

June 2019

Léon-Jean-Joseph Dubois, Antiquarian

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LÉON-JEAN-JOSEPH DUBOIS, ANTIQUARIAN

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Art History

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August 2019

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Abstract

This thesis examines the life of Léon-Jean-Joseph Dubois (1780-1846), a French engraver, antiquarian, conservator, and restorer of antiquities. Dubois lived in Paris during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in an era when Ancient Egyptian art and history became very popular. His life was overshadowed by the career of his friend Jean-François Champollion, the “Father” of Egyptology, who laid the foundations for the deciphering of Egyptian hieroglyphics in 1822.

This thesis is the first to study Dubois, and the focus of this study will be on his life, his publications, his art, his relationships with other antiquarians, his museum work, and his involvement with the early days of Egyptology, immediately before and after the deciphering of hieroglyphics. Dubois was a friend of Champollion, and contributed to Champollion’s scholarship in Egyptology and to his leadership of the Egyptian department at the Louvre. Champollion brought Dubois to the museum in 1826, and Dubois stayed at the Louvre for twenty years, until his death in 1846. He also illustrated in 1823 one of Champollion’s books, *Panthéon égyptien, collection des personnages mythologiques de l’ancienne Égypte* with lithographs. Those illustrations stand out for their vibrant representations of Egyptian deities, as Europeans understood them in the early nineteenth century.

Little has been written about Dubois since his death. Save for his auction catalogues, his work as an artist and antiquarian has almost all been ignored or lost. His auction catalogues, written by Dubois himself, describe statues, vases, art, and jewelry in great detail. Dubois wrote his own books on sculptures and on Egyptian scarabs, *Choix de pierres gravées antiques, égyptiennes et persannes* in 1817 and *Lettre de M. J. J. Dubois sur une inscription grecque* in

1843.

Despite the variety of his activities, Dubois was described at his death primarily as an excellent draftsman. In the obituary of Dubois printed in an archaeological review, he was explicitly denied the status of a scholar. This thesis, however, will establish that he was a scholar, dedicated to the description, preservation and restoration of antiquities.

Introduction

The subject of this thesis is Léon-Jean-Joseph Dubois (1780-1846), often alternately called Jean Joseph, J. J. Dubois, or L.J.J Dubois. Known primarily as an antiquarian and engraver, Dubois fit more than just two roles. He was a writer who published works on Egyptian and Greek antiquities and a cataloguer who described those items with such vivid detail and clarity that the items can still be visualized today. Dubois was also a conservator and restorer, who worked for the Louvre for twenty years to protect and restore ancient art in the museum's collection.

Even though he was a student of Egyptian antiquity, Dubois' life was overshadowed by that of Jean François Champollion, the "Father" of Egyptology (often called "Champollion le Jeune" or "Champollion the Younger" in English). It was Champollion who deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphics in the early nineteenth century. Champollion was the first European who could read the ancient Egyptian language since Greek historians wrote about ancient Egypt. Dubois met Champollion when the latter was just a teenage prodigy. Their lives were intertwined from 1807 until Champollion's death in 1832, as will be shown in the following chapters. When the "Father of Egyptology" became famous for deciphering hieroglyphics, Champollion brought Dubois to the Louvre, where the latter worked for twenty years.

This thesis will examine Dubois' life, his publications, his art, his relationships with other antiquarians, his work in the restoration and conservation of antiquities, and his involvement with the early days of Egyptology. Auction catalogues written by Dubois will be described to underscore his detailed attention to items to be sold, as well as his organization and classification methodology, and his understanding of materials and manufacturing processes. Dubois also

wrote books which were not catalogues, but scholarly treatises on Egyptian scarabs (incised and carved semi-precious stones which resemble dung beetles) and Greek vases.

Chapter One of the thesis will provide detail about Dubois' early life as a student of Jacques-Louis David and his work for Aubin-Louis Millin de Grandmaison, a French antiquarian who was the keeper of the Department of Medals and Antiquities in the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*. Dubois began his career as an engraver and became an author of auction catalogues while in his twenties. His auction catalogues will be analyzed in Chapter Two of the thesis. In the early nineteenth century, Dubois held a literal monopoly as an expert in the Parisian market for antiquities and was noted for vividly describing such objects and artworks for sale. His accounts of the lots to be sold include some outstanding antiquities, which are described in this chapter.

Chapter Three will be about his own book, an insightful summary on Egyptian scarabs, *Choix de pierres gravées antiques, égyptiennes et persannes*, which will also be interpreted in ways similar to the catalogues. Scholarly in its approach, this book presents an overview of the different styles of incised jewelry. Dubois outlines five styles, along with the varied materials used to make these stones. Although the book's title referred to Egyptian and Persian antiquities, the majority of the descriptions and drawings involved Egyptian scarabs. Scarabs are small stones sculpted to represent dung beetles, which were incised with the names of gods or pharaohs. In Egypt the scarab signified eternal life and represented the Egyptian gods Khepri or Atum.¹ The fashion for the scarab spread across the ancient world, and it was used as jewelry or as a seal across the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Dubois' travels to these same areas in

¹ William Ward, "Beetles in Stone: The Egyptian Scarab," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 57, No. 4 (Dec. 1994): 188.

the nineteenth century exposed him to different types of scarabs, and he portrayed scarabs and scaraboid jewelry in his book on inscribed gems.

His relationship with Champollion the Younger will be described in Chapter Four together with his illustrations for Champollion's publication which are included in this section. Although he rarely produced original drawings, his illustrations from the *Panthéon égyptien, collection des personnages mythologiques de l'ancienne Égypte* have been copied again and again to show the iconography of ancient Egyptian gods and goddesses.² Individual illustrations of ancient deities, brightly colored, have outlasted Champollion's commentaries contained in the *Panthéon*, which are based upon outdated information about Egyptian mythology.

Dubois' work at the Louvre in conservation and restoration, as well as the organization of the Egyptian collection, is documented in Chapter Five. Having obtained his position of deputy curator of the Egyptian section, and later of the combined sections of antiquities, he stayed at the Louvre from 1826 until his death in 1846. A controversy regarding Dubois' activities at the Louvre, discussed in the literature after his death, has been potentially resolved by documents in the French National Archives.

Finally, the thesis will conclude with Chapter Six, which explains the importance of Dubois in the field of Egyptology and the endurance of his study of Egyptian scarabs and ancient art. The skill of this museum curator to restore ancient works of art for display has preserved many monuments for posterity. The artistic explanation and illustrations of the scarab and other items by Dubois tell scholars today about art which has since been lost or destroyed.

² Jean-François Champollion, *Panthéon égyptienne, collection des personnages mythologiques de l'ancienne Égypte* (Paris: Hatchette, 1823).

Primary resources on Dubois' life exist in the form of his own works. Dubois' obituary provides facts regarding his life, but is also very misleading.³ If all anyone knew about Dubois was limited to his obituary, the small amount of information contained in that document would not reveal who Dubois really was and the variety of occupations he pursued in his lifetime. For example, Dubois was an antiquarian and an expert on antiquities. As an employee of the Louvre, he restored antiquities from Egypt and elsewhere.⁴ He wrote at least sixty-six auction catalogues and other books which reveal the scope of his knowledge of antiquities from 1809 through 1842. He illustrated a book by Champollion on Egyptian mythology.⁵

The secondary literature on Dubois is very sparse. There is one journal article which deals with Dubois at the Louvre, Monique Kanawaty's "Un conservateur des Antiquités égyptiennes méconnu: Jean-Joseph Dubois," from 1981.⁶ Kanawaty had access to personnel files at the Louvre, which she used to write her article. Another article discusses Dubois' work on scarabs, "Léon Jean Joseph Dubois (1780-1846): Un Collectionneur et chercheur méconnu des scarabées égyptiens," by Joachim Sliwa from 2000.⁷ A third article, Juliette Tanré's "La Restauration des antiquités Égyptiennes au musée du Louvre: Le Cas de Jean-Joseph Dubois," highlights his role as a restorer and conservator at the Louvre.⁸ Other first-hand information comes from letters

³ Anonymous, "Découvertes et Nouvelles: Nécrologie," *Revue Archéologique*, 3e année, no. 2 (15 Octobre 1846 au 15 Mars 1847): 689-692.

⁴ Juliette Tanré, "La Restauration des antiquités égyptiennes au musée du Louvre. Le cas de Jean-Joseph Dubois," *Ricerca di storia dell'arte* 1 (Gennaio-Aprile 2010): 9-51.

⁵ Champollion, *Panthéon*, n.p.

⁶ Monique Kanawaty, "Un conservateur des antiquités égyptiennes méconnu: Jean-Joseph Dubois," *Göttinger Miszellen* 51 (1981): 91-105.

⁷ Joachim Sliwa, "Léon Jean Joseph Dubois (1780-1846): Un Collectionneur et chercheur méconnu des scarabées égyptiens," *Folia orientalia* 26 (2000): 323-328.

⁸ Tanré, "La Restauration," 49-51.

written by Champollion the Younger to Dubois or to Jacques- Joseph Champollion, his brother, often called Champollion Figeac.

Almost all other published information on Dubois are secondary sources. Several biographies of Champollion only mention Dubois in passing. References to Dubois in contemporaneous journal articles on Dubois are few. Dubois' art is represented primarily in Champollion's book *Panthéon égyptienne, collection des personnages mythologiques de l'ancienne Égypte*.⁹ Yet, his artistic talent to preserve and restore antiquities is part of the history of the Louvre.

This thesis is the first to study Dubois' life and accomplishments. Two modern authors have called Dubois "unknown."¹⁰ His importance as an expert, antiquarian, and conservator at the Louvre should be acknowledged by those who study Egyptology and love antiquities. The writer of his obituary insisted that Dubois was not a scholar and never pretended to be one.¹¹ The following paper will present evidence that Dubois was a scholar, as shown by his own work.

⁹ Champollion, *Panthéon égyptienne*, n.p.

¹⁰ Kanawaty, "Un conservateur," 91; Sliwa, "Dubois, 323."

¹¹ Anonymous, "Découvertes et Nouvelles: Nécrologie," 601.

Chapter One. His Early Life

Léon-Jean-Joseph Dubois was born in 1780 in Paris, during the reign of Louis XVI.¹² Probably because of the chaos in France after the French Revolution and the disarray of records resulting from these events, few government documents are available to provide information about Dubois' early life. Various sources, including Dubois himself, repeat that he was a student of the prominent history painter Jacques-Louis David, whose studio was located in the Louvre. Although David was a great painter in his own right, he also wielded great influence as a mentor of hundreds of French and foreign students and as a politician under Robespierre.¹³ His studio produced some of the greatest artists of the time, including Jean Germain Drouais, Anne-Louis Girodet, François Gérard, Antoine-Jean Gros, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Jean-Victor Schnetz, Louis Léopold Robert, and François-Marius Granet.¹⁴

The life of a young artist in David's studio has been described in Etienne Delécluze's book *David, son école et son temps* (1855).¹⁵ A student of David himself, Delécluze mentioned Dubois specifically. His account is the first recorded evidence for Dubois' activities as an artist. Delécluze's memoirs date to a time when Dubois was approximately 20 years old and already an art student.¹⁶ Delécluze tells his readers that Dubois had made quite an impression. For instance, he was famous for his erudition in ancient and modern "obscenities," according to the author.¹⁷

¹² Anonymous, "Découvertes et Nouvelles: Nécrologie, 601.

¹³ Antoine Schnapper, *David* (New York: Alpine, 1980), 7.

¹⁴ Etienne Delécluze, *David, son école et son temps* (Paris: Didier, 1855), 67.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Dubois stated that he was 21 years old when he left David's studio in a later publication. J. J. Dubois, *Lettre de M. J. J. Dubois sur une inscription grecque*. (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1843), 6.

¹⁷ Delécluze, *David*, 67.

Delécluze added to his description that Dubois, like David himself, was an ardent revolutionary.¹⁸

C'était Dubois, cet élève de David célèbre par son érudition dans les obscénités antiques et modernes et, de plus, révolutionnaire ardent...¹⁹

Delécluze helps us to establish a time period for Dubois' stay at David's studio.

Delécluze himself arrived in David's studio in 1796, when it was located in the Louvre.²⁰ The year can be established because Delécluze was known to be there at the same time as Ingres, who came to the school in August of 1797, when David worked on *The Intervention of the Sabine Women*, a painting which dates to 1799.²¹ Delécluze recorded at least one event in which he and Dubois were walking with an older student and got into an argument about the route to take on the walk.²² The event was not important, but helps establish the approximate time period when Dubois was David's pupil.

Delécluze refers to Dubois often in his description as an *antiquaire*.²³ The author specifically stated that J. J. Dubois, who, besides engaging in the "usual obscenity of his speeches," already showed dispositions which led him to become an antiquary.²⁴ The reference to the word *obscenité* is ambiguous but suggests that Dubois liked to view art with sexually explicit content. In fact, the reference seems to be more of a scholarly one; the term *érudition* may refer to Greek or other ancient artworks with sexual content, which were studied by many

¹⁸ Ibid. David was elected to the Convention in the fall of 1792, and thereafter became closely involved with French political life, including being a supporter of Napoleon much later.

¹⁹ Delécluze, *David*, 67.

²⁰ Schnapper, *David*, 182.

²¹ Ibid., 185.

²² Delécluze, *David*, 196.

²³ Ibid., 415.

²⁴ Delécluze, *David*, 67.

French scholars at this time.²⁵

Apparently the young Dubois was also supported by a famous antiquarian, Alexandre Lenoir. One can find an inscription in an auction catalogue of the collection of the late Pierre-Nicolas, Baron van Hoorn Van Vlooswyck, written by Dubois, in which he dedicated the document to Marie-Alexandre Lenoir, “as a small token of the gratitude I owe him for his directing my studies.”²⁶ Lenoir was much more than just an antiquarian. At the time of Dubois’ dedication of the auction catalogue in 1809, Lenoir was the director of the *Musée des monuments français*, which he had opened in 1795 to save French art, architectural fragments, and historical artifacts looted during the French Revolution.²⁷ An early student of ancient Egypt, Lenoir was the author in 1814 of a book concerned with “Egyptosophy” and the Egyptian origins of all religions, *La Franche-Maçonnerie rendue à sa véritable origine*.²⁸ It may have been through Lenoir’s guidance and influence that Dubois became familiar with the eclecticism of those who believed in the esoteric side of the study of Egyptology.

It would be logical to assume, based upon the dedication by Dubois in the Van Vlooswyck auction catalogue, that Lenoir had taken the young Parisian under his wing. However, as Darius Spieth notes in his book on *Revolutionary Paris and the Market for Netherlandish Art*, there are other comments written in the 1809 catalogue by Dubois himself, which would support

²⁵ Erudition is defined in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as “extensive knowledge acquired chiefly from books : profound, recondite, or bookish learning.”

²⁶ Léon-Jean-Joseph Dubois, *Catalogue des pierres gravées égyptiennes, persanes, parthes, etrusques, grecques, romaines et modernes, formant la collection de feu M. Pierre-Nicolas, Baron van Hoorn Van Vlooswyck* (Paris 1809), 1.

²⁷ Darius A. Spieth, *Napoleon’s Sorcerers* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 79.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

the theory that Lenoir was a mentor of Dubois.²⁹ The Van Vlooswyck catalogue which contains the dedication to Lenoir was the first to be published by Dubois in his career. It dates to 1809, when Dubois was 29 years old. Dubois proudly listed himself as a student of David on the front of the catalogue, another indication that the auction occurred close to the time when he was in David's studio.³⁰ All of these facts, including the timing, the specific comments in the one catalogue given to Lenoir, and the inscription itself in that same catalogue, support the hypothesis of a teacher-student relationship between Lenoir and Dubois. With his position and education, and the respect given to him by others in his field, Lenoir was an important and influential mentor for Dubois.

Dubois had at least one other mentor early in his life, Aubin-Louis Millin de Grandmaison.³¹ Millin was also an important man in the world of scholars and antiquarians. He had been elected to the *Institut de France* in 1804 and was reconfirmed by the *Académie des Inscriptions* in 1816. Both of these learned bodies were highly prestigious institutions.³² Millin also was the editor of the *Magasin encyclopédique*, a French scholarly journal.³³ Perhaps even more importantly to Dubois, Millin was the curator of the *Département des monnaies, médailles et antiques de la bibliothèque nationale de France* and he wrote the *Medallic History of*

²⁹ Darius A. Spieth, *Revolutionary Paris and the Market for Netherlandish Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 178 and footnote 83.

³⁰ Dubois, *Catalogue des pierres gravées égyptiennes*, title page. Dubois often refers to himself as a student of David, but the mention is rarely on the title page of his auction catalogues.

³¹ Morris L. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 4th ed. (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2012), 374.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Alain Faure, *Champollion: Le savant déchiffré* (Paris: Fayard, 2004), 53.

Napoleon.³⁴ According to Hermine Hartleben, a biographer of Champollion the Younger, Dubois spent four months at the Borgia Museum in Velettri in Italy.³⁵ Cardinal Stefano Borgia was the founder of that museum, and he was an avid collector of Egyptian antiquities, which were displayed at the Velettri museum.³⁶ This collection included many Egyptian coins.³⁷ Millin was well aware of the Borgia antiquities, because he wrote about Borgia and his coins in his journal.³⁸

Champollion and Dubois biographers agree that Champollion met Dubois in 1807 through Millin.³⁹ The relationship with Millin was important to Dubois, although it is described in a variety of ways. Millin was described as the *maître* of Dubois in Dubois' obituary and as a collaborator in a Champollion biography. Dubois was described as Millin's assistant at the *Bibliothèque nationale*.⁴⁰ Dubois was writing a new introduction to Millin's book on incised antiquities at the time of Dubois' death.⁴¹ All of these references support the idea that Millin was a mentor for Dubois, at least at the beginning of Dubois' professional career. The fact that Dubois was writing a new introduction to Millin's book at the time of Dubois' death emphasizes

³⁴ A. L. Millin, *Medallic History of Napoleon* (London: Rodwell and Martin, 1819). He did not complete the book before his death.

³⁵ Hermine Hartleben, *Champollion: Sein Leben and Sein Werk*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1906), 1:107-108. Hartleben does not identify the exact dates when Dubois was in Vilettri, Italy.

³⁶ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 70. The Borgia collection is now in the Naples Museum.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 599. Author refers to the entry regarding Georg Zoega, who published a catalogue on the Borgia Egyptian coins.

³⁸ Guiseppe Baraldi, *Notizia Biografica sul Cardinale Stefano Borgia di Velletri* (Modena : Tipocrafi Reali, 1830), 9.

³⁹ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 162; Hartleben, *Champollion*, 1:107-108; Kanawaty, "Un Conservateur," 95.

⁴⁰ Anonymous, "Découvertes et Nouvelles: Nécrologie," 602; Faure, *Champollion*, 114; Hartleben, *Champollion*, Vol.1, 107-108.

⁴¹ Anonymous, "Découvertes et Nouvelles: Nécrologie," 692.

the long-lasting impact of the relationship.

Millin's book on French medals, completed after he died, mentions coins which were designed by others but engraved by Dubois. One example is Plate XLV, number 242 on Millin's list, which dates to 1809, and was designed by Vivant Denon.⁴² It is described as showing a river god reclining on his urn, accompanied by a French standard eagle.⁴³ Another example, Plate VII, portrays Napoleon's Victory at the St. Bernard Pass, and is dated 1800.⁴⁴ Denon also designed a Victory figure, which Dubois then engraved on the coin.⁴⁵

A third coin, dated 1798, commemorates the Battle of the Pyramids (fig.1). It is not reproduced in the Millin book, but like the ones shown by Millin, it is about Napoleon's



Fig. 1 Léon- Jean-Joseph Dubois (engraver) Bronze medal of Napoleon Bonaparte and the Battle of the Pyramids, ca. 1798, bronze medal, 57 millimeters in diameter, British Museum, Inventory No. 1906,1103.1382.

⁴² Millin, *Medallic History of Napoleon*, 82.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

triumphs. One copy of the medal is preserved in the collection at the British Museum. It commemorates the Battle of the Pyramids from Napoleon's Egyptian campaign.⁴⁶ No artist is listed, but according to the British Museum, the obverse side of the medal shows Napoleon in the center, in military dress with his characteristic bicorne hat.⁴⁷ The name "J J Dubois F" is also shown on this side of the coin.⁴⁸

These Napoleonic coins, engraved by Dubois, may have been a money-making occupation for him, and they may account for his time spent between his education and his first meeting with Champollion. He may also have been conscripted into the French military, but there is no reference to his military service in any of the known sources. We know only that his artistic interest began prior to his meeting with Champollion, who often referred to Dubois in his writings as a friend who was pre-occupied with art.⁴⁹ Although much of Dubois' life after 1807 was concerned with Champollion's work, he did collaborate with other antiquarians throughout his career.

⁴⁶ Jean-Joseph Dubois, "Bronze medal of Napoleon Bonaparte and the Battle of the Pyramids," Inventory No. 1906,1103.1382, British Museum.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.; The "F" indicates that he was the engraver.

⁴⁹ Gaston Maspero, "Lettres et Journaux écrits pendant le voyage d'Égypte," 2 vols. In *Lettres et journaux de Champollion Le Jeune* (Paris 1909), 2:133.

Chapter Two. The Auction Catalogues

The Van Vlooswyck catalogue was the first of many auction catalogues edited by Dubois. In total Dubois wrote at least sixty-six of these catalogues between 1809 and 1842. He was not the auctioneer, but the expert who described and catalogued the items for sale. Most of these auctions were sales of property belonging to a recently deceased owner; however, a few sales appeared to consist of the consignments belonging to either Dubois or another living person. Most of the sales were of Egyptian, Persian, or Greek antiquities; however, Dubois wrote catalogues for all kinds of art, including modern and Renaissance items. The antiquarian continued to exercise his profession until he reached his sixties, writing description after description of art, antiquities, and other personal property.

As described above, the property of the late Baron Pierre-Nicolas Van Vlooswyck was auctioned in 1809 in Paris.⁵⁰ The Baron Van Vlooswyck was a member of the *Académie royale des Antiquités de Cassel* and a wealthy Dutch collector.⁵¹ Dubois' description of every lot to be auctioned was very detailed. At the beginning of the Vlooswyck catalogue, Dubois explained how he organized the items listed.⁵² He specifically stated that Van Vlooswyck intended the auction catalogue to imitate the one prepared for Baron von Stoch [sic], which was written by Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Winckelmann was a German scholar and art historian whose writings effectively created the framework for the stylistic and developmental analysis of ancient material culture.⁵³ However, as Dubois opined, despite the scholar's fame, he did not want to

⁵⁰ Dubois, *Catalogue des pierres gravées égyptiennes*, title page.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 4.

⁵³ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 584.

follow Winckelmann's organization of the antiquities. He wished to divide the lots by nations, which resulted in his decision to follow the Persians with the Sassanides, who are also Persians, and to combine the Greeks and the Romans, because it was hard to distinguish the two types of art from each other.⁵⁴ Dubois divided the catalogue into sections based upon groups, listing various items identified by nationalities, instead of by types of property as, apparently, Winckelmann had done.⁵⁵

The 1809 Van Vlooswyck auction catalogue marked an important step for Dubois, because this was his first publication in which he decided on an informed and scholarly methodology of antiquities. One of the most prominent collections for which he edited an auction catalogue was that of the late Vivant Denon, a famous printmaker, antiquarian, and first director of the Louvre Museum, who was also a leading collector of antiquities. Denon had traveled to Egypt with Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798, and had written and illustrated a book about the temples and landscapes he saw there, the *Voyage dans la basse et la haute Égypte, pendant les campagnes du Général Bonaparte*.⁵⁶ The book was a bestseller, and its two volumes fascinated European readers with an interest in Egyptology. As a result of Denon's importance, and the depth of his collections, the catalogue had 304 pages to which a detailed index was added.⁵⁷

The Denon auction itself was scheduled for 1826 (the owner had died in the previous

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la basse et la haute Égypte, pendant les campagnes du Général Bonaparte*, 2 vols. (Paris: P. Didot, 1802).

⁵⁷ L. J. J. Dubois, *Description des objets d'art qui composent le cabinet de feu M. Le Baron V. Denon*, 2 vols. (Paris: Hippolyte Tiliard, 1826).

year). The items listed in the Denon auction catalogue consisted of more than just antiquities; in addition to ancient art, the possessions to be auctioned included historical and modern artworks. Some 1,390 lots are described. For the Egyptian lots, Dubois referenced not only Champollion's relatively new book on the hieroglyphic writing used by Egyptians, but also Denon's book on his travels in Egypt. Dubois noted when an item for sale had been the subject of a drawing in Denon's book.⁵⁸ In another reference, Dubois translated the inscription on a scarab as "Moeris, chéri d'Amon-Ra."⁵⁹ The translation of the inscription was possible because Champollion had deciphered Egyptian writing.

Bodies and coffins were also part of the sale. Nineteen mummies of humans and animals are described in the auction catalogue, with entries varying from mummies and body parts to elaborate coffins.⁶⁰ For example, lot 247 is described as two hands of a female mummy wearing hammered gold bracelets.⁶¹ A mummiform coffin containing funerary texts is listed in the catalogue at lot 241.⁶²

Many lots in the Egyptian part of the sale were scarabs or other small items, but stelae and statuettes also appeared. So did manuscripts. One papyrus is noted as having been given to Denon by Napoleon.⁶³ This particular manuscript featured Osiris, Isis, Horus and Nephthys, and was published earlier by Denon.⁶⁴ A total of 265 Egyptian items were described in the catalogue, although there were references to Egypt in some of the other categories. The mere quantity of the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 4, 7, 10.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 50-56.

⁶¹ Ibid., 55.

⁶² Ibid., 52-53.

⁶³ Ibid., 47.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

lots resulted in a three-day preview period and a sale immediately following on May 1, 1826.⁶⁵

The size of the sale resulted in a successful return for the Denon estate.

In 1818 Dubois prepared the catalogue of Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste Choiseul-Gouffier, a French diplomat and scholar, who had served as the French ambassador to Constantinople from 1784 to 1791 and who was an inveterate traveler.⁶⁶ Dubois carefully listed the deceased's titles on the opening page of the auction catalogue.⁶⁷ By this point Dubois had written catalogues for many important people, but the Choiseul-Gouffier sale was different because the owner had been a fellow antiquarian and colleague.⁶⁸ Dubois himself had traveled to gather some of the antiquities in the collection of Choiseul-Gouffier, as described in Chapter One of this thesis.

Claude-Madeleine Grivaud de La Vincelle was not a statesman like Choiseul-Gouffier, but he was also a collector of Greek and Egyptian antiquities.⁶⁹ On the title page of his auction catalogue, Dubois described Grivaud de La Vincelle as a *garde du livre de la Pairie*, (keeper of the books of the peerage). Most of the de La Vincelle auction consisted of Greek antiquities, with only eight lots listed under the category of "subjects related to Egypt."⁷⁰

This auction catalogue contained 454 lots on 74 pages, but Dubois' description of one lot in particular stands out. Lot 212 is described as a rock crystal amulet with an intaglio design of a

⁶⁵ Ibid, back cover.

⁶⁶ L. J. J. Dubois, *Catalogue d'antiquités égyptiennes, grecques, romaines et celtiques formant la collection de feu M. Le Cte De Choiseul-Gouffier* (Paris, 1818).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ L. J. J. Dubois, *Description des pierres gravées, antiques et modernes, qui composent la collection de feu M. Grivaud de la Vincelle* (Paris, 1820).

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1.

centauress, a hybrid of a woman and a horse. Dubois highlighted it as “very interesting,” because the engraving was of a complete body of a woman, without the usual horse’s legs in front.⁷¹

Dubois listed other examples of depictions of a centauress of which he was aware and wrote five paragraphs on this one amulet, when the description of most other lots consisted of a sentence or two.⁷²

Dubois also prepared the auction catalogue for Léon Dufourny, who was a prominent architect and collector of works of art.⁷³ Dufourny was furthermore a collector of books, and this catalogue was a description of his library filled with works on art, architecture, and antiquity. The first book listed was important to those interested in the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics. The *Hori Apoillinis Selecta Hieroglyphica* was published in 1606; it is more commonly known as the manuscript of Horapollo.⁷⁴ Little is known about the origin or author of this book on Egyptian hieroglyphics, which was found on the Greek island of Andros in 1419, and was subsequently copied and distributed throughout Europe.⁷⁵ It constituted the primary classical treatise on the Egyptian writing used by Europeans before Champollion and was considered for centuries as the ultimate authority on the subject; unfortunately, this book contained an erroneous and misleading conception of hieroglyphics.⁷⁶ The Dufourny auction occurred in 1823, one year after Dubois’ friend Champollion had presented his paper on his translation of Egyptian

⁷¹ Ibid., 53.

⁷² Ibid., 54.

⁷³ M. Dubois, *Catalogue des livres de la bibliothèque de feu M. L. Dufourny* (Paris, 1823).

⁷⁴ Erik Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs in European Traditions* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1961), 47.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 65.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

hieroglyphics, the *Lettre à M. Dacier*.⁷⁷ The Horapollo book not only stimulated the theoretical and literary studies of Egyptian hieroglyphs for Europeans like Champollion the Younger, but its elaborate descriptions of the hieroglyphic signs also contributed to an artistic tradition of the decorative use of the Egyptian alphabet.⁷⁸ This tradition may have influenced Dubois in his illustrations in the *Panthéon*, which portrayed Egyptian deities. Dubois began illustrating Champollion's first 1823 installment of the *Panthéon* illustrations in the same year as he organized the Dufourny auction.⁷⁹

Dubois also prepared catalogues for sales which were not after-death auctions. Perhaps Dubois' last sale was for the Comte James de Pourtalès-Gorgier, who was alive at the time of the sale of his collection in 1842.⁸⁰ This was a very professionally edited catalogue, with an illustration of a prestigious lot (lot 185) on the frontispiece, a "bas-relief" panel painting with ornate frame in the style of Albrecht Dürer (fig. 2).⁸¹ The drawing that was reproduced on the frontispiece is unsigned. There were few, if any, antiquities in this sale, and the auction catalogue itself describes the offerings as ranging from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to the modern era. The drawing is the sole introduction to the auction catalogue.⁸²

Dubois also wrote catalogues for anonymous sales. These were probably simply

⁷⁷ Jean-François Champollion, *Lettre à M. Dacier, secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, relative à l'alphabet des hiéroglyphs phonétiques employés par les Égyptiens pour inscrire sur leurs monuments les titres, les noms et les surnoms des souverains grecs et romaines* (Paris: F. Didot Pere et Fils, 1822).

⁷⁸ Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt*, 65.

⁷⁹ The book was released in multiple parts by subscription. See Chapter Four of this Thesis.

⁸⁰ J. J. Dubois, *Description des Objets d'Art du Moyen Age, de la Renaissance et Modernes, Faisant Partie des Collections de M. Le Comte De Pourtalès-Gorgier* (Paris, 1842).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

consignment sales of items which Dubois or other dealers owned. An auction from 1825, for example, was accompanied by a catalogue which lists “antiquities, paintings, cups, lacquers,

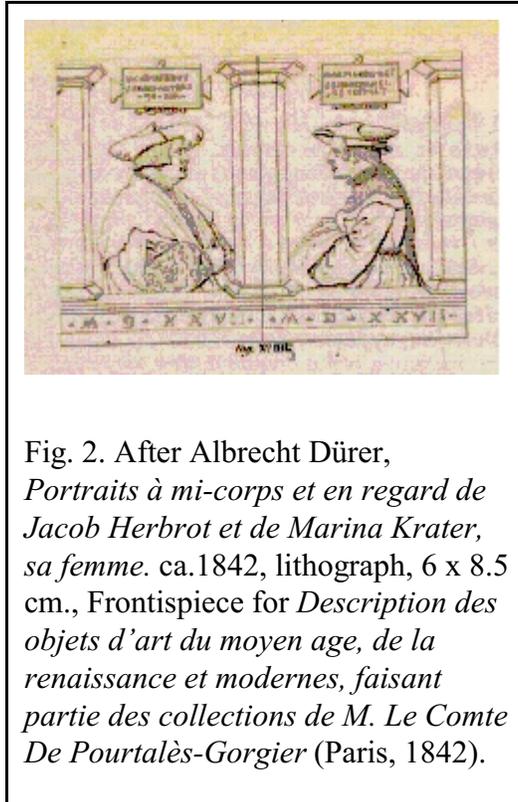


Fig. 2. After Albrecht Dürer, *Portraits à mi-corps et en regard de Jacob Herbrot et de Marina Krater, sa femme.* ca.1842, lithograph, 6 x 8.5 cm., Frontispiece for *Description des objets d’art du moyen age, de la renaissance et modernes, faisant partie des collections de M. Le Comte De Pourtalès-Gorgier* (Paris, 1842).

porcelains, drawings and engravings, manuscripts, and other curious objects.”⁸³ The contents of this sale are separated into only two groups, antiquities and paintings. The footnotes for some of the antiquities refer back to Dubois’ own illustrations in Champollion’s book on Egyptian mythology, the *Panthéon*.⁸⁴

As noted above, the auction sales of antiquities involved interesting and sometimes

⁸³ M. Dubois, *Catalogue des antiquités, tableaux, coupes, laques, porcelaines, dessins et gravures, manuscrits, et autres objets curieux* (Paris: Dubois, 1825).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

important items. A very famous and historically important object described by Dubois in one of the auctions was a list of pharaohs and a chronology of their individual reigns.⁸⁵ Jean François Mimaud, 1773-1837, was a French diplomat and collector.⁸⁶ Because he was the consul-general of France to Egypt, he was instrumental in bringing the obelisk now on the Place de la Concorde in Paris from its original location in Luxor, Egypt.⁸⁷ Mimaud's large collection of Egyptian antiquities was sold at auction on December 18, 1837. The sale contained 588 lots.⁸⁸ One of the most famous objects was the Table of Kings of Abydos, a chronological list of the Egyptian pharaohs created in antiquity, found on a wall in the temple of the Pharaoh Seti I at Abydos, Egypt, a list which is now owned by the British Museum.⁸⁹ Dubois described this particular item over a number of pages in his catalogue.⁹⁰ The King list was an important object which allowed Egyptologists to determine historical dates for events in Ancient Egypt, because Egyptians used dates tied to the individual pharaohs to record events. One-hundred and fifty-eight items of the Mimaud collection, with the exclusion of the Abydos King List, were purchased by the Louvre, where they are still considered to be a valuable part of the Egyptian department.⁹¹

A smaller but historically important sale concerned the estate of the late Jean-Jacques Castex, a prominent French sculptor from Toulouse.⁹² Castex had accompanied Napoleon's

⁸⁵ J. J. Dubois, *Description des antiquités égyptiennes de feu M. J.-F. Mimaud* (Paris: Panckoucke, 1837), 19.

⁸⁶ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 375.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Donald Malcolm Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 39.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Dubois, *Description des Antiquités Égyptiennes*, 19-28.

⁹¹ Andreu Guillemette, Marie-Hélène Rutschowskaya, Christiane Ziegler, *Ancient Egypt at the Louvre*, translated by Lisa Davidson, (Paris: Hatchette, 1997), 20.

⁹² Anonymous, *Zodiac of Dendera, Epitome* (London : J. Haddon, 1825), 6.

expedition to Egypt, and had been asked by Napoleon to create a reproduction of the famous circular Zodiac found by the expedition on the ceiling of the Temple of Hathor at Dendera.⁹³ Castex completed the model in Carrara marble in 1819, and, supposedly, an English speculator purchased it shortly after Castex died.⁹⁴ In 1822, Dubois wrote the catalogue for the Castex estate. Dubois listed in his section on *Sculptures Modernes* two related sculptures by Castex.⁹⁵ One was mentioned under the “Wax” section as a *Copie modelée en Égypte, par M. Castex, d’après le célèbre Zodiaque circulaire de Denderah Largeur*.⁹⁶ This was the wax copy of the Zodiac ceiling relief, which was also made by Castex. In the marble section of the catalogue, still under the *Sculptures Modernes* category, Dubois described a white marble item, *Belle copie du même Zodiaque, exécutée par le même artiste. Cet ouvrage, qui a demandé trois années de travail à son auteur, a été exposé au salon de 1819*.⁹⁷ This marble copy, supposedly sold to the unknown English speculator, was still listed as belonging to the Castex estate.⁹⁸ It may have been a copy of the original marble sculpture, or the sale to the British speculator never occurred.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 7-8.

⁹⁵ L.J.J. Dubois, *Notice des antiquités et des sculptures modernes de feu M. J. J. Castex* (Paris: J. M. Eberhart, 1822), 11.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Anonymous, *Zodiac of Dendera*, 7-8.

Chapter Three. Dubois' Passion for Egyptian Scarabs.

In 1814 Dubois traveled to the Levant to research Greek inscriptions and to transport items belonging to Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier, for whom Dubois would edit an auction catalogue a few years later.⁹⁹ During this trip he traveled to Smyrna and Constantinople to retrieve the items belonging to Choiseul-Gouffier and also to visit Troy.¹⁰⁰ Dubois prepared the engravings for the second volume of Choiseul's books, including the drawings of the inscriptions on Greek stones, medals and architectural monuments.¹⁰¹ The three volumes of Choiseul's book were published over a number of years, from 1782 through 1822.¹⁰²

Dubois returned from his trip and wrote his own treatise on inscribed artifacts. In 1817, after editing the auction catalogue for the Van Vlooswyck estate, Dubois published a book of his own about antiquities, called the *Choix de pierres gravées antiques, égyptiennes et persannes*.¹⁰³ It was dedicated to the Duc de Berry, who was the son of the future French king Charles X. In his dedication to de Berry, Dubois praises him and his ancestors, mentioning that they had collected and delivered important historical artifacts to the study of history.¹⁰⁴ Dubois provides no clues about de Berry, but it is possible that the Duke provided the financial and other support for the project.

The *Choix de pierres gravées* was mostly about Egyptian amulets and scarabs, even

⁹⁹ Kanawaty, "Un Conservateur, 91.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 93.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ L. J. J. Dubois, *Choix de Pierres Gravees Antiques, Egyptiennes et Persannes*, (Paris: J. M. Eberhart, 1817).

¹⁰⁴ Dubois, *Choix de Pierres Gravees Antiques*, n.p.

though the trip which preceded it did not include Egypt. Almost all of the items that Dubois discussed in *Choix* were scarabs or scaraboid jewels. Scarabs are small, incised gems or amulets, which were first created in Egypt but distributed through trade across the ancient world, including Syria, Malta, Sicily, Italy and Corfu, where Dubois had just traveled when he wrote the book.¹⁰⁵ His purpose in writing this short treatise was to disseminate information about the gems he discussed.¹⁰⁶ A later scholar noted that the scientific contributions of Dubois to the study of Egyptian scarabs was later unjustly overlooked.¹⁰⁷

In the dedication and in the foreword to the book, Dubois wrote how he came to study he “engraved gems,” and how so little was known of them.¹⁰⁸ He compared the Egyptian and Persian items to those of Greece and Rome, and commented on the rarity of the former. Greek and Roman art was a source for European artists and sculptors, because the historical traditions and mythologies of classic art were well-known for centuries.¹⁰⁹ Egyptian and Persian antiquities, however, were not as well known, and the inscriptions found on them had not yet been translated.¹¹⁰ As a result, Dubois affirmed, he sought to collect various antiquities in order to describe and preserve their appearance for the future.

When he published his scholarship, he had already met Champollion, and was aware that there was a competition to translate hieroglyphics among specialists. This competition had already unfolded for centuries at this point, but the stakes in the current race to decipherment

¹⁰⁵ Dubois, *Choix de pierres*, 23.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Sliwa, “Dubois,” 324.

¹⁰⁸ Dubois, *Choix de Pierres*, 1. The direct translation of the French used by Dubois is “engraved stones.” However, the book is about seals, jewelry or handheld amulets.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

were higher in the community which Dubois was about to join.¹¹¹ He hoped, he said, that his descriptions would be preliminary lessons for the important studies to come.¹¹²

Dubois began his research by searching for ancient Eastern jewelry scattered in the hands of collectors or merchants, most of whom were located in Europe.¹¹³ He claimed to know more such individuals than other collectors and scholars, whose studies he called incomplete.¹¹⁴

Dubois wrote an essay for his book about Egyptian and Persian incisions on scarabs and jewelry, dividing the examples he had seen into five categories. Even though he could not read the symbols or even understand the concepts of Egyptian religion and mythology, he could see the consistency of the symbols and the differences in styles used. To him, it was simply a matter of distinguishing the various styles and symbols as well as the techniques of creating those symbols.

He divided the types of inscriptions into five categories with examples drawn from earlier scholarly studies or collections: (1) linear engravings, such as were found in the work by Anne-Claude Comte de Caylus, which are line drawings engraved in the stone; (2) intaglio engravings, such as were found in Vivant Denon's *Voyage d'Égypte*; (3) relief engravings, or cameos, as found in the first volume of the *Description l'Égypte*, which was a style similar to low relief sculptures of the same people who created scarabs; (4) embossed reliefs, also found in the *Description l'Égypte*, and (5) stamp engraving, which was common to the Greeks and Romans, and differed from cameos.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Iversen, *The Myth*, 88. Iversen states that the quest to understand and decipher Egyptian hieroglyphics started in the seventeenth century.

¹¹² Dubois, *Choix de pierres*, 4.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Dubois, *Choix de pierres*, 7-8. The *Description de l'Égypte* is a multi-volume series of drawings from the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Dubois again divided the various items by subjects, including hybrid human-animal forms, naming those deities which were known in the nineteenth century from Greek or Roman sources. He also listed animal forms and hieroglyphs found on these gemstones, and continued to footnote each of his descriptions making references to the *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques et romaines*, a book by the Comte de Caylus, an eighteenth century French antiquarian and early archaeologist, in addition to the *Description de l'Égypte* and Denon's *Voyage*.¹¹⁶

Dubois was also very detailed about how and from what material the engravings were executed, listing not only the common term used by merchants and collectors, but also the names used by professional mineralogists.¹¹⁷ Examples of the semi-precious stones used were quartz, jasper, rock crystal, lapis lazuli, amethyst, and emerald.¹¹⁸ In order to find out where these amulets or scarabs were created or where they were found, Dubois referred to discoveries of amulets in Egyptian tombs and in places where they were probably worn by travelers in the ancient world. He added in a footnote that some had been found outside Egypt “after the introduction of some parts of the Egyptian cult in these countries.”¹¹⁹ This statement amounts to a recognition of the trade in Egyptian art across ancient peoples living near the Mediterranean. The introduction of scarabs through trade and shared religion was an important step in understanding the provenance of items, which appear to be Egyptian but were not made in the country where they were found.

¹¹⁶ Anne-Claude Philippe de Caylus, *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques et romaines* (Paris, 1752).

¹¹⁷ Dubois, *Choix de pierres*, 19-20.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 23.

Dubois treated this investigation as an academic undertaking. He analyzed the materials in such a way to establish art's importance in the cultural history of Egypt and other countries. He acknowledged the fact that these stones were found in Egyptian tombs and specifically referred to heart scarabs, which are scarabs with quotes from Egyptian funereal documents such as the Book of the Dead, which are found bound in the mummy wrappings.¹²⁰ He concluded his essay on these items by saying that he had included accurate drawings of Egyptian engraved scarabs in the hope that this work would be helpful to scholars who are trying to decipher hieroglyphics.¹²¹ He warned of forgers who provided inadequate and misleading descriptions and even altered hieroglyphics.¹²² Furthermore, he said, at least one out of ten copies of ancient inscriptions contain strange figures, due to the caprice or negligence of the copyist.¹²³

Dubois recognized the importance of copying the designs and symbols on ancient Egyptian artifacts, even if they were incompletely understood. Champollion's influence at this time may have been relevant, but the decipherment of the Egyptian writing and language was still years away. Dubois clearly wanted to write a scholarly book to be recognized by the community of specialists. A later writer noted that the scientific work of Dubois and his contributions to Egyptian scarabs have subsequently been totally ignored.¹²⁴ His interest in this category of art was evident in his drawings of the scarabs, which were an integral part of the book.¹²⁵ These drawings were very detailed and apparently accurate, although Sliwa notes that there are a few

¹²⁰ Ibid., 22-23 The funereal documents are commonly called the Book of the Dead. Pyramid Texts, or Coffin Texts.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Sliwa, "Dubois," 324.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

deformations caused by an erroneous interpretation of certain iconographic details.¹²⁶

Sliwa calls attention to some important drawings at the end of the book on scarabs.¹²⁷ One example of his series is a large scarab commemorative of Amenophis III, showing a series of lion hunt scenes.¹²⁸ This scarab is found on plate 5:5 of the appendix to Dubois' book (fig. 3). Sliwa

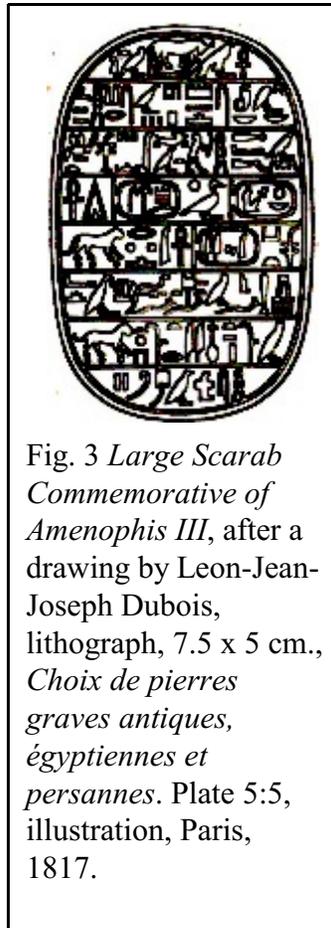


Fig. 3 *Large Scarab Commemorative of Amenophis III*, after a drawing by Leon-Jean-Joseph Dubois, lithograph, 7.5 x 5 cm., *Choix de pierres graves antiques, égyptiennes et persannes*. Plate 5:5, illustration, Paris, 1817.

advises his readers that this scarab was part of the collection of Nels Gustaf Palin, a Swedish

¹²⁶ Ibid., 326.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Orientalist and diplomat, who had assembled a remarkable collection.¹²⁹ Part of Palin's collection was lost in a fire at Pera in 1818, and another part was stolen after Palin was murdered in 1842.¹³⁰ Sliwa indicates that this particular scarab was lost, and that, as a result, the Dubois book is an important record because it preserves the appearance of a no longer extant piece of antiquity.¹³¹ There may be other representations of these scarabs, but the accuracy demonstrated by Dubois' drawing is very striking.¹³²

At this point Dubois was more than a collector; using scientific methods, he documented scarabs as they were known and understood at that time. Contemporaneously with the publication of this book, he had embarked on a new direction in his life, a position as an assistant to Champollion.¹³³

¹²⁹ Ibid., 326-327.

¹³⁰ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 414.

¹³¹ Sliwa, "Dubois," 328.

¹³² Ibid., 326.

¹³³ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 114.

Chapter Four. Champollion, Dubois and the *Panthéon* of Mythological Characters

Dubois continued with editing auction catalogues, but there is some confusion about Dubois' other occupations in 1817. Some biographers claim that in that year Dubois went to work for the Louvre as a draftsman of Egyptian Antiquities.¹³⁴ This affirmation cannot be confirmed through contemporary sources. However, Dubois did become a draftsman for the Egyptian Antiquities at the Louvre in November of 1826, a position for which he was selected by Champollion the Younger, who had been appointed curator of that section earlier in that same year.¹³⁵ In 1817 Dubois was busy writing his own book on scarabs and probably making his contributions to the Choiseul book.

From 1818 through 1842, Dubois wrote and published descriptions of antiquities and fine art in auction catalogues and books. He illustrated one book for Champollion the Younger and another book for Champollion Figeac, Champollion's older brother. However, most of his work was devoted to the Louvre, which he did join in 1826 as an assistant to Champollion and he stayed at the museum until his own death in 1846.

As is discussed in the first chapter, Dubois met Champollion in 1807 through the auspices of Millin. Dubois was ten years older than Champollion the Younger, and was a life-long resident of Paris. Dubois was in Millin's group and was involved with antiquarians. Champollion came to Paris from Grenoble in 1807 and studied under Silvestre de Sacy and Louis Mathieu Langlès at the Collège de France and the *École spéciale des langues orientales vivantes*.¹³⁶ He

¹³⁴ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 162.

¹³⁵ Genevieve Bresc-Bautier, Guillaume Fonkenell, and Françoise Mardrus, "De La Restauration à nos jours," in the *Histoire du Louvre* 3 volumes (Paris: Fayard, 2016), 2:39.

¹³⁶ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 114.

spent much of his time at the *Bibliothèque nationale*, where Millin was curator of the *Cabinet des médailles et antiques*.¹³⁷ Because Dubois was one of the antiquarians working with Millin, the meeting between Dubois and Champollion the Younger was probably inevitable. The two became friends almost immediately, despite the difference in age.¹³⁸ Millin gave Champollion access to the antiquities and commissioned his assistant Dubois to teach Champollion the basics of epigraphy.¹³⁹ Dubois and Champollion worked together well, as shown by their long-time relationship.

Another Champollion biographer, Hermine Hartleben, recounts a specific instance of the collaboration. On the first day of Champollion's school vacation in 1808, Champollion and Dubois made a plaster cast of an obelisk fragment with beautiful hieroglyphs.¹⁴⁰ Because of Dubois' time at the Velletri museum, he displayed a rare knowledge of both the materials and the craftsmanship common to ancient peoples in the construction of their works.¹⁴¹ Dubois and Champollion would go on outings with Millin to research antiquities.¹⁴² In 1809, Champollion the Younger returned to Grenoble, and he did not return to Paris on a permanent basis until 1821.¹⁴³

The relationship between Champollion the Younger and Dubois was both a personal and professional one. After being brought together by Millin, Dubois remained friends until the death

¹³⁷ Faure, *Champollion*, 114.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Hartleben, *Champollion: Sein Leben and Sein Werk*, 1:107-108.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁴³ Andrew Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-François Champollion* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2012), 132.

of Champollion in 1832, but there were times when neither one was in Paris. While Champollion the Younger was in Grenoble, Dubois stayed busy with his own work. He went on his trip to Greece for Choiseul, which took two years, wrote his book on scarabs and contributed to Choiseul's books. Champollion the Younger did not take Dubois with him to Egypt for his travels there in 1827-1829, choosing other collaborators instead. Champollion left Dubois at the Louvre to run the Egyptian department as Champollion had organized it. Champollion trusted Dubois to fulfill his mission at the Louvre rather than taking Dubois on the trip.

Champollion did write to Dubois more than once, usually on personal matters.¹⁴⁴ In an undated letter, for example, Champollion offered two tickets to Dubois to attend an exhibition of Egyptian artifacts organized by Giuseppe Belzoni, a popular excavator and adventurer, who died in 1823.¹⁴⁵ The letter may have been written while Champollion was in Grenoble. While on his trip to Egypt, Champollion also commented about Dubois to his brother, Champollion-Figeac, in letters, stating "Kiss Dubois for me, and tell him that I will write to him when I have something good to tell him."¹⁴⁶ In another letter to Champollion-Figeac, his brother wrote that what he had found in Egypt "would pique the curiosity and awaken the interest of our archaeologists and that of our friend Dubois, whom I regret, here more than elsewhere, not to have at my side."¹⁴⁷ He also expressed sadness about the death of Dubois' sister-in-law in another letter to Champollion-Figeac during the same period.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Edmond Henrotin, "Autographes des deux Champollion," *Chronique d'Égypte*. Vol. 48 (1973): 266.

¹⁴⁵ Brierbier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 52.

¹⁴⁶ Champollion, Jean-François, "Lettres et Journaux Écrits Pendant le Voyage D'Égypte," 2 vols., *Lettres et Journaux de Champollion*, (1909), 2:42.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 217.

Champollion finally did write a letter to Dubois himself, after promising Champollion-Figeac that he would do so. It was a long letter, dated December 27, 1829, which talked about Egyptian art and the Louvre.¹⁴⁹ Champollion the Younger was almost back home from his trip when he wrote the letter from the Port of Toulon.¹⁵⁰ Dubois had embarked to Greece, also in 1829, on a French scholarly expedition, but he may have returned to Paris by the date Champollion's letter was sent.

In the 1829 letter Champollion the Younger recounted that he had no less than 1,500 colored drawings prepared on the trip.¹⁵¹ Champollion praised the artists who had accompanied him on the Egyptian trip for their accurate representations of the monuments they had seen, criticizing earlier rendering of the same subject matter.¹⁵² Champollion added that Dubois would be surprised when he saw the drawings, which would create enough work for a lifetime.¹⁵³

Champollion also promised Dubois that he was bringing back antiquities to Paris, along with bas-reliefs which he had cut from the Tomb of Osiris at the Temple of Hathor.¹⁵⁴ He remembered that Dubois had admired the relief of Hathor which Belzoni had put in his exhibition.¹⁵⁵ The letter itself is a personal correspondence from Champollion to Dubois, which included some discussion about the Louvre, but was more about Champollion speaking to Dubois as his friend.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 455.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

There was also a more professional side to that relationship. In 1822, while back in Paris after his stay in Grenoble, Champollion published *Lettre à M. Dacier*, in which he announced that he understood the system by which Egyptian hieroglyphics worked.¹⁵⁷ Once he understood and explained the system, Champollion and others could decipher Egyptian writing. This achievement brought Champollion fame throughout Europe. However, Champollion needed income to allow him to continue his work, so he decided to publish a book which would be sold by subscription. This was the *Panthéon égyptienne, collection des personnages mythologiques de l'ancienne Égypte*, in which Champollion described individual gods and goddesses based on his knowledge of Egyptian mythology. He turned to Dubois to illustrate the book.

The plan for the subscription was that each installment would contain six divinities with the names of each deity rendered in the newly-understood hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts, including titles, the colors used for that deity, the deities' history and any details related to the subject.¹⁵⁸ One could subscribe through Dubois, or through a bookshop.¹⁵⁹ A luxury edition would cost a thousand francs, the basic edition only three hundred francs, and a single booklet could be had for ten francs.¹⁶⁰ There were enough copies sold to cover the cost of the first booklet issued, in part because the king purchased three subscriptions.¹⁶¹

Champollion based his commentary on Greek sources as well as on European writers. As a teenager, he had written a great deal on Egypt in Pharaonic times. When he developed this

¹⁵⁷ Champollion, *Lettre à M. Dacier*.

¹⁵⁸ Faure, *Champollion*, 448.

¹⁵⁹ Those bookshops were Firmin Didot; De Bure Brothers; Tilliard Freres; Treutel and Wurtz; Panckoucke; Goujon; Bossange Brothers; and Dondey-Dupré.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

earlier research on Egypt, Champollion learned that the Greeks had recognized their gods in those from Egypt.¹⁶² They equated Zeus with Amon, Apollo with Horus, Hephaistos with Ptah, Athena with Neith, Aphrodite with Hathor, and Isis and Osiris with the moon and the sun.¹⁶³ These interpretations of the Egyptian gods through Greek mythology were eventually determined to be false. Champollion was also familiar with the legends spread by freemasonry and made fashionable by the works of scholars such as Dubois' mentor Alexandre Lenoir.¹⁶⁴ Before he began deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics in 1823, he had asked his brother Champollion Figeac to obtain for him a copy of the book about Hermes Trismegistus.¹⁶⁵ Champollion the Younger did not scorn the doubtful Egyptosophy attributed to this fictitious author.

The concepts contained in Egyptian religion and descriptions of the gods and goddesses are complex.¹⁶⁶ The religion itself changed certain concepts over more than 3,000 years of Egyptian culture, and the information received from the Greeks and used by Champollion tended to come from the last millennium of Egyptian history. The use of the Greek interpretation of the Egyptian religion as well as the Egyptosophy legends coming from Europeans like Lenoir resulted in the *Panthéon* commentaries to be misleading at best. The initial installments provided a target for criticism from Champollion's enemies.¹⁶⁷ If Champollion had been able to read in the Egyptian language sources about the gods and goddesses, the information probably would have been more accurate. The *Panthéon* should have been written after Champollion's grammar on the

¹⁶² Ibid., 449.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Roy Adkins and Leslie Adkins, *The Keys of Egypt* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), 203.

language, instead of preceding it.¹⁶⁸

Dubois admittedly had a difficult job. The first plates of the *Panthéon* were drawn from the engravings found in the *Description de l'Égypte*, the color schemes used by Belzoni in his exhibitions, some objects brought back from Egypt, and even some fragments of papyri owned by Dubois himself.¹⁶⁹ Dubois did not know the importance of color used for the gods and goddesses by the ancient Egyptians. Nevertheless, his drawings were vividly colored, even gaudy, according to some readers. The life spans of these illustrations are longer than those of Champollion's commentaries, because Dubois' representations are more accurate. Not all of the planned installments of the *Panthéon* were published, because of Champollion's premature death. Many of Champollion's writings have been lost, along with Dubois' beautiful original colored drawings, which were the sources for the lithographs.¹⁷⁰

Dubois' reliance on information which preceded the decipherment of the ancient Egyptian language resulted in some curious examples of art reproduced in the book. For example, in the section entitled *Thoth Trismégiste*, Champollion told the story of Thoth / Hermes, which was a combination of the stories of Thoth, the Egyptian god which gave the world knowledge and writing, and Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, who was associated with the position of Pharaoh, with a mixture of Greek mythology and Egyptosophy.¹⁷¹ Dubois drew a specific representation of the god mentioned in this section, but the drawing belied the label of *Thoth Trismégiste*, or Hermes Trismegistus as he is more commonly known (fig. 4). The

¹⁶⁸ Faure, *Champollion*, 450.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 449.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 451.

¹⁷¹ Erik Hornung, *The Secret Lore of Egypt*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2001), 48.

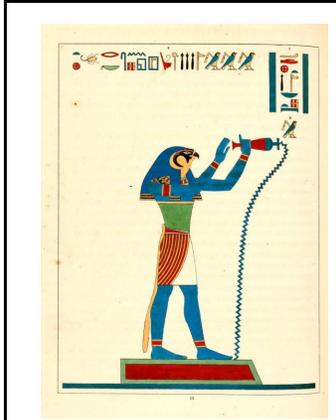


Fig. 4 After Léon-Jean-Joseph Dubois, *Thoth Trismegiste*, ca. 1823, colored lithograph, 18 x 13 cm. From Jean-François Champollion, *Panthéon égyptien, collection des personnages mythologiques de l'ancienne Égypte*. Paris: Firmin Didot, 1823. New York Public Library, NYPL catalog ID (B-number): b14073799.

iconography for Hermes Trismegistus is not the god in the Dubois drawings in the *Panthéon*.

One version of Hermes Trismegistus is described as an elderly but beautiful man, seated in an armchair, holding a tablet on his lap.¹⁷² He is not shown as an Egyptian god, because he was considered to be a man.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Ibid., 50-51.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 52. Hermes Trismegistus is based upon a real Egyptian named Imhotep, who lived during the Third Dynasty in Egypt.

In reality the god portrayed in the representation of *Thoth Trismegiste* by Dubois is the god Horus, a ubiquitous member of the Egyptian pantheon. Horus was one of the earliest Egyptian deities; he was a sky god and the son of Isis, who was always linked to the pharaoh.¹⁷⁴ He is usually shown as a falcon.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, Horus is not really a part of the Hermes Trismegistus story. The Egyptian god most related to the story is Thoth, whom Champollion does mention in his description of the mythological character.¹⁷⁶ Thoth, or Djehuty as he was called by the Egyptians, was a moon god who came to be associated with writing and knowledge.¹⁷⁷ This particular god could claim two symbols, one of an ibis and the other of a baboon.¹⁷⁸ The use of the Horus image to represent this god was mistaken.

This image would not be a normal representative of Horus. The Horus representation in this section, with the god making a libation, may very well be an accurate copy of a drawing of Horus, but was wrongly applied to the deity.¹⁷⁹ The picture itself resembles portraits at the Temple of Horus at Edfu, a monument from the Ptolemaic period, which was featured in the *Description de l'Égypte*.¹⁸⁰ Elsewhere in the book, in a commentary about the god Thoth, Dubois drew him correctly.¹⁸¹

Another misrepresentation of an Egyptian deity can be found in the section on Amon-Ra

¹⁷⁴ Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 200-201.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹⁷⁶ Champollion, *Panthéon égyptienne, Thoth Trismégiste*, n.p.

¹⁷⁷ Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods*, 215.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 216.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ Champollion, *Panthéon égyptienne, Thoth Deux Fois Grand*, n.p.

(fig.5).¹⁸² Amon-Ra was one of the most important Egyptian deities, worshiped as the creator god, a solar god and a member of the Ogdoad, the group of eight primeval gods.¹⁸³ The

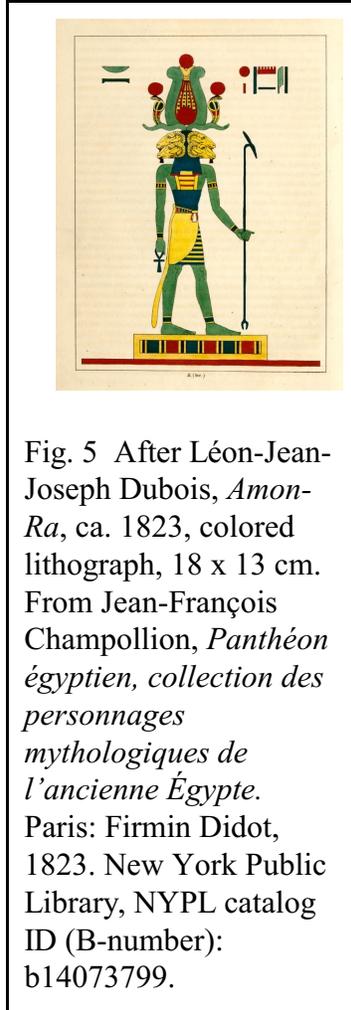


Fig. 5 After Léon-Jean-Joseph Dubois, *Amon-Ra*, ca. 1823, colored lithograph, 18 x 13 cm. From Jean-François Champollion, *Panthéon égyptien, collection des personnages mythologiques de l'ancienne Égypte*. Paris: Firmin Didot, 1823. New York Public Library, NYPL catalog ID (B-number): b14073799.

iconography of Amon-Ra is that of a man, wearing a kilt to which is often attached a bull's tail.¹⁸⁴ Sometimes, Amon-Ra is shown as a Ram, a Goose, or a Lion.¹⁸⁵ The drawing in the

¹⁸² Ibid., *Amon-Re*, n.p.

¹⁸³ Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods*, 92.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 94.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

Panthéon in this section is not Amon-Ra, but another god portrayed as a Ram, Banebdjet.¹⁸⁶ The name of this second god is translated as the *Ba neb* (Lord) of *Djedet* (the city of Mendes).¹⁸⁷ This god is shown just as Dubois depicted him, with two heads facing forward and two facing backward in a Janus style.¹⁸⁸ He is not Amon-Ra, as he is labeled in the book, and there is no section of the book attributed to this deity. However, Dubois' drawing is often used to represent Banebdjet, for whom there are few other representations in Egypt.

A final example of Dubois' art, which does not reflect the content of the commentary, is another section by Champollion on Amon-Ra. Dubois drew a picture of a *ba*, which is the soul of a man as it leaves his body at death (fig. 6).¹⁸⁹ The *ba* possessed all of the characteristics and personality of the deceased.¹⁹⁰ The soul of a man was not considered a deity, however, and was wrongly inserted into the commentary on Amon-Ra.

This is not to say that the drawings did not strike the Egypt-obsessed French as beautiful. Dubois used his talent to reproduce ancient art without the ability to identify the content of his representation. The pictures themselves were not connected to the commentary written by Champollion, but were usually accurate in their depiction of gods and goddesses as they appeared on tomb or temple walls. Dubois' illustrations remain vibrant representations of Egyptian deities

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ Jan Assmann, "Death as Dissociation: The Person of the Deceased and Its Constituent Elements," translated by David Lorton, in *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 88.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 93.

as Europeans understood them in the early nineteenth century.

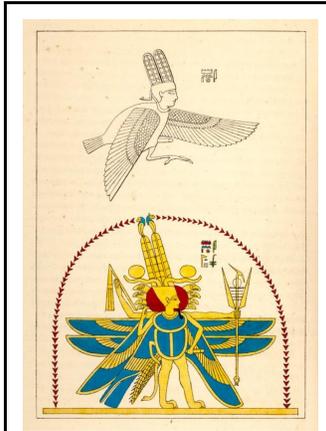


Fig. 6 After Léon-Jean-Joseph Dubois, *Amon-Ra*, ca. 1823, colored lithograph, 18 x 13 cm. From Jean-François Champollion, *Panthéon égyptien, collection des personnages mythologiques de l'ancienne Égypte*. Paris: Firmin Didot, 1823, New York Public Library, NYPL catalog ID (B-number): b14073799.

Chapter Five. Work at the Louvre as Deputy Curator and Restorer.

The popularity of Champollion the Younger gave Dubois a certain clout as an Egyptologist. In 1826, Champollion was appointed the first curator of Egyptian antiquities at the Louvre.¹⁹¹ He was able to bring in Dubois as his deputy curator later that same year.¹⁹² In 1827, Champollion left for his two-year trip to Egypt and Italy, and he also published his plans for the Egyptian section in the *Notice descriptive des monumens égyptienne du Musée Charles X* in that same year.¹⁹³ The description appears to be very similar to the auction catalogues and books published by Dubois earlier.¹⁹⁴ Champollion stayed for the opening of the Egyptian section, and departed for his trip to Egypt, leaving Dubois in control of the department.¹⁹⁵

While Champollion was gone, Dubois was busy with his museum work while producing more auction catalogues. In 1829, while at the Louvre, Dubois was appointed Chief of the Section of Antiquities of the Commission of Arts, and was later sent to the Peloponnese in Greece.¹⁹⁶ This appointment was an enlightening experience for Dubois, who was able to bring back to the Louvre Greek antiquities from his trip.¹⁹⁷ However, Dubois did not write a report for the expedition; ultimately, the report was edited by Abel Blouet and Amable Ravoisié, who were part of the Section on Architecture, Sculptures, Inscriptions and Views of the Peloponnese.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹¹ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who*, 114.

¹⁹² Kanawaty, “Un Conservateur,” 94.

¹⁹³ Jean-François Champollion, *Notice descriptive des monumens égyptiens du Musée Charles X* (Paris: L’Imprimerie de Crapelet, 1827).

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ Kanawaty, “Un Conservateur,” 96.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Abel Blouet and Amable Ravoisié, editors, *Expédition scientifique de Morée* (Paris, 1831).

The archaeology section was incorporated into Blouet's section on architecture.¹⁹⁹ There were rumors that Dubois was removed from his position during the expedition, but these were never confirmed. The ability of Blouet as an archaeologist has been recognized as exceptional and probably gave him priority to edit this section.²⁰⁰ Dubois returned to the Louvre and the Egyptian section after his trip to Greece.

On March 4, 1832, while in Paris, Champollion died.²⁰¹ The Father of Egyptology had procured the job at the Louvre for Dubois, and had protected Dubois politically. Without him, Dubois' job at the museum was endangered. Champollion-Figeac, the brother of Champollion the Younger, stepped in at this point, and reminded the skeptical Louvre administration that Dubois was very familiar with the works of Champollion.²⁰² The voyage of Champollion the Younger to Egypt and his subsequent illness had delayed the inventory of the Egyptian collection. According to Champollion-Figeac, Dubois was the only one competent to continue that work.²⁰³ Dubois himself spoke up, and wrote to the *L'Intendant de la Liste Civile du Roi* that he had been at the Louvre for seven years.²⁰⁴ He had been charged with the difficult restoration of antiquities and manuscripts in the Egyptian section.²⁰⁵ He had undertaken, he said, the classification of items in a systematic manner and brought order to a collection, already

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Alain Schnapp and Martina Dervis, "The Birth of the Archaeological Vision: From Antiquaries to Archaeologists." *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 21, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 2014):216.

²⁰¹ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 115.

²⁰² Kanawaty, "Un Conservateur," 97.

²⁰³ Ibid., 98.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 99. According to Kanawaty, the museum was under the control of an *Intendant de la Liste civile du roi* after 1830. The *Intendant* would have controlled funding and personnel.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

recognized for its importance in the history of art and elucidating its explanations for the religious and social practices of the ancient Egyptians.²⁰⁶

The response to the pleas by Dubois and Champollion-Figeac took time, but it was a favorable response. In July of 1835 Dubois was first promoted to the position of *Commissaire spécial Musée Royal pour les antiquités, monuments du Moyen Age et objets de haute curiosité*.²⁰⁷ He would be promoted again in January of 1837, five years after the death of Champollion the Younger, when Dubois was named deputy curator (*sous-conservateur*) of the Department of Antiquities.²⁰⁸ The Department of Egyptian antiquities was combined with other sections, including Greek antiquities, but Dubois continued to carry on the work of Champollion the Younger by enriching the Egyptian section.²⁰⁹ Dubois did so by acquiring new antiquities for the institution.²¹⁰ He remained at the Louvre until the day he died, in December of 1846.²¹¹

Dubois' tenure at the Louvre generated controversy after his death. In 1864, another Louvre employee, Paul Buchère, accused an unnamed individual of destroying Egyptian papyri at the museum.²¹² In the article titled *Champollion et ses successeurs* Buchère told his readers that funereal papyri in the collection of the Louvre were often adorned with a band of figures, including worshipers and deities.²¹³ According to Buchère, this unnamed employee cut wooden

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 100. "Special Commissioner of the Royal Museum for Antiquities; Monuments of the Middle Ages and Objects of High Curiosity."

²⁰⁸ Bresc-Bautier, *Histoire du Louvre*, 39.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Anonymous, "Découvertes et Nouvelles: Nécrologie," 692.

²¹¹ Bresc-Bautier, *Histoire du Louvre*, 39.

²¹² Paul Buchère, "Champollion et Ses Successeurs" in "L'Égyptologie," *Le Revue Nouvelle de Paris*, Vol. 6 (1864):19.

²¹³ Ibid.

boards and made small square boxes.²¹⁴ This employee would then cut the band of figures from the individual papyrus rolls and attach the art to the boxes, which the employee gave to friends and pretty women.²¹⁵

In 1907, the Buchère story was repeated by Gaston Maspero.²¹⁶ Although Buchère was relatively unknown as an Egyptologist, Maspero was one of the most prominent Egyptologists of his time, who held appointments as Professor of Egyptology and Professor of Egyptian Philology and Archaeology at the *Collège de France*.²¹⁷ Discussing the Egyptian antiquities at the Louvre, Maspero clearly identified Dubois as the guilty party.²¹⁸ Dubois, said Maspero, had original but bad ideas. One of those bad ideas was to cut out a certain number of vignettes representing gods individually and in groups from funereal papyri.²¹⁹ The cut-out pieces were then glued on wood and displayed at the Louvre to illustrate scenes of mythology or worship.²²⁰ Dubois allegedly repeated to those who wanted to hear the story that the texts of the funereal rituals contained horrible information and that they would always remain unintelligible to present-day individuals.²²¹ Believing that he was acting in the best interest of the public, Dubois pruned the writing from the papyri and kept only the art.²²² However, Maspero's account was not completely accurate in the basic facts of this story. He contended that Dubois' time at the Louvre as a deputy

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Gaston Maspero, "Notice Biographique du Emmanuel de Rougé," *Œuvres Diverses*. Vol. I., Bibliothèque Egyptologique, (1907), XVIII.

²¹⁷ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 359. Buchère is not even mentioned in *Who Was Who in Egyptology*.

²¹⁸ Maspero, *Œuvres Diverses*, 1:XIII.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

curator lasted only fourteen years, which was not true.²²³ This incorrect information casts doubt on the entire story.

Maspero added his own understanding of the story in a footnote. In that note he stated that in his early youth he had seen several of these exposed boards beside statuettes.²²⁴ The artwork remained on display, he said, until Théodule Deveria, who was the curator succeeding Dubois in this section of the Louvre, removed them.²²⁵ In the same footnote, Maspero disputed Buchère's version of the story. Dubois did not turn the boxes into gifts for his friends, because the deputy curator was not a dishonest man, Maspero contended. He mutilated the papyri without bad intentions, and he did not distribute the destroyed parts as gifts.²²⁶

Buchère's and Maspero's stories were disputed by Kanawaty, who wrote a biographical article on Dubois.²²⁷ She found that the information cited by Maspero was wrong, and she blamed Buchère for the misinformation.²²⁸ Kanawaty apparently looked at Buchère's personnel file at the Louvre, and found a letter from Deveria to the Superintendent of Beaux-Arts, which posed some questions about Buchère's mental stability.²²⁹ According to Deveria, the mental state of Buchère worried his employer.²³⁰ Buchère saw himself as surrounded by his enemies and had tendered his resignation from the Louvre as a result.²³¹ Apparently, Kanawaty was of the opinion that Buchère's accusations against Dubois had been tainted by his mental instability.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid., note 1.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Kanawaty, "Un Conservateur," 92.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

Kanawaty also disputed the opinions of the great Egyptologist Maspero.²³² Maspero's sources, primarily Buchère, were very weak.²³³ Maspero's own account was inaccurate with regard to the years Dubois had spent at the Louvre.²³⁴ Dubois had not been appointed deputy curator in 1832, as Maspero had stated, but had been brought to the Louvre in 1826, as an assistant to Champollion the Younger.²³⁵

The papyri story about Dubois has been repeated many times since Maspero's version of the story. The editors of *Who Was Who in Egyptology* include the legend in the short biographical entry on Dubois in multiple editions of their dictionary.²³⁶ Champollion's biographers also repeated the story, as do books on Egyptology about that period.²³⁷ Kanawaty is correct in her statement that Buchère's statement was weak, and he did not even mention Dubois' name.²³⁸ However, Maspero was a respected Egyptologist and scholar, and he affirmed that he saw these cuttings from the papyri which were displayed at the Louvre.²³⁹ His first-hand account gave the story credence.

Dubois did apparently cut something from the papyri, and the evidence of this action can now be found at the French National Archives. One papyrus listed at the archives sheds some light on the cuttings, and this information listed with the papyrus does not support either

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 162-163.

²³⁷ Faure, *Champollion*, 450; Jason Thompson. *Wonderful Things: A History of Egyptology, Volume 1* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2015), 178.

²³⁸ Kanawaty, "Un Conservateur," 92.

²³⁹ Maspero, *Œuvres Diverses*, 1:XIII, note 1.

Buchère's or Maspero's stories.²⁴⁰ The papyrus is called the "Papyrus Prisse," and dates from Ancient Egypt's Twelfth Dynasty.²⁴¹ The papyrus in question was stuck on cardboard in 1841 while Dubois was at the Louvre. Contrary to Buchère's accusations of papyri destruction, the Papyrus Prisse is described as one of the best preserved literary papyri of ancient Egypt.²⁴²

Another document in the National Archives is not as clearly related to Dubois' actions, but was owned by Dubois. Archival records state that the document identified as Egyptian 151, the Book of Breathing of Harsiesis, was purchased at the auction of Dubois' possessions after his death in 1847.²⁴³ Dubois may have taken steps to preserve this papyrus prior to his death, and the document does still exist in readable form.²⁴⁴ These artifacts survive because of Dubois' actions, and he should be recognized by scholars as a curator and restorer, both of which were important positions in nineteenth century Egyptology.

As Europeans learned about Egyptian monuments and art, they also discovered that those same monuments and works of art were being destroyed by their own actions and by those of the Egyptians themselves. Some Egyptologists and antiquarians were sufficiently concerned to warn the Egyptian government. One of the collectors of Egyptian artifacts, Consul-General Mimaut, whose property was auctioned by Dubois after Mimaut's death, was concerned about these losses.²⁴⁵ He had informed Muhammad Ali, the pasha (ruler) of Egypt in the nineteenth century,

²⁴⁰ "Papyrus Prisse," *Egyptien 183-194, Archives nationales française*, Paris, France.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ "Book of Respirations of Harsiesis," *Egyptien 151, Archives nationales française*, Paris, France.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?*, 55.

that the Temple of Hathor at Dendera was being quarried for a cotton cloth factory at Qena.²⁴⁶ Mimaut hoped that his warning would result in a termination of the destruction of Egyptian monuments.²⁴⁷ Champollion himself had tried to warn the same pasha about the destruction of temples, telling the Egyptian ruler that thirteen temples had disappeared between Napoleon's expedition in 1798 and Champollion's own trip to Egypt.²⁴⁸ The pasha blamed the destruction on Europeans but did ban the export of antiquities from Egypt.²⁴⁹

The need to preserve ancient art had been recognized for centuries for Greek and Roman antiquities, but the preservation and restoration of Egyptian antiquities was not as well understood. Part of Champollion's job at the Louvre, when he was first appointed in 1826, was to promote the preservation of Egyptian objects in the collection. In a letter addressed to the museum's director, the Comte de Forbin, dated November 25, 1826, the Comte de La Rochefoucauld, who was in charge of the Department of Fine Arts, accepted the proposal made by Forbin to name Dubois a draftsman of Egyptian antiquities.²⁵⁰ This letter detailed the tasks entrusted to him.²⁵¹ Dubois was responsible, in addition to drawing, to take care, under the watch of Champollion the Younger, of the restoration, classification and placement of objects that composed the Egyptian collection, together with all the work required to do this.²⁵² Although Dubois' title was that of draftsman, his responsibility included the restoration of the items in his care, and, to confirm this purpose, the funds to pay him came from the money assigned for

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 54.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 55.

²⁵⁰ Tanré, "La Restauration," 50.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

restoration works.²⁵³ After Champollion's death, and Dubois' re-assignment in the combined antiquities section, Dubois was asked to describe his job as it was performed which clarified his position as that of restorer.²⁵⁴ Dubois described his job first, as awarded in 1826, as "Draftsman of the Egyptian antiquities of the Royal Museum of the Louvre."²⁵⁵ Contained within this title, however, was the instruction to direct the restoration of the Egyptian monuments of the King's collection and to make a regular classification of these same monuments.²⁵⁶ During Champollion's trip to Egypt and again after Champollion's death, that position included the preservation of those antiquities.²⁵⁷ In a letter dated June 12, 1833, to the French Minister of the Interior, Dubois sought to obtain a title and increase in salary equal to his position as deputy curator of the antiquities section, a larger department of the museum than that which had held Egyptian art. He emphasized that his job was, in fact, directing the difficult restoration of numerous artifacts, including uniting the scattered fragments of art and manuscripts.²⁵⁸ In the letter Dubois continued that he had been preoccupied more than ever since Champollion's trip to Egypt and subsequent death to complete the work at the Louvre which was important to both Champollion and himself.²⁵⁹ Although the work particularly honored the memory of Champollion, Dubois was committed to make this duty worthy of the notice of the scholars in and outside of France.²⁶⁰

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

At this time, restoration was considered an artistic discipline.²⁶¹ Dubois certainly had the education and experience required for it, but there are few records to support his restoration process.²⁶² Dubois also was occupied with curatorial work at the Louvre. His detailed descriptions of items preserved the writings and style of the contents of his auction catalogues, as well as his own books on scarabs and other antiquities. Egyptian antiquities which entered the Louvre during his work there remain at the museum today. Even though there is not much information about what Dubois did on a daily basis, his work with papyri and other antiquities at the Louvre remains his legacy to the museum and to Egyptology itself.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid., 51.

Chapter Six. Conclusion

Dubois died on December 12, 1846, at the age of 66 as a result of a “malady of the heart.”²⁶³ Dubois’ obituary mentioned two specific projects on which he was working at the time of his death. One was the drawing of fonts intended to reproduce hieroglyphs typographically for the Royal Printing Office.²⁶⁴ These font designs were apparently never completed, although the obituary refers to the drawings as elegant, with pure lines, drawn from Egyptian pharaonic antiquities.²⁶⁵ Another project in the works at his death was a new edition of the *L'Introduction à la science des pierres gravées de Millin*, which had earlier been completed by his mentor, Millin.²⁶⁶ He was more versed in this branch of archaeology, according to the obituary, which would have made this new edition an interesting and completely new work.²⁶⁷ Dubois was praised as living exclusively for his science, which was certainly a complement to his studiousness and his scholarship.²⁶⁸

Despite the praise, the obituary begins by stating that Dubois was not a scholar and never pretended to be one.²⁶⁹ He was an expert on incised jewelry, such as scarabs, scaraboid jewelry and vases.²⁷⁰ His greatest contributions were the classification and storage of antiquities, as well as the acquisition of objects.²⁷¹ He knew the value of these type of antiquities better than anyone,

²⁶³ Kanawaty, “Un Conservateur,” 100. See also Anonymous, “Découvertes et Nouvelles: Nécrologie,” 692.

²⁶⁴ Anonymous, “Découvertes et Nouvelles: Nécrologie,” 692.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 691.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 692.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

and there was no single instance of interpreting the information about an artifact incorrectly, and other skilled antiquarians could rely on his judgment.²⁷² This expertise did not qualify him as a scholar for his contemporaries.²⁷³ According to the obituary, the position and the work he did throughout his life did not make him rich. The obituary states that he died in honorable poverty because he discharged his job with probity and disinterestedness.²⁷⁴

Kanawaty adds that Dubois earned the recognition of the *Legion d'Honneur* in 1842.²⁷⁵ However, the obituary did not mention this honor, and no dossier of the *Legion* with his name or birth date survives at the *Archives nationales*. His combined work as a conservator and expert in restoration of antiquities should have earned him more recognition. His obituary, surprisingly, used praise sparingly.²⁷⁶

The scholarly nature of his published works would seem to belie such modesty. The poverty of his personal situation supports the hypothesis of a life of scholarship, especially when one considers the amount of money which was transacted for some of the antiquities he described and sold.²⁷⁷ Nevertheless, his love for antiquities was clearly shown during his lifetime in his published work and in the trust of Champollion the Younger during his tenure at the Louvre. His work with scarabs, papyri and other antiquities was his legacy to the museum and to Egyptology itself. His auction catalogues preserve descriptions of the antiquities which were part of the study of ancient Egypt in the early nineteenth century. His assistance to Champollion throughout the

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid., 691.

²⁷⁴ Anonymous, "Découvertes et Nouvelles: Nécrologie," 692.

²⁷⁵ Kanawaty, "Un Conservateur", 92.

²⁷⁶ Anonymous, "Découvertes et Nouvelles: Nécrologie," 692.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

Egyptologist's life should be recognized as part of the history of Egyptology. Dubois should no longer remain "unknown."

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