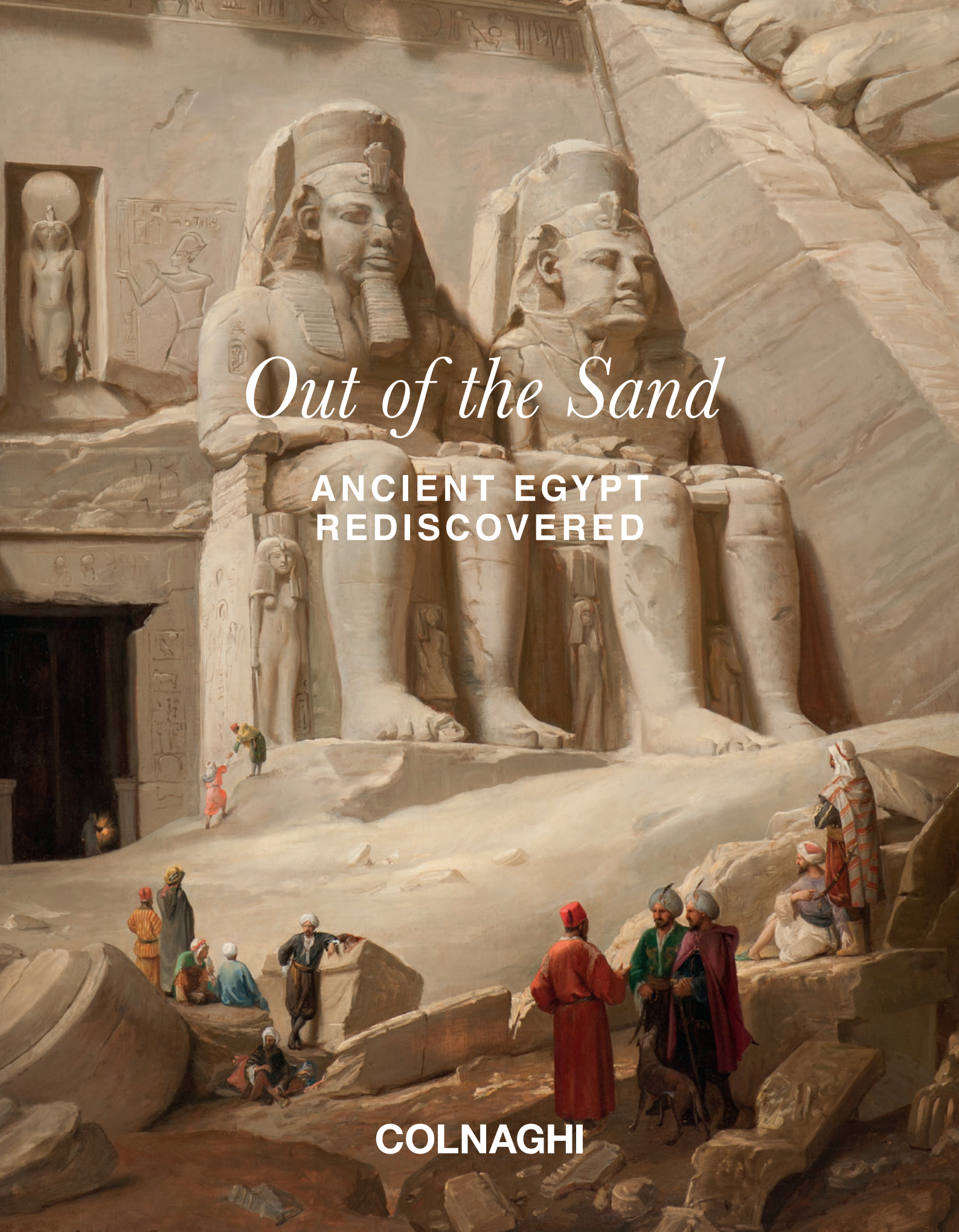




Out of the Sand

ANCIENT EGYPT
REDISCOVERED

COLNAGHI

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**ANCIENT EGYPT
REDISCOVERED**

7 September – 17 November 2026

Colnaghi London

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FOREWORD

Will Elliott

From my earliest childhood, I was fascinated by ancient Egypt. Like so many others, I was captivated by its colossal monuments, enigmatic pharaohs and extraordinary works of art. Alongside this came a fascination with the archaeology of Egypt itself: forgotten tombs, long-lost treasures and the remarkable individuals who brought them back to light. Howard Carter's discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb was central to that fascination, but so too were the stories of exploration and excavation that transformed our understanding of one of history's greatest civilisations.

Years later, another passion developed: the nineteenth century. I became especially interested in its travellers, whose journals and memoirs remain vivid records of encounters with places that, to many Europeans, still seemed ancient and mysterious. Egypt, in particular, inspired an extraordinary body of such writing. Reading Toby Wilkinson's *Beneath the Sands* rekindled that fascination just as I was developing a deeper appreciation of Orientalist art, and looking back, I can see how those interests gradually came together in this exhibition.

Curated with my colleague Mark Keshishian, *Out of the Sand* brings together paintings, drawings, early photographs, books and ancient Egyptian artefacts to tell the story of Egypt's rediscovery. The works reveal many different responses to the ancient world, from archaeological enquiry and careful documentation to artistic imagination and moments of gentle humour. Together, they illuminate not only the civilisation of the pharaohs but also the nineteenth-century generation that sought to understand it.

It has been a pleasure to work alongside Mark, whose knowledge of Egypt and passion for Orientalist art have enriched the project throughout.

We are grateful to the many colleagues, lenders and friends who helped make this exhibition possible, and especially to Dr. Sophie Bostock for contributing the excellent introductory essay that follows. We hope the catalogue and exhibition convey something of the fascination that inspired this project: both for ancient Egypt itself and for the remarkable travellers, artists, archaeologists and scholars whose work transformed the modern world's understanding of it.

Will Elliott

Partner – Colnaghi

FOREWORD

Mark Keshishian

It is a particular honour to showcase this exhibition at Colnaghi London and, through it, to bring a small piece of Egypt to the gallery. The objects and images assembled here represent only a fraction of the richness of Egypt's cultural legacy, yet together they evoke something of its extraordinary power: a civilisation of immense artistic and intellectual achievement whose influence has travelled across continents and endured across centuries.

Out of the Sand: Ancient Egypt Rediscovered forms part of a broader curatorial vision at Colnaghi: an aspiration to bring cultures into dialogue through artistic expression and to explore the ways in which works of art can deepen our understanding of histories beyond our own. Across antiquities, paintings, drawings, early photographs and rare books, this exhibition considers not only the enduring legacy of ancient Egypt, but also the many generations of artists, travellers, scholars and archaeologists who sought to record, interpret and preserve its extraordinary civilisations.

Working alongside Will Elliott to bring this exhibition to fruition has been the greatest pleasure and privilege. His lifelong passion for ancient Egypt, nineteenth-century art and the history of exploration provided the curatorial foundation and inspiration for the exhibition. His expertise, connoisseurship and vision shaped the project throughout, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside him in bringing our respective areas of interest together.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Jorge Coll, whose vision for Colnaghi, leadership and continued support have made ambitious projects of this kind possible at Colnaghi. His belief in the gallery's ability to unite scholarship and cultural dialogue has been fundamental to the development of this exhibition and to the wider Colnaghi Oriental Art Department programme of which it forms a part of. My sincere thanks are also due to Madeleine Eleanor Galbraith for her curatorial brilliance and dedication at every stage of the project. I am most grateful to Dr. Sophie Bostock, whose excellent introductory essay brings scholarly depth and sensitivity to the catalogue, and to Laura Eguiluz de la Rica for her commitment in helping to realise this special publication.

Mark Keshishian

Director – Colnaghi Oriental Art Department



INTRODUCTION

Out of the Sand: Ancient Egypt Rediscovered

Dr. Sophie Bostock

*[Egypt] is a great place
for contrasts:
splendid things gleam
in the dust.*

– Gustave Flaubert,
Letter to Louis Bouilhet,
1 December 1849¹

The Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, riding south through Nubia in 1813, saw four colossal stone heads breaking the surface of the sand, all that remained visible of a temple the desert had been swallowing for a millennium.² The story of how Europe came to know ancient Egypt is, in large part, a story of recovery: temples, tombs, statuary, and inscriptions drawn back into the light after centuries of burial, and with each of them an idea of Egypt that the finder believed he was discovering for the first time.

Sixteen years before Burckhardt's ride through Nubia, the English aristocrat and Bishop Frederick Hervey wrote from the Continent that he was overwhelmed by what he called his *égyptomanie*, the earliest known appearance of the word in any language.³ Hervey never reached Egypt; he died in Italy in 1803 without ever seeing it. The term was barely coined, yet the passion it described was already ancient. The Romans had been seized by it eighteen centuries earlier. After Actium and the death of Cleopatra had delivered Egypt to Rome, the conquered kingdom entered the Roman imagination as both a trophy and a mystery: its obelisks were shipped across the Mediterranean to stand in the squares of the capital, and the cult of Isis took root in the heart of the city.⁴ Several of the works in this exhibition belong to these later rediscoveries rather than to the civilisation they looked back upon: among them the Roman portrait head of the Hadrianic period.

This is why “rediscovered” is the right word for what the exhibition gathers, and why the prefix carries the argument. Egypt was never lost to the Egyptians. It was lost, and found, and found again, by everyone else. The objects assembled here divide accordingly into two kinds: the things Egyptians made, spanning two millennia, and the things later hands made in response to them, the great published surveys, the paintings and the photographs. Set side by side, they tell a single story, of a civilisation that came out of the sand each time a later age went looking for it.

The earliest object in the exhibition is also among the smallest: a kohl pot of blue-grey anhydrite, no taller than a thumb, carved in low relief with monkeys clinging to its sides, made in the Middle Kingdom some four thousand years ago to hold the black paint with which Egyptian men and women lined their eyes. The works that Egyptian hands made here span some two thousand years, from this pot to the marbles of the Roman age, and across that vast stretch they speak a language of remarkable constancy. Set a weathered limestone relief of the eighteenth dynasty beside the basalt bust of a man named Djed-Hor, carved the better part of a millennium later: the two share a canon of proportion and an ideal of the ageless human face that any Egyptian craftsman would have recognised as continuous and correct.⁵

Much of what survives was made for eternity. The green faience ushabti of Neferibresaneith, a high official of the twenty-sixth dynasty, is one of a small army of such figures placed in the tomb to labour for the dead; the mummy mask, its white face serene beneath

a headdress of blue and gold and its outlined eyes gazing calmly out, was made to cover the head of the dead and to carry an unchanged countenance into eternity.⁶ These were objects designed to last forever, and this funerary ambition to defeat time is precisely what delivered so much of ancient Egypt intact to the centuries that would later dig it up. Egypt was made to be remembered. It was.

One of the smallest pieces lets us watch the hand at work. A model of a royal bust, in limestone and small enough to cradle in one hand, is a workshop item: a profile head of real delicacy, its wig carved as row upon row of tiny curls.⁷ There is something moving in it, the same impulse that captivates us in an artist's preliminary drawing: the eternal forms shown mid-construction, the maker's hand suddenly close.

We have already met the latest of these works: the Ptolemaic and Roman pieces. The Roman head, carved by Rome, looking back, shows a further turn, the moment Egypt becomes a subject of images rather than their maker⁸. With the Roman head, the long sequence of Egyptian makers comes to its close, and a silence of more than a thousand years opens between the last of these objects and the first European who would find them again.

The silence broke in 1798, and it broke with an army. When Napoleon Bonaparte sailed for Egypt that summer, he brought with him not only soldiers but a corps of more than a hundred and fifty scholars, engineers and artists, charged with measuring, drawing and describing the country in its entirety.⁹

The military campaign failed; the scholarly one changed the world. Out of it came the Rosetta Stone, the key by which the hieroglyphs would eventually be read, and the *Description de l'Égypte*, a survey so vast it took twenty years to appear. With the *Description*, the recording of Egypt became a state project, systematic and complete.

But the monuments had first to be recovered before they could be recorded, and much of Egypt was still under the sand. The same Burckhardt who opens this introduction had glimpsed the buried heads of Abu Simbel in 1813 but could not reach the temple beneath them; it was left to Giovanni Belzoni, a Paduan strongman turned excavator, to clear the entrance and step into the Great Temple in 1817, almost certainly the first to do so in a thousand years.¹⁰ Belzoni's Egypt was one of brute physical recovery, of colossal heads dragged to the river and shipped to London.

What the excavators unearthed, the artists fixed on paper for those who would never see it. Among the earliest here is Luigi Mayer, whose watercolour study for Pompey's Pillar, the great Roman column at Alexandria, belongs to a series of views made around 1800 for the British Ambassador Sir Robert Ainslie.¹¹ But it was David Roberts, travelling the Nile in 1838 and 1839, who gave Europe the Egypt it would carry in its mind for a century. His views, lithographed with great brilliance by Louis Haghe and issued as *Egypt and Nubia*, are sunlit and majestic, the monument always picturesque and always sublime.

For a Victorian public, Roberts was Egypt, and the folio shown here is among the most influential bodies of images the country ever produced.

If the objects were Egypt making itself and the surveys were Egypt being recorded, the painters are Egypt being seen, and it is here that the European encounter becomes most personal and most revealing of the men who visited. No two of them met the country in the same way. John Frederick Lewis did not merely visit Egypt; he disappeared into it. Arriving in Cairo in 1841, he stayed a decade, growing a beard, adopting local dress, and giving himself so completely to Cairene life that when Thackeray called on him in 1844, he found his old friend living what he called a “*dreamy, hazy, lazy, tobacco-fied life*”.¹² Lewis’s Egypt is a world inhabited from within. His watercolour study of a European in Turkish dress, almost certainly the Egyptologist Sir Gardner Wilkinson, catches the whole sensibility in a single face: a Westerner in a fez and burnous, wearing his borrowed costume with easy, slightly amused assurance.¹³

Charles-Théodore Frère found another way into that world. As much at home in Egyptian society as Lewis was in Cairo, honoured by the Egyptian court with the title of Bey, he gave himself above all to the light: his small watercolour of the Pyramids at Giza across the Nile at sunset lets the monuments emerge from a glowing horizon, subordinate to the golden air around them and to the water buffalo and figures going about their evening in the foreground.

Then there were the travellers, who came to stand before the great monuments and register their overwhelming scale, and the finest of them here is Carl Werner. Where Lewis merged into Cairo, Werner confronted the architecture of Upper Egypt and let it dominate him. His view of Abu Simbel is built to overwhelm: the colossi of Ramesses rise in steep foreshortening above the tiny figures at their feet, the sky reduced to a shard of light at the apex of the canvas, the whole composition pressing the monument's mass down upon the viewer until the effect borders on the claustrophobic. His Egypt is experienced as a force indifferent to the human figures at its base.

And then, in Ludwig Hans Fischer's *Simoom*, the sublime tips into something close to terror. Here, the monument is one of the Colossi of Memnon, but it is no longer triumphant; it looms half-dissolved through a wall of advancing sand, its base already swallowed by the ochre haze consuming the caravan below. A guide in vivid blue, the one note of colour in a near-monochrome field of amber and dust, shields his eyes and drives his animals before the storm, while behind him, riders and camels vanish into the air itself. This is the desert as an annihilating element, the poisoning wind of its Arabic name. The colossus, survivor of more than three thousand years, and the travellers, the most vulnerable, share a single predicament, both at the mercy of a force older than either.

What unites these painters, and divides them from the photographers, is that each gives us an Egypt unmistakably shaped by the man who saw it. Lewis's is intimate, Frère's luminous, Werner's monumental,

Fischer's elemental, and none of them is neutral. They interpreted it, and the interpretation is the art. That such an individual vision could be thought to rival the veracity of the camera is a question this exhibition poses.

In 1849, the photographer Maxime Du Camp set out up the Nile with his friend Gustave Flaubert, and the photographs he made along the way appeared in 1852 in one of the earliest travel books ever illustrated with the new medium.¹⁴ Here, surely, was Egypt as it really was, beyond the reach of the artist's flattering hand. And yet the photograph composed Egypt as surely as the lithograph had. Du Camp chose his viewpoints, posed a servant against the stones for scale, and printed a grave, silent, depopulated Egypt of pure architecture. Beside him travelled Flaubert, whose own record of the journey could not be further from Du Camp's austere plates. The two men saw the same country and brought home two different Egypts.

The commercial photographers who set up studios in Cairo and Luxor in the decades that followed seemed to make good on the promise of authenticity. Antonio Beato, working from Luxor, sold travellers exact views of the temples, and his photograph of the pillars at Karnak renders in flawless detail what Roberts had romanticised a generation before.¹⁵ The prints looked like objectivity fulfilled. Yet they were staged as deliberately as any painting. Jean Pascal Sébah's *Ascending the Pyramid* is not a record but a construction: the European visitor hauled up the great blocks by a posse of Egyptian guides, a scene of tourism staged to look like adventure.

Beato chose his light and his angle; Sébah chose his cast. The photograph did not end interpretation; it concealed it behind the authority of the lens.

And then, in the work of Hippolyte Délié and Émile Béchard, the historical cycle is finally complete. In 1872, the two photographed the antiquities of the new national museum at Boulaq, the collection Auguste Mariette had assembled to keep Egypt's past in Egypt, and published them as one of the earliest photographic records of that museum's treasures.¹⁶ Here, the newest way of seeing turned its lens upon the oldest objects of all, the kind of object with which this exhibition begins. Egypt, the maker and Egypt the spectacle, the two tracks of this whole story, met at last on a single sheet of albumen paper.

That meeting is, in short, the thesis of the exhibition. What hangs on these walls is the long history of looking at ancient Egypt. Each age believed it had found the real Egypt, and each found chiefly itself: its science in the *Description*, its Romanticism in Roberts and Werner, its faith in objectivity in a camera that turned out to compose as freely as any painter. Through all of it, the ancient objects sit unmoved at the centre, made to outlast time and very nearly succeeding, watching the long procession of those who came to find them.

This is what the word "rediscovered" was always carrying. The splendid things did not gleam in the dust only once. They were buried and brought to light, looked at and looked at again, painted and

photographed and carried away, and each time a later age went down into the sand it came back believing the find was its own. Egyptian hands made the objects featured in this exhibition; everything else here is the long history of the West's quest to uncover them.

* * *

However, the camera did not have the last word. A full generation after the first photographs, the painters were still going up the Nile. In 1904 Henry Roderick Newman, a follower of Ruskin, carried his watercolours into the Great Temple at Abu Simbel and painted its colossi from within, by the light that falls through the door. In 1912 William Palmer-Jones, architect to the Metropolitan Museum's expedition at Thebes, set down the Colossi of Memnon at dusk, doubled in still water beneath a pale moon.¹⁷

Half a century on, the monuments were still being given a vision that was somebody's own. This procession has no last figure in it: we are only the latest to look, and the oldest objects in the gallery are watching us too.

NOTES

1. Gustave Flaubert, *Flaubert in Egypt: A Sensibility on Tour*, trans. Francis Steegmuller (London: Penguin Classics, 1996), letter of 1 December 1849. Steegmuller modifies Flaubert's original phrasing ("C'est ici qu'on s'entend en contrastes...") by replacing the pronoun *ici* ("here") with "Egypt" to establish historical context for standalone English readers. Because pagination fluctuates across digital and print versions of this travelogue, this text is localized chronologically via the letter entry. For the corresponding French text, see Flaubert, *Correspondance*, Lettre à Louis Bouilhet (1er décembre 1849).
2. Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (1784-1817) recorded the sight at Abu Simbel in 1813. See Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia*, John Murray, London, 1819.
3. Hervey's use of the word, in a letter of 20 March 1797, predates its first appearance in print by more than a decade. See Noreen Doyle, 'The Earliest Known Uses of "l'Égyptomanie" / "Egyptomania" in French and English', *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*, vol. 8, 2016, pp. 122-125. <https://egyptianexpedition.org/articles/the-earliest-known-uses-of-legyptomanie-egyptomania-in-french-and-english/>
4. On the Roman taste for Egyptian forms after the conquest of 30 BC, see Jean-Marcel Humbert, Michael Pantazzi and Christiane Ziegler, *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art 1730-1930*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1994. On the obelisks, Brian A. Curran, Anthony Grafton, Pamela O. Long and Benjamin Weiss, *Obelisk: A History*, Burndy Library / MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2009; on the cult of Isis at Rome, M. J. Versluys et al. (eds), *The Iseum Campense from the Roman Empire to the Modern Age*, Quasar, Rome, 2018.
5. On the canon of proportion and the long continuity of Egyptian artistic convention, see Gay Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, British Museum Press, London, 1997 (revised edition 2008); on the deliberate archaism of the Saite period, see Peter Der Manuelian, *Living in the Past: Studies in the Archaism of the Egyptian Twenty-sixth Dynasty*, Kegan Paul International, London, 1994.
6. On the ushabti, the servant-figure placed in the tomb to perform labour on behalf of the deceased in the afterlife, see Harry M. Stewart, *Egyptian Shabtis*, Shire Egyptology, Princes Risborough, 1995.
7. Such small limestone heads and reliefs are generally understood as sculptors' models or workshop reference pieces, though a votive purpose has also been argued.
8. On the stones of pharaonic Egypt, chiefly limestone and sandstone, with granite, basalt, greywacke and the banded travertine commonly called Egyptian alabaster, see Dietrich and Rosemarie Klemm, *Stones and Quarries in Ancient Egypt*, British Museum Press, London, 2008. White statuary marble was not among them; it was a Greek and Roman material, imported into Egypt and worked above all at Alexandria.
9. The expedition's scientific corps, the Commission des Sciences et des Arts, produced the *Description de l'Égypte*, Paris, Imprimerie impériale, 1809-1828. On the campaign and its scholars, see Charles C. Gillispie and Michel Dewachter (eds), *Monuments of Egypt: The Napoleonic Edition*, Princeton, 1987.
10. Giovanni Battista Belzoni, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs and Excavations in Egypt and Nubia*, John Murray, London, 1820.
11. Luigi Mayer's drawings were engraved for Sir Robert Ainslie and published as *Views in Egypt*, London, 1801.
12. William Makepeace Thackeray, *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, Chapman and Hall, London, 1846.
13. Scott, John, 'The Smiling Orientalist: An Anglo-Turkish moment; JF Lewis's portrait (almost certainly) of the great Egyptologist Sir John Gardner Wilkinson', *Cornucopia*, 17 March 2017.
14. Maxime Du Camp, *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie: dessins photographiques*, Gide et J. Baudry, Paris, 1852; for Flaubert's account of the same journey, see Gustave Flaubert, *Flaubert in Egypt: A Sensibility on Tour*, trans. and ed. Francis Steegmuller, London: Penguin Classics, 1996.
15. On the commercial photographers working in Egypt from the 1850s onward, among them Antonio Beato and the Sébah studio, see Nissan N. Perez, *Focus East: Early Photography in the Near East, 1839-1885*, Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1988.
16. Émile Béchard and Hippolyte Délié, with text by Auguste Mariette, *Album du Musée de Boulak*, Mourés & Cie, Cairo, 1872. The Boulak collection later passed to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.
17. Palmer-Jones served as architect to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Egyptian Expedition from 1908 to 1912, based at Thebes, where he painted the present watercolour in his final season. See Antonia Brodie et al. (eds), *Directory of British Architects 1800-1950*, vol. 2, British Architectural Library / Royal Institute of British Architects, London, 2001.

CATALOGUE

EGYPTIAN
MIDDLE KINGDOM
11TH – 12TH DYNASTY

Kohl Vessel
with Monkeys
ca. 2134 – 1782 B.C.

Anhydrite

6 cm

2 ³/₈ in.



This exceptionally charming kohl vessel belongs to the refined world of the Middle Kingdom. Carved from anhydrite, a hard mineral sometimes described as “blue marble” for its cool, luminous aesthetic effect, the vessel demonstrates the remarkable skill of Egyptian craftsmen in shaping, hollowing and polishing difficult materials on a miniature scale. Its probable source was the Eastern Desert of Egypt, a region long associated with the procurement of prized stones and minerals for objects collected by members of the upper social strata.

The vessel is small, tactile and carefully proportioned. Its body swells gently before narrowing into a flat shoulder and a subtly concave neck, finished with a thin rim. The interior has been smoothly drilled to create the hollow container, while the exterior is enlivened by two monkeys carved in low relief. Their knees are bent, their arms outstretched and merging at the centre of the vessel’s circumference, while their heads turn to one side. Around their necks, collars identify them not as wild animals, but as domesticated pets. The species has been identified as guenon, a primate native to sub-Saharan Africa and subsequently domesticated in Egypt.

The vessel’s function was equally important. It was intended to hold kohl, the black cosmetic applied around the eyes and lashes in Egypt from Predynastic times onward. Kohl was not merely decorative. It protected the eyes from intense sunlight, windblown sand and, according to ancient practice, disease after the annual inundation of the Nile. Its use was associated with elite status, and the quality of the present vessel suggests a patron of considerable social standing.

The object has a distinguished modern history, having been exhibited at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, from 1974 to 1996.

Comparable vessels are preserved in the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence; and the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, London.





EGYPTIAN
NEW KINGDOM
18TH DYNASTY

*Relief with Figures
in Profile*

ca. 1550 – 1295 B.C.

Limestone

10.1 x 16.5 cm

3 ³/₄ x 6 ¹/₂ in.



This finely carved limestone fragment preserves part of a larger processional scene from Egypt's New Kingdom, one of the most accomplished and visually sophisticated periods of pharaonic art. Although modest in scale, the relief contains a remarkable concentration of courtly refinement. Two male figures survive in profile, facing right, their heads aligned in procession and their short echeloned wigs rendered with crisp, rhythmic precision. The rear figure, more substantially preserved, wears a short beard of the type associated with high-ranking courtiers. His left hand is clenched and raised towards his right shoulder, a gesture that suggests formal attendance within a ritual or ceremonial context.

The relief is carved in raised relief, a technique particularly suited to architectural decoration in which the figures emerge subtly from the stone while remaining fully integrated with the wall surface. Here, the sculptor has achieved a delicate balance between linear clarity and soft modelling. The surviving facial features are especially refined: the gently slanting eye and the slightly upturned lips belong to the elegant visual language of the Thutmosid period. These characteristics are particularly associated with the reign of Queen Hatshepsut (r. 1473-1458), whose monuments helped define one of the most graceful and courtly styles of the early 18th Dynasty.

The most important comparables are two reliefs from the upper terrace of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri, now in the collection of the Berlin museums and reproduced in Catherine H. Roehrig's, *Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh*, published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2006. These parallels, identified as nos. 82a and c, show closely related features, while further similarities may be observed in reliefs that remain in situ at Deir el-Bahri.

Such comparisons help locate the present fragment not merely within the broad category of New Kingdom relief, but more specifically within the artistic world of Hatshepsut's Theban court.

Traces of red pigment remain on the skin, confirming the figures as male according to Egyptian colour convention. This surviving colour is an important reminder that such reliefs were originally polychrome, their carved surfaces enlivened by paint and integrated into a richly legible sacred environment. Despite its fragmentary state, with surface chips and a vertical break through the left-hand figure, the relief retains extraordinary presence. It offers a rare and intimate glimpse of the ceremonial order, technical discipline and aesthetic elegance that made 18th Dynasty relief sculpture one of the great achievements of ancient Egyptian art.





EGYPTIAN
NEW KINGDOM
19TH DYNASTY

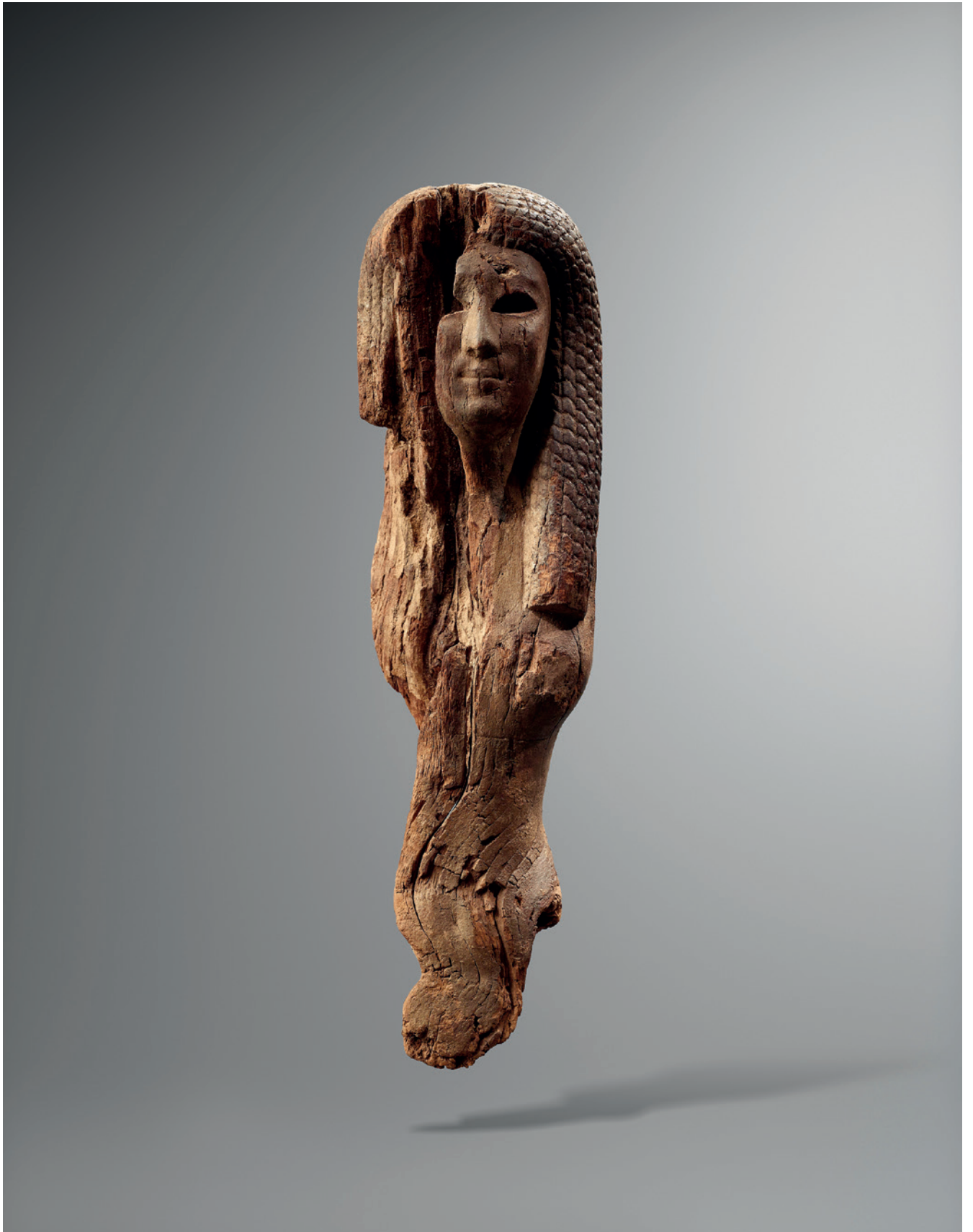
*Statuette Fragment
of a Woman*

ca. 1291 – 1185 B.C.

Wood

28 cm

11 in.



This evocative wooden fragment of a female statuette belongs to the refined tradition of New Kingdom private statuary, in which images of the deceased were created not merely as likenesses, but as enduring presences intended to accompany and sustain the individual in the afterlife. Although only partially preserved, the figure retains a striking sense of dignity and intimacy. Her face emerges from the surviving mass of wood with quiet authority, framed by an elaborate enveloping wig whose dense, ordered texture reflects the sophisticated fashions of the late 18th and 19th Dynasties. The body, though fragmentary, still preserves the suggestion of a pleated wrap-around garment, a type of dress associated with elite female representation during this period.

The use of wood is particularly significant. Unlike stone, which proclaims permanence through weight and durability, wood gives Egyptian sculpture a more intimate and corporeal presence. It was especially suited to private funerary statuary, where the figure functioned within the sacred environment of the tomb as a substitute body, a vessel of identity and a companion for eternity. The material also allowed for a warmth and softness of modelling that is very different from limestone or granite. In the present fragment, the aged surface, fissures and losses do not diminish the sculpture's power; rather, they intensify its sense of survival across more than three millennia.

The statuette's hairstyle and costume are central to its dating. The enveloping wig and pleated garment are characteristic of elite female fashion in the later 18th and early 19th Dynasties, while the sculpture's quality and morphology suggest a date in the early 19th Dynasty. This was the age that followed the Amarna period and led into the

Ramesside world, a moment when Egyptian art combined renewed formal discipline with a continued sensitivity to elegance, ornament and personal status. Stylistically and typologically related works have been discovered in the necropoleis of Saqqara and Asyut, both important centres for elite burial and commemorative practice. Such comparables place the present fragment within a wider funerary tradition in which statuettes of the deceased were used in ritual contexts and deposited in tombs to assist the transition into the afterlife. Despite its fragmentary condition, the sculpture remains deeply affecting. It preserves not only the image of an ancient Egyptian woman, but the idea of her continued presence: dressed, adorned and eternally prepared for the world beyond death.



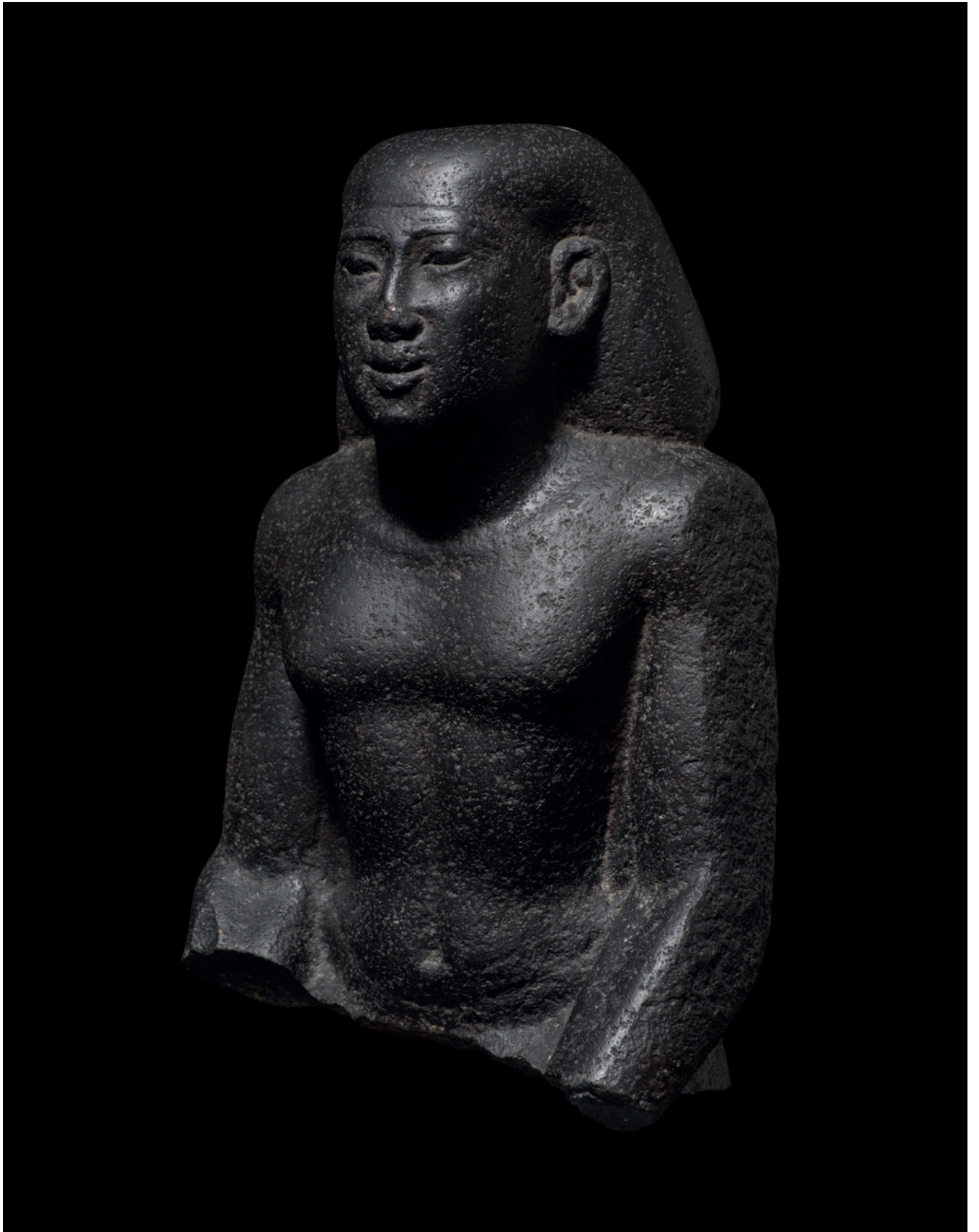
EGYPTIAN
LATE DYNASTIC PERIOD, SAITE PERIOD
26TH DYNASTY

Bust of
Djed-Hor-luf-Ankh
ca. 664 – 525 B.C.

Basalt

27 cm

10 ½ in.



This powerful basalt bust of Djed-Hor-Iuf-Ankh belongs to the refined sculptural tradition of Egypt's Saite Period, a moment in which artists looked deliberately to the great models of earlier pharaonic art while creating works of extraordinary polish, restraint and devotional intensity. Dating to the 26th Dynasty, the bust preserves the upper section of a male kneeling statue, a type closely associated with prayer, offering and ritual attendance before the gods. Although fragmentary, the sculpture retains a remarkable sense of bodily presence. The bare chest is carefully modelled, with raised nipples and a pronounced collar bone, while the belt and upper edge of the kilt remain visible below.

The figure wears a rounded, shoulder-length bag wig, pulled tightly across the forehead and falling in a smooth, compact mass around the head. His face is idealised yet strongly individualised: oval in shape, with long eyebrows, carefully drawn cosmetic lines extending from the eyes, and lips pursed into a delicate, almost inward smile. Such features are characteristic of high-quality Late Dynastic sculpture, in which serenity and discipline were used to suggest moral dignity, piety and eternal composure. The bent elbows and the subtle fold of the kilt indicate that the original figure was kneeling with his hands resting on his thighs, a pose adopted in acts of salutation and prayer.

The importance of the statue is deepened by the inscription preserved on the back pillar. It records a royal offering formula to Osiris, Foremost of the West and Lord of Abydos, invoking offerings including milk and also refers to Anubis, Lord of the Sacred Land, that is, the cemetery. The text identifies the owner as the venerated Djed-Hor-Iuf-Ankh, son of a wab-priest of Neith. This association is significant, for Neith was among the most important deities of

Sais, the capital and religious centre that gave the Saite Period its name. The inscription therefore places the figure within a world of priestly status, funerary devotion and carefully maintained ritual identity. The choice of basalt further enhances the sculpture's authority. Its dark, dense surface gives the body a compact permanence, appropriate for an image designed to endure within a sacred or funerary context. The top of the head bears a later conical depression, indicating secondary use, while the left arm is broken and the right arm pitted. Yet these marks of time do not diminish the bust's presence. Rather, they heighten its archaeological and devotional resonance: the surviving upper body of a man eternally kneeling before the gods.



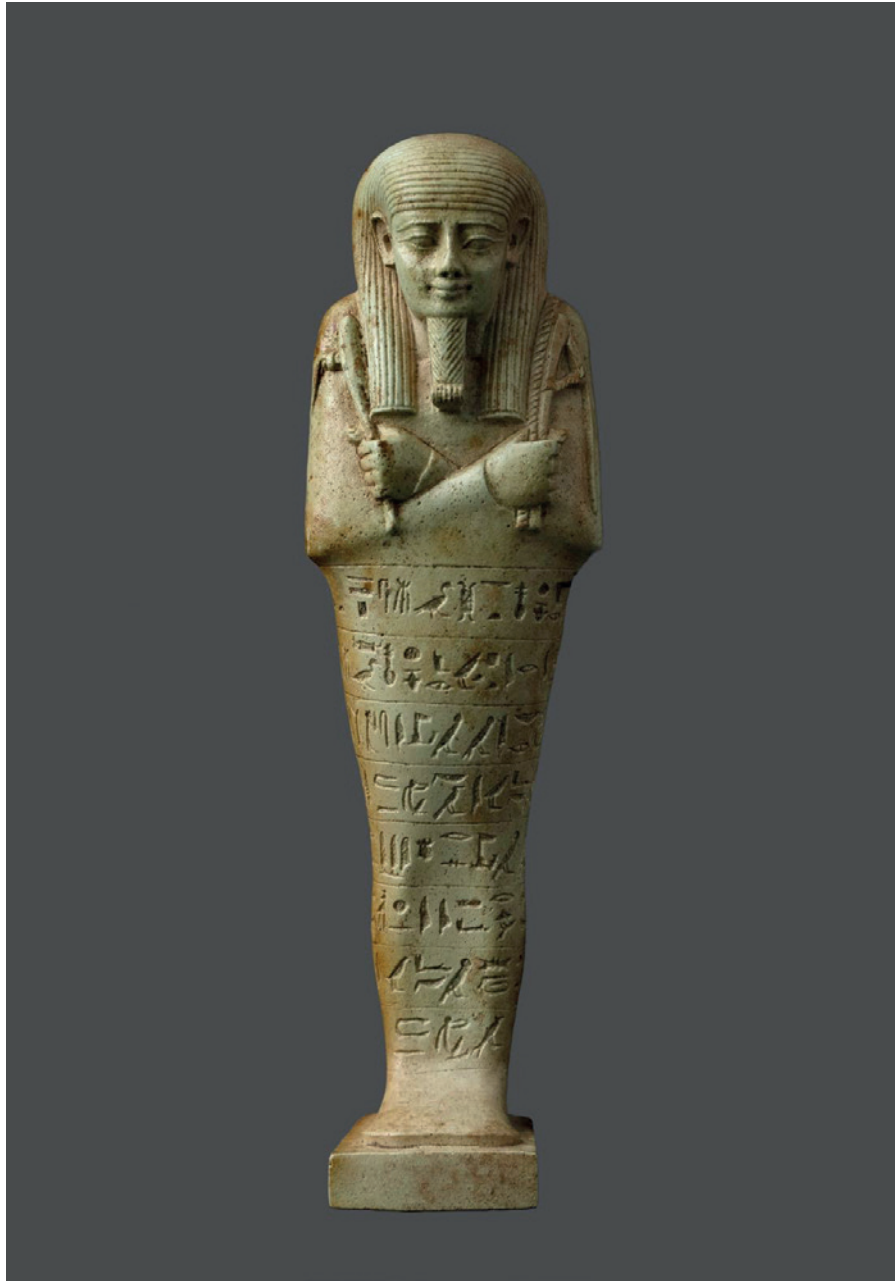
EGYPTIAN
LATE DYNASTIC PERIOD, SAITE PERIOD
26TH DYNASTY

*Ushabti of
Neferibresaneith*
ca. 570 – 526 B.C.

Green faience

19.1 x 5.3 cm

7 1/2 x 2 1/8 in.



This finely modelled green faience ushabti of Neferibresaneith belongs to one of the most distinguished known groups of Saite funerary figures. Created during the 26th Dynasty, probably in the reign of Amasis II (r. 570-536 B.C.), it represents the deceased in mummiform shape, with a tripartite wig, false beard, crossed arms and agricultural implements. Such figures were not passive tomb ornaments, but magical servants intended to answer on behalf of the deceased when called upon to perform labour in the afterlife. Their purpose is embedded in the very idea of the ushabti, a figure that responds: “Here I am.”

Neferibresaneith was not an anonymous owner, but a high-ranking Saite official. His titles identify him as Overseer of Lower Egypt, Administrator of the Palace and a priest, placing him within the administrative and religious elite of 6th-century B.C. Egypt. The refinement of the present figure reflects that status. The luminous green faience evokes regeneration, vegetation and rebirth, while the crisp inscription and carefully ordered form transform the statuette into a ritually active object. In the tomb, such figures formed a miniature workforce, ensuring that the burdens of agricultural labour in the next world would be transferred from the deceased to his magical substitutes.

The importance of this example is strengthened by comparison with the closely related ushabti of Neferibresaneith acquired by the J. Paul Getty Museum in 2016, accessioned as 2016.2. The Getty figure, also in green faience and dated to about 570-526 B.C., belongs to the same dispersed funerary group. Getty research records that Neferibresaneith’s tomb was discovered in 1929 at Saqqara, beneath a temple near the pyramid of Userkaf, and that 335 companion

ushabtis were found with it. Many subsequently entered the international art market and are now dispersed across collections on several continents.

The provenance of the present ushabti is especially evocative within this history of rediscovery and dispersal. Its recorded Musée du Caire provenance places it within the official Egyptian Museum Sales Room tradition, when antiquities judged duplicate or saleable were released through institutional channels. Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the museum's Salle de Vente functioned as a sanctioned point of circulation for ancient discoveries. In the new Cairo Museum, this sales room was located in the eastern pavilion, just to the right of the entrance, while the western pavilion housed the library. Such provenance gives the object not only archaeological interest, but also a powerful modern history: from ancient tomb equipment to museum-sanctioned sale, and finally to renewed interpretation within a contemporary exhibition.

EGYPTIAN
LATE DYNASTIC PERIOD, NEO-MEMPHITE
30TH DYNASTY

*Sculptor's Trial
Piece Fragment*
ca. 380 – 343 B.C.

Limestone

8.1 x 13.4 cm

3 1/4 x 5 1/4 in.



This finely carved limestone fragment belongs to the fascinating category of Egyptian sculptor's trial pieces: works that stand between exercise, model and artistic demonstration. Dating to the 30th Dynasty, the final dynasty of an independent Egypt before the Achaemenid reconquest in 343 B.C., the fragment captures the extraordinary refinement of Late Dynastic carving at a moment when Egyptian artists consciously revived and reinterpreted earlier pharaonic traditions. Its designation as Neo-Memphite is especially significant, suggesting a style rooted in the sculptural discipline, clarity and elegance associated with Memphis, one of Egypt's most important artistic and religious centres.

The fragment is carved in raised relief with the profile head of a courtier wearing an echeloned wig. The face is rendered with remarkable precision. The eye is narrow, elongated and almond-shaped, angled slightly upward towards the outer corner; the nose is straight; the lips are full, carefully shaped and subtly animated. These features give the figure a composed and idealised presence, while the delicacy of the carving reveals the hand of an accomplished sculptor. Particularly striking is the treatment of the wig. The curls widen at the front of the head, narrow around the ear, and then broaden again towards the back, creating a controlled rhythm across the stone surface. Behind the principal head are two additional strands of an echeloned wig, probably intended as a practice passage for the main relief.

Such trial pieces offer rare insight into the working practices of Egyptian sculptors. They were not simply unfinished fragments, but objects through which artists tested form, proportion, technique and stylistic effect. In this example, the contrast between the highly finished head and the abbreviated secondary wig strands gives the

fragment exceptional didactic value. One senses not only the final image, but the process of making: the measured incision, the repeated curl, the calibrated line of the eye.

The condition of the object further reveals its history. The upper and lower edges are broken away, while the left and right corners are finished, and the reverse is smooth. The collection number “Ae.12” is written in black paint on the upper left corner and again on the reverse. The piece was formerly in the collection of Professor Dr. Roland Bay, acquired in the 1950s and preserved by descent.

Despite its fragmentary nature, the relief possesses a striking completeness of artistic intention. It embodies the technical finesse, elegance and intellectual self-consciousness of Egypt’s last native dynasty.

EGYPTIAN
LATE DYNASTIC PERIOD
PTOLEMAIC PERIOD
30TH DYNASTY

*Sculptor's Model
of a Royal Bust*
ca. 380 – 330 B.C.

Limestone

8.5 cm

3 ¹/₃ in.



This delicately carved limestone sculptor's model of a royal bust belongs to the remarkable tradition of Egyptian trial pieces and workshop models produced during the Late Dynastic and early Ptolemaic periods. Such objects occupy a particularly fascinating place within Egyptian art, standing between finished sculpture, instructional model and artistic exercise. They allow us to glimpse the working practices of ancient sculptors, not only in their technical discipline, but in the careful transmission of royal iconography across generations. The bust represents a pharaoh wearing the *nemes* headdress, its broad lappets falling on either side of the face and onto the chest. Across the forehead runs a simple band from which rises the uraeus, the rearing cobra associated with the goddess Wadjet and with royal authority over Lower Egypt. The *nemes* itself was an attribute reserved exclusively for the king, immediately identifying the subject as pharaonic. At the crown of the head, a raised form may represent a stylised scarab beetle, a motif with strong associations of solar rebirth, transformation and divine kingship.

The face is small but exceptionally controlled. The brow is softly modelled, the eyelids crisply outlined, the ears well defined, and the mouth shaped into a slight, restrained smile. These features belong to the highly polished language of late Egyptian sculpture, in which earlier pharaonic forms were consciously revived and refined. The model's flat back and squared shoulders reinforce its workshop character, suggesting an object intended either for practice, instruction, or as a reference for the carving of larger royal images. Its closest published parallels lie among the sculptors' models of the Late and Ptolemaic periods, including examples discussed by Nadja Samir Tomoum in *The Sculptors' Models of the Late and Ptolemaic Periods* (Cairo, 2005), pl.11c,d; Cairo CG 33328. A further comparison may be made

with royal heads bearing a stylised scarab on the crown, discussed by Paul Edmund Stanwick in relation to Ptolemaic royal portraiture, in *Portraits of the Ptolemies: Greek Kings as Egyptian Pharaohs* (Austin, 2003), p.172, fig.59 [B9]. These comparables place the present work within a sophisticated artistic environment in which Egyptian and, later, Ptolemaic rulers continued to adopt the visual language of pharaonic legitimacy.

The object also has distinguished modern provenance. It was formerly in the collection of Charles Dikran Kelekian in New York, whose old inventory label, “No. 390,” remains on the reverse, and was later acquired by Jack Josephson before 1982. With dendritic surface staining, minor chips to the nose and uraeus, and the proper right lower corner broken away, the piece remains unrestored. Its fragmentary state only heightens its appeal: it preserves the hand of the sculptor, the grammar of kingship, and the enduring discipline of Egyptian artistic tradition.





EGYPTIAN
LATE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

Cartonnage
Mummy Mask
ca. 100 – 30 B.C.

Wood, Gesso

42 cm

16 ½ in.



This striking polychrome mummy mask belongs to the rich funerary culture of late Ptolemaic Egypt, a period in which ancient Egyptian beliefs concerning death, bodily preservation and divine transformation continued to flourish under a world increasingly shaped by Hellenistic rule. Created to cover the head and face of the wrapped mummy, the mask functioned not simply as an image of the deceased, but as a sacred and protective substitute body: a transfigured face through which the individual might endure eternally in the afterlife.

The mask is characterised by its blue-green tripartite wig, a form deeply rooted in pharaonic visual tradition. The lappets fall on either side of the face, framing the features with a sense of symmetry and ritual order. The eyes are powerfully emphasised: the rims, pupils, long cosmetic lines and tapering eyebrows are painted in black, giving the face an alert and almost animated presence. In Egyptian funerary imagery, the eye was never merely descriptive. It signified vitality, awareness and the restored capacity of the deceased to see, breathe and participate in the world beyond death.

The use of vivid colour is essential to the object's meaning. Blue-green tones were associated with regeneration, vegetation, water and rebirth, while the carefully painted facial details preserved the identity and divine readiness of the deceased. Such masks belonged to a broader ensemble of mummy adornment that could include cartonnage panels, painted coverings, collars, bead nets and amuletic imagery. Together, these elements transformed the mummy into an Osirian being: protected, beautified and ritually prepared for eternity.

The Late Ptolemaic date gives the mask particular historical resonance. By the first century B.C., Egypt stood at the threshold between pharaonic continuity and Roman rule. Yet objects such as this demonstrate that traditional funerary practices remained deeply meaningful. The ancient language of the tripartite wig, cosmetic eyes and idealised face continued to communicate status, protection and sacred transformation.





ROMAN IMPERIAL
EARLY HADRIANIC

*A Marble Portrait
Head of a Woman*
ca. 120 – 130 A.D.

Marble

22.8 cm

9 in.



This finely carved marble portrait head of a woman belongs to the early Hadrianic period, a moment in Roman portraiture when courtly fashion, individual likeness and idealising restraint were brought into elegant balance. Said to have been found in Alexandria, Egypt, the head is of particular interest as a work that appears to stand between the sculptural traditions of the Roman Empire and the highly individualised visual culture of Roman Egypt. Its quiet intensity recalls the ancient faces familiar from *Fayum* panel portraits, yet here translated into marble with exceptional delicacy and control.

The sitter is represented with an oval face, a finely shaped mouth, a slightly aquiline nose, large almond-shaped eyes and incised brows. The eyes are not yet drilled or articulated with pupils, a feature that helps place the portrait in the early years of Hadrian's reign, before the more systematic drilling of pupils became common after around A.D. 130. The surface is polished with great refinement, and traces of red pigment remain on the marble, an important reminder that Roman sculpture was not experienced in antiquity as pure white stone, but was often subtly enriched with colour. The most striking feature of the portrait is the elaborate coiffure. Undulating curls frame the forehead, while the hair is gathered and bound in a broad turban of coiled braids around the crown of the head. This sophisticated arrangement reflects the high fashion of the Hadrianic court and finds parallels in portraits of Empress Sabina and other elite women of the period. The pierced earlobes further suggest that the figure was intended to be adorned, perhaps with metal earrings that would have enhanced the lifelike effect of the sculpture.

Comparable portraits include the bust of Avidia Plautia in the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, as well as related female

portraits in the Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. These comparisons situate the present head within a wider world of Roman aristocratic female portraiture, in which hairstyle served not merely as ornament, but as a marker of status, chronology and cultural identity. The portrait's provenance is also distinguished, as it was with Galerie Nefer in Zürich in 1983 and later entered the Clarence Day Collection in Memphis, Tennessee.





DAVID ROBERTS

(Edinburgh 1796 – 1864 London)

Egypt & Nubia

From Drawings Made On The Spot By David Roberts R.A.

With Historical Descriptions By William Brockedon, F.R.S.

Lithographed By Louis Haghe. Vol. I, II, III, 1846-1849

London: F.G. Moon, 20, Threadneedle Street,

Publisher In Ordinary To Her Majesty., MDCCCXLVI. (- MDCCCXLIX.),

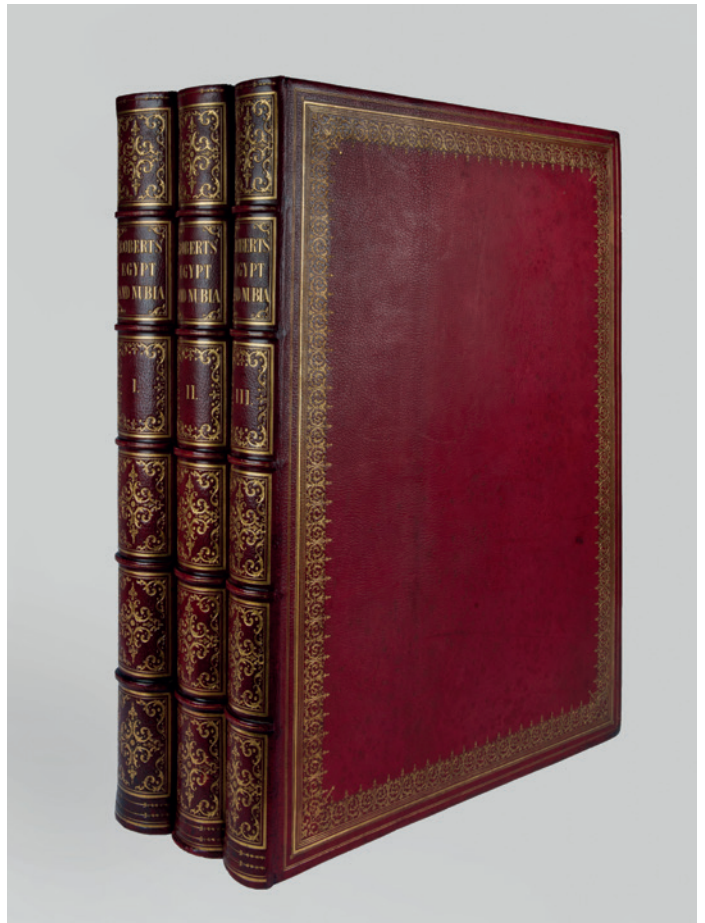
Day & Haghe (Day & Son) Lithrs. to the Queen.

3 vols, large folio. Contemporary red half morocco by M. Ogle & Son of Glasgow,
spines with 6 raised bands, each decorated with triple gilt fillets, compartments richly gilt and lettered
direct, sides and corners trimmed with quadruple gilt fillets, Placard pattern marbled sides,
pale primrose surface-paper endpapers, gilt edges.

With 121 tinted lithographed plates, 61 of which are full page, 60 half-page, and 3 vignette-titles,
in the scarcest form, with original hand-colour, cut to the edge of the image and mounted on card
in imitation of watercolours, as issued, mounted on guards throughout.

60 x 43 cm

23 ½ x 16 ¾ in.





The floor under the Portico
of the Temple of Dendera.

Painted by J. G. Brown
in 1822.



David Roberts's *Egypt & Nubia* is among the supreme monuments of nineteenth-century illustrated travel publishing, and one of the defining visual documents in Europe's rediscovery of ancient Egypt. Published in London by F. G. Moon between 1846 and 1849, with historical descriptions by William Brockedon and lithography by Louis Haghe, the work translated Roberts's on-site drawings into one of the most ambitious printed image cycles of the Victorian age. The present copy, in three large folio volumes, belongs to the scarcest and most luxurious form of the publication: the deluxe hand-coloured issue, with the plates cut to the edge of the image and mounted on card in deliberate imitation of original watercolours.

Roberts had travelled to Egypt in 1838, arriving first in Alexandria before moving through Cairo and then sailing south along the Nile. His journey took him to the great monuments of Upper Egypt and Nubia, including Thebes, Edfu, Philae, Abu Simbel and the Second Cataract. At a moment when archaeology, travel literature and imperial curiosity were reshaping Europe's understanding of the ancient world, Roberts offered something unprecedented: a sustained visual encounter with Egypt's temples, tombs, landscapes and people, rendered with the authority of direct observation.

The importance of Louis Haghe's role cannot be overstated. His lithographs preserved the drama, scale and atmospheric subtlety of Roberts's drawings with extraordinary technical sophistication. The tinted lithograph, enhanced by hand-colouring in this deluxe issue, allowed ancient monuments to appear not as dry archaeological records, but as living encounters with light, stone and desert air. In these plates, ruins are often animated by local figures, travellers, animals and shifting skies, creating a powerful dialogue between antiquity and nineteenth-century life.

The physical character of the present set reinforces its status as a luxury object. Bound in contemporary red half morocco by M. Ogle & Son of Glasgow, with richly gilt spines, marbled sides, primrose endpapers and gilt edges, the volumes were conceived not merely as books, but as works of art in themselves. With 121 plates, including 61 full-page plates, 60 half-page plates and 3 vignette titles, *Egypt & Nubia* offered its first owners a portable museum of Egypt.

Within the context of an exhibition devoted to the rediscovery of ancient Egypt, Roberts's publication is foundational. It stands at the intersection of art, archaeology, travel and print culture, preserving the nineteenth century's most influential painted vision of Egypt's ancient monuments.

MAXIME DU CAMP

(Paris 1822 – 1894 Baden-Baden)

Du Camp, Maxime.

Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie: dessins photographiques recueillis pendant les années 1849, 1850 et 1851, accompagnés d'un texte explicatif et précédés d'une introduction.

Paris, Gide & J. Baudry, 1852.

125 mounted original salt prints, letterpress captions to mounting leaves and tissue-guards, 3 small engravings to the introductory text, double-page engraved plan of Karnak, single-page plans of Medinet-Habu and the island of Philae. Recent half brown cloth, marbled boards, original spine, brown hard-grained morocco laid down, title gilt direct, low flat bands with dotted roll gilt, double fillet panels to the compartments, new endpapers, original marbled free endpapers retained.

47 x 31.5 cm

18 ½ x 12 ½ in.



THÈBES.



Maxime Du Camp.

Gide et Baudry, Éditeurs.

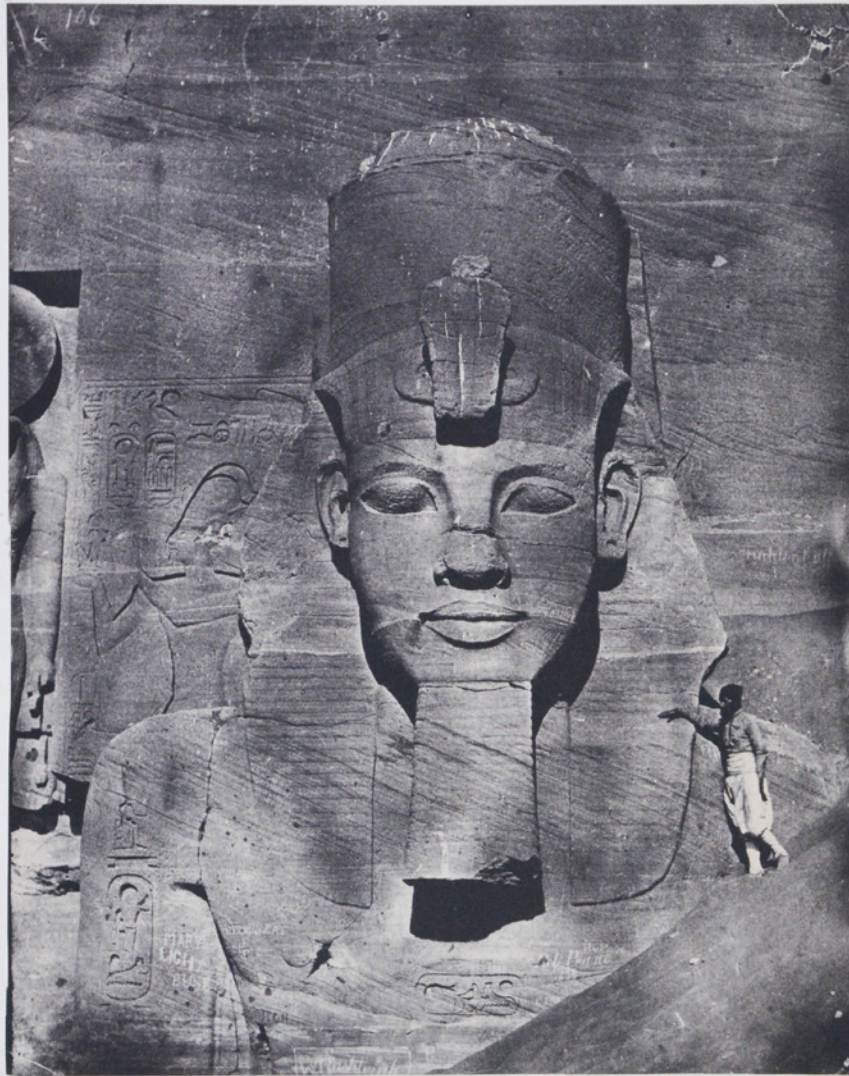
GOURNAH.

COLOSSE MONOLITHÈ D'AMÉNOPHT III.

Imprimerie Photographique de Blanchard, Evard, à Lille.

Pl. 56.

NUBIE.



Maxime Du Camp.

Gide et Baudry, Editeurs.

IBSAMBOUL.

COLOSSE MÉDIAL DU SPÉOS DE PHRÉ.

Imprimerie Photographique de Blanquart-Evrard, à Lille.

Pl. 106.

Maxime Du Camp's *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie* is one of the foundational monuments in the history of photography, travel literature and the nineteenth-century rediscovery of the ancient Near East. Published in Paris in 1852 by Gide & J. Baudry, the volume brought together 125 mounted salt prints made after photographs taken during Du Camp's journey through Egypt, Nubia, Palestine and Syria in the years 1849, 1850 and 1851. At a moment when photography was still a young and technically demanding medium, Du Camp's project represented an extraordinary ambition: to use the camera not merely as an instrument of curiosity, but as a tool of archaeological record, topographical precision and cultural documentation.

Du Camp travelled to the eastern Mediterranean with Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), having learned photographic technique shortly before departure. His mission was shaped by the intellectual climate of mid-nineteenth-century France, in which archaeology, Orientalist scholarship and new technologies of reproduction converged. The resulting photographs record temples, colossal statues, tombs, pylons, ruins and sacred landscapes with an austere clarity that distinguishes them from the more theatrical visions of contemporary painters and lithographers. Where David Roberts (1796-1864) translated Egypt into a sublime painterly panorama, Du Camp offered something radically new: the monument as photographic evidence.

The medium itself is central to the book's significance. The 125 salt prints, produced by the Blanquart-Évrard (1802-1872) process and mounted onto the leaves, give the publication an extraordinary material presence. These are not engravings after drawings, but original photographic impressions, each carrying the tonal softness,

atmospheric delicacy and physical vulnerability of early paper photography. The inclusion of letterpress captions, tissue guards, three small engravings in the introduction, and plans of Karnak, Medinet Habu and Philae situates the work between scientific survey, travel album and luxury publication.

Within an exhibition devoted to ancient Egypt's rediscovery, Du Camp's book occupies a crucial position. It belongs to the first generation of photographic encounters with Egypt's monuments, when the camera began to alter fundamentally how antiquity was seen, studied and circulated. The ruins of Karnak, Philae and Nubia were no longer mediated solely through the hand of the painter; they could now be fixed by light itself. Du Camp's achievement lies in this shift. His photographs do not merely illustrate Egypt. They mark the arrival of photography as one of the great modern instruments through which the ancient world was recovered, classified and imagined anew.

LUIGI MAYER

(1755 – 1803)

*Study for Pompey's Pillar, for the series
'Views in Egypt, Palestine, and Other Parts
of the Ottoman Empire'*

ca. 1792

Watercolour on paper

38 x 53 cm

14 ³/₄ x 20 ³/₄ in.



Luigi Meyer's (1755-1803) *Study for Pompey's Pillar* belongs to one of the earliest and most influential visual projects through which Egypt and the wider Ottoman world were presented to European audiences at the turn of the nineteenth century. Mayer, whose name is often rendered Meyer, was associated with Sir Robert Ainslie (1730-1812), British ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, and his drawings formed the basis for the celebrated publication *Views in Egypt, Palestine, and Other Parts of the Ottoman Empire*. Issued in London in the early years of the nineteenth century, the series transformed Mayer's original watercolours into hand-coloured aquatints, bringing the monuments, landscapes and peoples of the eastern Mediterranean into the libraries and drawing rooms of Europe. The subject of this study is the so-called Pompey's Pillar at Alexandria, one of the most imposing survivals of Roman Egypt. Despite its traditional name, the monument has no connection with Pompey. It was erected in honour of the emperor Diocletian (284-305) in the late third century A.D. and stood within the precinct of the Serapeum, the great sanctuary of the Greco-Egyptian god Serapis. Yet the mistaken name is itself historically eloquent. To eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travellers, the column seemed to gather within itself the whole layered memory of Alexandria: Pharaonic Egypt, Hellenistic learning, Roman rule, Christian transformation and Ottoman modernity.

Mayer's composition makes this historical layering visible. The column rises in the centre of the sheet with extraordinary clarity, its reddish shaft set against a pale, open sky. It is less an architectural detail than a vertical proclamation, the last surviving sign of a vanished sacred complex. Around it, however, life continues. Encampments occupy the left and right edges of the composition; seated figures converse in the foreground; mounted travellers and attendants cross the plain; and, in

the distance, low walls and masts suggest the continuing presence of Alexandria as a living city and port.

The power of the image lies in this balance between antiquity and immediacy. Mayer does not isolate the monument as a museum object. Instead, he places it within a social and topographical world. The column is monumental, but the tents, figures, animals and distant city give it scale, atmosphere and human consequence. It is both relic and landmark, ruin and point of orientation. As a preparatory study for a published view, the watercolour occupies an important place in the visual rediscovery of Egypt. It belongs to the generation before Roberts, Werner and Bridgman, when European knowledge of Egypt was still being shaped through travel, diplomacy, antiquarian study and engraved publication. Mayer's *Pompey's Pillar* is therefore not merely a view of Alexandria, but a foundational image in the making of Egypt as a modern historical imagination.





JOHN FREDERICK LEWIS, R.A.

(London 1804 – 1876 Walton-on-Thames)

*Portrait Study of a European
in Turkish Dress,
probably Sir John Gardner Wilkinson
(1797-1875)*

ca. 1850

Watercolour over pencil and black chalk

heightened with bodycolour

37.5 x 27.5 cm

14 ³/₄ x 10 ³/₄ in.



Initially trained in England, John Frederick Lewis, RA (1804-1876), first gained recognition as a watercolourist and animal painter before turning decisively toward Orientalist subject matter following his extensive travels in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. His most formative period occurred during his decade-long residence in Egypt between 1841 and 1851, when he settled in Cairo in a large Ottoman-style wooden house, consciously distancing himself from European society. Immersed in local life, Lewis adopted Near Eastern dress, customs and domestic practices, enabling him to observe Cairene society with an intimacy and authenticity that distinguished his work from many of his contemporaries. During this period, he produced a body of work characterised by extraordinary precision, subtle psychological insight and a restrained, almost timeless atmosphere, earning him a reputation as one of the most scholarly and empathetic painters of the Orientalist movement.

Among the most intriguing works associated with Lewis's Egyptian years is *Portrait Study of a European in Turkish Dress*, probably Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (1797-1875). The painting is widely believed to depict Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (1797-1875), the pioneering Egyptologist often described as the 'Father of British Egyptology.' By the 1840s, Wilkinson was already a figure of considerable renown, having spent twelve years in Egypt between 1821 and 1833, largely based in Thebes (modern Luxor), and having published his landmark study *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* in 1837. His scholarly achievements were formally recognised with a knighthood in 1839, and he returned to Egypt on several occasions thereafter, including during the early 1840s when his paths demonstrably crossed with those of Lewis. Documentary evidence strongly supports the identification of the sitter as Wilkinson.

The two men moved within the same expatriate and scholarly circles in Cairo, attending social gatherings together, including a noted séance hosted at Lewis's house in December 1841. References in Wilkinson's journals, contemporary correspondence, and later art market records further reinforce this connection. Most compelling is the record of a posthumous studio sale of Lewis's works in 1855, which included a portrait explicitly titled *Sir Gardiner Wilkinson, in Oriental Costume*. Additional versions and related studies, including one now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, attest to Lewis's sustained interest in this particular sitter. The portrait itself presents a fair-skinned European man with blue eyes, a long flowing moustache and heavily hooded eyelids, dressed in layered Ottoman attire. As with much of Lewis's Orientalist portraiture, this work operates on multiple levels: as a sensitive likeness of a specific individual, as a document of cross-cultural exchange and as a reflection on identity and self-fashioning in nineteenth-century Egypt.



CARL WERNER

(Weimar 1808 – 1894 Leipzig)

At The Temple of Abu Simbel

ca. 1860

Oil on canvas

190 x 122 cm

74 ³/₄ x 48 in.

Signed lower left: 'C. Werner. f'.



Carl Friedrich Heinrich Werner's (1808-1894), *At the Temple of Abu Simbel*, is a majestic meditation on scale, antiquity and rediscovery. Painted following the artist's travels in Egypt and Nubia, the work presents the façade of the Great Temple of Ramesses II (1279-1213 B.C.) not as a distant archaeological view, but as an overwhelming architectural presence. Werner, who had trained at the Leipzig Academy before spending nearly two decades in Italy, was above all an architectural painter. His long immersion in Rome sharpened his sensitivity to the grandeur of imperial stone, and in Abu Simbel he found an Egyptian counterpart to the monumental language of empire. The temple itself was carved into the rock on the west bank of the Nile in southern Nubia during the reign of Ramesses II, one of Egypt's most formidable pharaohs. Its façade, dominated by four colossal seated figures of the king, was conceived as a statement of power at the southern frontier of the Egyptian empire. Werner's composition is strikingly foreshortened. The colossi rise upward with extraordinary mass, dwarfing the figures gathered at their feet and compressing the sky into a small shard of blue at the upper edge of the canvas. This is not a panoramic view; it is an encounter. The monument does not sit within the landscape so much as overwhelm it.

The human details are essential to the drama. Local guides, travellers, animals and scattered fragments of fallen masonry animate the foreground, but their presence only intensifies the scale of the temple. A white-clad figure appears at the dark entrance, holding a lamp at the threshold between the sun-drenched exterior and the mysterious interior beyond. Above the portal, the niche of the falcon-headed sun god Re-Horakhty further anchors the scene in the religious and royal programme of Ramesses II.

Abu Simbel's nineteenth-century rediscovery forms the deeper historical context of Werner's painting. In 1813, Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (1784-1817) saw the colossal heads emerging from the sand, and in 1817, Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778-1823) cleared the entrance and entered the Great Temple. David Roberts (1796-1864) later depicted Abu Simbel as a romantic, partially buried ruin; Werner, arriving after further excavation, presents the temple as revealed, monumental and triumphant. His painting therefore answers the melancholy of ruin with something more forceful: the sense that the desert had not destroyed Ramesses' monument, but preserved it. Exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1877 and later reproduced in major studies of Orientalist art, Werner's *At the Temple of Abu Simbel*, stands as one of the most powerful nineteenth-century visions of ancient Egypt rediscovered.





CARL WERNER

(Weimar 1808 – 1894 Leipzig)

*Pastel Doorway
Leading from the Court*

1867

Oil on canvas

51 x 37.5 cm

20 x 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Signed and dated lower right: 'C. Werner. f. 1867'.



Carl Friedrich Heinrich Werner's (1808-1894) view of the doorway adjacent to the first pylon of the Temple of Isis at Philae is a small-scale work of exceptional architectural intelligence. Unlike his monumental vision of Abu Simbel, where the colossi of Ramesses II overwhelm the spectator through scale and mass, this painting is concerned with passage, threshold and sacred approach. Werner brings the viewer not before an entire monument, but into the intimate atmosphere of an ancient doorway: a carved portal leading from the outer precinct into the forecourt of one of the most evocative sanctuaries of ancient Egypt.

The Temple of Isis at Philae, near Aswan, was one of the great religious centres of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Dedicated principally to Isis, but also bound to the mythic presence of the gods Osiris and Horus, it embodied the late survival of ancient Egyptian sacred architecture at a moment when Egyptian, Greek and Roman worlds increasingly overlapped. Werner's painting captures precisely this atmosphere of continuity and survival. The architecture is Ptolemaic in date, yet its visual language is deeply pharaonic: winged solar disk, hieroglyphic bands, processional reliefs and divine figures all declare a world in which kingship, ritual and cosmic order remain inseparable. The doorway itself dominates the composition. Its lintel is crowned by a winged sun disk, while the surrounding walls are covered with carved hieroglyphs and offering scenes. On the left-hand side, one of the two relief carvings of Hathor flanks the entrance, her presence linking the passage to ideas of divine protection, fertility, music and rebirth. Werner renders these reliefs not as archaeological diagrams, but as surfaces alive to light. The carved signs catch the sun obliquely; some passages glow with golden clarity, while others sink into shadow, making the wall appear at once legible and mysterious.

At ground level, the human figures are quiet but essential. Seated guides, standing travellers and a solitary figure seen through the portal animate the ruins without diminishing their authority. Their scale makes the architecture intelligible, but also intensifies its sacred gravity. Through the doorway, the eye is drawn into a deeper space of columns, palms and sunlit stone, suggesting the temple as a sequence of revelations rather than a single façade. Werner's genius lies in this balance between documentary precision and poetic atmosphere. Having spent years studying the architecture of Italy, Spain, Palestine and Egypt, he understood that ancient monuments are not only structures but experiences of movement, light and memory.





CARL WERNER

(Weimar 1808 – 1894 Leipzig)

Temple of Amun, Karnak

1865

Watercolour on paper

14.5 x 25 cm

5 ³/₄ x 9 ³/₄ in.

Signed and dated lower left: 'C. Werner. f. 1865.'.

Inscribed lower right: 'Carnack. 23 Febr. 65'.



Carl Friedrich Heinrich Werner's (1808-1894) *Temple of Amun*, Karnak, 1865 is a work of remarkable delicacy, in which one of the greatest sacred complexes of ancient Egypt is approached not through spectacle, but through stillness, ruin and contemplative light. Executed in 1865, shortly after Werner's travels in Egypt and Nubia, the watercolour depicts a group of ram-headed sphinxes, or criosphinxes, within the precinct of Amun at Karnak. Set low in the foreground, these weathered guardians appear half-absorbed by the surrounding earth, their monumental bodies softened by time, sand and vegetation.

Karnak, at ancient Thebes, was the principal religious centre of Amun-Re during the New Kingdom and one of the most extensive temple complexes of the ancient world. Its processional routes were lined with sphinxes, and those associated with the Temple of Amun often take the form of a lion's body with the head of a ram, the sacred animal of Amun. In Werner's view, the nearest criosphinx lies in profile, its curled ram's horns and heavy, muscular form rendered with both archaeological precision and painterly sympathy. Behind it, a pharaonic-headed sphinx sits in quiet alignment with the landscape, creating a dialogue between two types of sacred guardian: one animal and divine, the other human and dynastic.

Werner's compositional intelligence lies in his refusal to overstate the monument. Unlike his grand oil of Abu Simbel, where architecture overwhelms the spectator, here Karnak is dispersed across an open, sunlit terrain. Ruins appear in the distance, small figures move across the plain, and the temple complex seems to recede into memory. The scene is washed in pale golds, greens and blues, giving the stones an atmosphere of suspended antiquity. The eye is drawn not to a single

architectural climax, but to the relationship between sculpture, desert and time. The criosphinxes themselves were not merely decorative. In ancient Egyptian sacred architecture, such figures marked and protected processional approaches, embodying divine guardianship and royal legitimacy. At Karnak, the ram-headed sphinx was a visual expression of Amun's power, often sheltering a small figure of the king between its forelegs. Werner, however, finds poetry in their ruined state. The guardian has become vulnerable; the sacred animal is weathered, cracked and almost geological. This watercolour therefore belongs to the most sensitive strand of nineteenth-century Egyptological Orientalism. It is not an invention of Egypt, but a record of encounter. Werner sees Karnak as a place where the sacred past survives in fragments: luminous, broken and still profoundly alive.



C. Werner. f. 1865.



Carnach d. 23 Febr. 185

FREDERICK ARTHUR BRIDGMAN

(Alabama 1847 – 1928 Rouen)

*The Ramesseum at Thebes,
traditionally titled
‘The Colossi of Memnon’,
Egypt*

ca. 1872-1874

Oil on canvas

31 x 43.2 cm

12 x 17 in.

Signed and inscribed lower right: ‘F.A. Bridgman / Memnon in Thebes’.



Frederick Arthur Bridgman's (1847-1928) small but luminous view of the ruins at Thebes appears to depict the Ramesseum, the mortuary temple of Ramesses II (r. 1279-1213 B.C.) on the west bank of the Nile, rather than the seated Colossi of Memnon in the strict archaeological sense. The distinction is important, but also historically revealing. In the nineteenth century, the Ramesseum was frequently associated with the name Memnon and the colossal Ramesside sculpture removed from the site by Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778-1823) and now in the British Museum became known as the Younger Memnon. Bridgman's own inscription, *Memnon in Thebes*, therefore belongs to this older language of travel, excavation and poetic association.

The painting shows a fragmentary temple entrance flanked by standing Osiride colossi, their arms crossed over their chests in the funerary pose of Osiris. Their forms are severely damaged, yet still imposing, set against the pale cliffs of the Theban necropolis beyond. Bridgman does not attempt a grand panoramic reconstruction. Instead, he fixes upon a charged architectural fragment: a doorway, two monumental guardians, fallen stones and the radiant emptiness of the desert. The composition is horizontal and compressed, allowing the massive verticals of the statues and pylons to act almost as a stage-set against the open blue sky. Its architecture declared royal power, divine association and permanence; yet by the nineteenth century it had become one of the great poetic ruins of Egypt. Bridgman is especially sensitive to this paradox. The Osiride figures still proclaim pharaonic authority, but their broken faces and eroded bodies speak equally of time, abandonment and rediscovery.

The human presence is almost withheld. A single dark figure appears within the shadowed doorway, while scattered stones lie in the sunlit foreground. This restraint gives the scene its power. The viewer is made to stand before the ruin as Bridgman himself must have done during his first journey to Egypt in the early 1870s: not as an archaeologist measuring a monument, but as a painter absorbing the emotional force of antiquity. Comparable nineteenth-century views of Thebes by Francis Frith (1822-1898), David Roberts (1796-1864) and other traveller-artists similarly transformed the Ramesseum and Memnonian landscape into emblems of Egypt's rediscovery. Bridgman's contribution is quieter and more intimate. He presents not the spectacle of excavation, but the afterlife of empire: stone, light, silence and the broken majesty of Ramesses' eternal house.





LUDWIG HANS FISCHER

(Salzburg 1848 – 1915 Vienna)

The Simoon *(The Desert)* *ca. 1878*

Oil on canvas

175.9 x 116.8 cm

69 1/4 x 45 3/4 in.

Signed lower left: 'Ludwig Hans Fischer'.



Ludwig Hans Fischer's (1848-1915) *The Simoon* is one of the most arresting visions of Egypt produced within the Austrian Orientalist tradition. Painted circa 1878, following Fischer's travels in North Africa and the Near East, the work transforms the desert before one of the Colossi of Memnon of Luxor, into a theatre of elemental suspense. Fischer was not merely an imaginative Orientalist, but a deeply travelled painter, draughtsman, engraver and ethnographic observer. Trained at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts under Eduard Peithner von Lichtenfels (1833-1913), he travelled to North Africa and the Middle East in 1875 on an Academy scholarship, later visiting Tunis, Palestine and Egypt. His art was therefore grounded in first-hand encounter: in observed costume, atmosphere, architecture and the lived realities of travel.

The painting is conceived as a dramatic vertical composition. In the upper register, the Great Statue of Pharaoh Amenhotep III (r. 1391-1353 B.C.) emerges through a suspended ochre haze, his colossal body emerging and disappearing at once. Below it, a caravan advances towards the viewer, caught in the blinding atmosphere of the storm. The eye is drawn to the *khabir*, or guide, wrapped in a brilliant blue robe, his arm raised to shield his face as he drives three goats against the wind. Behind him, camels, riders and a donkey seem to dissolve into the dust-laden air. Fischer's achievement lies in his orchestration of atmosphere: the sky is drained of blue, the horizon almost erased, and the world reduced to a suffocating harmony of amber, sand and pale gold.

The title refers to the simoom, from the Arabic *samūm*, a hot, dry, poisonous desert wind associated not simply with sand, but with extreme heat and bodily peril. In this sense, Fischer's storm is more

than a meteorological spectacle. Within Islamic tradition, *samūm* carries a profound cosmological charge, appearing in connection with the scorching fire from which the jinn were created. Whether or not Fischer consciously intended this layer of meaning, his painting powerfully evokes the desert as a place where the visible and invisible worlds meet.

The Colossi of Memnon were crucial to this effect. By the later nineteenth century, they had become one of the supreme emblems of European Egyptomania, disseminated through travel literature, archaeology and monumental publications such as the *Description de l'Égypte*. Yet Fischer does not present it as a picturesque ruin. Instead, the ancient monument and the fragile caravan are united by the same engulfing force. Comparable in subject is Louis Haghe's (1806-1885) lithograph after David Roberts (1796-1864), *Approach of the Simoom, Desert at Gizeh*, 1849, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art. Fischer's own later, *The Khamsin*, 1891 confirms his sustained fascination with the desert wind as both natural phenomenon and existential drama.





CHARLES THÉODORE FRÈRE

(Paris 1814 – 1888)

*A view of the Pyramids at Giza
from the Nile at Sunset*

ca. 1885

Watercolour on paper

9.5 x 15 cm

3 ³/₄ x 5 ³/₄ in.

Signed lower right: 'TH. FRÈRE BEY'.



Charles-Théodore Frère's (1814-1888), *A View of the Pyramids at Giza from the Nile at Sunset* is a work of remarkable intimacy and atmospheric breadth, distilling the grandeur of Egypt into a sheet measuring little more than fifteen centimetres across. Few artists did more to shape the nineteenth-century European image of Egypt than Frère, whose Orientalist career was rooted not only in travel and observation, but in a sustained relationship with Egypt itself. His fascination with the Orient began during an extended stay in Algeria between 1836 and 1839, and was deepened by later journeys through Egypt, Greece, Turkey and the Levant between 1851 and 1854. In 1853, he established a studio in Cairo, an unusual step for a European-Orientalist painter and one that brought him into close contact with Egyptian artistic and courtly societies.

The present watercolour unites two of the defining motifs of Frère's Egyptian oeuvre: the evening light that became his hallmark and the timeless silhouette of the Pyramids of Giza. Bathed in a golden sunset, the pyramids rise beyond the broad, still waters of the Nile, their forms softened by distance and atmosphere. In the foreground, three water buffalo graze quietly at the river's edge, while tiny figures and pack animals animate the far bank. A cluster of palms frames the right-hand side of the composition, and a flock of birds wheels across the luminous sky, giving the scene a delicate sense of movement. Frère was drawn not simply to Egypt's celebrated monuments, but to the relationship between antiquity and the living landscape around them. Here, the pyramids are neither archaeological curiosities nor isolated symbols of the ancient world. They emerge naturally from a landscape of cultivated banks, grazing animals and human activity, suggesting a place where everyday life unfolds beneath monuments that had endured for millennia.

The work belongs to a recurring group of Giza subjects that occupied Frère throughout his Egyptian career. A close comparison may be made with his monumental *Pyramides de Gyzeh pendant l'inondation du Nil. Crépuscule*, exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1885. The Salon painting presents the subject on a grand scale; the present sheet distils the same vision into an object of exceptional refinement. Its signature, including the honorific “Bey,” reflects Frère’s esteem at the Egyptian court. In this small watercolour, he captures the defining qualities of his art: luminous atmosphere, poetic restraint and an extraordinary command of space.

HERMANN D.S. CORRODI

(Frascati 1844 – 1905 Rome)

Sunset on the Nile

ca. 1890

Oil on canvas

98 x 115 cm

38 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 45 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Signed lower left: 'H. Corrodi. Roma'.



Hermann David Salomon Corrodi's (1844-1905) *Sunset on the Nile* is a refined and atmospheric meditation on Egypt, in which landscape, light and human presence are brought together with remarkable pictorial sensitivity. Born in Frascati in 1844, Corrodi was raised within an artistic family. He studied first in Geneva, before continuing his training in his father's studio and at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome. This formation gave him both the discipline of academic drawing and a deep sensitivity to landscape, architecture and atmosphere, qualities that would become central to his reputation as one of the most accomplished Italian Orientalist painters of the later nineteenth century.

Corrodi achieved international acclaim as a painter of genre and Orientalist subjects, receiving commissions from members of the British and Austro-Hungarian royal families. His career was shaped by extensive travel across Europe, North Africa and the Near East, and he became especially admired for his refined views of the desert, the banks of the Nile and the villages that animated its shores. At the beginning of the 1880s, he travelled to Egypt, Syria, Cyprus and Constantinople, returning with a collection of Eastern objects that enriched his studio and informed the authenticity of his compositions. These objects were later destroyed when his studio burned in 1892, but the visual memory of the journey continued to nourish his art.

The present work embodies many of Corrodi's favourite themes. The Nile is shown at sunset, its still waters reflecting the golden sky and the silhouettes of figures gathered along the bank. A camel, seated groups, palm trees and low village architecture establish the lived world of the river, while the pyramid in the distance gives the scene its deeper historical resonance. Corrodi does not treat the pyramid

as an isolated archaeological monument; instead, it is absorbed into the rhythm of daily life, rising quietly beyond the settlement like a silent witness to Egypt's ancient past. What makes *Sunset on the Nile* especially compelling is its sense of immediacy. The scene appears almost like a snapshot: figures wash, converse, wait and move through the fading light. Yet this apparent spontaneity is held within a carefully balanced composition. Corrodi captures Egypt not as a stage of theatrical exoticism, but as a place where ordinary life unfolds beneath the enduring presence of antiquity.





HENRY RODERICK NEWMAN

(New York 1843 – 1917 Florence)

Abu Simbel

1904

Watercolour on paper

64.3 x 41.3 cm

25 1/3 x 16 1/3 in.

Signed lower left: 'H R NEWMAN'.



Henry Roderick Newman's Abu Simbel of 1904 belongs to one of the most refined and poetic bodies of Egyptian watercolour painting produced at the turn of the twentieth century. Often described as an "American Pre-Raphaelite," Newman trained in Manhattan before leaving the severity of New York winters for the warmer artistic climates of Florence and Venice. It was there, among the weathered surfaces of medieval and Renaissance architecture, that he developed his extraordinary sensitivity to stone, light and age. His architectural watercolours attracted the admiration of John Ruskin, who praised Newman's ability to record "what is old and broken or weatherstained," an observation that applies with particular force to the artist's later Egyptian subjects.

From 1888, Newman began wintering in Egypt, where he moored his dahabiya, the Hapi, on the Nile directly opposite the great temple of Abu Simbel. This proximity gave him an unusual intimacy with the site. Unlike many artists who encountered Egypt through rapid travel, Newman returned to Abu Simbel repeatedly, studying its surfaces, inscriptions and atmosphere with patient devotion. He became a familiar presence to local Egyptians and foreign travellers alike, and his views of the temple were admired and collected by an international elite.

The present watercolour records not simply the monumentality of Abu Simbel, but its interior life. The great temples, carved into the sandstone cliff in the thirteenth century B.C. under Ramesses II (r. 1279 to 1213 B.C.), had long been subjected to the slow burial and revelation of desert sand. By the early nineteenth century, their rediscovery became one of the defining episodes in Europe's renewed encounter with ancient Egypt. Newman's painting, however, does

not dramatise excavation or spectacle. Instead, it offers a faithful and atmospheric impression of the temple's cool sandstone interior: its deeply hewn hieroglyphs, wall paintings and ancient ochre tonalities.





WILLIAM JOHN PALMER-JONES

(Hertford 1887 – 1974 London)

*The Colossi
of Memnon at Dusk*

1912

Pencil and watercolour on paper

27.3 x 15.8 cm

10 ³/₄ x 6 ¹/₄ in.

Signed and dated lower left: 'Palmer-Jones / 1912'.



Born, as William John Jones, in Hertford, Huntingdonshire and educated at Dulwich College, 1900-1904. He then studied at the Architectural Association Schools, 1906-1908 and printmaking at Central School of Arts and Crafts. He was attached to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York as staff artist for excavations in Egypt, 1908-1912, and also involved in British archeological work at Melos and Sparta. During WWI he served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Royal Naval Air Service and the Egyptian Labour Corps. *The Colossi of Memnon at Dusk*, 1912, is a work of unusual quietness and poetic restraint, transforming one of the most celebrated monuments of ancient Thebes into a meditation on reflection, silence and historical endurance. The watercolour records the two colossal seated statues of Amenhotep III on the west bank of the Nile at Luxor, once guardians of the pharaoh's vast mortuary temple. Rather than presenting them as archaeological trophies or picturesque ruins, Palmer-Jones renders them as spectral presences, suspended between stone, water and moonlight.

The composition is strikingly vertical and highly atmospheric. The twin colossi rise at the upper edge of the sheet, pale and weathered, their fragmented forms softened by dusk. Below them, their reflections descend into the still water, dissolving the ancient architecture into wavering bands of grey, ochre and blue. A pale moon, or late evening sun, hangs between the monuments and is repeated in the water beneath, creating an image almost symmetrical in structure but dreamlike in effect. The monument is therefore doubled: once as archaeological reality, and again as memory, shadow and afterimage.

Palmer-Jones was trained as an architect and draughtsman, and this background is evident in his sensitivity to mass, proportion and structure.

Yet the watercolour is not architectural in a dry or technical sense. Its power lies in the tension between precise observation and poetic abstraction. The colossal statues, broken by time, are reduced to essential planes and tones, while the surrounding atmosphere seems to dissolve all hard edges. In this respect, the work belongs to a distinctly modern strand of Egyptological imagery: less concerned with spectacle than with mood, stillness and the emotional life of ruins.





ANTONIO BEATO

(*ca.* 1825 – 1906)

*The Pillars of Upper and Lower Egypt,
Karnak*

ca. 1880

Albumen print

26 x 20 cm.

10 ¼ x 7 ¾ in.





Antonio Beato's (ca. 1825-1906), *The Pillars of Upper and Lower Egypt*, Karnak is a powerful example of nineteenth-century archaeological photography, in which the monument is presented as both historical document and poetic ruin. At the centre of the composition rise two slender granite pillars within the Temple of Amun-Re at Karnak, framed by a dramatic breach in the surrounding sandstone masonry. The broken walls, still covered with hieroglyphic inscriptions, form a kind of architectural aperture through which the ancient pillars appear almost ceremonially revealed.

The subject is of particular historical importance. These are the heraldic pillars of Thutmose III (r. 1479-1425 B.C.), ruler of the Eighteenth Dynasty, carved with the emblematic plants of the Two Lands: the lotus of Upper Egypt and the papyrus of Lower Egypt. Their pairing expressed the union of Egypt under pharaonic kingship, and they are among the most celebrated surviving features of the Karnak complex. Beato's photograph does not record them as isolated archaeological specimens. Instead, he places them within the fractured body of the temple itself, allowing ruin, inscription and symbol to operate together.

Beato, who settled in Luxor and made Egypt his principal subject, was one of the great commercial photographers of the Nile Valley. His albumen prints were bought by travellers and assembled into albums, but they were also valuable records of monuments that have since altered. This image exemplifies his achievement: exact, theatrical and deeply attentive to the endurance of stone.

HIPPOLYTE DÉLIÉ and ÉMILE BÉCHARD

(Active about 1870 – 1880)

Panthéon

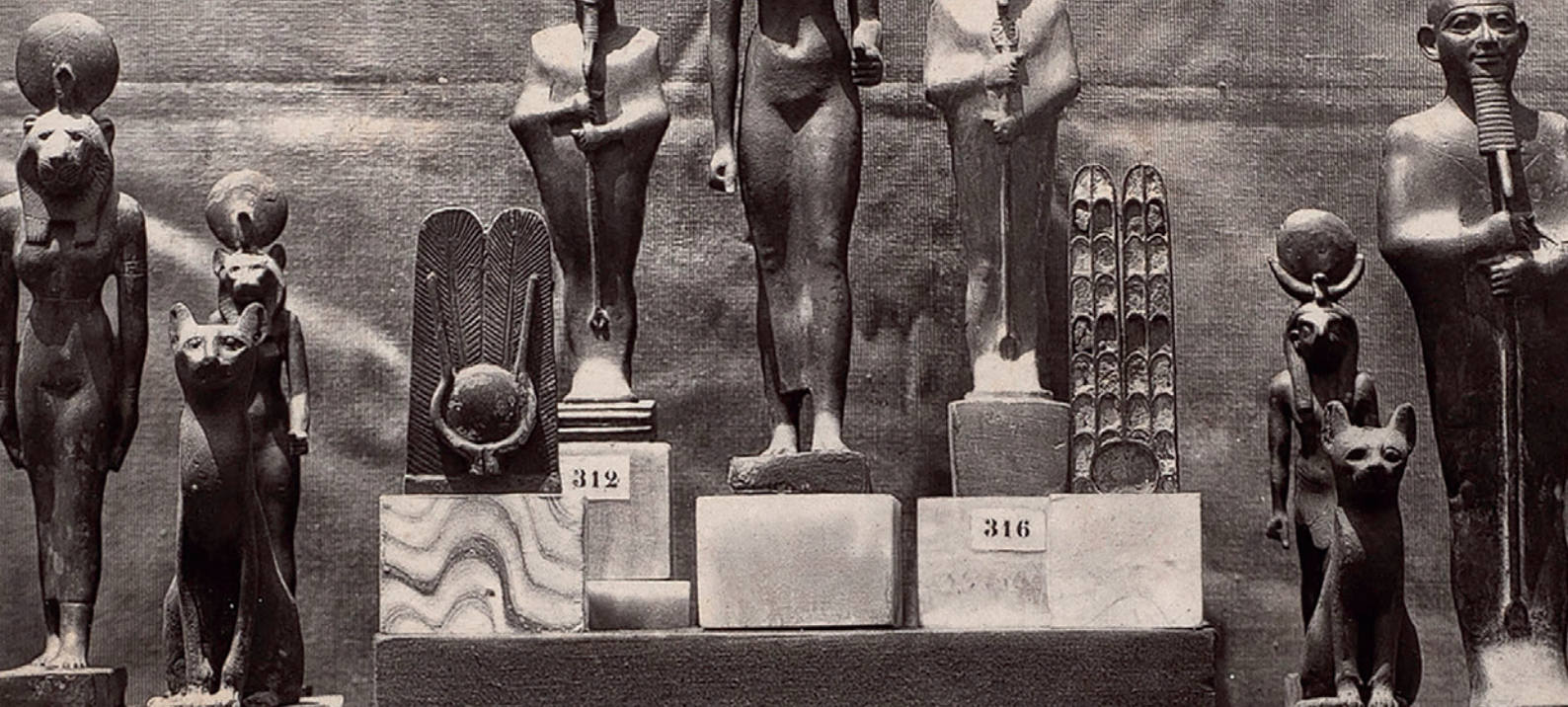
ca. 1870

Albumen print

19.5 x 25.5 cm

7 ½ x 10 in.





Hippolyte Délié and Émile Bécharde's *Panthéon*, belongs to the great flowering of nineteenth-century albumen photography, when architecture, antiquities and museum culture were transformed into images of scholarly and commercial circulation. Active in Egypt during the 1870s, Délié and Bécharde were among the photographers who gave visual form to a rapidly expanding European interest in the ancient world. Their photographs were not simply souvenirs. They were instruments of classification, comparison and desire, allowing monuments and antiquities to travel beyond their physical sites into albums, libraries and collections.

The title *Panthéon* immediately evokes the idea of collective memory and sacred or national canon. Whether understood through architecture or through the assembled image of ancient divinities, the word carries a particular nineteenth-century resonance: it suggests a space where history is gathered, ordered and made visible. Délié and Bécharde's practice was especially suited to this transformation. Their work combines the documentary authority of photography with the compositional care of academic presentation, producing images that feel at once factual and staged.

JEAN PASCAL SÉBAH

(1872 – 1947)

*Ascending
the Pyramid*
ca. 1870

25.5 x 19.5 cm

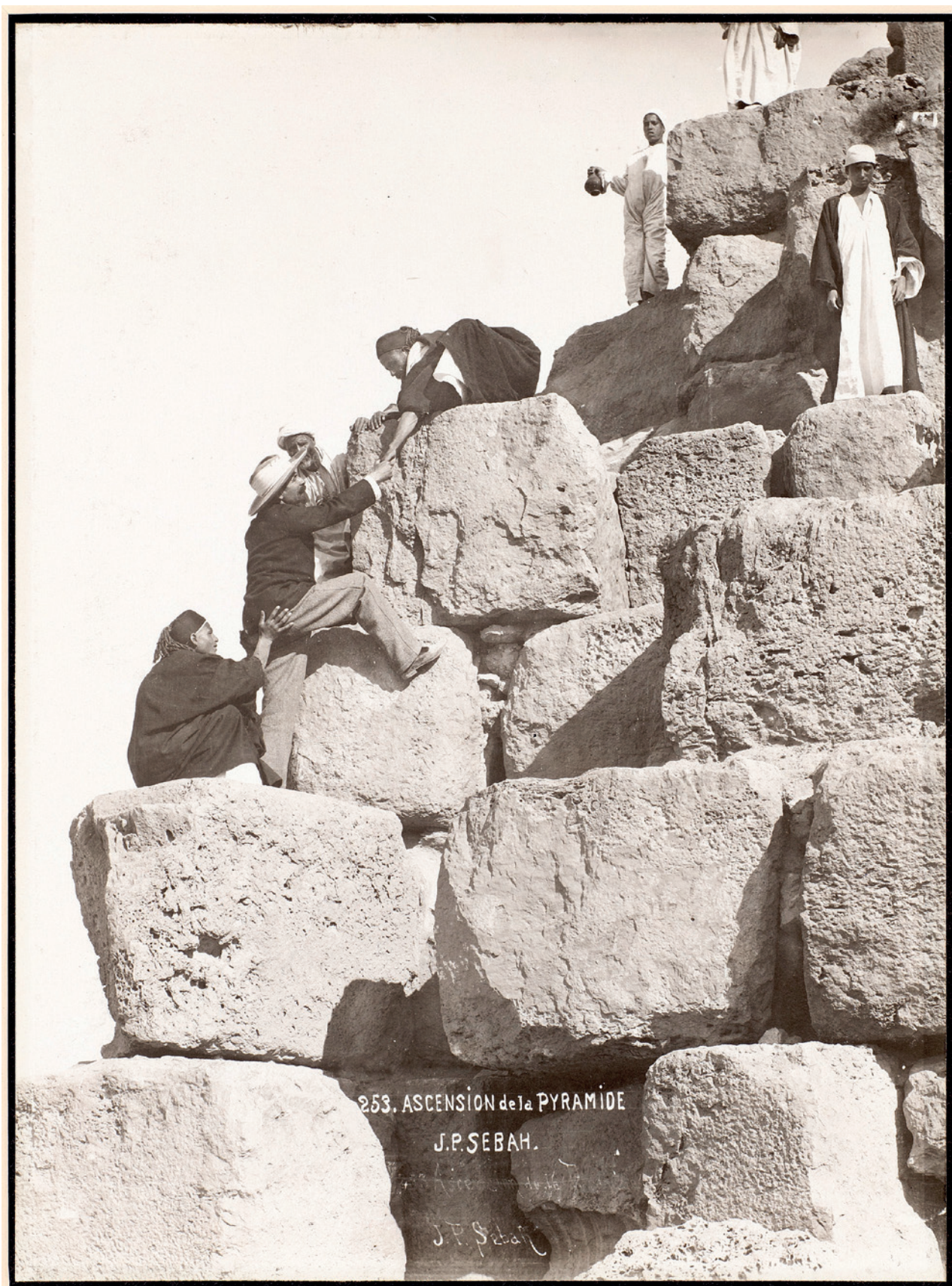
10 1/4 x 7 3/4 in.

Albumen print

Signed and titled in the negative

Signed and inscribed with printed text on image:

‘253.ASCENSION de la PYRAMIDE J.P. SEBAH’.



253. ASCENSION de la PYRAMIDE

J.P. SEBAH.

J.P. Sebah



253. ASCENSION de la PYRAMIDE

J.P. SEBAH.

Jean Pascal Sébah's (1872-1947), *Ascending the Pyramid*, records one of the defining rituals of late nineteenth-century travel in Egypt: the climb up the Great Pyramid of Khufu at Giza. Rather than presenting the pyramid from a distant, monumental viewpoint, Sébah brings the viewer directly onto the body of the ancient structure. The composition is built from vast limestone blocks, stacked like a rugged architecture of effort, against which human figures appear caught in motion.

At the centre of the image, a European traveller in a dark jacket, pale hat and light trousers is helped upward by Egyptian guides. One pulls him from above, another supports him from below, while additional figures pause higher up among the stones. The scene captures the physical drama of the ascent, but also the social choreography of tourism. By the late nineteenth century, climbing the Great Pyramid had become an almost obligatory episode in the Grand Tour of Egypt. It was an encounter with antiquity staged through labour, spectacle and photographic memory.

The image is signed and titled in the negative, identifying it as *Ascension de la Pyramide* by J. P. Sébah. Jean Pascal Sébah inherited one of the most important photographic names in the Ottoman world. His father, Pascal Sébah, founded a major studio in Constantinople and later opened a Cairo branch, which became central to the production of Orientalist views for visitors to Egypt. Jean Pascal continued and extended this family enterprise, creating photographs that satisfied the tourist market while preserving invaluable records of monuments, customs and encounters.

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