-319; Nicholas Daly, 'That obscure object of desire: Victorian commodity culture and fictions of the mummy', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, volume 28, issue 1 (1994), pp.24-51; Melanie C. Hawthorne, 'Dis-covering the female: Gautier's Roman de la Momie', *The French Review*, volume 66, issue 5 (1993), pp.718-729.

[52] Recent studies include: Simon J. Knell, *National Galleries: The Art of Making Nations* (London: Routledge, 2016); Simon J. Knell, *The Great Fossil Enigma, The Search for the Conodont Animal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012); Simon J. Knell, *The Culture of English Geology, 1815-1851: A Science Revealed Through Its Collecting* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

[53] Knell, *Great Fossil Enigma*; Knell, *Culture of English Geology;* Simon J. Knell, 'Museums, fossils and the cultural revolution of science: mapping change in the politics of knowledge in early nineteenth-century Britain' in Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod and Sheila Watson (eds), *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed* (London: Routledge, 2007).

[54] Knell, *Culture of English Geology*; Simon J. Knell, 'The road to Smith: how the Geological Society came to possess English geology' in Cherry Lewis and Simon J. Knell (eds), *The Making of the Geological Society of London* (London: The Geological Society Publishing House, 2009).

characterised by an approach in which the agency is placed within the object.[55] Dudley's edited volume *Museum Objects* proposed new ways to look at objects, their materiality, sensory approaches and emotional engagements.[56] Dudley looks at the material qualities of the objects, focusing on the objects themselves: rather than being an accessory to interpretation, the object is placed at the heart of engagements, creating powerful reactions. The emphasis on the material nature of material culture, what Dudley calls 'a museum return to the material reality of the material' offers a lens through which to look at why people engage with specific objects, and the properties that elicit their reaction;[57] this is especially helpful when the objects in question are human remains.

Although taking a constructivist approach to research communities which emerged around the mummies, this research finds that there was a multiplicity of engagements and that purely emotional engagements with Egyptian mummies existed, and sometimes co-existed with other practices, highlighting the dichotomy of the mummy as object and human remains – these questions will be returned to in the conclusion.

The ethical mummy

Finally, ethics is an intellectual context in which the mummy must be considered, looking at the mummy as a form of material culture that raises a unique set of ethical questions. While the presence of the dead body in museums in France and the UK, as well as elsewhere, has led to debate, it is the controversy surrounding the holding of indigenous remains from other parts of the world that has forced a change of attitude. The active contribution of human remains in the understanding of past cultures is undeniable: human remains offer a lens through which researchers can contribute to the advancement of the archaeological understanding of the past, as well as addressing contemporary concerns. Such research, however, no longer goes unchallenged by groups concerned with their identities, their cultural and religious beliefs, and the possession of their ancestors. By the end of the twentieth century, museums faced a major dilemma: could human remains be displayed in museums? Relevant studies have been undertaken on the ethics of human

[55] Sandra Dudley, 'Encountering a Chinese horse: engaging with the thingness of things' in Sandra Dudley (ed.), *Museum Objects, Experiencing the Properties of Things* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.1-16; Sandra Dudley 'Museums and things' in Sandra Dudley et al. (eds), *The Thing about Museums* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.1-11.
[56] Dudley, *Museum Objects.*
[57] Ibid, p.11.

remains in museums, notably by Giesen in 2013 and Lohman and Goodnov in 2007.[58] The conversation has been augmented in recent years by discussions on the conservation, restoration, display, politics, and ethics of the retention of human remains.[59] France, despite its late entry, has developed a voice in debates over human remains in museums.[60] However, while extensive research has been conducted on ethnographic museums, human remains remain a question of *déontologie* in France and guidelines are scarce.[61]

Within these debates and discussions, Egyptian mummies have mainly been ignored and the display and reception of Egyptian mummies remains largely unmapped. Woodhead pointed out that skeletons from archaeological excavations as well as mummies are 'unlikely to outrage public decency', a statement that demonstrates that mummies are now distinguished from other more recent or sensitive categories of human remains.[62] The question remains: how and why have ethical responses to mummies changed? And, how can professionals respond to these new challenges?

A series of exhibitions in the United Kingdom have been concerned with the reframing of mummy display, attempting to tackle growing concerns about the potential ethical challenges of Egyptian human remains. Between 2008 and 2012, the Manchester Museum led a conversation on its display of Egyptian mummies.[63] For the first stage, the museum decided to entirely cover its Egyptian mummy, Asru. The reactions from the public were mainly negative, and by the time the galleries reopened, the mummy of Asru was, this time, partially covered with a linen fabric, and set in a case partially obstructing

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[58] Myra Giesen, *Curating Human Remains, Caring for the Dead in the United Kingdom* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013); Jack Lohman and Katherine Goodnov, *Human Remains and Museum Practice* (Paris and London: UNESCO and the Museum of London, 2007). See also: Jack Lohman, 'Contested human remains' in Graeme Were and J.C.H. King (eds), *Extreme Collecting, Challenging Practices for 21st Century Museum*s (London: Berghahn Books, 2012), pp.49-56.

[59] Mary Brooks and Claire Rumsey, 'The body in the museum' in Vicki Cassman, Nancy Odegaard and Joseph Powell (eds), *Human Remains: Guide for Museums and Academic Institutions* (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2006), pp.261-289; Tiffany Jenkins, *Contesting Human Remains in Museum Collections, The Crisis of Cultural Authority* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), pp.121-139.

[60] Noëlle Timbart, Hélène Guichard and Alain Froment (eds), *Techné*, issue 44 (2016).

[61] Sally Price, *Paris Primitive* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007); Nelia Dias, *Le Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro* (Paris: Editions CNRS, 1991). France, unlike the United Kingdom, does not have established guidelines on human remains in museums. See, on this question: Laure Cadot, *En Chair et en Os: Le Cadavre au Musée* (Paris: Ecole du Louvre, 2009), especially pp.94-104.

[62] Charlotte Woodhead, 'Care, custody and display of human remains, legal and ethical obligations' in Giesen, *Curating Human Remains*, pp.31-42.

[63] Campbell Price, 'Covering the mummies', blog entry: <https://egyptmanchester.wordpress.com/2008/05/06/covering-the-mummies/> [accessed September 2017]. An overview of the collection can be found in Dmitri Logunov and Nick Merriman (eds), *The Manchester Museum: Window to the World* (Manchester: The Manchester Museum, 2012).

the view.[64] Other museums have opted to remove from display some specimens, including the Musée du Louvre which removed the mummy of Padiimenipet, an unwrapped mummy, and the Musée de l'Homme which opted not to exhibit Egyptian mummies for its reopening in 2015, for ethical reasons.[65] Both museums' decisions are incredibly important, because they hold in trust legacies of medical and racial dissections. On the occasion of the *Ancient Lives: New Discoveries* exhibition, the British Museum published *Regarding the Dead: Human Remains in the British Museum*, the first comprehensive assessment and questioning of human remains across regions and disciplines undertaken by a single museum.[66] The publication noted that documentation and research cannot be separated from display, stressing the active contribution of human remains in understanding the past. While this may refer to the ancient past, research and documentation regarding the histories of the collection, study and dissection of Egyptian human remains can also inform a more recent past. In turn, these can illuminate current engagements with Egyptian mummies in museums and stress histories of Egyptology that remain unexplored; this approach has encouraged the current research, of which methodology is explored in the next section.

1.3 Methodology

This is a cultural history of engagements around a specific category of material culture history and as such utilises methodological approaches well established and theorised in museums studies. This research draws upon a combination of primary sources. Of particular interest have been published accounts as these have particular importance in disseminating views that shape cultures of engagements. Although the observation of mummy specimens is implicit in this study, written accounts have been of greater

[64] The display case is covered with white lines which create an optical illusion. In addition, the lighting of the case only turns on when someone approaches closely; both strategies offer the choice to the visitor to see the mummy, or not.

[65] The website of the museum states that, 'for reasons of conservation and ethics, they are rarely displayed in public': <http://www.museedelhomme.fr/en/collections/biological-anthropology/mummies> [accessed August 2017].

[66] Fletcher, Antoine and Hill, *Regarding the Dead.* In this publication, see especially: Daniel Antoine, 'Curating human remains in museum collections: broader considerations and a British Museum perspective', pp.3-9; Daniel Antoine and Janet Ambers, 'The scientific analyses of human remains from the British Museum collection: research potential and examples from the Nile valley', pp.20-30; Taylor, 'The collection of Egyptian mummies'.

importance because they express perception and intention.[67] Of the unpublished resources I have accessed, these are primarily institutional documents. This section considers the methods of cultural history and its writing, the choice of temporal and spatial focus, the location of sources (and their challenges) and the translation of parts of certain documents specially for this thesis. Finally, it concludes with a discussion of the trajectory of this research project, revealing the ways my own experiences with mummies led me to investigate eighteenth- and nineteenth-century encounters.

Cultural history and material culture

Rather than considering a linear approach to the development of Egyptology collections – especially of mummies – or the development of an idea or discipline (such as Egyptology), this research focuses on contexts and frames of understanding. Looking at the ways individuals constructed value through objects (the mummies) and disciplinary structures – which, as will be demonstrated, were not fixed – this research considers the passage of mummies between cultures of collecting, as well as intellectual and medical investigations. Treating mummies as cultural objects, this study focuses on research communities formed around them and considers how the mummy emerged through a series of different engagements, where I place the agency with the individuals who engaged with mummies, rather than the objects themselves.

Cultural history rose from a marginal specialism in the 1970s to an increasingly dominant position in historical research, asking questions of representation and meaning.[68] Burke, a leading cultural historian, has theorised its ambitions and evolution in a number of publications.[69] A question that arises from the cultural turn is: how has cultural history impacted historical practice? Tosh notes that 'present day scholars increasingly study meaning as an end in itself, in the belief that how people interpreted their world and represented their experience is a matter of intrinsic interest.'[70] Historians

[67] See discussion of the preference of documents over objects in historiography by Knell, 'Museums, reality and the material world' in Simon, J. Knell (ed.), *Museums in the Material World* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), pp.1-28 (pp.7-9).
[68] John Tosh (ed.), *Historians on History* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), especially the section 'The new cultural history', pp.315-323; Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).
[69] Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, second edition (Cambridge: Polity, 2008). An earlier version of Burke's research on cultural history is: Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity, 1997).
[70] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2010), pp.246-273 (p.258).

of the *Annales School* had previously stated that no picture of the past could be complete without a reconstruction of its mental landscape, giving the French appellation of *histoire des mentalités*.[71] Although a burgeoning approach in historical research, cultural history remains rather difficult to define: Burke suggests that rather than framing what cultural history does, it is necessary to consider what cultural historians do, and notes that 'the common ground of cultural historians might be described as a concern with the symbolic and its interpretation'.[72] However, cultural history is not solely about the interpretation of symbols, but provides a new cultural position to inquire into the contexts within which ideas and interactions take place. Although without definite rules, cultural history is inherently cross-disciplinary, in order to build a spectrum of sources and views. Historians working in the field of museum studies (which in many respects parallels cultural studies in its interest) have been predisposed to adopt cultural historical methods.[73]

Burke remarks that, although offering new ways to look at the historical past, cultural history is not without its problems. He states that 'the temptation to which the cultural historian must not succumb is that of treating the texts and images of certain periods as mirrors, unproblematic reflections of their time.'[74] He advocates critical engagement with sources, especially with published sources aimed at a public or professional audience which are rarely neutral in their approach to their subjects. I will return to the question of the choice of sources later in this section.

While an intellectual history of the Egyptian mummy could offer a lens through which to explore the construction of knowledge of the mummy, I have elected a cultural history approach: indeed, this research is not solely about how knowledge was constructed, but rather about engagements with Egyptian mummies; it is about individual encounters with mummies, what the mummy meant to certain individuals, and why it mattered to them. The Egyptian mummy has, in recent studies, been drawn into

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[71] On the Annales School and histoire des mentalités, see, for example: George Huppert, 'The Annales experiment' in Michael Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp.873-888; Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History, Knowledge, Evidence, Language* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp.119-124; Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner and Kevin Passmore (eds), *Writing History, Theory and Practice*, second edition (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), pp.108-122.
[72] Burke, *Cultural History*, p.3.
[73] Examples of cultural histories of museums are: Alberti, *Nature and Culture;* Knell, *Culture of English Geology*; Christopher Whitehead, *Interpreting Art in Museums and Galleries* (London: Routledge, 2011); Kate Hill (ed.), *Museums and Biographies* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012); Suzanne Macleod, *Museum Architecture: A New Biography* (London: Routledge, 2013).
[74] Burke, *Cultural History*, p.20.

orientalism and postcolonial studies to explain Western engagements with the Ancient Egyptian civilisation. In particular, Said's *Orientalism* has been central to rethinking Western attitudes to ancient Egypt and the appropriation of its material culture.[75] My approach, however, has been to distance myself from these modern frames so as to attempt to recover attitudes and understanding contemporary with the events themselves. While postcolonial theory can certainly open up new ways to look at the past, there is also the danger of blinkering that looking and the rich complexity of past contexts and actions. Theoretically influenced studies of race, unrolling and the mummy have generally overlooked the historical contexts of these debates and investigations. This thesis addresses these omissions.

Because this research is about engagements with objects, it is embedded within material culture history, and methodologies associated with the study of material objects. In *Writing Material Culture History*, Gerritsen and Riello noted that 'material culture therefore consists not merely of "things" but also of the meanings they hold for people.'[76] The approach to material culture which I am taking in this research is influenced by the approaches of Alberti, Chaplin and Knell, and is broadly speaking a constructivist one. The models that have inspired this work include Knell's research on geology communities in the nineteenth century, Chaplin's study of Hunter's museum and Alberti's study of medical preparations in the nineteenth-century museum. Despite looking at different communities, and with different foci, these studies constitute inquiries into the relation between communities, objects, and knowledge construction. Knell, in particular, develops a constructivist reading of the museum object[77] and notes that:

> Natural scientists, archaeologists and art historians, in some respects, share a similar engagement with objects: they build whole subjects from material things. Their disciplines are largely shaped by rules of engagement with the material world, but, rather curiously, the uniting discipline of the museum is history.[78]

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[75] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). Critical studies of postcolonial theory can be found in these works: Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2005); Rosie Warren (ed.), *The Debate on Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (London and New York: Verso, 2016); Daniel Martin Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 2007). I will return to the question of methods in the conclusion.
[76] Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (eds), *Writing Material Culture History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), pp.2-13 (p.2).
[77] Simon J. Knell, 'The intangibility of things', in Dudley, *Museum Objects*, pp.324-335.
[78] Knell, 'Museums, reality and the material world', p.7.

Knell highlights a key element, the central importance of history, both as a uniting element (museums implicitly and explicitly create histories through collecting), and as a methodological approach to the study of material things. Knell's study of engagements with fossils was influenced by Latour's observation that over time science constructs 'black boxes' that the historian is then charged with opening:

> The word *black box* is used by cyberneticians whenever a piece of machinery or a set of commands is too complex. In its place they draw a little box about which they need to know nothing but its input and output.[79]

In some respects, the Egyptian mummy is a black box and a cultural historical approach has offered new ways to consider the intellectual and social environment in which the collecting, opening, and performance of mummies took place. This has helped acknowledge the distinct understandings and framings of the mummy at a time when ancient Egypt was being reappraised and groups of individuals coalesced, forming identifiable – although not yet fixed – disciplines.

This thesis considers three forms of engagement: collecting, physical interventions (through opening, autopsies and other destructive practices) and performances (through unrolling and encounters). The term *engagement* is understood in this thesis as 'participating or becoming involved with something' and 'establishing a meaningful connection with something'.[80] The combination of both definitions – the physical involvement with the Egyptian mummy, but also the meaningful connection, be it for intellectual (cultural or scientific) or emotional reasons – is important in this research. Indeed, it will become evident as chapters progress that the forms of involvement with Egyptian mummies often combine a physical form of participation (for example, collecting, dissection etc.) and an intellectual motivation that spans from scientific research, personal motivation, or emotional attachment.

Although the research looks at collecting, it is more about mapping communities of interest, rather than mapping the journeys of objects from the field or through networks. The mapping of collection formation and collecting practices has, in recent years, been

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[79] Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp.2-3; Knell, *Culture of English Geology*, p.xii.
[80] Definition 'to engage with' in Oxford English dictionary online: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/engage [accessed January 2018].

looked at through the lens of object biographies and object life trajectories.[81] Although these approaches have been greatly beneficial in revealing the secondary lives of objects, and exposing these in museums, they often contribute to linear histories of acquisition. In 2017, Stevenson, Libonati and Baines introduced the concept of 'object habits' as relating to 'factors that influence the type of things chosen, the motivations for collecting, the modes of acquisition, the temporal variations in procurement, the styles of engagements with artefacts or specimens, their treatment, documentation and representation, as well as attitudes to their reception and presentation.'[82] The potential of the object habit is in expanding the scope of investigations into collecting, previously limited to the field-museum relationship, and to shed light on the multiplicity of practices and engagements. This approach to the cultures of collecting facilitates the integration of cultural histories into contemporary debates. Although this thesis is not *per se* a study of the collecting of human remains, it has been informed by the concept of object habits when approaching networks of collecting in Paris and London.

The historical anthropological turn has brought nuances and advantages to cultural history through the concept of encounters.[83] The term *encounter* is broadly defined as 'to meet someone unexpectedly'[84] and 'to experience something'.[85] Encountering Egyptian mummies certainly brought about the experience of someone, or something, (the mummy) that was unexpected in its materiality and the experience it offered, regardless of the aim and outcome of the interaction. Burke noted that 'encounters between disciplines, like encounters between cultures, often follow the principles of congruence and convergence. What attracts people from one culture to another is often an idea or a practice analogous to their own and so familiar and unfamiliar at the same time.'[86] The term encounter is used in anthropology to refer to everyday engagements across

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[81] Joyce Joy, 'Reinvigorating object biography: reproducing the drama of object lives', *World Archaeology*, volume 41, issue 4 (2009), pp.540-556; Igor Kopytoff, 'The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process' in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things, Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.64-92; Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, 'The cultural biography of objects', *World Archaeology*, volume 31, issue 2 (1999), pp.169-178.
[82] Stevenson, Libonati and Baines, 'Introduction – object habits'. Also, Stevenson, 'Artefacts of excavation'.
[83] Burke, *Cultural History*, pp.31-50; Peter Claus and John Marriott, *History, An Introduction to Theory, Method and Practice* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), pp.280-302; Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, pp.246-273 (especially, pp.265-267).
[84] Definition of 'encounter' from the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, accessed online 18 January 2018 :
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/encounter [accessed January 2018]
[85] Ibid.
[86] Burke, *Cultural History*, p.40.

difference, looking at how culture-making occurs through unequal relationships.[87] Burke noted that 'cultural encounter' as a term became more predominantly employed in the 1990s, as an alternative to the term 'discovery', for example to look at the interactions between Christopher Columbus and his followers and the cultures exisiting in South America. Similarly, there is a resistance to the use of the terms 'discovery' or 're-discovery' when dealing with ancient Egypt.[88] The title of this thesis, *Encountering Egyptian Mummies, 1753-1858*, indicates that this thesis is interested in the encounters, the interactions and engagements between individuals and the Egyptian mummy, an object that was familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. In many ways, the mummy's components and materiality – and its human aspect – were familiar, and yet its attached culture and set of practices were fundamentaly different from contemporary French and British cultural and religious beliefs. Therefore, the cultural encounter can be used as a complementary approach to the cultural history of the Egyptian mummy.

With museums facing increasing anxiety about their human remains collections, one could ask: why engage with Egyptian human remains using historiographic methodologies? Why not undertake an ethical investigation? The answer is, history *is* an ethical lens. It is through a deep understanding of historical engagements with mummies that we can start engaging with considerations such as display, removal, and sensitivity. Ethics is not about whether it is right or wrong to display human remains – as it is so often framed – but it is about gaining a broad and in-depth understanding of these human remains, in order to engage with them with an awareness of the cultural histories that accompany them, and the evolution of these histories through time.

Timeframe and spatial focus

This is a study of a century of engagements framed by two key historical events. It explores a period before and during the formation of Egyptology as a modern discipline when there was considerable fascination with ancient Egypt. This study begins in 1753, the year the British Museum was founded. Not only is the British Museum an important institution in the history of the collecting of Egyptian material but, more importantly for

[87] Ibid., pp.121-123.
[88] See, for example, the important study of Riggs : Christina Riggs, *Egypt* (Islington: Reaktion Books, 2017); and the multitiude of studies of Egypt, which point towards a long-standing study of ancient and modern Egypt. Certainly, it demonstrates that Egypt was not 're-discovered'.

this research, the museum held Egyptian mummies from the day of its creation, transferred from the collection of Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) in 1753 (interestingly, these mummies turned out to be fakes). This was followed, in 1756, by the bequest of two authentic Egyptian mummies, which were put on display from the first day of the opening of the museum to the public in 1759. These decisions placed the Egyptian mummy as an important museum object, visible to communities who engaged with the institution. The end date of this research, 1858, corresponds to the creation of the Service des Antiquités Egyptiennes and the Musée du Boulaq in Cairo, by Auguste Mariette (1821-1881). These events are significant in marking a professionalisation of Egyptology, as well as a more intense control of Egyptian archaeology from the French. Mariette is also significant for performing a mummy unrolling during the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris, where ancient Egypt was displayed and performed in a strong colonial context. Crucially, it is during this event that a shift in attitudes towards the Egyptian mummy is the most noticeable: the performance of the unrolling of a mummy became embedded in political manoeuvres to represent, and to some extent control, the Egyptian mummy, its culture and its history within a colonialist agenda. Within this timeframe, a series of events defined the development of the study of Egyptian material culture, including the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt of 1798-1801, the publication of the *Description de l'Egypte* in France,[89] the decipherment of hieroglyphs in 1822 and the opening of the Egyptian galleries at the Musée du Louvre in 1827. These events form the backbone of traditional narratives of the history of Egyptology, but are complemented by contemporary events, such as the treatment of corpses and their performance, as well as developments in medical sciences which will be an important focus. Additionally, the choice of timeframe – with a foot in two centuries – permits me to cross the classical division between 'pre-Egyptology' and Egyptology, with Napoleon's expedition marking the point of transition.[90]

This thesis is not organised around museum case studies, but instead deploys examples of engagements within the spatial locations of Paris and London. The choice of these two cities as case studies, and their suitability for a research on the mummy, deserves some attention. First, it is important to state here that this research does not

[89] Edmé-François Jomard et al. (eds), *Description de l'Egypte* (Paris: impr. C.-L. Panckoucke, 1821-1830).
[90] Jason Thompson, *Wonderful Things: A History of Egyptology*, volume 1 (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2015) elected a division for its first volume from 'Antiquity to 1881' rather than the usual division 1800, an evidence of a shift in temporal approach.

embark on a comparative study, strictly speaking. The aim is not to compare or quantify the presence, study of, and reception of, Egyptian mummies in these two cities, but rather to situate the knowledge cultures involved with Egyptian mummies in Paris and London. The choice of Paris and London is not a random choice: these two cities were the main actors in the framing and contextualisation of Egyptian material culture in the period between 1753 and 1858; they were also the centre of intellectual reflections in the natural sciences and the shaping of the natural world in Europe. Some examples of these engagements can be offered here: Paris was the centre of the publication of the *Description de l'Egypte*, it was the host of a number of academics who embarked on the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt and it is also the city where Champollion deciphered the hieroglpyhs and opened the Musée Charles X. On the natural sciences scene, individuals such as Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) were dominating European conversations on the natural world, but also questions of race and human origins. On the British side, the collecting of Egyptian material culture was an important subject from the 1750s and it is evident that Britain and France were the main actors in the collecting of Egyptian material culture, motivated by political competition. It is those debates, intellectual and political competition, but also exchanges, that make these two cities important case study. It is true to say that other cities were important in the shaping of knowledge about ancient Egypt at that time, in Europe but also, importantly, in Egypt itself, as Colla demonstrated.[91] However, the two cities of Paris and London have not been studied consistently together; therefore, if this is not a comparative study *per s*e, it is certainly a conjoint study of the cultures of participation in these two cities.

At an earlier stage of research, the British Museum and the Musée du Louvre had been elected as case studies: the reasons for this choice, and its limitations, are here presented. The British Museum possesses the largest collection of Egyptian human remains outside of Egypt and when it displayed mummies in the mid-eighteenth century, it became the first public museum to do so. These exhibits created an opening paradigm that would affect other museums. In Paris, the first Egyptian galleries opened in 1827 under the curatorship of Jean-François Champollion (1790-1832), in what was known as the Musée Charles X. The collection of Egyptian material culture at the Musée du Louvre has never been the subject of a comprehensive study, and the inclusion of Egyptian mummies as part of the Musée Charles X has never been investigated. The only study of

[91] Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities*.

the early years of Egyptology at this museum was conducted in the work of Sylvie Guichard, who reappraised the first guide to the museum, the *Notice Descriptive*.[92] These two museums, the British Museum and the Louvre, appeared as evident focal points in this thesis. However, the initial focus on case studies had prevented the investigation of other spaces of engagement. Placing agency in the hands of individuals rather than institutions has brought an awareness of networks of individuals – especially, medical practitioners – who came to the Egyptian mummy with specific interests and agendas.

Finally, I have been aware that Paris and London were not the only sites for the collection and performance of Egyptian mummies, but that there were more engagements occurring within the timeframe in provincial towns and cities. This is particularly the case for France in the second half of the eighteenth century, during the period of political turmoil in Paris. This thesis, therefore, is not a comprehensive study of the mummy in France and England. However, the cities of Paris and London were crucial locations in the construction of knowledge, evidenced by the two museums, but also by associated knowledge communities, especially in natural sciences.

Location of sources

This research is qualitative, and focuses primarily on contemporary published accounts. In order to form an understanding of the spectrum of sources available for this research, and to elect the types of document to be considered, I initiated my research through fieldworks at the Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes (DAE) at the Musée du Louvre and the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the British Museum. The Musée du Louvre does not hold specific archival material on its collection of Egyptian human remains – as a rule, the museum does not hold archive documents, which have been transferred to the Archives Nationales in the suburban site of Pierrefittes. However, over the course of this research, published books which had been in the holdings of the Archives Nationales in the Marais area of Paris were transferred back to the library of the DAE. Therefore, I was able to access all the published guides to the museum, starting with Champollion's initial *Notice* of 1827.[93] In addition, the department holds object

[92] Sylvie Guichard, *Notice Descriptive des Monuments Égyptiens du Musée Charles X* (Paris: Editions Khéops, 2013); Jean-François Champollion, *Notice Descriptive des Monumens Egyptiens du Musée Charles X* (Paris: Imprimerie de Crapelet, 1827).
[93] Champollion, *Notice Descriptive.*

cards which cover all the artefacts in the collection; these cards have been modified and augmented over time and provide greater insight into each object than the museum database. In addition, they are the only complete source of information on Egyptian mummies at the Louvre. Although they are sometimes rudimentary in their content – and certainly, in their format – they have been useful in mapping the extent, scope and in some measure, the history, of Egyptian mummies at the Louvre. At the British Museum, the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan holds archival documents, which are useful in completing a picture of the collection; these were used in conjunction with secondary literature, in particular Moser's publication mentioned above, to create a picture of the early years of the museum.[94]

The rest of the research has been mainly desk-based, going through a large number of digitised primary sources, which mostly consisted of published eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources. The National Library in London, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) and the Archives Nationales in France, as well as more accessible online resources such as Gallica and Archives Online have been consulted to access the vast array of written documents available within the timeframe. The focus on books and articles published by authors involved with mummies, rather than on visitor accounts, was necessary to probe the engagements with Egyptian mummies that took place within specific intellectual contexts and how these informed their construction of the idea of the mummy.

The intention of this thesis is not to discover original documents, but rather to make an original contribution both in the cross-referencing of documents from different institutions, and penned by different individuals, and in shedding light on networks of collections and collectors. It has come to my attention that some documents, albeit easily available, have not been the focus of consistent study. This is evident, for example, in the reports of interventions by John Hunter (1728-1793) at John Hadley's (1731-1764), Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) and Georges Cuvier (1769-1832).[95]

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[94] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*.

[95] John Hadley, 'An account of a mummy, inspected at London 1763', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 54 (1764), pp.1-14; Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, 'Observations on some Egyptian mummies opened in London', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 84 (1794), pp.177-195; Georges Cuvier, *Note Instructive sur les Recherches à faire Relativement aux Différences Anatomiques des Diverses Races d'Homme* (1799), edited in Jean Copans and Jean Jamin, *Aux Origines de l'Anthropologie Française* (Paris: J.M. Place, 1994), text 2.

The primary sources that have been selected in this research provide an important foundation to critically assess ways in which knowledge cultures shaped and transformed the mummy. However, they need to be critically assessed in consideration of their locatedness and how they enable and constrain the research. The choice of published accounts over archival material is, as stated above, to permit me to frame ways the Egyptian mummy was communicated: to answer the aim of this thesis which is to frame the cultures of participation with Egyptian mummies in the chosen period. In looking at published books, journals and other accounts that were disseminated in each country, and exchanged between the two, I have been able to extract themes that were recurrent, such as questions of race, origins, the body and so on. However, it is evident that, with any historical research, creating a complete picture is simply not possible. In addition, the deliberate choice of looking at published accounts over archival material – although some was used, but more sporadically – means that some voices are not heard. It will become evident, for example, as the chapters progress, that the voices unearthed are predominantly, if not exclusively, male voices. It is necessary to be cautious in not interpreting this as a strict representation of the cultures of the time. It is true to say that the institutional cultures which are observed in these studies were male dominated, but some of the voices from archives that are brought up in this research are female, and it is to be expected that there are many more to be found. Certainly, a study of these voices and the gender disparity in engagement with, and reception of, the Egyptian mummy would be greatly beneficial, although it falls outside of the scope and focus of this research.[96]

Translation of French sources

This research has drawn on French and British literature, in both primary and secondary sources. While researching primary sources, it became evident that many French documents had not been translated into English. This is particularly the case for early documents from travellers, but it is also evident in such documents as the guides to the Musée du Louvre. The translation of these extensive documents falls outside of the scope of this research, but in tracing documents relevant to Egyptian mummies, the research has

[96] Similarly, female characters appear in engravings of mummy displays as visitors, and of mummy dissections and unrollings as spectators, and a study of these visual representations would certainly be beneficial.

produced new translations of the material. For documents with existing translations, these have been used and credited in footnotes.

Encountering mummies

> Twilight deepened into darkness, the bustle from the Rue de Rivoli waxed and then waned, distant Notre Dame changed out the hour of midnight, and still the dark and lonely figure sat silently in the shadow. (…) The moon was shining fitfully through the unshuttered window, however, and his eyes ran along the lines of mummies and the endless array of polished cases, he remembered clearly where he was and how he came there. (…)
>
> It was my custom to read all that the scholars had to say upon Ancient Egypt. (…) But how was I to lay hands upon them? How was I to have them for my very own? It chanced that the office of attendants was vacant. I went to the Director. I convinced him that I knew much about Egypt. (…)[97]

The first passage in Conan Doyle's short story is that of an aspiring student of Egyptology, falling asleep in the Egyptian galleries of the Musée du Louvre, after a long day studying the material culture of ancient Egypt. The second passage is that of an individual who takes a position as a gallery attendant at the Louvre as a legitimate excuse to approach the Egyptian mummies in the museum's collection. These two episodes could very well have been written about my trajectory as a young student living in Paris in the vicinity of the Louvre, trying to figure out the collection of Egyptian mummies in the museum, with the notable exception that Doyle's gallery attendant is, in fact, a 4000-year-old Egyptian mummy attempting to revive its ancient love, a mummy collected by Auguste Mariette (1821-1881).

At the inception of my interest in – and academic dedication to – Egyptian mummies were two episodes. First, an incident at the Louvre when a visitor loudly and intentionally knocked on the case of the then-sole mummy on display, asking it to *wake up*, which initially startled me and then led me to develop an understanding of the variety of visitor responses to mummies; eventually, it led to a questioning of display and

[97] Conan Doyle, *The Ring of Thoth* (1890), edited in John J. Johnston and Jared Shurin (eds), *Unearthed* (London: Jurassic London, 2013), pp.79-96.

engagement. The second episode took the form of persistent rumours at the Louvre over the years about missing mummies and a curious story that Egyptian mummies had been buried in the garden of the Louvre in this very century. Research led to the realisation that the museum had never led any form of inquest into its Egyptian human remains collection – the real story about the missing mummies is revealed in chapter 3 of this thesis. These years spent at the Louvre in multiple capacities were soon enriched with academic research in the United Kingdom, in the form of a Bachelor's degree in Ancient History and Egyptology at University College London (UCL) and a Master's degree in Museum Studies at University of Leicester. These degrees fitted in a trajectory of research into Egyptian mummies developed and reassessed over many years.

In 2013, I produced a Bachelor's dissertation on a comparative study of Egyptian mummies in four museums: the Manchester Museum, the Musée du Louvre, the British Museum and the Field Museum in Chicago, considering ways these institutions had transformed their display to address ethical considerations surrounding the retention of human remains. This first research project revealed a complex, and often under-studied, history of mummy collecting, display and reception. Following this research project, I undertook a Master's degree in Museum Studies, during which I focused my research on the British Museum, producing a linear history of the display of Egyptian mummies at the museum. This research greatly informed my understanding of the mummy as a multi-faceted museum object and allowed me in this thesis to develop a critical understanding of the collection.

In addition, I co-organised a study day at New Walk Museum in Leicester in June 2014 titled 'Egyptian Mummies: A History Unwrapped', which gathered researchers and curators interested in Egyptian mummies, with diverse backgrounds: archaeologists of ancient Egypt, curators of Egyptology collections and of exhibitions on Egyptian mummies and researchers of reception studies.[98] The study day greatly informed my understanding of Egyptian mummies' curatorship, as well as confirming the need for greater research in mummy studies.

At the end of my Master's degree, I interned in the Egyptian department at the Musée du Louvre, an opportunity to gain insight into the collection and to engage with

[98] 'Leicester study day: Egyptian Mummies: A History Unwrapped', 28 June 2014, New Walk Museum, Leicester (organiser: Egypt Exploration Society).

curators at the museum. It became evident that Egyptian mummies had never – and still do not – hold any place in the research agenda and curatorial activities of the museum. This placement was an opportunity to reassess the importance of such research to the curatorial team. In part, it resulted in my contribution to the publication *Techné* (the scientific journal of the Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France) published in December 2016, in which I provide an overview of the current challenges faced by UK museums in regards to the retention and display of Egyptian human remains in museums which, published in a French journal, sheds light on existing European conversations about Egyptian mummies.[99] My background as an Egyptologist has informed my understanding of Egyptian collections throughout my work as a museum researcher; I conducted this thesis project as a museum researcher and as a historian of museums, and I have strived to step outside of the field of Egyptology and place myself as an academic and researcher of the museum. I have done so in full awareness of the tensions, but also the similitudes, between the disciplines of Egyptology and museum studies.

The combination of my research projects, visits to numerous museums holding Egyptian mummies and contacts with curators of collections holding Egyptian human remains led to the following observations. The history of mummy collecting – and, especially, the contexts in which mummies entered collections – remains largely unexplored. Egyptian mummies, in particular, have not been considered in isolation as museum objects, but appear in linear developments of collections, individual biographies and the study of the history of Egyptology. In addition, museums such as the Musée du Louvre have never engaged with the history of their mummy collections, therefore leaving aside an important part of their collection. In addition, and in relation to this first observation, was the realisation that Egyptian mummies were – after being neglected entirely – appearing in ethical debates surrounding their retention and display. Museums were trying to find justifications for their display of mummies, without awareness of the history of their collection and the history of engagements with mummies. I have sought to re-focus the conversation and re-engage curators and researchers of the necessity of such study through numerous public and academic talks (to name a few: at the Ashmolean Museum in 2014, for the West Midlands Egyptology Society in Birmingham in 2015, at

[99] Angela Stienne, 'The Egyptian mummy in UK museums: cultural histories and object biographies', *Techné*, issue 44 (2016), pp.40-44.

the Barber Institute of Arts in 2016 and for ASTENE at the University of East Anglia in 2017), as well as active engagements through conversations on social media and a website collecting mummy stories, which expands the knowledge of mummy collections and engages the public in contributing its own stories.[100]

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis argument is articulated around five sections (sections 1 to 5). Sections 2, 3 and 4 consider different formats of engagement. The three main engagements in this research are: collecting, physical interventions and performance, which form the backbone of the six content chapters into which this research is divided (chapters 2 to 7).

Section 1: introduction (chapter 1)

The first section is composed of the present chapter and serves as an introduction to the research focus of this thesis: it sets the conundrum of Egyptian mummies in museums, locates this research within the intellectual context of research into the histories of Egyptology, material culture, the cultural history of object collecting and knowledge construction, and articulates the original contribution of the thesis. This chapter also sets the research methods, the approach and challenges and traces the intellectual trajectory which led to this research.

Section 2: establishing mummy collections in Paris and London (chapters 2 and 3)

This research begins with eighteenth-century engagements with Egyptian mummies, locating the intellectual practices of individuals who engaged in the collection and study of Egyptian mummies. The mapping of individual and institutional engagements with mummies prior to the French expedition to Egypt of 1798-1801 conducted in chapter 2 is essential in placing actors and spaces of engagement in a pre-Egyptology context. In addition, it reveals the diverse and active investigations of ancient Egypt and its human remains through time, locating the Egyptian mummy as an object of investigation. The

[100] See the ongoing project *(Your) Mummy Stories*, a participative project inviting individuals from any background to share a mummy story, disseminated on various platforms. Angela Stienne, *Mummy Stories*, 2017. <www.mummystories.com/yourmummystories> [accessed 20 August 2017].

study of the collection of Egyptian mummies, and their inclusion in private collections in Paris and in private, and then institutional, collections (the British Museum) in London can illuminate the framing of the mummy in the eighteenth century.

The third chapter considers the evolution of these collecting engagements in the aftermath of the French Expedition to Egypt, mapping the development of collections of Egyptian material culture in Paris and London, with a special focus on the British Museum and the Musée Charles X (Musée du Louvre). The collection of Egyptian mummies is considered in the light of changing socio-cultural and political contexts – in looking at the development of collections, this chapter, in conjunction with the preceding one, considers ways the Egyptian mummy became embedded in museum practices.

Section 3: from mummy opening to racial dissections (chapters 4 and 5)

After considering the collection of Egyptian mummies, this research moves on to consider the physical engagements with Egyptian mummies through their physical study, in particular looking at the opening, autopsy and dissection of mummified specimens.

The fourth chapter provides an overview of the processes of destruction of Egyptian mummies, first by transforming the mummy into medicinal produce – the *mumia* – and then by investigating mummies through dissection, dismemberment and other destructive investigations which occurred concurrently with the collecting practices overviewed in section 2. This chapter proposes a reframing of the Egyptian mummy as much more than an object of collection and emphasises its organic nature as human remains.

This format of engagement is modulated in the fifth chapter, which draws from the physical investigations, but this time considers the race conundrum which, in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, embedded Egyptian mummies within discourses which included questions of the origin of mankind, and especially of the racial origins of the ancient Egyptians, in the context of an appraisal of the intellectual, artistic and scientific advancements of the ancient Egyptian civilisation. This chapter analyses under-studied cases of physical and intellectual studies of Egyptian mummies as racially-motivated investigations.

Section 4: from mummy unrolling to the human mummy (chapters 6 and 7)

The sixth chapter draws on the previous sections to consider the transformation of engagements with Egyptian mummies in the early-to-mid nineteenth century through the practice of mummy unrolling. This chapter considers mummy unrolling within the context of representation and performance of the dead in England in the first half of the nineteenth century and questions the nature and purpose of these performances, the role of the performers, and the impact on the shaping of the mummy.

Finally, the seventh chapter considers the performance of the Egyptian mummy, not as an object or as a corpse, but rather as an individual. This chapter draws on non-fictional and fictional narratives to examine ways individuals who engaged with Egyptian mummies searched for the humanity of their specimen, by conjuring the mummy alive – not necessarily the mummy as a creature coming back to life, but the understanding of the mummy as the body of a past individual. These engagements reveal intricate connections between the collection, opening and appreciation of the mummy as a past living person, and reframe a largely underappreciated area of mummy literature.

In summary, chapters 2 and 3 consider engagements with Egyptian mummies as collected objects: the second chapter considers individual collections and the formation of the British Museum mummy collection in a pre-Napoleonic expedition context, while the third chapter considers the aftermath of this event. The mummy is addressed as a vector between individuals: collectors and visitors, museums and visitors, individuals within groups that engage with Egyptian mummies. With different perspectives and nuances, chapters 4 and 5 address the engagements with mummies as organic remains, through the acts of cutting, breaking, tearing apart, dissecting and experimenting on the mummy. While the fourth chapter considers the motivations behind the study of the Egyptian mummy as an organic object, the fifth chapter considers investigations deeply associated with intellectual developments which required a reassessment of the genesis storyline and a reconsideration of the relation between race, ability, and culture. Finally, chapters 6 and 7 consider the performance of the Egyptian mummy, considering ways individuals transformed their engagement with mummies through imagination, performance and spectatorship, and resolved the dichotomy object-subject through encounters.

Section 5: analysis and conclusion (chapter 8)

The concluding chapter, chapter 8, considers the findings of this research, in particular in adding as-yet unexplored histories of engagements with mummies, and in reframing the mummy as a material object which was constructed within specific intellectual and scientific contexts in the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. It addresses the aim and objectives set in the introduction, and establishes how the theoretical framework and methodology have helped answer these questions. In addition, this chapter locates these findings and cultural histories within contemporary debates over the retention and display of Egyptian mummies in museums. It argues that the current climate in museums, marked by the removal of Egyptian specimens from display for ethical reasons, reflects a lack of understanding of the history of mummy engagements, and the absence of a framework to address mummy collections. This conclusion offers lines of reflection to pursue the research undergone in this thesis, and develop history-conscious and practice-embedded research to transform the curating of Egyptian human remains.

At the end of this thesis, appendixes have been attached as reference and consist of a timeline of the engagements considered in this thesis and tables of mummy collections at the Musée du Louvre and the British Museum; visual material has been included in text and is catalogued in the List of Figures.

SECTION 2

ESTABLISHING MUMMY COLLECTIONS IN PARIS AND LONDON

Chapter 2 – Mummy collections in the eighteenth century

> I have bespoken a mummy, which I hope will come safe to my hands, notwithstanding the misfortune that befell a very fine one designed for the King of Sweden. He gave a great price for it, and the Turks took it into their heads that he must have some considerable project depending upon it. They fancied it the body of, God knows who; and that the state of their empire mystically depended on the conservation of it. Some old prophecies were remembered upon this occasion, and the mummy was committed prisoner to the Seven Towers, where it has remained under close confinement ever since: I dare not try my interest in so considerable a point as the release of it; but I hope mine will pass without examination.[101]

While in Turkey with her husband – the British Ambassador Edward Wortley Montagu (1678-1761) – Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) entertained an extensive correspondence, of which the excerpt above is taken, dated from 29 May 1717. During her stay in Constantinople, she collected artefacts and as her letter states she hoped to acquire an Egyptian mummy. She had desired a specific mummy, but was rather unsure about the fate of it, since the King of Sweden, Charles XII (1682-1718), who was a guest of the Sultan of Turkey after being defeated by the Russians in 1709, had suffered the above disappointment in acquiring his own mummy. The Seven Towers, the 'Yedikule Hisari', was a treasury and archive of the Ottoman Empire, as well as a prison. Certainly, the episode recalled in Lady Mary's correspondence suggests that the mummy was considered a prized possession to be sought after, collected and even taken prisoner. Whether the Lady ever recovered her mummy is unclear, as is the fate of Charles XII's own specimen. However, it is evident that, by the eighteenth century, the Egyptian mummy was coveted by individual amateurs, royals and locals alike.

So normalised are encounters with Egyptian mummies in museums in Europe, that it is easy to fail to observe how strange it is that Europeans collected these human remains. Were they seen merely as fossils of Egyptian civilisation or had they some other meanings for those who collected them? How common were these practices?

[101] Marie Wortley Montagu, *The Letters of Lady M. W. Montagu during the Embassy to Constantinople, 1716-1718* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1825), p.161.

This chapter considers the creation and development of private collections of Egyptian mummies in eighteenth-century Paris and the contemporary development of the British Museum's collection in London. The Egyptian mummy is framed, in this chapter, as an object, that is, as a material thing which can be collected, touched and studied, emphasising the property of the mummy as a collectible object, rather than its organic properties as human remains. The liminal state of the mummy – both object and person – makes such a distinction imprecise. However, to locate and trace changes in attitudes towards the Egyptian mummy, it is important to initially locate the mummy in collections and to investigate the actors who engaged with it as an object. The location of the mummy within collections is one of the questions considered: was the mummy collected like any other object? Or was its dual nature understood and emphasised in any way? This can be inferred, to some extent, from the objects displayed with the mummies. In the era before the discipline of Egyptology was formulated, was the mummy displayed with natural history specimens or the material culture of ancient Egypt?

The collecting of Egyptian mummies in the eighteenth century has been largely overlooked, and yet a study of its practice is essential in understanding the construction of knowledge of ancient Egypt in a pre-Napoleonic expedition context. The presence of collections – sometimes extensive – of Egyptian material culture in the eighteenth century, both in Paris and London, confirms the existence of groups of individuals who reflected on, and attempted to advance the knowledge of, ancient Egypt. This chapter draws on primary sources produced by those who engaged with Egyptian mummies, as well as the important studies of Pollès, Aufrère and Moser in particular,[102] to extract evidences of collections of Egyptian mummies at a time of growing interest in the ancient Egyptian civilisation. Ultimately, this chapter identifies the actors and spaces of engagements with mummies which form the backbone of other forms of engagement considered later on.

Opening with an overview of the collection of, and interactions with, Egyptian mummies prior to the eighteenth century, this chapter then maps the presence of Egyptian mummies in Paris in the second half of the eighteenth century. Paris offers an idiosyncratic perspective on the collecting of Egyptian mummies because the city did not

[102] Renan Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Amateur, 2001); Sydney H. Aufrère, *La Momie et la Tempête* (Paris: Alain Barthelemy, 1990); Stephanie Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006).

have a major public display of these objects until 1827; prior to this, mummies were displayed in private collections. This chapter then establishes the collection and display of Egyptian mummies in London in the second half of the eighteenth century, with a particular focus on the location of Egyptian mummies within the British Museum. The presence of Egyptian material culture, initially in the private collection of Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) and later at the British Museum, has been dismissed as a largely accidental occurrence with little impact on either the reception of the mummy or the display of Egyptian material culture. However, the curatorial act of incorporating Egyptian mummies into private and public collections created a specific place for the mummy in the intellectual landscape. As this chapter will show, London was actively investigating the ancient Egyptians and consistently collecting the physical remnants of its people, the mummies.

2.1 The collected mummy in Paris

In the mid-sixteenth century, Egyptian mummies became objects of collection, a few centuries after they had been exhumed and used as a source of a medicinal substance, a practice to which I will return in chapter 4. The infatuation with mummies and mummy parts as memorabilia or as objects displayed in cabinets of curiosity has been linked to the rediscovery of ancient texts and the ancient Egyptian civilisation, in particular in Italy, in the context of a humanist approach to the study of the ancients and their lost knowledge. Research has been conducted on the long history of the study of ancient Egypt, in particular by Daly who looked at ancient Egypt in Medieval Arabic writings, Burnett who looked at ancient Egypt in Latin Middle Ages imagery and Curran who considered the Renaissance 're-discovery' of ancient Egypt.[103] It is evident, looking only at these three papers, that the concept of the rediscovery of ancient Egypt is erroneous, for ancient Egypt had never ceased to be of interest, both in Egypt and in Europe. However, it is in late Renaissance Europe that ancient Egypt exerted the most fascination, with the ancient civilisation considered as the key to lost knowledge, embedded in esoteric symbols. In

[103] Okasha El-Daly, 'Ancient Egypt in Medieval Arabic writings' in Ucko and Champion, *Wisdom of Egypt*, pp.39-64; Charles Burnett, 'Images of ancient Egypt in the Latin Middle Ages' in Ucko and Champion, *Wisdom of Egypt*, pp.65-100; Brian A. Curran, 'The Renaissance afterlife of Ancient Egypt (1400-1650)' in Ucko and Champion, *Wisdom of Egypt*, pp.101-132. Also, by same authors: Okasha El-Daly, *Egyptology: The Missing Millennium* (London: UCL Press, 2005); Brian A. Curran, *The Egyptian Renaissance, The Afterlife of Ancient Egypt in Early Modern Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

the seventeenth century, Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680) epitomised this vision of ancient Egypt in his works, compiling an anthology of Egyptian writings and claiming to have deciphered the ancient Egyptian script.[104] Kircher's formative role in the research and communication on the rediscovery of ancient Egypt has been studied in length, especially by Findlen, Godwin and Stolzenberg.[105] In *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, Kircher presented an engraving of the inside of a mummy pit, a group burial, which was accompanied by a map [Fig.2.1]. [106] The mummy pits were deeply associated with the concept of 'going to the mummy'.

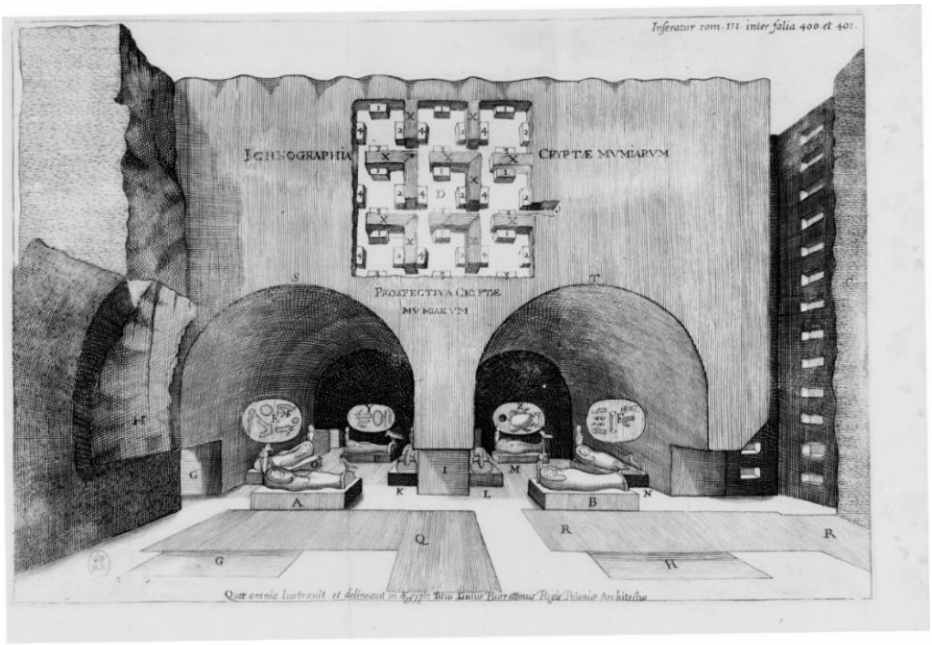

Fig.2.1: 'Ichnographia cryptae mumiarum' in Athanasius Kircher, *Œdipus Aegyptiacus* ([n.pl.], [n.pub.], 1652), volume 3. © Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Going to the mummy

> Only Europeans were capable of such an enterprise, who whether it be for profit, the balms themselves, or in the hope of finding some rarities, adventured into these underground locations, to find amongst the dead that which made the living live in luxury.[107]

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[104] Athanasius Kircher, *Œdipus Aegyptiacus* ([n.pl.], [n.pub.], 1652).
[105] Paula Findlen, *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything* (London: Routledge, 2004); Daniel Stolzenberg, *Egyptian Oedipus: Athanasius Kircher and the Secrets of Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Joscelyn Godwin, *Athanasius Kircher: A Renaissance Man and the Quest for Lost Knowledge* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 1979).
[106] Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*.
[107]Christian Hertzog, *Essay de Mumio-Graphie* (Gothe: Jean Andr. Rether, Imprimeur Duc, 1718), p.26, author's translation.

In 1718, Christian Hertzog (1665-1727) published his *Essay de Mumio-Graphie*, in which he made a direct reference to the practice of going to the mummy pits to collect Egyptian mummies.[108] Until the sixteenth century, journeys to Egypt were considered highly dangerous and thus rare enterprises but beginning in 1517, diplomatic exchanges developed between Europe and Egypt. The exhumation of mummies, centred mainly on the site of Saqqara, was initially motivated by the development of a market for grounded mummy powder, which was to be used as a medicine. Nonetheless, the practice of exhuming Egyptian mummies for collection purposes can be traced back to the sixteenth century. In fact, Pollès noted that 'aller à la mumia' or 'aller au mumies' (literally, to go to the mummies) was an expression dedicated to a single meaning, that is, to refer to journeys to Egypt for the purpose of collecting Egyptian mummies.[109] In 1657, a map which located the pyramids and the sphinx, from *Les Voyages et Observations du Sieur de la Boullaye-le-Gouz,* referred to the whole region as 'momies' and 'plaine aux momies' (mummy field) [Fig.2.2].[110] Travels to recover mummies from pits and tombs developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and were reported in numerous accounts. These accounts paint a picture of isolated travellers embarking on journeys, at times dangerous, who were drawn to the exhumation of mummies.[111]

[108] Hertzog, *Essay de Mumio-Graphie*.
[109] Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*, p.35.
[110]François de la Boullaye-le Gouz, *Les Voyages et Observations* (Paris: G. Clousier, 1653).
[111] Pollès recorded a number of visitors who went 'to the mummy' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*, pp.33-80.

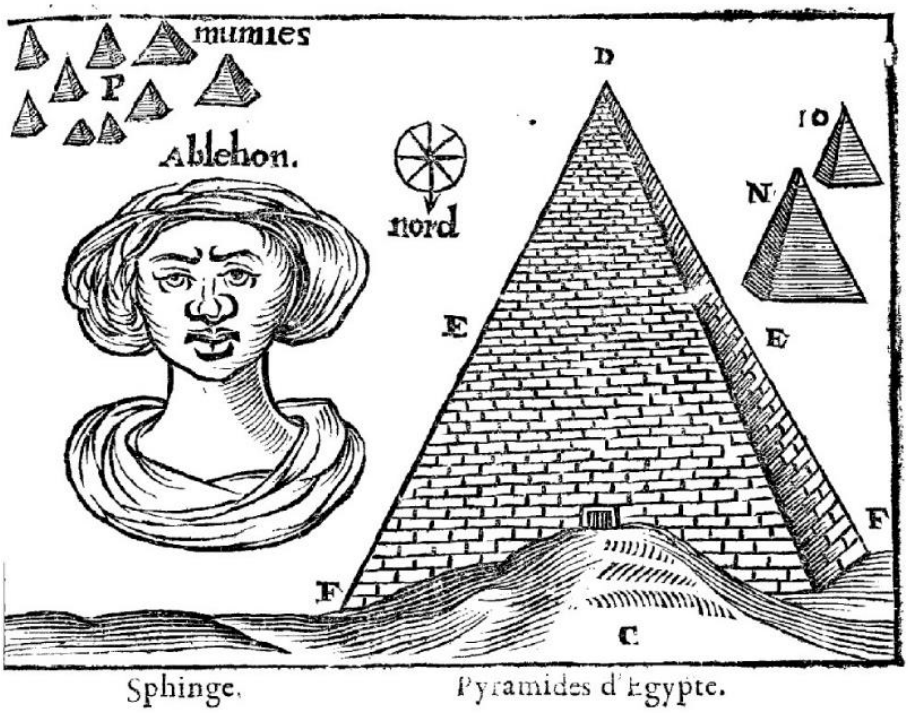

Fig.2.2: 'Mumies' in François de la Boullaye-le Gouz, *Les Voyages et Observations* (Paris: G. Clousier, 1653), p.359. © Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, G-6192.

The mummy pits were composed of numerous corpses buried in a single pit, a phenomenon which remains rather poorly understood.[112] The sight of so many mummies en masse both disconcerted and intrigued their visitors. Charles Irby (1789-1845) remarked:

> It is impossible to conceive a more singular and astonishing sight than this. Imagine a cave of considerable magnitude filled with heaps of dead bodies in all directions, and in the most whimsical attitudes; some with extended arms, others holding out a right hand, and apparently in the attitude of addressing you; some prostrate, others with their heels sticking up in the air; at every step you thrust your foot through a body or crush a head.[113]

Evidently, the discovery of the mummy pits represented an excellent catalyst for the inspection and collection of mummies: not only did they provide an almost endless

[112] Tessa Baber, 'Ancient corpses as curiosities: Mummymania in the age of early travel', *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*, Volume 8 (2016), pp.60-93.
[113] Charles Irby and James Mangles, *Travels in Egypt, Nubia and Syria* (London: T. White and co., 1823), p.45.

supply of Egyptian mummies for trade, collection and consumption, but they also provided an unparalleled environment for the development of imaginative theories and assumptions regarding the mysterious funerary practices of the ancient Egyptians. It is revealing that expeditions were conducted with the sole purpose of collecting the human remains of ancient Egypt, rather than to look for objects of monetary value. These mummies, when they were not destroyed on site of collection for the making of the *mumia*, were sent to Europe to feature in private collections. Aufrère and Pollès considered the early collections of Egyptian mummies in some considerable length, and thus I will turn to one specific collector, to offer some considerations on the mummy as an object of curiosity.[114]

Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580-1637)

The presence of Egyptian mummies in private collections before the eighteenth century places these specimens in a cabinet of curiosity context, and raises the questions: was the mummy a curiosity? And what can be defined as 'curiosity'? The cabinets of curiosity have been a source of contention. They have been rejected as a model of display in early museum studies, as a way of ensuring that the museum would distance itself from the cabinet, then considered as a disorganised mix of things acquired without much judgment or discrimination. In-depth research into the cabinet, and the collected object as curiosity, can be found in the works of Pomian, Schnapper and MacGregor, to name a few. [115] More recent research, including recent work by Bowry, has shown that the cabinet was, in its accumulation of objects and specimens, a representation of the world in which it was located. [116] However, it was also idiosyncratic and specific to its owner and its time and space, making a single definition almost impossible. Nonetheless, once the cabinet is understood as a representation of both the outside world and a mode of thinking which addresses a set of realities, the mummy can be identified as one of the elements of this

[114] Aufrère, *La Momie et la Tempête*, pp.155-232; Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*, pp.33-80.
[115] Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectionneurs, Amateurs et Curieux, Paris-Venise: XVI-XVIII siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987); Antoine Schnapper, *Collections et Collectionneurs dans la France du XVIIe siècle: Tome 1, Le Géant, la Licorne et la Tulipe* (Paris: Flammarion, 1993); Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
[116] Stephanie Bowry, 'Rethinking the Curiosity Cabinet: A Study of Visual Representation in Early and Post Modernity' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 2015). Online: <https://lra.le.ac.uk/bitstream/2381/32594/1/2015bowrysjphd.pdf> [accessed September 2017].

object assemblage which informs the understanding, and reframes the perception, of the mummy as a curiosity.[117]

The mummy was perceived through distinct prisms, influenced by individual understandings of the ancient Egyptians and by wider intellectual developments. Together, these influences contributed to the identification of the mummy as a remnant of an old civilisation; the mummy was certainly the most appealing of these remnants at the time, and became a true *curiositez*, a term which Pollès notes was recurring in France to designate Egyptian mummies.[118] He also notes that the collection of mummies coincided with the extension of cabinets in the sixteenth century – prior to this, mummies were seldom mentioned in travellers' accounts.[119] Finally, Pollès notes that the nature of the mummy made it an ideal object for collection and display in cabinets. He states:

> The mummy constitutes some sort of ideal synthesis of the different types of objects preserved in cabinets, since it is both a natural curiosity and an antiquity and belongs both to the natural world, and to the one pertaining to human industry. And in this order of human industry, it is the synthesis of its different domains, because for its preservation it pertains to sciences, for its hieroglyphs, inscriptions, and ornaments and drawings, to art.[120]

Of the seventeenth-century collectors in France, Peiresc has received the most attention: he epitomises the spirit of intellectual curiosity and his collecting activities illuminate the prescriptions and practices that shaped and surrounded the cabinet at the time. Peiresc has been studied in great depth by Aufrère, who conducted an extensive study of the culture of collecting of Egyptian mummies in the seventeenth century.[121] In 1629, François Auguste de Thou (1607-1642) sent a letter to Peiresc from Sakkara, in which he wrote: 'I was the other day at the mummies & went down to a cave, where I saw 5 or 6 corpses as entire as if they had just been buried.'[122] Father Théophile Minuti

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[117] The term 'curio' has been discussed in the introduction of: Alexander Marr and R. J. W. Evans (eds), *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2006). See also, on curiosity and collections: Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002); Neil Kenny, *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[118] Aufrère defines the 'curiosity' of Egyptian material culture in a pre-Egyptology context in: Aufrère, *La Momie et la Tempête*, pp.31-52; Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*, p.54.
[119] Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*, p.52.
[120] Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*, p.53, author's translation.
[121]Aufrère, *La Momie et la Tempête*. Also: Lisa T. Sarasohn, 'Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc and the patronage of the new science in the seventeenth century', *Isis*, volume 84, issue 1 (1993), pp.70-90.
[122] *Texte de Thou*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, M.S. f.f. 95537, fol. 297, author's translation.

(1592-1662), upon his return from Egypt where he travelled from 1629 to 1630, brought back two Egyptian mummies for Peiresc, whose interest was reported as follows:

> The arrival of Minuti, back from Egypt ... caused unto our illustrious Amateur extreme joy. Minuti brought him many books, mainly those called Coptic, meaning written in ancient Egyptian idiom and Egyptian characters; two mummies one of which particularly remarkable for its grandeur and its entireness, was the body of a prince, as far as could be conjectured from the ornaments.[123]

Interest in the customs surrounding ancient Egyptian funerary practices led Peiresc and a visitor to partially unwrap one of the mummies.[124] In this case, the incentive to open the mummy was linked to a legend that the ancient Egyptians placed a coin in the mouth of the deceased in order to pay for the passage to the afterlife. This unwrapping of a mummy is a first indication that collecting activities and destructive practices were not antithetic: collectors who felt strongly about the value of their objects, felt also a strong desire to uncover more about these. In Aufrère, the event is recorded as follows:

> He was charmed by the new curiosities he found at his house, among other, the two mummies, and to hear him discussing this method of embalming and other […] after removing with difficulty the various wrappings from the head, which were the same as those of the rest of the body, nothing was found.[125]

Several acquaintances of Peiresc had their own collections of mummies. In the cabinet of Boniface de Borilly (1587- 1648) in Aix, there were 'four crocodiles, one very large, and three smaller. Diverse bodies petrified and embalmed. One foot and a leg of a mummy.'[126] The cabinets of the Desneux brothers, Israel Desneux and Christophe Desneux, who were in correspondence with Peiresc, held a single mummy.[127] The communication of information through networks of individual collectors of Egyptian mummies was accomplished through correspondences, exchanges in publications and regular visits to each other's cabinets – the effort to place the mummy within private cabinets was a first attempt to situate Egyptian mummies as objects of inquiry.

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[123] Jean-Baptiste Requier, *Vie de Nicolas Claude Peiresc* (Paris: Chez Musier, 1770), p.259, author's translation.
[124] Aufrère, *La Momie et la Tempête*, p.161.
[125] Aufrère, *La Momie et la Tempête*, p.163, author's translation.
[126] Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*, p.47, author's translation.
[127] Schnapper, *Collections et Collectionneurs*, p.211.

Egyptian mummies in eighteenth-century Paris

In the absence of a centralised museum space in Paris to host Egyptian collections – the Louvre opened its Egyptian galleries in 1827 – the location of Egyptian material culture, and especially of Egyptian mummies, in Paris in the eighteenth century requires more comprehensive research into private spaces. The only systematic investigation into the presence of Egyptian mummies in eighteenth-century France has been conducted once again by Pollès, although sometimes superfluously.[128] This section considers a number of cabinets in Paris at this time with a view to understanding who held this material, what it tells us about the significance of the mummy and how they were categorised and understood.

An important private cabinet belonged to aristocrat Joseph Bonnier de la Mosson (1702-1744) and was located in his Hotel de Lude in Paris.[129]A catalogue to the collection was produced when it was up for sale in 1744.[130] The introduction to the catalogue provides an overview of its extent, though it is written to attract purchasers:

> It has yet to be found in France as of today, a cabinet that has earned the attention of the public, outside of the one exhibited here. The variety of objects which forms its collection, the number of objects, the difficulty in gathering so many rarities, required an amateur as ardent, and as rich as the late Mr. Bonnier de la Mosson, in order to attain to the execution of such a vast project, regardless of the place that it required, to organise the ensemble with order & with advantage.[131]

De la Mosson having inherited a family fortune, which included the Parisian hotel, decided to transform the first floor of this building into nine cabinets. The cabinets were divided into specific fields of inquiry: the anatomy cabinet, the cabinet of chemistry, the apothecary cabinet, the druggist, the cabinet du tour, the first natural history cabinet (with animals in flasks), the second natural history cabinet (with dried animals), the mechanics and physics cabinet, and the shell cabinet. A characteristic of this collection was its

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[128] Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood.* Due to the extent of the scope of Pollès's work, which spans from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, and across continents, this study can be at times superfluous. This is for example the case in the section 'La momie des antiquaires' which emphasises the seventeenth century, but overlooks the eighteenth century, and in particular, De la Mosson's cabinet, examined here.
[129] Pierre Julien, 'Les cabinets de curiosités de la rue Saint-Dominique et les peintures de Lajoüe', *Revue d'Histoire de la Pharmacie*, volume 72, issue 262 (1984), pp.278-279.
[130] Edmé-François Gersaint, *Catalogue Raisonné d'une Collection Considérable de Diverses Curiosités en tous Genres* (Paris: chez Jaques Barois et Pierre-Guillaume Simon, 1744).
[131]Gersaint, *Catalogue Raisonné*, p.ii, author's translation.

scientific focus: there was not, in De la Mosson's cabinet, any artefacts or antiquities, and yet the head of an Egyptian mummy was included in the collection. In the *Catalogue Raisonné d'une Collection Considérable de Diverses Curiosités* by Gersaint, the numerous objects were ordered by categories, following the division established by de la Mosson.[132] The section 'Cabinet d'anatomie' reads:

> This cabinet contains three glass cabinets, in which are kept human skeletons of various ages; several other animal skeletons of diverse species; some myologies & angiologies; some good pieces of anatomy in coloured wax, and some portraits in wax made from nature.[133]

The 'troisième armoire', the third glass cabinet, mentions 'the head of a mummy' among a list of human remains including skeletons and dried human skins.[134] The anatomy cabinet was smaller than the others, and also less visible. Possibly, its contents, a selection of anatomical specimens with some rare and uncharacteristic conditions, made it an oddity in the context of the rest of the collection, and it may have attracted a more particular set of visitors. Following the premature death of de la Mosson, the hotel was sold, and some of the content of the cabinets was bought by Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) for the Jardin du Roi. Not only did he acquire some of the rare specimens in jars, but also the furniture which accompanied the collection.[135] The general content and organisation of De la Mosson's cabinet can be reconstructed via drawings made by Jean Baptiste Courtonne (1712-1781) in 1740; however, these drawings did not include the anatomy collection, and the fate of the mummy head is unknown.[136]

Another actor in the mid-eighteenth century was the Comte de Caylus (1692-1765) who amassed collections of antiquities and published on the ancient Egyptians.[137] Caylus had befriended at a young age the artist Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) and was himself an artist, creating the illustrations for his own publications.[138] Between 1752 and 1767, Caylus published *Recueil d'Antiquités Egyptiennes, Etrusques, Grecques et*

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[132] Gersaint, *Catalogue Raisonné.*
[133]Ibid., p.4, author's translation.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Some of these are now in the library of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris.
[136] The drawings are available here: <http://bibliotheque-numerique.inha.fr/collection/3878-cabinet-de-bonnier-de-la-mosson/> [accessed June 2017].
[137]Anne Claude de Caylus, *Recueil d'Antiquités Egyptiennes, Etrusques, Grecques et Romaines*, volume 3 (Paris: Dessaint et Saillant, 1759).
[138] Hector Reyes, 'Drawing and history in the Comte de Caylus' *Recueil d'Antiquités*', *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture*, volume 42 (2013), pp.171-189.

Romaines, a seven-volume publication.[139] In his *Recueil*, Caylus included an engraving which represented Antiquity in the form of an Egyptian figure [Fig.2.3]. The first part of the publication was dedicated to the ancient Egyptians. Despite providing a long list of artefacts collected in Egypt, there is no mention of human remains in this publication. Caylus acquired a hotel in 1736 to house his antiquity collection, located at 109 rue Saint Dominique in Paris, of which Charles Le Beau (1701-1778), member of the Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, wrote that 'the entrance of his house announced the Ancient Egypt: one was received there by a beautiful Egyptian statue five feet five inches in size.'[140] The statue had been bought by Caylus from a descendant of Benoît de Maillet (1656-1738) and it was on the frontispiece of the first volume of his *Recueil d'Antiquités*.[141] Despite their absence from the publication, Caylus owned mummy parts in his collection, which he had examined by French chemist Guillaume-François Rouelle (1703-1770) in 1754. His investigation will be covered in chapter 4 because it fits into physical interventions practiced by individuals in the natural sciences.

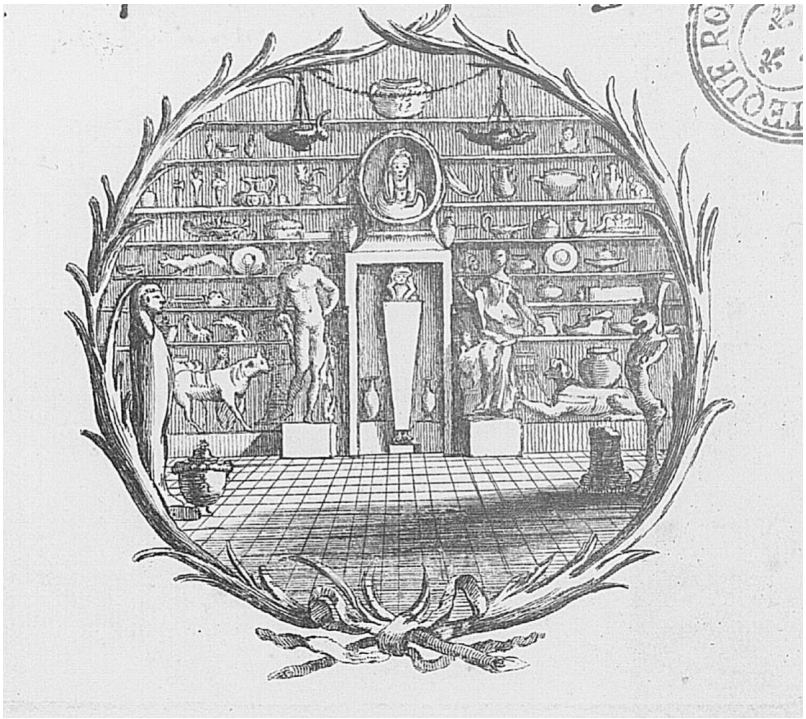

Fig.2.3: Cover drawing in Anne Claude de Caylus, *Recueil d'Antiquités Egyptiennes, Etrusques, Grecques et Romaines* (Paris: Desaint et Saillant, 1752-1767), drawing by François Bartoli. © Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[139] Caylus, *Recueil d'Antiquités.*
[140] Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*, p.53.
[141] Caylus, *Recueil d'Antiquités.*

Rouelle was linked to two other Parisian cabinets: the Cabinet de Sainte Geneviève, founded in the seventeenth century by Father du Moulinet (1620-1687), which contained one full mummy as well as mummy parts, and the Cabinet des Célestins which held two mummies.[142] These two cabinets are mentioned in Rouelle's report to the Académie Royale des Sciences of 1754, in which he wrote:

> The mummy that is preserved in the cabinet of Sainte Geneviève, & the two which are in the one of the Celestins, can shed new lights on this passage by Herodotus and confirm my conjectures.[143]

The conjectures mentioned by Rouelle were related to his personal research on salts, which led him to dissect a mummy in 1754.[144] The provenance of the mummies from Sainte Geneviève and Celestins cabinets is unclear; Rouelle only noted that the specimen from the former was better preserved in that it still retained its outer wrappings.[145] Rouelle, an eminent figure in chemistry, also knew of another mummy belonging to Benoît de Maillet (1656-1738), thus demonstrating that Rouelle was a hub for collectors and investigators possessing mummies.

Egyptian mummies held sufficient significance in collections to be mentioned and traceable. Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain (1643-1727) who had commissioned Maillet to bring back artefacts from Egypt – including a full mummy which Maillet opened to the public in Egypt – had his own collection containing an Egyptian mummy.[146] His mummy was later transferred to the Cabinet des Petits-Frères, located at the Place des Victoires and was misleadingly thought to be that of Cleopatra. The cabinet was dismantled during the French Revolution, and the mummy buried in the garden.[147]

Other Parisian private collections containing Egyptian mummies in the eighteenth century included the collection of Jean Pierre d'Aigrefeuille (1665-1744) whose mummy had 'all the parts of the face and of the inside, except for the eyes and the brain',[148] the

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[142]The cabinet de Sainte-Genevière was dismantled, with its library, in 1790, and the artefacts dispersed in other institutions: see, Adolphe Joanne, *Paris Illustré: Nouveau Guide de l'Etranger et du Parisien* (Paris: Hachette, 1867), p.793.
[143] Anon. [Académie des Sciences], *Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences* (Paris: J. Boudot, 1754), p.136, author's translation.
[144] Jean Paul Grandjean de Fouchy, 'Eloge de M. Rouelle', *Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1773), p.142-143.
[145] Anon., *Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences* (1754), p.136.
[146] Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*, p.49.
[147] Ibid., p.63.
[148] Ibid., p.49.

cabinet belonging to naturalist Valmont de Bomare (1731-1807) whose catalogue mentions a mummy[149] and the cabinet of Jean Baptiste de Bourguignon de Fabregoules (1746-1836), magistrate and equerry of the city of Aix, which held a mummy in its sarcophagus.[150]

Mummies were also part of royal collections, although they are not well documented. The description of Louis XV's (1710-1774) cabinet made by Buffon and Daubenton in 1750 describes 'the inner finger of the right hand of a mummy with a part of a left foot.'[151] This account contrasts with the inventory of Louis XIV's (1638-1715) library in 1684 which stated that the cabinet contained no less than 'seventeen mummies from Egypt', which would make it the largest collection in Paris in the late seventeenth century.[152] The fate of the seventeen mummies, of which only a finger and a foot remain, was not recorded and it is possible that these suffered from poor conservation, and completely deteriorated.

To sum up, the practice of collecting Egyptian mummies in Paris in the eighteenth century for private cabinets was well established. It was inscribed in an existing European tradition of collecting and studying Egyptian mummies but, as mentioned above, the origin of the interest in Egyptian mummies was not antiquarian but apothecarian. However, the enduring interest in Egyptian mummies and the difficulty in acquiring them – from the journey, to the risks in accessing mummy pits, and the instability of Egypt reported in many accounts of attacks and thefts – prove that the mummy was not, as has been suggested, collected as an accidental by-product of other significant collecting activities. Instead, it is evident that, in the eighteenth century, there was widespread interest in having a mummy in private collections. Contemporary to these investigations, London was actively investigating Egyptian mummies, on a much larger scale.

2.2 Sir Hans Sloane's collection

The study of Egyptian mummies in London demands an investigation into Irish physician Sir Hans Sloane's collection (1660-1753), which became the foundation of the British Museum's first gallery. The final destination of Sloane's private collection has attracted

[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid., p.49.
[152] Ibid.

considerable attention, but the significance of his collection of Egyptian material culture as part of a larger ensemble has been relatively neglected. Sloane has been the subject of extensive research, into his collecting activities, the extent of his collection, and the contexts in which it was assembled. In particular, MacGregor has conducted a thorough examination of Sloane's collection, including Egyptian artefacts.[153] Therefore, this section considers exclusively Sloane's collection of Egyptian antiquities and locates Egyptian human remains in his extensive collection.

Sloane did not actively pursue a collection of Egyptian material. MacGregor remarked that Sloane's 'marked degree of bulk-buying seems accurately to reflect the unfocused and undiscriminating character of Sloane's interests, suggesting little more than a conscious attempt to boost an underdeveloped facet of an otherwise well-rounded collection.'[154] Nonetheless, the inclusion of Egyptian material in his collection broadened the scope of the collection and must have captured the public interest since mummies are mentioned in visitors' accounts. In addition, the origins of the artefacts in Sloane's collection reveal connections between collectors of Egyptian materials.

At the time Sloane built his collection, in the early eighteenth century, relatively little was known about the ancient Egyptian culture, other than that provided by classical written sources and travellers' accounts, with varying levels of interpretation. It was the dawn of an era of large-scale explorations in Egypt which were initiated in the late 1730s by Frederic Louïs Norden (1708-1742) and Richard Pococke (1704-1765) who published accounts and brought back antiquities, which were subsequently included in private collections. Norden travelled to Egypt in 1737-1738 on the request of King Christian VI of Denmark (1699-1746) and published extensive documentation and drawings of his travels in *Voyage d'Egypte et de Nubie*.[155] Pococke set out on an expedition to the Near East in 1736 and reached Alexandria in September 1737 from where he later proceeded to Rosetta and Cairo. He visited the ancient sites where other adventurers were already

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[153] Arthur MacGregor, *Sir Hans Sloane: Collector, Scientist, Antiquary, Founding Father of the British Museum* (London: British Museum Publications, 1994). On Sloane, see also: Debora Meijers, 'Sir Hans Sloane and the European proto-museum' in R. G. W. Anderson, M. L. Caygill, Arthur MacGregor and L. Syson (eds), *Enlightening the British. Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century* (London: The British Museum Press, 2003), pp.11-17; M. L. Caygill, 'From private collection to public museum: The Sloane collection at Chelsea and the British Museum in Montagu House' in Anderson et al., *Enlightening the British*, pp.18-28.

[154] MacGregor, *Sir Hans Sloane*, p.177.

[155] Frederic Louis Norden, *Voyage d'Egypte et de Nubie* (Copenhague: Imprimerie de la Maison Royale, 1755).

looking for artefacts; Pococke recalled that he 'saw the people sifting the sand in order to find seals and medals, there being no part in all the east where the former are found in such great abundance.'[156] Pococke provided detailed accounts of his observations made during the expedition in *A Description of the East, and some Other Countrie*s.[157] In Book 1, Chapter 5, titled 'Of the Egyptian manner of Embalming human Bodies and Birds', a lengthy description of the embalming technique is largely composed of references to the contributions of Herodotus and Diodorus with some additional personal comments [Fig.2.4].[158] On a technique of embalming suggested by Diodorus, which he had not observed in the tomb he visited, Pococke noted that:

> It may be doubted, whether there was not such bodies formerly found, that supplied the world with the mummy of dried flesh; there being nothing of this kind seen on the mummies at present; and that, there being so great a demand for it, all those bodies might have been destroyed.[159]

[156] Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East, and some Other Countries* (London: W. Bowyer, 1743).
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid., pp.230-233.
[159] Ibid., p.229.

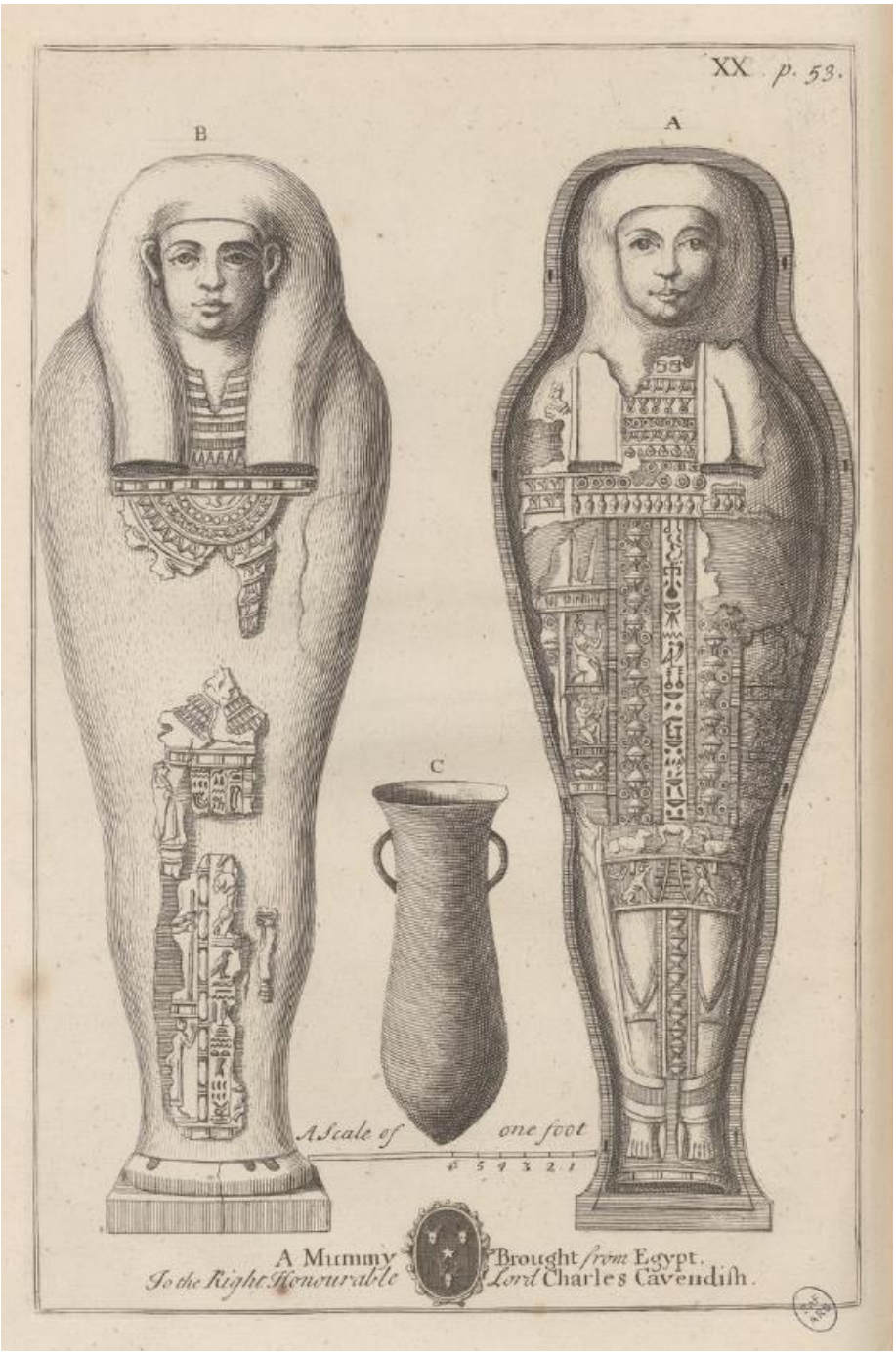

Fig.2.4: 'A mummy brought from Egypt to the right honourable Lord Charles Cavendish' in Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East, and some Other Countries* (London: W. Bowyer, 1743-1745). © Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

In 1712, Sloane had set up his museum at his house at Cheyne Walk, Chelsea and, from 1742, the residence served as an exhibition space where selected visitors were offered tours from the 'curator' James Empson (d.1766). It is apparent that Sloane was 'always ready on proper Notice to admit the Curious to the sight of his Musaeum'[160] and

[160] MacGregor, *Sir Hans Sloane*, p.36.

the accounts of such visits provide us with a detailed understanding of the assemblage of Sloane's collection both at Bloomsbury and at Chelsea. The presence of 'a great number of Egyptian antiquities' in Sloane's Bloomsbury collection is attested to by French surgeon Sauveur-François Morand (1697-1773) in 1729, but there is no mention of human remains in this account.[161]

Clearly, the ordering of the collections and the spatial arrangements were of interest to Sloane, as reflected in Sloane's catalogues and visitor accounts. Swedish-Finnish explorer and naturalist Pehr Kalm (1716-1779) visited the Chelsea Manor on 26 May 1748 with several gentlemen, with particular interest in a snake from Sloane's natural history collection.[162] Kalm wrote a record of the rooms he visited and the main features in each room, and it is from this record that the general composition of the collection can be reconstructed.[163] The greater part of the collection occupied a long gallery, ten feet in length, with the specimen cabinets set against the walls, while 'about a fathom from the floor above the Natural Curiosities the walls were all covered with books.'[164] The great salon contained jars and bottles with specimens in spirit; in eight other rooms, the walls were covered with Sloane's extensive collection of books. In room fifteen, Kalm mentions 'an Egyptian mummy, all sorts of anatomical objects, human skeletons etc.'[165] Not mentioned by Kalm but recorded in Sloane's catalogue of 'Humana' was 'the head of an Egyptian mummy dried in the sand brought from Egypt by Mr Sandys.'[166]

The individual referred to by Sloane is George Sandys (1578-1644), one of the earliest Englishmen to leave an account of an antiquarian expedition to Egypt and a benefactor to the museum of John Tradescant (1570-1638).[167] Sandys travelled extensively in Europe and the Middle East. His accounts contributed to the knowledge of geography and human history of the time. Among his observations of the ancient Egyptian culture, Sandys attempted to explain the Egyptian writing system.[168]Although

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[161] Jean Jacquot, 'Sir Hans Sloane and French men of science', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, volume 10, issue 2 (1953), pp.91-93.
[162] MacGregor, *Sir Hans Sloane*, pp.31-35.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Pehr Kalm, *Kalm's Account of his Visit to England: On his Way to America* (London: Macmillan And Co., 1892), p.102.
[165] Ibid.
[166] MacGregor, *Sir Hans Sloane*, p.69.
[167] George Sandys, *Sandys Travels* (London: John Williams Junior, 1673).
[168] Ibid., p.81.

Sandys died before Sloane's birth, Sloane had received some artefacts from Sandys's collection which, in addition to the mummified head, included 'a small Aegyptian earthen idole of blew colour from Egypt', as recorded in Sloane's catalogue.[169]

Another connection through object donation was forged with the orientalist Robert Huntington (1637-1701). Huntington had been appointed chaplain to the Levant Company in Aleppo, Syria in 1670 and, in the following ten years, travelled multiple times in the Near East, visiting Egypt at least twice. Huntington and Sloane were acquainted, and Sloane had suggested Huntington for membership to the Royal Society of London in 1699, without success. Part of Huntington's collection was given to the Ashmolean and the Bodleian Library, with Sloane receiving 'An Aegyptian idol of blew earth taken out of a mummy by Dr Huntington.'[170]

Egyptian mummies

Sloane owned at least one large mummy which, according to Kalm, was not displayed with the rest of the Egyptian material culture but with other skeletons. This separation suggests that the mummy was categorised primarily as human remains – similar to a skeleton – rather than as an Egyptian artefact. This distinction would have been significant to Sloane as his collection of human specimens owed more to his medical than his antiquarian interests; he brought back a number of specimens from his travels, notably in the West Indies. The mummy may have been acquired from the collection of English antiquarian and Fellow of the Royal Society John Kemp (1665-1715), which was described in 1707 as follows:

> This collection chiefly related to the Antiquities of the Ancient Aegyptians, Greeks and Romans. He hath several ancient Aegyptian Gods in metal, divers Sorts of Stones and Artificial Earth, two ancient Mummies in their Wooden Coffins, the Heads of a Man and a Woman carved on the Outside of the Coffins.[171]

The Royal Society's Committee for the Repository visited Sloane's Museum and was particularly interested in the display of the mummy which contrasted with its own exhibit of a mummy. The *Minutes* of 11 May 1732 mentioned that 'Mr Jackson should

[169] MacGregor, *Sir Hans Sloane*, p.175.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Anon., 'A description of the Musaeum of Mr. J. Kemp near the Hay-Market', *Monthly Miscellany or Memoirs for the Curious*, volume 2 (1707), p.259.

be sent to, & desired to repair & put the Mummy belonging to ye R.S. into ye same sort of Case as the Mummy at ye President's, only without casters.'[172] There is no record of Sloane's mummy in the British Museum and decay could be the reason why it was not included at the inception of the Museum. Indeed, geologist and antiquarian John Woodward (1665-1725) had commented on another mummy he had encountered, stating:

> I myself saw here a mummy, brought formerly out of Egypt that, after it had been for some time in our more humid air, began to corrupt and grow mouldy, emitted a foetid and cadaverous scent, and in conclusion putrefied and fell to pieces.[173]

Mummies are difficult to preserve as part of collections due to their organic nature: they need a temperature and humidity controlled environment in order to sustain their state of preservation and this must have been troublesome for private collectors who were not necessarily equipped to maintain artefacts requiring such special treatment. Therefore, the addition of mummies to Sloane's collection, and their retention as part of the collection, suggests a real interest in having Egyptian human remains as part of a collection of natural creations. Mummies were not just acquired as part of a larger ensemble, they were of enough interest and curiosity to be kept. Two small mummies were also part of Sloane's collection but attracted little public interest and therefore were not included in visitor accounts. They reappear in a published document from 1794, when Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) opened them at the British Museum and discovered they were fake [Fig.2.5].[174]

Having no son, Sloane was determined that his collection would benefit the nation. Miller pointed out that Sloane 'was not willing to leave [his collection] to either the Royal Society or to the Ashmolean at Oxford, both of which institutions he regarded as distinctly unsatisfactory for his purpose.'[175] The variety in his collection might be a reason why it would not have suited the Royal Society which was primarily a scientific collection. In his will of 9 October 1739, Sloane mentioned that a museum should be created to host his collection. His appointed trustees were to offer the collection to the King for the nation for the sum of £20,000 payable to Sloane's daughters, Lady Elisabeth Cadogan (1695-

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[172] Royal Society, MS 490 CMB.63, minutes of meeting of 8 May 1733, in MacGregor, *Sir Hans Sloane*, p.179.
[173] John Woodward, 'Of the wisdom of the ancient Egyptians', *Archaeologia, or, Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity*, volume 4 (1809) p.235.
[174] Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, 'Observations on some Egyptian mummies opened in London', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 84 (1794), pp.177-195.
[175] Edward Miller, *That Noble Cabinet, A History of the British Museum* (London: Deutsch, 1973), p.41.

1768) and Mrs Sarah Stanley (1709-1765).[176] The British Museum was founded in 1753, to house Sloane's collection and set up in Montagu House on Great Russell Street.

Fig.2.5: The wooden box containing one of the two fake Sloane mummies. Photograph of author taken at the British Museum in June 2017. Use courtesy of the British Museum.

MUMMIES IN SLOANE'S COLLECTION

1753	1 large mummy	Described in Sloane's collection by Kalm. Not recorded at the British Museum, possible decay/discard.
	1 small mummy	Not catalogued in Sloane's catalogue, located at the British Museum in Blumenbach's report of mummy dissections in 1794, from the 'Sloanian collection'.
	1 small mummy	Not catalogued in Sloane's catalogue, located at the British Museum in Blumenbach's report of mummy dissections in 1794, from the 'Sloanian collection'.

Fig.2.6: Table of mummies in Sloane's collection. © author.

[176] Ibid, p.43.

2.3 Egyptian mummies at the British Museum

The first mummy to enter the British Museum, after to the two small mummies from Sloane's collection, was donated by Colonel William Lethieullier (1701-1756) in his will in which he stated: 'I give to the Public Museum at Montagu House my Egyptian Mummy, with everything thereunto appertaining, with the rest of my Egyptian antiquities.'[177] The mummy was illustrated, first by George Vertue (1684-1756) in 1724, and then in an engraving by the antiquarian Alexander Gordon (1692-1755) in 1737 [Fig.2.7 and 2.8]. Gordon wrote on the circumstances of the discovery of the mummy that:

> This singular Monument of Egyptian Antiquity, was found by some Arabs, in one of the ancient Cryptae, or Catacomb of the Dead, in the Field of SAKARA, about three Leagues from Cairo, in the year 1721, while his present possessor William Lethieullier, was in Egypt, to whose assiduity in promoting Matters of Antiquity and Curiosity, the Learned World owes this noble Remain, and who afterwards at Alexandria ship'd it on board the Dove Gallery for England, where it arrived in the year 1722.[178]

Of this mummy in particular, Gordon noted that 'it has nothing about it very different from the others seen in the Cabinets of the Curious, in many places of Europe.'[179] The mummy was listed in the Museum's collection in 1756 with 'the skull of a mummy', 'two feet and a hand, seemingly of a mummy.'[180] The mummy must have been received as a valuable addition to the collection since the Trustees thanked Lethieullier's son in person for the gift:

> Monday, Feb 23. Committee of the trustees of the British Museum, waited on the executors of the late Colonel Lethulier [sic], to return thanks for the valuable legacy left to the publick [sic] by that gentleman; being a fine mummy, and a curious collection of Egyptian antiquities. On this occasion Pitt Lethulier [sic],

[177] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, p.245.
[178] Alexander Gordon, *An Essay Towards Explaining the Hieroglyphical Figures on the Coffin of the Ancient Mummy belonging to Capt. William Lethieullier* (London: edited by Gordon, 1737) p.1.
[179] Ibid.
[180] 'The Bequest of Colonel William Lethieullier' (1756). British Museum Department of Ancient Egypt and the Sudan Archives.

Esq. nephew to the colonel, presented them with several antiquities, which he himself had collected during his residence at Grand Cairo.[181]

The *Synopsis* of the Museum mentions the Lethieullier family 'who so early as the year 1756, began their benefactions, and continued them for several years, thereby materially increasing the collection of Egyptian antiquities, to which they added two mummies, and a great number of idols, utensils and other implements.'[182]

[181] Sylvanus Urban, The *Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, volume 26 (March 1756), p.145.
[182] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, p.72.

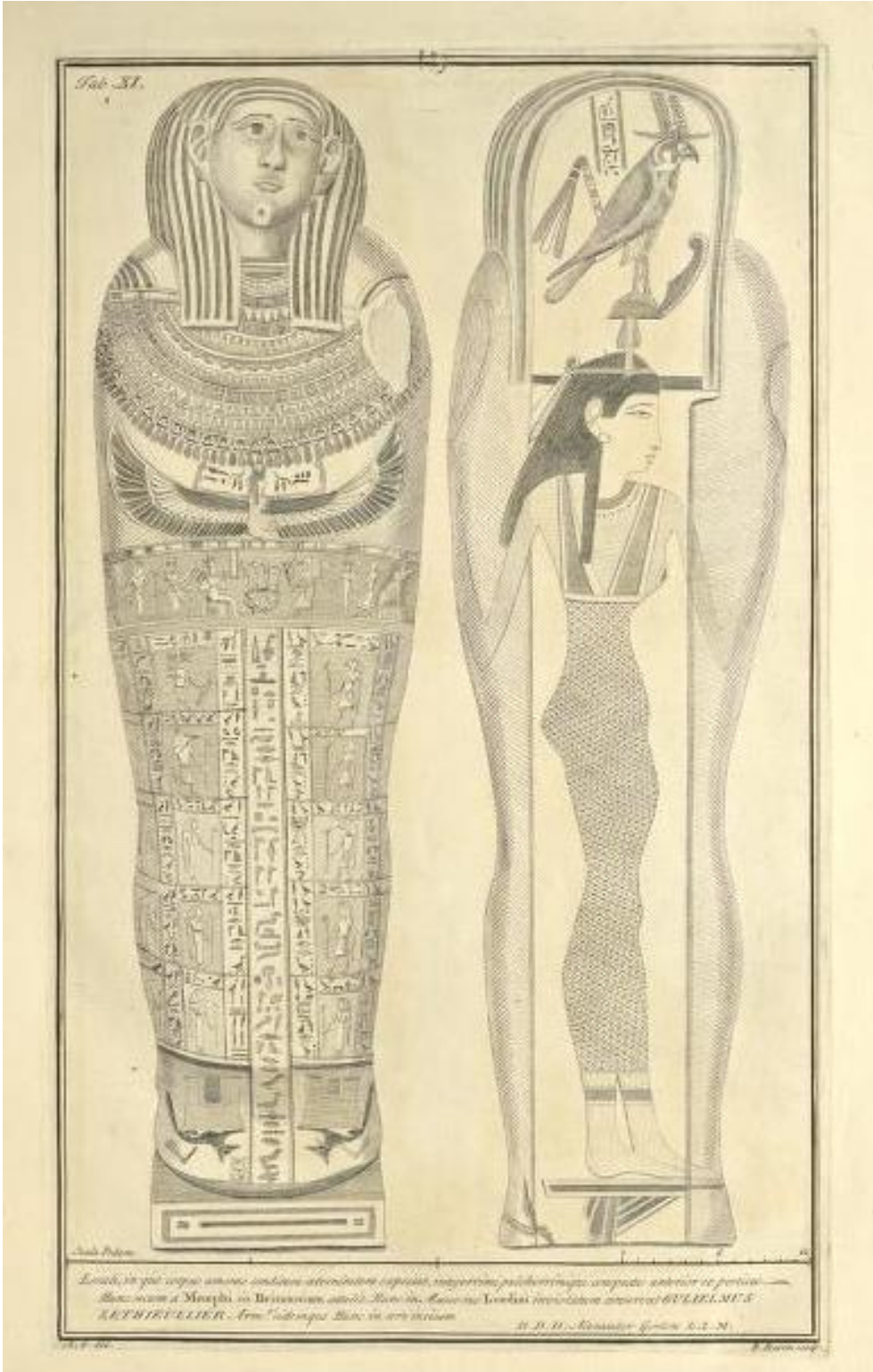

Fig.2.7: The Lethieullier coffin (front and back) in Alexander Gordon, *An Essay Towards Explaining the Hieroglyphical Figures on the Coffin of the Ancient Mummy belonging to Capt. William Lethieullier* (London: edited by Gordon, 1737).

Fig.2.8: The Lethieullier coffin (sides) in Alexander Gordon, *An Essay Towards Explaining the Hieroglyphical Figures on the Coffin of the Ancient Mummy belonging to Capt. William Lethieullier* (London: edited by Gordon, 1737).

The Egyptian Society

The Lethieullier family played a central role in the expansion of the Egyptian collection at the British Museum and their involvement with Egyptian-related enterprises had precedents: both William and Pitt Lethieullier had been members of the short-lived Egyptian Society.[183] The society was set up in London by William Stukeley (1687-1765) on the occasion of a dinner at the Lebeck's Head Tavern in Charing Cross on 11 December 1741. Stukeley's interests were anchored in the research of the early history of mankind.[184] In 1717, after seven years of medical practice in Lincolnshire, Stukeley moved to London and was involved in the re-establishment of the Society of Antiquaries, as the Secretary. In 1718, he became a Fellow of the Royal Society and the following year he was elected to the Council of the Royal Society; by 1720 he was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and a Freemason. He was among the thirty-seven Trustees who gathered at the Manor House, Chelsea, on 27 January 1753 to set up the future British Museum.[185]

The Egyptian Society was composed of members who had travelled to Egypt or had private collections that included Egyptian artefacts. Present at the first meeting were Norden and Pococke, who had travelled to Egypt. The Society's main purpose was 'promoting and preserving Egyptian and other ancient learning.'[186] During its meetings, held fortnightly in the winter months, antiquities were displayed and papers were occasionally read. An account of the second meeting by Dawson noted that, 'At this second meeting the President's staff of office – an Egyptian sistrum – was laid before him, and Stukeley gave a learned dissertation upon it. His conclusion was that the sistrum was a "rattle" to scare off birds of prey when sacrifices were made!' [187]

The gatherings were evidently an occasion to form new theories about ancient Egypt. Pococke, for example, proposed the idea that Egyptian colonies had formed in Ireland, asserting that 'in Ireland, he observ'd a surprising conformity between the irish & the ancient Egyptians.'[188] He reasserted his theory in 1754 when he wrote to Stukeley

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[183] Warren R. Dawson, 'The first Egyptian society', *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, volume 23, issue 1 (1937), pp.259-260.
[184] David Boyd Haycock, *William Stukeley, Science, Religion and Archaeology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002).
[185] Miller, *That Noble Cabinet*, p.42.
[186] Dawson, 'The first Egyptian society', p.259.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Haycock, *William Stukeley*, p.174.

from Berlin stating: 'I am sure there was a colony here from Egypt… I take it when the Continent was in wars in the fifth and sixth centuries, people came over to study, as to a place of quiet; but I believe the learning was very little.'[189]

Individual members' motivation behind subscribing to the society, and their reason for being attracted to the ancient Egyptian culture, took different forms: Pococke and Norden wrote publications stimulating a wide interest in Egypt, while Lethieullier, who had visited Egypt for commercial reasons, was struck by the ancient site of Saqqara where he acquired the mummy later donated to the British Museum. Another member of the Egyptian Society was Gordon, mentioned above, who illustrated the Egyptian artefacts included in twelve private British collections including Sloane's, Lethieullier's and Richard Mead's (1673-1754). Sloane himself never took part in the Egyptian Society, possibly due to his old age at the time (he was over eighty years old).

The Egyptian Society ceased to exist on 16 April 1743, just ten years before the creation of the British Museum. As James pointed out, 'the enthusiasm which had led to the formation of the Egyptian Society represented a growing interest in ancient Egypt and its physical remains of a quality quite different from that demonstrated by the random collection of Egyptian antiquities by Sir Hans Sloane and other general collectors.'[190] The men involved in the Egyptian Society were interested specifically in ancient Egypt and attempted to advance the knowledge of this culture through the study of Egyptian objects and the formulation of new theories which, although at times unfounded, demonstrated a real interest in the Egyptian culture.

The mummies

It is difficult to trace the detailed history of the display of mummies at the British Museum, because the rooms were regularly remodelled and there is an absence of visual evidence. However, guides to London and the Museum, as well as visitor accounts, allow for some understanding of the arrangement of the rooms. In *London and its Environs Described*, Dodsley wrote a description of the content of each room. He noted that:

> Having giving in the porter's lodge mark'd in the plan No. I your name, addition and place of abode, you have notice given what day and hour to attend and a ticket given you. By showing this you are admitted and entering the hall (i) you ascend

[189] Ibid.
[190] James, *The British Museum and Ancient Egypt*, p.5.

> a magnificent stair-case, nobly painted by La Fosse. The subject of the ceiling, Phaeton requesting Apollo to permit him to drive his chariot for a day. On the inside walls a landskip [sic.], by Rousseau: This brings you to the vestibule (I No. 2) the ceiling represents the fall of Phaeton: in this is a mummy and some other antiquities.[191]

Edmund Powlett's guide to the British Museum takes the visitor on a virtual tour of the Museum, room by room. Describing the room with the mummy, he noted that:

> The room is set apart from the immediate Reception of Presents, and contains several very curious Articles, given by colonel Lethieullier, his Brothers, and other Benefactors. I shall mention an Egyptian Mummy, which is deposited in a Glass Case, in one Corner of the Room, as its Coffin is in the other.[192]

The *London Magazine* of 1761 reported on Powlett's publication:

> A pamphlet, intitled, The General Contents of the British Museum, with Remarks, &c, has lately appeared, in which every Reader of a curious Disposition, will find much matter to prompt him to more elaborate Enquiries; and besides, it seems to be a pleasing, and even necessary Companion, for every Gentleman and Lady, who is enclined to visit that grand national Repository.[193]

It is evident that the mummy was a subject of much interest at the time. The only specific specimen to which the *London Magazine* referred to was the mummy.[194] From the guides above, we learn that the mummy was displayed on the upper floor of the museum in a vestibule lined with cabinets. The room was furnished with a collection of miscellaneous objects, for the most part the collection of the Lethieullier family. The mummy was displayed in the north corner of the room in a mahogany case with glass lids and slides, while the coffin was on the opposite side. The mummy had the peculiarity of being displayed upright, Moser noted so that 'the whole may be exposed to view.'[195] The display of Egyptian mummies in an upright position was a common practice at the time, and throughout the nineteenth century; it is evidenced both in descriptions, visual

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[191] Robert Dodsley and James Dodsley, *London and Its Environs Described* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1761), p.31.
[192] Edmund Powlett, *The General Contents of the British Museum: With Remarks. Serving as a Directory in Viewing that Noble Cabinet*, (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1761), p.12
[193] R. Baldwin, *The London Magazine, Or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*, volume 30 (1761), p.660.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, p.46.

materials and also today in the fact that the feet of mummies are often damaged as a result of upright display. The upright position of the mummy is interesting in terms of display strategy and ways it shapes knowledge. Indeed, this is the only occurrence at the museum, which thence displayed its mummies laying down, as will be covered in the next chapter. Upright mummies appear more commonly in cabinets, and these could certainly be linked to the upright positions in anatomy collections in cabinets. Indeed, it was common practice at the time to display skeletons in an upright position, often hung from a hole in the skull. Certainly, it is interesting to think that the mummy was initially displayed like an anatomical object, rather than an object of material culture.

In 1766, the Museum acquired another mummy and its coffin, donated by John Stuart, the third Earl of Bute (1713-1792), to King George III (1738-1820), who bequeathed them to the Museum.[196] In 1772, two small mummies entered the Museum as part of the purchase of the collection of Sir William Hamilton (1731-1803). Hamilton was the British Ambassador in Naples and his collection was purchased for £8,410.[197] The constant presence of mummies in the institution's early years is highlighted by their inclusion in most purchases and gifts to the British Museum.

In 1767, an unpublished script for a theatre play which takes place inside the Museum, makes a reference to Lethieullier's mummy and reads:

> Nothing easier. Do you observe that small spring-handle there? It is the easiest thing in the world, believe me, to turn round a dead – ay, or a living mummy, if you can but find out, and touch and twirl the proper Spring.[198]

This small text suggests the presence of an apparatus to rotate the mummy. However, the word 'mummy' was regularly used to refer to the coffin, rather than the body. In addition, it could be easily deduced that this is a work of fiction, with no correspondence to the actual display at the Museum. However, the first coffin to enter the British Museum (today EA6695, 'wooden coffin of Irtyru') has been examined for the purpose of this thesis[199] and a series of holes on the top and bottom of the coffin has been

[196] Today British Museum EA6696.
[197] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, p.246, n16.
[198] Reverend Weedon Butler, *A Walk through the British Museum*, 1767. London, British Library, Western Manuscripts, Add MS 27276.
[199] To resolve the contention as to the existence of this rotating system, I initiated an examination of coffin EA6695, which took place on 6 June 2017. This is the first recent study of the coffin, which had only been photographed in the 1990s, but never fully investigated. As figures 2.9 and 2.10 demonstrate, there are evidences of holes in the coffin which are consistent with a system of rotation: one large hole would have

observed, which confirms that a device was attached to rotate the coffin [Fig.2.9 and 2.10]. This is corroborated in *The Surveyors and Workmen's Estimates vol. II* of 1783, in which a line concerns an operation 'to refix the Machinery for turning one of the mummies'.[200] This display strategy is interesting – and unique – because it actively engaged the visitor in the observation of the specimen on display; it also participated to the feeling of the mummy coming to life. I will return to this idea in chapter 7.

Fig.2.9: Coffin EA6695 at the British Museum. Photograph of author, use courtesy of the British Museum.

been used for the spring, while the smaller holes had screws. The painted surface – which has been restored on many occasions – indicates there was a plaque set on the surface, which would have kept the machinery together. The damage visible is likely caused by the removal of the machinery, at a time which is unknown. See, Taylor, 'The Collections of Egyptian Mummies', p.104.

[200] *The Surveyors and Workmen's Estimates vol. II* (1783), British Museum Archives.

Fig.2.10: Photograph of the holes at the bottom of coffin EA6695. Photograph of author, use courtesy of the British Museum.

MUMMIES AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

1753	2 small mummies	From Sloane's collection. Pseudo-mummies.
1756	1 mummy	Bequest of Colonel William Lethieullier. With entire coffin (EA6695).
1756	1 mummy	Donated by Pitt Lethieullier. Identified as EA6694.
1766	1 mummy	Presented by King George III. Identified as EA6696.
1772	2 small mummies	Acquired from collection of William Hamilton. Identified as EA6952 and EA6953.
1792	1 mummy	Provenance unknown. Total of four large mummies; two small mummies and two small pseudo-mummies in 1792.

Fig. 2.11: Mummies at the British Museum in the eighteenth century. © author.[201]

[201] This table, and the ones in chapter 3 and in the Appendix, have been drawn by the author, based on primary sources, the findings of this research, and the research of John H. Taylor on the British Museum mummy collection. See: Taylor, 'The collection of Egyptian mummies'.

2.4 Conclusion

The collections included in this chapter establish the collecting of Egyptian mummies in the eighteenth century, both in Paris and London. Egyptian mummies, exhumed from Saqqara principally, were brought back to Europe, to be included in cabinets, and to be observed and studied by individuals concerned with a number of different fields of inquiry. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Egyptian material culture was approached through various prisms which were largely influenced by occultism, a rejection of Egyptian artistic forms compared to the classical art and an understanding of ancient Egyptian history through the lens of a biblical narrative. However, the Egyptian mummy seemed fairly untouched by these narratives, although it was linked to equally imaginative interpretations relating to mummification practices.

It is evident from the collecting practices discussed in this chapter that the mummy was primarily placed with anatomy collections. On some occasions, the cabinet did not hold collections of antiquities – this is the case of de la Mosson's cabinet – but in most cases, the Egyptian mummy was placed with other human remains despite the presence of archaeological objects. The collection of Sir Hans Sloane is an example of such practice – it is all the more representative when considering the extensive collections of antiquities in Sloane's collection. The mummy, a collected object, was in fact, an anatomical object. The transfer of Sloane's collection to the British Museum changed this dynamic in the identification and classification of the Egyptian mummy: the mummy was then integrated into a collection of Egyptian material culture.

The presence of Egyptian material culture inside the British Museum has been dismissed as accidental. Moser noted that Egyptian objects were only used as a representation of a subsidiary, deviant form of art, compared to the classic style.[202] However, the numerous references to Egyptian mummies at the British Museum in newspapers and visitor accounts point towards a genuine interest in the mummy. In addition, no description of mummies used pejorative terms – rather, the mummy was described as a fascinating and curious object, pointing it out as an original, albeit unusual, object. The value in exploring a pre-Egyptology context is precisely in reconsidering the reception of Egyptian material culture and mummies prior to the French expedition to Egypt of 1798-1801. The role of the display in engagements with Egyptian mummies at

[202] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, especially pp.33-92.

this period is difficult to define, simply because the descriptions are scarce. Certainly, archival material provides greater insight into the reception of these display strategies, and thus Stephanie Moser's publication is an important contribution to probe these engagements.[203] What is evident from the early years of the museum, is that the Egyptian mummy was an important object, and that it was being re-assessed in terms of display: from an upright position, to a rotating coffin, it is evident that individuals within the museum were actively thinking the role of the mummy in representation of ancient Egypt.

This chapter discussed the presence of Egyptian mummies in cabinets, private collections, and museum settings, as the result of active interest in the ancient Egyptian culture. The next chapter considers the transformation of the collection, display and reception of Egyptian mummies in the context of a rapid development of the study of ancient Egypt prompted by the French Expedition to Egypt, and the development of collections of Egyptian material culture at the British Museum and at the Musée du Louvre.

[203] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, pp.33-64.

Chapter 3 – Mummy collections in the nineteenth century

In 1787, French traveller and politician Constantin-François Volney (1757-1820) published his *Travels Through Syria and Egypt*, in which he called for a better understanding of these regions which, according to him, formed the cradle of modern intellectual ideas and could illuminate contemporary practices.[204] He wrote:

> Those are the countries in which the greater part of the opinions that govern us at this day have had their origin. In them, those religious ideas took their rise, which have operated so powerfully on our private and public manners, on our laws, and our social state. It would be interesting, therefore, to be acquainted with the countries where they originated, the customs and manners which gave them birth, and the spirit and character of the nations from whom they have been received as sacred: to examine to what degree this spirit, these manners, and these customs, are altered or retained.[205]

Volney's most influential work, *Les Ruines ou Méditations sur les Révolutions des Empires* published in 1791, reiterated this urgency for a better understanding of the past.[206] In the narrative, the protagonist, during his journey to the East, is confronted with a ghostly vision of a condemned future: the banks of the Seine and the Thames have become ruins in the image of those of ancient civilisations; the metaphor signifies the fate of great nations falling into darkness.[207] Volney's narratives epitomised both the growing interest for Near Eastern cultures (especially ancient Egypt) and the strong political instability in France at the turn of the eighteenth century. One man became the symbol of both concerns: Napoléon Bonaparte (1769-1821). At the end of the eighteenth century, it was Napoleon's command of a French expedition to Egypt from 1798 to 1801 that created momentum for the study of ancient Egypt. The peculiar nature of the expedition as both

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[204] Constantin-François Volney, *Travels Through Syria and Egypt in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1785* (London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1788).
[205] Ibid., p.iv.
[206] Constantin-François Volney, *Les Ruines, ou Méditations sur les Révolutions des Empires* (Paris: Desenne, 1791).
[207] Assman noted that Egypt became the image of a 'liberation from one's own past which is no longer one's own […] Egypt must be remembered in order to know what lied in the past, and what must not be allowed to come back' in Jan Assman, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp.7-8. Wengrow discusses the link between Volney's writing and the French social instability: David Wengrow, *What Makes Civilization?: The Ancient Near East and the Future of the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.165.

a political and cultural enterprise led to a series of developments in the study of ancient Egypt and to the acquisition of material culture which would reframe European understandings of the civilisation. Ancient Egypt stood large on the intellectual and cultural scene and the decipherment of the ancient Egyptian script in 1822 accelerated the unlocking of key information about the civilisation.

A fundamental development in the status of Egyptian material culture in the first half of the nineteenth century was its transformation from being the subject of collecting – often in isolated collections, in France especially – to being composed of politically-charged objects. Museum collections of these objects were valued not simply as representations of ancient Egypt, they also embodied military, political and cultural success in an era of national competition. The British victory in Egypt and the seizing of artefacts from the French resulted in an influx of antiques and necessitated the expansion of the Egyptian galleries at the British Museum. In Paris, the political failure of the expedition was reversed by the cultural success of the work of the Commission des Sciences et des Arts, which published the *Description de l'Egypte*, among other works.[208] Jean-François Champollion (1790-1832), who played an instrumental role in deciphering the ancient Egyptian script, campaigned for the creation of France's first gallery of Egyptian material culture at the Louvre: the Musée Charles X.[209] By looking at the development of both museums' collections, this chapter maps the presence of Egyptian mummies in a context of strong political competition between the British and the French, as well as intense intellectual developments and exchanges. Ultimately, it asks the questions: were mummies affected by the fundamental political, intellectual and social changes brought about at the turn of the century? And was their place in museum collections reconsidered and revised?

This chapter opens with an overview of the Commission des Sciences et des Arts – the so-called Savants – during the French expedition to Egypt of 1798-1801, paying particular attention to individuals who engaged with research in Egypt and then became important figures on the French intellectual scene. This chapter then considers the re-organisation of the British Museum's collection of Egyptian material culture, in particular

[208] Edmé-François Jomard et al. (eds), *Description de l'Egypte ou Recueil des Observations et des Recherches qui ont été faites en Egypte pendant l'Expédition de l'Armée Française* (Paris: Imprimerie. C.-L. Panckoucke, 1821-1830).
[209] See the study of Guichard: Sylvie Guichard, *Notice Descriptive des Monuments Égyptiens du Musée Charles X* (Paris: Editions Khéops, 2013).

the creation of purpose-built galleries showcasing the growing importance of Egyptian objects, developments which are directly linked to a cultural power struggle with France. In a second part, this chapter considers in detail the creation of the first Egyptian galleries at the Musée du Louvre – the Musée Charles X – curated by Champollion, where I offer the first study of the Museum's mummy collection between 1827 and 1858.

3.1 The French expedition to Egypt

On 12 April 1798, the five members of the Directoire, the French government at the time, signed a decree ordering the formation of an Armée d' Orient, with the twenty-eight-year-old General Bonaparte in command.[210] The objective was first and foremost political: the French wanted to halt the expansion of Britain's Empire and to manage this enterprise successfully it needed to prevent British access to the sea. However, instead of a direct naval confrontation, intervention in Egypt was seen as meeting the same strategic goal of preventing British access to India. The expedition has been studied in considerable detail, in particular in recent works by Solé, Laissus and Brégeon.[211] The political dimension of the French expedition to Egypt is not considered here; rather this section introduces individuals who actively engaged in the study and collection of Egyptian material culture, and especially Egyptian mummies.[212]

Members of the Commission

The exceptional character of the expedition lies in it being a joint cultural and military enterprise. 151 men, who were selected for their intellectual and scientific abilities, were to be engaged in collecting data on both ancient and modern Egypt. Together they formed the Commission des Sciences et des Arts.[213] This section considers some individuals of

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[210] Napoléon Bonaparte, *Correspondance Inédite Officielle et Confidentielle de Napoléon Bonaparte*, volume 1 (Paris: C. L. F. Panckoucke, 1819), p.12.

[211] Robert Solé, *L'Egypte, Passion Française* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1997); Yves Laissus, *L'Egypte, Une Aventure Savante* (Paris: Fayard, 1998); Jean-Joël Brégeon, *L'Egypte de Bonaparte* (Paris: Editions Perrin, 2006); On the aftermath of the expedition, see: David Jeffreys (ed.), *Views of Ancient Egypt since Napoleon Bonaparte* (London: UCL Press, 2003).

[212] The Egyptian mummy has not previously been located and isolated in the context of the expedition, and I will return to the specific case of Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825) in chapter 7.

[213] On the individuals involved, see, for example: Patrice Bret, *Les Oubliés de Polytechnique en Egypte: Les Artistes Mécaniciens de la Commission des Sciences et des Arts* (Paris: Actes du 14e congrès national des Sociétés Savantes, 1990).

particular interest, to whom I will also return in the following chapters. Among these were the naturalist, Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1772-1844), the mathematician and physicist, Jean Baptiste Joseph Fourier (1768-1830), the artist, Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825), the mathematician, Gaspard Monge (1746-1818), and the chemist, Louis Berthollet (1748-1822).

Saint-Hilaire studied natural philosophy under naturalist and member of the Académie des Sciences, Mathurin Jacques Brisson (1723-1806), and attended the College de France and classes at the Jardin des Plantes.[214] In 1793, Saint-Hilaire was appointed to the chair of zoology as one of the twelve professors at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle. He entered into correspondence with French naturalist, Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), in 1794 and together they wrote five *Mémoires* on natural history. It was Saint-Hilaire who provided Cuvier with Egyptian mummies for his personal research.[215]

Fourier played a role in promoting the French Revolution and served a local Revolutionary Committee.[216] He was one of the scientific advisors accompanying Bonaparte to Egypt and shortly upon arriving in Egypt he was appointed secretary of the Institut d'Egypte and Governor of Lower Egypt. After the French capitulation to British and Ottoman forces in September 1801, Fourier returned to France to occupy the post of professor at the Ecole Polytechnique before being appointed Prefect of the department of Isère in Grenoble by Napoléon. Fourier was also an editor of the *Description de l'Egypte*.[217] In 1817 he was elected to the Académie des Sciences, becoming the Perpetual Secretary in 1822. As a result of his contributions to Egyptian archaeology, he was also elected to the Académie Française and the Académie de Médecine in 1826.

Fourier had met another mathematician during his years at the Ecole Polytechnique, who also embarked on Napoléon's expedition: Gaspard Monge.[218] Monge was an instructor of physics at the Ecole Royale du Génie in Paris, and in 1780 became a member of the Académie des Sciences, where he developed a friendship with another member of the French campaign, Louis Berthollet. The French Revolution changed the

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[214] Théophile Cahn, *La Vie et l'Œuvre d'Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire* (Paris: Presse Universitaire de France, 1962); Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, *Vie, Travaux et Doctrine Scientifique d'Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire* (Paris: Chez P. Bertrand, 1847).
[215] Toby A. Appel, *The Cuvier-Geoffroy Debate: French Biology in the Decades before Darwin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
[216] On Fourier: François Arago, *Joseph Fourier* ([n. pl.], CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016); Jean Dhombres, *Fourier. Créateur de la Physique-Mathématique* (Paris: Belin, 1998).
[217] Jomard et al., *Description de l'Egypte*.
[218] François Arago, *Gaspard Monge* ([n. pl.], CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).

direction of Monge's career and he became Minister of the Navy and the Colonies for a year, from 1792 to 1793. Monge was instrumental in the creation of the Ecole Normale and the Ecole Polytechnique where he taught descriptive geometry, a discipline for which he is credited as the instigator. From May 1796 to October 1797, Monge was in Italy with Berthollet to select some of the paintings taken as war tributes, and there, he became familiar with Napoléon. Monge was later recruited by Bonaparte into the Commission des Sciences et des Arts, and went on to preside over the creation of the Institut d'Egypte.

In addition to these few men, the expedition also included forty-five engineers, a dozen mechanists and balloonists, a dozen doctors and pharmacists, and thirty geometers, astronomers, chemists, zoologists, botanists, and mineralogists. In contrast to those senior participants mentioned above, most members of the Commission were in their early twenties. In fact, some of the professors of the prestigious schools such as the Ecole Polytechnique had brought with them promising students. Informed by classical sources and travellers' accounts from the preceding centuries, they were unprepared for the realities of Egypt. One French scholar noted that they 'were looking for the city of the ptolemies, the library, the seat of human knowledge. And [they] found instead ruins, barbarism, poverty and degradation.'[219]

The Savants worked under unusual circumstances: the army had come first and foremost to lead a military campaign. They departed Toulon on 19 May 1798, and stopped in Malta in June, before Alexandria in July 1798. This month, the French army had two of its most important battles. At the so-called 'Battle of the Pyramids', which was in fact located ten miles from the pyramids, at Embabba, and which occurred just three weeks after the arrival of the French troops in Alexandria, the French victory established Napoleon's dominance over the Mamelukes. However, ten days after this victory, the entire French fleet was destroyed by the British under Admiral Horatio Nelson (1758-1805). With the sinking of the French flagship, the *Orient*, the expedition lost its scientific instruments, surveying equipment and supplies. However, the French were on a long campaign: after the naval defeat, the campaign remained on land and the Savants remained in Egypt. The botanists set up their experiments in the garden of Passim Bey's palace and here also Saint-Hilaire established chemistry laboratories and collected mineral, botanical, and zoological specimens. However, following the French defeat, the

[219] Robert Tignor, *Egypt: A Short History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), p.198.

British army offered an ultimatum: the Savants and the French army could return home unarmed in exchange for the entirety of the material culture they had collected. Offended by the offer, Saint-Hilaire proposed destroying the entirety of the collections, rather than to bequest them to the British, comparing such act to 'burning a library of Alexandria.'[220] In the end, part of the collection was retained by the French, though the largest proportion was seized by the British troops including what would become its most important piece, the Rosetta Stone.[221]

The return from Egypt

Individuals engaged in the Commission des Sciences et des Arts developed an extensive knowledge of ancient and contemporary Egypt, and they also expanded their field of practice. The investigations on ancient and modern Egypt were disseminated through various publications, as personal accounts, scholarly research in a number of fields, and more substantial publications aimed at a wider audience. Among the personal accounts was a series of recollections by Colonel Chalbrand (1773-1854), published in 1855 after his death.[222] There is little information on Colonel Chalbrand other than his military rank during the campaign, but his memoires show that he was interested in the collection of artefacts and the customs and art of the countries where he was stationed. Amongst the objects he brought back from Egypt, was a collection of Egyptian mummies. The account reads:

> He had brought back from all the places he had visited objects of curiosity from which he had formed a museum. Egypt mostly had provided the most complete and rich part of his collection; he had allotted to it an entire room of his house. One could see there, statues, some mummies in perfect condition […] Most of these objects originated from the excavations in the tombs of Thebes.[223]

Other accounts by members of the expedition show the availability of the mummy as a souvenir of the campaign. This illustrates the intensive ongoing excavations of

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[220] Saint-Hilaire, *Vie, Travaux et Doctrine Scientifique,* p.107.
[221] M. L. Bierbrier, 'The acquisition by the British Museum of antiquities discovered during the French invasion of Egypt' in W. V. Davies (ed.), *Studies in Egyptian Antiquities. A Tribute to T. G. H. James* (London: British Museum Press, 1999), pp.111-113.
[222] Chalbrand, *Les Français en Egypte ou Souvenirs des Campagnes d'Egypte et de Syrie par un Officier de l'Expédition* (Tours: A. Mame, [1855] 1955).
[223] Ibid., p.2, author's translation.

Egyptian sites at this time. Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825), who played a substantial role upon his return and who is best known for his role as the director of the Louvre, attested to the regularity of these excavations.[224] In his publication *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte*, he indicated the existence of a market for Egyptian mummies both for the resin (or *mumia*) found inside them, and for the treasures they might contain. He noted:

> I was brought mummy fragments: I would promise anything to have some complete and intact ones; but the avarice of the Arabs deprived me of this satisfaction: they sell in Cairo the resin found in their wombs and the skull of these mummies and nothing can prevent them from taking these out; then the fear of giving one that might contain some treasures (they never found any in similar excavations) makes them systematically break the wooden envelop, and tear apart those made of painted canvas covering the bodies in rich embalming.[225]

Upon his return from Egypt, Denon published accounts of his travels, which received immediate success.[226] Denon also established his own private cabinet of Egyptian artefacts in Paris, to which I will return in chapter 7. Another private collection set up in the aftermath of the expedition belonged to Giuseppe Passalacqua (1797-1865) who had set up his cabinet in Paris, and who on multiple occasions engaged in the study and collection of Egyptian mummies.[227] This cabinet – together with those of Denon and Frédéric Cailliaud (1787-1869) – formed the most important private collections of Egyptian artefacts in Paris in the first half of the nineteenth century. The central place of Egyptian mummies in these collections reflected both individual interests and the growing attraction and availability of Egyptian mummies.

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[224]On Dominique Vivant Denon, see: Philippe Sollers, *Le Cavalier du Louvre. Vivant Denon (1747-1825)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997); Marie-Anne Dupuy (ed.), *Dominique Vivant Denon. L'œil de Napoléon* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1999).
[225] Dominique Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte* (Paris: P. Didot l'ainé, 1802), p.329, author's translation.
[226] Denon, *Voyage*; Dominique Vivant Denon, *Monuments des Arts du Dessin* (Paris: B. Denon, 1829).
[227] I will return to this collection in chapter 7.

The Description de l'Egypte

The tremendous talent, skills and thoroughness of the Savants resulted in a monumental project: the *Description de l'Egypte,* edited by Jomard.[228] In February 1802, the Imperial Press began the publication of the cultural and scientific research undertaken in Egypt. The volumes included 837 copper-engravings and more than 3,000 illustrations, distributed over three main themes: 'Antiquités', 'Etat Moderne' and 'Histoire Naturelle'. The *Description* described the many antiquities and sites uncovered, living Egyptian culture and the flora and fauna, thus creating a unique ethnographic and geographic compendium. Both animal and human mummies were included in the *Description*. Four occurrences of human mummies were featured in the plates, in the section 'Thèbes Hypogées':

1. 'bras et bandelette de momie' (arm and wrapping of a mummy) [Fig.3.1].
2. 'profil et face d'une tête de momie d'homme' (profile and face of a male mummy head) [Fig.3.2].
3. 'profil et face d'une tête de momie de femme' (profile and face of a female mummy head) [Fig.3.3].
4. 'momie de femme' (female mummy) [Fig.3.4].

It is unlikely that these four illustrations represented all of the mummy specimens brought back from Egypt at the time. These objects will be returned to in later chapters.[229]

[228] Jomard et al, *Description de l'Egypte.*
[229] On the reception of the *Description de l'Egypte* in Britain, see: Andrew Bednarski, *Holding Egypt: Tracing the Reception of the 'Description de l'Egypte' in Nineteenth Century Great Britain* (London: Golden House Publications, 2005).

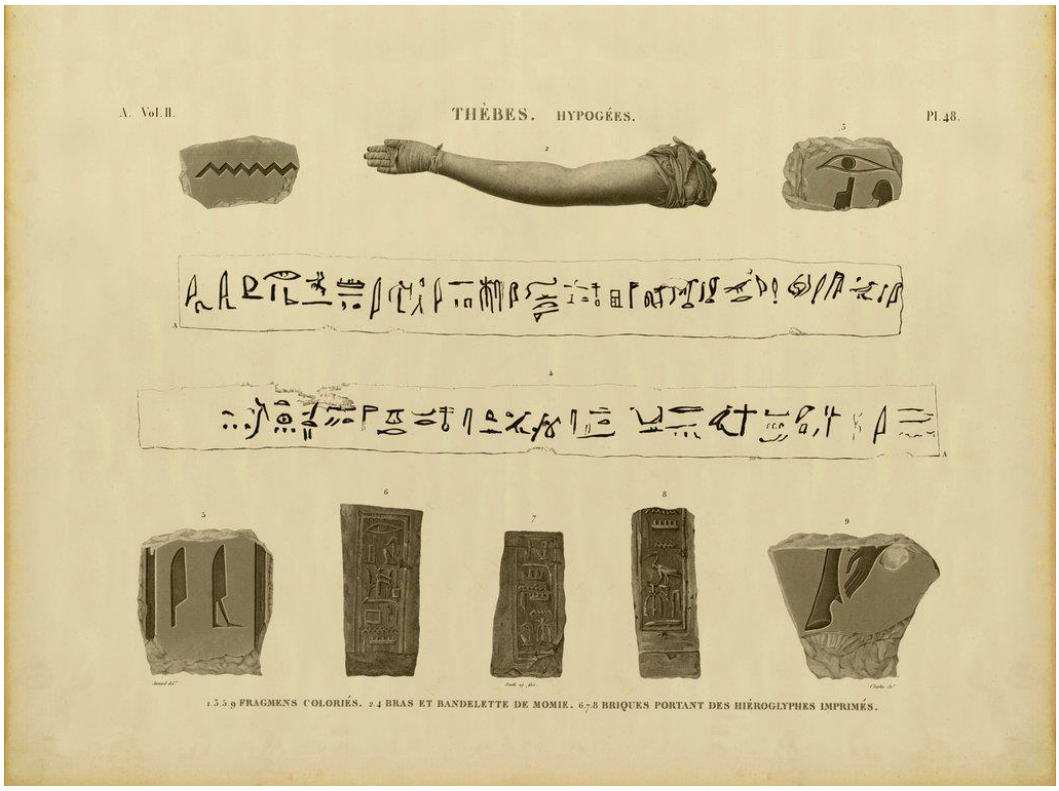

Fig.3.1: ‘Bras et bandelette de momie’ in Edmé-François Jomard et al. (eds), *Description de l’Egypte* (Paris: Imprimerie C.-L. Panckoucke, 1821-1830).

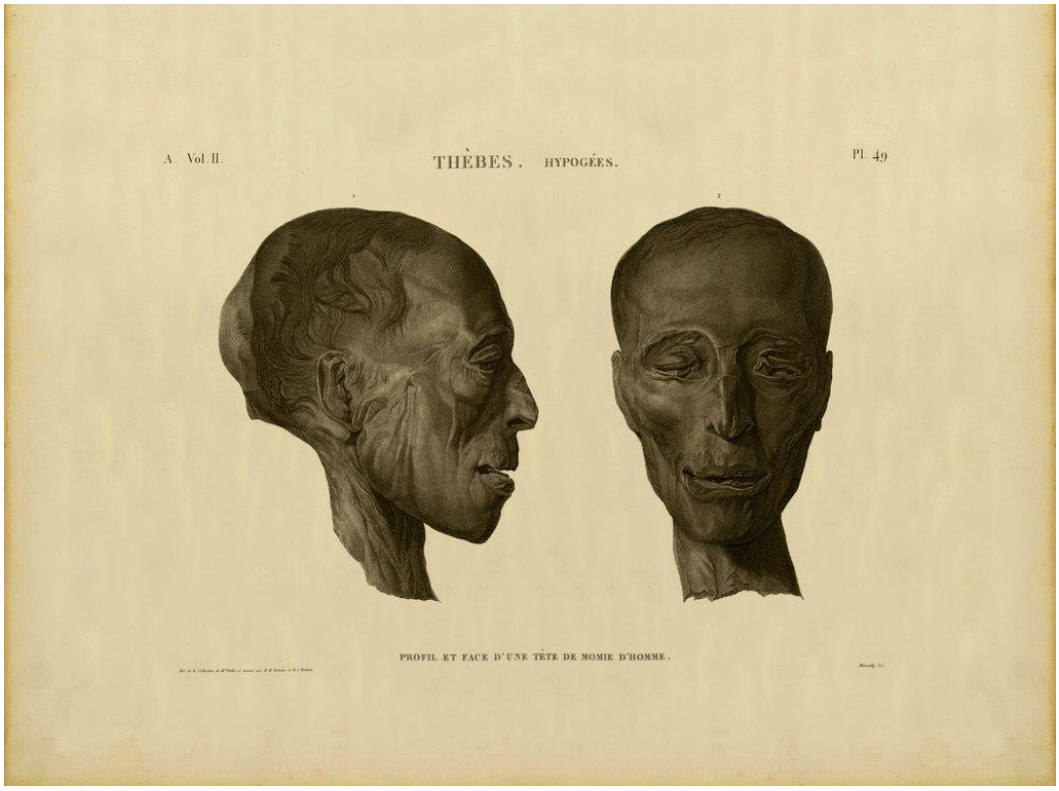

Fig.3.2: ‘Profil et face d'une tête de momie d’homme’ in Edmé-François Jomard et al. (eds), *Description de l’Egypte* (Paris: Imprimerie C.-L. Panckoucke, 1821-1830).

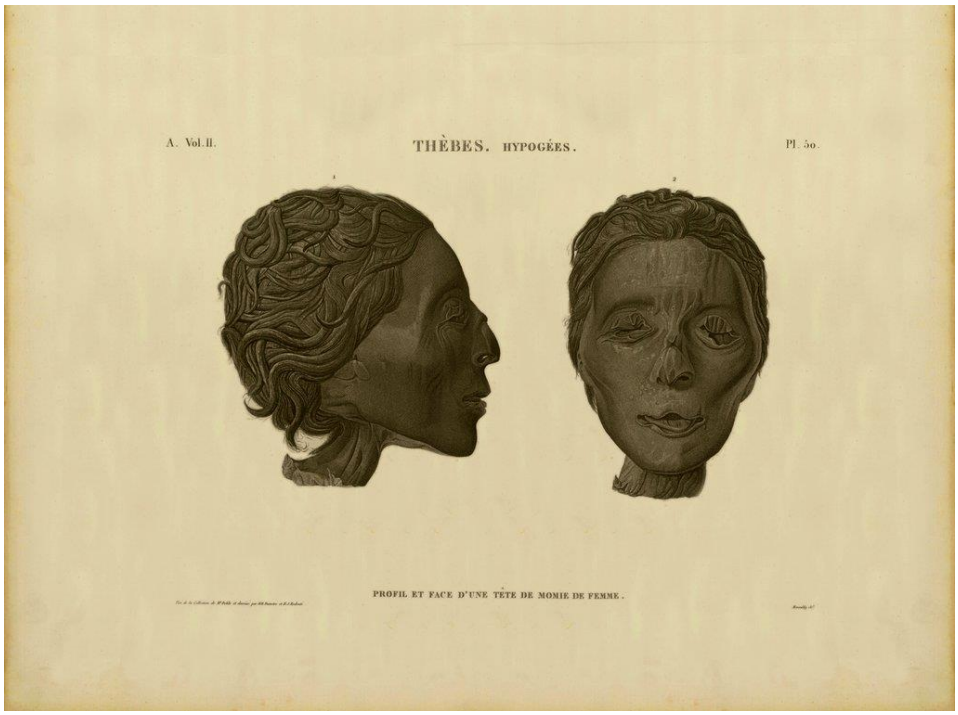

Fig.3.3: ‘Profil et face d'une tête de momie de femme’ in Edmé-François Jomard et al. (eds), *Description de l’Egypte* (Paris: Imprimerie C.-L. Panckoucke, 1821-1830).

Fig.3.4: ‘Momie de femme’ in Edmé-François Jomard et al. (eds), *Description de l’Egypte* (Paris: Imprimerie C.-L. Panckoucke, 1821-1830).

3.2 The British Museum in the first half of the nineteenth century

The artefacts confiscated from the French army arrived in London in 1802. Upon their arrival, the colossal objects had no designated space and were temporarily stored in the Museum's courtyard; the Rosetta Stone was deposited in the library of the Society of Antiquaries.[230] This seizure, as well as growing British interest in the material culture of ancient Egypt, led to the creation of a suit of purpose-built galleries – collectively known as the Townley Gallery – which were to include the Townley Marbles and the new Egyptian artefacts. The creation and development of the new galleries have been mapped in considerable detail by Moser, and therefore this section considers only the Egyptian mummies.[231] Using a combination of archival material held in the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the British Museum, object catalogues from the sale of collections, and the important work of Taylor, it is possible to map to some extent the collection, display and evolution of the mummy collection at the British Museum in this period.[232]

The new suit of galleries was opened on 3 June 1808 with two of the thirteen rooms dedicated to Egyptian material culture: the main Egyptian gallery was occupied by the larger sculptures, while the other Egyptian room was composed of the objects previously exhibited in the main building. Moser noted that, while attention to thematic arrangement was given to the classical material, the Egyptian antiquities did not benefit from any thematic or contextual presentation.[233] The visiting arrangements to the museum changed slightly in the early years of the nineteenth century and, in particular, new rules were introduced in 1807 which made it possible to view the antiquities galleries separately from the rest of the museum. As Moser pointed out 'it signified a wider recognition that a community of scholars with a specialist interest in antiquities existed in Britain.'[234]

The *Synopsis of the Collections* of 1808 indicates the presence of an Egyptian mummy in these new displays.[235] The entry of the mummy is noted in the *Synopsis* as 'Egyptian mummy with its coffin sent to England by E. Wortley Montagu […] presented

[230] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, p.73.
[231] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*.
[232] John H. Taylor, 'The collection of Egyptian mummies at the British Museum' in Alexandra Fletcher, Daniel Antoine and J.D. Hill (eds), *Regarding the Dead* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 2014), pp.103-114.
[233] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, p. 76.
[234] Ibid., p.84.
[235] British Museum, *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum* (London: Printed by Cox, Son and Bayliss, 1808), volume held by the British Museum Central Library.

to the museum by His majesty.'[236] It will be recalled that this mummy, and the Sakkara mummy bequeathed by Lethieullier, which makes an appearance in the 1827 *Synopsis*, are both old specimens dating from the previous century.[237] Therefore, the new exhibition of 1808 did not show any more recently acquired mummies.

New acquisitions

In 1823, the British Museum acquired the collection of Henry Salt (1780-1827). Born in Lichfield on 14 June 1780, he had trained as a painter before being appointed in 1802 as secretary to the Viscount Valentia (1770-1844).[238] Both men travelled for four years from 1802 to 1806, from India to the Red Sea and Ethiopia. Salt's paintings of their journey were later incorporated into Valentia's *Voyages and Travels to India*.[239] This journey initiated a long series of travels for Salt, who embarked on a diplomatic career. In 1815, he took a key position in British-Egyptian relations as British Consul General in Cairo and subsequently engaged in the collection of Egyptian material culture, demonstrating an earnest interest for the ancient Egyptian civilisation as illustrated by his effort to learn the ancient Egyptian script. Salt's collecting was aided by the efforts of his two main agents, Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778-1823) and Giovanni d'Athanasi (1798-1854).

Salt was in direct competition with the French representative in Egypt, Consul General Bernardino Drovetti (1775-1852), who held this position from 1810 to 1815 and 1820 to 1829.[240] Drovetti amassed three large collections: the first one was offered to the King of France, but rejected and instead purchased in 1824 by the King of Sardinia for the Turin Museum; the second was purchased in 1827 by Charles X for his eponymous gallery at the Louvre; and the third was purchased in 1836 by the Berlin Museum. Salt

[236] Ibid., p.xxvi-vii.
[237] British Museum, *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, 28th edition (London: Printed by G. Woodfall, 1827).
[238] C. E. Bosworth, 'Henry Salt, Consul in Egypt 1816-1827 and Pioneer Egyptologist', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 57 (1974), pp.69-91; Deborah Manley, *Henry Salt: Artist, Traveller, Diplomat, Egyptologist* (Faringdon: Libri Publications Ltd, 2001).
[239] George Viscount of Valentia, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt* (London: Printed for William Miller by W. Bulmer and Co., 1809).
[240] Sylvie Guichard [Bernardino Drovetti], *Lettres de Bernardino Drovetti, Consul de France à Alexandrie (1803-1830)* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003); Giorgio Seita and Valerio Giacoletto Papas, *Bernardino Drovetti: La Storia di un Piemontese in Egitto* (Aosta: Le château, 2007).

noted that while he was in Egypt, Drovetti was 'buying up everything to complete a collection upon which he had been engaged for some years.'[241]

Fig.3.5: Mummy of a young man, EA6713. Purchased from Henry Salt's first collection in 1823. © Trustees of the British Museum.

[241] John James Halls [Henry Salt], *The life and Correspondence of Henry Salt* (London: R. Bentley, 1834), p.472

In 1835, following Salt's death, the collection (known as 'third Salt collection') was sold at auction at Sotheby's.[242] The catalogue emphasised the exceptional number of papyri, tablets and mummies in Salt's third collection. Of the mummies in particular, it stated:

> The mummies are of various dates, and belong to persons of different ranks. They are all in the most perfect preservation, and will excite great interest in all persons acquainted with, or desirous of becoming acquainted with, the most extraordinary people of antiquity.[243]

Separate lots containing Egyptian mummies were put up for auction. On the first day, lot 149 was 'the mummy of a small child' and lot 150, 'the mummy of a female of high quality'. The latter was accompanied by a lengthy description in the catalogue and the following note: 'This is one of the most curious and interesting mummies extant, and doubtless contains all the numerous rings as represented on the finger; and other beautiful ornaments.'[244] On the second day, the catalogue included lot 298, 'the mummy of a priest', and on the third day, lot 285, the 'head of a female Graeco-Egyptian mummy', and lot 438, 'the mummy of a female.' On the fourth day of sale, lot 852, 'the mummy of a royal personage in two cases', received a special comment in the introduction which stated that it is 'perhaps the most magnificent specimen ever seen in Europe of the splendour with which the ancient Egyptians decorated the bodies of those whom they more particularly reverenced and respected. […] This mummy is perhaps the finest thing in the collection.'[245] Other lots of Egyptian mummies included: lot 722, 'a Graeco-Egyptian mummy', lot 986, 'the mummy of a priest', lot 1125, 'a graeco-Egyptian male mummy', lot 1269, 'the mummy of a dancing girl', lot 1270, 'a Graeco-Egyptian male mummy.'[246] This auction catalogue demonstrates the extent of Salt's mummy collection, which was unparalleled at the time.

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[242] Sotheby and Son, *Catalogue of the Highly Interesting and Magnificent Collection of Egyptian Antiquities, The Property of the Late Henry Salt, Esq. which will be Sold by Auction* (London: printed by J. Davy, 1835). AN: there is no page number in this catalogue.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.

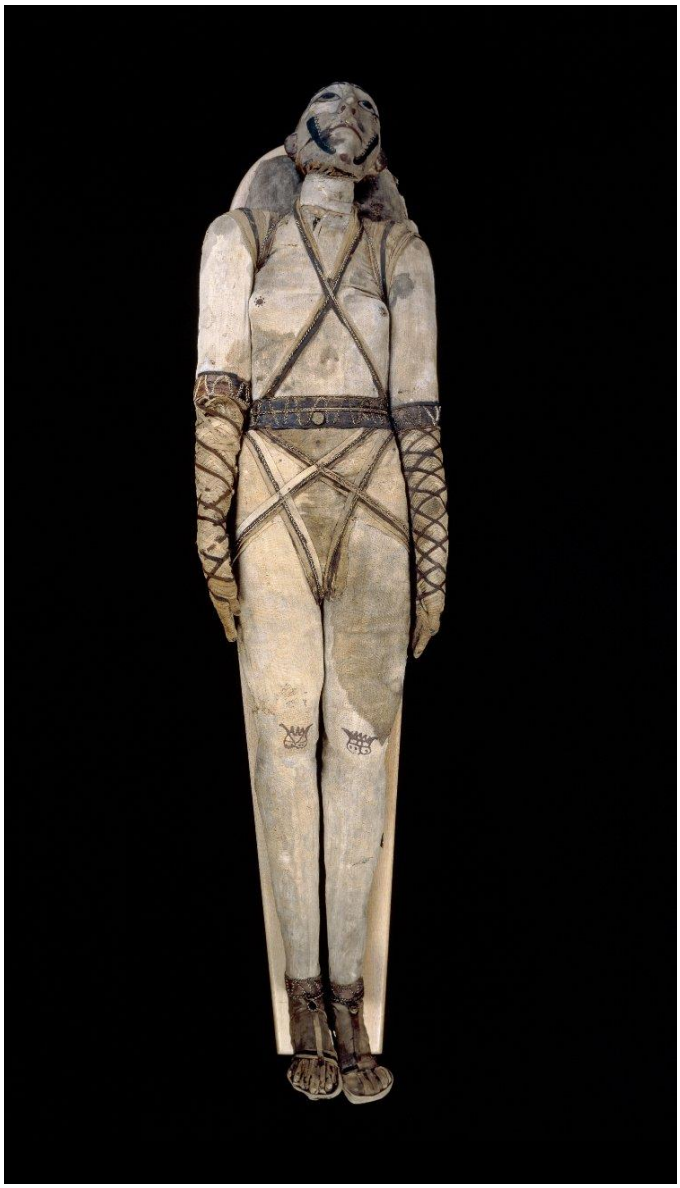

Fig.3.6: Mummy of a man, EA6704. Purchased through Sotheby's from the third Salt Collection in 1835. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Other substantial collections of Egyptian material were also collected in the 1830s, including that of Giovanni d'Athanasi and Joseph Sams (1784-1860). Sams's collection was offered to the Trustees of the British Museum for £4,000 in 1833 and was eventually acquired for less than this.[247] The collection included over two thousand objects and six Egyptian mummies.[248] A report on Sams's collection by the Trustees for the Treasury, written when the collection was under consideration, remarked on the mummies in the collection, stating:

[247] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, p.132.
[248] Ibid.

Six different specimens of Egyptian mummies, with cases finely decorated; and an extraordinary Sarcophagus of polished marble, the top beautifully sculptured, partly as a human figure. This fine monument, may be compared in interest and in value, to the one for which alone, Sir John Soane gave £2,000. It is not so large but has its cover, and a mummy within it, in fine preservation, neither of which the other possesses.[249]

Fig.3.7: Mummy of Cleopatra, daughter of Candace. From Sams's collection. British Museum EA6707. © Trustees of the British Museum.

[249] Ibid., p.136.

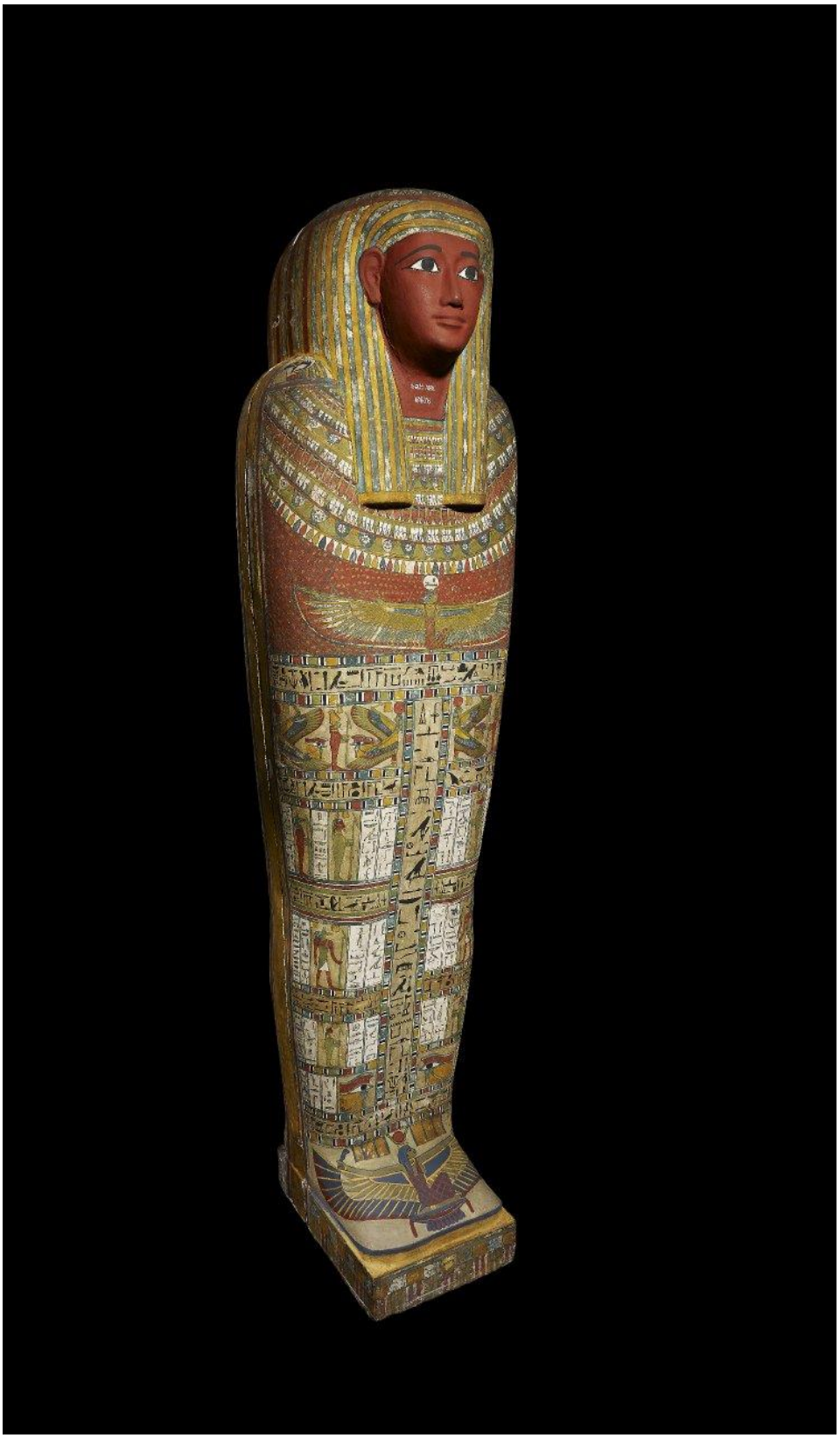

Fig.3.8: Coffin of Penamunnebnesuttawy, EA6676. Acquired from Sams's collection by the British Museum in 1834. Previously attributed to third Salt collection (erroneous, see note Salt on the coffin). © Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig.3.9: Mummy of Penamunnebnesuttawy, EA6676. Acquired from Sams's collection by the British Museum in 1834. Previously attributed to third Salt collection (erroneous, see note Salt on the coffin). © Trustees of the British Museum.

The New Egyptian Room

To accommodate the new additions to the collection, a new Egyptian gallery was established in 1837. Three years earlier, the Egyptian sculptures had been moved to the Smirke Gallery, where far more space and prominence could be given to these objects. This in turn gave more space to the smaller objects that were now displayed in the new Egyptian Room, on the upper floor.

On 10 November 1838, the *Penny Magazine* reserved a large section for a review of this new space, entitled 'New Egyptian room, British Museum' [Fig.3.10].[250] The article began with an introduction on the ancient Egyptian civilisation, noting that 'of the many pursuits which the talents and enterprise of the present day have created, few have prosecuted with more ardour, or have become more popular, than those connected with the study of the history and manners of the ancient Egyptians.'[251] On the new gallery in particular, the article noted:

> It is situated at the northern portion of the building, immediately over the Egyptian Saloon, through which we pass to gain the staircase leading to the new apartment. It was constructed from the designs of Sir R. Smirke, and was first thrown open last Christmas. As will be seen from the engraving (which is taken from the north side, looking towards the Etruscan apartment), it is extremely chaste and elegant in design, and is well lighted from above.[252]

It was within this space that the new mummy acquisitions were displayed with one of the coffins fixed with pivots to allow its rotation:

> In the centre of the room are two glass cases, containing in the lower portions the outer cases or coffins of two mummies, which may be seen in other parts of the room. These coffins are covered within and without with paintings and hieroglyphics having reference to the deceased; and, being upon pivots at the ends, are so placed that both the interior and the whole of the exterior may be seen.
>
> In the glass-cases, seen in the cut, on either side of the central cases, are arranged mummies, showing the different stages of the process: some are merely covered

[250] Anon., *Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, 10 November (1838), p.436-437.
[251] Ibid., p.436.
[252] Ibid.

with the first layer of cloth; others are more extensively bandaged and covered with bituminous matter; some are seen enclosed in the first pasteboard or thin wooden case, and others show this first covering enclosed in another of similar construction; while in adjoining cases are shown the outer boxes or coffins in which the body was conveyed to the tomb.[253]

It is clear that these displays were strongly didactic, showing all the stages of mummification and burial from body to sarcophagus. There may not have been extensive labelling – there is no mention of what accompanied the objects – but the explanatory intention of the display is very clear. Therefore, these objects were not just trophies, they were evidential and educational.

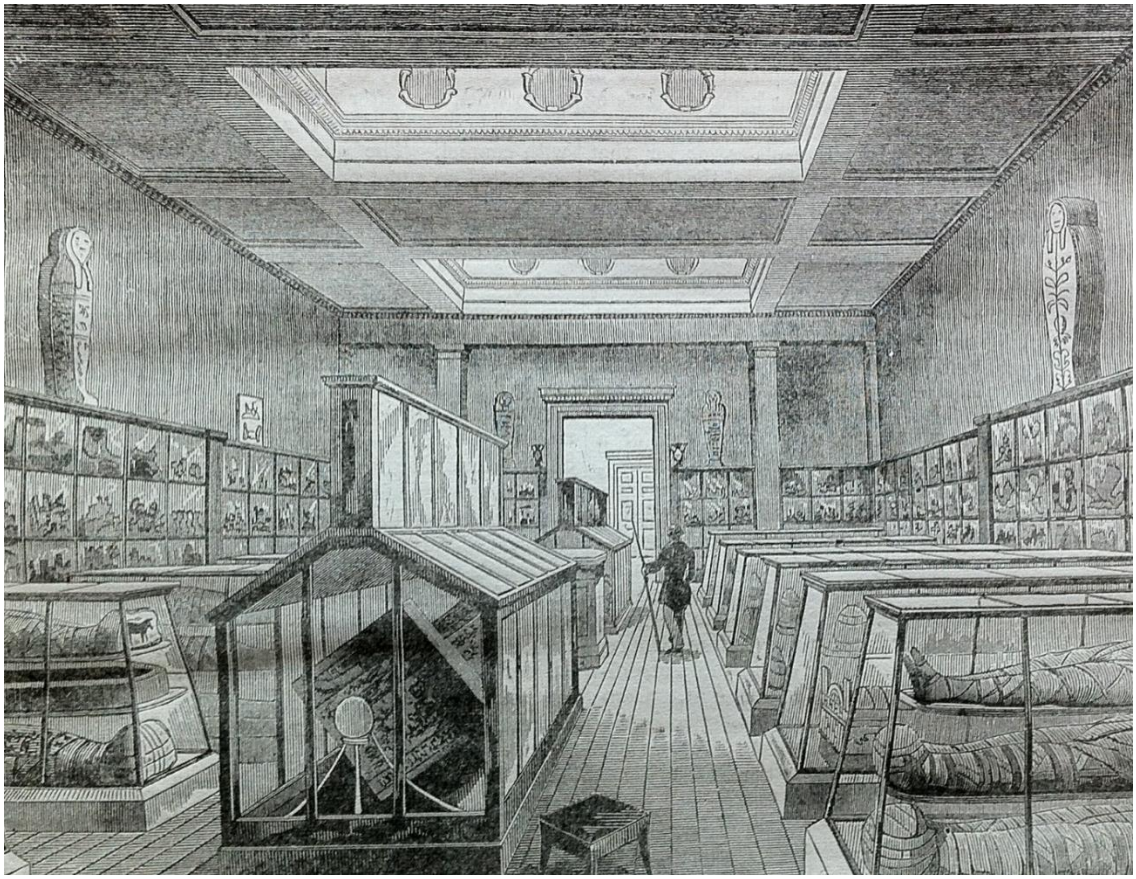

Fig.3.10: 'New Egyptian Room, looking South' in Anon., *Penny Magazine*, 10 November 1838.

[253] Ibid., p. 437.

An engraving from *The Illustrated London News* of 13 February 1847 presented another view of the Egyptian Room, showing that very little change, other than the visible presence of an Egyptianising frieze, had taken place over the course of the previous decade [Fig.3.11].[254]

Fig.3.11: 'Egyptian Room' in Anon., *The Illustrated London News*, 13 February 1847.

By 1840, the *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum* listed over thirty Egyptian mummies displayed in the galleries, and the extent of the collection is visible in the 1847 engraving [Fig.3.11].[255] In 1854, the Egyptian rooms were revamped, with little effect on the display of Egyptian mummies. The engravings of 1838, 1847, and the first photographs from 1875 [Fig.3.12] present common features: Egyptian mummies are displayed in free standing cases in the middle of the room. The engravings present mummies on three shelves, one above the other. However, in the 1875 photographs mummies are displayed either in-between the top and bottom of sarcophagi, or on a shelf above a closed sarcophagus. The spatial location of the mummies, and their quantity,

[254] Anon., *The Illustrated London News*, 13 February (1847).
[255] British Museum, *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum*, 40th edition (London: 1840).

undeniably attracted the attention of visitors. *The Illustrated London News* reported in 1847:

> But here, as everywhere, last of all comes death; and the floor of the room is mostly occupied with plate-glass cases of mummies, and various emblems of the painted pageantry to which mortals have fondly clung in all ages of the world. Here are coffins, sepulchral cones, and other ornaments, scarabeo, amulets, &c. The casts illustrate the heroic life of Egypt, just as the contents of the cases illustrate the social life. This room has usually crowds of visitors.[256]

In fact, when *The Illustrated News* rolled off the presses for the first time in May 1842, Egypt appeared immediately in the publication. Evidently, Egypt had become a subject of great interest, and had transformed from a topic of private interest – within closed circles – into a public subject. The growing number of Egyptian mummies on display at the British Museum was one factor that generated interest in ancient Egypt; concurrently, active research and competition developed between Britain and France.

Fig.3.12: Photograph of the mummy room at the British Museum around 1875. © 2017, The Trustees of the British Museum / Frederick York.

[256] Anon., *Illustrated London News*, 13 February (1847), p.108.

MUMMIES AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

1753	2 small mummies	From Sloane's collection. Pseudo-mummies
1756	1 mummy	Bequest of Colonel William Lethieullier.
1756	1 mummy	Donated by Pitt Lethieullier. EA6694?
1766	1 mummy	Sent from Egypt by Edward Wortley Montagu. EA6696.
1772	2 small mummies	EA6952 and EA6953. Acquired in 1772 from Hamilton's collection?
1792	1 large mummy	Unknown. By 1792, 4 large mummies + 2 small mummies + Sloane's fakes.
1823	6 mummies	Purchased from Salt's collection in 1823.Two are identified: Mummy of a young man EA6713; and EA6707.
1831	1 child mummy	Acquired from unnamed source
1834	6 mummies	Purchased from Sams's collection in 1834. Two are identified: Mummy of a man EA6676. 26th/25th Dynasty; and EA6662.
1835	6 mummies	Acquired through auction from Salt's third collection in 1835. Five are identified: EA6665, EA6679, EA6704, EA6711, EA6715. Sixth mummy is EA6680.
1835	1 mummy	EA6692. Purchased in Egypt from Athanasi.
1836	1 mummy	EA6952. Presented by the Earl of Bessborough.
1839	6 mummies	Purchased from Anastasi's collection in 1839. Five are identified: 'Mummy of a man EA6714. Roman period.' And EA6669, EA6673, EA6682, EA6699. Sixth mummy destroyed after damage in 1843.

Fig.3.13: Mummies at the British Museum in the first half of the nineteenth century. © Author.

3.3 The Musée Charles X

This section maps the creation of the Musée Charles X in Paris in the first half of the nineteenth century, the first set of galleries of Egyptian material culture at the Louvre. The history of the Musée Charles X has been explored in detail by Guichard in the re-edition of Jean-François Champollion's *Notice Descriptive*, in addition to the work of Buhe who has transcribed Champollion's inventories, and translated these into maps and

visuals.[257] However, Egyptian mummies – their collection, and ways they were embedded in curatorial practices – have never been considered in isolation as objects of material culture, and therefore, this section maps the collection of mummies in the early years of the Museum.

In 1824, Champollion published his *Précis du Système Hiéroglyphique* which fundamentally transformed the understanding of the ancient Egyptian script.[258] On the last page of the *Précis*, Champollion expressed the need for a substantial Egyptian gallery in Paris, writing:

> That I may be allowed, finally, to express a wish that all the friends of science will undoubtedly support: that in the midst of the general tendency of minds for solid studies, a prince, sensible to the glory of letters, may bring together in the capital of his state the most important relics of ancient Egypt, those on which are unrelentingly inscribed the religious, civil, and military history, that an enlightened protector of archaeological studies may accumulate in a great collection the means to effectively explore this new historical mine, still almost virgin territory, to add to the annals of mankind the pages that time seemed to have stolen from us. May this new glory, for any institution eminently useful is also eminently glorious, be reserved to our great country.[259]

Jean-François Champollion was born in 1790 in Figeac, France, the last of seven children.[260] Due to absent parental figures, he was brought up by his elder brother Joseph-Jacques Champollion-Figeac. In 1802, he enrolled at the school of Abbé Dussert where his proficiency with languages first became evident through his study of Latin and Greek, and then Hebrew, Arabic and other Semitic languages. His skills came to the attention of Joseph Fourier, who had taken the post of prefect of Grenoble upon his return from the

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[257] Guichard, *Notice Descriptive*; Champollion, *Notice Descriptive*; Elizabeth Buhe, 'Sculpted Glyphs: Egypt and the Musée Charles X', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, volume 13, issue 1 (2014). On the Musée Charles X, see also: Christiane Aulanier, *Histoire du Palais et du Musée du Louvre. Le Musée Charles X et le Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes* (Paris: Musées Nationaux, 1961); Bénédicte Georges, 'La formation du musée égyptien au Louvre', *La Revue de l'Art, Ancien et Moderne*, volume 43 (1923), pp.161-172 and 275-293.

[258] Jean-François Champollion, *Précis du Système Hiéroglyphique des Anciens Egyptiens* (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1824). This work resulted from the document: Jean-François Champollion, *Lettre à Monsieur Dacier Relative à l'Alphabet des Hiéroglyphes Phonétiques* (Paris: F. Didot Père et Fils, 1822).

[259] Champollion, *Précis*, p.400, author's translation.

[260] Aimé Champollion-Figeac, *Les deux Champollion, Leur vie et Leurs Œuvres* (Grenoble: X. Drevet, 1887); Michel Dewatcher, *Champollion, un Scribe pour l'Egypte* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990); Michel Dewatcher and Alain Fouchard (eds.), *L'Egyptologie et les Champollion* (Grenoble: Presse Universitaire de Grenoble, 1994).

French campaign in Egypt. The encounter forged Champollion's interest in the Egyptian civilisation, while Fourier became an ally and supporter of Champollion's endeavours throughout his life. The life trajectory of Champollion, through his education, connections and object acquisitions, transformed France's role in the emerging scene of Egyptian archaeology and confirms the political and intellectual role attained by individuals who researched the ancient Egyptian culture.

The creation of an Egyptian section at the Musée du Louvre was the result of a royal decree by Charles X, signed on 15 May 1826.[261] The decree ordered the restructuring of the Musée des Antiques, which would thereafter be divided into two sections, the first covering Greek, Roman and Medieval art, the second Egyptian and Oriental art, under the curatorship of Champollion; the decree stated that 'Mr. Champollion Le Jeune is appointed curator of the monuments that form the second division of the Musée des Antiques.'[262]

It is on the occasion of the opening of the new galleries on 15 December 1827 that Champollion published a guide, *Notice Descriptive des Monumens Egyptiens du Musée Charles X*.[263] The publication of 166 pages reveals the original content of the first Egyptian gallery at the Louvre, listing 5333 objects with no illustration. For the unaccustomed visitor who was encountering Egyptian material for the first time, the guide was a precious aide to the exploration of the galleries. It is evident that a selection was made by Champollion in the objects reported in his inventory and in his *Notice*, and that he selected those objects which corresponded to his display choices; therefore, it is crucial to note that the *Notice* does not provide a complete picture of the collection of the Musée Charles X, but only of the objects on display, excluding from public knowledge the artefacts that were kept in storage.

The collections

Edmé-Antoine Durand (1768-1835), a friend of the Champollion brothers, had his own cabinet, including Egyptian artefacts. The 2150 Egyptian objects acquired from this collection on 2 March 1825 formed the nucleus of the future Musée Charles X.[264]

[261] 'Ordonnance de Charles X du 15 mai 1826', mentioned in: Champollion, *Précis*, p.x.
[262] Ibid., author's translation.
[263] Champollion, *Notice Descriptive*.
[264] Inventaire Durand: Archives des Musées Nationaux 7 DD*2.

Champollion was an avid visitor to the Durand cabinet where he had studied some of the artefacts. He met with Durand in Livorno and was concerned that Durand was coveting the second Salt collection. In a letter, Champollion noted 'some good mummies' in what he unpacked of Salt's collection.[265] The Salt collection was finally acquired and Champollion was sent to pack and inventory the collection, adding 4,014 objects to the royal collection. In 1827, before the opening to the public, Champollion continued to add artefacts to his museum through acquisitions from private collections: the Brideau collection, the Denon collection, and the entirety of the second Drovetti collection. Through these acquisitions, Champollion aimed to create 'un véritable musée d'objets égyptiens' (a true museum of Egyptian artefacts), which would present a variety of objects, displayed in a didactic manner. [266] His conception of display was novel – he wanted by all means to avoid the disorganisation of the Drovetti collection in Turin. Champollion was also concerned with the decoration of the rooms. He sent a request from Italy that halted any decoration before his return to Paris, having heard that it had been planned to cover the rooms with marble in the Hellenistic style, stating that his rooms must be decorated in the Pharaonic style. Upon his return to Paris, he had just under a year to arrange the new museum, with the inauguration originally planned for 4 November 1827.

Four rooms on the first floor of the south wing of the Cour Carrée were assigned to the Egyptian section, and separated from the Greek and Roman rooms by the columns room. Fontaine wrote in his *Journal* about the two different sections, and noted that:

> The gallery of King Charles X composed of two divisions occupies the entire wing by the river in the northern part of the great Court. The sitting room with columns, above the window, separates the two divisions, whose leaders, not unlike the rulers of this world, do not live in the most perfect and the best possible agreement. Each seeks to increase their own display, finding the space given to them too cramped. One would conquer the other and even dispossess him completely if he could.[267]

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[265]Jean-François Champollion, 'Lettre de Gênes, 11 Juillet 1825' in H. Hartleben (ed.), *Lettres de Champollion le Jeune, Lettres d'Italie* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1909), p.239, author's translation.
[266] Louis de Blacas, 'Inventaire analytique de quelques lettres nouvelles de Champollion le Jeune' in Anon., *Recueil d'Etudes Egyptologiques Dédiées à la Mémoire de Jean-François Champollion* (Paris: E. Champion, 1922), p.7.
[267] Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, *Journal, 1799-1853* (Paris: Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, ed. 1987), p.767, author's translation.

The mummies

The creation of a new sets of galleries at the Louvre with collections of Egyptian material culture raises these questions: were mummies included in the initial collections? How and where were they displayed? What was their place within the collection? This section maps the presence of Egyptian mummies in the early years of the collection, considering ways Egyptian mummies became embedded in the curatorial practices and decisions of this new gallery. The inventories of Champollion and Dubois, the various catalogues to the Museum, and the recent work of Buhe and Guichard allow for a reconstruction of the collection and display of mummies at the Musée Charles X between 1827 and 1858.[268]

In the *Notice* written by Champollion in 1827, the first and third rooms are designated as funerary rooms with artefacts related to embalming, introduced as follows:

> We have assembled in these two rooms all the objects related to the embalming of human bodies. This practice, which was both religious and sanitary, was halted only after the establishment of Christianity in Egypt: embalming was more or less in demand, depending on the period or the importance of the individual. This art declined under Roman and Greek domination; the mummies made with the greatest care and study all belong to the Pharaonic period and kings of the Egyptian race.[269]

It is worth noting that, as was the case at the British Museum, interest in embalming was the main reason for displaying the mummies. The *Notice* offered descriptive information on the artefacts pertaining to funerary equipment, but no indication as to the actual content of the rooms, nor the repartition of artefacts in each room.[270] Three Egyptian mummies were in the initial collection when it opened in 1827: 'N.1 momie ou corps embaumé' (mummy or embalmed body) which corresponds to a male mummy; 'N.2 momie de femme' (female mummy) and 'N.3 momie d'homme' (male mummy). I offer a first translation of their description in the *Notice* here:

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[268] Sylvie Guichard, *Notice Descriptive*; Buhe, 'Sculpted Glyphs'.
[269] Champollion, *Notice Descriptive*, p.111, author's translation.
[270] Recent research by Monique Kanataway and Elizabeth Buhe proposed a reconstruction of the Egyptian rooms including the repartition of objects in the museum. In this reconstruction, the mummy of Siophis (now Padicheri) is displayed standing upright in a case. There is no material evidence, however, to conclude that the mummy would not have been laying down, as it was the case in later visual representations. See: Buhe, 'Sculpted Glyphs'.

> N.1 – Mummy or embalmed body of an individual named *Siophis*, wrapped in linen and cotton bandages, artfully arranged, and in such a way that the shape of the body is preserved. The arms and the legs, the toes and fingers, are wrapped separately. Over the face is a golden mask; a painted canvas cartonnage necklace covering the chest; in the middle a pectoral with the images of the three deities *Osiris*, *Horus* and *Isis*. A type of apron, also made of cartonnage, covers the middle of the body. Are represented, 1°. The scarab of the god *Phré* (the Sun), accompanied by a prayer to the god Osiris, great king of the sky, to the goddess Isis, the divine mother, to Nephtys, the sister goddess, to the god Horus, avenger of his father, to Phré (the Sun), the saviour god, the great god, lord of the sky, manifestation of the ray of truth in the firmament, and to the great god Atmou, lord of the subterranean world, 2°. NETPHE, unfolding her wings across the body of the deceased, holding in each hand the symbol of Justice and joined by the saying, *Netphé, the great creator*.
>
> N.2 – Mummy of a woman: the body is wrapped in bandages, without any other exterior decoration.
>
> N.3 – Mummy of a man. This embalmed body is that of a Greek from a family established in Thebes during the reign of the emperor Hadrian; an encaustic wax portrait of this individual is fixed on the wrappings which cover the face.[271]

Mummies were mentioned in a few accounts. Nestor L'Hote (1804-1842) wrote that 'in the two funerary rooms are the human mummies, the coffins of the mummies, funerary images, boxes and statues of wood, stelae of funerary manuscripts, etc.'[272] Alexandre Lenoir (1761-1839) wrote in *Examen des Nouvelles Salles du Louvre*:

> We owe to the generosity of Charles X a museum of antiquities that France was lacking. This new attraction draws the crowd in; the scholar, the studious man, the amateur, as well as the simply curious visitors, all come here to pay tribute to the King, protector of the fine arts […] See gallery Charles X, N.1 mummy of an individual named Siophis and n.2 that of a woman.[273]

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[271] Champollion, *Notice Descriptive*, pp.112-113, author's translation.
[272] Nestor L'Hote, *Bulletin Férussac*, volume 9 (1828), p.137, n.117, author's translation.
[273] Alexandre Lenoir, *Examens des Nouvelles Salles du Louvre, Contenant les Antiquités Egyptiennes, Grecques et Romaines* (Paris: Farcy, 1828), p.3, author's translation.

Because the galleries opened in December 1827, Renoir's report is dated from 1828. However, it reveals that at the time of his visit, either there were only two mummies left on display, or he simply ignored the third one. This is relevant when attempting to map the presence of mummies at the museum. The so-called mummy of Siophis survived well at the museum [Fig.3.14], but the fate of the two other mummies is unclear – they do not appear in later museum accounts.[274] In addition, mummies which had been acquired for the museum from one of the individual collections – as of yet unidentified – decayed prior to the opening of the galleries. A note of 27 July 1827, which had not been identified previously, indicates that the Marquis d'Autichamps (1777-1859) wrote to Auguste de Forbin (1777-1841) – the director of the Louvre at the time – to notify that he did not see any objection to the digging of a hole in the garden of the Louvre to lay the remains of the Egyptian mummies ('restes de momies égyptiennes') [Appendix 3].[275] He added the necessity to add lime to the burial to prevent 'the exhalations of these distant beauties.'[276] Champollion had discussed similar cases of mummies which putrefied in a letter to Roger Gaspard de Cholex (1771-1828) of June 1824, in which he advised on the conservation of mummies at the Royal Museum in Turin. He noted:

> There is indeed a type of mummy prepared either by injection, or with a liquid balm, which only survives a few months in the European climate, much more humid that in the catacombs where these bodies rested for so many centuries. The mummies of this kind quickly begin to decompose and release a fetid odour, which spreads to all nearby objects. [277]

The mummies at the Musée Charles X which had developed signs of decomposition were thus disposed of and buried in the garden of the Louvre, by Perrault's Colonnade which is located at the easternmost facade of the Palais du Louvre, facing the Church of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois. The mummies remained there until, it seems, in 1830, at the same location, the bodies of those who died during the barricade of the Trois Glorieuses were inhumed. Ten years later, the remains buried in the garden were

[274] The mummy of Siophis is today known as the mummy of Padichéri, currently on display in Room 15 (Momie N2627).
[275] Letter 'autorisation d'ensevelir des momies', Archives Nationales 20144775/2, section administration.
[276] Ibid., author's translation. This document ends speculations that the mummies which had been put on display at the Louvre decayed. The document predates the actual opening of the Egyptian galleries at the Louvre.
[277] Jean François Champollion, 'Au comte Roget de Cholex, Turin Juin 1824' in Hartleben, *Lettres de Champollion le Jeune*, p.16, author's translation.

transferred to the Colonne de Juillet at La Bastille. The mummies are thought to have been mixed with the contemporary remains and transferred as well, although this remains speculative, and might merely be an urban legend.

Fig.3.14: Mummy of a man, N2627. Acquired in 1826 from Salt's collection. © Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes / Elisabeth Delange.

From August 1828 to March 1830, Champollion embarked on his first and only journey to Egypt. The purpose of this journey was to acquire new artefacts for the Louvre, through excavations and purchases. However, the funds necessary for such endeavour were delivered to Champollion with such delay that the project could not be fully accomplished.[278] Nonetheless, Champollion had saved on his travel expenses enough to finance digs in Thebes, Abydos and Saqqara.[279] He brought back 102 objects from the campaign, among which two Greco-Egyptian child mummies [Fig.3.15 and 3.16].[280]

[278] Guichard, *Notice*, p.62.
[279] Ibid.
[280] Ibid.

Fig.3.15: Mummy of a child, N2628A. © Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes / Sylvie Guichard.

Fig.3.16: Mummy of a child, N2628B. © Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes / Sylvie Guichard.

The mummies after Champollion

The sudden death of Champollion in 1832 created a period of instability for the museum, and resulted in a lack of publications on the Egyptian collection. Jean Léon Joseph Dubois (1780-1846) took Champollion's position in 1832. Dubois produced a careful examination of the objects in the Egyptian collection, including Egyptian mummies, providing an updated account of their number and display using inventories.[281] In 1849, a new curator was appointed, Emmanuel de Rougé (1811-1872). He immediatly produced an updated guide to the Museum, *Notice des Monuments*, which focuses solely on the

[281] See translations and studies of those documents in Buhe, 'Sculpted Glyphs'.

ground floor gallery;[282] the 1855 *Notice Sommaire* includes all the Egyptian rooms, including the funerary objects and human remains.[283] Rougé made curatorial changes to the display of the first Egyptian room. In the *Notice Sommaire*, the section 'Salle Funéraire' (funerary room) provides a picture of the repartition of artefacts within the room. In 'Armoire H', the mummies are described as follows:

> At the base are examples of Egyptian mummies, covered by their wrappings. The male mummy named Siophis by Champollion is covered by different cartonnages used as ornamentation. A large necklace is represented on the chest cartonnage. In the middle is a pectoral with the figures of Osiris, Isis and Horus. The cartonnage of the legs is decorated in the manner of the mummy coffins we have described. Under the cartonnage and the linen fabrics which follow the shapes of the body, were placed nets of blue enamel which are in frames, on the right and left, at the back of the room. With this mummy are two wrapped child mummies.[284]

A note was added at the end of the page, which read:

> The unwrapped mummies and several good mummy cases have been consigned, due to lack of space, to a study room, on the second floor of the Louvre.[285]

In addition to referring to the limit in space allocated to the Egyptian collection, this footnote seems to indicate additional unwrapped mummies, not on display.

There is no illustration of the rooms of the Musée Charles X until 1863, and thus we are missing over thirty years of visual representations. More interestingly, is that the very first illustration of the Egyptian rooms is an engraving of the funerary room. Produced for the guide *Paris Illustré, Nouveau Guide de l'Etranger et du Parisien*, this engraving was titled 'Salle funéraire du musée Charles X' [Fig.3.17].[286] The engraving depicts the third funerary room: in a central display, sarcophagi are displayed opened, with the upper parts on a stage, while the lower parts are displayed on a lower level.

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[282] Emmanuel de Rougé, *Notice des Monuments Exposés dans la Galerie d'Antiquités Egyptiennes* (Paris: Vinchon, Imprimeur des Musées Nationaux, 1849).
[283] Emmanuel de Rougé, *Notice Sommaire des Monuments Egyptiens Exposés dans les Galeries du Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Imprimerie Simon Raçon & co., 1855).
[284] Ibid., p.97.
[285] Ibid.
[286] Adolphe Joanne, *Paris illustré. Nouveau Guide de l'Etranger et du Parisien* (Paris: Hachette, 1863).

Canopic jars and other small artefacts are displayed on shelves and within cases; there is no trace of mummies in this depiction.

Fig.3.17: 'Salle funéraire du musée Charles X', engraving by Augustin Régis in Adolphe Joanne, *Paris Illustré. Nouveau Guide de l'Etranger et du Parisien* (Paris: Hachette, 1863). [copyright restriction].

The description of the mummy display from 1855 remained unchanged in later guides, up until 1895, when the description only removed the footnote reference to unwrapped mummies.[287] It is only in 1932 that a new description to the display – from which we can infer a renovation of the display at this point – appears in the *Guide Catalogue Sommaire II Salles du Premier Etage* (Salle Charles X) by curator Charles Boreux(1874-1944).[288] The catalogue mentions three mummies in the Salle du Scribe (Room of the Scribe): these are the two child mummies brought from Egypt by Jean-François Champollion and the mummy of Siophis, seen above. The catalogue also mentions an unwrapped mummy of a man, brought by Baron Larrey, displayed in a glass case, located in the passage between the funerary room and the Colonnade room [Fig.3.18].[289] Curiously, there is no mention of the head of Joséphine de Beauharnais's mummy, acquired by the museum in 1859 [Fig.3.19].

[287] Emmanuel de Rougé, *Description Sommaire des Salles du Musée Egyptien* (Paris: Librairies-Imprimeries réunies, 1895).
[288] Charles Boreux, *Guide Catalogue Sommaire, II Salles du Premier Etage (Salle Charles X)* (Paris: Musées Nationaux, 1932), pp.295-296.
[289] Ibid.

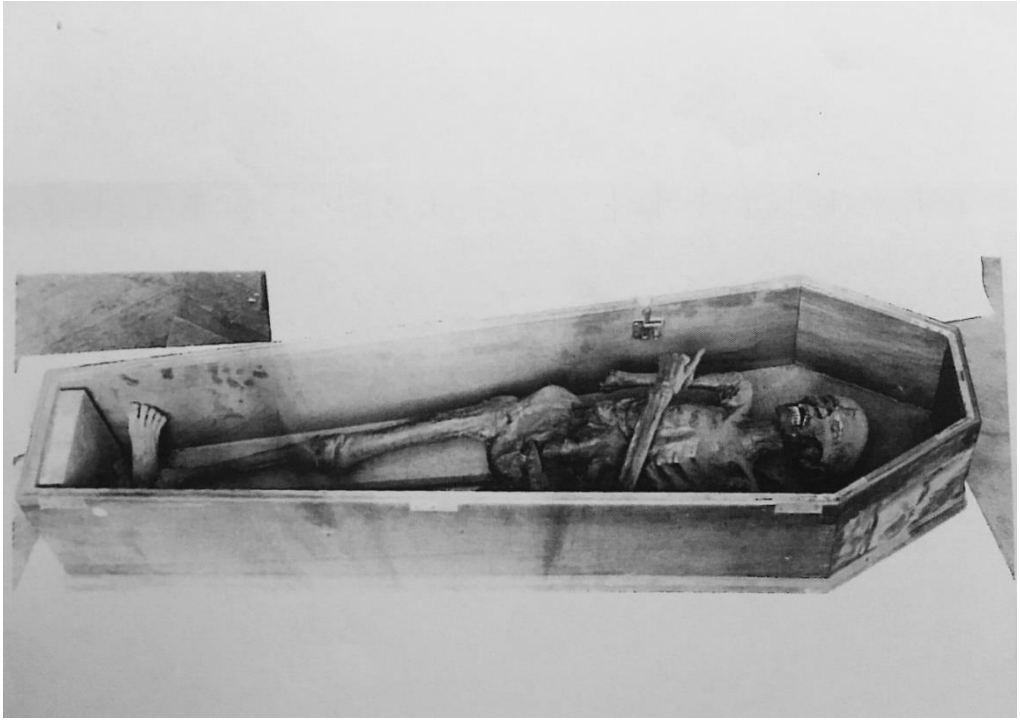

Fig.3.18: The mummy Larrey, brought from Egypt in 1799, donated to the Louvre in 1832. © Musée du Louvre, documentation Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes / Jean Louis de Cenival.

Fig.3.19: Head of a mummy, E3442. © Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes / Hélène Guichard.

MUMMIES AT THE MUSÉE DU LOUVRE

1826	2 mummies	2 mummies, lost through decomposition before the opening of the galleries in 1827.
1826	1 male mummy	Mummy of a man, N2627. Ptolemaic period. Purchased from Salt's collection.
1827	1 male mummy	In Champollion's *Notice Descriptive* of 1827. Lost?
1827	1 female mummy	In Champollion's *Notice Descriptive* of 1827. Lost?
1830	1 child mummy	Mummy of a child, N2628A. Purchased from Champollion's mission in 1828-1829.
1830	1 child mummy	Mummy of a child, N2628B. Purchased from Champollion's mission in 1828-1829.
1832	I male mummy	Mummy of a man, ID238903. Donated by Larrey to the Louvre in 1832.
1859	1 mummy head	Female mummy head, E3442. Purchased from the collection of Joséphine de Beauharnais by Nils Gustaf Palin (1765-1842) for the Louvre in 1859.

Fig.3.20: Mummies at the Musée du Louvre in the first half of the nineteenth century. © author.

3.5 Conclusion

While the preceding chapter demonstrated numerous pre-expedition endeavours to study ancient Egypt and collect its remains, it is evident that the expedition prompted a much-larger scale project of study, of which France and Britain, as well as Italy, were the main actors. However, this was very much a period of transformation. The deciphering of hieroglyphs greatly helped the understanding of the ancient civilisation, but it required extensive work, firstly by its decipherers, and then from other scholars who learned the system, and developed it. Similar transformations and periods of adaptation were needed in museum collections, as illustrated by the various incidents of objects abandoned in storages due to lack of suitable space; including mummies at the Louvre.

The growth of collections post-expedition and the buying of bulk collections from individuals led to an increase in the presence of Egyptian mummies in museums. The British Museum having started its collection in the preceding century, it is not surprising that its collection kept growing and was considerably larger than the one at the Louvre in the mid-nineteenth century. Evidently, mummies attracted attention, as illustrated by the choice of engraving in the *Illustrated London News*.[290] At the Musée du Louvre, the history of the collection is difficult to map out with assurance: this is partly due to the colossal work Champollion had to undertake to acquire collections, write reports, create displays and travel to Egypt, all in a very short period. At first sight, it could be argued that Champollion had little interest in mummies, from their absence in his official reports. In fact, the mummy of Siophis (now Padicheri) received a lot of attention in the *Notice*, compared to other artefacts.[291] In addition, Champollion's personal correspondences reveal that he excavated multiple mummies (as many as eighteen in one day) but could not bring them all back to France due to space restriction on his ship.[292] In addition, he proved to have an extensive knowledge of mummies while in Turin, where he provided helpful insights into their conservation.[293] Certainly, the study of Egyptian mummies at the Louvre, and in Paris in general, has not received enough attention in scholarly research. Nonetheless, it is notable that despite a substantial collection of Egyptian human remains, the Louvre never had more than three or four specimens on display at a single time, and the description of those mummies in the Museum's guide were rarely updated. The collection of the Museum was, and remains today, focused specifically on artefacts pertaining to writing, and sculptures, shaped by Champollion's short but fruitful collecting activities and scholarly interests.

The question of display and its impact on the shaping of knowledge was noted by Moser who stated that 'the space dedicated to the presentation of the collection, the location of the collection in the museum, the way it was structured, its distribution or special layout, the architecture and design of the gallery, and the aids used to facilitate interpretation all played a part.'[294] Moser makes a detailed analysis of the display of

[290] Anon., *The Illustrated London News*, 13 February (1847).
[291] Champollion, *Notice*, pp.112-113.
[292] Jean-François Champollion, *Lettres écrites d'Egypte et de Nubie en 1828 et 1829*, lettre douzième, 25 mars 1829 (Paris: Didier, 1868).
[293] Champollion, 'Au comte Roget de Cholex, Turin Juin 1824'.
[294] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, p.221.

Egyptian material culture at the British Museum in *Wondrous Curiosities*.[295] What is clear from the display of Egyptian mummies in the British Museum, from both written and visual sources, is the sheer number of Egyptian mummies on display. Certainly, these numbers must have created a sense of awe and surprise to the visiting public. The museum was inclined to showing mummies in different stages, and therefore their display was didactic and aimed at educating the visiting public on the different stages of mummification: this speaks against a display of purely aesthetic interest. Certainly, then, display was aimed at shaping knowledge on the mummy as the remnant of cultural and religious practices. At the Louvre, the mummies were in smaller number. However, in both museums, they were displayed with coffins, and other funerary objects, creating what was called 'funerary rooms'. The separation between funerary rooms and other objects, such as large sculptures or daily-life objects (those being rarer in museums at the time) played a role in creating an image of ancient Egypt as a civilisation interested in death and the afterlife – an image that pervaded through times and had much impact on shaping European understanding of the ancient Egyptian's interests and worldviews. As Moser noted, 'the type of items possessed [by museums] communicated particular ideas about ancient Egypt.[296]

Chapters 2 and 3 have situated mummies within the cultures of collecting in Paris and London, by tracing the passage of human remains between them. In asking how did they come to be in collections, and what was their relevance, these chapters have framed the collecting interests of individuals in the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries in Paris and London, while embedding these narratives in larger intellectual, cultural and political developments. The focus on collecting and museum display, however, has its limitations. While on display, Egyptian mummies offered limited kinds of engagements, which has led them being labelled as mere representations of exoticism. In many respects, these two chapters have documented mummies as normalised objects. There is nothing remarkable in these collecting activities and even the didactic manner in which they were displayed is unexceptional. In the chapters that follow, these accepted beliefs about the Egyptian mummy in Western culture, as an object and particularly as a body, will be challenged.

[295] Ibid.
[296] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, p.219.

SECTION 3

FROM MUMMY OPENING TO RACIAL DISSECTIONS

Chapter 4 – Physical interventions

> There can also be found in great quantity, in the stomach and brain of cadavers, this substance called mummy. Campaign dwellers transport it to the city, where it is sold cheaply: I bought three heads full of this substance for half an Egyptian dirham. One of the merchants selling this drug showed me a bag that was filled with it, I saw in it the chest and stomach of a corpse that was full of this mummy.[297]

This excerpt, written by a medical man who resided in Cairo, Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi (1161-1231), refers to the destruction of mummies to produce a medicine, the *mumia*. The account, dated from the twelfth century – and corroborated by many more accounts from the following centuries – challenges the idea that Egyptian mummies were merely objects of material culture for collection and exhibition. In this excerpt, the cadaver is full of 'mummy' or 'mumia': the mummified body of the ancient Egyptian is not yet *a* mummy, it is *made of* mummy, a blackened substance coveted from the Middle-Ages on. This episode locates the mummy within a frame of consumption of human remains for medicinal purpose which, if not commonplace, was substantial enough to develop into a significant market. Up to the eighteenth century, the mummy held a special place as medicinal treatment, but over time scepticism developed regarding the actual benefits of the medicine. French surgeon Ambroise Paré (1510-1590) dedicated an entire chapter in his *Discours* to mummies, titled 'Le discours de la mumie', in which he warned of the risks of ingesting powders derived from mummies which have been decaying for centuries.[298] Pierre Pomet (1658-1699) in his *Histoire Générale des Drogues* dedicated a section to Egyptian mummies highlighting his reservations as to the actual medicinal properties of mummies, and yet noted that if one is to partake of the substance, he or she must choose a mummy that is 'beautiful, shiny, very dark, without bone nor dust, with a good smell, the smell of burnt, not pitch'[299] [Fig.4.1]. Similarly, French chemist Nicolas Lémery (1645-1715) listed all the virtues attributed to mummies in his *Traité Universel*

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[297] Silvestre de Sacy, *Relation de l'Egypte par Abd-Allatif* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1810), p.200, author's translation.
[298] Ambroise Paré, *Discours d'Ambroise Paré* (Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1582); Ambroise Paré and Adriaan van de Spiegel, *The Workes of that Famous Chirurgion Ambrose Parey* (London: Printed by Richard Cotes and Willi, 1649).
[299] Pierre Pomet, *Histoire Générale des Drogues* (Paris: J.-B. Loyson et A. Pillon, 1694), 'Seconde partie, Chapitre premier. Des Mumies', pp.2-8.

des Drogues Simples.[300] What the history of *mumia* – which, as noted in the introduction chapter, has not been thoroughly researched[301] – indicates is that there is a history of physical engagements that occurred simultaneously with collecting practices which can reveal more expansive meanings and interactions with Egyptian mummies.

This chapter looks at the destructive interventions on Egyptian mummies undertaken by men of science in the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. The opening of Egyptian mummies has been largely overlooked as a practice, and yet it is both curious and revealing of the reasons why men collected, studied, and were interested in the Egyptian mummy. What mention there is of the physical interventions on Egyptian human remains appears only as a brief introduction to the unrolling of mummies, or as a strange marginal practice.[302] This contrasts with the large compendium of studies on the dissection, cultures of display and criminality associated with more historically-recent corpses.[303] The assumption that the openings and dissections of Egyptian mummies are merely to be understood as the destruction of historical material culture has led scholars to overlook the cultural and intellectual importance of these interventions to contemporary actors.

A study of the physical engagements with mummies must begin with these questions: why was the mummy considered for opening and dissection? What knowledge could be gained from these engagements for the advancement of the knowledge of the ancient Egyptian civilisation? How did they transform and conceptualise the mummy, in comparison with collecting practices? This chapter argues that there was a cultural underpinning for the opening of Egyptian mummies in the contemporary context of the natural sciences, and that these engagements brought with them certain unique ways of thinking about the Egyptian mummy as a specimen of collection. These ways of thinking, developed in the second half of the eighteenth century, became an intellectual legacy that

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[300] Nicolas Lémery, *Traité Universel des Drogues Simples* (Paris: L. d'Houry, 1698), pp.508-509 (p.509).
[301] Karl H. Dannenfeldt, 'Egyptian mumia: the sixteenth century experience and debate', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, volume 16, issue 2 (1985), pp.163-180. Richard Sugg, *Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2016) is the most recent publication on this topic. However, despite the emphasis on mummies in the title, it discusses mummies very little. Also, Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*, pp.13-32; Jason Thompson, *Wonderful Things*, pp.63-64.
[302] Sugg, *Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires*.
[303] For example: Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned, Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Andrew Cunningham, *The Anatomical Renaissance: The Resurrection of the Anatomical Projects of the Ancients* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997); Elizabeth T. Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse, Staging Post-Execution Punishment in Early Modern Englan*d (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

affected later engagements, discussed later in this thesis. These interventions on mummies can also be located in the wider intellectual context of rethinking of the human body: what it meant and what its value was. Contemporary debates concerning the acquisition and use of corpses at the turn of the nineteenth century sparked a rethinking of medical dissections and new regulations concerning the acquisition of cadavers. These changes – materialised in new laws on the use of human bodies in medicine – can in some measure be linked to the study of the Egyptian mummy, and certainly impacted ways individuals considered, identified and interpreted the mummy.

This chapter undertakes a chronological discussion of physical interventions on mummies which allows the observation of parallel developments in intellectual thought. In particular, it considers the important examinations of Egyptian mummies by John Hadley (1731-1764) in England, who wrote the first thorough medical report of the opening of a mummy, and by Frédéric Cailliaud (1787-1869) in France. This chapter is not intended to give a comprehensive account of the history of physical interventions on mummies, but rather seeks to ground these practices intellectually. This is important to apprehending the variously nuanced approaches to the dissection and unrolling of mummies in the following chapters.

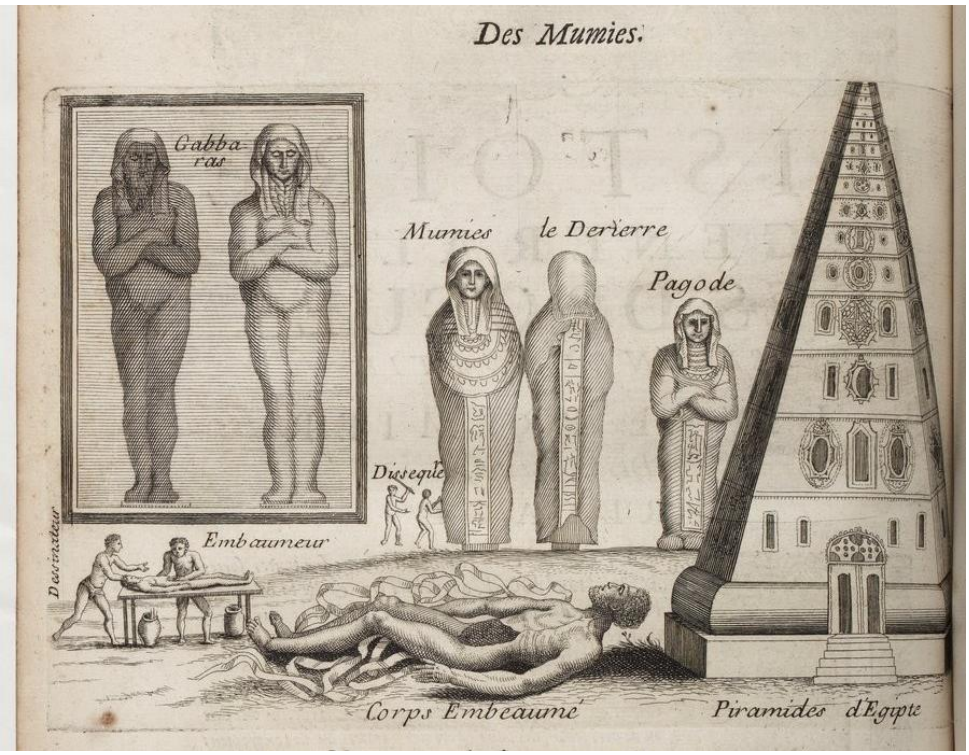

Fig.4.1: 'Des Mumies' in Pierre Pomet, *Histoire Générale des Drogues* (Paris: J.-B. Loyson et A. Pillon, 1694), p.2.

4.1 Opening Egyptian mummies

The opening excerpt, which considers the Egyptian mummy as a medicinal commodity to be consumed, allows the following observations: mummies were not always approached as materials that needed to be preserved, protected and exhibited. In fact, they could serve more diverse purposes through their destruction. Prior to the French expedition to Egypt and the realisation that ancient Egyptian material culture could serve political and intellectual agendas in museums, mummies had been more commonly destroyed than preserved. The openings of Egyptian mummies, in France and elsewhere, by Benoît de Maillet (1656-1738) and Guillaume-François Rouelle (1703-1770) offer a glimpse at the motivations that led individuals to dissect Egyptian mummies; both men were interested in the natural sciences but can be understood as operating within different frames of research and respectability.

Maillet's mummy opening

Maillet was the French General Consul in Cairo between 1692 and 1708; he was elected to this position by Louis Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain (1643-1727) during the reign of Louis XIV (1638-1716). Letters exchanged between Maillet and Pontchartrain (and other protagonists), and published by Omont and Cohen, record Maillet's mummy opening.[304] Maillet first wrote to Pontchartrain about the discovery of a mummy on 17 September 1693.[305] Five years later, in 1698, he told him of another mummy that he had opened in front of an audience in Cairo where he shared the discovery with Jean-Pierre Rigord (1656-1727).[306] He wrote:

[304] Henri Omont, *Missions Archéologiques Françaises au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, première partie (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1902), pp.279-316; Claudine Cohen, 'Benoît de Maillet et la diffusion de l'histoire naturelle à l'aube des lumières', *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences*, volume 44, issue 3-4 (1991), pp.325-342.
[305] Jérôme Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain, 'Lettre de Jérôme Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain (secrétaire d'Etat de la Marine et de la Maison du roi) à Benoît de Maillet (consul de France au Caire) datée du 25 mai 1701', in G. B. Depping, *Correspondance Administrative sous le Règne de Louis XIV, Volume 4: 'Travaux Publics – Affaires Religieuses – Protestants – Sciences, Lettres et Arts – Pièces Diverses* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1855), pp.182-183 ; Letter quoted in Omont, *Missions Archéologiques*, pp.282-283. Reply by Maillet: 'Lettre de Maillet datée du 17 septembre 1693', Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, ms. F. FR. 20147, folio 180.
[306] Omont, *Missions Archéologiques*, pp.284-285.

> I caused another mummy to be open, which was the body of a female, and which had been given to me by the Sieur Baggary, it was opened in the house of the Capuchin father of the city (Grand Cairo.)[307]

He then proceeded to describe the mummy:

> This mummy had its right hand placed upon its stomach, and under this hand were found the strings of a musical instrument, perfectly well preserved. From hence I should conclude, that this was the body of a person that used to play on this instrument, or at least of one that had a great taste for music. I am persuaded that if every mummy were examined with the like care, we should find some sign or other by which the character of the party would be known.[308]

In the above quotation, Maillet revealed his understanding of the Egyptian mummy as the corpse of a human, of which the character could be uncovered by a careful examination through a process of opening, or dissection. This is interesting because it links to discussions, in later times, about these mummies being knowable people, rather than objects or bodies to be dissected. It demonstrates that even in the late seventeenth century, before science objectified the mummy,[309] there was an interest in knowing the individual behind the wrappings. I will return to this important point in chapter 7. Maillet's interest in the natural sciences has received attention, in particular for his publication *Telliamed*, written between 1692 and 1720 and published posthumously in 1748.[310] While in Egypt, Maillet also wrote *Description de l'Egypte*[311] – a title later reused for the publication of the results of Napoleon's expedition.[312] The *Description*, although written by Maillet, was published by Jean Baptiste Le Mascrier (1697-1760) in 1735.[313] This publication included an engraving of a mummy, Maillet having visited various sepulchres [Fig.4.2]. Maillet, like other individuals in his century, located the mummy as a subject of inquiry. He does not seem to have collected mummies, but rather he elected to open some of the specimens he found.

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[307] Jean-Baptiste Le Mascrier [Benoît de Maillet], *Description de l'Egypte* (Paris: L. Genneau et J. Rollin fils, 1735), p.278, author's translation.
[308] Ibid., p.279, author's translation.
[309] The extraction of mumia had, of course, earlier objectified the mummy as a deposit of health-giving substances and as a commercial product.
[310] Benoît de Maillet, *Le Telliamed* (Amsterdam: L'Honoré et fils, 1748).
[311] Le Mascrier, *Description de l'Egypte.*
[312] Jomard et al. *Description de l'Egypte*.
[313] Le Mascrier, *Description de l'Egypte.*

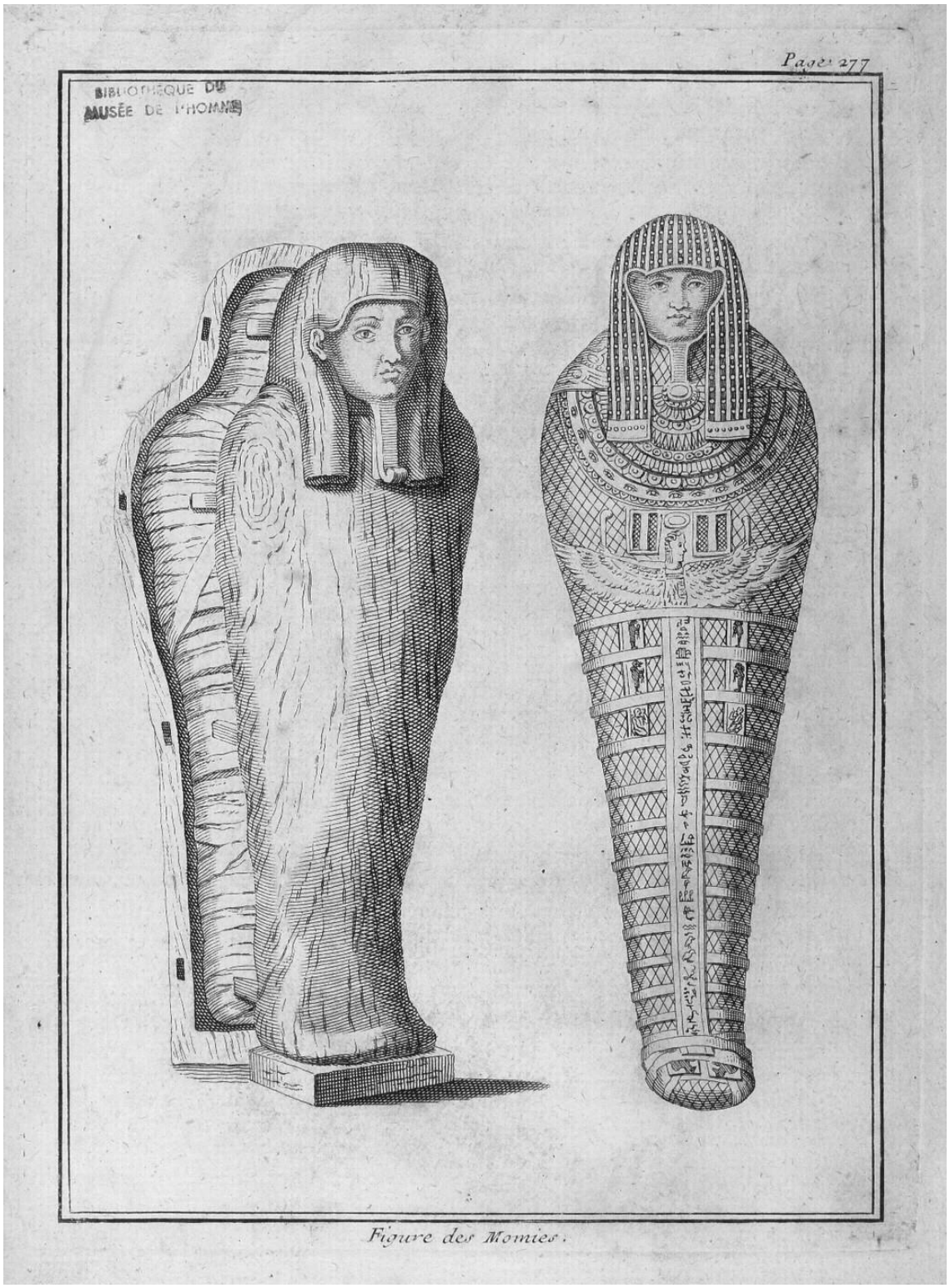

Fig. 4.2: ‘Figures des momies’ in Jean Baptiste Le Mascrier [Benoît de Maillet], *Description de l’Egypte* (Paris: L. Genneau et J. Rollin fils, 1735). © Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

In 1692, the year Maillet went to Egypt, a document entitled *Lettre d'un Académicien* was published on Egyptian mummies by the French heraldry specialist Claude François Menestrier (1631-1705).[314] It began:

> I can see, Sir, by the questions that you are asking & by the clarifications you are asking me to give on the matter of that Mummy brought from Egypt, that you have other views than most people, and that novelty attracts you to see extraordinary things.[315]

The individual had, according to Menestrier, four questions: what is a mummy? Where does the mummy come from? How did mummies remain intact for so long without being corrupted? And, finally, what is the meaning of the depictions and symbols on the envelope of the body? The four questions highlighted in this letter represent the fundamental interrogations brought about by the interaction with Egyptian mummies at the time. Of these, the incorruptibility of the mummy was the primary factor that made the mummy such a peculiar object. Inevitably, the desire to uncover the science behind the mummification process led to the destruction of many specimens. One important feature of the event recorded in this publication and mentioned in the title was the public exhibition of the mummy in front of an audience, the body being 'exhibited to the public curiosity.'[316] The document was accompanied by an engraving of the mummy, whose face is represented uncovered, possibly as a result of the opening [Fig.4.3].[317] The mummy was described as follows:

> It has all the characteristics of a genuine mummy, and even to be the body of a person of quality, kept in asphalt and bitumen: both because of the place where it was found, which is one of the pyramids, and by the sarcophagus of Porphyry, the coffin of cedar wood, and the wrappings of linen marked by the image of the hieroglyphs and their symbols.[318]

The examples of Maillet and Menestrier's openings in the late seventeenth century (and Peiresc's opening discussed in chapter 2) indicate that the public opening of

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[314] Claude François Menestrier, *Lettre d'un Académicien à un Seigneur de la Cour* (Paris : chez Robert J-B de la Caille, 1692).
[315] Ibid., p.1, author's translation.
[316] Ibid.
[317] The engraving was reproduced in full in the G*entleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle* of August 1751 with the title 'An Egyptian Mummy, two of which are said to be lately brought from Grand Cairo'.
[318] Ibid., p.2, author's translation.

mummies was not a new practice when it became publicised in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. The next sections will consider the changing intellectual contexts in which these openings and dissections occurred.

Fig.4.3: Claude François Menestrier, *Lettre d'un Académicien* (Paris: chez Robert J-B de la Caille, 1692).

Caylus and Rouelle

In 1754, the French chemist Guillaume-François Rouelle (1703-1770) undertook an examination of the head and pieces of a mummy at the suggestion of the Comte de Caylus (1692-1765) who had received these specimens from the consul of France.[319] The encounter between Caylus and Rouelle is recorded in the 'Eloge de M. Rouelle':

> A piece of history which M. le Comte de Caylus was working on, put him in the case of consulting M. Rouelle, it was the embalming of the ancient Egyptians, it was a matter of finding what were the materials employed, and of which one can see some samples in the mummies we have left, and how they were used.[320]

Born in Mathieu, a Norman village near Caen, Rouelle was from an early age interested in the sciences: an anecdote refers to his purchase of a cauldron at age fourteen to conduct his own experiments.[321] He left his medical studies in Caen to pursue chemistry, later moving to Paris where he studied pharmacy under Gottlob Spitzley (1690-1750). Established in Paris as an apothecary in 1738, Rouelle's lectures on chemistry, which were given in his own laboratory, attracted the interest of many intellectuals of the time including Denis Diderot (1713-1784), Antoine Lavoisier (1743-1794) and Antoine-Auguste Parmentier (1737-1813). Rouelle's rise in Paris was meteoric, such that in 1742 he took over the position of demonstrator of chemistry at the Jardin des Plantes.[322] Two years later, in 1744, the success of his chemistry courses at his laboratory at Place Maubert helped him to become a member of the Académie des Sciences.[323] Soon after his admission, Rouelle read his first *Mémoire* in which he presented a division of salts.[324] Rouelle published five M*émoires* between 1744 and

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[319] On Caylus, see: Marc Fumaroli, *Le Comte de Caylus et Edmé Bouchardon, Deux Réformateurs du Goût sous Louis XV* (Paris: Editions Louvre, 2016); Hector Reyes, 'Drawing and history in the Comte de Caylus's *Recueil d'Antiquités*', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 42 (2013), pp.171-189. On the fragments given by Lironcourt to Caylus, see mention in: Paolo Maria Paciaudi, *Lettres de Paciaudi au Comte de Caylus* (Paris: chez Henri Tardieu, 1802), p.351.

[320] Jean Paul Grandjean de Fouchy, 'Eloge de M. Rouelle', *Histoire de l'Académie des Sciences* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1773), p.142-143, author's translation.

[321] On Rouelle: Remi Franckowiak, 'Les sels neutres de Guillaume-François Rouelle', *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences*, volume 55, issue 4 (2002), pp.493-532; Paul Dorveux, 'Apothicaires membres de l'Académie Royale des Sciences: IX. Guillaume François Rouelle', *Revue d'Histoire de la Pharmacie*, volume 21, issue 84 (1933), pp.169-186.

[322] Franckowiak, 'Les sels neutres', pp.495.

[323] Dorveaux, 'Apothicaires membres de l'Académie Royale', p.173.

[324] Guillaume-François Rouelle, 'Mémoire sur les sels neutres', *Mémoires* (1744).

1754.[325] The fourth of these *Mémoires*, 'On the embalming of the Egyptians', compared his findings with the hypothesis offered by Herodotus, with whom he disagreed.[326] Having conducted his own research on salts, he was interested in the organic products used in the embalming process and particularly in *natron* (natrum), the salt used in mummification to dehumidify the body and ensure optimum preservation.

In his *Mémoire*, Rouelle asserted that the Egyptian embalming technique consisted in drying the soft tissues using natrum which he described as a powerful alkali, a basic ionic salt. His analysis of substances found in mummies also aimed to prove that the ancient Egyptians used bitumen from Judea and other aromatic gums in the mummification process.[327] Rouelle's intervention was not, *per se*, an opening or a dissection, but rather the study of mummy fragments resulting from the tearing apart of pieces of mummies. However, this intervention places the mummy in a context of natural sciences (here, chemistry) which is very different from Maillet's intervention, both in its analysis and in the context of respectability in which Rouelle was located.

Rouelle and Caylus were both members of the Académie des Sciences. The seventeenth century saw the creation of several academies in France: the Académie Française (initiated in 1635, it was dissolved during the Revolution and re-established in 1803), the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (1663), the Académie des Sciences (1666), the Académie de Peinture et de Sculpture (1648), the Académie de Musique (1669) and the Académie d'Architecture (1671). These were grouped under the name of the Institut de France. The creation and development of each académie followed a different path. Of particular interest to this research is the Académie des Sciences which provides links with mummy collectors and to the intellectual contexts of the early-to-mid-eighteenth century.

While a study of the Académie des Sciences in Paris and the Royal Society of London falls outside of the scope of this research,[328] it is important to note that these

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[325] The Mémoires are: 1) 'Mémoire sur les sels neutres' (1744); 2) 'Sur le sel marin' (1745); 3) 'Sur l'inflammation de l'huile de térébanthine' (1747); 4) 'Sur l'embaumement des Egyptiens' (1750); 5) 'Mémoire sur les sels neutres' (1754).

[326] A. D. Godley [Herodotus], *The Histories*, volume 2, chapter 86 (Cambridge, Mas.: Harvard University Press, 1920).

[327] De Fouchy, 'Eloge de M. Rouelle', p.143.

[328] See, for example, Margery Purver, *The Royal Society: Concept and Creation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009); Roger Hahn, *The Anatomy of a Scientific Institution: The Paris Academy of Sciences, 1666-1803* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1971); Maurice Crosland, *Science Under Control, The French Academy of Sciences 1595-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Frédéric

institutions were important to scientific communication between the two countries. This is especially so for the study of the mummy, because England and France were, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the two main players in the collection and study of Egyptian material culture. Despite the existence of other smaller societies in France and Britain, these two institutions played the leading role in the creation of knowledge, scientific competition and intellectual exchanges between the two countries. This was facilitated by the institutions' publications – the *Philosophical Transactions* for the Royal Society and the *Mémoires* for the Académie des Sciences – as well as through the establishment of a 'joint-membership' allowing admission to both societies. While it was possible to join the Royal Society as a Foreign Member, the Académie was stricter on its admission of foreign scholars. The status of *associé étranger* was restricted to eight members, including Isaac Newton (1642-1727) in 1699. At the end of the eighteenth century, another member of the Royal Society was admitted as *associé*: Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), the then President of the Royal Society who facilitated Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's (1752-1840) access to the British Museum's mummies, discussed in the next chapter.[329]

What the above opening and analyses indicate, is that certain frames of understanding or research questions were driving forward the investigation of Egyptian mummies. The most important of these was their extraordinary preservation. Rouelle, in particular, saw this piece of research as a critical point in his career trajectory. However, it is important to note that the opening itself was a means to an end; the process of the opening was of little interest to them and as a result, we have few details of the process, the setting or the audience of these events. These early interventive investigations of the mummy are primarily of interest here because they provide an important context for understanding future interventions. I will now turn more particularly to openings that were closely related to the wider medical dissection of bodies.

Lawrence Holmes, 'Chemistry in the Académie Royale des Sciences', *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences*, volume 34, issue 1 (2003), pp.41-68; Eric Brian, 'L'Académie Royale des Sciences de l'absolutisme à la Révolution', in Eric Brian and Christiane Demeulenaere-Douyère (eds), *Histoire et Mémoire de l'Académie des Sciences* (Paris: Ted Doc, 1994); Maurice Crosland, 'Relationships between the Royal Society and the Académie des Sciences in the late eighteenth century', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, 59 (2005), pp.25-34.

[329] Warren R. Dawson (ed.), *The Banks Letters. A Catalogue of the Manuscript Correspondance* (London: The British Museum, 1958).

4.2 Hadley's mummy dissection

The first detailed account of the dissection of an Egyptian mummy records that undertaken at the home of John Hadley (1731-1764) on 16 December 1763.[330] The members in attendance were 'Dr Wollaston, Dr Blanshard, Dr Hunter, Dr Petit, the Rev. Mr Egerton Leigh, and Mr Hunter'.[331] This audience immediately places this event in a medical-anatomical context. In particular, the presence of the Hunter brothers, anatomist William Hunter (1718-1783) and John Hunter (1728-1793), locates this as an important event. At the time, William Hunter was already well-established as a practitioner in London who, in 1764, would become physician to Queen Charlotte (1744-1818). His brother, John, had just returned from the army, and would set up his own anatomy school in London in 1764.[332] This particular dissection was fundamental in locating the mummy as an anatomical specimen that could offer clues on the mummification process. It was frequently referred to in later studies of the mummy.[333] However, it has been largely overlooked by historians. It is important to understanding why men of science and rank considered the mummy worthy of examination.

London-born Hadley had been educated at Queen's College Cambridge and, in 1756, became professor of chemistry and, two years later, Fellow of the Royal Society. The mummy had been lent to Hadley by the Royal Society for him to 'examine the manner, in which this piece of antiquity has been put together' and to compare the findings with the texts of Herodotus, Didorus Sicilus and Pliny.[334] This particular mummy had already been described in Nehemiah Grew's (1641-1712) *Musaeum Regalis Societatis*.[335] Part I of that publication entitled 'A description of the rarities belonging to the Royal Society and preserved at Gresham College' contained a sub-section, 'Of human rarities', which gave the following description: 'An Egyptian mummy given by the illustrious Prince Henry duke of Norfolk. It is an entire one taken out of the Royal

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[330] John Hadley, 'An account of a mummy, inspected at London 1763', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 54 (1764), pp.1-14.
[331] Ibid., p.1.
[332] On William and John Hunter: Simon Chaplin, 'John Hunter and the Museum Oeconomy' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 2009); Helen Brock (ed.), *The Correspondence of Dr William Hunter*, 2 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008); Roy Porter, 'William Hunter: A surgeon and a Gentleman' in William F. Bynum and Roy Porter (eds), *William Hunter and the Eighteenth-Century Medical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.7-34.
[333] For example: Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, 'Observations on some Egyptian mummies opened in London', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 84 (1794), p.177.
[334] Hadley, 'An account of a mummy', p.1.
[335] Nehemiah Grew, *Museum Regalis Societatis, or a Catalogue and Description* (London: W. Rawlins, 1681).

Pyramids. In length five feet and ½.'[336] Mention of the former royal ownership of the mummy may reflect a recurrent assumption in descriptions of mummies at the time that only royalties were mummified. The association also gave the object historical status. Grew's comments on embalming practices were all but fictitious, and fitted a mythology that had developed around Egyptian funerary practices. For example, he noted that 'The way of embalming amongst the Egyptians, was by boiling the Body (in a long Cauldron like a fish kettle) in some kind of liquid Balsam […] much after the same manner, as the sugar doth, in the conditioning of pears, quinces, and the like.'[337]

It is precisely because such imaginative theories on the principles of mummification had developed that the opening of Egyptian mummies was necessary. In fact, Hadley observed that the practices discussed by Grew were scientifically viable – he noted that 'from experiment it has been found; that, bones and flesh being boiled in common pitch, it will pervade the substance and fill the cavities of the former' – but that this form of preservation was not used by the ancient Egyptians.[338]

Grew noted that the mummy was complete when it was acquired. However, it was in very poor condition when it was received for examination by Hadley, with the head and feet detached from the body and some missing bones.[339] Precisely what had happened to the mummy between Grew's description and the 1763 dissection is unclear but it seems likely that natural decay and poor collection management may have caused loss and damage. Hadley's observation that 'the wrappers, with which they [the head and the rest of the body] had been united, having been destroyed, the cavity of the thorax was found open towards the neck', seems to confirm a history of poor care.[340]

It is important to note that the Royal Society had experienced some difficulty in the early decades of the eighteenth century and the state of decay of the institution had been noted later in that century by the German scholar Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach (1683-1734):

> [The Museum] consists of what appear to be two long narrow chambers, where lie the finest instruments and other articles… not only in no sort of order or tidiness

[336] Ibid., p.1.
[337] Ibid., p.2.
[338] Hadley, 'An account of a mummy', p.11.
[339] Ibid., p.3
[340] Ibid.

> but covered with dust, filth and coal-smoke, and many of them broken and utterly ruined. If one inquires after anything, the operator who shows strangers around…will usually say: 'A rogue had stolen it away', or he will show you pieces of it, saying: 'it is corrupted or broken, and such is the care they take of things!'[341]

Hadley's dissection of the mummy did not produce significant new findings on mummification itself. He concluded his report stating that, apart from a bulbous root found on the foot, of which he made a detailed drawing, none of the organs of the mummy remained [Fig.4.4]. That foot, however, is of much interest as there are few depictions of a bulb having remained on a mummy foot. Hadley speculated that 'in all probability, we have not made any new discoveries', but in fact, this detailed step-by-step account of the dissection of a mummy places him as an instigator, a point of origin, of what can be regarded as the medical dissection of mummies. Unfortunately, Hadley's research was put to an abrupt end with his sudden death from a fever on 4 November 1764.[342]

Although most obviously driven by curiosity about the process of mummification, this dissection can also be situated in the context of changing ideas about the natural world. In this period, Packam noted the departure from *mechanism* – the understanding of physiological functioning in mechanical terms based on an analogy of living things with machines – towards *vitalism*, a theory which suggested that life is generated and sustained through some form of non-mechanical force or power specific to living bodies.[343] Vitalism challenged a traditional account of a divinely controlled creation. For younger scholars, seventeenth century mechanism was seen as supporting the religious orthodoxies and social hierarchies which they contested.[344] Peter Hans Reil argued that late Enlightenment vitalists were guided by a form of observation and reason, but that they also wanted to reformulate the concept of matter in science in a way that respected natural variety and dynamic change.[345] John Hunter, one of the men involved in the

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[341] Zacharias Conrad Von Uffenbach, *London in 1710: From the Travels of Zacharias Conrad Von Uffenbach* (London: Faber and Faber, ed. 1934), p.98.
[342] Johnston noted that the mummy was destroyed in the bombing raids during World War II, but that the foot, which was of much interest to Hadley, remains in the collection of the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons in London, in John J. Johnston, 'Lost in Time and Space: Unrolling Egypt's Ancient Dead', *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* (2013), pp.7-22 (p.9).
[343] Catherine Packham, *Eighteenth Century Vitalism: Bodies, Culture, Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.1.
[344] Peter Hans Reill, 'The legacy of the "scientific revolution": science and the enlightenment' in Roy Porter, *The Cambridge History of Science*, volume 4: 'Eighteenth-Century Science' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.23-43; Shirley A. Roe, 'The life sciences' in Porter, *The Cambridge History of Science*, pp.400-416.
[345] Reil, 'The legacy', p.33.

mummy dissection at Hadley's house, was instrumental in developing the vitalist understanding of the body as a systematic, self-communicating organism, locating a force of vitality in the blood.[346] In this way, Hunter located the body as a central point in the rethinking of the natural world. I will return to this philosophical questioning of the body later in this chapter.

The debates surrounding vitalism took place in a European context: Montpellier, Paris and Göttingen were important centres for the development of vitalist theories through scholars such as François Boissier de Sauvages (1706-1767), Théophile de Bordeu (1722-1776) and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840). Blumenbach discerned a number of 'common or general vital energies that exist more or less, in almost all, or at least in a great many parts of the body'.[347] With Blumenbach's vision, in accordance with late-Enlightenment vitalism, the occult qualities condemned by Newton were reintroduced into the life sciences. An organised body consisted of a complex conjunction of energies and forces, the foremost being what he called the formative drive (*Bildungstrieb*).[348] Blumenbach's significant research on vitalism placed him as a central figure in scientific and human science research in Europe. He saw the Egyptian mummy as offering important potential for his study of the origins of mankind. Blumenbach's investigations represent a very important moment in the study of the body and mankind, and will be discussed later in this thesis. I want to conclude this more general discussion of mummy openings with a particularly well documented example which took place in France in the first half of the nineteenth century. It was undertaken by Frédéric Cailliaud (1787-1869). This event connects collecting and physical interventions and, therefore, is a fitting example to consider the development of these practices in the early nineteenth century.

[346] Ibid.
[347] Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *Elements of Physiology* (Philadelphia: T. Dobson, 1795), pp.1-33.
[348] Porter, *Cambridge History of Science*, p.37.

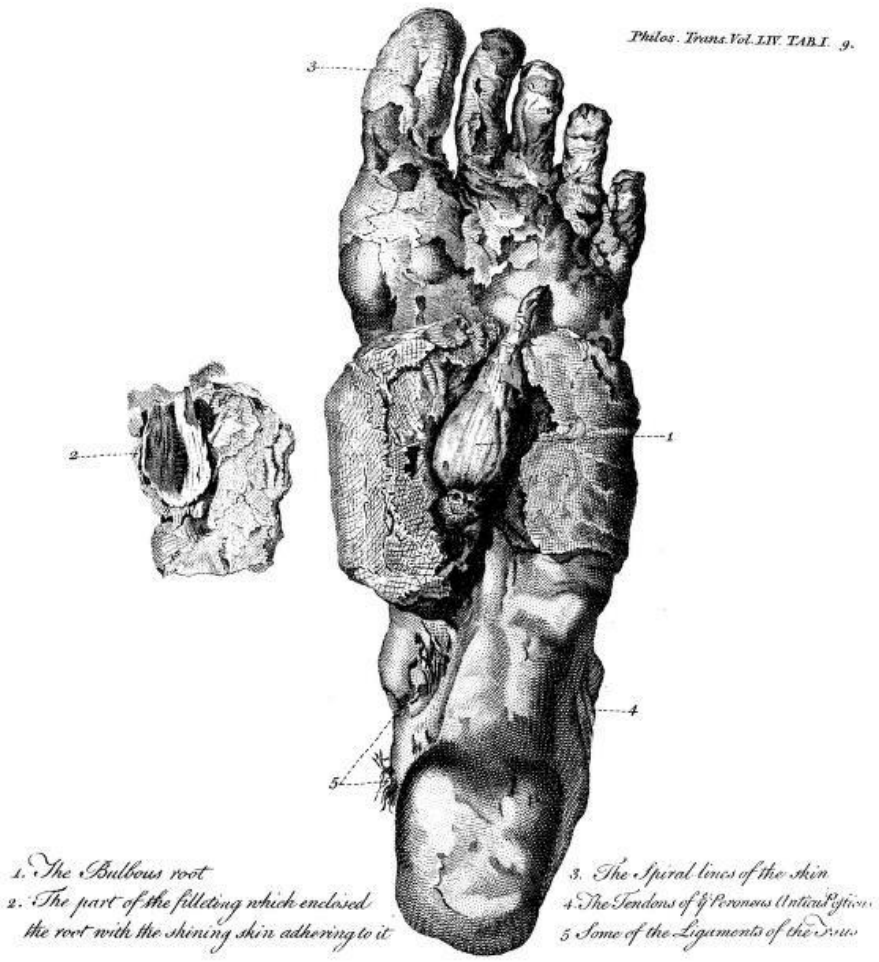

Fig.4.4: Mummy foot in John Hadley, 'An account of a mummy, inspected at London 1763', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 54 (1764), pp.1-14.

4.3 Cailliaud's interventions

In 1824, the *Revue Encyclopédique* reported on the opening of two mummies belonging to French mineralogist Frédéric Cailliaud.[349] From 1815 to 1822, Cailliaud travelled to Egypt, Nubia and Ethiopia to collect minerals and was one of the first post-Napoleonic expedition explorers to travel to the deserts on both sides of the Nile. His investigation of the ancient Egyptian culture was so advanced that the study of his work by Mainterot and Bednarski – including some previously unknown manuscripts – places him as a pioneer of early nineteenth-century research into ancient Egypt.[350] In addition to his contribution

[349] Anon., 'Ouverture de deux momies appartenant à M. Cailliaud', *Revue Encyclopédique*, volume 21 (1824), pp.243-246.
[350] Philippe Mainterot, *Aux Origines de l'Egyptologie* (Rennes: PUR editions, 2011); Philippe Mainterot, 'La redécouverte des collections de Frédéric Cailliaud: contribution à l'histoire de l'égyptologie', *Histoire*

to the development of Egyptian archaeology, Cailliaud was a major actor on the scientific scene of the first half of the nineteenth century, as illustrated by his curatorship of the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de Nantes.

Born in Nantes in 1787, Cailliaud developed an interest in mineralogy – a term which then had a more expansive meaning and concerned the structure and origins of the earth – at a young age. At twenty-two, he moved to Paris to study at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, which opened in 1793. In 1815, he travelled to both Cairo and Alexandria where he made the acquaintance of Bernardino Drovetti (1776-1852). Following a journey to the southern lands of Egypt, Drovetti, impressed by Cailliaud's geological expertise, recommended him to the viceroy of Egypt, Muhammad Ali (1769-1849), who appointed Cailliaud government mineralogist. His first mission was to locate emerald mines in the Gebel Zubarah and Cailliaud not only achieved this goal, but also made significant archaeological discoveries: the temple of Redessieh, the ruins of Sekket and the ancient road from Coptos to Berenice. In 1818, he travelled to the Western Desert and became the first explorer to visit the oasis of Kharga. Over the course of his stay in Egypt, Cailliaud visited the temples of Thebes on multiple occasions, the centre of the Franco-British cultural competition, represented by agents Giovanni Battista Belzoni and Henry Salt.

It was at this time that Cailliaud started building up his own collection of artefacts, which included about 1130 objects.[351] They were acquired in 1819 by the Département des Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque du Roi, directed at the time by French archaeologist Désiré Raoul-Rochette (1790-1854). On his return to France in 1818, Cailliaud's collection caught the attention of Edmé-François Jomard (1777-1862), a former member of the French campaign in Egypt. Jomard's expert knowledge in publication – as a result of his involvement with the *Description de l'Egypte*[352] – became indispensable in the publication of Cailliaud's own travel accounts. Their collaboration resulted in the publication of *Voyage à l'Oasis de Thèbes*[353] and *Voyage à l'Oasis de Syouah*.[354]

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de l'Art, issue 62 (2008), pp.1-12; Andrew Bednarski, *The Lost Manuscripts of Frédéric Cailliaud* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2014).

[351] Mainterot, 'La redécouverte des collections de Frédéric Cailliaud', p.2.

[352] Jomard et al., *Description de l'Egypte*.

[353] Frédéric Cailliaud, *Voyage à l'Oasis de Thèbes* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1821).

[354] Frédéric Cailliaud, *Voyage à l'Oasis de Syouah* (Paris: Imprimerie de Rignoux, 1823).

In 1819, Cailliaud embarked on his second expedition to Egypt at the order of Louis XVIII's government to complete the survey work of the *Commission*, which had been interrupted in 1801, in particular the mapping of the Nile Valley in the southern regions and the exploration of the Nubian temples. The Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres also required that Cailliaud bring back antiquities from the Theban region. From March 1820, he travelled up the Nile towards Nubia, and during the journey, he stopped in Saqqarah, El-Kab, Edfu and Thebes to collect objects. Amongst the objects collected in Egypt, Cailliaud recalled in *Voyage à Méroé* that 'with the help of some Arabs from Gournah, whom I occupied doing digs, I opened various tombs, and found there some very interesting pieces […] I acquired a series of good mummies, with their cases covered in hieroglyphic figures and paintings of good preservation.'[355]

The antiquities brought back by Cailliaud were temporarily displayed at 11 rue de Sèvres in the 'Cabinet Cailliaud', prior to their acquisition by the government.[356] Unlike the objects from his first expedition, this second collection was not acquired immediately by the government and Cailliaud complained the situation had been mishandled.[357]

The openings

The 'Cabinet Cailliaud' was the site of the opening of mummies on 30 November 1823, reported in the *Revue Encyclopédique*:

> Opening of two mummies from Mr Cailliaud. Amongst other precious objects brought back by Mr Cailliaud from his last journey to Egypt, and which compose his rich Egyptian cabinet, the curious and the antiquarians had distinguished a good mummy with an extraordinary volume and weight.[358]

This male mummy was acquired in Bournah in 1820 from the Italian dealer Antonio Lebolo (1781-1830) and belonged to a man named Padiimenipet who had died in the nineteenth year of Trajan's reign.[359] It was a rather unusual mummy: its weight of about 110 kilos and the large size of the head and feet attracted attention [Fig.4.5]. The

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[355] Frédéric Cailliaud, *Voyage à Méroé* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1826), pp.258-263.
[356] Mainterot, 'La redécouverte des collections', p.7.
[357] *Lettre de Frédéric Caillaud à François Chabas du 20 mars 1866.* Bibliothèque de l'Institut, Ms 2576, 106-109.
[358] Anon., 'Ouverture de deux momies', p.243, author's translation.
[359] François René Herbin, *Padiimenipet, Fils de Sôter* (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2002).

mummy was described by Cailliaud in his *Voyage à Méroé*.[360] Champollion went to see the mummy after it arrived in Paris, as recorded in his *Lettre à M. Letronne* of March 1824.[361] Champollion was more interested in the hieroglyphs covering the mummy – and especially in some issues relating to the naming of the mummy – than the body itself. Cailliaud noted that Champollion was satisfied during his visit that he was able to confirm the validity of the hieroglyphic system he had published a few years prior.[362]

Fig.4.5: The mummy of Padiimenipet, E25491, dépôt du Cabinet des Médailles et des Antiques de la BNF, © Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes / Hélène Guichard.

Champollion-Figeac reported in the *Revue Encyclopédique* that after hesitating for a while, Cailliaud finally agreed to satisfy the curiosity of a number of individuals by agreeing to the opening of the mummy.[363] The audience included the Duc de Blacas (1771-1839), The Marquis de Marbois (1745-1837), Dominique-Jean Larrey (1766-1842) and Auguste de Forbin (1777-1841). The Duc de Blacas was a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres who had supported Champollion's position at

[360] Cailliaud, *Voyage à Méroé.*
[361] Jean-François Champollion, *Lettre à M. Letronne, Membre de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, sur l'Expression Phonétique des Noms de Pétéménon et Cléopâtre, dans les Hiéroglyphes de la Momie Rapportée par M. Cailliaud* (Paris: Imprimerie de A. Bobée, 1824).
[362] Bednarski, *The Lost Manuscripts*, pp.23-24.
[363] Anon., 'Ouverture de deux momies', p.243.

the Musée du Louvre. He had formed a cabinet of antiques, described by Joseph Toussaint Reinaud (1795-1867).[364] Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) was a German naturalist and geographer as well as an associate member of the Académie des Sciences who spent many years in Paris, studying and exchanging knowledge on natural history with the scientific elite of the time. François Barbé-Marbois (1745-1837) was a diplomat and former minister of Napoleon I, who held state functions up until 1834. Dominique-Jean Larrey (1766-1842) was a military surgeon, member of the Académie Royale de Médecine and the Académie des Sciences. Larrey took part in the French campaign in Egypt and wrote extensively on Egyptian surgical practices.[365] Finally, Auguste de Forbin (1777-1841) had succeeded Dominique Vivant-Denon (1747-1825) in the position of director of the royal museums in 1816, and was responsible for the enlargement of the Louvre with the creation of the Musée Charles X in 1827; Forbin had travelled to Egypt in 1817.[366] The attendance at this one event at Cailliaud's cabinet reveals which circles of knowledge production were interested in mummies at the time. The presence of political figures was unquestionably a way to lend credibility to the event, but other members were directly connected by one or more of the following three aspects: the mummy's provenance (they had visited Egypt), the mummy's organic properties (of special interest to naturalists and surgeons), and the quality of the mummy as an artefact (collectors).

The opening started with the removal of the outer wrappings which formed an envelope around the body, and in between which was placed a papyrus bearing the names of Cleopatra and Ptemenon. Cailliaud continued removing the fabrics of different qualities, and in total unrolled 380 meters of wrappings during the three-hour long operation.[367] It took a further four days to unwrap the body completely, involving the use of a hammer as a bituminous substance had stuck the fabric onto the dried flesh. The mummy had the peculiarity of having the eyes and mouth covered with a golden plaque, a custom which Cailliaud noted, was foreign to Egyptian practices.[368] Other details, such

[364] Joseph Toussaint Reinaud, *Description des Monuments Musulmans du Cabinet de Blacas* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1828)
[365] Dominique Jean Larrey, *Mémoire sur l'Ophtalmie Régnante en Egypte par le C. de Larrey, Chirurgien en Chef de l'Armée d'Orient* (Cairo: Imprimerie Nationale, 1800); Dominique Jean Larrey, *Relation Historique et Chirurgicale de l'Expédition de l'Armée d'Orient, en Egypte et en Syrie* (Paris: Demonville et Sœurs, 1803).
[366] Auguste de Forbin, *Voyage dans le Levant, en 1817 et 1818* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1819).
[367] Anon., 'Ouverture de deux momies', p.244.
[368] Ibid., p.245.

as the closed mouth and the golden wreath led Cailliaud and Lettsome to suggest that it was the mummy of a Greek individual. A papyrus, deciphered by Champollion, confirmed that it was the mummy of a young man who died on 2 June of the year 116 AD. A series of drawings by Cailliaud in his *Voyage à Méroé* illustrate the various aspects of the mummy and the coffin, including a drawing pre-unwrapping, and a drawing of the face of the mummy unwrapped [Fig.4.6 and fig.4.7].[369] The second mummy opened by Cailliaud – which received less attention – presented an entirely different embalming technique without any noticeable use of bitumen, salt or other resinous substance; instead sawdust was found on the intact specimen.

Fig.4.6: The mummy before the opening, drawing by Frédéric Cailliaud in Frédéric Cailliaud, *Voyage à Méroé* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1826). [Copyright restriction].

[369] Cailliaud, *Voyage à Méroé.*

Fig.4.7: The face of the mummy of Padiimenipet, drawing by Frédéric Cailliaud in Frédéric Cailliaud, *Voyage à Méroé* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1826). [Copyright restriction].

The so-called 'second Cailliaud collection' was finally acquired on 3 November 1824 for the sum of 36,000 francs.[370] Mainterot drew up a comparative chart of the inventory of the first and second Cailliaud collections (which correspond to his two expeditions to Egypt), and from the section 'momies (animales et humaines)' (human and animal mummies), we learn that the first collection contained seventeen mummies and the second eighty-three mummies.[371] However, the exact number of human mummies is impossible to determine as Mainterot did not distinguish between human and animal mummies and it is likely that the latter were numerous. Out of the 950 objects acquired by the government in 1824, Cailliaud had written notices for about 500 of these.[372] The interest in bringing back such a large amount of human and animal mummies was undeniably linked to Cailliaud's connection with men involved in the medical and natural

[370] Mainterot, 'La redécouverte des collections', p.7.
[371] Ibid.
[372] Archives du département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Registre Acquisition, Echanges et Dons, t. VII, 1817-1826.

sciences, and the interest of these individuals in studying a variety of mummies – ultimately, it is the great interest of these men which led him to open his specimens.

With the creation of the Musée Charles X in 1827, collections held in cabinets were rapidly overshadowed by the new set of galleries, and the sudden influx of antiquities from Egypt soon eclipsed Cailliaud's collection.[373] The archaeologist François Chabas (1817-1882) deplored that the Cailliaud collection was stored in the attic of the library rue Richelieu, where it stayed for forty years and suffered damage.[374] The specificity of Cailliaud's cabinet – and of the collection he amassed over the years – was probably the sense of utility he had pursued in his choice of artefacts and in the connections he made between these objects and other individuals. Notably, his collection was of great help to Champollion in his quest to decipher hieroglyphs. However, his collection was not as monumental as Drovetti's and Salt's and the timing of his collection just a few years before the opening of the Musée Charles X almost condemned the collection and its history into oblivion. Nevertheless, it was the largest collection brought back by a Frenchman between the French expedition to Egypt and the artefacts brought by François Ferdinand Auguste Mariette (1821-1881) in 1852.

The extraordinary collections assembled by Cailliaud, his contribution to the advancement of Egyptological knowledge in the context of Champollion's deciphering of hieroglyphs, and his opening of Egyptian mummies, are located within the framework of men involved with sciences who interacted with mummies as both objects of collection and scientific specimens, in the same vein as Hadley, Blumenbach, and Rouelle. Cailliaud was first and foremost interested in the natural sciences, and his collection of Egyptian material culture was a by-product of his expeditions to Egypt to recover minerals. In 1823, Cailliaud decided to move back to his native city of Nantes where he pursued his original interest in the natural histories, especially his research in conchology. In 1836, he became the curator of the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle in Nantes and his collection was divided between the city's cultural communities.

[373] Mainterot, 'La redécouverte des collections', p.8.
[374] François Chabas, 'Sur un ostracon de la collection Cailliaud', *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprach*e, (1867), pp.37-40. In 1907, most of the objects in the Cabinet des Médailles were deposited at the Louvre and the mummy of Padiimenipet remains in the Museum, although it was taken off display at the beginning of this century.

4.4 On dissections

These openings and dissections of Egyptian mummies were located in an intellectual context of intense reflections on the use of cadavers: their acquisition, their trade and the needs and legal complexities of their use. Dissections of human bodies were, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a necessary means to advance medical knowledge. Bernard de Mandeville (1670-1733) wrote in 1725 on the practice of criminal dissections that:

> We ought to encourage the improvement of physick [sic] and surgery, wherever it is our power. The knowledge of anatomy is inseparable from the studies of either; and it is almost impossible for a man to understand the inside of our bodies, without having seen several of them skilfully dissected.[375]

William and John Hunter elevated the status of anatomical dissections in the eighteenth century;[376] the latter carried out the dissection of a mummy at Hadley's house in 1763.[377] In the nineteenth century, the dissections of Egyptian mummies increased in number and in popularity, mostly in Britain – a phenomenon I will examine in chapter 6 – and were anchored in changing attitudes towards medicine, anatomy and corpses, which ultimately led to the 1832 Anatomy Act. What can explain interest, curiosity, and practices of medical dissections, and their relation to the dissection of Egyptian mummies? Riggs noted in her important study of unwrapping that 'the Enlightenment separation of theology and knowledge meant that anatomists held their own sacred grounds. Medical thinking had reconceptualised the interior of the body as the location of disease, making rigorous dissections paramount for training doctors.'[378] Corpses, of the recently deceased and ancient bodies, could therefore offer clues on the body itself: its functioning, and more importantly perhaps, its deficiencies, through the study of diseases.

However, the acquisition of corpses was not without its problems. Herbert Mayo (1796-1852), a British anatomist who lectured at the Royal College of Surgeons and at King's College in the first half of the nineteenth century, urged for an anatomy legislation,

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[375] Bernard de Mandeville, *An Inquiry into the Causes of the Frequent Executions at Tyburn* (London: J. Roberts, 1725), p.26.
[376] Chaplin, 'John Hunter and the museum oeconomy'; Brock, *Correspondence of Dr William Hunter*; Porter, 'William Hunter: A surgeon and a Gentleman'.
[377] Hadley, 'An account of a mummy'.
[378] Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt*, p.48.

to avoid the growing phenomenon of body snatching, which has been studied in length by Richardson, Wise and Rosner, in particular.[379] Mayo noted in a letter:

> We are threatened with the invasion of disease, against which every resource of medical knowledge should be carefully prepared. And the public mood is so occupied with the engrossing subjects of cholera and reform that a bill for legalising dissection, which 3 years ago might have produced a riot, would now scarcely occupy a day's attention. Under these circumstances, I venture to hope that the Council of King's College will take into their present consideration, whether grounding their request upon the incident which has lately occurred, they may not with some prospect of success solicit the Government to adopt some measure, through which the serious evils may be removed, that not only most prejudicially interfere with the advancement of the study of medicine, but have at the same time led to the darkest criminality in modern times.[380]

The incident to which Mayo refers is the murder of an Italian boy in London by John Bishop and Thomas Williams, two body snatchers who made a living out of providing corpses to medical schools.[381] The incident spread waves of terror throughout London, echoing responses to the murders committed by William Burke (1792-1829) and William Hare (1792 or 1804-c.1858) in Edinburgh in 1828.[382] Bishop and Williams were caught when trying to sell the body of a child to the medical school at King's College. Mayo's demonstrator of anatomy at King's, Richard Patridge (1805-1873), noticed that the body which had been offered for sale had not suffered a natural cause of death. In his letter, Mayo suggests the possibility of other such instances, noting that 'two incidents trifling in themselves concur to strengthen in my mind the suspicion resulting from the facts detailed in the report that the boy was intentionally destroyed.'[383] The first of those incidents is the disappearance of six boys, and the second is the offer made to Mayo of a

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[379] Ruth Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Sarah Wise, *The Italian Boy: A Tale of Murder and Body Snatching* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004); Lisa Rosner, *The Anatomy Murders* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). Also: Piers Mitchell (ed.), *Anatomical Dissection in Enlightenment England and Beyond: Autopsy, Pathology and Display* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

[380] Herbert Mayo (undated c. 1828), King's College Special Collection online: <http://www.kingscollections.org/exhibitions/specialcollections/charles-dickens-2/italian-boy/anatomy-act> [consulted August 2017].

[381] Wise, *The Italian Boy*.

[382] Brian Bailey, *Burke and Hare: The Year of the Ghouls* ([n.pl.], Mainstream Publishing, 2002).

[383] Mayo, unpublished, King's College Special Collection online: <http://www.kingscollections.org/exhibitions/specialcollections/charles-dickens-2/italian-boy/anatomy-act> [accessed August 2017].

boy ‘described as remarkably fresh’ to which he concluded that ‘for my own part I entertain little doubt that from time to time murder is perpetuated in London for the value of the body of the victim.’[384] Mayo’s criticism of body snatching was evidently focused on the gruesomeness of the disappearance and presumed killing of children, and the attraction for money which pushed individuals towards such act. However, it is evident that if the act of killing to provide bodies to medical institutions existed, it reflected a bigger crisis in the acquisition of corpses for medical research. Corpses had become, throughout the eighteenth century, harder to come by. Body snatching was not in itself an illegal practice, but it raised ethical issues, such as those raised by Mayo. The advances of medicine and the realisation of the necessity of medical dissections in forwarding knowledge of the human body therefore clashed with issues of supply. In the 1820s, demands were therefore made for better legislation to provide a supply line of cadavers.

The issue was partly resolved through the Anatomy Act of 1832 which regulated the supply of cadavers for medical research and the teaching of anatomy.[385] A major change brought about by the Anatomy Act was in the acquisition of recently-deceased bodies. While the Murder Act in place since 1752 had limited access by medical schools and medical practitioners to the bodies of executed prisoners, the Anatomy Act of 1832 provided access to the bodies of those who had died in hospitals and workhouses and whose bodies had not been claimed by relatives. What these contexts tell us, is that the Egyptian mummy was embedded within wider intellectual contexts which provide a deep and meaningful background to consider the Egyptian mummy: the opening and dissection of Egyptian mummies are significant in a context of deep reconsiderations of what the body meant to certain groups of individuals.

4.5 Conclusion

The narratives selected in this chapter reveal engagements with Egyptian mummies as corpses – human remains that can be ground into powder, dissected, cut into pieces, and studied in a context of natural sciences. The mummy, collected as an object of material culture to be preserved in collections and museums, was simultaneously destroyed, manipulated, and examined by individuals who, with different aims, considered the

[384] Ibid.
[385] Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse*.

Egyptian mummy as an important object of investigation. Understanding of the embalming process, developed in ancient Egypt as a way to turn the body into an immutable thing – a body that would remain intact for the afterlife – was transformed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through a series of operations, with a view to answering contemporary concerns on the body.

This chapter has revealed some motivations to open the mummy: curiosity for the mummification process and its related ancient mortuary customs, interest in the chemical properties of the substances used in the preservation of the bodies, and medical interest in the mummy as a cadaver that can help uncover some clues about the human body, in the context of complex discourses and demands regarding the use of corpses for medical studies. The mummy was shaped by individuals with specific interests who came across the mummy as a commodity. The term 'commodity' is used here, because the mummy was not necessarily essential to a trajectory of research and engagements for the individuals concerned, but was either an additional means to prove theories, or a substitute for another product (such as the *mumia*). Cailliaud, for example, saw the mummy as one of many areas of diverse interest in a research trajectory through the natural world. This is an important point, because unlike collectors or museums who tried to retain their specimens intact, medical practitioners and natural scientists often used the mummy for a short period, and although they certainly were captivated by their specimens, these were simply one category of object in a series of bodies or materials that helped them shape the intellectual and physical world around them.

The physical interventions covered in this chapter are only one part of a complex story of physical and scientific engagements with Egyptian mummies. While mummies were caught in evolving discourses over the acquisition and retention of human remains, they were also inserted into discourses which placed the mummy geographically in a place then associated with the origin of civilisation and ideologically at the centre of a debate regarding the racial origin of humankind. The subject of dissection and other forms of intervention will now be taken into a more specific field of interest which concerns the potential of the mummy to contribute to debates on race.

Chapter 5 – Racial dissections

> When we reflect that to the race of negroes, at present our slaves, and the object of our extreme contempt, we owe our arts, sciences, and even the very use of speech; and when we recollect that, in the midst of those nations who call themselves the friends of liberty and humanity, the most barbarous of slaveries is justified: and that it is even a problem whether the understanding of negroes be of the same species with that of white men![386]

As early as the second half of the eighteenth century, a rhetoric of racial differentiation, anchored in a new epistemological discourse, led individuals to open Egyptian mummies, identifying the mummy as racially-oriented evidence of the origin of mankind. In this discourse, the mummy as *a body* was seen as holding physical scientific evidence. In this engagement, the preservation of the body did not pose questions, but rather the availability and exceptional preservation of Egyptian mummies made these objects of interest to men investigating the origin of mankind and the ethnicity of the ancient Egyptians.

The opening quotation from the account of the late-eighteenth-century French traveller and politician, Constantin-François Volney (1757-1820), was a response to a central concern that emanated from the rediscovery of the ancient Egyptian civilisation: how could a civilisation located on the African continent produce the advanced technologies, understanding of the world, and a system of artistic and intellectual productions that embodied the foundation of Western civilisation? And how could this be reconciled with the emerging and developing framework that both encouraged and justified a colonial mindset based on racial differentiation and the superiority of a white European group? Two main questions formed the core of a debate that took place from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. These were: Where could one locate the origin of mankind? And how could one organize and categorize the natural world (both animal and human), and with what implications? These questions were embedded in contemporary political, religious and medical developments, as well as changes in the

[386] Constantin-François Volney, *Travels Through Syria and Egypt in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1785* (London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1788), volume 1, p.83.

approach to the natural sciences, both in England and France, which dramatically reconsidered ways to understand, negotiate and study the natural world.

In 1792, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) conducted the first openly racially-oriented set of dissections of Egyptian mummies at the British Museum. These interventions, as well as those he undertook in private collections, underpinned his research on the classification of mankind. Using comparative anatomy, especially craniology, as his research method, Blumenbach framed the Egyptian mummy within his own developing taxonomic system. He was not alone in these studies. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) became the most important figure in natural history in Europe, and was responsible for developing a highly influential classification of the natural world. He, too, applied his taxonomic approach to the study of Egyptian animal mummies and human skulls in order to confirm both his classification system and his racial theories. Finally, in the 1830s, Augustus Bozzi Granville (1783-1872) dissected an Egyptian mummy in London, in what was a synthesis of contemporary anatomical interventions on mummies and intellectual thinking on the origin of the ancient Egyptians.

These three individuals were contemporary and yet have not been studied together before. There are a number of points worth stressing. They were connected – although they did not meet – by the race conundrum which placed the Egyptian mummy as one element of their important studies. However, their interpretations of the origin of the mummy led to different conclusions. Cuvier and Granville were concerned with proving the European origin of the ancient Egyptians, therefore branding the origin of civilisation as evidence of Caucasian achievement. Blumenbach, on the contrary, was careful not to draw strict conclusions on the racial origin of the ancient Egyptians and, importantly, he made a point not to connect racial origins with abilities.

Racial thinking, its origin and development, and its larger impact on historical developments in the late nineteenth century have been the subject of considerable research. This chapter opens with a broad overview of the literature on racial thinking in the mid-eighteenth century in order to locate the intellectual framework for the racial dissection of mummies. This chapter then focuses on the interventions conducted by Blumenbach, Cuvier and Granville. By embedding their individual reports of mummy autopsies and dissections within a wider context of medical dissections and intellectual

formulations, this chapter provides new evidence of the complexity of the history of engagements with Egyptian mummies at the turn of the nineteenth century.

5.1 Race and the human skull

The concept of race, and especially the hierarchisation of races, which placed a European group in a position of superiority, has been the subject of numerous important studies. Of particular importance to the present study are Bancel, David and Thomas's study of the 'invention of race' through scientific investigations and popular exhibitions, Keevak's and Augstein's important histories of racial thought, and Baum's study of the politics of Caucasian identity.[387] These works provide a rich context for understanding the different ways individuals have responded to the question of racial difference. Racial thinking predates the eighteenth century; however, the impulse to categorise races into a definite number and to connect them with separate narratives of origin becomes a subject of major debate this century.[388] This section locates racial thought and its theories in the eighteenth century, with a particular focus on those thinkers who believed the form of the human skull provided an important key. This is critical to understanding how the Egyptian mummy became embedded in these discourses.

A first attempt at categorising races can be found in French physician and traveller François Bernier's (1620-1688) 'New Division of the Earth', published anonymously at first and then in the *Journal des Sçavans* in 1684. Bernier wrote:

> But what I have noticed in my long and frequent voyages has given me the idea of dividing the world in a different way. Although in the exterior form of their bodies, and principally in their faces, nearly all people differ from each other according to the different districts of the Earth that they inhabit (in such a way that those who have often travelled are not normally mistaken in their ability to distinguish each nation in particular), I have nevertheless noticed that there are

[387] Nicolas Bancel, Thomas David and Dominic Thomas, *L'Invention de la Race, Des Représentations Scientifiques aux Exhibitions Populaires* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 2014); Michael Keevak, *Becoming Yellow: A Short History of Racial Thinking* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011); Bruce Baum, *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race: A Political History of Racial Identity* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2006); Hannah Augstein, *Race, The Origins of an Idea 1760-1850* (St. Augustine, FL: St Augustine Press, 2000).
[388] David Allen Harvey, *The French Enlightenment and its Others* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.125.

> four or five Species or Races of men whose difference is so remarkable that it may serve as a just foundation for a new division of Earth.[389]

Bernier's text did not have a watershed effect and he was rarely quoted by later thinkers on race.[390] However, it is an important source for two reasons: first, it was a first attempt at categorising human races in a precise number, and it took a secular approach to the question of human origins.

Keevak noted that in the eighteenth century, a shift happened in the categorisation of whiteness versus otherness, which is better exemplified by the fact that Asians, who had been categorised as white people in earlier periods were, by the end of the seventeenth century, excluded from this category.[391] This example is a starting point to think about how Westerners approached the question of race and origin in the eighteenth century, and especially, how the distinction between sameness and otherness was created and reinforced over time. Keevak's study shows how a rhetoric of racial differentiation took place in Europe, and then spread internationally. What were the criteria for racial distinction? Were these universal to European thinkers? And what were the implications for the study of the ancient Egyptians?

These questions were attended to by Europe's leading natural and cultural philosophers including Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) and Blumenbach – as well as Petrus Camper (1722-1789) and Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804). They were actors in the shaping and reframing of race in the eighteenth century; they presented diverging and sometimes opposing views as to the reason behind the differences among humans.[392] Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae* published in 1735 proposed a classification of mankind in four groups: Europaeus, Americanus, Asiaticus and Afer.[393] In *Histoire Naturelle de l'Homme*, Buffon dedicated his last chapter to 'Variétés de l'espèce humaine' (varieties of the human species); Buffon defined a taxonomic system to classify humans in relation to an 'ideal'.[394] His concept of

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[389] Anon. [François Bernier], 'New Division of the earth according to the different species or races of man that inhabit it, sent by a famous voyager', *Journal des Sçavans,* 24 April (1684).
[390] Keevak, 'Taxonomies of yellow. Linnaeus, Blumenbach, and the making of a "Mongolian" race in the eighteenth century' in Keevak, *Becoming Yellow*, pp. 45-46.
[391] Keevak, *Becoming Yellow.*
[392] Harvey, *The French Enlightenment and its Others*, 'The varieties of man: racial theory between climate and heredity', pp.125-153; Augstein, *Race, the Origins of an Idea*; Bancel et al, *L'Invention de la Race*.
[393] Carl von Linné, *Systema Naturae* ([n.pl.], [n.pub.], 1735).
[394] Thierry Hoquet, 'Biologisation de la race et racialisation de l'humain: Bernier, Buffon, Linné' in Bancel, David and Thomas, *L'Invention de la Race*, pp.25-58.

degeneration implies the supremacy of the white race; this approach will be of interest when considering the racial origin of the ancient Egyptians.

Of particular interest in this chapter are Camper and Blumenbach, for their focus on skull measurement, or craniology.[395] In *The Works of the Late Professor Camper* (1794), Camper introduced his influential facial line or facial angle (*linea facialis*), a measurement he first presented in two lectures he gave in Amsterdam in 1777.[396] The introduction to Camper's posthumous publication, subtitled 'On the connection between the science of anatomy and the arts of drawing, painting, statuary, etc. etc.' noted:

> The grand object [of the book] was to shew, that national difference may be reduced to rules; of which the different directions of the facial line form a fundamental norma or canon; - that these directions and inclinations are always accompanied by correspondent forms, size and position of other parts of the cranium, the knowledge of which will prevent the Artist from blending the features of different nations in the same individual.[397]

The angles Camper devised were reused by individuals such as Etienne Geoffroy St Hilaire and Georges Cuvier to demonstrate the clear difference in the shape of skulls between individuals from different races. Camper and Blumenbach's approaches to the body, and in particular the skull, were a turning point in the way to study and apprehend the human body: they demonstrated, with varying models and interpretations, the development of a science dealing with variation in size, shape and proportions of the human skull that could be used to differentiate races, and to draw conclusions on the origin of certain bodies – this is where the Egyptian mummy came into play.

Egyptian mummies

From the racial discourses that emerged in the eighteenth century, one can ask: What made the Egyptian mummy such a worthy subject of investigation? As pointed out above,

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[395] For a study on Camper and his location in Dutch natural history, see: Klaas van Berkel and Bart Ramakers (eds), *Petrus Camper in Context: Science, the Arts, and Society in the Eighteenth Century Dutch Republic* (Torenlaan: Wilco, 2015).

[396] Thomas Cogan [Petrus Camper], *The Works of the Late Professor Camper* (London: printed for C. Dilly, 1794)

[397] Cogan [Camper], *The Works of the Late Professor Camper*, p.x. See also, on the relation between race and aesthetics: David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo, Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the 18th Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

the rediscovery of the ancient Egyptian civilisation led to the realisation that the ancient Egyptians had an advanced understanding of certain subjects, and this realisation was in part due to the discovery of mummies which had survived intact for centuries. The mummification process was evidence that the ancient Egyptians had a good understanding of anatomy as well as of the natural and chemical preservation of organic materials. This, in turn, led to the series of openings and dissections covered in the preceding chapter. With the progressive study of the ancient sites, and then the decipherment of the ancient Egyptian script, it became evident that the body of knowledge of the ancient Egyptians extended to astronomy, mathematics, literature, religion and so on. Ancient Egypt, because of its geographical location and the advanced nature of its civilisation, became a subject of contention, because this conflicted with contemporary discourses which placed African peoples as inferior or primitive. To resolve this contentious debate, the mummy had to become a subject of intellectual and physical investigation.

In 1787, Volney spent seven months in Egypt during a journey to the East. He was surprised to note that the Egyptians were not a white people, and noted:

> All the Egyptians have a bloated face, puffed-up eyes, flat nose, thin lips – in a word, the true face of the mulatto. I was tempted to attribute it to the climate, but when I visited the Sphinx, its appearance gave me the key to the riddle. On seeing that head, typically Negro in all its features, I remembered the remarkable passage where Herodotus says: 'As for me, I judge the Colchians to be a colony of the Egyptians because, like them, they are black with woolly hair…' When I visited the sphinx, I could not help thinking that the figure of that monster furnished the true solution to the enigma (of how the modern Egyptians came to have their 'mulatto' appearance). In other words the ancient Egyptians were true Negroes of the same type as all native-born Africans. That being so, we can see how their blood, mixed for several centuries with that of the Greeks and Romans, must have lost the intensity of its original color, while retaining nonetheless the imprint of its original mould.[398]

Volney's view that the ancient Egyptians were black-Africans did not reflect a consensus at the time. The question as to whether Egyptians were a black or white people

[398] Volney, *Travels through Syria and Egypt*, pp.80-83.

became of central concern (very few considered, at this time, the possibility of a multi-ethnic culture). In James Boswell's (1741-1795) seminal work, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791), a conversation is reported which mentions the race of a mummy, stating:

> I mentioned Lord Monboddo's notion that the ancient Egyptians, with all their learning, and all their arts, were not only black, but woolly-haired. Mr Palmer asked how it did appear upon examining the mummies? Dr Johnson approved of this test.[399]

Lord Monboddo – James Burnett (1714-1799) – was one of a number of scholars at the time interested in the concept of evolution, and ancient Egypt was at the core of his interests. The conversation reported above is the first mention of the use of direct evidence – an unwrapping, autopsy or dissection – to answer the question of the racial origin of Egyptian mummies.

5.2 Blumenbach's mummy dissections

Between 1792 and 1794, German anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach conducted a series of examinations of Egyptian mummies, in private settings and at the British Museum. Blumenbach's interventions are the first evident link between mummy dissections and investigations into the classification of race. Blumenbach was also the first, and only, individual to conduct dissections of mummies inside the British Museum, which did not authorise the practice thereafter. The extensive studies on race conducted by Blumenbach have been studied to some extent, although almost exclusively in German, especially in an ongoing project conducted by the University of Göttingen.[400] It is, however, true to say that Blumenbach's studies of Egyptian mummies have received relatively little attention, and yet, are important in the framing of the mummy as an object of racial investigation.[401] This section considers a number of investigations conducted by Blumenbach: the 1781 Göttingen intervention, followed by the series of openings and dissections performed in London between 1792 and 1794.

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[399] James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, Comprehending an Account of His Studies and Numerous Works in Chronological Order*, Volume 4 (London: G. Walker, [1791] ed. 1820), pp.109-110.
[400] 'Johann Friedrich Blumenbach – online' of the Union der Deutschen Akademien der Wissenschaften <www.Blumenbach-online.de> [accessed August 2017].
[401] Roj Bhopal, 'The beautiful skull and Blumenbach's errors: the birth of the scientific concept of race' in *BMJ*, volume 335 (2007), pp.1308-1319. Also, in Christina Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), pp.48-49, 52, 54 and 71.

The 1781 opening in Göttingen

In 1794, Blumenbach recalled in his 'Observations on some Egyptian mummies opened in London' the 'uncommon, and to me very interesting, opportunities that were afforded to me, to open and examine several Egyptian mummies.'[402] Despite pointing out the originality of the event, this London event was not Blumenbach's first encounter with a mummy, having previously presided over the examination of a mummy in the academic museum of the University of Göttingen, where he was teaching, on 25 August 1781. The event was recorded in the *Göttingische Anzeigen von Gelehrten Sachen* of 8 October 1781.[403] This is the earliest account of Blumenbach's involvement with Egyptian mummies. The report indicates that the event occurred during a convention of the Der Königliche Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften (The Royal Society of the Sciences). The opening of the mummy – or the 'investigation' as it is called in the report – was undertaken by Göttingen professor of medicine and chemistry Johann Friedrich Gmelin (1748-1804), Blumenbach, and Heinrich August Wrisberg (1739-1808); Blumenbach and Wrisberg performed the dissection, while Gmelin conducted the chemical analysis of the paint.

The report of this intervention is divided into two parts: first, the description of the outer parts of the mummy, and then, the analyses of the internal parts. The sarcophagus in which the mummy was contained was 6ft long (approx. 1.8m) and the cover of the body just over 5ft long (approx. 1.5m). The body was found to be that of a female, covered by cartonnage – unattached to the bandages – from the chest down to the feet. The face had been painted onto the wrapping, but was badly preserved, which Blumenbach and Wrisberg suggested was due to 'the Arabs' ripping off the veil to cut a hole on the right of the mummy's head, looking for gold inside the skull.[404] The investigation then focused on the body: the report noted that inspection was done from the back of the mummy, so as not to destroy it completely. Bones were found dislocated and in complete disarray. The men noted that this would have been due to natural causes, rather than modern destruction. No soft tissue remained from the mummification process. The report ended with the following critique:

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[402] Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, 'Observations on some Egyptian mummies opened in London', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 84 (1794), pp.177-195 (p.177).
[403] Anon., *Göttingische Anzeigen von Gelehrten Sachen*, 8 October (1781), pp.985-992.
[404] Ibid.

> The aim of the embalming was to preserve the body out of reverence for the dead; over the years, however, it became accepted that a stranger's hand disgracefully cuts open the bare body. As a consequence, a religious custom, which sense gets lost, has the opposite effect: here comes the modern European scholar, who has no knowledge of the custom.[405]

This critique was seemingly addressed to those individuals who had destroyed and misused the mummy – this is likely a reference to the consumption, destruction and trade of mummies through time. Throughout his research, Blumenbach remained very critical of the ways mummies had been handled in the past, and he condemned the poor quality of contemporary research on Egyptian mummies. This first investigation of a mummy by Blumenbach was conducted in a scientific setting, with a view to understanding the process of mummification. Blumenbach put together an interdisciplinary team for this purpose. However, it was not very different from the interventions covered in the preceding chapter because he is not yet investigating or mentioning race – at least overtly.

The 1792 dissections in London

Blumenbach's first examination of an Egyptian mummy in London occurred on 21 January 1792 at the house of Blumenbach's friend, Scottish physician Dr Marxwell Garthshore (1732-1812). Garthshore was a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. He was connected to surgeon John Hunter who participated in the dissection of a mummy at Hadley's; Garthshore had made financial provision for Anne Hunter (1742-1821), Hunter's wife, after his death. Garthshore had his own collection of Egyptian antiquities which included a small, one-foot long mummy. Blumenbach's dissection of this mummy took place in private in front of a select audience, which included the President and several members of the Royal Society, 'and other men of letters.'[406] The small mummy had a mask and breast plates, of relatively good conservation. The mummy was cut open at the side for inspection; Blumenbach noted that 'the outward integuments were glued

[405] Ibid., p.988, author's translation.
[406] Blumenbach, *Observations*, p.177.

so fast upon each other that it was found necessary to use a saw.'[407] The inside of the mummy was made of a bundle of the integuments of another mummy, mixed with resins.

Blumenbach mentioned in his *Observations* a second, similar mummy he found in the collection of Dr John C. Lettsom (1744-1815). Blumenbach opened that mummy at Lettsom's house on 29 January 1792. The mummy appeared to contain no human remains but, instead, the skeleton of an ibis. Blumenbach noted that 'the striking difference, no doubt, rather excited than satisfied my curiosity.'[408] Blumenbach approached the British Museum, having found the museum holding three similar small mummies. He wrote:

> I felt an irresistible impulse to apply to the President of the Royal Society, as one of the curators of the Museum, for his interference towards obtaining permission to open one of the three in order to have an opportunity for some further comparison.[409]

The President of the Royal Society was Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820) to whom Blumenbach's *Observations* are addressed.[410] Banks, who took part in James Cook's (1728-1779) first great voyages from 1768 to 1771, was the President of the Royal Society, a Trustee of the British Museum, and a member of the Society of Antiquaries of London. Blumenbach and Banks were engaged in correspondences in the late-eighteenth century.[411] Banks's eminent position in the intellectual scene and his direct connection with the Museum as a Trustee, allowed Banks to provide Blumenbach with access to the collection. Because of these fortuitous circumstances, Blumenbach was allowed 'not only to open one of these little mummies, but also to choose among the four large ones that are in the noble repository, the one that should appear to me the most likely to afford some material information on the subject.'[412] Blumenbach elected among the small mummies at the British Museum one from 'the Sloanian collection', for it seemed to differ the most from Garthshore and Lettsom's mummies. The four large mummies resembled the one he examined in Göttingen, so he elected the one that differed the most, judging from the bandages. Evidently, Blumenbach was not looking for the most spectacular specimen – a

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[407] Ibid., p.178.
[408] Ibid., p.179.
[409] Ibid.
[410] Ibid.
[411] Claudia Kroke, *Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Bibliographie seiner Schriften* (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2010).
[412] Blumenbach, *Observations*, p.179.

definite election choice for collectors – but the one that could help form the most comprehensive typology of mummies.

The dissection of the mummies occurred on 18 February 1792 at the British Museum. The precise location in the Museum is unknown, but Blumenbach pointed out that the dissection was done 'in the presence of a numerous and respectable meeting.'[413] Blumenbach started with the small mummy and the dissection was evidently destructive, with Blumenbach 'sawing it open' with a 'heated saw.'[414] The small mummy, once more, proved to be a fabrication. Blumenbach noted that 'although when viewed externally nothing appeared suspicious in this little mummy, I found, however, on examining carefully the successive integuments that the outward ones had some traces of our common lint paper, with which it seemed to have been restored, and afterwards painted over.'[415]

The large mummy appeared to be the body of a young person. The soft tissues of the body had all disappeared, leaving only the skeleton and a large amount of resin. It was on the occasion of the dissection of this specific mummy that Blumenbach began introducing comments on the racial origin of mummies. He noted the presence of the *maxillae*, which he pointed out was 'sensibly prominent, but by no means so much as in a *true Guinea face*; and not more so than is often seen on handsome negroes, and not seldom on European countenances.'[416] This comment reflects Blumenbach's interest in identifying racial origins from the facial structure of Egyptian mummies. Blumenbach continued his detailed description, recording the absence of amulets, and of 'an onion' (this is a direct reference to Hadley's dissection and the onion on his mummy foot),[417] but noted the peculiarity of two artificial ears. Blumenbach then stated in his report that 'circumstances' did not allow him to experiment on the mummies examined at the British Museum, and he was interested in finding out more on the salt used to cover one of the large mummies. He noted that geologist John Hawkins (1761-1841) helped him obtain 'some considerable pieces of mummies which he had bought off a druggist at Constantinople […] which in taste and appearance was very similar to that I have just

[413] Blumenbach, *Observations*, p.180.
[414] Ibid.
[415] Ibid.
[416] Ibid.
[417] John Hadley, 'An account of a mummy, inspected at London 1763', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 54 (1764), pp.1-14.

now mentioned.'[418] Blumenbach then referred to the dissection of another mummy at the British Museum (the third one), 'for the sake of comparison.'[419]

Blumenbach conducted other mummy investigations, outside the British Museum. On 17 March 1794, he examined another mummy at the house of a Fellow of the Royal Society, Charles Francis Greville (1749-1809). The mummy belonged to John Symmons (1745-1831) and had already been opened on 29 March 1788 by John Hunter. The *New Lady's Magazine* reported on the latter occasion:

> On Saturday morning last John Symmons, Esq. of Grosvenor-house, had a mummy dissected there by Mr. John Hunter, at which were present Dr. Brocklesby, and other of the faculty, with several of the literati. […] As soon as the ceremony of the operation was over, the remains of her Royal Highness were carefully deposited in a box, and the company, after the custom of ancient funerals, dined together, and afterwards poured libations to her memory.[420]

Blumenbach's investigation of this specific mummy was conducted to the point of destruction since Blumenbach was allowed 'unconditionally, not only to dissect it as much more as I should think proper, but also to select and take away whatever parts of it I should think worthy of a particular investigation';[421] evidently, the specimen was already lost through previous intervention. Of his many investigations, Blumenbach noted that many Egyptian mummies were what he called 'artificial restorations and deceptions', meaning modern fakes.[422] Almost all of the mummies he inspected had evidence of forgery, either on the body itself or the coffin. His encounters with such deceptions led Blumenbach to call, in his *Observations*, for a better study of the ancient Egyptian culture. He wrote:

> How many other artificial restorations and deceptions may have been practised in the several mummies which have been brought into Europe, which have never been suspected, and may perhaps never be detected, may well be admitted, when

[418] Blumenbach, *Observations*, p.183.
[419] Ibid.
[420] Anon., *The New Lady's Magazine: Or, Polite and Entertaining Companion to the Fair Sex*, Volume 3 (1788), p.220.
[421] Blumenbach, *Observations*, p.184.
[422] Ibid., p.186. Forgeries of Egyptian mummies were common on the market, motivated by a keen interest from buyers, who sometimes lacked sufficient knowledge to assess the authenticity of the specimens. Moser pointed out that 'such mummies had been acquired in good faith as examples of mummification because their external appearance matched what Europeans had come to think as mummies': Stephanie Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), p.48.

we consider how imperfect we are as yet in our knowledge of this branch of Egyptian archaeology, which, as a specific problem, few have hitherto treated with the critical acumen it seems to deserve.[423]

The relative lack of knowledge at the time justified, in Blumenbach's opinion, the opening of mummies.

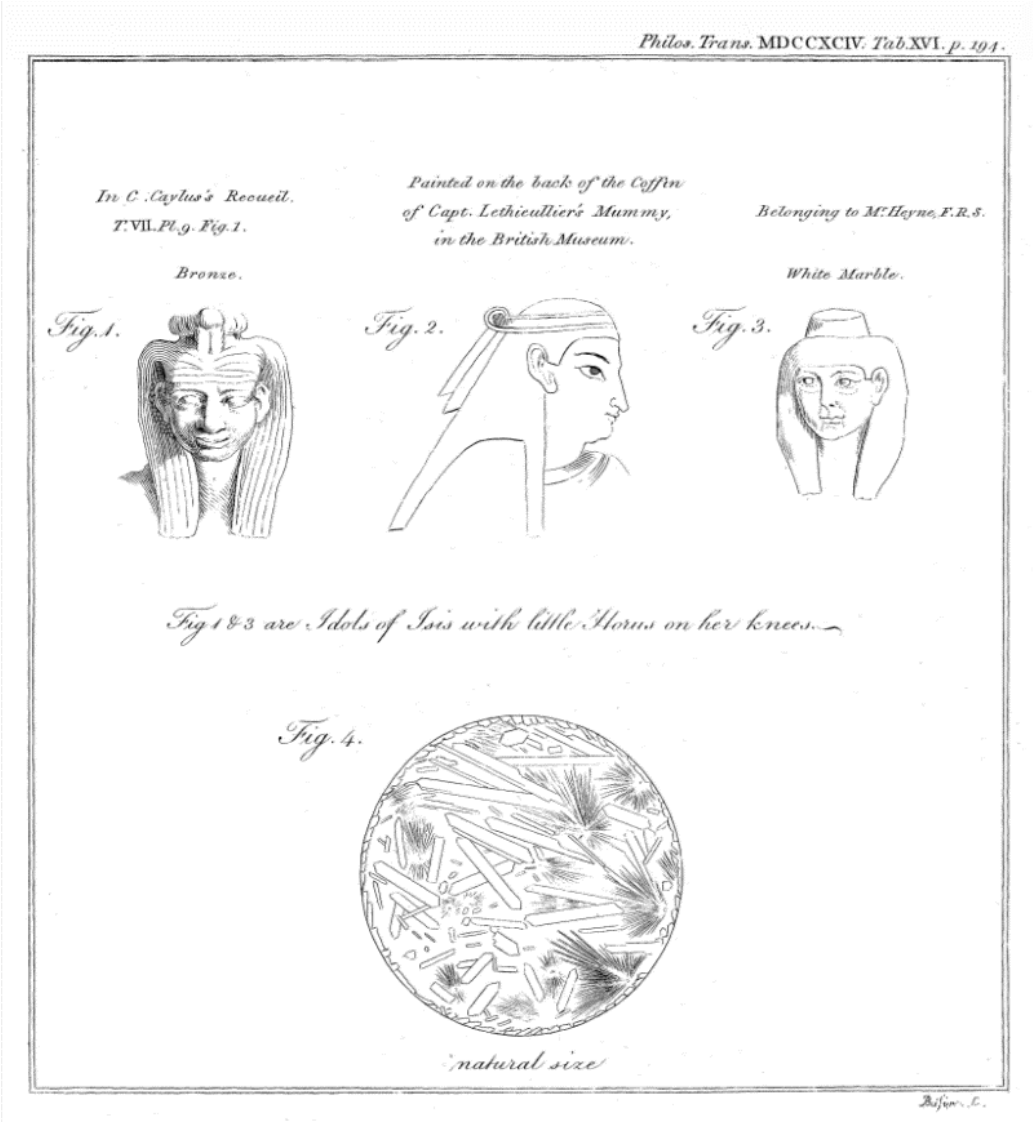

Fig.5.1: Blumenbach's knowledge of previous studies of mummies is evident in this drawing, in which he names Caylus and the Lethieullier mummy at the British Museum. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, 'Observations on some Egyptian mummies opened in London', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 84 (1794), pp.177-195.

[423] Blumenbach, *Observations*, p.187.

Mummies and races in Blumenbach's <u>Observations</u>

By the time the opening of mummies occurred in London, Blumenbach had already published fundamental work on the study and categorisation of mankind, in particular on race. He had studied at the Universities of Jena and Göttingen, graduating from the latter in 1775. His thesis, *De Generis Humani Varietate Native Liber* (*On the Natural Variety of Mankind*) formed the basis of his research on race-based classification.[424] Blumenbach distinguished between apes and humans in this work, both by the absence of an 'intermaxillary' bone and the upright posture of humans. His thesis was re-issued in 1795, with the addition of drawings of skulls to illustrate the physical characteristics of humans [Fig.5.2].[425] Crucially, the publication divided humans into 'types of races': in the first edition, Blumenbach proposed four, and then changed this to five categories in the second edition. The five races he established were as follows: 1. The Caucasian, 2. The Mongolian, 3. The Malay, 4. The Ethiopian and 5. The American.[426]

Fig.5.2: Typology of skulls in Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *De Generis Humani Nativa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek and Ruprecht, 1795). © Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[424] Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa* (published as dissertation, 1775).
[425] Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa* (Gottingae: Vandenhoek and Ruprecht, 1795).
[426] Ibid.

In his call for a better understanding of Egyptian mummies, Blumenbach noted the need for 'a very careful technical examination of the characteristic forms of the several skulls of mummies we have hitherto met with, together with an accurate comparison of those skulls with the monuments abovementioned' (that is, representations in Egyptian art on monuments).[427] On the race of the Egyptian mummies, Blumenbach noted that the Egyptians 'will find their place between the Caucasian and the Ethiopian' group.[428] He wrote on the physiognomy of Egyptian mummies that he located three varieties, but insisted that 'like all the varieties in the human species, [they] are no doubt often blended together, so as to produce various shades, but from which the *true*, if I may so call it, *ideal* archetype may however be distinguished, by unequivocal properties.'[429] The three varieties he identified in Egyptian mummies were: 1. the Aethiopian, 2. The Hindoo and 3. The 'mixed'.[430]

In 1796, after his interventions in London, Blumenbach published an Atlas, *Abbildungen Naturhistorischer Gegenstände,* which opened with five illustrations of the five human races he had determined.[431] Throughout his studies, Blumenbach strived to classify human races, but emphasised the disconnection between race and ability, thus detaching his research from other contemporary racial theories. Eigen noted that 'throughout Blumenbach's collective work and highlighted by the *Abbildungen* is the certainty that, on the one hand, race can function as a category of physical classification, and on the other hand, race must be rejected as an analytic category of culture.'[432]

Blumenbach's series of dissections of Egyptian mummies is important, because it locates the Egyptian mummy as an object of racially-motivated investigation. However, it is important to note that Blumenbach was interested in how the mummy fitted within his classification, rather than exploring the origin of the mummy within a specific agenda – this is important because the two following sections deal with individuals who had strong views on where the Egyptian mummy needed to fit in the context of the racial classification of humankind.

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[427] Blumenbach, *Observations*, p.189.
[428] Ibid., p.193.
[429] Ibid.
[430] Ibid.
[431] Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *Abbildungen Naturhistorischer Gegenstände* (Göttingen: Heinrich Dieterich, 1796).
[432] Sara Eigen, 'Self, race, and species: J. F. Blumenbach's atlas experiment', *The German Quarterly*, 78.3 (2005), pp.277-298.

5.3 Georges Cuvier's skull taxonomy

The anatomical comparisons set by Blumenbach were further developed by Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), who advanced the taxonomic approach to the classification and division of animals and humans. Cuvier has been researched extensively: his contribution to zoology is extensive, his curatorship at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris had a long-lasting impact on the shaping and curating of natural sciences, and his feuds with other naturalists are well known. In particular, the studies of Taquet are important in gaining a thorough understanding of Cuvier's work and personality.[433] What is less known, however, is the extent of Cuvier's research on human remains, which formed an important part of his private collection; while his collecting of Sarah Baartman has been the subject of some scholarly attention,[434] his collecting and study of Egyptian human remains has been left in the margin of scholarly research, and therefore I will focus on this aspect of his research, with a view to understanding ways Cuvier framed the Egyptian mummy.

Born on 23 August 1769 to a middle-class family in Montbéliard, Cuvier developed an interest for natural history early on and in 1788 became a tutor in the subject. Cuvier worked on a new plan for a general natural history, wanting to transform, in particular, the field of zoology. In order to realise his project, Cuvier approached the scientific community of the Cabinet d'histoire naturelle in the Jardin du Roi. Created in 1635 by Louis XIII (1601-1643) as a garden of medicinal plants, a 1718 decree of Louis XV (1710-1774) later removed the medicinal restriction for the garden to include research on natural history. Soon after the reorganisation of the institution in 1793, and its renaming as Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Cuvier was named assistant, aged only twenty-six. It is in the context of the culmination of his interest in natural history and the transformation of the royal gardens into a museum that Cuvier developed his original research, which transformed research methods in natural history. In particular,

[433] Philippe Taquet, *Georges Cuvier, Naissance d'un Génie* (Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 2006); Also, Dorinda Outram, *Georges Cuvier: Vocation, Science, and Authority in Post-Revolutionary France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press,1984).
[434] Gérard Badou, *L'Enigme de la Venus Hottentote* (Paris: Jean Claude Lattès, 2000), Natasha Gordon-Chipembere, *Representation and Black Womanhood: The Legacy of Sarah Baartman* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Cuvier's main contribution was to establish comparative anatomy and vertebrate palaeontology as significant fields of research.[435]

The first investigations of Egyptian specimens undertaken by Cuvier were with ibis, and were linked to his cooperation – and disputes – with other naturalists of his time. Three naturalists studied Egyptian animal mummies in Paris in the first half of the nineteenth century: Georges Cuvier, Jean Baptiste de Lamarck (1744-1829) and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1772-1844). These three used animal mummies to prove their own – differing – theories regarding the possibility that animals and plants had evolved through structural modifications to their form. Cuvier investigated Egyptian animal mummies through the lens of his personal research on comparative anatomy and the possibility of animal evolution. He studied various specimens of cats and ibis, brought from Egypt in the aftermath of the French expedition by Saint-Hilaire. In 1830, he published *Discours sur les Révolutions de la Surface du Globe*, in which he presented a study of the Egyptian ibis.[436] He used this study to support his theory that organic evolution did not exist, and that organisms were a functional whole that could not be altered, contemplating the unchanged physiognomy of these animals over time. Cuvier stated that the specimens from ancient Egypt were not different from their nineteenth century contemporary counterparts. Flourens noted:

> Egypt has preserved, in its catacombs, said M. Cuvier, cats, dogs, monkeys, cattle heads, ibis, birds of prey, crocodiles etc., and certainly we do not see more differences between these beings and the ones we see, than between the human mummies and the skeletons of men today.[437]

Cuvier's ideas were opposed to those of his contemporaries, particularly Lamark, Buffon and Saint-Hilaire, who believed in changeable animal morphology. Cuvier and Saint Hilaire were both offered a position as naturalists in Napoleon's expedition, but Cuvier, who had joined the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, declined, claiming he

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[435] On Cuvier's involvement in the transformation of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris, see: Philippe Taquet, 'Establishing the paradigmatic museum, Georges Cuvier's cabinet d'anatomie comparée in Paris' in Knell, MacLoed and Watson (eds), *Museum Revolutions*, pp.3-14.

[436] Georges Cuvier, *Discours sur les Révolutions de la Surface du Globe* (Paris: E. d'Ocagne, 1830). Studies of the ibis also appear in: Georges Cuvier, *Recherches sur les Ossemens Fossiles, où l'on Etablit les Caractères de Plusieurs Animaux dont les Révolutions du Globe ont Détruit les Espèces* ([n.pl.], [n.pub.], 1812). They are also reported in (not exhaustive): Aubin-Louis Millin, *Dictionnaire des Beaux-Arts* (Paris: Chez Desray, 1806), pp.124-125; Pierre Flourens, *Analyse Raisonnée des Travaux de Georges Cuvier, Précédées de son Eloge Historique* (Paris: Chez Paulin, 1841).

[437] Flourens, *Analyse Raisonnée*, p.257.

had more substantial work underway at the Museum. In 1797, he already published *Tableau Elémentaire de l'Histoire Naturelle des Animaux* (*Elementary Survey of the Natural History of Animals*).[438]

Investigations on Egyptian human skulls

Cuvier wanted to apply the comparative classification system he had developed with animals on humans, and he complained in 1799 that there had not yet been such study, stating: 'Entire skeletons would be infinitely valuable. Can it be conceived that we have not yet, in any work, the detailed composition of the skeleton of the Negro, and that of the White?'[439] In the same *Note*, Cuvier drew up guidelines on ways to acquire and study such specimens.[440] Cuvier's investigations of African bodies were extensive, and were embedded in late-eighteenth-century and early-nineteenth-century frameworks of inquiries which, in this case, directly linked race to physical and mental attributes. In 1816, a South African woman, Sarah Bartmann, died in Paris. Cuvier studied her while she was alive, and at her death, he claimed her body for investigation.[441] Cuvier made a plaster cast of her body once deceased, and then dissected it; both cast and human remains were put on display at the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle. This series of events fitted within a series of investigations of African women – referred to at the time as 'Hottentots' or 'Bushwomen' – by thinkers who used the black body as a frame to compare, construct and assert racial theories.[442] Although Cuvier did not dissect full Egyptian mummies, he did study a large number of Egyptian mummy skulls – Cuvier had his own cabinet which contained Egyptian human skulls, amongst his c. 11,000 preparations.[443]

Cuvier's investigations are commented upon in James Cowles Prichard's (1786-1848) *Research into the Physical History of Mankind* (1836), which touched upon the subject of evolution, and dedicated two chapters to the ancient Egyptians: 'Chapter X. On

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[438] Georges Cuvier, *Tableau Elémentaire de l'Histoire Naturelle des Animaux* (Paris: Baudouin, 1797).
[439] Georges Cuvier, *Note Instructive sur les Recherches à Faire Relativement aux Différences Anatomiques des Diverses Races d'Homme* (1799), edited in Jean Copans and Jean Jamin, *Aux Origines de l'Anthropologie Française* (Paris: J.M. Place, 1994), texte 2, author's translation.
[440] Ibid.
[441] Georges Cuvier, *Extraits d'Observations faites sur le Cadavre d'une Femme connue à Paris et à Londres sous le Nom de vénus Hottentote* (Paris: G. Dufour, 1817).
[442] Ibid.
[443] Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla, *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Sciences and Popular Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p.25.

the History of the Ancient Egyptians, and of their Relation to other Races of Men' and 'Chapter XI. On the Physical History of the Egyptian race'.[444] In the latter chapter, the section 'Of Mummies' opened with the note: 'We have an authentic source of information respecting the physical characters of the Egyptian race, in the innumerable mummies, in which the mortal remains of the people are preserved'.[445] He reported on Cuvier's investigations of Egyptian mummies:

> M. Cuvier declares that he has examined, either at Paris or in other parts of Europe, more than fifty heads of mummies, and that none of them presented the characters either of the Negro or the Hottentot. He concluded that the Egyptians belonged to the same race of men as the Europeans; that their cranium and brain was equally voluminous with ours; 'qu'en un mot, ils ne faisaient pas exception à cette loi cruelle qui semble avoir condamné à une éternelle infériorité les races à crane déprimé et comprimé'.[446]

The quotation in French is here translated: 'that cruel law, which seems to have condemned to an eternal inferiority those races with small and compressed skulls'.[447] Cuvier's study of Egyptian skulls was entirely shaped with the aim of expositing the fact that ancient Egyptians were not a black people, comparing those skulls to extensive studies he had conducted on non-white individuals. In his report on Sarah Bartmann, Cuvier made additional comments asserting the absence of links between black-Africans and the ancient Egyptians, stating:

> [Neither the] bushman, nor any race of Negros, gave birth to the celebrated people who established civilisation in ancient Egypt and from whom one could say that the entire world has inherited the principle of law, science and perhaps even religion.[448]

The appropriation of the ancient Egyptians as exclusively Caucasian was not specific to Cuvier's research, but rather an expression of nineteenth-century racial and colonial discourses, that were repeated by numerous naturalists and philosophers. For example, in the 1840s, Samuel George Morton (1799-1851) used skull measurements to

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[444] James Cowles Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, volume 1 (London: Sherwood, Gilbert & Piper, 1836).
[445] Ibid., p.232.
[446] Ibid., p.233.
[447] Cuvier, *Extraits d'Observations*, p.273.
[448] Ibid.

conclude that ancient Egypt was 'originally peopled by a branch of the Caucasian race' and that Egypt was then penetrated by other people, creating what he called 'an endless confusion of races';[449] this theory was reused by American Josiah Nott (1803-1873) who called the racial diversity after the original Caucasian presence, 'barbarism'.[450] The reuse of Caucaso-centric theories of the racial origin of the ancient Egyptians across the Atlantic illustrates the resonance of these theories in a context of developing colonialism which emphasised the superiority of Europeans and white Americans over Africans, using the ancient Egyptians as an example of Caucasian achievement.

Fig.5.3: Egyptian skulls in the collections of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris, c. 1880. © RMN / Bibliothèque centrale du MNHN / Pierre Petit. [Copyright restriction].

[449] Samuel G. Morton, *Crania Aegyptiaca: Or, Observations on Egyptian Ethnography, Derived from Anatomy, History and the Monuments* (Philadelphia: John Penington; London: Madden & Co., 1844), p.65.
[450] Josiah C. Nott, *Two Lectures on the Natural History of the Caucasian and Negro Races* (Mobile: Printed by Dade and Thompson, 1844), p.16.

5.4 Granville's mummy dissection

The investigations of Egyptian mummies through physical interventions covered in the preceding chapter, and Blumenbach and Cuvier's taxonomic studies of Egyptian mummies, were synthesised – and referred to – in the single intervention of Augustus Bozzi Granville in 1821. Granville's thorough knowledge of medical practices, and the attention his intervention attracted, place the events of the autopsy and subsequent dissection of a mummy in a framework of respectability. This event has been studied extensively by Riggs, who conducted an original study of the exceptional drawings produced during this dissection, and engraved for publication.[451] It is useful here to review the process of this dissection, for its unique character, but also its connection with the unrollings covered in the next chapter.

On 14 April 1825, Granville presented a paper on the results of the dissection of a mummy, which he reported in the *Philosophical Transactions*.[452] Milan-born, Granville started his medical education in Pavia, then part of the Austrian Empire.[453] A fervent advocate of Italy's independence, he fled the country on the eve of Napoleon's invasion and, in Corfu, made the acquaintance of William Richard Hamilton (1777-1859), the private secretary to Lord Elgin (1766-1841), British Ambassador at Constantinople. Hamilton had already proved himself by taking part in the campaign against the French in Egypt, and notably, he was responsible for taking possession of the Rosetta Stone from the French. Hamilton also supervised the removal of the Parthenon marbles for Lord Elgin. Prior to his return to Britain, Hamilton facilitated Granville's admission as physician to the British Embassy in Constantinople. Granville travelled extensively, ultimately reaching Spain where he practiced medicine in Madrid, later becoming an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Madrid. From 1807 to 1813, he served in the Royal Navy as assistant surgeon to *HMS Raven*. Upon his return to England, he married and settled in London as a physician. During his travels, Granville had spent eighteen months in Paris studying obstetrics, a speciality he pursued upon his return. In Paris, Granville attended lectures given by the greatest medical scientists and naturalists

[451] Christina Riggs, 'An autopsic art: drawings of "Dr Granville's mummy" in the Royal Society Archives', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, volume 70, issue 2 (2016), pp.107-133.
[452] Augustus Bozzi Granville, 'An essay on Egyptian mummies; With observations on the arts of embalming among the ancient Egyptians', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 115 (1825), pp.269-316.
[453] Alex Sakula, 'Augustus Bozzi Granville (1783-1872): London physician-accoucheur and Italian patriot', *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, volume 76, issue 10 (1983), pp.876-882.

of his time, including Cuvier. In 1819, he was appointed physician-accoucheur in London, a year after being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. Soon, Granville grew disappointed in the management of the Royal Society, especially when he considered the low scientific standard of the institution. His visit to Paris and in particular his encounters with Cuvier and Louis Joseph Gay-Lussac (1778-1850) had demonstrated the possible advances of scientific research. Granville soon implemented important reforms, notably in the 1830s, when he regulated the admission of Fellows.[454] In 1874, Granville published his autobiography which provides a compelling account of the scientific world of the time.[455]

Granville had received the mummy of a woman and its coffin from one of his patients, Sir Archibald Edmonstone, 3rd Baronet (1795-1871) who had travelled to Egypt in 1819. The *London Medical Repository and Review* reported:

> Sir Archibald Edmonstone having presented Dr. G. with a mummy, which he had purchased at Gournou, on the 24th of March, 1819, from one of the inhabitants of the sepulchral excavations on the side of the mountain, at the back of which are the celebrated tombs of the kings of Thebes, Dr. Granville proceeded to a minute examination.[456]

The mummy was received intact, Granville noted that 'when the mummy came into my possession, it was precisely in the state in which it was found when the case was first opened by Sir Archibald Edmonstone, covered with cerecloth and bandages most skilfully arranged, and applied with a neatness and precision, that would baffle even the imitative power of the most adroit surgeon of the present day.'[457] The mummy belonged to a fifty-year-old Theban woman.

Granville's unrolling was carried out in two stages: first the unwrapping – the removal of the fabrics covering the body – which took an hour, and then, the meticulous dissection of the body, which took place at his house over the course of six weeks. The proceedings of these operation sequences were recorded in Granville's *An Essay on Egyptian Mummies.*[458] The removal of the mummy wrappings was done in the presence

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[454] Ibid.
[455] Augustus Bozzi Granville, *Autobiography of A. B. Granville* (London: Henry S. king & Co., 1874).
[456] James Copland, John Darwall and John Conolly, *The London Medical Repository and Review, Volume 1 from June to December 1825* (London: Printed for Thomas and George Underwood, 1825), p.372.
[457] Granville, *An Essay on Egyptian Mummies*, p.5.
[458] Granville, *An Essay on Egyptian Mummies*.

of a small committee, 'two or three medical friends, and Sir Archibald himself.'[459] Granville's background in medical surgery is obvious throughout the report in his use of medical terms: he called on different occasions the wrappings 'bandages', and meticulously distinguished each type of bandages. The significance of these thorough observations on bandaging were noted by Granville himself:

> These observations respecting the art of bandaging among the ancient inhabitants of Egypt, as displayed in their best class of mummies, have not, as far as I recollect, been made before to the extent here alluded to, and will throw a new light on the history of the branch of practical surgery.[460]

Granville was very much aware that his research on mummies was of a different nature from those practiced before: his attention to detail and medical references made this event the closest a mummy dissection had ever been to an anatomical dissection in a medical context. In Granville's report, medical observations were combined with an evident awareness of the contemporary research on ancient Egyptian funerary customs. For example, on one occasion, he compared the wrappings of his mummy to 'those described and delineated by Jomard in the *Description de l'Egypte*.'[461]

[459] Ibid., p.5.
[460] Ibid., p.6.
[461] Ibid.; Jomard et al., *Description de l'Egypte*.

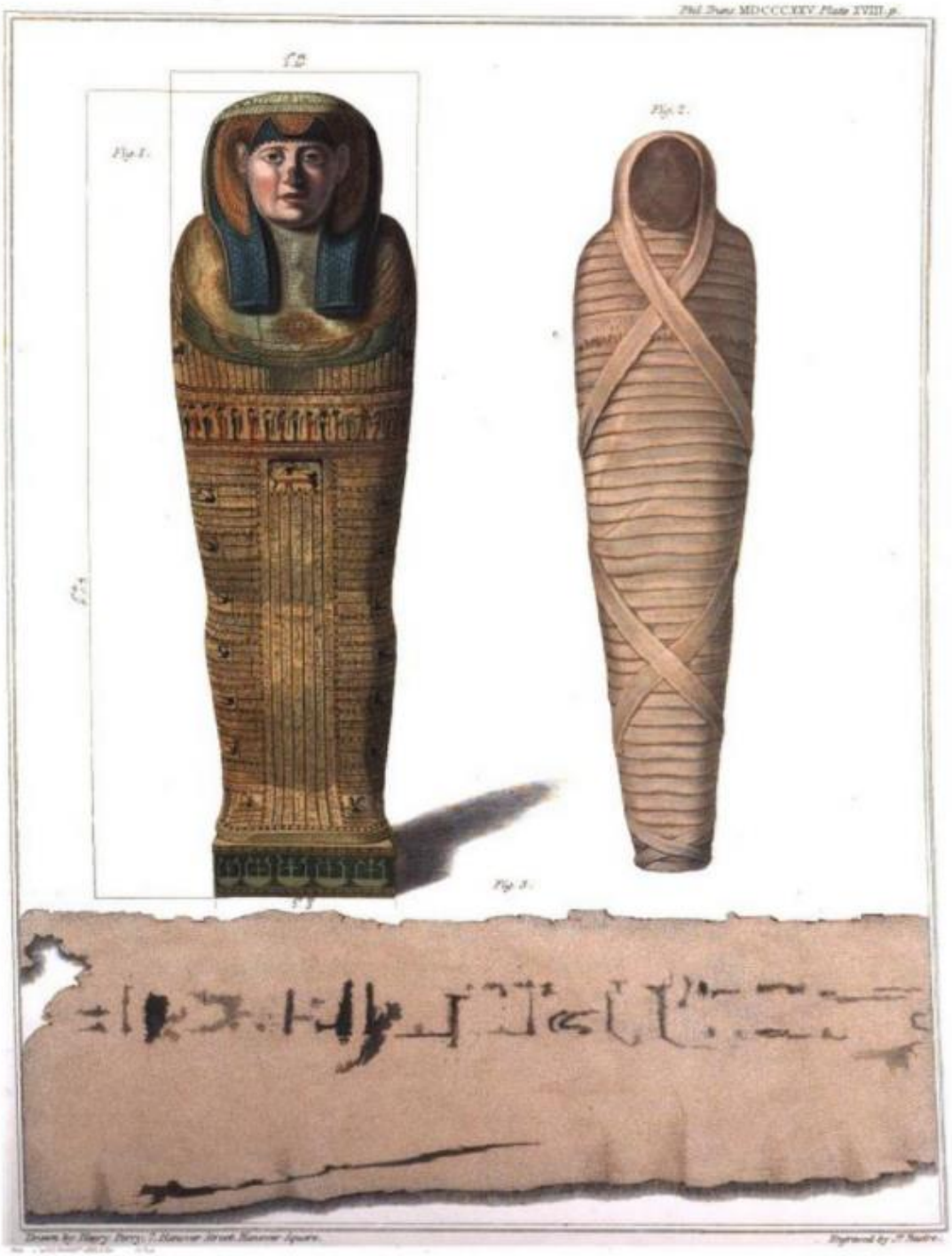

Fig.5.4: The coffin and the mummy in Augustus B. Granville, ‘An essay on Egyptian mummies’, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 115 (1825), pp.269-316.

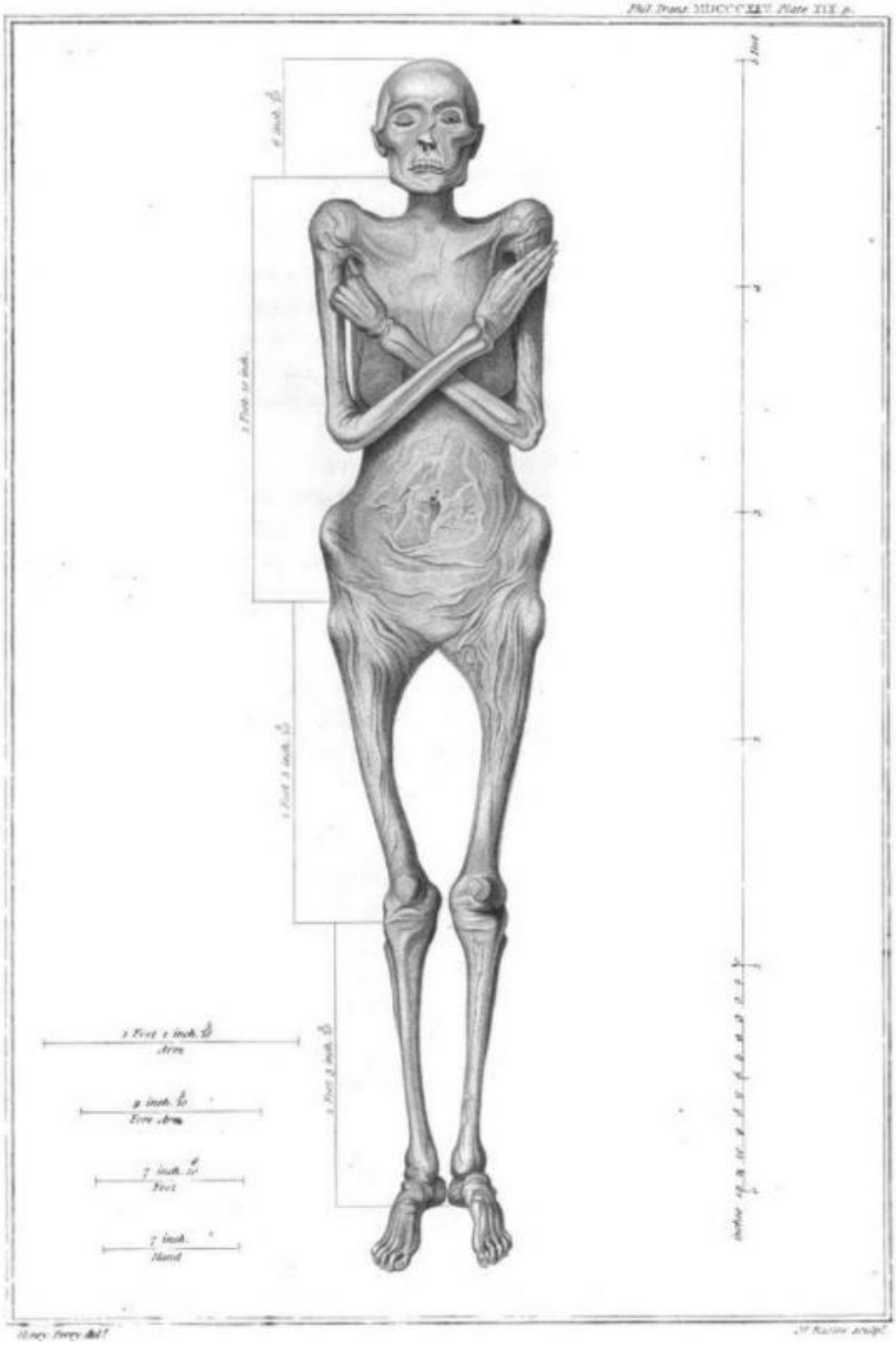

Fig.5.5: The unwrapped mummy in Augustus B. Granville, ‘An essay on Egyptian mummies’, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 115 (1825), pp.269-316.

After the removal of the wrappings, Granville moved on to the autopsy of the mummy, which he began with the analysis of the sex (female), and of the main physical characteristics.[462] The next stage of Granville's report concerned the careful measurement of the body, linked to the determination of the individual's race, which ties in with Blumenbach's and Cuvier's anthropometric investigations. Granville started by comparing the height of the mummy with an ideal, that of the 'Venus de Medici', stating:

> The celebrated Medicean statue, which stands as the representative of a perfect beauty, is five feet in height, like our mummy, and the relative ad-measurement of the arm, fore-arm, and hand in each, are precisely similar.[463]

Of all the observations, it is Granville's investigation of the pelvis of the mummified woman which is the most revealing of his research, and how it tied to contemporary questionings [Fig.5.6]. In order to prove his point regarding the mummy's racial origin, Granville brought to the Royal Society the dissected pelvis of a 'Negro girl', ready for inspection.[464] The comparison led Granville to declare that 'the pelvis of our female mummy will be found to come nearer to the *beau idéal* of the Caucasian structure, than does that of women of Europe in general.'[465] In the same manner, Granville moved onto the examination of the cranium, once again demonstrating its apparent European origin, noting that it bears to the skull of the Georgian female represented in the *Decas Tertia Craniorum* of Blumenbach's very instructive collection.'[466] Immediately thereafter, Granville referred to Cuvier's work noting that 'it may be affirmed then, that Cuvier's opinion respecting the Caucasian origin of the Egyptians, founded on his examination of upwards of fifty heads of mummies, is corroborated by the preceding observations.'[467]

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[462] Granville was also the first of the series of individual who dissected mummies to search for a cause of death: see, Helen D. Donoghue et al., 'Tuberculosis in Dr Granville's mummy', *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, issue 277 (2010), pp.51-56.
[463] Granville, *Essay on Egyptian Mummies*, p.12.
[464] Ibid, pp.13-15.
[465] Ibid, p.13.
[466] Ibid, p.14.
[467] Ibid, p.15.

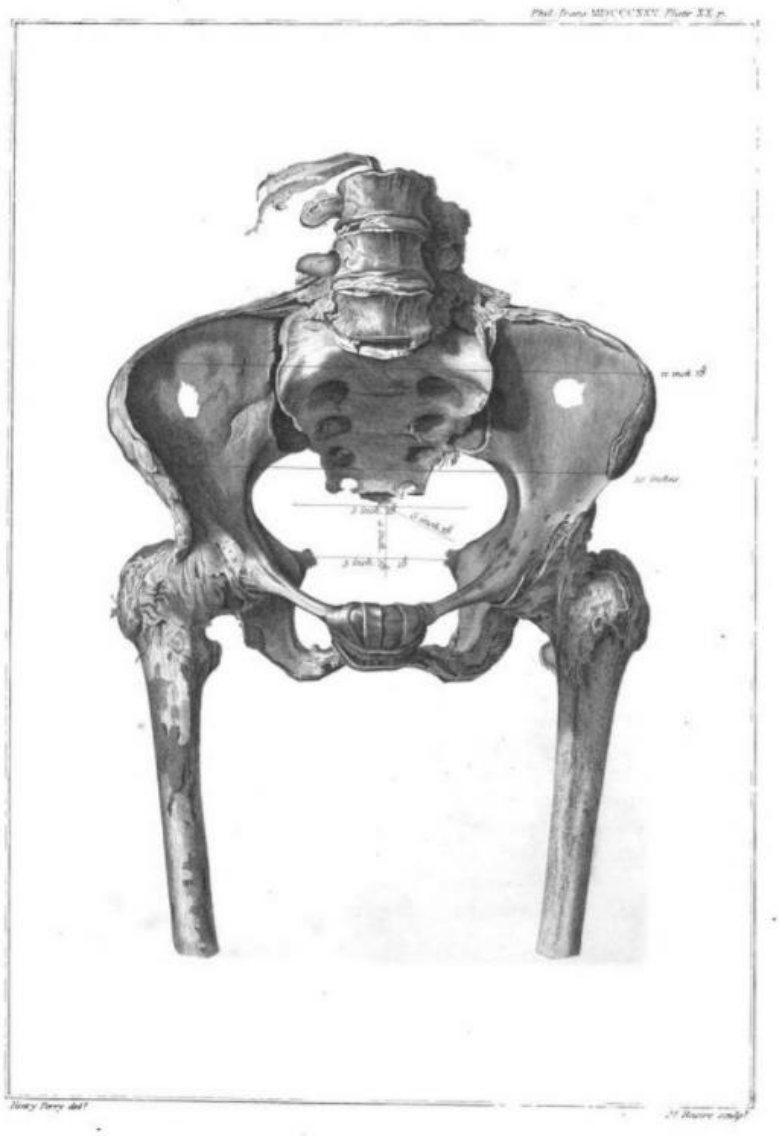

Fig.5.6: The pelvis of the mummy in Augustus B. Granville, ‘An essay on Egyptian mummies’, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 115 (1825), pp.269-316.

Granville was, in his report, very keen to connect his research to others who had engaged with Egyptian mummies. He placed himself within a network of researchers by comparing his work not only to Cuvier’s, but also former members of the Royal Society who had investigated mummies – Hadley and Blumenbach – and he made a strong case that Hadley’s report was merely descriptive, while Blumenbach had had many deceptive mummies.[468] However, he referred on multiple occasions to the latter’s work on race classification, thus demonstrating that Blumenbach’s work was still a reference. Granville

[468] Ibid., p.43.

also referred to Caylus by name, and described Rouelle's experiments on mummy fabrics, deeming his results 'very deficient.'[469]

The dissection of the mummy was pursued by Granville in order to further the understanding of the specimen he had in his possession. He stated that 'having proceeded thus far in my inquiry into the state of preservation of the mummy before me, I determined, perfect, and beautiful as it was, to make it the object of further research by subjecting it to the anatomical knife, and thus to sacrifice a most complete specimen of the Egyptian art of embalming.'[470] Over one hundred people attended the sessions over the course of a week; the staging of a long-standing experiment is very much characteristic of Granville's practice, as is his obsessive desire for precision. The report of the mummy dissection was accompanied by very detailed drawings for which Granville had commissioned Henry Perry. Riggs noted that the inclusion of these drawings – in the same vein as Blumenbach's and Camper's skulls – 'demonstrate the significant role of illustration and other visual practices in anatomical argumentation in the early nineteenth century, as well as the prestige that commissioned illustrations lent to the performance and dissemination of scientific purpose' and that the drawings 'include one of the key visual tropes of race science – a skull in left-facing profile, mapped with a facial angle' [fig. 5.7].[471]

Granville kept the remains of the mummy dissected in 1824. Riggs noted that 'Granville turned the physical remnants of his mummy into its own cabinet of curiosities, using a wooden chest with subdivided drawers to keep the pieces in his home.'[472] In 1853, Granville sold the chest with textiles to the British Museum, where it remains – those remains are still in the holding of the Museum, and I will return to this point in the conclusion.

[469] Ibid., p.19.
[470] Ibid., p.15.
[471] Riggs, 'An autopsic art', p.107.
[472] Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt*, p.54.

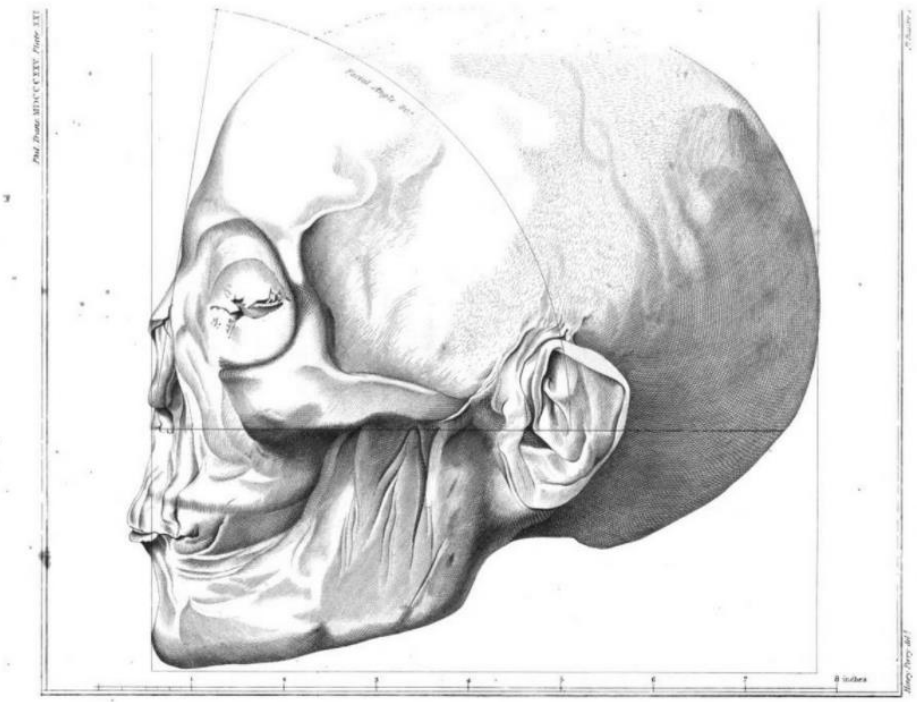

Fig.5.7: The facial line of the mummy in Augustus B. Granville, ‘An essay on Egyptian mummies’, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 115 (1825), pp.269-316.

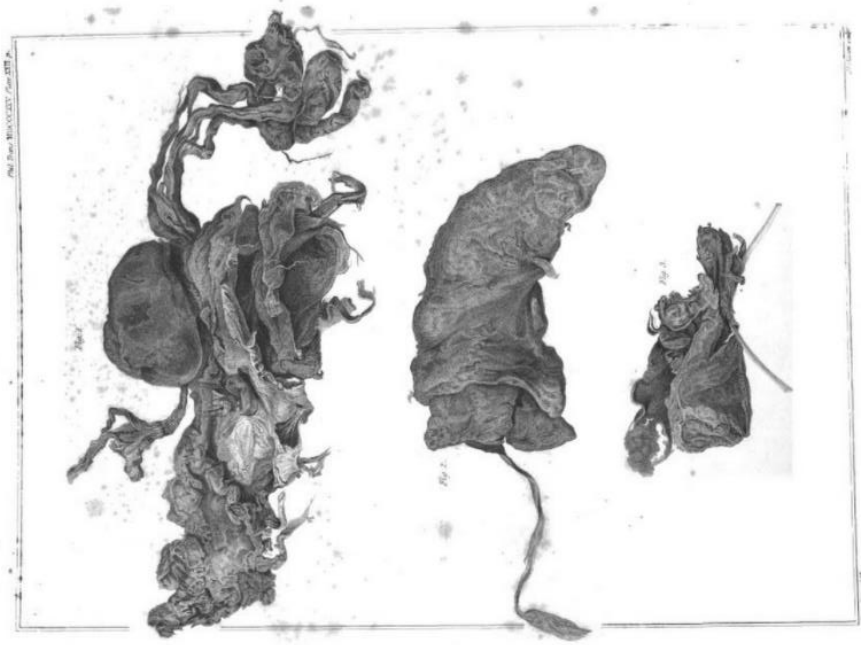

Fig.5.8: Some of the remains preserved in a box and sold to the British Museum later on in Augustus B. Granville, ‘An essay on Egyptian mummies’, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 115 (1825), pp.269-316.

5.5 Conclusion

In the late-eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, the mummy became a subject of experiment aimed at proving, or disproving, racial theories. The openings of mummies aimed at comprehending the mummification process, and at advancing medical knowledge, were therefore paralleled by much deeper intellectual and physical investigations. By locating the mummy – and, therefore, the ancient Egyptians – in what was then considered the cradle of civilisation, some theoreticians of racial origins felt the desire to displace the mummy's racial origin. Moser noted that 'there was another incentive for unwrapping mummies more closely, whose preserved skin and bones held the promise of further data for the scientific classification of humankind.'[473]

In the eighteenth century, there was a rising concern about the origin of the ancient Egyptians, which developed further in the first half of the nineteenth century: how could one mediate the location of the ancient Egyptians on the African continent with accounts of the advancement of their knowledge and technologies? The dissection of mummies became a means of investigating this problematic question. The results of the three sets of investigations covered in this chapter are mixed: Blumenbach opted for a mixed-race approach to the racial origin of the ancient Egyptians, while Cuvier and Granville concluded on a strict Caucasian origin. The accuracy of these results is not to be questioned or refuted here – as it turns out, it is likely that the mummies acquired by these researchers were from the later, Roman or Greek periods, from which more mummies have survived, and would present a European bias. It is evident, however, that the investigations of mummies by Cuvier and Granville were not open to interpretation: the Egyptian mummy needed to be found of a white origin, as it needed to fit into strong intellectual positions on the supremacy of a white race, which formed the foundation of a strong colonialist ideology later in that century.

The dissections of human mummies with a racial motivation were not widespread at the turn of the nineteenth century. However, those who engaged in such practices were highly influential in natural history and medicine, and their research was highly publicised. Blumenbach was appointed curator at the Natural History Museum of Göttingen in 1776, and then Professor of Physiology and Anatomy in the same establishment in 1778, a position which he held for almost fifty years. He was also elected

[473] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, p.49.

a member of seventy-eight societies and published extensively, making contributions to comparative anatomy and natural history – his achievements resonated on the international scene. Cuvier was a fundamental figure, not solely through his position at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, but more widely on the European scene. Therefore, the mummy was situated in a network of scholars who were institutionally linked to major institutions: the British Museum and the Royal Society of London, the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle and the Académie des Sciences in Paris.

What these engagements tell us, is that the mummy as a body was a source of interest to resolve a conundrum that was of such importance that it motivated, and necessitated, the opening and dissection of Egyptian mummies. These engagements, and their findings, opened the way to more investigations and located the Egyptian mummy as an important element of racial study – the links between Egyptian archaeology and racial thinking continued afterwards, as demonstrated in Challis's important study.[474] Chapters 4 and 5 have pointed out a series of physical interventions on Egyptian mummies which have been largely neglected in scholarly research as embedded practices. They have been rejected as odd practice, and yet were, to contemporary individuals, equally important as collecting engagements. What those physical interventions indicate, is that the mummy was regarded as a multi-dimensional object – and body. In the nineteenth century, the Egyptian mummy also entered a public sphere through performances, in particular unrollings and literature. What the following chapters ask is: can collecting practices and physical interventions through openings and dissections be reconciled with the mummy as a *person*, and was the mummy re-contextualized once on public view?

[474] Debbie Challis, *The Archaeology of Race* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

SECTION 4

FROM MUMMY UNROLLING TO THE HUMAN MUMMY

Chapter 6 – The mummy on show

> Giovanni D'Athanasi respectfully informs the public, that on the evening of Monday, the 10th of April next, at seven o'clock, the most interesting mummy that has as yet been discovered in Egypt will be unrolled in the large room at the Exeter Hall, Strand. [475]

> The fascination of the audience of that time was, inevitably, shot through with morbid, erotic pleasure, granted an aura of respectability by the scientific and archaeological discourses in which the exhibition took place. Given this, it is not surprising that the viewable consumption of mummies developed into a public spectacle as the fashion for unwrapping and dissection took hold.[476]

In the first half of the nineteenth century, some individuals reframed the format of mummy opening through the lens of performance and entertainment, conducting what is referred to as 'mummy unrolling'. The practice of opening mummies, previously performed for a select, mostly scientific audience, aimed at advancing knowledge on specific topics such as the mummification process or the origin of the ancient Egyptians, was opened to a broader audience.

The two opening quotes are revealing of the problematic approach to mummy unrolling in scholarly research. The first quote is an excerpt taken from an invitation to attend the unrolling of a mummy in the collection of Giovanni D'Athanasi (1798-1854), a procedure performed by Thomas Joseph Pettigrew (1791-1865). The second quote is from Susan Pearce's paper 'Bodies in exile' which considers attendance at mummy unrollings as grotesque consumption of a show that both objectified and alienated the body of the mummy – Pearce calls these events 'a narcissistic experience', 'a carnival for London audiences where the fragment of their [the mummies] own stories written on the coffins and bandages were used as historical titillation, rather than history.'[477] However, as the preceding chapters have demonstrated, there was a cultural underpinning for the

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[475] 'Announcement by D'Athanasi, 1837' in Warren R. Dawson, 'Pettigrew's demonstrations upon mummies, a chapter in the history of Egyptology', *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, volume 20, issue 3/4 (1934), Plate XXIII.
[476] Susan Pearce, 'Bodies in exile: Egyptian mummies in the early nineteenth century and their cultural implication' in Sharon Ouditt (ed.), *Displaced Persons: Conditions of Exile in European culture* (Farnham: Surrey, 2002), pp.54-71 (p.58).
[477] Ibid.

opening of Egyptian mummies, from which the unrolling developed, somewhat naturally, in the context of developing formats of entertainment in the first half of the nineteenth century. The unrolling, a successful but rather short-lived format of physical engagement, was produced both as a result of, and within, cultural and intellectual contexts which explain the creation of these formats of investigation of the Egyptian mummy. By excluding these cultural and intellectual contexts, an incomplete picture is drawn which leads to misinterpretation. I will, however, return to the body of work that considers the objectification of the mummy as part of the performative experience of unrolling, and the problems of these approaches, in the following chapters.

During mummy unrollings, the Egyptian mummy was performed by individuals who used such events as a way to market productions such as exhibitions, publications and excavations. In particular, two individuals, through their individual practice and set of performances, transformed engagements with Egyptian mummies and, simultaneously, the reception and marketing of ancient Egypt: Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778-1823) and Thomas Joseph Pettigrew. Both figures have left traces in the history of Egyptology through their very strong personalities, yet their considerable contributions to public archaeology have been largely overlooked. Belzoni's opening of an Egyptian mummy in London as an introduction to his exhibition of a reconstructed Egyptian tomb inspired Pettigrew, a medical practitioner, to acquire, study and unwrap Egyptian mummies. The series of unrollings conducted by Pettigrew in the 1830s fundamentally transformed public interactions with these objects. The interventions of Belzoni and Pettigrew placed Egyptian mummies – their display, study and performance – in a public context, breaking boundaries between medical practice and spectatorship, and creating new barriers between scholarship and public entertainment – a point that will be considered in the concluding chapter.

Belzoni and Pettigrew, and their attached set of practices, have been the subject of extensive research, although with varying levels of contextual grounding. Their strong, charismatic *persona*, and their use of such events to advance their personal career, have led them to being sensationalised over time. On Belzoni, two important publications are by Hume and Mayes,[478] but these have somewhat romanticised his work; Belzoni himself

[478] Stanley Mayes, *The Great Belzoni* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2008); Ivor Noel Hume, *Belzoni: The Giant Archaeologists Love to Hate* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011); Also, entry 'Belzoni' in M. L. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, fourth edition (London: Egypt Exploration

is responsible for this image of the strongman-turned-archaeologist but, as with any autobiographical narrative, his writings should be approached cautiously. Pearce has also conducted extensive archival research on Belzoni's exhibition, which is used in this chapter.[479] Pettigrew's interest in Egyptian mummies has been covered by Dawson[480] – a study that is very informative for its rich archival material, but is at times also rather uncritical – and more recently in the important contributions of Moshenska.[481] Moshenska's extensive research on Pettigrew and mummy unrolling has been crucial in looking at unrolling in cultural context, and forms the underpinning for understanding interventions on Egyptian mummies discussed in this chapter.

Drawing on existing research, this chapter aims to (re)contextualise the practice of mummy unrolling within contemporary interventions on the body. This chapter raises the following questions: what was the incentive to move the practice of mummy opening from a private to a public space? Who were the actors promoting and developing this new kind of public intervention? How did unrollings frame the Egyptian mummy?

Mummy unrollings must be assessed through the following lenses: first, the display and visibility of human remains to the public, looking at the model of the anatomy theatre and the medical museum and, second, the development of entertainment and spectatorship in the nineteenth century which can, in part, explain the appeal of highly theatrical performances of mummy unrolling. Ultimately, this chapter considers ways mummy unrollings offered new avenues to engage with Egyptian mummies and to perform the representation of ancient Egypt; I argue that the presence of Egypt in the first Great Exhibitions of London and Paris in the second half of the nineteenth century represents a paradigm shift in the representation of ancient (and modern) Egypt.

Society, 2012), pp.52-53; Luigi Montobbio, *Giovanni Battista Belzoni: La Vita I Viaggi le Scoperte* (Padova: Edition Martello, 1984).

[479] Susan Pearce, 'Giovanni Battista Belzoni's exhibition of the reconstructed tomb of Pharaoh Seti I in 1821', *Journal of the History of Collections*, Volume 12, Issue 1 (2000), pp.109-125.

[480] Dawson, 'Pettigrew's demonstrations'.

[481] Gabriel Moshenska, 'Unrolling Egyptian mummies in nineteenth century Britain', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, volume 47, issue 3 (2013), pp.451-477; Gabriel Moshenska, 'Thomas "Mummy" Pettigrew and the study of Egypt in early nineteenth-century Britain' in Carruthers, *Histories of Egyptology*, pp.201-214.

6.1 Encountering the dead

To frame the unrollings which took place in Britain in the early to mid-nineteenth century, the mummy must be considered as an object of performance.[482] The performance of the dead was not in itself a novel practice. Moshenska noted that 'as a form of performance they [the unrollings] allude to a range of apparently related practices in the histories of science, medicine and archaeology. The body on the dissecting table harks forward in time to the medico-legal autopsy and the museum laboratory, while the prurient fascination of the audience harks back to the anatomy theatre of Renaissance Europe.'[483] This section considers the practice of dissection in the anatomy theatre and the display of human remains in nineteenth-century London, to assess how these models can be linked to mummy unrolling.

The anatomy theatre

In the early modern period, the public was exposed to the dissection of the dead, both in the anatomy theatre and in the visual representations of the dissected corpse in the anatomy lesson genre of painting. The anatomy theatre has been studied at length, particularly by Sawday and Cunningham.[484] The anatomy theatre and the anatomy painting provide frames of understanding for the history of public engagement in the viewing of the dead in Europe.

The anatomy theatre emerged in continental Europe in the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century, in a humanist context of reinterpretation and study of the human body, its functioning and its relation to the world – initially, to God's creation and then to nature. The anatomy theatre was not solely a space of investigation into the human body via the act of dissection, it was a place of public conversation and contemplation of the body.

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[482] It is useful to note that unrolling was mainly a British phenomenon in the 1820s and 1830s, and it was not until the 1850s on that it started to spread to France (although very sporadically) and the United States.
[483] Moshenska, 'Unrolling Egyptian mummies', p.2.
[484] On the anatomy theatre, see: Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Andrew Cunningham, *The Anatomical Renaissance* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997); Natalie Alvarez, 'Bodies unseen: the early modern anatomical theatre and the dance macabre of theatrical looking', *Janus Head*, volume 12, issue 2 (2012), pp.35-48; Cynthia Klestinec, 'A History of anatomy theatres in sixteenth century Padua', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, volume 50, issue 3 (2004), pp.375-412; Christian Billing, 'Modelling the anatomy theatre and the indoor hall theatre: dissection on the stages of early modern London', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, volume 13, issue 3 (2004), pp.1-17. On the anatomy lesson genre, see for example: Julie V. Hansen, 'Resurrecting death: Anatomical art in the cabinet of Dr. Frederik Ruysch', *The Art Bulletin*, volume 78, issue 4 (1996), pp.663-679.

The body intrigued and fascinated, both the medical practitioner aiming to improve his practice, and members of the public who felt a mix of fascination and repulsion when faced with the dissected body. Although public anatomical dissections were not numerous, they attracted a large audience and were advertised as theatrical performances with public notices, instituting a pattern of advertisement which was reused for the mummy unrolling.

Alexander Benedictus (c.1470-1525) took dissections out of the traditional lecture hall and into the theatre, as recorded in his publication *Anatomy, or Five Books on the History of the Human Body*.[485] He described the setting as 'a temporary theatre' with seats 'allocated according to the rank of the spectators. […] The cadaver is to be placed in the middle of the theatre, on an altar-like stage (*aeditiore scammo*), in a light place, convenient for the dissectors.'[486] With this description, the setting, arrangement, and attendance of the dissection of cadavers was set and provided evident inspiration for the setting of later public dissections, including public mummy unrollings.

In 1540, Vesalius (Andreas Van Wesele, 1514-1564), who contributed considerable advances to the study of anatomy, conducted a series of demonstrations in Bologna which give insights into the format of these events. In particular, Vesalius created a format for the public anatomy lecture, divided into two sequences: first, the lecture, based on existing publications on anatomy and, at a separate time and location, the intervention on human remains.[487] Leiden university anatomy theatre was in the late-sixteenth, early-seventeenth century, a central location for the performance of dissections; in fact, Leiden and Padua were the forerunners of the anatomy theatre, offering access to the public, who had previously been prohibited from viewing medical dissections.[488] In England, there was limited access to anatomy dissections for both the public and anatomists themselves. Dissections were conducted at Oxford and Cambridge from the early-to-mid sixteenth century but they were not numerous and rarely open to the public.

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[485] Alessandro Beneditti [Benedictus], *Anatomicae, Sive de Historia Corporis Humani, libri quinque* ([n.pl.], [n.publ.], 1493).
[486] Cunningham, *Anatomical Renaissance*, pp.71-72.
[487] Cunningham, *Anatomical Renaissance*, p.103. Also: Luke Wilson, 'William Harvey's Prelectiones: The performance of the body in the Renaissance theatre of anatomy', *Representations*, issue 17 (1987), pp.62-95.
[488] The anatomy theatre was opened to the public, but it was not then a public entertainment in the sense that it was costly, and the public was mainly composed of surgeons and students from outside the university who would not have access to the private sessions. This could be understood, for example, as evening lectures or seminars at universities, open to the public, but with a specialist audience.

The implementation of the Murder Act of 1752 created a shift, forcing the Company of Surgeons to conduct dissections of criminal corpses – the bodies of convicted criminals – in public.[489] In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, issues surrounding the acquisition of corpses transformed the public's relationship to anatomical dissections, as outlined in chapter 4, but it is evident that over time, the format of the early modern anatomy theatre was retained and relatively few changes were made to this model in the short-lived public mummy unrolling format of the mid-nineteenth century.

Morbid curiosities in London

The dissection of the Egyptian mummy, and its transfer from private practice in a medical setting to the realm of entertainment, positions the mummy as a 'morbid curiosity' or, as Alberti frames it, the mummy not as an *object* of curiosity, but rather as a *body* of curiosity.[490] In the eighteenth century, the London public could already observe dissected corpses or, as they were called, *preparations* of specimens kept in collections. There is a body of work, by Alberti and Chaplin in particular, which attests to the large number of human remains being dissected and put on display in London in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.[491] For example, in 1799, the British government purchased 13,000 preparations from John Hunter's personal collection which were given to the Company of Surgeons in London. The Company routinely advertised anatomy lectures and the viewing of human remains in newspapers as well as in guides to London.[492] The dissections, although conducted in private, were made accessible to the public by turning the corpses into preparations ready for display. John Hunter's collection had been displayed in a purpose-built structure in his own anatomy school in Leicester Square since 1785. In 1788, the *General Evening Post* reported: 'One day last week, Mr John Hunter opened his very curious, extensive and valuable museum at his house in Leicester-fields,

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[489] On the study of anatomy in England, see: P. D. Mitchell et al., 'The study of anatomy in England from 1700 to the early 20th century', *Journal of Anatomy*, volume 219, issue 2 (2011), pp.91-99. On the dissection of criminal corpses in early modern England: Elizabeth T. Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
[490] Samuel Alberti, *Morbid Curiosities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[491] Alberti, *Morbid Curiosities*; Simon Chaplin, 'Nature dissected, or dissection naturalized? The case of John Hunter's museum', *Museum and Society*, volume 6, issue 2 (2008), pp.135-151; Simon Chaplin, 'John Hunter and the Museum Oeconomy' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 2009).
[492] Simon Chaplin, 'Dissection and display in eighteenth century London', in P. Mitchell (ed.) *Anatomical Dissection in Enlightenment England and Beyond; Autopsy, Pathology and Display* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.95-114 (p.99).

for the inspection of a considerable number of the literati…'[493] This link between anatomical dissections and exhibitions to the public can be found in the dissection of Egyptian mummies. Hunter retained the bulbous foot of the mummy he dissected at Hadley's house for his collection of anatomical preparations.[494] Similarly, Granville retained a box of preparations resulting from his dissection of an Egyptian mummy, which was then deposited at the British Museum.[495] In addition, the proceedings of dissections were available to the public in publications and newspapers.[496] Therefore, in the first half of the nineteenth century, exposure to the dead was not necessarily a normality but it had certainly become accessible to the inquisitive visitor. Is it also worth observing that mortality was very high in these countries at this time: death was much more prevalent, especially among children, and epidemics were not uncommon.[497]

At the British Museum, mummies had been present in growing numbers for over fifty years. By the time Belzoni conducted a mummy unrolling in 1821, there were a dozen mummies at the British Museum, and as illustrated in chapter 3 most of these were on display [Appendix 1]. In addition, the study of ancient Egypt was the topic of heated conversation: the ancient Egyptian writing was translated a year after Belzoni's unrolling, in 1822, after exchanges and competition between the French and the British, represented by Jean-François Champollion (1790-1832) and Thomas Young (1773-1829) respectively. The growing interest in ancient Egypt and fascination for the Egyptian mummy were used in the various enterprises of Giovanni Battista Belzoni.

6.2 Belzoni's unrolling and exhibition

This section frames the unrolling of an Egyptian mummy, performed as an opening act to an exhibition of ancient Egyptian material culture by Belzoni, as a shift in the practice

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[493] Chaplin, 'Nature dissected, or dissection naturalized?', pp.135. On Hunter's museum, see: Chaplin, 'Dissection and Display in eighteenth century London', pp.95-114; Alberti, 'The organic museum, the Hunterian and other collections of the Royal College of Surgeons of England' in Alberti and Hallam, (eds.) *Medical Museums, Past, Present Future*. Other anatomy museums in London in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are covered in: Mitchell, ''The study of anatomy in England from 1700 to the early 20th century'; Jonathan Evans, 'Barts and the London's Medical Museum Collections' in Piers Mitchell (ed.), *The History of Medicine in Context: Anatomical Dissection in Enlightenment England and Beyond: Autopsy, Pathology and Display* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp.115-137.
[494] Hadley, 'An account of a mummy, inspected at London 1763'.
[495] The Granville box remains in the collection of the British Museum.
[496] Chaplin, 'Dissection and Display in eighteenth century London', p.99.
[497] Simon J. Knell, *The Culture of English Geology, 1815-1851: A Science Revealed Through Its Collecting* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.313-320.

of mummy openings. The mediatisation of archaeological excavations and the use of a mummy unrolling as a marketing strategy define Belzoni's role in reshaping the place of mummies in discourses related to the performance and consumption of Ancient Egypt. Belzoni's endeavours have been well documented, mostly by himself,[498] and subsequently by historians. Hume's and Mayes's publications are useful in drawing a broad picture of Belzoni's life, and therefore, this section focuses solely on his encounters and enterprises with Egyptian mummies.[499] Belzoni was engaged in a number of archaeological enterprises in Egypt between 1815 and 1819, including the opening of the Great Temple of Abu Simbel, the discovery of the tomb of Seti I in the Valley of the King, the opening of the Khafre pyramid at Giza and the transport of the obelisk of Philae. Belzoni left Egypt in September 1819 and arrived in London in March 1820, working on his next substantial projects: a publication and a public exhibition.

Crushing mummies

It is often assumed that Belzoni had no interest in mummies: this assumption is directly related to Belzoni's own recounting of his encounters with Egyptian mummies during his expeditions in Egypt, related in his 1820 publication *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations in Egypt and Nubia*.[500] In Gournou, Belzoni discovered a mummy-pit composed of a maze of tunnels, each filled with numerous mummies. He narrated his progression in the pit, recounting:

> The blackness of the wall; the faint light given by the candles or torches for want of air, the different objects that surrounded me, seeming to converse with each other, and the Arabs with the candles or torches in their hands, naked and covered with dust, themselves resembling living mummies, absolutely formed a scene that cannot be described.[501]

He continued:

> I sought a resting place, found one, and contrived to sit; but when my weight bore on the body of an Egyptian, it crushed like a band-box. I naturally had recourse to

[498] Giovanni Battista Belzoni, *Narrative of the Recent Operations and Discoveries* (London: J. Murray, 1820).
[499] Hume, *Belzoni*; Mayes, *The Great Belzoni*.
[500] Belzoni, *Narrative*.
[501] Ibid., pp.156-157.

> my hands to sustain my weight, but they found no better support; so that I sunk altogether among the broken mummies, with a crash of bones, rags, and wooden cases [...] every step I took I crushed a mummy in some part or other.[502]

Quite contrary to Hume's assertion, Belzoni knew how to use the appeal of Egyptian mummies to draw public interest, evident in his publication – which was so popular that it was rewritten in 1821 and translated into multiple languages – and his opening of an exhibition he set up at Bullock's Egyptian Hall.

The 1821 unrolling and exhibition

To publicise his 1821 exhibition, Belzoni held a mummy unrolling aimed primarily at medical practitioners. Pettigrew was in attendance and his recollection in *A History of Egyptian Mummies* is one of the rare mentions of the event.[503] The unrolling remained reserved to a body of professional men but its occurrence prior to an exhibition of Egyptian material – including mummies – was a calculated move to attract visitors to the exhibition: first, it gave him and his project scientific credentials and second, it attracted the curiosity of a larger public wanting to view the mummy and to observe the result of such an event. The *Literary Gazette* reported:

> We congratulate the scientific, the learned, the literary, the lovers of art, and the curious, (which enumeration, we take it, embraces a large majority of the public) on the treat prepared for them in the Exhibition by Mr. Belzoni, which opens at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, on Tuesday next. To describe this performance as singular, unique, extraordinary, is but faintly to portray it: to us it appears to be the most interesting and valuable spectacle that ever was conceived and executed.[504]

The exhibition did not need much publicity in itself: the success of Belzoni's *Narratives* and the location of the exhibit in the Egyptian Hall in London were enough to generate interest. Designed by Peter Frederick Robinson (1776-1858), the Egyptian Hall – originally named London Museum – had been commissioned by William Bullock

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[502] Ibid., p.157.
[503] Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green and Longman, 1834), p.xv.
[504] Jerdan et al., 'Egyptian Antiquities', *The literary Gazette: A Weekly Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts*, volume 5 (1821), p.268.

(1773-1849) to host his own collection.[505] The building was of Egyptian inspiration, loosely based on Dominique Vivant Denon 's (1747-1825) drawings of Egyptian temples – especially of Dendera – in his *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte*,[506] and inspired by the Egyptian Revival style [Fig.6.1]. [507] The inside of the building was adorned with lotus columns and embellished with imaginative hieroglyphs (the Egyptian script had not yet been deciphered). In 1812, Bullock held an exhibition of his own collection of 'upwards of Fifteen Thousand Natural and Foreign Curiosities, Antiquities and Productions of the Fine Arts', which proved immensely popular.[508]

Fig. 6.1: Bullock's Museum (Egyptian Hall or London Museum), Piccadilly, attributed to T. H. Shepard, 1815. © Wellcome Library, London, Iconographic Collections. Copyrighted work available under Creative Commons Attribution only licence CC BY 4.0 http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

[505]William Bullock, *A Companion to Bullock's Museum* (London: H. Reynell, 1810); Pearce, 'Giovanni Battista Belzoni's exhibition'; Susan Pearce, 'William Bullock. Inventing a visual language of objects' in Knell et al (ed.), *Museum Revolutions*, pp.15-27.
[506] Dominique Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte* (Paris: Imprimerie de P. Didot, 1802).
[507] On the revival style, see: Humbert, *Egyptomania*.
[508] On Bullock and the Egyptian Hall, see: Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978); Pearce, 'William Bullock'.

The Egyptian Hall was the ideal location for Belzoni's ambitious plan and served as an immersive environment. Belzoni had ensured that his exhibition would create awe by having two of the most magnificent rooms from the tomb of Seti I – the Hall of Four Pillars and the Hall of Beauties – recreated life-size according to his own drawings, as well as a 15-metre-long model of the entire tomb [Fig.6.2]. The exhibition combined reproductions and real antiques, sarcophagi and mummies, from Belzoni's personal acquisitions. Pearce noted that despite Belzoni's reputation as a showman, he was in fact very much interested in the realness of things as reflected in his precise drawings and his attention to detail in the re-creation of Seti's tomb, thus introducing the idea of 'reconstruction of the past as recreation of the past.'[509] Newspapers praised the spectacular show: the *Times* reported that 'every eye, we think, must be gratified by this singular combination and skillfull [sic] arrangement of objects so new and in themselves so striking…'[510]

In addition, upstairs, were fourteen display cases, including two human mummies. Belzoni's *Description of the Egyptian Tomb* indicates the presence of these two mummies in the section 'Cases of Egyptian Curiosities etc':

> No. 11 A mummy opened in England a short time ago: it is the most perfect of those I unfolded in Egypt, during 6 year's research; the box in which it was contained, is placed above. No.12 The mummy of an Egyptian priest, remarkable for the singular position and the binding of the arms.[511]

The two mummies were further described in the *Catalogue of Various Articles of Antiquity to be Dispersed of at the Egyptian Tomb*, drawn with the prospect of selling Belzoni's artefacts at the closing of the exhibition.[512] This catalogue confirms the presence of the two mummies, respectively in cases 11 and 12. The first mummy is described as 'the most perfect mummy known in Europe; it is entire in all its limbs and the hair visible on its head; it was brought to England with great care, and was unfolded by M. Belzoni before various celebrated physicians… found in tomb of Memnon… case

[509] Pearce, 'Belzoni's exhibition', pp.109-125.
[510] Altick, *Shows of London*, p.245.
[511] Anon., *Description of the Egyptian Tomb Described by Giovanni Battista Belzoni* (London: J Murray, 1822).
[512] Anon., *Catalogue of the Various Articles of Antiquity to be Disposed of at the Egyptian Tomb by Auction* (London: Printed by William Clowes, 1822) in Susan Pearce, 'Belzoni's exhibition', Appendix 3, pp.121-123.

well preserved.'[513] The description confirms that this specimen was the specific mummy unwrapped by Belzoni prior to the exhibition, in the presence of Pettigrew. The second mummy's description adds little to the description Belzoni had provided.[514]

Belzoni's exhibition was a success, attracting 1,900 visitors on its first day.[515] The format of the exhibition itself was both ambitious and perceptive, grasping the public appeal. The Egyptian Hall was an obvious location for the exhibition but instead of simply presenting artefacts for display, Belzoni invited visitors to re-live the experiences he narrated in his publication. The exhibition was a display within a display and a form of temporary exhibition in which the mummy unrolling, the publication of the *Narrative* and the building all played an essential role in attracting the public.[516] In short, Belzoni offered a format for the temporary exhibition: promoted by marketing (the unrolling and the publication); spectacular in form with large-size and previously unseen objects (a tomb reconstruction and an exceptional number of artefacts); and ephemeral in existence (sold at auction at the closing).[517] Belzoni's enterprises were put to an abrupt end with his death from dysentery in 1823 just two years later. His unrolling and his highly marketed exhibition inspired another individual to pursue his endeavours: Thomas Joseph Pettigrew.

[513] Pearce, 'Belzoni's exhibition' p.123.
[514] Ibid.
[515] Altick, *Shows of London*, p.245.
[516] Belzoni, *Narrative*.
[517] Three additional mummies were brought from Egypt by Belzoni: two of them were displayed in Bath in 1842 and were transferred to the Bath Literary Institution where Henry A. Ormsby examined them in 1852. Another mummy was sold to the Belgian government by Belzoni's wife, Sarah, in 1847 after Belzoni's passing.

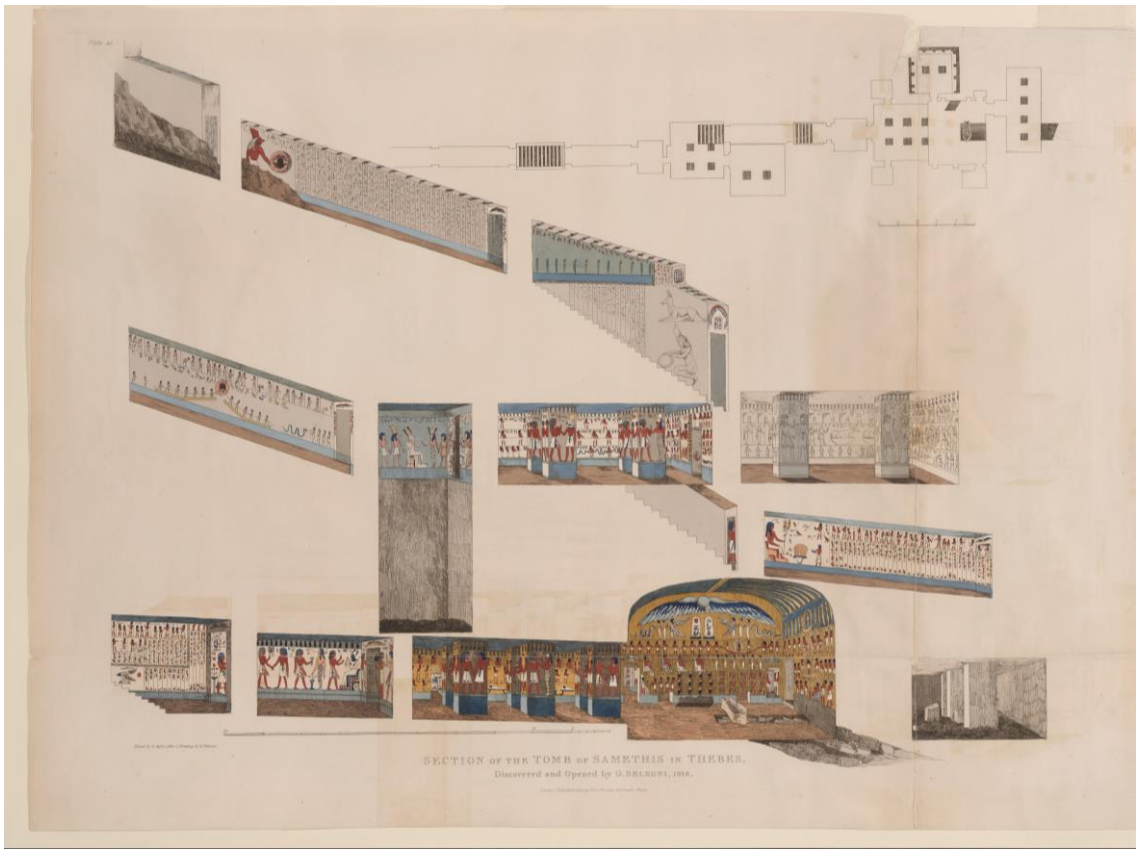

Fig. 6.2: Section of the tomb of Samethis [Seti I] in Thebes. © From The New York Public Library Digital Collections.

6.3 Pettigrew's unrollings

> Within the range of archaeological enquiry there can scarcely be a subject of greater curiosity or interest than that which relates to the preservation of the remains of mankind of so early a period as were the first inhabitants of Egypt.[518]

This opening sentence from the publication *A History of Egyptian Mummies* captures Pettigrew's fascination with mummies, which led him to study, unwrap and popularise Egyptian mummies. It is surprising that, considering his contribution to the study of ancient Egypt, in addition to his successful medical career, Pettigrew has been the subject of relatively little scholarly research, aside from Dawson's and, more recently, Moshenska's studies.[519] This section considers ways Pettigrew catalysed – but also fundamentally transformed – engagements with Egyptian mummies.

[518] Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies*, p. xv.
[519] Moshenska, 'Thomas "Mummy" Pettigrew' and Moshenska, 'Unrolling Egyptian mummies'.

Pettigrew was a medical practitioner and followed in the footsteps of his father, a naval surgeon. His medical career has often been overshadowed by his reputation as a 'mummy unroller' but he was undeniably distinguished in the medical field, taking on the position of private surgeon of the Duke of Kent and the Duke of Sussex. Pettigrew was involved in lengthy correspondences with fellow surgeons and medical practitioners of his time such as John Coakley Lettsom (1744-1815), Astley Cooper (1768-1841), Michael Farradey (1791-1867) and George Cruikshank (1792-1878). His medical network was solidified by memberships and positions in medical societies, including the Medical Society of London (MSL) and the Royal Humane Society. At the death of his wife in 1854, Pettigrew devoted his life to archaeology and took up another position, that of Vice-President of the British Archaeological Association. Pettigrew never travelled to Egypt but secured knowledge through networks and correspondence with those who travelled there.[520]

The 1823 opening

Pettigrew's interest in Egyptian mummies was directly connected to Belzoni. In 1821, Pettigrew met Belzoni in London while the latter was holding his exhibition at the Egyptian Hall. Belzoni – whom Pettigrew called 'that most intrepid and enterprising traveller' – had invited Pettigrew to his mummy unrolling.[521] The latter recalled the event as follows:

> My attention had been directed to this curious subject of inquiry from an intimacy with the celebrated traveller Belzoni. With him I had the opportunity of examining three Egyptian mummies, and although the state of their preservations was not of the best description their condition was sufficient to awake my curiosity.[522]

Shortly after, Pettigrew purchased his own specimen. The mummy had arrived in England in 1741, brought by the physician Charles Perry (1689-1780) [Fig.6.3]. The latter had described it in *A View of the Levant* in the section entitled 'An essay towards

[520] See Moshenska on Pettigrew's connections, especially Robert Hay (1799-1863) and John Gardner Wilkinson (1797-1875), who both attended Pettigrew's unrollings: Moshenska, 'Unrolling Egyptian mummies', p.459.
[521] Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies*, p. xv.
[522] Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, *Biographical Memoirs of the Most Celebrated Physicians, Surgeons, etc. etc. who have Contributed to the Advancement of Medical Science* (London: Fisher, 1840), p.31.

explaining the principal figures on our mummy.'[523] The mummy had, according to Perry, been found in the catacombs of Saqqara and was 'the most curious antiquity of the sort, one only excepted.'[524] Pettigrew purchased it at a sale by auction and unrolled it in 1823 at his Spring Gardens home. The mummy was in poor condition, as a result of a hasty embalming.

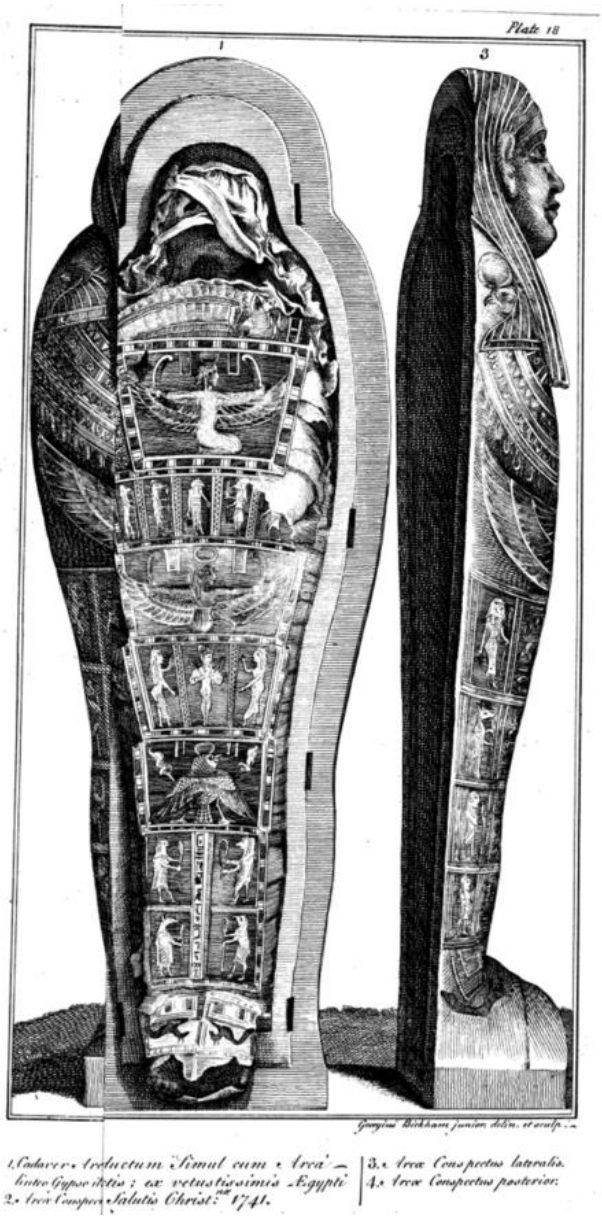

Fig. 6.3: Perry's mummy in Charles Perry, *A View of the Levant: Particularly of Constantinople, Syria, Egypt, and Greece* (London: T. Woodward, 1743).

[523] Charles Perry, *A View of the Levant: Particularly of Constantinople, Syria, Egypt and Greece* (London: T. Woodward, 1743)
[524] Ibid., p.470.

1833: shaping the format of mummy unrolling

Ten years later, in 1833, Pettigrew bought a mummy at Sotheby's for £23, during the sale of Salt's collection. The mummy had been brought from Thebes and Pettigrew described it as 'the finest and most interesting specimen' in *A History of Egyptian Mummies*.[525] At the same event, his friend Thomas Saunders bought another mummy for the sum of £36,15s. Pettigrew unwrapped both mummies on 6 April 1833 at Charing Cross Hospital, where he was a Lecturer in anatomy. The event was reported in the *Gentleman's Magazine, and Historical Chronicle*:

> At the Charing Cross Hospital, on Saturday April 6, two Egyptian mummies were opened and unrolled under the direction of T.J. Pettigrew, Esq. F.R.S. These specimens were purchased at Messrs. Sotheby's sale of Egyptian antiquities.[526]

The *Gentleman's Magazine* gave a lengthy description of the intervention, which is completed by Pettigrew's own recollection of the opening.[527] The performance of this unrolling within a medical building, the Charing Cross Hospital, was consistent with the practice of mummy openings in medical circles. The audience was also consistent with private medical dissections, with Pettigrew pointing out the etiquette of individuals in attendance.[528] The result of the opening was as follows: Pettigrew's mummy, an older male, did not have any outer wrappings intact, therefore Pettigrew was unable to compare it to the work of his predecessors, of whom he named Edmé-François Jomard and Augustus Bozzi Granville. The resulting body, which had a brownish colour, was represented in a drawing included in the publication [Fig.6.4]. The other mummy which belonged to Saunders was in poor condition, damaged by heat.

The study of the first mummy did not end in the premises of the performance. Further examinations were pursued, both as a way to develop the understanding of the specimen and as a means to retain some interest from the members in attendance. The *Literary Gazette* reported:

> Mr Pettigrew stated, that he should subject the flesh and intestines to a series of experiments and examinations, without exactly stating their nature, and that he

[525] Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies*, p. xv.
[526] Sylvanus Urban, *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle. From January to June 1833, volume CIII* (1833), p.356.
[527] Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies*, p.xv.
[528] Ibid., p.xvi.

would feel obliged to any of the scientific persons present for any hints or information in the progress of his undertakings. We shall look forward with anxiety to the result.[529]

This intervention was not very different from other interventions in medical circles: Pettigrew was interested in the nature of mummification, and in the preservation of soft tissues, and he was interested in involving the scientific community of the time.

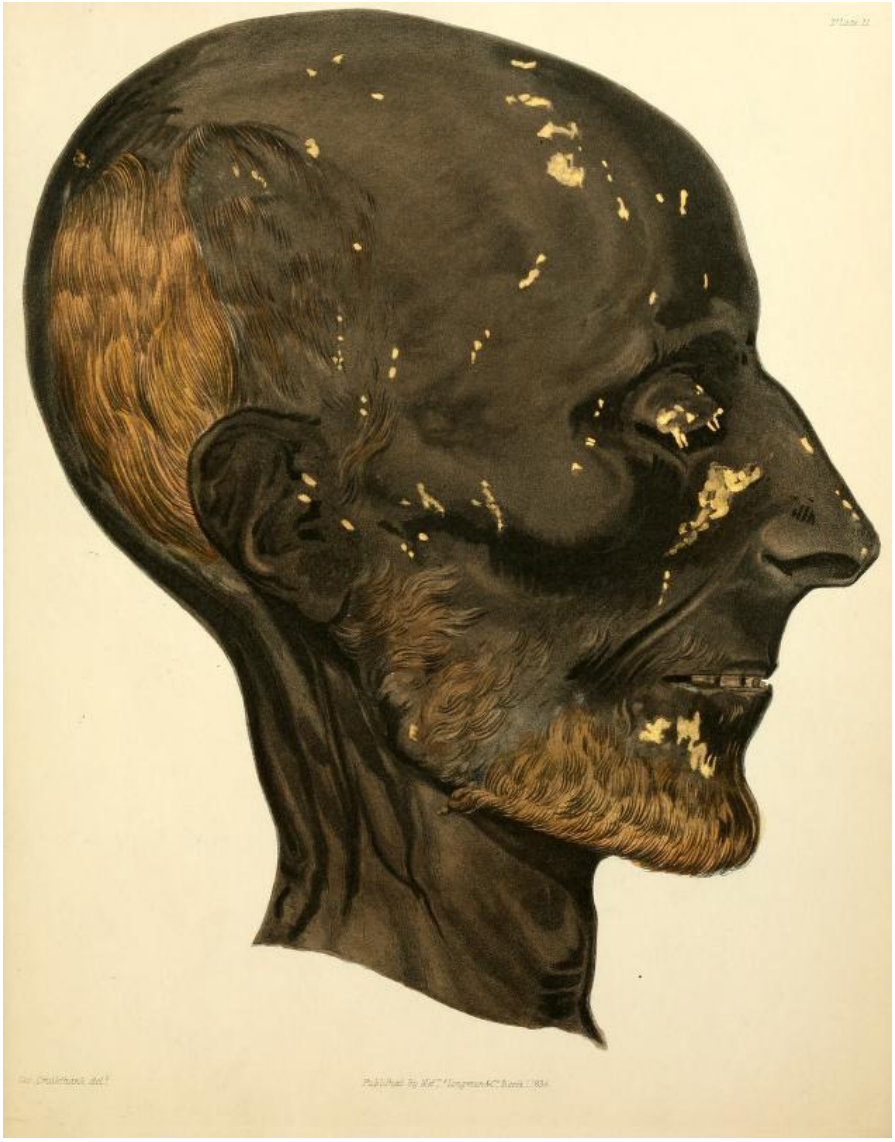

Fig.6.4: The mummy head in Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green and Longman, 1834).

[529] Anon., 'Art and sciences', *Literary Gazette* (13 April 1833), p.234.

A few months later, Pettigrew's friend, Dr John Lee, presented him with the mummy of a 21st dynasty female priest which had also been bought at the Salt auction. The unrolling of this specimen occurred on 24 June 1833. In attendance was John Davidson (1797-1836) who, enthusiastic about the event, asked Pettigrew to unroll his own mummy, a specimen brought from Thebes in 1821 by John Henderson. The opening occurred on 13 July 1833 at the Royal Institute.[530] Davidson gave an introductory lecture, *An Address on Embalming Generally*, which was subsequently published.[531] The mummy belonged to a 21st dynasty individual, whose name was deciphered during the event.[532] In his account of the unrolling, Davidson noted that Pettigrew and he proceeded to the unrolling together. Once more, substances had stuck the bandages to the skin and rendered the unrolling difficult in some parts of the body. Davidson observed that 'finding that considerable time would be requisite for the removal of the remaining portions of bandage, and not wishing to weary the patience of my audience, I determined on postponing any further attempt.'[533] Davidson conducted the rest of the unrolling and noted the absence of amulets or parchments, but concluded by stating that, even if it had not brought new insight, at least his dissection had confirmed Herodotus's embalming theories.[534]

1834: A History of Egyptian Mummies and large-scale unrollings

In the decade between his first unsuccessful mummy opening in 1823 and the 1833 series of unrollings, Pettigrew kept his medical practice but retained his interest in the ancient Egyptian civilisation. He used this time to research ancient Egyptian writing and culture which he combined with his anatomical expertise to study Egyptian mummies. By the time he had returned to unrollings in 1833, his knowledge was so extensive that he published *A History of Egyptian Mummies* a year later.[535]

A History of Egyptian Mummies presented a thorough examination of the mummy, considered as a multi-layered historical object. Pettigrew considered, throughout the

[530] Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies*, p. xvii.
[531] John Davidson, *An Address on Embalming Generally, Delivered at the Royal Institution, on the Unrolling of a Mummy* (London: J. Ridgway, 1833).
[532] Ibid.
[533] Ibid., p.19.
[534] Ibid.
[535] Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies*.

different chapters of his publication, the mummy through various prisms. Rather than focusing solely on the embalming process which had been the focus of previous publications, Pettigrew opened with the many uses of mummies, such as 'Chap. II. On Mummy as a Drug'.[536] He then continued with the religious and funerary beliefs of the ancient Egyptians and the setting of the mummy – the 'Egyptian tombs' – before looking in details at the embalming, the substances, bandages, and associated objects (amulets, sarcophagi, manuscripts etc.), thus setting Egyptian mummies in both spatial and temporal contexts. The publication also covered other mummies, that is, mummies from other locations, especially Peru, pseudo-mummies which he called 'deceptive specimens of mummies', as well as modern mummification, thus providing a thorough account of mummy studies.

The publication included plates which represented Egyptian mummies: Plate 1 (frontispiece) read: 'Whole-length view of the Graeco-Egyptian mummy, showing the colour of the same and the appearance of the gilding on different parts of the body. From the author's collection' [Fig.6.5]. This mummy, which Pettigrew had unwrapped, was also represented in Plate II 'Profile of the same mummy, natural size' [see fig. 6.4, above]. The other plates (13 in total) represented funerary objects found with Egyptian mummies. Of particular interest, the illustrations represent objects from collections Pettigrew had visited, or was aware of. In particular, he noted the collections of Giuseppe Passalacqua (1794-1849) in Paris and of Dr Lee, emphasising once more, the connection between mummy collectors in Paris and London. In fact, Pettigrew's reference to other collectors and researchers of mummies extended beyond illustrations. His publication, which provided a thorough examination of the knowledge on mummification based on a compilation of documents both ancient and more recent, also made thorough references to the study and dissections of Egyptian mummies by his contemporaries, thus producing what could be referred to as the first modern history of both the study and reception of mummies. Pettigrew was the first to compile an overview of the practice of mummy unrolling and, through his history of mummy engagements, he ensured that he located himself as a principal actor both by his actions and his writings. By these means, he created the persona of the mummy unroller.

[536] Ibid., pp.7-12.

Fig.6.5: ‘Graeco-Egyptian mummy’ in Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green and Longman, 1834).

Pettigrew's publication caused an increased interest in his unrolling sessions. Another mummy brought by Henderson and kept at the Royal College of Surgeons was opened by him in January 1834. William Clift (1775-1849), curator at the Royal College of Surgeons, wrote a detailed report of the event, emphasising its popularity:

> Visitors in considerable numbers arrived very early and filled all the Seats; many were obliged to stand; and many others retired from all the doors who could not find admission.[537]

The unrolling session, which sold out rapidly, was followed by the exhibition of the body:

> Gentlemen who may be disappointed in witnessing the unrolling of the Mummy this day, will have an opportunity of viewing it in the Museum every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 12 till 4 O'clock.[538]

The success of Pettigrew's unrollings and the increased attendance resulted in Pettigrew's creation of a series of seminars. The establishment of these codified demonstrations – six seminars followed by the unrolling of a mummy – exemplifies the turning point in Pettigrew's realisation that the combination of his Egyptological and anatomical skills with the growing interest in ancient Egypt, as well as the growing success of entertainment under many forms, could profit him by turning his original relatively private events into society's events. The unrolling sessions were then ticketed, and price was set in the custom of theatrical performances: it varied according to location and visibility, with one guinea for the front and side seats, and half for the back seats with limited visibility.

In 1837, Giovanni D'Athanasi, the former agent of Salt, asked Pettigrew to unroll one of his mummies.[539] Over 500 people attended the event at Exeter Hall. The unrolling was complicated by some difficulty in breaking the outer wrappings of the mummy, and even the use of a hammer did not suffice. An announcement had to be made that the work would be continued elsewhere and that the result would be made available to the public.[540]

In 1837, Pettigrew unrolled another mummy, following his set of six seminars. The mummy had been brought from Thebes by John Gosset who had travelled to Egypt

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[537] Dawson, 'Pettigrew's demonstrations', p.172
[538] Ibid., p.173
[539] 'Announcement by D'Athanasi, 1837' in Dawson, 'Pettigrew's demonstrations', plate XXIII.
[540] Anon., *Literary Gazette*, 15 April (1837), p.2

in 1835 with E. Lane. Gosset died on his way back from Egypt and his father donated his collection with the mummy to the island of Jersey where Pettigrew proceeded to the opening, reported in the *British Press*.[541]

The *Literary Gazette* of 1848 reported on the unrolling of an Egyptian mummy at the studio of Scottish painter David Roberts (1798-1864), known for his prolific series of lithographs of Egypt and the Near East. He had set sail to Egypt on 1 August 1838, where he toured Egypt and produced a vast collection of sketches. The mummy had been given to Pettigrew by Thomas Arden. The event was described in the *Literary Gazette* which noted that 'the unrolling of the mummy was skilfully performed, with observations, as the task proceeded, worthy of Mr Pettigrew's long experience, and having (we believe) done as many as forty or fifty similar subjects.'[542]

The enthusiasm Pettigrew demonstrated for the advancement of the study, publication and publicity regarding mummy studies was tainted by a strong personality which earned him many enemies in the medical scene. In particular, his dedication to self-advancement and the promotion of his own image were often a cause for reproach. Pettigrew's habit of inviting prestigious individuals and naming them in each publication and account of unrolling session was, evidently, a way to gain recognition, but he also acquired a reputation for having a bad temper and his involvement in quarrels.[543] An episode of particular interest occurred when Pettigrew made a request in 1833 to unroll a mummy at the British Museum, which was rejected. The case was recorded in Pettigrew's *A History of Egyptian Mummies*:

> I regret to have here to state conduct of an opposite nature on the part of the Trustees of the British Museum, to whom I made application to be permitted to examine one or two of the specimens contained in that *national* establishment. The Trustees were of opinion that it would destroy the *integrity* of the collection![544]

This reply greatly displeased Pettigrew who returned to the episode in the 1836 *Magazine of Popular Science and Journal of Useful Arts* stating:

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[541] Anon., *British Press*, 8 September (1837), p.3
[542] Anon., 'Literary and learned', *Literary Gazette*, 10 June (1848), p.394.
[543] Moshenska, 'Unrolling Egyptian mummies', p.11.
[544] Pettigrew, *History of Egyptian Mummies*, p.xix.

> It is to be hoped that the Trustees of the British Museum will relax from their determination not to allow any of the specimens contained in that national collection to be unrolled, as much curious if not useful information may be obtained by such a research.[545]

This refusal, which followed Blumenbach's successful dissections of mummies inside the British Museum in 1792, could indicate the museum's realisation that it needed to preserve its collection, and the acknowledgment of the destructive nature of unrollings. However, Pettigrew's strong personality was perhaps also perceived as the wrong image for the museum.[546] Consequently, his intellectual respectability was questioned by the museum, which rejected any affiliation.

Pettigrew died in 1867 and afterwards, Samuel Birch (1813-1885), curator of oriental antiquities at the British Museum, took up the mantle of mummy unrolling performer. Birch's knowledge of ancient Egyptian civilisation was much more complete, but he lacked anatomical expertise, and as such his unrolling proceedings did not reveal physiological details like his predecessors'. Birch had already conducted an unrolling in Shrewsbury Shire Hall in 1842, reported in *The Literary Gazette*.[547] In 1850, he conducted the opening of a mummy brought from Gurnah by Arden. The opening occurred in the house of Lord Londesborough and was announced by an invitation which stated: 'At home, Monday 10th June, 1850, 144 Piccadilly. A mummy from Thebes to be unrolled at half-past two.'[548] The mummy belonged to a woman who had both hands covering her intimacy and was accompanied by a copy of the Book of the Dead, numerous amulets and, uncommonly, silver gloves. Later, Birch studied the mummies brought from Egypt by the Prince of Gales in 1869 at Clarence House and, in 1875, unwrapped a mummy gifted by the consul of England in Egypt to the Duke of Sutherland. Pettigrew's unrollings echoed around the world, and in 1864, a series of seminars given at the New York Society on the Egyptian civilisation was concluded with the unrolling of a mummy, performed by Professor Henry J. Anderson.[549]

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[545] Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, 'Account of the unrolling of an Egyptian mummy, with incidental notices of the manners, customs, and religion of the Ancient Egyptians', *Magazine of Popular Science, and Journal of the Useful Arts*, Volume 2 (1836).
[546] On Pettigrew's persona, see Moshenska, 'Unrolling Egyptian mummies'.
[547] Anon., Literary and learned, 'unrolling of a mummy', *The Literary Gazette, a Weekly Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts*, 17 September (1842), p.651.
[548] Ibid.
[549] Brier, *Egyptian Mummies*, p.167.

The last great public unrolling of an Egyptian mummy in Britain occurred on 15 December 1889 in the Botanic Lecture Theatre at University College London. The event was presided by Wallis Budge (1857-1934) one of the curators of the British Museum. The event was attended by H. Rider Haggard (1856-1925) writer of *She: A History of Adventure*.[550] Why, one could ask, was the unrolling of mummies halted? The multiple dissections, and the advancement of the knowledge on ancient Egypt and Egyptian mummies means that by the end of the nineteenth century, the mummy was no longer an oddity. Specimens of other things were performed in the second half of the nineteenth century in London which provided a much more captivating vision. The mummy, had, perhaps, lost its appeal as an oddity, or perhaps it was that one could not suppose that such openings produced new knowledge.

6.4 Contextualising performances and exhibitions

The unrollings performed by Pettigrew attracted a paying audience who felt 'delight in witnessing the unrolling of endless bandages, smiling at the hieroglyphics, and then staring at the dried remains of a being who moved on the earth three or four thousand years ago.'[551] The attraction of such event must be looked at through the lens of new formats of entertainment which developed in the nineteenth century, including fairs and freak shows, and later into the creation of national exhibitions, in particular the 1867 Exposition Universelle.

Fairs and freak shows

In the mid-nineteenth century, a range of shows developed in London which were diverse and ephemeral in nature.[552] These have been covered in great depth by Altick and Wood.[553] These studies demonstrate the development of a range of Victorian entertainments, aided by technological developments, in particular transportation, which attracted a larger provincial audience. As Toulmin pointed out, 'an organised leisure

[550] H. Ridder Haggard, *She: A History of Adventure* (London: Longmans, 1886).
[551] Anon., 'Egyptian mummies', *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal*, issue 118 (1834/1884), pp.110-111.
[552] Vanessa Toulmin, '"Curios things in curios places": temporary exhibition venues in the Victorian and Edwardian entertainment environment', *Early Popular Visual Culture*, Volume 4 (2009), p.13; Robert Wood, *Victorian Delights* (London: Evans Brothers ltd, 1967).
[553] Altick, *Shows of London*; Wood, *Victorian Delights*.

industry emerged, aimed at the exploitation of this new audience.'[554] The formats of entertainment were diverse: fairs, freak shows, itinerant shows, theatre, spectacle, musical hall and circus, to name a few.[555] Although the origin of such formats of performances predates the nineteenth century, it is in the mid-nineteenth century that the public started to attend these events in larger numbers; London was the capital of such events, although the touring nature of some of the performances made them available more widely. The fascination for novel things made science exciting and education entertaining, and individuals utilised this Victorian fascination to produce large shows of contemporary wonders and oddities – in the same vein as Belzoni's exhibition.

Bodies were often the central attraction of these shows – alive for their special abilities, or dead as specimens and preparations. The case of Julia Pastrana (1834-1860) is an example of an individual displayed both alive and dead. She exhibited herself as a hairy woman in the mid-nineteenth century, sometimes described as 'the ugliest woman in the world' and at her death, her body was displayed to the public at 191 Piccadilly, advertised as a 'new and unparalleled discovery in the art of embalming, whereby the original form and almost the natural expression of life are retained.'[556] This advertisement highlights the fascination in seeing the dead body preserved as a simulacrum of life, which had already attracted visitors to the viewing of preserved bodies, and was later materialised by a Victorian practice in photographing the dead.[557] Egyptian mummies were not included in these itinerant and ephemeral shows of the mid-nineteenth century, but rather, they appeared in larger performances: the great exhibitions.

Egypt at the great exhibitions

The 1851 London's *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations* was the first world fair. Organisation of the event was led by Prince Albert (1819-1861) and Henry Cole (1808-1882) with the purpose of showcasing British industrial and technological

[554] Toulmin, 'Curios things', p.117.
[555] On the performance of science, see: Bernard Lightman, *Victorian Science in Context* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Bernard Lightman, 'Mid Victorian science museums and exhibitions: the industrial amusement and instruction of the people', *Endeavour*, volume 37, issue 2 (2013), pp.82-93.
[556] N. Durbach, '"Skinless wonders": Body worlds and the Victorian freak show', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Science*, volume 69, issue 1 (2014), pp.38-69 (pp.38-39).
[557] On post-mortem photography: Emily Ann Bronte, *Victorian Death Art: Post-Mortem Death Photography and Hair Art* ([n.pl.], [n.pub.], 2017); Alexander Coil, D*ead People Posing: The Mystery Behind Dead Photographs* ([n.pl.], Create Space Independent Publishing, 2015).

advancements as a demonstration of imperial power. The exhibition was a response to many successful exhibitions held in France and earlier in the United Kingdom, but it was the first international showcase of its kind. In France, industrial exhibitions had been held since 1798 as a direct challenge to the British. These exhibitions, though initially intended as annual fairs, were eventually held about every five years and grew more elaborate with each new incarnation.

In 1851, the best of the Empire's engineers and architects were brought together and their efforts culminated in the creation of the Crystal Palace, which served as both the primary venue and centrepiece of the exhibition. Ancient Egypt was performed through the architecture of the Crystal Palace, decorated with Egyptian sculptures, and the map of the building indicated an 'Egyptian Avenue', leading to the 'Egyptian Court', which featured gigantic Egyptian sculptures. The Great Palace has been studied at length, especially by Moser, who also studied Egypt at the British Museum.[558] By creating a venue where the nations of the world could compete through the quality of their exhibits, the Great Exhibition and later exhibitions spurred innovation and competition and used the terrain of the exhibition as a measure of each nation's progress.

These exhibitions, and their appeal for spectatorship and performance, brought unrollings to France, for the first time on such a large scale.[559] In 1867, French archaeologist Auguste Mariette (1821-1881) was charged with the creation of an Egyptian building for the Exposition Universelle de Paris – the presence of Egypt was of particular importance, linked to the appending opening of the Canal of Suez in 1869. An Egyptian temple was built according to drawings made by Mariette himself. An *okel* (a covered market) hosted, on the first floor, a collection of human remains, including mummies. The mummies had been collected by Mariette from the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari. [560] Mariette recollected in a letter:

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[558] Stephanie Moser, *Designing Antiquity: Owen Jones, Ancient Egypt and the Crystal Palace* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*; Nicky Levell, *Oriental Visions. Exhibitions, Travel, and Collecting in the Victorian Age* (London: Horniman Museum & Gardens, 2001). See also: Peter Colvin, 'Muhammad Ali Pasha, the Great Exhibition of 1851, and the School of Oriental and African Studies Library', *Libraries & Culture*, volume 33, issue 3 (1998), pp.249-259.

[559] Openings and dissections of Egyptian mummies were already attested in France: for example, in 1752 by Caylus, in 1754 by Rouelle, and in 1823 by Cailliaud.

[560] Elisabeth David, *Mariette Pacha 1821-1881* (Paris: Pygmalion, 1997); Amandine Marshall, *Auguste Mariette* (Paris: Bibliothèque des Introuvables, 2011).

> I managed to save six fine mummies… none of them have been touched, and you will see them as if they had just emerged from their mothers' breast… If it pleases him, his majesty the Emperor, our noble leader, will be able to attend in person to the unrolling of these interesting subjects of the Pharaohs…[561]

On 27 May 1867, one of the mummies was opened by Mariette; the unrolling of the mummy was marketed as the central event of the exhibition. The unrolling took place in front of an audience which included some of the most renowned writers of the time including Dumas son (1824-1895), Maxime du Camp (1822-1894), and Théophile Gautier (1811-1872). The Goncourt brothers, Edmond de Goncourt (1822-1896) and Jules de Goncourt (1830-1870), reported on the event, pointing out the strangeness in performing the unrolling of a woman. They reported:

> We unroll, and unroll again, again, and again, and the bundle does not seem to diminish, and there is no feeling of getting closer to the body. The linen seems to revive itself and threatens to never end, under the hands of the helpers who unroll endlessly. For a while, to speed things up and hurry the endless unwrapping, the mummy is placed on its feet, which make a noise akin to wooden legs, and one can see turning, spinning, dancing appallingly, in the hurried arms of the helpers, this standing package: Death in a bundle.[562]

The unrolling of an Egyptian mummy at the Exposition Universelle in Paris demonstrated a shift in paradigms regarding not only the unrolling, but also the consumption of ancient Egypt: if museums had already become political in their collecting of Egyptian artefacts since Napoleon's expedition, separate spaces and formats of interactions with Egyptian objects, and especially mummies, had provided different avenues to interact with ancient Egypt. With the Exposition Universelle, the mummy, which had been fairly untouched in the museum, became a political object: its unrolling by a French archaeologist who held an eminent position – Mariette created the service of antiquities in Egypt in 1858 which he directed – and within a highly politicised event, embedded the mummy within political agendas. The recollections by the Goncourt brothers could indicate that the excitement for unrolling had been tainted, and what had

[561] Auguste Durand (ed.), *Compte Rendu des Séances de l'Année – Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1884), p.563, author's translation.
[562] Edmond de Goncourt and Jean de Goncourt, 'entry of 27 Mai 1867', *Journal des Goncourt: Mémoires de la Vie Littéraire*, volume 3, issue 1 (1866-1870), pp.129-133, author's translation.

appeared as an exciting form of amusement, had taken another meaning, a 'parody of life.'[563]

6.5 Conclusion

The unrolling of Egyptian mummies, performed by Pettigrew in particular, has been the subject of much speculation. Pettigrew, like Belzoni, was a prolific writer, and his interventions on Egyptian mummies were numerous. He was instrumental in moving the anatomical study and opening of Egyptian mummies from a private practice to the realm of public entertainment. Some studies, which have looked at unrolling in isolation, have concluded that unrolling was a strange practice which dehumanized Egyptian mummies and objectified them as products of entertainment.[564] An alternative view, however, can be gained from studying Pettigrew's career as a mummy unroller, and the demonstration of a natural progression from the private to the public sphere. The unrolling of Egyptian mummies can only be considered in contexts – and these contexts are varied, complex, and ground mummy unrollings within a set of rooted practices. These interventions were consistent with a long-standing history of medical-anatomical dissections in Europe. In addition, the Egyptian mummy – both human remains and object – was the remnant of a civilisation which had, by the 1830s, attracted a great deal of attention, in both countries. The exhibition curated by Belzoni in 1821 coincided by a few years with the opening of the Louvre's first Egyptian galleries – and those events were paralleled by great excitement surrounding the decipherment of the hieroglyphs.

In itself, the Egyptian mummy provided its own share of excitement. The wrappings were the perfect effect for a performance: curiosity about the hidden body and the possibility of uncovering amulets and jewellery kept the audience interested, and the sole act of unrolling – removing what seemed like a large piece of cloth that could be removed in one go – provided dramatic effect. In reality, unrollings proved complex, sometimes requiring the use of a hammer, and often leading to disappointment, either due to poor conservation, poor mummification, or simply the lack of any ornament. However, from a marketing point of view, it is the excitement of the possible that attracted individuals, and the idea that more could be uncovered which kept audiences coming.

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[563] Théophile Gautier, *L'Orient*, volume 2 (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1882), p.101.
[564] Pearce, 'Bodies of exile'. See also, the discussion on the humanity of the mummies in the following chapter.

Belzoni and Pettigrew had grasped the need to attract, control and retain public attention, in order to pursue their endeavours, and to attract funds for future projects. In this sense, they were inscribed in their own time, at a period when entertainment was developing dramatically. What has been largely overlooked in critical studies that undermine unrollings as what Pearce calls 'historical titillation' is the extent to which these individuals were involved in the production of knowledge in their own field. Belzoni travelled to Egypt, where he made considerable discoveries and published his journeys, including drawings, and used multiple references to produce his reproduction of a tomb. Pettigrew was first and foremost a medical practitioner, and therefore had extensive anatomical knowledge. In addition, his knowledge of ancient Egypt and Egyptian mummies was extensive, as demonstrated above – he was certainly the most knowledgeable person on Egyptian mummies at the time. The rejection of their practice as mere entertainment is revealing of the ways the field of Egyptian archaeology was transforming at the time, and also of the ways it considers 'public archaeology' now – I will return to this important point in the conclusion.

In attendance at the 1867 unrolling of a mummy by Mariette were a number of French writers who felt distraught at the viewing of such event. Because the unrolling of Egyptian mummies had not been as recurrent in France as it was in England, they found themselves witnessing an intervention on what they saw not as a museum specimen but as a person, an individual. These reactions during the unrolling of a mummy at an event which was highly political, really speak against an act of othering: they suggest that some individuals considered the mummy as a human they could encounter, and of whom they could uncover the life story – this is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 7 – The human mummy

> What most impressed me, however, were the Egyptians themselves – the men of three thousand years ago, still existing entire in their framework of bone, muscle, and sinew. It struck me as a very wonderful truth, in the way in which truths great in themselves, but common-placed by their familiarity, do sometimes strike, that the living souls should still exist which had once animated these withered and desiccated bodies; and that in their separate state they had an interest in the bodies still.[565]

When Scottish geologist and newspaper editor Hugh Miller (1802-1856) visited the Egyptian galleries at the British Museum, he was struck by the ancient Egyptians, not necessarily for their material creations, but for their human, physical properties. The mummies offered something quite different from other objects displayed in the Museum: a human connection. For this devout Christian, the encounter with the ancient Egyptians created a closer connection between the past – ancient Egypt was increasingly associated with a Christian narrative – and the present. Also, and crucially, Miller envisioned the possibility of *the mummy alive*: not by considering the mummy as coming back to life, but rather considering the mummy as much more than an artefact or a corpse, but rather, that 'the living souls should still exist which had once animated these withered and desiccated bodies.'[566] Miller's approach, inherently embedded in a Christian narrative of the survival of the spiritual entity (the soul) after death, is crucial in seeing past the mummy as an object or as a corpse and in considering the humanity of the mummy and its enduring life. Crucially, his reaction was prompted by the physical encounter with an Egyptian mummy, in a museum setting.

The engagements of individuals who collected and retained Egyptian mummies for their physical properties as artefacts or human remains that can be studied, analysed and dissected allowed for physical and intellectual engagements with the mummy as a person, an individual. Some individuals explored transcendent experiences with Egyptian mummies which originated from the viewing of a mummy or mummy parts and then transformed beyond the physical level through narratives. The desiccated body of Egyptian mummies became an agency for the creation of narratives in which writers

[565] Hugh Miller, *First Impressions of England and its People* (London: J. Johnstone, 1847), p.364.
[566] Ibid.

imagined the possible life and feelings of the ancient Egyptians; the mummy became a receptacle of a projected image of the ancient Egyptians.

Narratives on ancient Egypt and Egyptian mummies have been the object of problematic studies: they have been looked at through the lens of colonial and sexual possession, for example in the works of Daly, Day and Lyu.[567] Some recurrent issues in these studies are worth stressing. Day noted that:

> Emotional detachment characterized people who destroyed mummies while sympathy motivated those who named or reburied them, but this alignment of subjectification with sympathy and objectification with detachment could be reversed in the imagination. Creators of fiction and legend produced romances, which bestowed speech and movement upon mummies only to manipulate them like objects.[568]

Day opposes physical interventions (destruction) to emotional engagements, and this confrontation of those who care for mummies against those who destroy them is paradigmatic of the problematic approach to engagements with mummies.[569] This chapter will demonstrate – as has been done to some extent in previous chapters – that openings and dissections did not equate antagonistic feelings towards the mummy, and, similarly, that collecting activities did not necessarily result from an emotional affect for mummies. Another important point to extract from this excerpt, is that mummy fiction has long been considered as manipulation of the Egyptian mummy; in many ways, this echoes the approach to mummy unrolling in scholarly research considered in the previous chapter.

Mummy literature has been disconnected from the collecting of mummies, but the inception of mummy fiction is linked to physical encounters in collections, and to networks of individuals who studied Egyptian mummies. In France, in particular, French collectors and romantic writers used the format of narratives – both reports and fiction – to translate their emotions at the encounter with a mummy specimen. In looking at these narratives constructed around the individuality and life trajectories of Egyptian mummies, this chapter asks the following questions: how was the human nature of mummies

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[567] Nicholas Daly, 'That obscure object of desire', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, volume 28, issue 1 (1994), pp.24-51; Jasmine Day, *The Mummy's Curse* (London: Routledge, 2006), especially pp.19-63; Claire Lyu, 'Unswathing the mummy', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 33 (2005), pp.308-319.
[568] Day, *The Mummy's Curse*, pp.38-39.
[569] This is a recurring issue of modernism, to which I will return in the conclusion.

appreciated by individuals? How was this negotiated in regard to the mummy as a specimen on display? What were the implications of this in creating an overall understanding of the mummy?

This chapter draws on a number of primary sources that include published accounts, personal accounts and fictional narratives, with a view to understanding how those who encountered Egyptian mummies viewed the mummy as an individual. In the first half of the nineteenth century, two large collections of Egyptian material culture were formed in Paris by Italian merchant Giuseppe Passalacqua (1797-1865) and by Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825), former member of the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt and director of the Musée Napoléon (Musée du Louvre); both held mummies in their private collections and demonstrated a real appreciation for Egyptian mummies in their writing. Denon's fascination for Egyptian mummies was supplemented by the opening of one of his specimens, suggesting that affection for mummies did not contradict a desire to unwrap and study specimens. It is one of Denon's specimens, a mummy foot, which inspired Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) to write the short story *Le Pied de Momie* and then his archaeological novel *Le Roman de la Momie*.[570] These two publications need to be considered in the context of the emergence of the mummy fiction genre, which would grow substantially in the second half of the nineteenth century, in a context of popularisation of ancient Egypt. In considering the changing frames of the understanding of mummies, this chapter aims to supplement the multi-faceted interpretation of the mummy in the first half of the nineteenth century, and reconcile the dichotomy between object and subject.

7.1. Seeing life behind the wrappings

The opening address to Belzoni's 1821 exhibition by Horace Smith (1779-1849) read:

> The nature of thy private life unfold:
> A heart has throbbed beneath that leathern breast,
> And tears adown that dusty cheek have rolled;
> Have children climbed those knees, and kissed that face?

[570] Théophile Gautier, *Le Roman de la Momie* (Paris: Hachette, 1858).

What was thy name and station, age and race?[571]

In this section of the poem, the protagonist asks questions that do not relate to the nature of the mummy as an embalmed body, but rather, questions the identity of the mummy as a person: its age, race, social situation, and personal life; these questions locate the mummy, performed during an unrolling which some deemed dehumanising, as a person. This section considers the framing of the mummy as an individual, looking at ways the nomenclature of the mummy shifted from object to person. In particular, this section introduces the narratives of emotional encounters with mummies by Passalacqua, who expressed emotions at the collection and opening of mummy specimens. In addition, this section considers ways the dichotomy between the mummy as an individual and a dead body was negotiated by including the mummy in Christian narratives of the preservation of the body and soul. These elements, which have not been considered through the lens of the human mummy, set the scene for the interventions of Denon and Gautier in France.

The naming of the mummy

The devising of names to refer to Egyptian mummies has rarely been the subject of research, and yet can illuminate the evolution of individual engagements with these objects. The individuality of the mummy – its quality as *individual* – regularly appeared in recollections of those who encountered Egyptian mummies. The reference to the mummy as an individual is almost entirely reserved to the mummy as a collected object rather than as an apothecary product. Nonetheless, a watercolour of the *Livre des Simples Médecines* of 1530 which described the mummy as medicine, depicts an unwrapped, skeletal-looking body in a wooden box, with the caption 'mumie' [Fig.7.1].[572] The next century, in 1690, the entry for 'Mommie' in the *Dictionnaire Universel* by Antoine Furetière (1619-1688) remarked on the lack of fixed definition for the term. He first noted:

> Mommie, or mumie. Feminine noun. Ancient embalmed body brought from Egypt, shown in cabinets as curiosities. It is said that mummies became used in

[571] Horace Smith, 'An Address to the mummy at Belzoni's exhibition, London', *Sacramento Daily Union*, volume 42, issue 7408, 10 February (1872).
[572] Platearius, *Livre des Simples Médecines*, ([n.pl.], [n.pub.], 1530).

medicine due to the malice of a Jewish doctor, who wrote that this preserved and embalmed flesh could be used to cure several ailments.[573]

In addition to this initial definition, Furetière added four definitions: a dried body found in the Libyan desert, a liquid from embalmed human remains (the liquid rather than the body), a drug composed of bitumen and finally, the fake mummy which he described as the body of a recently deceased person disguised as a genuine ancient Egyptian specimen.[574] Together these characterisations demonstrate the diverse nomenclature of the mummy.

Fig.7.1: 'Mumie' in Platearius, *Livre des Simples Médecines* ([n.pl.], [n.pub.], 1530). © Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[573] Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire Universel*, volume 2 (La Haye and Rotterdam: Arnout et Reinier Leers, 1690), p.654, author's translation.
[574] Ibid.

In 1755, the contention as to the definition of the mummy was not resolved, and the mummy still appeared as a medicinal produce in the highly influential *Samuel Johnson Dictionary* which contained a lengthy description, including this abstract:

> 1. A dead body preserved by the Egyptian art of embalming.
>
> 2. We have two different substances preserved for medicinal use under the name of *mummy*: one is the dried flesh of human bodies embalmed with myrrh and spice; the other is the liquor running from such mummies when newly prepared, or when affected by great heat, or by damps: […] this sort is extremely dear, and the first sort so cheap, that as all kinds of mummy are brought from Egypt we are not to imagine it to be the ancient Egyptian mummy.[575]

This excerpt taken from the lengthy description gives more prominence to *mumia*, than it does to the mummy as a corpse, or a person. The identification of the collected mummy as an individual is evidenced in recollections of engagements with mummies, and reveals the sort of connections individuals entertained with their specimens. The motivation to consider the Egyptian mummy as a 'living object' is multi-layered. Evidently, the mummy was first and foremost a body, but it is the art of preservation which startled collectors. Indeed, some mummies were so well embalmed that the exact preservation of the body, with hair and skin preserved, facilitated a comparison between the collector and the collected. Jean Sommer in 1591 recalled viewing two exhumed bodies 'so well preserved that it could have been thought they were still living',[576] while a quatrain of 1691 on the arrival of a mummy in Paris read: 'The object of the curious, and the love of the erudite/ I come from the blood of the gods, the colours of dawn/ Victim of death for four thousand years/ Despite death, I remain alive.'[577]

The idea of a living mummy was mentioned in the 1767 play mentioned in chapter 2 which noted: 'It is the easiest thing in the world, believe me, to turn round a dead – ay, or a living mummy.'[578] The apparatus which had been set on the sarcophagus created a simulacrum of movement of the body. Even the dissection and unrolling of Egyptian mummies was concerned, in the initial stage of the intervention, with the uncovering of

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[575]Samuel Johnson, 'mumie', *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: W. Strathan, 1755).
[576] C. Burri and S. Sauneron (eds) [Jean Sommer], *Voyage en Egypte, 1589-1590-1597* (Paris: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 1971), p.48.
[577] Aufrère, *La Momie et la Tempête*, p.166, author's translation.
[578]Reverend Weedon Butler, *A Walk through the British Museum*, 1767. London, British Library, Western Manuscripts, Add MS 27276.

the life story of the deceased individual, and then its collecting process, thus mapping out its life trajectory.

Giuseppe Passalacqua, who had a prominent collection of Egyptian material culture in Paris in the early nineteenth century [Fig.7.2], is an example of a collector who demonstrated affect for mummies in his writing. Born in Trieste in 1797, he travelled to Egypt to sell horses, but his business did not prosper and he turned his attention to excavations and collecting.[579] Passalacqua's recollection of the encounter with an Egyptian mummy while in Egypt is anchored in narratives of fascination for the female Egyptian mummy. He recalled of his finding of an intact tomb:

> The young beauty of centuries past, who was dressed so extraordinarily and who can be placed in the ranks of the most curious of past discoveries… found herself embalmed in a very gracious and unusual attitude… her right hand... seemed to indicate with the index finger the bottom of her stomach… the left arm folded in front of her, the hand spread across the opposite breast, in such a way that she had nearly taken the pose of the Venus of Medici.[580]

Passalacqua, fascinated by the beauty of the individual and the purity of her position, decided to unwrap the specimen. The description of the unwrapped body retains the same tropes of beauty and elegance, at which point, he writes candidly about his mixed emotions:

> At the sight of this young woman of such beautiful proportions, and as such the most remarkable of all the mummies I had seen, which is not a small number, I stayed unmoving before her, fixing with a mixture of surprise and sadness her beautiful curves and adornments.[581]

The local group which had accompanied Passalacqua tore apart the mummy's arm, taking him out of his reveries. He recalled:

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[579] Pamela Tedesco, 'Giuseppe Passalacqua (Trieste 1797-Berlino 1865), Una nota biographia', *Analecta Papyrologia*, issue 21/22 (2009/2010), pp.237-267; Eve Gran-Aymerich, *Les Chercheurs du Passé* (Paris: CNRS, 2007), p.102. A study of Passalacqua can also be found in: Renate Germer, Hannelore Kischkewitz and Meinhard Lüning, *Berliner Mumiengeschichten* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2009), pp.79-96.
[580] Giuseppe Passalacqua, *Catalogue Raisonné et Historique des Antiquités Découvertes en Egypte* (Paris: Galerie d'antiquités égyptiennes, 1826), p.160, author's translation.
[581] Ibid, author's translation.

> During this episode, one of my Arabs, trying to demonstrate his enthusiasm, broke her arm and left hand to present to me the scarab and the bracelet that decorated them. This action troubled me, and because of this I brought back of this beauty only the forearm and the right hand. The rest of the body was carefully reburied.[582]

Passalacqua accumulated a large collection of ancient Egyptian artefacts which he presented in 1826 at an exhibition in Paris at 52, Passage Vivienne.[583] The display contained nine human mummies, two ears and a forearm – that of the female mummy which had transfixed Passalacqua. Among the mummies, two children and a woman were presented unwrapped. The collection was offered to the French government for 400,000 Francs but was rejected; it was acquired by Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia (1795-1861) for the Berlin Museum, of which Passalacqua was named curator between 1828 and 1865.[584] What the encounter between Passalacqua and the female mummy tells us, is that some individuals felt intense emotion at the viewing of a mummy, not because they found some valuable treasures – the mummy was covered in precious ornaments – but because they were faced with a *person*, and they were emotionally unprepared for such an encounter.

Fig.7.2: 'Perspective de la chambre sepulchrale', drawing by Giuseppe Passalacqua, 1823. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung Berlin, Dokumentenarchiv. [Copyright restriction].

[582] Ibid, author's translation.
[583] Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, p.418.
[584] Ibid.

Mummification and the Christian narrative

The human nature of mummies was not only posing questions of materiality to those who encountered them, it also questioned the location of the mummy in a Christian narrative. While historical narratives of ancient Egypt were compared and adapted to the Christian narrative of human creation, mummies were contrasted to Christian ideas of death and offered an alternative interpretation. While Christian death and resurrection were dependent on the decomposition of the body, Egyptian mummies offered a different approach in that the funerary rituals were centred on the preservation of the body *as if* alive. Nonetheless, the ancient Egyptians did not preserve the body intact and the many procedures involved in the mummification process included the removal of organs to prevent decomposition. Contemporary individuals confronted with bodies that appeared suspended in time attempted to reconcile their Christian understanding of death and the immortality of the soul. Saint Augustin (354-430 AD), for example, asserted that the ancient Egyptians believed in resurrection as evidenced by the effort they put in the preservation of their dead.[585] In parallel, other narratives based on metempsychosis – the passage of the soul from one body to another – developed, based on Herodotus's description of mummies in which he noted:

> The Egyptians […] are also the first of mankind who have defended the immortality of the soul. They believe that on the dissolution of the body the soul immediately enters some other animal, and that, after using as vehicles every species of terrestrial, aquatic, and winged creatures, it finally enters a second time into a human body. They affirm that it undergoes all these changes in the space of three thousand years.[586]

The concept of metempsychosis applied to the ancient Egyptians was perpetuated by George Sandys (1577-1644) in 1615, when he noted that 'of all the Heathen they were the first that taught the immortality of the soul, and the transfiguration thereof into another body, either of man or beast, clean or unclean, as it had behaved it self in the former'.[587] The preservation of the body *as if alive* was fundamentally alien to a Christian narrative which relied on the destruction of the body ('you are dust and to dust you shall return') and provided questionings as to the fate of the soul in such a situation. While

[585] Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood*, p.68.
[586] Godley [Herodotus], *The Histories*, volume 2, chapter 123.
[587] Sandys, *Sandys Travels*, p.81.

metempsychosis relied on the displacement of the soul, individuals such as Hugh Miller imagined the soul as still existing in eternity, while the body expressed for how long it has done so; it is the idea that this spiritual presence remains after millennia. Inevitably, these conversations were intrinsically linked to the consideration of the mummy not so much as a collected object, but as an individual. In addition to the peculiarity of the spectacular preservation of the body through embalming, individuals developed more intimate engagements with mummies, looking at the mummy as a person of beauty.

7.2 Denon's romantic impressions

This section frames the collecting activities, the opening of a mummy and the narratives by Dominique Vivant Denon as the epitome of non-fiction mummy narratives which present both an affection and a fascination for Egyptian mummies as individuals, objects of collection and subjects of physical interventions. Denon provides an idiosyncratic example of the mummy investigator, in that he pursued a multiplicity of engagements with mummies – in addition to his travels and curatorship of important collections – and did not belong to the scientific community which had been central to the study of Egyptian mummies.

Denon was born in Givry on 4 January 1747, and lived an eclectic life, taking on many positions. A study of Denon's complex and varied life can be found in Sollers and, more importantly, in Dupuy (ed.) who provides a thorough study of Denon's collecting activities, including his collection of Egyptian materials. [588] The present section considers, corrects, and adds to Dupuy's research, on Egyptian mummies especially.

Denon was a favourite of Louis XV (1710-1774) who entrusted him with a collection of gems and medals for Madame de Pompadour (1721-1764). He had a favoured position with women which he used to successfully climb the social ladder. In 1772, he started his diplomatic career, first at the French Embassy in St Petersburg, and then in Sweden. Following these occupations, he travelled to Switzerland in 1775 and to Naples in 1776. While visiting these countries, he became interested in the royal

[588] On Dominique Vivant Denon, see: Philippe Sollers, *Le Cavalier du Louvre. Vivant Denon (1747-1825)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997); Marie-Anne Dupuy (ed.), *Dominique Vivant Denon. L'œil de Napoléon* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1999). On Denon's collection, Anon. [Musée National des châteaux de Malmaison et de Bois-Préau], *Malmaison et l'Egypte: Musée National des Châteaux de Malmaison et Bois-Préau* (Rueil-Malmaison: Musée National des châteaux de Malmaison & Bois-Préau, 1998).

collections of art; by exploring them, he became the recipient of a memory of European collections. Denon was an amateur engraver and, in 1787, became a member of the Académie de Peinture. During the Revolution, his house was seized, but he successfully returned to Paris. Under the Directoire, he frequented the salon of Joséphine de Beauharnais, who was crucial in facilitating Denon's enrolment in the French expedition to Egypt.

In 1802, a Direction of the Museum Central des Arts was created and the position of Directeur des Musées de France was offered to Denon, a position he held until 1815. Denon played a crucial role in building up the collection of art at the Louvre and selected himself some of the art pieces along his travels. In addition, he developed a politic of museography in the museum, setting up restoration workshops in the west wing of the great gallery and developing a large-scale inventory project. At the exile of Napoleon, the collections were dismantled and Denon had to collaborate in the restitution effort.

The quest for an Egyptian mummy

> All my life I had longed to journey to Egypt, but time, which wears all, had squandered this wish. When the expedition, which would make us leaders of that land took place, the possibility of completing the venture reignited my desire for it. [589]

Denon's interest in ancient and modern Egypt has been largely overshadowed by his eclectic life and his position as director of the Musée Napoléon; however, his collection of artefacts (482 Egyptian artefacts at the sale of his collection), his writings and drawings were unparalleled at the time. In Egypt, Denon not only visited the Delta, where the Commission was located, but also travelled throughout the country and visited Upper Egypt, where he formed a great collection of drawings, records and antiquities. His drawings in particular were used in the *Description de l'Egypte*,[590] while his writing led to two publications: *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte* and *Monuments des Arts du Dessin*.[591]

[589] Dominique Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte* (Paris: P. Didot l'ainé, 1802), p.1, author's translation.
[590] Jomard et al (eds), *Description de l'Egypte*.
[591] Denon, *Voyage*; Dominique Vivant Denon, *Monuments des Arts du Dessin* (Paris: B. Denon, 1829).

During his journey in Egypt, Denon's first encounter with Egyptian mummies was not with human specimens but animal mummies. In Sakkara, a chamber containing over 500 specimens of ibis mummies had been discovered and Denon opened one of them with naturalist Etienne Geoffroy Saint Hilaire. Of this experience, Denon made a drawing, which was published in his *Voyage* [Fig.7.3].[592]

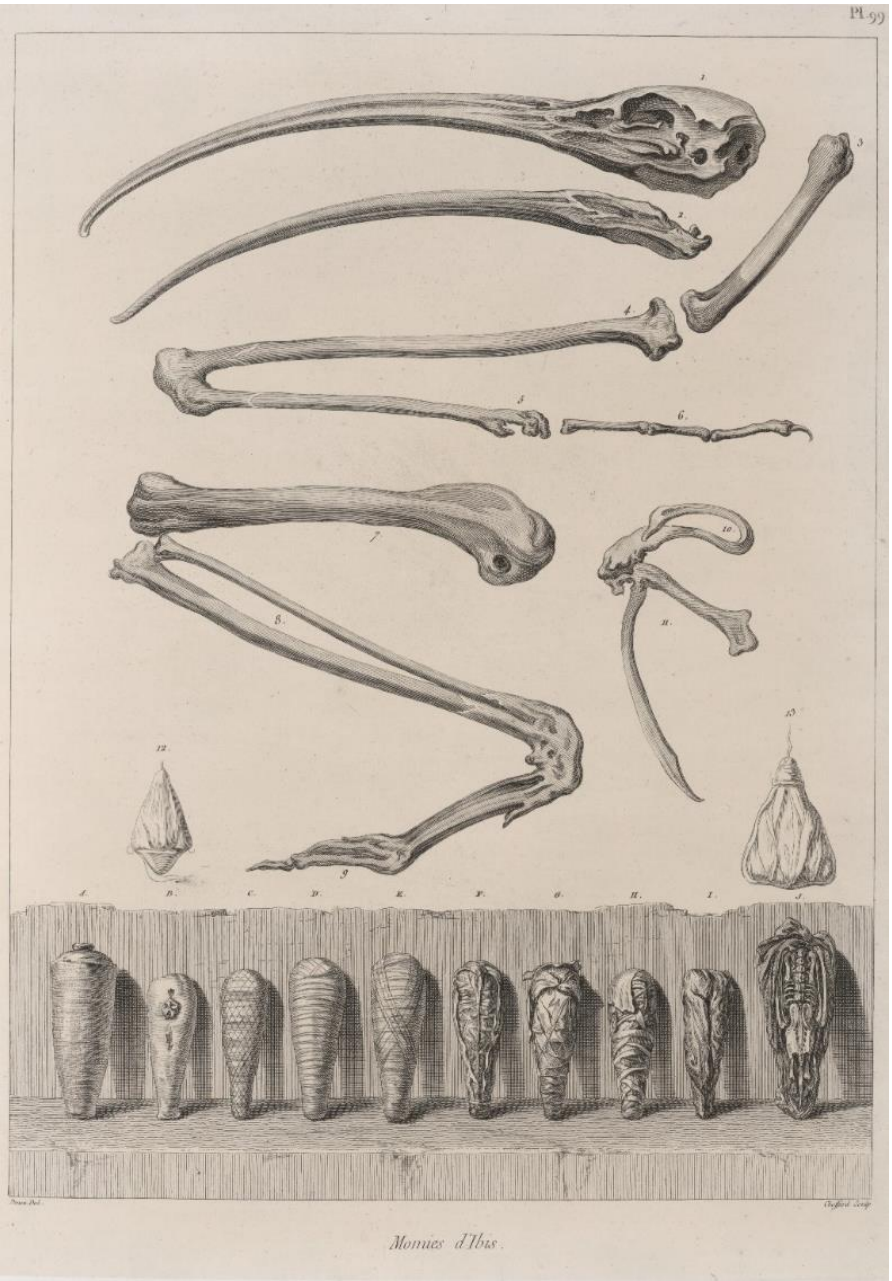

Fig.7.3: 'Momies d'ibis' in Dominique Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte* (Paris: P. Didot l'ainé, 1802), plate 99.

[592] Denon, *Voyage*, plate 99.

Denon had, from his arrival in Egypt, desired to visit Upper Egypt, and when he obtained the authorisation to travel there – to pursue Mourad bey (1750-1801) – he visited Philae and Thebes. He reached the Valley of the Kings in 1798, from which he brought back the foot of an Egyptian mummy, which he described as follows:

> It was without a doubt the foot of a young lady, a princess, a charming being, of which shoes had not altered the shape, and of which shape was perfect; it felt like obtaining a favour, and made me a forbidden lover in the lineage of pharaohs.[593]

The foot was illustrated in Denon's *Voyage* [Fig.7.4].[594] With this short description of the mummy's foot, Denon had set in place the tropes of engagement with Egyptian mummies reused in early nineteenth century literature: the idea that the mummy encountered – here, the sole foot is enough to project an image in Denon's imagination – belonged to a princess of exceptional beauty, installing the relation between the owner and the mummy as a romantic encounter, in which the man falls in love with the *idea* of the female mummy. It is important to note that, unlike what has been suggested in research so far, the individual does not fall in love with the physical object of the mummy, but rather with an idea of who the mummy was: this is evidenced in the emphasis on the mummy's past life, rather than its contemporary being as an object. In addition, it emphasizes that individuals who engaged with mummies brought with them certain ideas of what the mummy ought to be; they did not just engage with the object, but with the idea they had formed of it – I will return to this point in the conclusion as it can illuminate more recent views of the mummy.

[593] Denon, *Voyage*, p.320, author's translation.
[594] Denon, *Voyage*, plate 100.

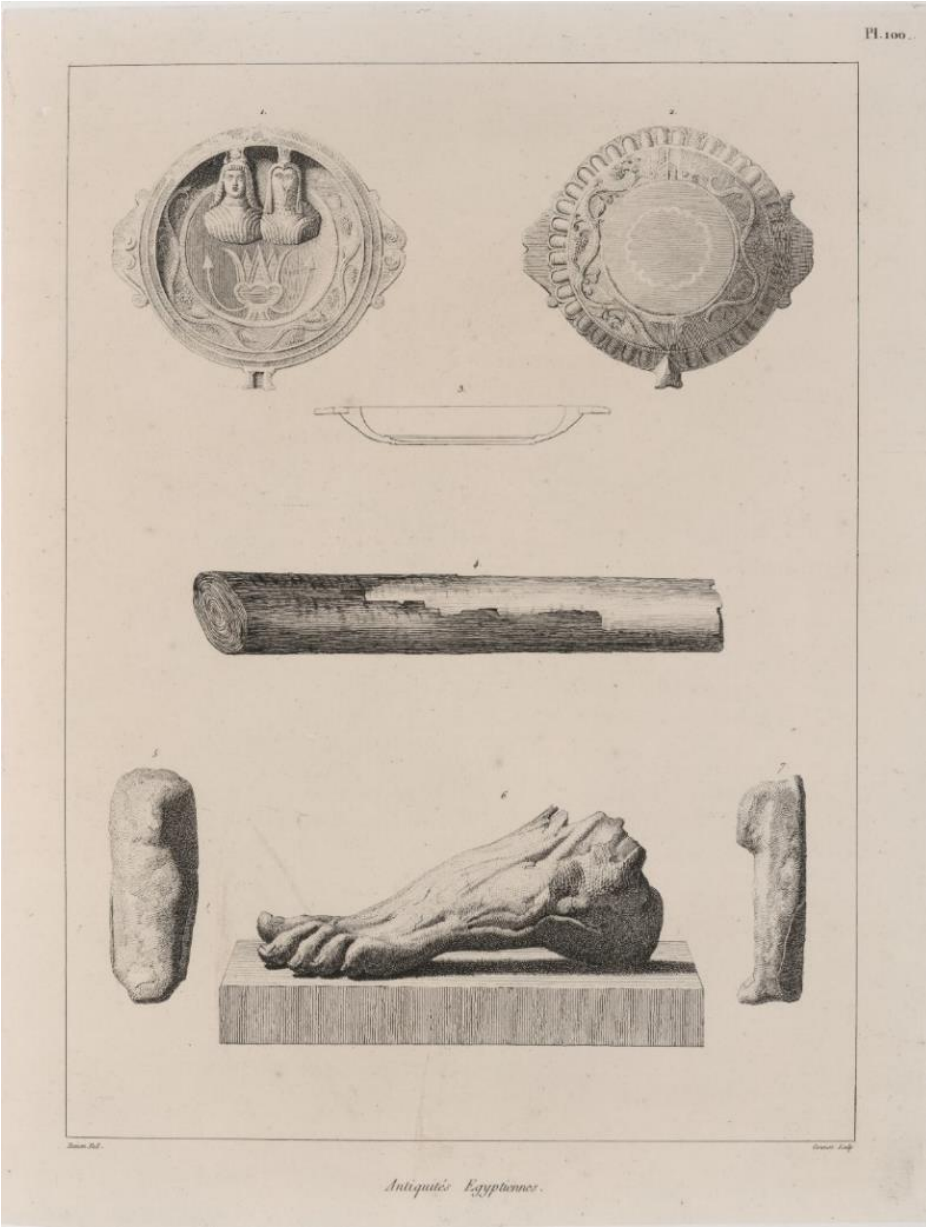

Fig.7.4: Mummy foot in Dominique Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte* (Paris: P. Didot l'ainé, 1802), plate 100.

In Gournah, Denon visited tombs in which local inhabitants had elected refuge. His quest for an intact mummy was a deception, which he narrated in his *Voyages*:

> I was brought mummy fragments: I would promise anything to have some complete and intact ones; but the avarice of the Arabs deprived me of this satisfaction: they sell in Cairo the resin found in their wombs and the skull of these mummies and nothing can prevent them from taking these out.[595]

[595] Denon, *Voyage*, p.329, author's translation.

Denon left Egypt without the specimen he coveted, but brought back enough artefacts and notes to produce two publications: his *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte* is a recollection of his journey, [596] while *Monuments des Arts du Dessin* forms an analysis of the arts, with sections on ancient Egypt;[597] both publications were personal, the first as a journal and the second as an overview of his own private collection.

Denon's mummy collection

Denon's collection of Egyptian mummies and mummy parts was extensive considering his non-specialist background in Egyptian archaeology. Denon had an interest in human remains, evidenced by the presence in his collection of various hair and bones. The catalogue of Denon's collection drawn at his death at the prospect of selling the entire collection accounts for 482 Egyptian artefacts, including four sarcophagi, six Egyptian mummies and two Egyptian mummy heads, two hands and one foot.[598]

From his travel to Egypt, Denon retained the mummy foot, which was on display in his private collection, which was visited by Lady Morgan (1781-1859) who recalled in 1817:

> I found in this curious collection several objects which could not be classified: a perfectly preserved human foot, which may once have been part of the charms of amiable Beatrice or beautiful Cleopatra. Two thousand years at least have passed since they rested against the cushion of a couch or walked softly in the orange groves of the Delta. It is this pretty little foot which Mr. Denon described during his journey, and which is without doubt, due to its elegant shape, the foot of a young lady or a princess.[599]

Here, Lady Morgan concurred with the assumption that the remains of the mummy belonged to a princess. This assumption illustrates the desire to project a world of wonders onto the remains, as well as the exposure of individuals to the remains (human

[596] Denon, *Voyage*. The publication was very successful and was reedited multiple times. It was translated into English and German.
[597] Denon, *Monuments*.
[598] Léon Jean Joseph Dubois, *Description des Objets d'Art qui Composent le Cabinet de Feu M. Le Baron V. Denon* (Paris: Imprimerie d'Hippolyte Tilliard, 1826).
[599] Lady Sydney Morgan, *La France* (Paris: Truttel et Würtz, 1817), p.87.

and material) of the high-ranking individuals, collected for museums – there was little interest for the everyday object in collecting practices at the time.

At the return from Egypt, Denon was still missing an artefact he had coveted: a full Egyptian mummy. It is at the death of Joséphine de Beauharnais and the sale of her collection in 1819 that Denon finally obtained a complete mummy. The catalogue of this sale indicates 'two mummies from Egypt each contained in a case of walnut wood five feet and half; the head of a female mummy, three ibis mummies inside clay vases'.[600] From this sale, Denon acquired one of the full mummies, which had been gifted to Josephine de Beauharnais by Horace Sebastiani (1771-1851) who had travelled to Egypt on a diplomatic mission in 1802 – I will return to this specific mummy later on.

In addition, Denon had in his collection the head of a female mummy, conjectured to be the 'tête de momie de femme' in the *Description de l'Egypte* (plate 50) [Fig.7.5].[601] This mummy head was found in Thebes in 1799 during the French expedition in Egypt. The plate of the *Description de l'Egypte* mentions 'Delile' – Alire Raffeneau Delile (1778-1850) – who was a botanist member of the French expedition to Egypt.[602] The head was included in the cabinet of natural history of Joséphine de Beauharnais in Malmaison. At the sale of Beauharnais's collection in 1819, Denon acquired the specimen, among other artefacts.[603] It has been suggested that the mummy he owned was not this very specimen because it does not match the description of a female mummy head in the *Monuments des Arts du Dessin*, which captures Denon's collection.[604] In fact, the mummy in Denon's *Monuments* was not Egyptian but belonged to the Guanche, the Berber-tribe of the Canary Island [Fig.7.6].[605] The Egyptian female mummy head was listed in the catalogue of the sale of the collection Denon, as n°246.[606] The head was later acquired by Nils Gustaf Palin (1765-1842) who donated it to the Louvre in 1859.

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[600] Catalogue de la vente de la collection de Joséphine de Beauharnais, 1819. Archives Nationales.
[601] Dubois, *Description des Objets d'Art*, p.55, n°246; Jomard et al., *Description de l'Egypte*, vol. 2, plate 50.
[602] Ibid.
[603] He acquired one full mummy and two mummy heads at this sale.
[604] Denon, *Monuments des Arts du Dessin*, p.79. Marc Etienne confirms the mummy Denon is the one in the *Description* in Martine Denoyelle and Sophie Descamps-Lequime (eds), *De Pompéi à Malmaison, les Antiques de Joséphine* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2008), pp.44 and p.179.
[605] Denon, *Monuments des Arts du Dessin*, p.79.
[606] Dubois, *Description des Objets d'Art*, p.55, n°246.

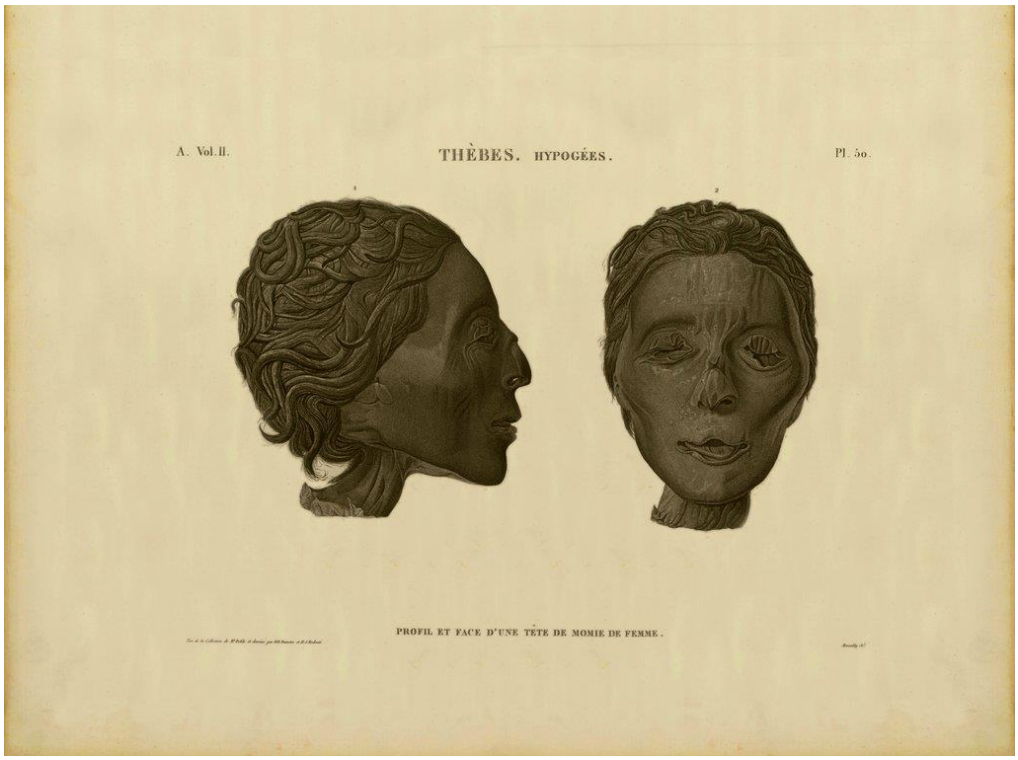

Fig.7.5: ‘Profil et face d'une tête de momie de femme’ in Edmé-François Jomard et al. (eds), *Description de l’Egypte* (Paris: Imprimerie C.-L. Panckoucke, 1821-1830).

Fig.7.6: Female mummy head in Dominique Vivant Denon, *Monuments des Arts du Dessin* (Paris: B. Denon, 1829). The head at the bottom is the female mummy head from Canary Island, misinterpreted as being the female Egyptian mummy head in Denon’s collection.

Finally, Denon owned another mummy head, a male one this time, which is accounted for in the catalogue of Denon's collection.[607] An engraving, *Le baron Vivant Denon dans son bureau, au milieu de sa collection*, illuminates the provenance of this mummy head [Fig.7.7]. The painting by René Théodore Berton (1776-1859), which was used as a model for the engraving, has been lost; the lithograph was produced by Jean-Baptiste Mauzaisse (1784-1844). The date of the original painting is uncertain, although the year 1813 has been suggested. The scene represents Dominique Vivant Denon standing in an office, surrounded by artefacts. The location of the scene is unclear and two locations have been suggested: his house Quai Voltaire and his office at the Louvre. In 1813, Denon had settled in Quai Voltaire, and it is likely that this is the location of the scene represented, considering it depicts his personal collection, rather than the Museum's. The artefacts and artworks represented were carefully selected to produce a snapshot of Denon's collecting activities and his career at large – this is confirmed by the fact that these artefacts were lithographed to be included in Denon's *Monuments des Arts du Dessin*.[608] Among the artefacts reminiscent of Denon's travel to Egypt are the Isis sculpture, the Anubis sculpture and a mummy head inside a bell-shaped glass cabinet. The appearance of the mummy head suggests that it is the male mummy head represented in the *Description de l'Egypte* [Fig.7.8].[609]

[607] Dubois, *Description des Objets d'Art*, p.55, n°245.
[608] Denon, *Monuments*.
[609] Jomard, *Description de l'Egypte*.

Fig.7.7: Denon in his office, ‘Le baron Vivant Denon dans son bureau, au milieu de sa collection’, lithograph by Jean-Baptiste Mauzaisse after a painting by René Théodore Berthon. © RMN Grand Palais / D. Arnaudet. [Copyright restriction].

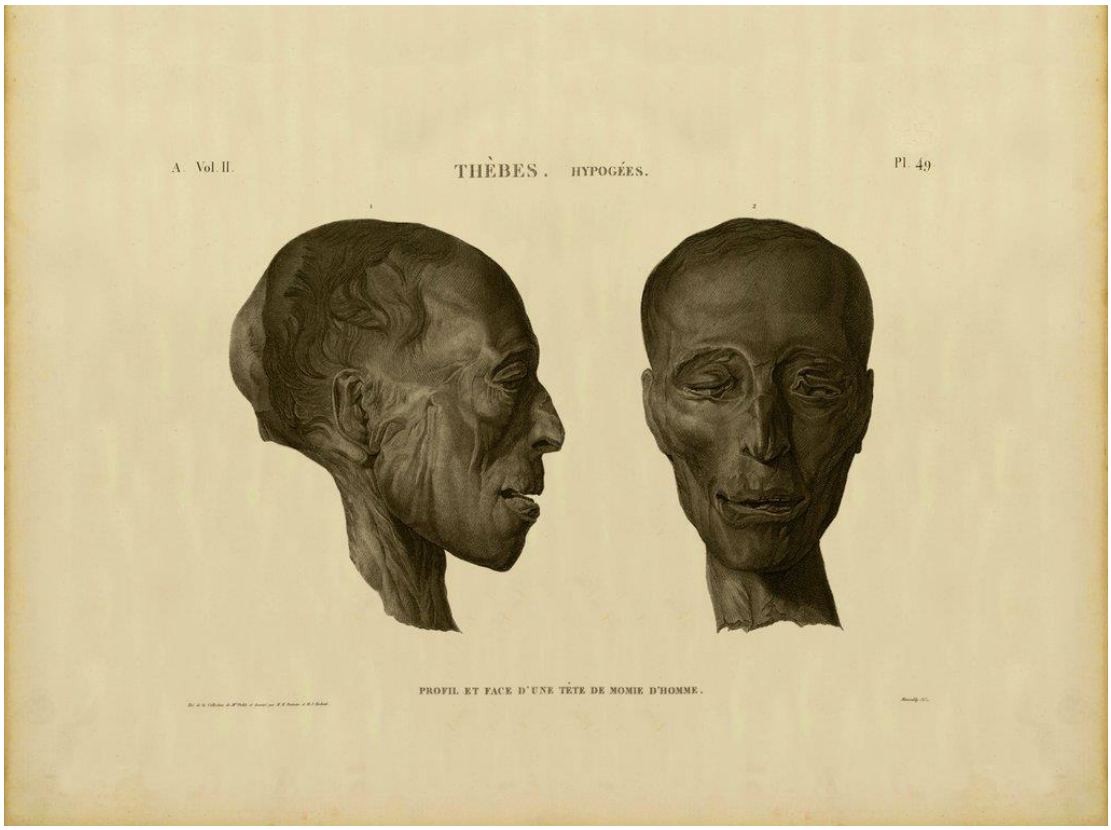

Fig.7.8: 'Profil et face d'une tête de momie d'homme' in Edmé-François Jomard et al. (eds), *Description de l'Egypte* (Paris: Imprimerie C.-L. Panckoucke, 1821-1830).

The unrolling of a mummy by Denon

Denon did not solely acquire Egyptian mummies as collectible objects, he elected to unwrap one specimen – the full mummy – at his house, in the presence of a small audience. The minutes ('procès-verbal') of the unrolling were recorded over six pages and included in Denon's *Monuments des Arts du Dessin.*[610] The minutes provided by Denon offer a particularly meticulous description of every step of the unwrapping, showcasing Denon's interest in finding out every detail of the embalming technique used in the process of the making of this specific specimen; this is all the more interesting considering Denon was not, such as Granville, a medical practitioner. Despite the medical undertone of this examination, a biased fascination for the female specimen is apparent in the author's inclination to seek out perfection in all its aspects. For example, he noted that a more thorough examination demonstrated that 'the opening of the mouth was of

[610] Dominique Vivant Denon, 'Procès-verbal de l'ouverture d'une momie' in Denon, *Monument des Arts du Dessin*, pp.66-73.

proportion as elegant as it was gracious' and he repeatedly emphasised the 'anatomical perfection' of the mummy.[611]

The process of the unwrapping of the mummy was visually recorded in *Monuments des Arts du Dessin*, and this representation is unique in mummy studies [Fig.7.9]. Plate 3 presents the different sequences of the unrolling, divided into six stages: n°1, 'a mummy, as it was found taken from the box where it was kept' corresponds to the pre-unrolling stage; n°2 and 3, 'removing the wrappings' correspond to the first stage of unwrapping; n°4, 'it still retains wrappings, but we can distinguish its shape and the position given by the embalmers' and finally, n° 5 and 6, 'entirely uncovered', once the mummy is fully unwrapped.

Fig.7.9: Phases of the mummy unrolling in Dominique Vivant Denon, *Monuments des Arts du Dessin* (Paris: B. Denon, 1829).

In addition, and again a unique occurrence at the time, is the existence of an engraving which depicts the scene of the unrolling at Denon's [Fig.7.10]. The engraving, produced by John Cheney (1801-1885), was entitled *La séance de débandelettage d'une momie chez Vivant Denon*. The scene is located Quai Voltaire, at Denon's house – this is evidenced by the view outside the window of a building of the Louvre. Denon is visible in the centre of the room, represented as the instigator of the opening, aided by two other

[611] Ibid, p.66-73 (p.69).

men. The presence of an audience was confirmed in Denon's report of the unrolling, in which he recalled an instance when the smell of the resin covering the wrappings of the mummy was too strong for the 'spectators'.[612]

Fig.7.10: The scene of the mummy unwrapping at Denon's. Engraving by Harriet Cheney, 'La séance de débandelettage d'une momie chez Vivant Denon'. [Copyright restriction].

After the unrolling, Denon retained the mummy unwrapped and presented it standing in a wooden box, described in the catalogue drawn at his death as 'a female mummy entirely unwrapped and placed standing in a case with glass lid'."[613] At the death of Denon, the mummy was acquired by Dominique-Jean Larrey (1766-1842), who donated it to the Louvre on 6 october 1832, together with the box Denon had elected for it [Fig.7.11].[614]

[612] Denon, 'Procès-verbal', p.67.
[613] Dubois, *Description des Objets d'Art*, p.55, n°244. The mummy, unwrapped following its dissection by Denon, is not currently on display, but remains in the Museum's collection as ID238903.
[614] Archive Bibliothèque Nationale de France, NAF 5876 f. 335.

Denon's legacy is not just his extensive collection of mummies – of which we have an extraordinarily precise account – but in the diversity of his engagements with mummies. Through his encounters with mummies, his collecting activities, his drawings, and his physical interventions on mummies, Denon reconciled the dichotomy of the Egyptian mummy as a body and an object. He demonstrated that the opening of the mummy was not incompatible with the desire to keep mummies as objects of collection, and that the objectification of the mummy through the process of collecting and unrolling, did not prevent one from having a transcendent encounter with the individual behind the wrappings.

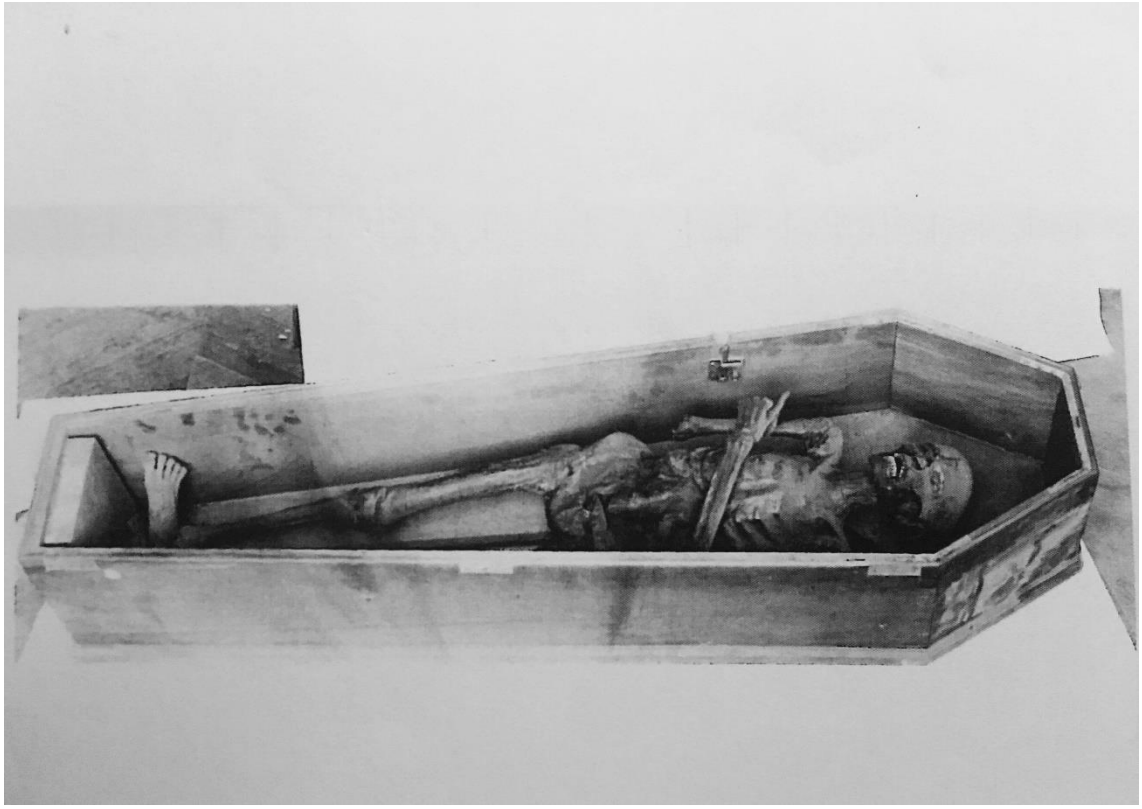

Fig.7.11: The mummy Larrey, brought from Egypt in 1799, donated to the Louvre in 1832. © Musée du Louvre, documentation Département des Antiquités Egyptiennes / Jean Louis de Cenival.

7.3 Gautier's mummy fictions

The viewing of the mummy foot in Denon's collection inspired a prominent French writer of the mid-nineteenth century to consider the Egyptian mummy as a central character in

fiction narratives: Théophile Gautier. Gautier did not visit Egypt prior to writing his various Egypt-inspired narratives, but he viewed Egyptian artefacts and mummy specimens in collections and later attended the unrolling of the Egyptian mummy by Mariette at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris. Of this event, the Goncourt brothers reported their disarray at the viewing of the female body being mistreated on the table of a theatre, without anyone else sharing their melancholy.[615] This comes over twenty years after Gautier demonstrated his attachment to a female mummy he had envisioned through his writing. This section considers ways Gautier, in the same vein as Denon, considered ways to reconcile the mummy unrolling with the mummy as a person, and inspired much of the literature on Egyptian mummies.

Le Pied de Momie

The first short story to give a central place to an Egyptian mummy is Théophile Gautier's *Le Pied de Momie* in which the theme of the Egyptian mummy as a beautiful woman traveling from the past is introduced in fiction narratives.[616] *Le Pied de Momie* narrates the story of an antiquarian who enters an antique shop searching for an original paperweight, which would be different from any he could find in general shops. Among a mixture of objects, he notices a small foot which he believes to be of marble; upon inspection, he realises that the foot is, in fact, that of a mummy. The foot is already, at this stage, transformed from a sculpture to human remains, which present the remnant of a living person. Gautier describes the foot as follows:

> I was surprised at its lightness. It was not a foot of metal, but in sooth a foot of flesh, an embalmed foot, a mummy's foot. On examining it still more closely the very grain of the skin, and the almost imperceptible lines impressed upon it by the texture of the bandages, became perceptible. The toes were slender and delicate, and terminated by perfectly formed nails, pure and transparent as agates. The great toe, slightly separated from the rest, afforded a happy contrast, in the antique style,

[615] Edmond de Goncourt and Jean de Goncourt, 'entry of 27 Mai 1867', *Journal des Goncourt: Mémoires de la Vie Littéraire*, volume 3, issue 1 (1866-1870), pp.129-133.
[616] Théophile Gautier, *Le Pied de Momie* (1840), edited in John J. Johnston and Jared Shurin (eds), *Unearthed* (London: Jurassic London, 2013), pp.35-48. This is the edition used in this chapter, with the edition's translation into English. The French title has been kept, rather than the edition's translation.

to the position of the other toes, and lent it an aerial lightness – the grace of a bird's foot.[617]

The mummy, the owner of the shop points out, belongs to a princess named Hermonthis. The main character decides to acquire this mummy foot, which he deems very original; in fact, he decides immediately that every honourable man should have such object in his collection.[618] After an evening out drinking wine, he returns home and falls asleep. At this instant, the transition from reality to dream operates, a shift which signals the transformation of the normal to the surreal, and in which the mummy as a fiction character appears. Within his dream, the antiquarian is awakened by the sound of the mummy foot wriggling, and soon after by another sound similar to someone hopping on a single foot. The figure of an elegant woman appears behind the curtains with a peculiar characteristic: the woman is missing a foot. After she exposes that she cannot regain her foot due to the antiquarian acquiring it, and how much lament this is causing her and her father – the Pharaoh – the main protagonist gracefully decides to return the foot to its original owner. The woman, grateful, invites the man to meet her father, blurring even more the temporal disparities of the story by allowing the main character to travel back in time with the woman, and to enter a netherworld in which all mummies throughout ancient Egyptian history are gathered. There, the antiquarian, who had fallen in love with the graceful woman, asks her in marriage to the Pharaoh. The latter is surprised by such a demand mostly, and Gautier re-establishes here the timeframe, because of the age difference between the two characters. The main protagonist eventually wakes up from his reverie, back to his contemporary reality. Although the dream ends, the story is kept on hold: while the man is back in his room, waking up from his dream, he notices a scarab the young lady had left on his desk in the exact location where the mummy foot had been placed.

Gautier's short story epitomised two aspirations that are particular to mummy narratives: first, the dream, the imagination, of who might be under the wrappings of the mummies encountered – idealised as a beautiful, graceful woman – and second, the fluidity of time and its atemporality, which allows the protagonist to travel back in time and encounter the ancient Egyptians. The concept of encounter with mummies is here central, for despite the collection, study and unwrapping of Egyptian mummies, their *life*

[617] Gautier, *Le Pied de Momie*, p.39.
[618] Ibid, p.41.

remains unattainable. In this story however, the mummy can travel in time, visiting the antiquarian's world, and vice-versa.

Gautier had already mentioned ancient Egypt in his writing. Two years prior to *Le Pied de Momie*, he had published in *La Presse* a short story located in ancient Egypt: *Une Nuit de Cléopâtre*.[619] In *Le Pied de Momie*, the mummy foot is for the first time reincarnated: Passalacqua and Denon had wondered about the specimen they had collected, but Gautier took the mummy foot in Denon's collection and transformed it through writing into a real person. A great concern of Gautier which is evident in his work is the concept of time, and more importantly the idea of the past. The aspirations and limitations linked to the concept of time were reused by Gautier in his more substantial work, *Le Roman de la Momie*; in the novel, the mummy is, once more, a youthful woman.

Le Roman de la Momie

> *Le Roman de la Momie* is scarcely more than one long translation, into Gautier's exquisite literary landscape, of the results of discovery as to the manners, customs, and furniture of the ancient Egyptians.[620]

Between 11 March and 6 May 1857, *Le Roman de la Momie* was published in twenty-one episodes in *Le Moniteur Universel*.[621] The complete story is divided into two parts: first, a prologue focuses on a young British aristocrat, Lord Evandale, and a German Egyptologist, Doctor Rumphius, who discover an untouched tomb, aided by a Greek merchant, Argyropoulos. They believe they have found the unviolated tomb of a Pharaoh, but upon opening the sarcophagus find a female mummy of outstanding beauty, which belonged to a woman named Tahoser. This discovery led to another trope of mummy fiction: the mummy unrolling as literary introduction to the past life of the mummy. When faced with the unwrapped body, Lord Evandale is lost in thought:

> Strange sensation, indeed, to be face to face with a glorious human being who had lived when History and her records were vague and misty. A beautiful creature who was certainly contemporary with Moses, and still owned much of the glory

[619] Théophile Gautier, *Une Nuit de Cléopatre* (Paris: A. Ferroud, 1838), p.16.
[620] George Saintsbury, *Essay on French Novelists* (Folcroft, PA: Folcroft Library Editions, 1891), pp.225-262 (p.232).
[621] Théophile Gautier, *Le Roman de la Momie* (Paris: Hachette, 1858).

> of youth. Imagine touching a little hand that had probably been kissed by a Pharaoh, or that hair, more lasting than empires, more enduring than monuments of granite!
>
> At the sight of the denuded form of the lovely lady [...] the young lord experienced that retrospective desire that a fine picture or statue can cause if it represents one who was famous for her charms: he thought he would have loved her could he have lived in those ancient centuries, and his thought, a spiritual one, went forth, as it were, into the void to tell her soul.[622]

The female mummy was found with a papyrus which, upon the protagonists' return to England, was deciphered. The second part of *Le Roman de la Momie* is therefore presented as the life of the female mummy as described in the papyrus. The narrative moves to ancient Egypt, but this time, contrary to *Le Pied de Momie*, the protagonists introduced in the prologue do not physically travel in time with the female mummy, but rather are transported by the narrative. The narrative of Tahoser's life is paved with adventures and romantic deceptions, and reveals ways individuals perceived ancient Egypt.

Gautier's *Roman de la Momie* was very well documented; many criticised the writer's lengthy descriptions.[623] The literary references and the correspondences to contemporary writings reveal the location of the mummy within literary circles. It reveals ways contemporary archaeological research was used to produce works accessible to the public via fictional narratives. To create the prologue of the novel, Gautier drew inspiration from a variety of existing works produced by individuals involved in the collection of Egyptian material culture or the study of ancient Egypt, and who, importantly, were contemporary to Gautier. Gautier's main inspiration was Ernest-Aimé Feydeau (1821-1873), to whom he dedicated his novel.[624] In the dedication, Gautier emphasises the connection between fiction and non-fiction narratives in early mummy fiction, and the intention to bring to life archaeological and historical works, by reimagining the life of the mummy. The description of the tomb in the novel is directly inspired by the description of the tomb of Seti I in Feydeau's *Histoire des Usages*

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[622] Gautier, *Le Roman de la Momie*, prologue. Translation from Brian J. Frost, *The Essential Guide to Mummy Literature* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2008), p.6.
[623] Algernon Coleman, 'Some sources of the Roman de la Momie', *Modern Philology*, volume 19, issue 4 (1922), pp.337-360.
[624]Gautier, *Le Roman de la Momie*, preface.

Funèbres.[625] The name of the mummy, Tahoser, is inspired by Champollion's report of an Egyptian tomb belonging to an individual of the same name.[626] The main inspiration for the prologue of *Le Roman de la Momie* is Passalaqua's recollection of the encounter with an Egyptian mummy: the comparison of the mummy with the Venus of Medici in Gautier's narrative echoes Passalacqua's writing.[627] By reusing descriptions of scenes and events reported in non-fiction narratives from Champollion, Belzoni, Passalacqua and others, and transposing these in a fictive world, Gautier enabled his readers to experience the discovery of the mummy, and then to encounter the mummy by entering its ancient world.

In *Le Roman de la Momie*, recurring literary tropes are evident, which not only form the prototype of mummy fiction, but anchor the narrative with developing contemporary investigations of mummies. First, the novel is articulated around concepts and variations of mummy dissections, which is evidenced by the unrolling of the mummy upon its discovery, but also by the use of medical terms throughout the prologue.[628] In its description, the landscape becomes itself a body, and the excavation is narrated with the use of medical terms. As Lyu noted, the excavation of the site is, in itself, a medical dissection.[629] The novel has been approached in recent studies as showing undertones of morbid sensuality, a topic which Gautier addressed in another short story, *La Morte Amoureuse.*[630] However, these studies are problematic on many levels. The main problem is the amalgam between mummy fiction and genuine interventions on Egyptian mummies: studies have often used literary tropes of sensual encounters with mummies to explain the unrolling and dissection of Egyptian mummies as sexual and colonial possession. These interpretations cannot be used in isolation to explain and interpret the grounded practices of individuals who unrolled and dissected mummies within specific fields of practice, and frames of understanding. Indeed, Gautier's emphasis on emotion and individualism in the context of the encounter with a mummy was very much a

[625] Ernest Feydeau, *Histoire des Usages Funèbres et des Sépultures des Peuples Anciens* (Paris: Gide et J. Baudry, 1856-1858).
[626] Hermine Hartleben [Jean-François Champollion], *Lettres de Champollion le Jeune* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1909).
[627] Passalacqua, *Catalogue Raisonné*, p.160.
[628] Gautier, *Le Roman de la Momie*, prologue.
[629] Lyu, 'Unswathing the mummy', pp.308-309.
[630] Théophile Gautier, 'La Morte Amoureuse', *La Chronique de Paris* (1836).

romantic approach to the specimen.[631] By taking his protagonists into the past – either by operating a displacement in time, such as in *Le pied de Momie*, or by looking back at the story of Tahoser through the discovery of a papyrus – Gautier created a sense of empathy for the mummy as a human being, while displacing his characters to an ancient Egyptian setting, portrayed as a glorified past. In this sense, the literary influence of Passalacqua and Denon is evident: both had collections of Egyptian material culture which directly inspired Gautier's choice of narrative, and both presented a romantic empathy in their writing for the mummies they collected and encountered. The connection between Passalacqua, Denon and Gautier illuminates the passage of mummies between cultures of collecting and engagements, and reinforces the existence of knowledge communities in Paris and London bound by similar cultural interests.

The mummy in early nineteenth century fiction narratives

In *The Essential Guide to Mummy Literature*, Frost wrote: 'the popular concept of the mummy as a malevolent monster dates back to the nineteenth century, when stories about mummies rising from the dead to terrify the living first captured the imagination of the reading public and set the revivified corpse on the path of becoming a major horror icon.'[632] However, the Egyptian mummy was a much more multifaceted character in early nineteenth century fiction, and negative representations of mummies are more evident in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The first recorded narrative of mummy fiction is considered to be the 1827 *The Mummy: A Tale of the Twenty-Second Century* by Jane Webb (1807-1858).[633] Set in a dystopian England of 2126, the novel narrates the resurrection of a male mummy, identified as Cheops, through human intervention via the use of electricity. The mummy steals an airship and arrives in London, where it imposes terror. The presence of this creature – the revengeful mummy – in literature might be a novelty, but similar characters, such as *Frankenstein* in 1816, are credited as inspiration for the storyline.[634] The vanity

[631] On romanticism, see: Martin Travers, *European Literature from Romanticism to Postmodernism* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006); J. Whiteley, 'Théophile Gautier: A romantic critic of the visual arts', *Oxford Art Journal*, volume 6, issue 2 (1983), pp.83-84.
[632] Brian J. Frost, *The Essential Guide to Mummy Literature* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2008), p.xiii.
[633] Jane C. Loudon [Jane Webb], *The Mummy! A Tale of the Twenty Second Century* (London: Colburn, 1827).
[634] Anon. [Mary Shelley], *Frankenstein* (London: Lackington et al., 1818).

and ferocity of Cheops were echoed in other writings, such as in Lord Byron's (1788-1824) *Don Juan*.[635] Webb's mummy had two characteristics that set it aside from other early mummy fiction narratives: it was the mummy of a male, and a terrifying-looking creature. Webb's vengeful mummy is alien to other early mummy narratives, which considered the mummy as an elegant and attractive woman, both in fiction and non-fiction narratives. A main argument for the negative representation of Webb's mummy can be found in the moralist Christian ending which elects a resolution of the narrative's conflict by moral dignification; evidently, Webb did not share Gautier's romantic fascination for ancient Egypt, but rejected ancient Egyptian culture as paganism.

In April 1845, Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) published *Some Words with a Mummy*, in which the unwrapping of an Egyptian mummy takes centre stage.[636] The story begins in London when a gentleman receives an invitation to attend the private opening of a mummy specimen which had been kept in a museum. The invitation read:

> Come to me, by all means, my dear good friend, as soon as you receive this. Come and help us to rejoice. At last, by long persevering diplomacy, I have gained the assent of the Directors of the City Museum, to my examination of the Mummy – you know the one I mean. I have permission to unswathe it and open it, if desirable. A few friends only will be present – you, of course. The Mummy is now at my house, and we shall begin to unroll it at eleven tonight.[637]

After the unrolling of the body, the group in attendance considers using electricity to revive the mummy; after some exploits where one of the protagonists is thrown out of a window, the mummy eventually comes to life. Poe had, the previous year, written a short story entitled *The Premature Burial* in which a man considered dead, and whose body had been stolen by medical students, is revived using electricity as well.[638] Upon his resurrection, the male mummy has a moralist discourse about the ungentlemanly ways of mummy unrolling. Upon remarking on the strangeness of the mummy being alive ('I should have thought, observed Mr Buckingham, that it is high time you were dead'),[639] the resurrected mummy comments that the ancient Egyptians used to suspend their life

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[635] Anon. [Lord Byron], *Don Juan* (London: Thomas Davison, 1819), canto 1, v.219.
[636] Edgar Allan Poe, *Some Words with a Mummy* (1845), edited in Johnston and Shurin, *Unearthed*, pp.49-66. The short story was translated into French in 1854 by Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) and published in *Le Pays*.
[637] Poe, *Some Words with a Mummy*, p.51.
[638] Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Premature Burial', *The Philadelphia Dollar Newspaper* (1844).
[639] Poe, *Some Words with a Mummy*, p.58.

(prior to death) to be resurrected in later centuries, thus proposing another version of ancient Egyptian funerary practices.

Another mummy story was published in 1847 in France: *Une Momie Egyptienne* published in *Muses et Fées*.[640] The story centres on a collector, Athanas de Lauregeon, who receives the visit of a German scholar who offers to sell him the mummy of Isis; Athanas acquires the mummy and decides to organise an unrolling session. The outcome of the unrolling is a comic resolution, in which the mummy turns out to be a pseudo-mummy made of the body of a chimpanzee from a zoological collection. The short story follows similar themes: the idea of finding a unique object (the individual acquires the mummy specifically because it is meant to be the one of Isis), the evident fascination for the unrolling of the body – developed through the reading of many such events in England, and more sporadically in Paris – and finally the obsession with the unwrapped female body which, in this short story, turns into derision by presenting the body of an animal which causes great horror, confusion, and finally amusement to the audience.

Pseudo-mummies were also mentioned in a German story, *La Momie de Rotterdam* (1838) in which the scholar Hazenbrok is desperate to obtain an Egyptian mummy for his museum in Leiden;[641] refusing to suffer the lack of this important specimen, he elects to create a modern fabrication. In order to have a body to mummify, the scholar elects to mummify the body of a rich merchant of Rotterdam. Once the scholar believes that the merchant has died, he begins the process, but the merchant wakes up and escapes, causing great distress to the scholar, who dies.

Le Pied de Momie, *Le Roman de la Momie* and *Some Words with a Mummy* are the three main fiction narratives of the first half of the nineteenth century. Gautier's publications focus on the female mummy and the relation between collector and collected, while Poe's story discusses the unrolling of an Egyptian mummy, as well as a relation between collector and collected which is, this time, tainted by a sense of guilt. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the mummy fiction narrative developed exponentially, and proposed a more varied image of the mummy, although topics of unrolling, the relation collector-collected, the location of the mummy inside museum

[640] Joseph Méry, 'Une momie égyptienne', *Muses et Fées* (Paris: G. de Gonet, 1861), pp.139-162.
[641] Georg Döring, *La Momie de Rotterdam* ([n.pl.], Seringe, 1838).

settings, and the revival of the mummy as an individual, remained important literary tropes.[642]

7.5. Conclusion

This chapter, which is the last content chapter of this thesis, contrasts powerfully with the other chapters, which have investigated the engagements with mummies as collected objects and organic objects worthy of scientific examination. Those interventions considered the mummy as an *object* of inquiry. They questioned the materiality of the mummy, but it was more about what the mummy was made of, than who the mummy was. A study of the Egyptian mummy in context cannot, however, exclude engagements with Egyptian mummies as a person, at the risk of judging unrollings, dissections, and other formats of engagement as pure destruction of material culture.

This chapter has introduced engagements which transformed the mummy from an object to a person, through a form of revelation that was materialised in the individual's imagination: collectors and writers envisioned the individuals behind the wrappings. The Egyptian mummy was a peculiar object: it was gendered, often possessed a name, and had a life – not just an object trajectory – but a past life as well. Therefore, the mummy as an object of collection brought with it an array of questions which are not usually attributed to artefacts: what was its name? What kind of life did the person behind the wrappings live? Was this life in any way similar to that of contemporary individuals? The mummy also brought with it fundamental questions explored in prior chapters, such as the race of those who inhabited ancient Egypt.

In addition to their quality as individuals, mummies were special due to the exceptional quality of their preservation. This state of preservation fascinated men of sciences, but the suspended state of death intrigued others, because it proposed an alternative approach to the concept of death, the survival of the body and the soul, and the afterlife, which needed to be questioned, and at times appropriated, in the context of a Christian narrative of death.

[642] On mummy fiction in the second half of the nineteenth century, see: Andrew Smith, *Lost in a Pyramid and Other Classic Mummy Stories* (London: British Library 2016)*;* Johnston and Shurin (eds.), *Unearthed*; Frost, *The Essential Guide to Mummy Literature*.

Mummy fictions were embedded in contemporary thinking and explored interests and anxieties entirely disconnected to ancient Egypt: the physical relation with the mummy (even platonic) was not a reality in ancient Egypt when the dead body was not visited but instead meant to be kept away. Similarly, the concept of the mummy coming back to life reflected a contemporary desire consistent with a Christian anxiety of resurrection; it was entirely disconnected from the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians, who would have been horrified at the idea of returning to the physical world of their earthly existence.

It is interesting to note the disconnection between the seeing and touching of a mummy specimen, and the transcendent image produced from these engagements: none of the individuals who imagined the mummy as a person, either in a dream or real life, considered that the specimen they had in front of them was an incomplete human, who had lost a large portion of its organs. In fact, the viewing of a dry body paradoxically initiated the process of imagining the female mummy as an elegant and charming individual; undeniably, engagement with mummies involved the projection of an *ideal*. Considering physical and intellectual engagements with the Egyptian mummy as a person is fundamental in creating a picture of the mummy in those centuries – but it can only be approached as the result of a grounded understanding of the history of engagements with Egyptian mummies that shaped and transformed the Egyptian mummy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as to avoid problems of modernism and misinterpretation of the rich contexts that explain encounters with Egyptian mummies between 1753 and 1858.

SECTION 5

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

> One human mummy, of an adolescent of about thirteen years of age, was selected and was taken to the medical school to be unwrapped [...] finally the unwrapping of mummy one double seven o began. [...]
>
> But the exact identity of the person must, even then, have been uncertain. This much, we can deduce, we can even reconstruct a possible likeness, but the name, the origin, and the true appearance of one double seven o, they will always remain a mystery. [643]

These transcriptions of the opening of an Egyptian mummy are not very different from the autopsies, dissections, and unrollings of the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. However, this specific event dates back to 1975, when Manchester Museum was the host of the televised dissection of an Egyptian mummy, conducted by members of its team, and led by Rosalie David [Fig.8.1 and fig.8.2].[644] This event, the last dissection of an Egyptian mummy in the UK, is considered scientific in nature: it was led by a team of medical practitioners, in a museum institution, surrounded by individuals with some knowledge of the ancient Egyptian culture, and accessible to the public via recording in a documentary. Some forty years later, it remains largely referenced by its host institution, the Manchester Museum, where Rosalie David is still an active researcher into Egyptian mummies, via the Manchester Museum Mummy Tissue Bank.[645] Therefore, one could say, it is a project of great scientific significance.

It is not very different, in nature, from the unrolling of Egyptian mummies performed by Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, a qualified medical surgeon and a scholar of ancient Egypt, who opened Egyptian mummies in front of a paying audience. Nor is it very different from Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's opening of Egyptian mummies at the British Museum, in the attendance of men of science. The study of the tissues is not very different from Rouelle's extensive and attentive study of the natron in mummy wrappings

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[643] Transcription from 'Mummy one seven seven O: The unwrapping', video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHoEegCW8P0> [Accessed September 2017].

[644] Rosalie David, *Mysteries of the Mummies: The Story of Manchester University Investigation* (London: Book Club Associates, 1978).

[645] Rosalie David, *Manchester Museum Mummy Project: Multidisciplinary Research on Ancient Egyptian Mummified Remains* (Manchester: Manchester Museum, 1979); Patricia Lambert-Zazulak, 'The international ancient Egyptian mummy tissue bank at the Manchester Museum', *Antiquity*, volume 74, issue 283 (2000), pp.44-48.

either. The facial reconstruction of the mummy after the experimentation[646] is also not very far from the fascination for the mummy as a human, by individuals such as Giuseppe Passalacqua and Dominique Vivant Denon, but could, also, be linked to the focus on the facial features of the ancient Egyptians of the like of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Georges Cuvier and Augustus Bozzi Granville. Therefore, in many respects, this intervention of 1975 was very much the recipient of a history of engagements with Egyptian mummies which has largely been forgotten. It is certainly not the birth of the scientific study of Egyptian mummies as it has been labelled to be, but rather the last in a series of physical and destructive engagements with Egyptian mummies.

Some questions can be raised from this one important example: what is scientific Egyptology? How and why have individuals engaged in openings and dissections of Egyptian mummies, up to the twentieth century? Why are some events considered more academic, professional, or scientific, than others? And what can this tell historians and museum professionnals about the ways the study of ancient Egypt, the history of Egyptology and the study of Egyptian mummies have been shaped and transformed over time? These questions raise an important point: without pressure from the public and its own practitioners, Egyptology has not interrogated its own history of collecting and engagements, of which Egyptian mummies are an important part. This thesis has resolved in part the question of engagements with Egyptian mummies, at a time when thinking about Egyptian mummies as objects and human remains worthy of thorough and diverse investigations accrued, and coalesced with the rethinking of a number of subjects of investigation, related to collecting, the origin of mankind, the body and the natural sciences. The project of studying Egyptian mummies brought with it certain unique ways of thinking about the world in which these individuals lived, and these ways of thinking have been important for the intellectual legacy of the Egyptian mummy as a cultural object, one which European museums inherited, and yet never fully questioned or exploited.

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section 1, ‘Encountering Egyptian mummies (1753-1858)’, analysis the findings of this research, locating the Egyptian mummy as an object of cultural engagement, approached by different knowledge cultures which shaped and transformed the Egyptian mummy through their individual and shared

[646] David, *Mysteries of the Mummies*, pp.168-183.

practice. It delineates ways this research has answered the aim of this thesis. The second section, 'Thinking about mummies', considers ways the methods set in the introduction to answer the aim and objectives have helped deepen the understanding of modern engagements with Egyptian mummies, what are the benefits of a cultural history of the mummy, how cultural history can be combined with other approaches, and the limitations of these methods. The third section, 'Legacies of engagement', turns to the physical remains of a particular set of engagements considered in this research – the physical interventions via openings, autopsies and dissections – and asks: what has happened to these remains? How have museums engaged with them? What does this tell us about ways mummies are approached in museums today? In turn, these interrogations lead to the final section of this chapter, 'Future lines of reflection', which locates this research, its findings and methods, in the current complex context of thinking about human remains in museums. It considers how the Egyptian mummy could be incorporated into contemporary debates over the retention and display of human remains in museums, in a context of rethinking of what Egyptology means, what it does and what its future holds.

Fig.8.1: The opening of an Egyptian mummy, 'Mummy 1770', at the Manchester Museum, in 1975. © Manchester Museum, University of Manchester.

Fig.8.2: The opening of an Egyptian mummy, 'Mummy 1770', at the Manchester Museum, in 1975. © Manchester Museum, University of Manchester.

8.1 Encountering Egyptian mummies (1753-1858)

This thesis has gathered, through the study of a large number of primary sources, stories of encounters with Egyptian mummies. Some are brief encounters, some are chance encounters, and some are life- and career-changing encounters. They locate the Egyptian mummy as an important object of investigation, in the hands of actors who shaped and transformed the Egyptian mummy through a series of engagements. An important find of this research is that the Egyptian mummy was, in the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, a multi-faceted object of inquiry – much more multi-faceted, in fact, than has previously been acknowledged. It was constructed within knowledge communities that were drawn to mummies for various reasons. This section considers the findings of this thesis, considering ways the Egyptian mummy came to be possessed by groups and communities who constructed knowledge around the mummy. It answers these questions: why did individuals collect mummies? Why did they subsequently destroy them? Why did groups with seemingly no link with Egyptian archaeology and the construction of the historical and archaeological past come to use the mummy as a

cultural object to construct knowledge? And, importantly, what did the mummy mean to them, not just in terms of knowledge construction, but in terms of materiality?

Communities of engagement

The aim of this thesis was to frame the cultures of participation with Egyptian mummies between 1753 and 1858, in London and Paris, which fundamentally shaped the Egyptian mummy as a museum specimen. This research finds that the communities which engaged with Egyptian mummies were varied, and crossed disciplinaries. It is evident from this research that there was not one single group that could be defined as having a particular interest with Egyptian archaeology (what would now be defined as Egyptologists or Egyptian archaeologists), and thus mummies. Rather, there were a number of people who saw the mummy as offering answers to their personal and professional questionings. An important point which has been made on numerous occasions throughout this research, is the absence of a professionalisation of practices at the turn of the nineteenth century, which means that one cannot look for a singled-out group of individuals who engaged with the Egyptian mummy. Nevertheless, it has been possible to construct a typology of individuals who engaged with Egyptian mummies over the century of this research.

A starting point was to consider individuals and groups of individuals who looked at the Egyptian mummy as an object of collection, that is, a material thing that could be taken out of Egypt, and displayed in a collection in Europe (private or public) for select or public viewing. These engagements were numerous. Certainly, they existed before Napoleon's expedition, although this specific event created momentum for the collecting of Egyptian material culture as representation of cultural power. What is evident, throughout this study of mummies as collected objects, is that Egyptian mummies were not embedded in these political discourses until much later in the 1850s, and that they attracted great curiosity and attention prior to this. This is important because, while the ancient Egyptian artistic canon was largely rejected, as Moser pointed out,[647] the Egyptian mummy was valued as an object of great interest. This suggests that the Egyptian mummy must be viewed differently from other materials collected from the ancient Egyptian civilisation at this time. In fact, it is evident that, in the eighteenth century, the Egyptian mummy was often considered in isolation, and was not displayed with other Egyptian

[647] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*.

material culture, but rather with anatomical objects. Certainly, it speaks against an act of objectification, as it is understood now: this idea that once mummies are put on display, one forgets their original organic nature – I will return to this point later on.

The accessioning of Egyptian mummies in the two main museum institutions in England and France at the time – the British Museum and the Musée du Louvre – is revealing not only of the contemporary interests in ancient Egypt, but also of each country's approach to Egyptian mummies (which, interestingly, are still relevant today). The British Museum had an Egyptian mummy from the first day of its opening to the public in 1759, as well as a number of coffins. Egyptian mummies were, therefore, an essential part of the Museum's history. The mummy, and the coffins (there was little differentiation between the two in reports of this period, as evidenced on a number of occasions) attracted much interest and were the symbol of the Egyptian collection as a whole: this is evidenced in the fact that some newspapers only reported on the mummy. Of course, this can also be explained in the rejection of other forms of creation (especially the representation of the body in Egyptian art, which was greatly contrasted with the classical representations of Greece and Rome). In Paris, the formation of an Egyptian collection occurred significantly later – over seventy years – but once more, Egyptian mummies were present from the day of opening (three full mummies; two extra mummies were lost a few months prior to opening). Egyptian mummies were also received with interest, although it is evident that, by the 1830s, London had already far surpassed Paris in the collecting and study of Egyptian mummies. Although Paris had been the recipient of a number of cabinets containing Egyptian mummies in the eighteenth century, the Musée Charles X (Musée du Louvre) was fairly untouched by the growing European interest in Egyptian mummies. This is evidenced by the lack of acquisition of Egyptian mummies after the death of Champollion: the two mummies subsequently entering the Museum – the 'mummy Larrey' and the head of a female mummy from Joséphine de Beauharnais's collection – entered the museum through donations. Since 1855, the Louvre has not pursued the collecting of Egyptian mummies, unlike the British Museum.

It would be wrong to assume that the accessioning of the Egyptian mummy as an object of collection was concerned with the mummy as an object of aesthetic interest, that could be observed by a number of visitors, but without much engagement. The museum was the site of diverse investigations that physically engaged a number of actors with the mummy. This is almost exclusively the case at the British Museum, and is better

exemplified by the apparatus on the Lethieullier coffin/mummy which allowed visitors to rotate this object, as to observe it more closely, and produced a simulacrum of life. This is also evidenced in the investigations conducted by Blumenbach on mummies. Blumenbach's investigations were destructive interventions, conducted with the aim of answering a number of questions about the origin of mankind. However, to locate and trace changes in the engagements with mummies, one must look outside of the museum, where the most complex and formative interactions occurred.

Physical interventions

To understand eighteenth- and nineteenth- century contexts in which mummies were located, it is necessary to step outside of the museum, looking at a range of individuals who came across the mummy as an object of inquiry, located in the natural and medical sciences. The assumption that the mummy must be considered through the lens of community cultures interested in the Egyptian mummy as an object of collection to be kept in a museum has governed research, until the recent studies of Roger Luckhurst and Christina Riggs in particular.[648] This thesis has analysed some of the complexities of the interrelationships between Egyptian mummies and the natural sciences, locating the Egyptian mummy as an object of physical investigation. The incentive to open, unwrap and dissect Egyptian mummies is better understood in the context of a reconsideration of the human body, the origin of mankind, as well as advances in the understanding of the natural world, and science more generally, which marked this period (including, chemistry in the work of Guillaume-François Rouelle).[649] In looking at science communities, this thesis has produced new research, in particular in considering physical interventions, not as the destruction of material culture, but rather as embedded practices which fit within a European history of the study of bodies. The dissection of bodies and the medical analysis of human remains were not, to a contemporary eye, a revolution in

[648] For example, the studies of Sydney Aufrère and Renan Pollès have relied heavily on contexts of collecting, and thus, offer only a partial picture of the contexts within which mummies were constructed. The studies of Roger Luckhurst (who looked at curse narratives as a constructed way of looking at the mummy) and Christina Riggs (who considers the concept of unwrapping through a colonial lens) have transformed tremendously the study of the Egyptian mummy. Sydney H. Aufrère, *La Momie et la Tempête* (Paris: Alain Barthelemy, 1990); Renan Pollès, *La Momie de Khéops à Hollywood* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Amateur, 2001); Roger Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Christina Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

[649] The chemical analysis of mummy wrappings also appears in Gabriel Moshenska, 'Michael Faraday's contributions to archaeological chemistry', *Ambix*, volume 62, issue 3 (2015), pp.266-286.

practice, as both had been established before. Opening Egyptian mummies was, therefore, constitutive of certain intellectual approaches and practices. This is important in looking at some of the individuals considered in this research as operating in social and cultural contexts that are far-removed from ours – a point to which I will return in the next section.

The racial dissection of Egyptian mummies is an important finding of this research. It is important because, outside of Rigg's important study of Augustus Bozzi Granville's operations,[650] these interventions have hitherto been ignored by scholars. They were located in contemporary contexts that were questioning the world in which individuals lived, at a time when the world opened up, and individuals were forced to reconcile the Genesis storyline they had relied on, with the finding that the ancient Egyptian civilisation, located on the African continent, was at the origin of much of the cultural underpinnings of contemporary eighteenth- and nineteenth- century Europe. A common ground of these physical interventions is that the individuals engaged in these practices were involved in the natural and medical sciences. This is significant because they fall outside the category of individuals traditionally associated with the collecting of material culture. Instead, they saw those objects as a means to answering their questions, and the mummy was only one object in their extensive research. This can, in part, explain why the natural and medical sciences have often been ignored as communities that shaped the understanding of the archaeological past. However, I argue in this thesis that it is the interventions of those individuals that were the most formative in creating a picture of the mummy.

The paradigm shift caused by Belzoni and Pettigrew marked by the inclusion of the collection and study of Egyptian mummies within a performative setting changed the reception of mummies by involving the public, and located the mummy as a subject of entertainment. However, the unrollings of mummies by Belzoni and Pettigrew were not sudden transformations: they were the result of a sum of transformations in the public consumption of ancient Egypt which were embodied not only in larger museum collections, but also in the introduction of the mummy into fictional literature, the development and democratisation of medical dissections, and a rapid growth of knowledge relating to ancient Egypt, all embedded in Victorian narratives of the past, death, and the location of a European self within an expanding world. Unrollings of

[650] Christina Riggs, 'An autopsic art: drawings of "Dr Granville's mummy" in the Royal Society Archives', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, volume 70, issue 2 (2016), pp.107-133.

mummies have been broadly categorized as grotesque consumption of Egyptian mummies as representation of the 'oriental other' – a term used by Edward Said[651] – without much consideration to the contexts within which the performers operated. In addition, the showmanship of the performers has been broadly exaggerated, without taking into account the actual medical abilities of the practitioners, and the past occurrences of medical dissections in public. A change in purpose surrounding dissections began in the 1850s when the mummy was caught in the politics of representation of power and conquest in the Great Exhibitions and Expositions Universelles.

It is important to note that, although they were crucial in framing the Egyptian mummy as a multi-faceted object of inquiry, these engagements were not always purposeful. This is especially the case in the first half of the nineteenth century. They were not purposeful in the sense that their aim was not always to create new knowledge. For example, individuals like Pettigrew and Belzoni did produce substantial works through their excavations and publications, but they also came to the mummy within frames that included their own social advancement. When these sorts of engagements occur, historians – and especially historians of archaeology – are keen to dismiss them as less significant.[652] In fact, Belzoni and Pettigrew were crucial in shaping the mummy as an object of intellectual curiosity and, simultaneously, an object of entertainment – museums are today the recipient of these frameworks of knowledge construction.

Framing the mummy

This thesis has produced a rich history of the Egyptian mummy during a century of intense political and intellectual developments in Paris and London. It has produced a history that is not linear, but rather grounds particular narratives of engagements within their intellectual, cultural, and social contexts. As a result, this thesis has produced a history that departs from the simple museological review of mummies in museums, and offers a complex, multi-layered history of engagements, that questions the nature of those

[651] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).
[652] Luckhurst points a similar issue in the research of curse stories. He notes: 'Perhaps all this effort has recovered just a marginal history at best, a footnote. Some historians fear that the focus on the more eccentric passages of British history has ended up returning to parochial antiquarianism. But I think that such micro-histories can also operate as telling symptoms of much greater shifts in culture', Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse*, p.241.

engagements and the people who interacted with the Egyptian mummy. It argues that the museum was not the main site for engagement with Egyptian mummies, but rather the recipient of the result of these engagements, and that the *persona* of the collector was not the driving figure of these engagements, but rather that the mummy was constructed by individuals within other knowledge communities, in particular the medical and natural sciences. It is not to say that collecting activities were not purposeful, but rather, that they provide an incomplete picture of the cultures of engagement of that time.

This was not a thesis about the material nature of Egyptian mummies, nor was it restricted to a constructivist approach to knowledge. This was a thesis about the negotiation of encounters between individuals within specific knowledge communities and the Egyptian mummy, an object and a body. After exploring the mummy as a collected object, and the mummy as an object of physical intervention, I have found it important to close this thesis with a chapter on the human mummy. This adds a useful dimension to this research, as it permits us to deal with Egyptian mummies as human individuals, not *despite* other engagements, but *in conjunction with* the collecting, opening and dissecting of these objects. The appreciation that the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century was a time when mummies could be collected, dissected, and emotionally appreciated by individuals – sometimes, by a single individual like Dominique Vivant Denon – is fundamental in reshaping the ways scholars have approached these engagements. It is evident that, between 1753 and 1858, the Egyptian mummy was an object that was consistently investigated by men interested in the making of the mummy as an embalmed body, a remnant of a highly-developed civilisation, an ethnical representation of a culture, as well as the body of a person – and that those investigations resulted from the cooperation of individuals across interests, disciplines, and nations.

Aftermath

To conclude this section, it is worth noting that this research is but a snapshot in the history of the European consumption of Egyptian mummies. The period elected in this research is, however, of importance, because of the intense intellectual and political changes in both France and England. It is evident that, if UCL's unrolling of 1889 is considered the last large-scale public unrolling of an Egyptian mummy, the opening of

Egyptian mummies did not end in the premise of this specific performance. The three photographs and the one painting that follow – together with the ones that opened this chapter – attest the continuing practice of opening Egyptian mummies [Fig.8.3, 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6]. In fact, just last year, a mummy unrolling was performed at Bartholomew Museum in London. The mummy was an actor, but the event was an informed performance of the unrolling of an Egyptian mummy, as it would have been performed in Victorian times – it attracted considerable interest.[653]

The scientific investigation of human remains – Egyptian or otherwise – was also sustained, and tremendous research has been conducted by Debbie Challis on the links between Egyptian archaeology and eugenics[654] and by Samuel Redman on what he calls 'bone rooms'.[655] These two publications show that the Egyptian mummy (including skeletons and skulls) was, in the late Victorian and Edwardian period, still the subject of investigations related to its origin. These interrogations have continued, and continue to be of central interest to individuals concerned with their origins.

[653] 'An evening with an Egyptian mummy', by John J. Johnston and Odette Toilette. 19 October 2016.
[654] Debbie Challis, *The Archaeology of Race: The Eugenic Ideas of Francis Galton and Flinders Petrie* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).
[655] Samuel J. Redman, *Bone Rooms: From Scientific Racism to Human Prehistory in Museums* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016).

Fig.8.3 and fig.8.4: The mummy of Tutmosis before and after its opening, photograph by Emile Brugsch, in Gaston Maspero, *La Trouvaille de Deir el Bahari* (Le Caire: F. Mourès, 1881). © Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Fig.8.5: ‘Examination of a mummy, a priestess of Amun’, painting by Paul Dominique Philipoteaux, c. 1891. Private Collection / Photo © Peter Nahum at The Leicester Galleries, London / Bridgeman Images. [Copyright restriction].

Fig.8.6: The unrolling of a mummy by Margaret Murray at the Manchester Museum, 1908. © Manchester Museum, University of Manchester.

8.2 Thinking about mummies

In *The Archaeology of Race*, Challis quoted a remark by Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853-1942) from *Egypt and Israel* – 'Half of history seems incredible to one who looks at all things through modern spectacles'[656] – and noted that 'all of history, ancient and modern, is viewed through the spectacles of our present day concerns and assumptions.'[657] Challis introduces a problem faced by many historians, and especially relevant to the research undertaken here: the problems of modernism and generalisation. A history of the Egyptian mummy can only be conducted with the awareness that the period considered is one very different from contemporary times: this is especially true when it comes to topics such as the viewing of the dead, the medical and scientific contexts, and the approach to death and the body in the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. This section addresses the problems of methods in the study of engagements with the material and human remains of ancient Egypt.

The problem of methods

The principal contribution this thesis has made is in offering a new methodological approach to the framing of the mummy between 1753 and 1858, especially in looking at the mummy within contemporary contexts, rather than exclusively from the vantage point of colonial and post-colonial theories. In particular, this has produced new ways to look at the opening, dissection and unrolling of Egyptian mummies. I have pointed out in chapters 6 and 7 the issues of such work as Susan Pearce's 'Bodies in exile', which has been largely shaped by what is known as consumerism theory.[658] This approach has been compounded by researchers of mummy fiction, such as Nicholas Daly who noted:

> In the end, then, the mummy story, like realism, insists on the very opposition between subject and object that was increasingly problematic in an expanding consumer culture.[659]

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[656] William Matthew Flinders Petrie, *Egypt and Israel* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1911).
[657] Challis, *The Archaeology of Race*, p.1.
[658] Susan Pearce, 'Bodies in exile: Egyptian mummies in the early nineteenth century and their cultural implication' in Sharon Ouditt (ed.), *Displaced Persons: Conditions of Exile in European Culture* (Farnham: Surrey, 2002), pp.54-71.
[659] Nicholas Daly, 'That obscure object of desire: Victorian commodity culture and fictions of the mummy', *Novel*, volume 28, issue 1 (1994), p.47.

The unrolling of Egyptian mummies is only one example of the problems of research into the Egyptian mummy, and these problems are a result of the projection of modern frames of knowledge construction on the past. To observe and analyse past events critically, it is imperative that one projects oneself in the past, detached from modern perceptions. Simon Knell wrote about this:

> Our goal must be not to think as participants do within the field but to stand on the outside of the field and see it and its participants as engaged in forms of negotiation and attached to particular objects without them ever reflecting on the cultural strangeness of it all.[660]

The collecting, opening, dissections, and emotional engagements with Egyptian mummies in the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries may appear strange to contemporary eyes. They are engagements that differ entirely from contemporary engagements with the dead. Opting for a cultural historical approach is not about rejecting the emerging colonial contexts in which these engagements occurred – doing so would be negating an important history of Western engagements with the material culture of ancient Egypt.[661] This thesis located the mummy within intellectual contexts and, in turn, the results of this thesis must be located within wider contexts. Engagements exist within these contexts.

The framing of the mummy as a body of medical and scientific investigation was particularly resilient, and an amalgam between medical practices and performances results from a poor understanding of the history of physical interventions on mummies. In addition, references in the scholarly literature to unrollings as un-Egyptological and pure *Egyptomania* is a modernism: it locates the performance of the opening of mummies within modern constructs which consider the performance of the mummy as posing ethical issues.

The choice of locating this research in the geographical context of the cities of Paris and London can be returned to here. These two cities were selected as case studies with a view to understanding ways individuals and communities engaged with the

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[660] Simon J. Knell, 'The intangibility of things', in Dudley, *Museum Objects*, pp.324-335 (p.330).
[661] Some important studies have been conducted that have contributed to the understanding of the legacy of colonialism and imperialism in Egypt: Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt*; Brian M. Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists, and Archaeologists in Egypt*, revised and updated (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

Egyptian mummy in these cities, with the awareness that these locations were, between 1753 and 1858, the main locations in Europe in terms of engagement with ancient and modern Egypt, but also in other fields of enquiry. This thesis aimed to locate knowledge communities, and rather than to quantify and strictly-speaking compare these two cities, it was more about approaches to engagement than it was about deciding and defining which city was the most engaged and had the most impact on the shaping of the mummy. Nevertheless, it has become evident throughout the thesis that London was actively investigating Egyptian mummies on a much larger scale than Paris: this is due, in part, to the opening of Egyptian galleries at the British Museum some seventy years prior to France's own gallery, the Musée Charles X, but also to the influx of Egyptian material culture in the aftermath of the French expedition. On a larger temporal scale, it is true to say that England has demonstrated a much greater interest in the Egyptian mummy in general. This is today exemplified by greater number of publications on the mummy, larger quantitiy of mummies on display, and greater approach to ethical questions in museums than France has ever produced.

This thesis began with the contention that a cultural history of the Egyptian mummy has ethical implications. This statement's overall message was that museums cannot assess their collections of human remains without awareness of the history of these collections, their situatedness, and the important complex contexts in which they entered Europe. It is evident that France has relatively poor knowledge of the complex and sometimes difficult contexts in which its human remains have entered French collections, and certainly this is reflected in an absence of contextual grounding in museums today – I will return to some examples in the next section.

Other approaches to mummy studies

In this thesis, I placed the agency within the individuals that engaged with Egyptian mummies, rather than the mummies themselves. This was important in the framing of knowledge communities that engaged with the mummy, and understanding ways these individuals framed the mummy. However, a study of the Egyptian mummy as an object, from the vantage point of questions of materiality and emotional engagement, could certainly open up complimentary ways to understanding how individuals not only constructed, but perceived the Egyptian mummy. Chapter 7 of this thesis has certainly

demonstrated that some individuals who engaged with the mummy saw past the desiccated body to envision the life of those objects – this reconciles the variously nuanced approaches to the mummy. Certainly, it answers questions museums are facing today when trying to determine the nature of the mummy, as object or human remains. The cultural approach to the mummy I have elected in this research demonstrates that one can look at those complex ethical issues through the lens of history.

The field of Egyptology is undergoing considerable transformations, the result of a crisis in identity. At the core of this is the realisation that Egyptologists as a group have not stepped outside of this field to self-reflect on what it does, and what it means. Collections of Egyptian material culture have, therefore, been questioning their being. This is best exemplified in a number of events in the academic year 2017/2018 that question the agency, approaches, and future of Egyptology and of Egyptological collections: the ICOM CIPEG conference in Chicago in September 2017 on 'The role of curators in museum research and exhibits: Tradition, change, and looking to the future', the conference 'Egyptology and Anthropology: Historiography, theoretical exchange, and conceptual development' in Cambridge in July 2017[662] and the call for papers for the 2018 Annual Egyptological Colloquium at the British Museum on 'Displaying Egypt', to name a few. The call for papers for the latter event notes:

> The representations of Egypt in public displays have, to varying degrees, reflected collecting/acquisition histories, disciplinary/institutional distinctions, historical/political/social contexts, aesthetic/design trends, economic drivers and audience expectations. Such displays have in turn helped inform and shape perceptions of Egypt past and present. Despite the growing focus on histories of Egyptology, and the study of Egypt and its heritage within the context of colonial and post-colonial histories, the subject of *Displaying Egypt* remains one rich with potential for further discussion and research.[663]

[662] A presentation was given at the conference in Cambridge which addressed the issues of self-reflection, identification and methodologies relevant to the field of Egyptology: Justin Yoo, Carl Walsh and Paul Van Pelt, 'Egyptology is anthropology or it is nothing', 25-26 July 2017.
[663] British Museum Call for Papers: <http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/departments/ancient_egypt_and_sudan/annual_lecture_and_colloquium/call_for_papers.aspx> [accessed September 2017].

This statement is evidence that museums hosting Egyptian material culture, and individuals associated with a field of inquest related to Egyptology, are becoming increasingly aware that some histories are yet to be explored.

Finally, the central and abiding question of methodology in historical or museological research has been presented in this thesis; however, it was not the aim of this research to produce an in-depth reflection of the problems of methods. To cast new light on the histories of Egyptology that have become a central focus of recent research, it is evident that a multi-disciplinary approach to collecting and other formats of engagement is essential in building an understanding of those collections in museums. In particular, scholars like Gabriel Moshenska and Samuel Alberti, have pointed out the usefulness in looking at engagements through the vantage point of the history of science, medicine and archaeology – certainly, this thesis has demonstrated that the mummy would benefit from in-depth research into the histories of medicine and science thinking at this time, and this would in turn complement the understanding of the Egyptian mummy as the body of a person.

8.3. Legacies of engagements

The physical and intellectual engagements which led to dissections of Egyptian mummies in the timeframe 1753-1858 have resulted in physical legacies, not only through the survival of publications, but through the physical survival of mummy parts which have been retained in museums, both in Paris and London. These remains are of a different nature than full mummies; the stories they tell are not necessarily the ones with which museums have elected to engage. This section maps the legacies of some of the human remains which have been considered in this research. In particular, it considers three examples – ‘Hadley’s foot’ at the Hunterian Museum, Cuvier’s human remains at the Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle in Paris, now at the Musée de l'Homme, and the ‘Granville box’ at the British Museum. This section poses questions of legacy and storytelling, and raises the problematic ways these remains have been approached by museums.

The mummy foot at the Hunterian Museum

The dissection of an Egyptian mummy at the house of John Hadley in 1763 resulted in the detailed drawing of one foot, the one which had preserved a bulbous root [Fig.8.7].[664] This same foot was retained by John Hunter, who participated in the physical act of dissecting the specimen. He included the foot in his personal collection. Hunter's collection was acquired by the city of London in 1799: it was presented to the Company of Surgeons and deposited in what is now the Hunterian Museum, at the Royal College of Surgeons in London. The mummy foot was on public display until May 2017, when the Museum closed for a long period of refurbishment [Fig.8.8]. The foot was displayed standing, mounted on a wooden mount, with the bulb visible; the label mentioned Hunter briefly. It is easy, however, to miss the momentum that this foot – this dissection – created for the medical study of Egyptian mummies. This is an interesting first example, because the foot was not displayed in a collection of Egyptian material culture, but rather in a vast and varied collection of human remains; this is representative in itself of the context in which this foot came to become an object of investigation, opened during an investigation located in the natural and medical sciences.

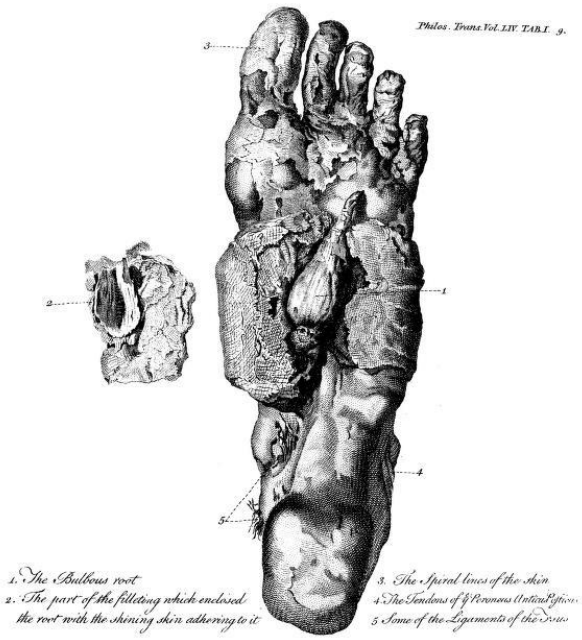


Fig.8.7: The mummy foot in John Hadley, 'An account of a mummy, inspected at London 1763', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 54 (1764), pp.1-14.

[664] John Hadley, 'An account of a mummy, inspected at London 1763', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 54 (1764), pp.1-14.

Fig.8.8: The mummy foot at the Hunterian Museum, 'EN:324 foot, mounted dry bone and tissue, mummy'. © The Hunterian Museum, The Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Granville's mummy box at the British Museum

In 1821, Augustus Bozzi Granville conducted the opening and dissection of a mummy in London, with the purpose of observing the racial origin of this specimen and of the ancient Egyptians.[665] The remains of this thorough examination were kept in a wooden box, containing parts of the mummy unwrapped by Granville, parts of a 'North-African' mummy which Granville used as a comparison with the Egyptian mummy, four human foetuses, plus four arms and a leg of others; these latter were used by Granville to experiment on mummification. As Christina Riggs noted, the box remained in Granville's possession until it was purchased by the Trustees of the British Museum in 1853.[666] The box was initially on display –Granville was unhappy about the display. It was displayed

[665] Augustus Bozzi Granville, 'An essay on Egyptian mummies; With observations on the art of embalming among the ancient Egyptians', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 115 (1825), pp.269-316.
[666] Riggs, 'An autopsic art', p.127; Christina Riggs, 'The body in the box: archiving the Egyptian mummy', *Archival Science*, volume 17, issue 2 (2017), pp.125-150.

in the Egyptian rooms 'not displayed in the manner best adapted for the instruction or the amusement of the public.'[667] Granville was rather upset that his wooden box was not visible *enough* to the public; today, the box is not on public view at all. Evidently, it is a highly problematic object, as the recipient of a history of engagement concerned with offering evidences of the Caucasian origin of the ancient Egyptians. It is precisely because it is such a problematic object, that its history needs to be addressed – a point to which I will return later on.

Fig.8.9: 'Egyptian mummy a large portion of the mesentery and part of the intestine' from the Granville box. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig.8.10: 'Specimens of segments of the femur of the female Egyptian mummy' unwrapped and dissected by Granville. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

[667] Augustus Bozzi Granville, *Autobiography of A. B. Granville*, edited by B. Granville, second edition (London: Henry S. King & Co, 1874), p.211.

Fig.8.11: Part of the Granville box. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig.8.12: Part of the Granville box. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Cuvier's Egyptian skeletons

Another example of the legacy from those physical interventions considered in this thesis is Cuvier's Egyptian skeletons. It is an interesting example, because his engagements with Egyptian mummies have received little scholarly attention, and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle – and its many branches nowadays – has erased the problematic history of its collecting of human remains. The Musée de l'Homme, created in 1837, is heir to the Musée d'Ethnographie created in 1882. It hosts the collections of human anthropology (human remains) of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. After a long period of refurbishment, the Museum reopened in 2015, presenting a new design, but also a new storyline, which does not consider the history of its collection. Today, the Musée de l'Homme holds thirty-three Egyptian mummies. According to the museum's website, the mummies are not on display for ethical reasons.[668]

On 31 March 2017, the museum opened its first major exhibition since its reopening in 2015: *Us and Them, from Prejudice to Racism*. A highly interactive exhibition, it questions understandings of differences, through various intellectual, geographical and historical frames. In a room dedicated to the historical development of racial thinking, a series of individuals are mentioned, including Johann Friedrich Blumenbach and Georges Cuvier; the latter is the founding figure of this Museum's anthropological collections, a point that is not clearly stated in this exhibition [Fig.8.13]. The issue in disengaging with the collections of Egyptian human remains at the Musée de l'Homme is twofold: first, the ethical claims of removing human remains from display are inconsistent with the Museum's practice (the mummy of a child is on display, as well as mummies from other regions), but the collection is also crucial in telling a history of modern engagements with Egyptian mummies which involved racially-motivated dissections, collections and studies. *Us and Them* is a first step in acknowledging a history of racial thinking and collecting, but the Museum has not yet engaged in linking this historical narrative to the collection it holds in trust [Fig.8.14 and fig.8.15].

[668] Musée de l'Homme on mummies: <http://www.museedelhomme.fr/en/collections/biological-anthropology/mummies> [accessed August 2017]

Fig.8.13: The room with the publications of Georges Cuvier and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach. *Us and Them, From Prejudice to Racism* [Exhibition]. Musée de l'Homme, Paris. 31 March 2017 – ongoing. [Copyright restriction].

Fig.8.14: 'Squelettes de momies égyptiennes', c.1880. © RMN / Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, Direction des bibliothèques et de la documentation, Fonds Petit IC 830 / Pierre Petit. [Copyright restriction].

Fig.8.15: ‘Momie égyptienne’, c.1880. © RMN / Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle, Paris, Direction des bibliothèques et de la documentation, Fonds Petit IC 834 / Pierre Petit. [Copyright restriction].

These legacies of engagement are important, because they do not tell stories about ancient Egypt, but rather, they tell stories of modern engagements with Egyptian mummies in general. This thesis opened with a quote by John Taylor at the British Museum, who noted that the Egyptian mummy had not been the subject of comprehensive research into its history.[669] I argue in this thesis that the modern engagements with Egyptian mummies have not received sufficient attention – in particular, the history of racial engagement with Egyptian mummies ought to be the focus of more scholarly attention – but importantly, that museums have not engaged with these cultural histories, despite the fact that they hold in trust the remains of these important and complex engagements. Therefore, this thesis, by unearthing some areas of research, has opened up new lines of reflection for the future.

8.4 Future lines of reflection

This thesis began with the contention that, while the Egyptian mummy seems familiar, the history of its accessioning into scientific Egyptology is hitherto incomplete. In addition, the introduction noted that the current discussions on the retention of these human remains in museums have been inconclusive, because museums were trying to find a resolution as to the many complex issues of their retention and display, without awareness of the histories of these objects. This section offers future lines of reflection: it contends that this research was the beginning of a conversation, and has opened up future lines of research in museum studies.

The Egyptian mummy in museums

During the course of this three-year research, much has happened in museums hosting Egyptian mummies; however, these interventions have not impacted the course of this research, and this is revealing in itself. In 2015, the Musée de l'Homme reopened in Paris, and offered an example of a museum that has refused altogether to address its historical past. This example, covered above, is paradigmatic of a strand of museums that host in their collections objects considered controversial, and have elected not to engage with

[669] John H. Taylor, 'The collection of Egyptian mummies at the British Museum' in Alexandra Fletcher, Daniel Antoine and J.D. Hill (eds), *Regarding the Dead* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 2014), pp.103-114 (p.103).

them. A reason the Musée de l'Homme is interesting, is that the Egyptian mummy is one of those controversial objects. While attention in scholarly research on the ethics of the retention of human remains has heavily focused on remains with direct descendance – and especially, those groups that have asked for repatriation – the Egyptian mummy has been considered uncontroversial. I argue that, in the light of the findings of this research, the controversy is the absence of in-depth research on the Egyptian mummy. Certainly, it is controversial that museums holding in trust objects that have been crucial in the understanding of the past, race and the body, have not engaged with these objects.

In 2012, a few years before this research started, the Louvre reopened its galleries, loosely titled 'East Mediterranean in the Roman Empire', which include Egyptian collections. These galleries contain a number of Egyptian mummies and mummy parts. At the re-opening, it was decided that the mummy of Padiimenipet which had been on display before, would not be featured in the gallery anymore. Although no official reason was given for this removal, rumours in the Museum were that the mummy was *naked*, that is, unwrapped. This echoes similar concerns at the time, since the Manchester Museum reopened its galleries in 2012, having covered the mummy of Asru, also unwrapped. The reasons why Padiimenipet is unwrapped are well documented: as covered in chapter 4, he was opened by Frédéric Cailliaud, who collected a number of Egyptian artefacts and opened the mummy, which was subsequently viewed by Jean-François Champollion. This specimen has a history that is grounded in the Museum's history of collecting, as well as in contemporary contexts, and yet it was deemed unfit for display.

The Louvre is, as a large-scale institution with research that resonates on the international scene, an unparalleled example. The museum has simply never investigated its Egyptian mummies – there is no publication on Egyptian mummies at the Louvre as of 2017. The mummies were X-rayed a few decades ago, and yet the results were never published. The museum has a number of mummies in its collection now, but most of these lay undocumented in storage. This thesis has offered, for the first time, a study of mummies at the Louvre up to 1858/9 and the translation of the mummy sections in the first catalogues of the Louvre, which is a first step to making those available to a wider audience. There is an evident need for a much more comprehensive study of the mummy collection at the Louvre, covering the Egyptian collection from 1827 to present days. The case of the Musée du Louvre is rather isolated for such a large collection but illustrates

an important issue in museums collections which include Egyptian mummies: Egyptian mummies are recognized by museums as a formidable resource to attract the visiting public and yet, the long history of engagements with Egyptian mummies is absent from most museums.

In comparison, the British Museum has conducted tremendous research on its Egyptian human remains, and some of the results were materialised in 2014 in the exhibition *Ancient Lives: New Discoveries*.[670] More recently, the World Museum in Liverpool has opened its new Egyptian galleries, featuring a mummy room, which showcases the constant interest in those objects. Other museums in the United Kingdom have been concerned with the overhaul of their Egyptian collections (such as Bolton Museum and New Walk Museum in Leicester), and therefore it is expected that new formats of display will be revealed. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that, so far, none of these museums have openly addressed the complex history of modern engagements with Egyptian mummies.

Ethical considerations

The resolution of ethical contentions has been the driving force in the study and reshaping of collections of Egyptian human remains, with varying levels of interpretations and success. I would like to start with an important example: virtual unwrappings. As pointed out in the introduction of this thesis, X-rays have fundamentally transformed the scientific research of Egyptian mummies, by allowing the viewing of the body without damaging these objects. This has been greatly enhanced by the development of CT scans, which have allowed a much more precise observation of these objects. In the past decade, these scans have gradually appeared in museums around the world, making available to the public the results of these investigations. Progressively, new technologies including touch screen were introduced in commercial exhibitions of those bodies to bring them to life, through what is known as virtual unwrapping. These interfaces were presented as a non-invasive, and more ethical way to glimpse under the wrappings. How do we weigh the ethical values and implications of such engagements against past engagements? I would argue that the virtual unwrapping offered to the public is a displacement in practice from

[670] *Ancient Lives: New Discoveries: Eight Mummies, Eight Stories* [exhibition]. British Museum, London. 22 May 2014-12 July 2015.

the public unrolling. Curators' use of new technologies to bring new life to the mummies are changing our understanding of the ethics of displaying bodies, but once placed at the end of a line of engagements, they are not very different from the spectator who paid to attend the unrolling of a mummy in nineteenth-century London. The tension between using the body to connote authenticity, to capture a history of engagement, and to create spectacle, is evident in museums today; it is especially evidenced in current anxieties in museums, that which have led some institutions to remove their objects from display.

Fig.8.16: 3D scans and virtual unwrapping at *Ancient Lives: New Discoveries: Eight Mummies, Eight Stories* [exhibition]. British Museum, London. 22 May 2014-12 July 2015. [Copyright restriction].

Future research

The Museum Association states on the display of human remains:

> Displaying human remains can help people to learn about, understand and reflect upon different cultures and periods of history. They can also cause distress to

certain individuals or groups. Display them only if the museum believes that they make a material contribution to a particular interpretation.[671]

Egyptian mummies have been considered familiar and less controversial than other human remains. This thesis has demonstrated that it is not entirely the case. This assumption that the Egyptian mummy is familiar, and that it does not seem to cause issue to the visiting public, is reductive of the long history of engagements with the human remains of ancient Egypt. Questions of race must be addressed by museums, because these institutions hold legacies of racial investigations, but also because those debates around the racial origins of the ancient Egyptians still exist and animate much conversation about ancient Egypt and the racial origin of mankind. An example is a recent study which published the result of the DNA test of a number of mummies. [672] The mummies were found of Middle-Eastern, rather than African origin, and this sparked a renewed discussion on the racial origin of the ancient Egyptians. An exhibition on prejudice and race like *Us and Them* at the Musée de l'Homme which has not addressed the history of its collecting or the intellectual origin of its Egyptian collection, is revealing of the problematic approach to Egyptian mummies, and other human remains in European collections. Contrary to what the Museum Association suggests, and to what a number of museums have elected to do, I argue that the twenty-first-century museum should seek solutions that do not result in the removal of Egyptian mummies from display. This thesis has suggested that, to answer current concerns, research and displays need to observe the complexity of engagements with Egyptian mummies and pay respect not just through careful design and visitor performance, but through the provision of new information about the history of our relationship to the Egyptian mummy – as both cultural object and human remains.

[671] Museum Association, 2015, *Code of Ethics: Additional Guidance*: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1155817> [Accessed September 2017].
[672] V. J. Schuenemann and al., 'Ancient Egyptian mummy genomes suggest an increase of Sub-Saharan African ancestry in post-Roman period', *Nature Communications*, 8 (2017), pp.-11.

Appendix

MUMMIES AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

1753	2 small mummies	Not in Sloane's catalogue, located at the British Museum in Blumenbach's report of mummy dissections in 1794.
1756	1 mummy	Bequest of Colonel William Lethieullier. With entire coffin, EA6695 (mummy unidentified).
1756	1 mummy	Donated by Pitt Lethieullier, identified as EA6694.
1766	1 mummy	Sent from Egypt by Edward Wortley Montagu. Presented to the British Museum by King George III. Identified as EA6696.
1772	2 small mummies	Acquired from collection of William Hamilton? Identified as EA6952 and EA6953.
1792	1 mummy	Unknown.
1823	6 male mummies	Purchased from Salt's collection in 1823. Two are identified in the Museum: mummy of a young man, EA6713; mummy of a young man, EA6707 (from Sam's collection).
1831	1 child mummy	Acquired from unnamed source.
1833	1 mummy head	Head of an adult male mummy, EA6719. Acquired from Alexander Turnbull Christie in 1833.
1834	6 mummies	Purchased from Sams's collection in 1834. Two are identified: mummy of a man EA6676; mummy of Djedkhonsiufankh, EA6662.
1835	1 mummy	Mummy EA6692. Purchased in Egypt by Alexander Turnbull Christie from Giovanni d'Athanasi.
1835	2 mummy heads	Head of a mummy, EA6720 and head of a mummy, EA6722. From Alexander Turnbull Christie, acquired 1835.
1835	1 child mummy	Mummy of a child, EA6724. Purchased from Henry Salt's collection in 1835.
1837	1 mummy	EA6957. Presented by the Earl of Bessborough.

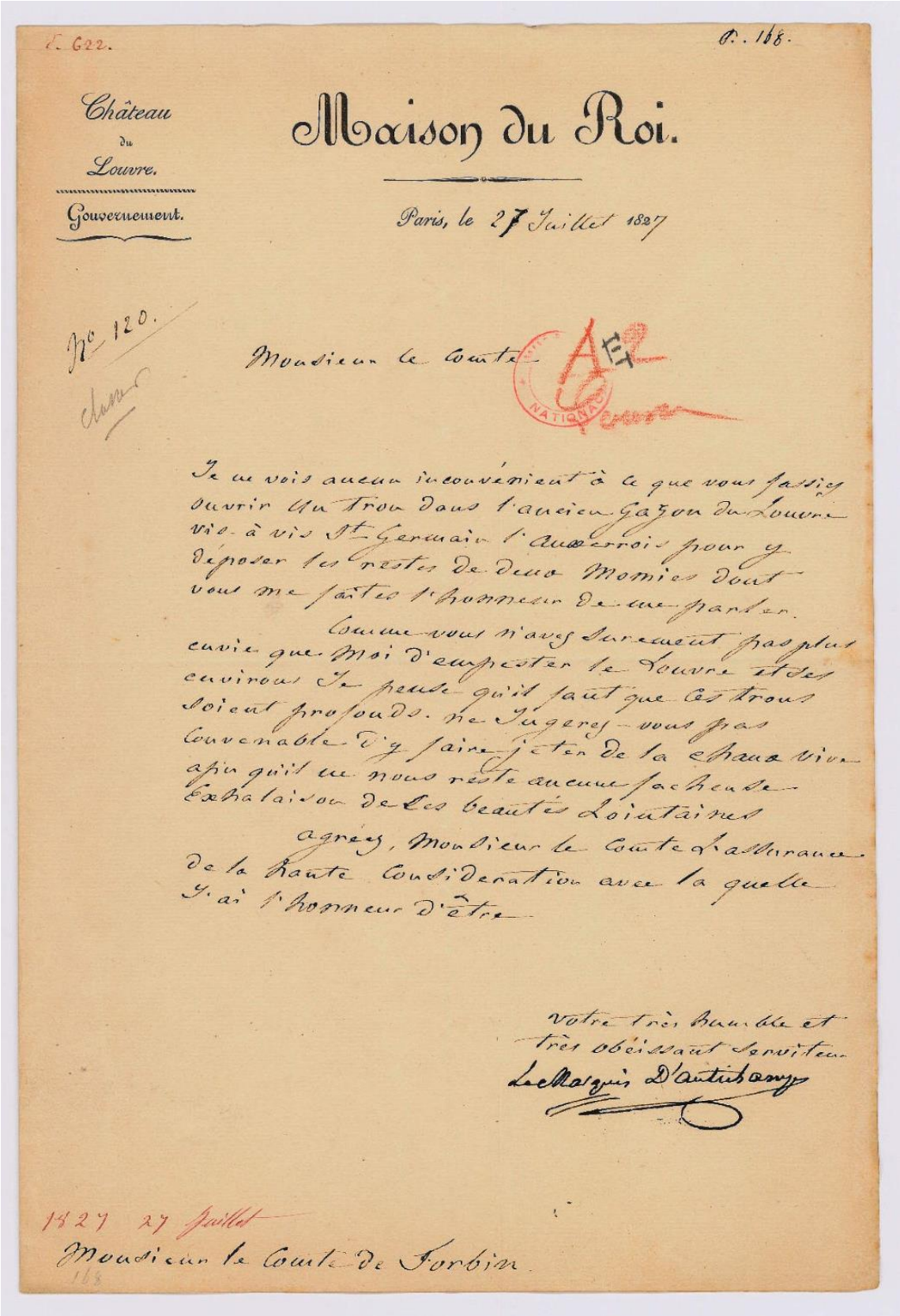
1839	6 mummies	Purchased from Giovanni Anastasi's collection in 1839. Five are identified: 'Mummy of a man EA6714. Roman period.' And EA6669, EA6673, EA6682, EA6699. Sixth mummy destroyed after damage in 1843.
1853	mummy remains	Wooden box containing the remains from Granville's dissection, EA75991.

Appendix 1: Table of mummies at the British Museum within the timeframe. © author.

MUMMIES AT THE MUSEE DU LOUVRE

1826	2 mummies	2 mummies, lost through decomposition before the opening of the galleries in 1827. Buried in the garden of the Louvre.
1826	1 male mummy	Mummy of a man (Siophis/Padicheri), N2627. Ptolemaic period. Purchased from Salt's collection (n°3001 to 30003, with other objects).
1827	1 male mummy	In Champollion's *Notice Descriptive* of 1827. Lost shortly after?
1827	1 female mummy	In Champollion's *Notice Descriptive* of 1827. Lost shortly after?
1830	1 child mummy	Mummy of a child, N2628A. Purchased in 1830 from Champollion's mission of 1828-1829, list Champollion n°47.
1830	1 child mummy	Mummy of a child, N2628B. Purchased in 1830 from Champollion's mission of 1828-1829, list Champollion n°47.
1832	1 male mummy	Mummy of a man, ID238903. Donated by Baron Larrey on 6 october 1832. Brough from Egypt by General Sebastiana who gifted it to Joséphine de Beauharnais. At sale of Beauharnais's collection, acquired by Denon. At sale of Denon's collection in 1826, acquired by Larrey for the Louvre.
1859	1 mummy head	Female mummy head, E3442. Purchased from the collection of Joséphine de Beauharnais by Nils Gustaf Palin (1765-1842) for the Louvre in 1859.

Appendix 2: Table of mummies at the Musée du Louvre within the timeframe. © author.



E. 622. P. 168.

Château du Louvre.

Gouvernement.

Maison du Roi.

Paris, le 27 Juillet 1827

N° 120.

Monsieur le Comte

Je ne vois aucun inconvénient à ce que vous fassiez ouvrir un trou dans l'ancien gazon du Louvre vis-à-vis St-Germain l'Auxerrois pour y déposer les restes de deux momies dont vous me faites l'honneur de me parler.

Comme vous n'avez sûrement pas plus envie que moi d'empester le Louvre et ses environs je pense qu'il faut que ces trous soient profonds. ne jugerez-vous pas convenable d'y faire jeter de la chaux vive afin qu'il ne nous reste aucune fâcheuse exhalaison de ces beautés lointaines

agréez, Monsieur le Comte l'assurance de la haute considération avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être

Votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur

Le Marquis D'Autichamp

1827 27 Juillet

Monsieur le Comte de Forbin

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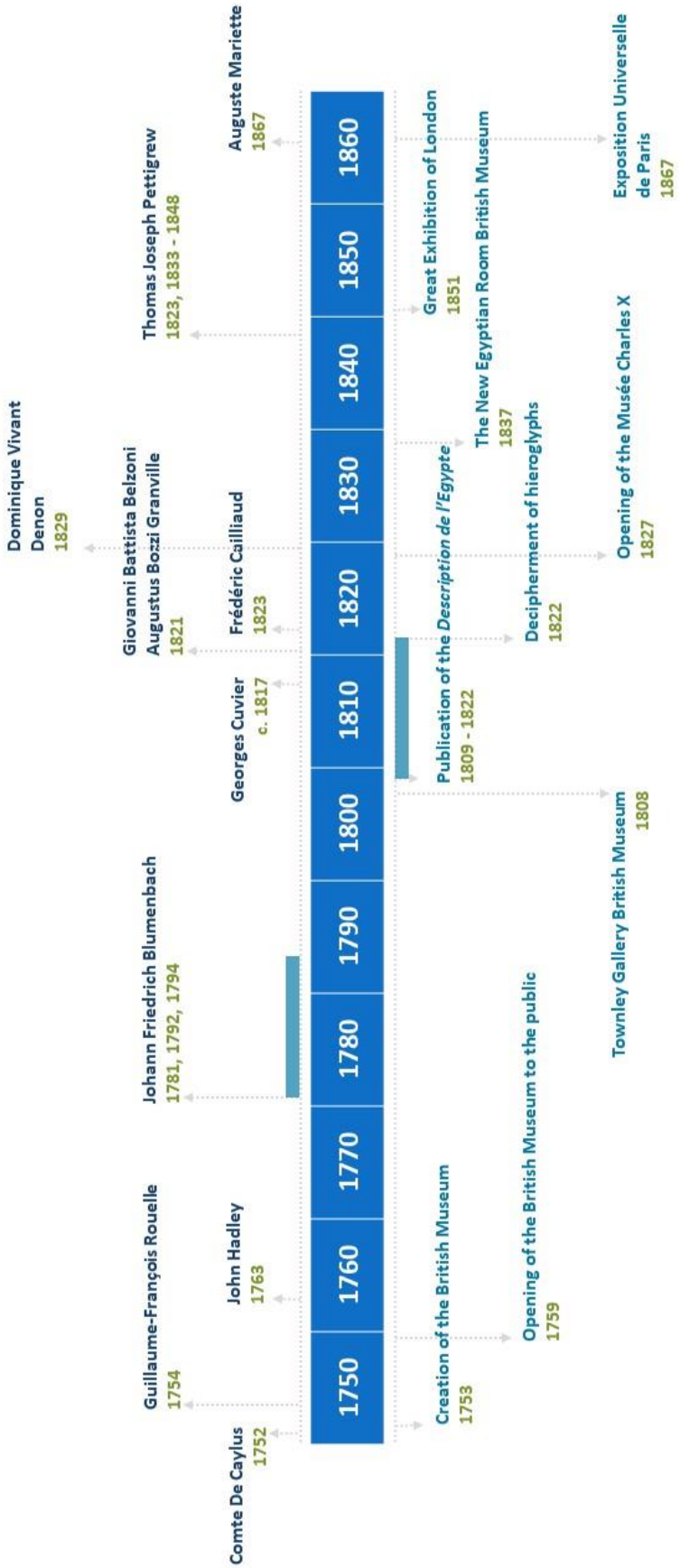
Appendix 3: Letter ‘autorisation d’ensevelir des momies’. © Archives Nationales 20144775/2, section administration.



Appendix 4: Timeline of mummy openings, autopsies and dissections, with actors in the upper part, and contemporary events in the lower part. © author.

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