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# Cultural Consumption, Colonialism, and Nationalism in an Egyptian Alabaster Scarab Beetle

By: Alexandra Harter

**Abstract:** Within a scarab beetle that was acquired during my travels in Egypt, one can read evidence of Egyptian history, both the European imperialist efforts as well as the Egyptian nationalist past, each often expressed through cultural consumption that continues even into today. Ultimately, my scarab beetle is a souvenir from my own travels in Egypt and thus is also taking part in this cultural consumption like so many other souvenirs. I argue that while my scarab beetle is representative of Egyptian culture, it is also part of this broader history of colonial consumption which then triggered the subsequent Egyptian response of manufacturing souvenirs for this demand. Eventually, modern Egyptians also came to foster nationalist sentiments and contest colonial rule, which then encouraged further consumption of Egyptian material culture, although from a place of nationalist pride. These nuances will be further examined throughout this paper, through the use of contemporary literature such as British news articles and short stories, as well as the Egyptian nationalist responses.

**Key Words:** *Egypt, tourism, Egyptomania, Orientalism, nationalism, commodity, souvenir, imperialism*

For the ancient Egyptians, scarab beetles were symbols of immortality and protection. Amulets and similar trinkets meant to resemble the beetle were often placed within the wrappings of mummies as they were prepared for their entombment. My own scarab beetle, which serves as the inspiration for this study, was not taken from a tomb. In fact, it was given to me as a gift by an alabaster shop owner for purchasing what I suspect was an overpriced candle lamp during my travels in Luxor. Nevertheless, my scarab beetle is full of ancient Egyptian symbols: from the shape itself as a scarab, to the carvings on the base that resemble hieroglyphics. However, when one looks closely at the beetle, it becomes clear that while it may be attempting to resemble an ancient Egyptian artifact, its inherent identity as a souvenir shines through. From the rough and uneven edges of the beetle, to the symbols attempting to pass as hieroglyphics on the base, my scarab does not quite measure up to the artifacts that were discovered in the tombs of ancient Egyptian royalty.



*Figure 1. My carved alabaster scarab beetle.*

The scarab beetle is, however, evidence of a broader history. Within its rough carvings, one can read evidence of Egypt's past under European hegemony and the widespread cultural consumption that began in this period and continues into today. Not only that, but this cultural consumption can also be read in part as the Egyptian nationalist response to European colonialism. Ultimately, the scarab is a souvenir from my travels in Egypt, and therefore is also taking part in this cultural consumption like so many other souvenirs like it. David Hume defined the ideal souvenir as follows: "From the perspective of the producer, the souvenir needs to represent the culture and heritage of the tourist destination... the more nodes of heritage that can be tastefully invested in the souvenir by

the maker, and recognized by the consumer, the better.”<sup>i</sup> For the purposes of my study, I would argue that my scarab beetle meets this criteria in a fairly nuanced manner. For while it is representative of Egyptian culture, it is also part of the history of *colonial* consumption which then triggered the subsequent Egyptian response of manufacturing souvenirs for this demand. Over time, as modern Egyptians came to foster nationalist sentiments and contest colonial authority, there is a shift in the production of Egyptian souvenirs from the purpose of meeting colonial demands, to a feeling of nationalist pride. All of these nuances can be read within my small alabaster scarab beetle.

It is first helpful to define in more detail what exactly cultural consumption entails. It is a complicated concept with many different contexts throughout history. For the purposes of this paper, it is helpful to limit this term to the kind of European Orientalism that was defined by Edward Said’s well-known work in 1991. Orientalism is understood as the stereotyping of the East on the part of the West in a systematic manner, which reduces the numerous diverse peoples of the Middle East into “an undifferentiated Other,” as summarized by Jasmine Day.<sup>ii</sup> Egyptomania is in some ways a form of Orientalism that is particular to Egypt. However, it is not always a kind of sinister “Other-ing” of Egypt and its culture but can actually simply be a fascination and admiration of the Egyptian culture. Egyptomania is so widespread across the world that the tourism industry has become a very significant part of the Egyptian economy,<sup>iii</sup> and all the consumption that this entails. More locally, Egyptians themselves have also been known to exhibit Egyptomania in a kind of nationalist pride for their own country and culture.<sup>iv</sup> I myself on my tours of the sites in Egypt often felt this sense of being welcomed and it wasn’t always for the money I was perceived as being likely to spend as a tourist; rather, I would say that the tour guides I had were excited to share the culture and history of their nation of which

they were so proud. So, while admiration for Egyptian culture is not necessarily a negative thing, likewise the cultural consumption that is associated with this Egyptomania is not always a signal for colonialism.

Before examining the nationalist response, it is first necessary to examine the colonial past. I mentioned above that my scarab beetle reminds me of the kind of amulets and trinkets that were often placed within the mummy's wrappings as charms of protection. While my scarab beetle may be a reference to those ancient Egyptian artifacts, there is another layer to this parallel that is rooted in European colonialism, particularly that of the British. After Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, the "science" of Egyptology was initiated,<sup>v</sup> as well as Egyptomania, which will always serve as a kind of parallel. However, this move was a competitive effort against the British,<sup>vi</sup> and it was the British who ultimately made Egypt a protectorate under their hegemony after Napoleon's invasion failed. It was during this time that the Victorians began to consume Egyptian culture on a wide scale. Similar to my own scarab beetle, the British people also began to acquire their own souvenirs. The difference, however, is that their souvenirs tended to be the "real thing," in other words, the souvenirs that were taken from Egypt during this time tended to be ancient artifacts and human remains in the form of mummies.

This consumption became a tool in the British arsenal for colonial control of Egypt. Through the consumption of Egyptian culture in this way, the British asserted their authority and control over the nation. The forms of this consumption varied and could consist of unwrapping events of mummies, popular literature, and the placement of ancient artifacts in museums as part of a narrative that argued for ancient Egypt's place as part of Western culture. First, the unwrapping events will be examined, as they generated similar souvenirs to that of my scarab beetle and served as part of the inspiration for this paper.

Unwrapping events began as parties for the elite and indeed, came to be a symbol of social status as mummies were purchased and transported from Egypt to England for the purpose of these special occasions.<sup>vii</sup> The demand for mummies for the purpose of these social events as well as for the perceived medical benefits of mummy flesh came to be so great that the supply was even supplemented with modern “mummies” – created from the bodies of modern Egyptians – that were produced by charlatans in order to satisfy the market.<sup>viii</sup> As Egyptology came to be more fully established, and the popular consumption more limited as the field became professionalized, these events took on a more academic slant. For instance, Margaret Murray held a very similar event at Manchester University in 1908. While it had a more academic purpose, the event was still open to public, a very intentional decision on Murray’s part, as she wanted to engage the public in this way and “bring reason and understanding to the [Egypto-]mania.”<sup>ix</sup>

Nevertheless, the cultural consumption of this event is still extremely evident. At the end of the unwrapping, the audience was invited to file up to the front of the auditorium and provide their names and addresses in exchange for a “free souvenir from the day: a piece of linen that had been pulled from the body.”<sup>x</sup> Unwrapping events were especially popular, as Egyptology engaged the public imagination and became “culturally in demand both as marketable entertainment and as a topic of scientific study.”<sup>xi</sup> These events may seem rather morbid to our modern eyes, however, Victorians were quite familiar with death and were accustomed to having physical contact with the dead due to high mortality rates as well as burial and mourning practices.<sup>xii</sup> Physical “souvenirs” of loved ones both dead and alive were quite popular during this time period (such as locks of hair), and served as part of grieving practices. It is not surprising that guests would also want to take a souvenir of a mummy – in the form of a piece of

the wrappings or a protective amulet that was discovered within the linen folds – after they attended an unwrapping event. Indeed, mummies were even taken as “*materia medica*,” and valued for its perceived medical properties, thus increasing the demand for mummies even further.<sup>xiii</sup> This, then, can account in some part the popularity of these unwrapping events and the cultural consumption that occurred in the form of taking home a physical piece of the mummy.

When I was first closely observing my alabaster scarab beetle, I quickly noticed the symbols etched on the base. Excited by what I initially perceived as hieroglyphs, it only took a small amount of research to determine that what I initially perceived as hieroglyphs were actually only symbols pretending to be so and were therefore unreadable (or at least unreadable to me). This led me to wonder if the British felt similarly hindered by a lack of access, as their close encounters with ancient artifacts became less readily



Figure 2. Carved symbols on the bottom of the scarab.

available as time went on. As Egyptology became more professionalized, and more effective policing of Egypt’s antiquities export laws was established, the populace had to instead turn to fictional narratives to satisfy their desires for consuming Egyptian culture, thereby signifying the continued fascination of all things Egyptian by the British. Indeed, as mummies became less available for popular consumption due to the application of the scientific method of Egyptological practice. Additionally, due to the more effective policing of Egypt’s antiquities export laws, the populace had to instead turn to literature to satisfy their desires for consuming Egyptian culture,<sup>xiv</sup> resulting in a boom of mummy’s curse literature and yet another form of

cultural consumption. This consumption by literary means is worth further examination for how it is evidence of the Victorians' continued fascination with ancient Egypt.

Ancient Egypt was interesting to the Victorians in part for how it was evidence of Biblical history.<sup>xv</sup> In this way, it was familiar to westerners, although this history was complicated for the contrasting perceptions of Egypt within the Bible – first as a place of oppression from which Moses led the Hebrews out of slavery but then as the place of escape for the infant Christ.<sup>xvi</sup> This, combined with the fascination of these ancient ruins and artifacts, led to a subsequent production of Egyptian-focused literature, much of which was centered in some way around the idea of the mummy's curse, or that a mummy was a monstrous creature who came back to life and wanted to harm the living. In fact, some scholars have argued that the mummy's curse genre of literature was a direct consequence of the British occupation of 1882, a genre that continued into late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>xvii</sup> The monstrous nature of the mummy is a kind of Orientalist reaction to a mysterious ancient culture of which little was known.

One example of this type of literature can be found in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's short story titled, "Lot No. 249." The protagonist, a medical student at Oxford named Abercrombie Smith, gradually becomes convinced that another scholar, named Bellingham, who lives below him is in possession of a mummy that can come to life and harm the people that Bellingham wants to get rid of. Various people are chased or injured by the mummy throughout the story. Abercrombie Smith quickly catches on, soon being pursued by the mummy himself, until he forces Bellingham to destroy the mummy at gunpoint. Bellingham leaves Oxford soon after and is last heard of in Sudan, although he is never to be seen again.



It is interesting to look more closely at how the mummy and Bellingham are described, as well as the nature of the destruction of this Egyptian “monster.” The mummy is only ever a tool to complete Bellingham’s murderous aims. It is his possession, one of many Egyptian artifacts on display in his study: “... a museum rather than a study. Walls and ceiling were thickly covered with a thousand strange relics from Egypt and the East.”<sup>xviii</sup> This section demonstrates the foreignness of the artifacts and a subsequent lack of understanding on the part of the protagonist. The objects on display in Bellingham’s study are described as quite animalistic, which seems to denote a kind of beastly nature to these ancient artifacts. Conan Doyle describes all the various animal headed deities:

Above were bull-headed, stork-headed, cat-headed, owl-headed statues, with viper-crowned, almond-eyed monarchs, and strange beetlelike deities cut out of the blue Egyptian lapis lazuli. Horus and Isis and Osiris peeped down from every niche and shelf, while across a ceiling a true son of Old Nile, a great hanging-jawed crocodile, was hung in a double noose.<sup>xix</sup>

These Egyptian artifacts could not be seen as more foreign and Other. Bellingham, by decorating his study this way and through his expertise of “Eastern” languages, has integrated himself into this culture.<sup>xx</sup> The nameless mummy, meanwhile, is described as a “horrid, black, withered thing,”<sup>xxi</sup> that is only ever given the name that was assigned to it when it was being sold – lot no. 249. Once again, there is an air of mystery that cannot help but consequently demonstrate a lack of understanding of the culture of these objects. Bellingham, as the sole expert on the mummy who knows more about it than any man in England,<sup>xxii</sup> eventually comes to suffer for his close association of these foreign artifacts.

However, readers are meant to cheer for the eradication of the villainous Bellingham and the destruction of the mummy. He is threatened by Smith and ends up self-exiling himself, going back to foreign lands. It is as though by so closely associating himself with foreigners, he no

longer belongs in England and in fact is harmful to those around him. It is Smith, taking the part of the quintessential Englishman and possessing many virtues that are mentioned throughout, who eradicates Bellingham and his weapon “such as no man had ever used in all the grim history of crime.”<sup>xxiii</sup> During the confrontation between Smith and Bellingham, when Smith is holding Bellingham at gunpoint, he states, ““You’ll find that your filthy Egyptian tricks won’t answer in England.”<sup>xxiv</sup> The conflict has widened to almost become a struggle between nations, yet at the same time there is no question that England will prevail over the insidious tricks of ancient Egyptian magic.

The levels of cultural consumption here are numerous. It is most clearly seen within the character of Bellingham, who is in possession of such an extensive collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts. The fact that he has them and has even managed to purchase a mummy that seems to be controlled with some kind of spell on papyrus, combined with the lack of surprise that he has these items on the part of those around him, only demonstrates the widespread Victorian consumption of Egyptian material culture during this time period. The auction number assigned to the mummy – lot no. 249 – is further evidence of this consumption. The fact that the mummy’s actual name is unknown only demonstrates the lack of real understanding of this culture and a kind of Orientalist perspective that was defined by Edward Said. Deemed a dangerous weapon rather than human remains and evidence of an amazing ancient culture with an extensive history, the mummy is reduced to a monster that must be consumed by flames and destroyed. As unwrapping events declined, Egyptian culture began to be consumed more often through the means of literature such as “Lot No. 249.”

While my scarab beetle is not exactly a museum quality object, the souvenirs that the wealthy Victorians brought back with them as objects of curiosity most certainly were of such

quality. Many of them eventually found their final resting place in a museum, some a bit worse for wear and many having a patchwork provenance that makes it hard to trace where specifically the ancient artifact came from and how it ended up in Great Britain. Even the Cairo Museum has its origins in this time period's colonialism, with the intended audience exclusive to Europeans and only serving to further ideas of European control in the Middle Eastern country.<sup>xxv</sup> Indeed, the museum has even been labeled a monument to Western Egyptology.<sup>xxvi</sup> The museum came to be a place where Western powers could include ancient Egyptian culture as part of the foundation of Western civilization, in a similar way to the Greeks and Romans,<sup>xxvii</sup> encouraging a universalist narrative that legitimized European control and consumption of Egyptian culture.

The British Museum, meanwhile, is certainly utilizing this narrative. In fact, it has been argued that the museum itself is part of the imperialism of the nineteenth century and that it is “the national equivalent of the private collection... [which] provides a way of ‘domesticating’ objects” and that the British Museum became the ideal of this imperialistic collecting.<sup>xxviii</sup> This imperial collecting was combined with an argument for “rescuing” these artifacts and ensuring their conservation, due to the perceived lack of care on the part of the Egyptian people for their own cultural artifacts.<sup>xxix</sup> This mentality is abundantly clear in the British press, which on one occasion gave an account of “treasure hunting” and the discovery of some Coptic artifacts. While it is true that this account is centered around Gaston Maspero, a French Egyptologist who discovered the artifacts that would become the base of the collection for the Cairo Museum as he excavated for the Egyptian government, this account nevertheless demonstrates European interference in the collecting and controlling of Egyptian antiquities. Furthermore, while this archaeological mission seems to have been on behalf of the Egyptian government, it has been shown above that the establishment of the Cairo Museum was for the benefit of a European

audience and is thus another method by which this consumption of material culture continued in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The location of the treasure was found by means that are reminiscent of the mummy's curse narrative in Victorian literature that was mentioned above: according to Maspero, it was found by supernatural means (although in this case it was divination rather than a curse).<sup>xxx</sup> Upon the discovery of the Coptic artifacts, the local Egyptian people, who had been crowding around the excavation site, argued that they "had a hereditary right to it, as the descendants of those who had buried it."<sup>xxxxi</sup> They apparently were attempting to take the items by force with "violent hands" when another group of "Mussulmans" from a nearby village laid their claim upon the "spoils."<sup>xxxii</sup> At this point in the narrative, it is interesting to note that Maspero's account seems to take the side of the Coptic Egyptians, whom he calls "natives," and states that

it was evident that the Copts alone could have any hereditary right to it. Nevertheless, the dispute lasted long enough to save the treasure from either party. It had just been compromised, and the two local factions were about to renew the assault in company, when the soldiers arrived with fixed bayonets, and seized the expected booty, which was soon safely lodged in the museum.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Here, there are a few things worth noting that is further evidence of European cultural consumption and imperial control. First, the prioritizing of the Coptic Egyptians over the Muslim Egyptians. This is demonstrating the Orientalist narrative mentioned at the beginning of this essay, which saw the categorization of the peoples from the Middle East. In this case, the peoples that have been identified as Copts are called "natives" and it is interesting to note that their hereditary right to the "treasure" is recognized here, likely due to the more sympathetic figure they presented to European powers for their Christian faith. However, as they are described as about to lay violent hands upon the treasure and assault the workmen who were at the excavation, it is deemed that they are not fit to care for the ancient artifacts.

The “Mussulmans,” meanwhile, are identified as marauders who were wrongfully arguing for their right to the ancient objects. It is likely to have been considered wrongful due to the distinctions between Egyptians across religious lines (Coptic Christians and Muslims); therefore, the right that the Muslim Egyptians were claiming to have to the artifacts likely was not accepted by the Europeans for the reason of the artifacts’ reported Coptic origins. Regardless, the “Mussulmans” likewise are reported to have become violent in their endeavor to claim the artifacts, so neither Egyptian groups were given control over their nation’s artifacts. Soldiers are reported to have been necessary to forcefully restore order, seize the artifacts, and protect the team of excavators, so violent do both the “natives” and “marauders” become. The much-contested items then find their safe home within the museum – a location where neither of these groups are likely to see them – where they can be enjoyed by other Europeans in Egypt. Here, it is clear how Egyptian culture has come under the control of European powers in Egypt and how the ancient Egyptian material culture was consumed through these archaeological expeditions and subsequent placement in museums.

Finally, for the last section of this paper, I want to consider the Egyptian response to this colonial cultural consumption, especially in regard to Egyptian material culture. I see evidence of this within my scarab beetle as well. The shop where I acquired the scarab was filled with rows upon rows of pyramids, sphinxes, camels, and other similarly kitschy items. I remember being more interested in the scarab at the time than I was in the lamp I had just bought, especially when I discovered the symbols carved into the base. Now I am wondering: how did these types of shops that cater to tourists become established? Why were modern Egyptians seemingly so eager for their culture to be consumed in this way?

The history of this modern cultural consumption begins with Mohammed Ali, the Ottoman pasha and viceroy of Egypt from 1805 to 1848, who allowed Europeans to “appropriate antiquities for what he saw as financial and political benefits.”<sup>xxxiv</sup> The pasha, who wanted to westernize Egypt and foster political relations with European powers after Napoleon’s invasion, was known to gift ancient artifacts to visiting European dignitaries as a means by which to achieve these aims.<sup>xxxv</sup> Mohammed Ali set a precedent for Egypt’s foreign relations and consequently shaped subsequent relations with European powers. This can be seen in the aforementioned work of Maspero, who was technically working for the Egyptian government on his archaeological expedition. It is clear, however, that Maspero and other European archaeologists are just one of many instances of Europeans interfering in Egyptian affairs.

It is also worth noting the cultural context that allowed for the piecemeal sale of Egyptian antiquities. Ever since Egypt came to be under Ottoman rule, it was a majority-Muslim nation. This certainly shaped the manner in which Egyptians came to think about their own past and their own material culture. Elliott Colla, in his book titled, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity*, details the Islamic response to ancient Egyptian artifacts. According to the Islamic viewpoint, the Pharaoh was a villain who did not obey Allah; ancient ruins of this pagan civilization is taken as evidence for God’s authority over creation.<sup>xxxvi</sup> As was previously mentioned, Europeans tended to use conservation as a means to justify “rescuing” and acquiring artifacts. This was only encouraged with the lack of regard that modern Egyptians had for these pagan relics of a civilization that was not worthy of study because of their failure to recognize God’s authority.<sup>xxxvii</sup> This was to change after the interventionist and colonial efforts of the Europeans, however.

As Egyptology became more established, modern Egyptians began to rediscover their own history which then resulted in the contestation of European hegemony in the nation.<sup>xxxviii</sup> As Egyptians became tourists in their own country, they learned more and more about the ancient past and a time of self-rule in their country's history.<sup>xxxix</sup> By connecting with and making claims upon the material culture of ancient Egypt in this way, modern Egyptians began to foster patriotic sensibilities,<sup>xl</sup> and began to utilize the field of Egyptology to help shape a national identity, and, eventually, nationalist challenges to European control of Egypt and its past.<sup>xli</sup> This nationalist response was a legitimizing argument for Egyptian rulers, although it was not always utilized directly by rulers themselves. For example, the Egyptian scholar Tahtawi argued that Mohammed Ali was the heir of the Pharaohs,<sup>xlii</sup> and played a significant role in Mohammed Ali's efforts to curb the European looting of Egyptian antiquities.<sup>xliii</sup> While Egyptology has its origins in European colonialism, it was now being used for Egyptian nationalism.

Ancient Egyptian material culture served as the battleground for this colonial/national struggle. According to Colla, "artifacts helped to express an essential difference between Europeans and Egyptians [in colonial Egypt.]. Likewise, for many modern Egyptians antiquities became material facts attesting to their own history and identity."<sup>xliv</sup> Artifacts came to be symbols of the Egyptian national identity. It is interesting to note that it was ancient artifacts – the material culture of Egypt – that helped to foster these nationalist sentiments amongst the Egyptian people. This still continues into today with the extensive tourism industry within the nation. Many Egyptians study Egyptology and make a career of it, perhaps the most well-known Egyptian Egyptologist being Zahi Hawass. Many more, however, work as tour guides at sites like the Egyptian Museum, Luxor, Aswan, the pyramids at Giza; quite a few have extensive knowledge of many sites for tours that take visitors all over the country to numerous sites.

Egyptomania and Egyptology have combined to create a substantial tourism industry within Egypt.

This tourism industry has also sparked the creation of a different kind of material culture – the Egyptian souvenir. Made by modern Egyptians for the consumption of tourists, these souvenirs are in some ways based on a kind of nationalist pride. Sites like Khan el Khalili, itself a place of interest for tourists due to its location in the Old Islamic part of Cairo, overflow with souvenirs geared toward tourists. Small stalls selling souvenirs can be seen at almost every tourist site, from the pyramids at Giza to the Valley of the Kings at Luxor; not only that, the souvenirs also tend to be very similar, if not identical. It was at this kind of shop aimed at tourists that I acquired my scarab beetle. While these shop owners are certainly attempting to profit off of the demand of tourists for souvenirs, which is itself a form of cultural consumption through material culture, Egyptians are also encouraging this consumption with a sense of nationalist pride.

For example, the alabaster shop owner – who’s name I remember was Ahmed – from whom I purchased my lamp and scarab told us all about his family shop. His father managed it before him, and his grandfather before him – it’s an established family business that has long depended on and made a profit from the tourism industry. Ahmed was clearly proud of his family business but he was also displaying a kind of



*Figure 3. Khan el Khalili, with many souvenirs on display for tourists.*



nationalist pride that is similar to that of the tour guides who also encourage cultural consumption. This is shown within the objects for sale and how they themselves demonstrate a pride in Egyptian culture that is expressed through this material culture of souvenir manufacturing. While this is only one example of the numerous tourist shops within the country, the wide scale of the production of these souvenirs – many of which are identical – demonstrates a similar nationalist pride as well as an encouragement of cultural consumption through Egyptian material culture. My scarab beetle is only one of these numerous objects.

This essay has shown the role that material culture has played in regards to the consumption of Egyptian culture, through the lens of my small scarab beetle. Egypt has a long history of cultural consumption, both from a colonial and a nationalist perspective. I see all of this reflected in my scarab beetle, which now sits quietly on my desk, unassuming and seemingly uncomplicated. However, this object is a piece of the broader cultural consumption that has been examined above. Similar to the items that were taken as souvenirs during unwrapping events in Victorian Britain, my scarab beetle can be read as a remnant of European colonialism. I have focused on Victorian Britain as this was the imperial nation that was most responsible for the establishment of this cultural consumption, as a result of Egyptomania and Egyptology. As Egyptology became more established within the academic world, and ancient artifacts such as mummies became less readily available, the British public had to look for other means of satisfying their desire to consume the culture of Egypt. This was found in fiction literature focused on Egypt, which tended to consist of the trope of the mummy's curse, as seen in fiction such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "Lot No. 249." Finally, the museum is the ultimate place of cultural consumption where artifacts were housed for the entertainment of the European public.

This was justified by a conservationist argument that was further legitimized by the universalist narrative that placed ancient Egypt under the umbrella of Western civilization.

Over time, as Egyptology became more established, modern Egyptians began to use this field for their own nationalist purposes. The very field that had been a means of cultural consumption on the part of the Europeans allowed for modern Egyptians to re-discover their own ancient past, which had previously been deemed unworthy of study due to the pagan perceptions of ancient Egypt within the Islamic worldview. As a more secularized examination of the past began, patriotic sensibilities became more common, and there was a subsequent claiming of the material culture of ancient Egypt and the hereditary right to the legacy of this culture. Today, some modern Egyptians encourage Egyptomania and cultural consumption through the manufacturing of souvenir items like my scarab beetle as an expression of pride for their culture. Thus, the material culture of Egypt has served as the site of conflict for both colonial and nationalist narratives, narratives that can be read within my alabaster scarab souvenir. What can initially be seen as a simple souvenir from my vacation in Luxor is actually a piece of this material culture that has had such a complicated and contested past; one only needs to look closely enough to see it.

## End Notes

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- <sup>i</sup> David L. Hume, *Tourism Art and Souvenirs: The Material Culture of Tourism* (London: Routledge, 2014), 2-3.
- <sup>ii</sup> Jasmine Day, *The Mummy's Curse: Mummymania in the English-Speaking World* (London: Routledge, 2006), 6.
- <sup>iii</sup> Fayza Haikal, "Egypt's Past Regenerated by its Own People," in *Consuming Ancient Egypt*, Sally MacDonald and Michael Rice, eds., (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 138.
- <sup>iv</sup> Zahi Hawass, "Introduction," in *Egyptomania: Our Three Thousand Year Obsession with the Land of the Pharaohs*, Bob Brier (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), xix.
- <sup>v</sup> Hawass 2013, xix.
- <sup>vi</sup> Michael Rice, Sally MacDonald, "Tea With a Mummy: The Consumer's View of Egypt's Immemorial Appeal," in *Consuming Ancient Egypt*, Sally MacDonald and Michael Rice, eds., (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 5.
- <sup>vii</sup> Lynn Meskell, "Consuming Bodies: Cultural Fantasies of Ancient Egypt," *Body & Society* 4, no. 1 (1998), 65.
- <sup>viii</sup> Meskell 1998, 64-65.
- <sup>ix</sup> Kathleen L. Sheppard, "Between Spectacle and Science: Margaret Murray and the Tomb of the Two Brothers," *Science in Context* 25, no. 4 (2012), 528.
- <sup>x</sup> Sheppard 2012, 541.
- <sup>xi</sup> Sheppard 2012, 526.
- <sup>xii</sup> Day 2006, 28.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Meskell 1998, 64-65.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Day 2006, 19.
- <sup>xv</sup> Day 2006, 28.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Julian Walker, "Acquisitions at the British Museum," in *Consuming Ancient Egypt*, Sally MacDonald and Michael Rice, eds., (Abingdon, Routledge, 2016), 104.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Christina Riggs, "Colonial Visions: Egyptian Antiquities and Contested Histories in the Cairo Museum," *Museum Worlds: Advances in Research* 1 (2013), 67.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, "Lot No. 249," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 85 (1892), 530.
- <sup>xix</sup> Conan Doyle 1892, 530.
- <sup>xx</sup> Conan Doyle 1892, 527-528.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Conan Doyle 1892, 530.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Conan Doyle 1892, 531.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Conan Doyle 1892, 539.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Conan Doyle 1892, 539.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Riggs 2013, 66.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Donald Malcom Reid, *Whose Pharaohs: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 3.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Riggs 2013, 68.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Nicholas Daly, "That Obscure Object of Desire: Victorian Commodity Culture and Fictions of the Mummy," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 28, no. 1 (1994), 31.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Elliott Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 64.
- <sup>xxx</sup> "Treasure Hunting," *Derby Mercury*, 24 June 1885, British Library Newspapers, [https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BA3202791162/BNCN?U=mlin\\_m\\_tufts&sid=BNCN&xid=12e5697f](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BA3202791162/BNCN?U=mlin_m_tufts&sid=BNCN&xid=12e5697f). Accessed 9 Apr. 2020.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> "Treasure Hunting," *Derby Mercury*, 24 June 1885.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> "Treasure Hunting," *Derby Mercury*, 24 June 1885.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> "Treasure Hunting," *Derby Mercury*, 24 June 1885.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Day 2006, 20.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Day 2006, 21-22.
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Colla 2007, 77-78.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Colla 2007, 123; Fayza Haikal, "Egypt's Past Regenerated by its Own People," in *Consuming Ancient Egypt*, 123.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Colla 2007, 163.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Colla 2007, 155, 165.
- <sup>xl</sup> Colla 2007, 155.

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<sup>xli</sup> Reid 2002, 2.

<sup>xlii</sup> Abdelislam Maghraoui, “The Dilemma of Liberalism in the Middle East: A Reading of the Liberal Experiment in Egypt, 1920s-1930s,” Order No. 9116068 (1991: Princeton University), 157.

<sup>xliii</sup> Reid 2002, 289.

<sup>xliv</sup> Colla 2007, 175.

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