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Egyptology and Pharaonism in Egypt before Tutankhamun

Sailing home to France for the last time in July 1914, retiring director general of the Egyptian Antiquities Service Gaston Maspero could look back with satisfaction on 116 years since Napoleon's conquest of Egypt, ninety-two since Jean-François Champollion's decipherment of hieroglyphs, fifty-six since Auguste Mariette's founding of the Egyptian Antiquities Service,¹ and thirty-three since first taking up his own post in Cairo. The French could perhaps be pardoned their sometime boast that Egyptology was a French science.²

This chapter begins with a brief review of the development of Western Egyptology over the long nineteenth century from 1798 to 1914. In addition to the French, scholars and archaeologists from Britain, Germany, Italy, and other European countries all participated in constructing the discipline. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Americans joined in. National and personal rivalries often subverted ideals of scientific objectivity and international collaboration, and Egyptology remained resolutely Eurocentric. The rather conventional sketch of the history of nineteenth-century Egyptology in the next few pages sets the stage for a central theme of the book: bringing in modern Egyptians—both those who struggled to establish Egyptology as a scholarly specialty and those who promoted ancient Egypt among the wider public. The career of Ahmad Kamal Pasha epitomizes the struggle to develop Egyptian Egyptology, and Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid stands out among the intellectuals who campaigned to popularize it in modern Egypt in the decade leading up to World War I. The chapter then turns to the critical years of World War I—a trying time for British and French colonizers, Egyptians, and all archaeologists alike. The hopes and disappointments of the Egyptian uprising of 1919 ('revolution' in nationalist terminology) come next. The

chapter concludes with an overview of the substantial evidence of pharaonism among the public on the eve of Tutankhamun's bursting on the scene in November 1922.

French and British Egyptology from Champollion and Thomas Young to Maspero and Petrie

Until Champollion's breakthrough toward decipherment of hieroglyphs in 1822, what Europeans knew about ancient Egypt was gleaned from the Bible; classical works by writers such as Herodotus and Manetho; and travel accounts by medieval and later European travelers—including crusaders, pilgrims, and merchants. From the Renaissance through the European Enlightenment, comparing classical accounts with on-the-ground observations in Egypt emerged as a new method of research. Humanist rediscovery of the classical texts of Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica* and the *Corpus Hermeticum* also fed mystical fantasies of pharaonic Egypt as the fount of occult wisdom. Such traditions passed underground from humanists to Rosicrucians and Freemasons and on to New Age circles today.

In 1798, Napoleon's expedition to Egypt opened up a new era. British, Ottoman, Mamluk, and popular Egyptian resistance quickly turned the expedition into a military disaster, but the accompanying French savants managed to salvage a scholarly triumph—the encyclopedic *Description de l'Égypte*. French soldiers digging fortifications also chanced upon the Rosetta Stone, which bore inscriptions in three scripts—hieroglyphs, demotic, and Greek. Seizing the stone as spoils of war, the British ensconced it in the British Museum, but their scholars, led by polymath physician Thomas Young, made little progress in deciphering its hieroglyphic text. A Frenchman won the honor instead: in 1822 Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832) announced his breakthrough toward deciphering hieroglyphs. By the time of his death ten years later at only forty-two, Champollion had published a grammar of ancient Egyptian, founded the Egyptian Department at the Louvre, led an archaeological expedition to Egypt, urged Egyptian governor Muhammad Ali to preserve antiquities, and inaugurated academic Egyptology through the chair created for him at the Collège de France.

Picking up on Champollion's legacy after a lull, Auguste Mariette (1821–1881) discovered the Serapeum—the tomb of the Apis sacred bulls—at Saqqara in 1850. Four years later, the accession of Muhammad Ali's son Said Pasha opened the door to Ferdinand de Lesseps's project to dig the Suez Canal. With French influence in Egypt riding high throughout Napoleon III's reign (1851–1870), Said appointed Mariette director of antiquities in 1858 (see fig. 8). Mariette obtained a monopoly

on excavation and filled the museum he opened at Bulaq in 1863 (the Egyptian Museum) with pharaonic antiquities. He achieved at least partial success in stemming the frenzied outflow of antiquities to Western museums and private collections.

In 1880, Gaston Maspero arrived in Cairo to found what soon became the Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire (IFAO). This put him on the spot to keep the directorship of the Antiquities Service in French hands when Mariette died in January 1881. Khedive Ismail's (r. 1863–79) bankruptcy and deposition at the hands of European creditors had opened the way for Col. Ahmad Urabi's revolt against European encroachment, Khedive Tawfiq (r. 1879–92), and Egypt's Turkish-speaking Ottoman elite.³ In 1882, the British bombarded Alexandria, defeated Urabi, and occupied the country. During his two terms directing the Egyptian Antiquities Service (1881–86, 1899–1914), Maspero's adroit diplomacy managed to keep it in French hands despite the British occupation. In 1899, Maspero negotiated an informal archaeological entente which prefigured the famous Anglo-French Entente of 1904. He welcomed British officials into the Antiquities Service, and in the 1904 Entente agreement, Britain formally recognized France's claim to direct the Egyptian Antiquities Service.



8 Auguste Mariette's sarcophagus and statue, garden of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. Photo: D. Reid.

Two months before Maspero sailed from Egypt for the last time in June 1914, his British contemporary Flinders Petrie (1853–1942) wound up his usual winter excavations and headed home to England. Petrie spiritedly continued the British–French rivalry over Egypt and Egyptology, which went back to Admiral Nelson’s sinking of Napoleon’s fleet at the Battle of the Nile, Champollion’s trumping Thomas Young in the decipherment of the Rosetta Stone, and British consul Henry Salt’s (1780–1827) contest with French consul Bernardino Drovetti (1776–1852) in collecting pharaonic antiquities for European museums. Britain was far behind France (as well as Germany) in establishing Egyptology as a university specialty and a profession. With only scant and sporadic state support, British Egyptology long remained the domain of private patronage and amateurs. Tomb copyist Gardiner Wilkinson (1797–1875) and his Orientalist friend Edward W. Lane (author of *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*) were neither university nor museum based.⁴ As an official at the British Museum for nearly fifty years, Samuel Birch (1813–1885) came closer to being a professional Egyptologist. He was also a sinologist, however, and never ventured out to see Egypt for himself. Birch’s successor, E.A.W. Budge (1857–1934), kept the British Museum active in Egyptology through the Maspero–Petrie era.

Petrie was thus not atypical in arriving in British Egyptology by a nonacademic road. This contrasted with his contemporary Maspero, who also first set foot in Egypt in 1880. Maspero came up through the elite schools of Paris and excelled as an academic, administrator, and museum curator. Petrie, on the other hand, was a self-taught field archaeologist with almost no formal schooling. He worked out meticulous techniques of excavation and record keeping, paid close attention to everyday objects, and published his results promptly. He refined stratigraphic excavation and established relative chronologies, especially with pottery, through seriation. Never lingering at any site for long, he dug all over Egypt and in Palestine, sometimes for the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF) but more often for his own Egyptian Research Account and British School of Archaeology in Egypt (BSAE). Archaeologists today are less impressed with some of Petrie’s other successive enthusiasms: believing in secret wisdom encoded in the architecture of the Great Pyramid, attempting to prove the literal historical accuracy of the Bible, and seeing races and racial conquests as the critical determinants of the history of civilizations.⁵

Alongside and sometimes overlapping with Petrie, the EEF (since 1919 the Egypt Exploration Society, EES) was another key force in British Egyptology in the 1880–1914 era.⁶ Novelist Amelia Edwards (1831–1892) and British Museum numismatist and Orientalist Reginald

Stuart Poole took the lead in organizing the privately funded EEF in 1882. Britain’s conquest of Egypt in the very year of the EEF’s founding formalized an imperial antiquities regime privileging Westerners. David Gange has emphasized the centrality of religion in shaping nineteenth-century British interest in ancient Egypt. Until after midcentury, apocalyptic sermons, literature, and paintings depicted it as a monstrous pagan land cursed by God for persecuting Moses and the chosen people. In the 1870s and 1880s, the emphasis shifted as Biblical literalists embraced archaeology as a scientific ally they hoped would discredit higher criticism of the Bible and skepticism of scriptural truths.⁷ The EEF’s early public appeals highlighted its search for the lost Biblical cities in the Nile Delta associated with Moses and the Exodus. The EEF soon broadened its horizons, and in 1892 a bequest in Amelia Edwards’s will first propelled Egyptology into a British university. She endowed a chair of Egyptology at University College London. As she had wished, Petrie became its first occupant.

The pharaonic emphasis of the January 1914 set of Egyptian postage stamps discussed in the introduction was in tune with Consul General Lord Kitchener’s archaeological interests. A collector of antiquities himself, he proposed to erect a fallen colossus of Ramesses II from Memphis in front of the Cairo train station. A stamp of Ramesses II issued in 1915 probably reflects this unrealized colonial project (fig. 7, row 4).⁸ Ironically, Egyptian nationalists—the regime of Nasser’s Free Officers—would accomplish the project forty years later (fig. 78.).⁹ The switch from French to English as the European language on Kitchener’s stamp set of January 1914 anticipated Britain’s declaration of a formal protectorate over Egypt late that same year. In the meantime, World War I had broken out, and Kitchener had been called home to become secretary of state for war.

The Coming of the Germans

As early as the 1840s with Richard Lepsius, Germans began to challenge the French for leadership in Egyptology.¹⁰ Germany’s and Italy’s late unifications—by West European standards—meant that their Egyptological activity was dispersed well beyond their eventual national capitals of Berlin and Rome. Late unification and the weakness of their universities may have encouraged some Italians to pursue the field under foreign auspices. Italian-born Bernardino Drovetti (1776–1852) collected antiquities while serving as French consul at Cairo, Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778–1823) collected for British consul Henry Salt and exhibited in London, and Giuseppe Passalacqua (1797–1865) became the first director of Berlin’s Egyptian Museum.

Richard Lepsius (1810–84) and Heinrich Brugsch (1827–94) put German archaeology on the map in Egypt itself. Just missing the chance to study hieroglyphs with the master, Lepsius arrived in Paris to study the year after Champollion's death. King of Prussia Friedrich Wilhelm IV personally funded Lepsius's archaeological expedition to Egypt from 1842 to 1845. Lepsius returned to a Berlin University chair created especially for him and later added the directorship of Berlin's Egyptian Museum. He published his expedition's results in twelve volumes—*Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Aethiopien* (1849–59). Although Heinrich Brugsch earned his doctorate at Berlin, he emerged as a younger rival rather than as a student of Lepsius. Arriving in Egypt in 1853 on a Prussian state scientific mission, Brugsch assisted Mariette in working on the Saqqara Serapeum. In 1864, he returned to Egypt as Prussian consul and from 1869 to 1874 directed Egypt's ephemeral School of Egyptology in Cairo. Based at the University of Göttingen from 1867, he contributed to all phases of Egyptian philology.

After forcing Chancellor Bismarck into retirement in 1890, Kaiser Wilhelm II worked to expand German influence in the central Ottoman Empire. Egypt, already in British hands, received less German imperial attention. The projected Berlin-to-Baghdad railroad potentially rivaled the Suez Canal as a link to India and the Far East. In 1898, the kaiser visited Constantinople (Istanbul), Damascus, and Jerusalem. German excavations in Greece and western Anatolia, driven by the reverence for Greece and Rome in German high culture, concentrated on classical sites. Biblical associations also came into play with German excavations in Mesopotamia and Egypt. The kaiser encouraged the founding of the German Oriental Society (Deutsche Orient Gesellschaft, DOG) in the same year he visited the Near East. The DOG grew out of a nongovernmental Orient-Committee formed in 1887 to sponsor excavation in Mesopotamia. Textile millionaire James Simon (1851–1932), a German Jewish patron of Berlin museums and charities, provided much of the funding for DOG excavations in both Mesopotamia and Egypt.¹¹

Lepsius's and Brugsch's work in Egypt had been only episodic; Ludwig Borchardt (1863–1938) labored to establish a more permanent German archaeological base there. Borchardt earned both a Technische Hochschule degree in architecture and an Egyptology doctorate under Lepsius's successor, Adolf Erman (1854–1937), at Berlin. Erman's priority in backing Borchardt's activities in Egypt beginning in 1895 was to obtain copies of texts to support his ambitious project of a Berlin dictionary of Egyptian.¹² Funded by the Prussian Academy of Sciences, Erman's dictionary challenged older French leadership in Egyptian

philology. Borchardt's excavations and research on ancient Egyptian architecture sometimes caused friction with his philologically focused mentor and others in Erman's circle back in Germany. After helping consolidate the temples of Philae before their flooding by the Aswan Dam, Borchardt directed an international commission to catalogue the collections of the Cairo Museum. In 1899, Erman arranged for Borchardt's appointment as scientific attaché at the German consulate.¹³ With funds from James Simon through the DOG and his own resources, Borchardt excavated Fifth Dynasty solar temples and pyramids at Abu Gurob and Abusir. In 1907 Erman arranged for the founding of the Imperial German Institute for Egyptian Archaeology (Kaiserlich Deutsche Institut für Ägyptische Altertumskunde), with Borchardt as director.¹⁴ Despite its impressive-sounding name, the sparsely staffed and meagerly funded Institute was not in the same league as IFAO. The Institute's headquarters were in Borchardt's privately owned villa in Zamalek (Cairo) and an adjoining villa acquired in 1908, and the "German House" he built for research at al-Qurna (Thebes) was privately funded and on land donated by Khedive Abbas II¹⁵ (see fig. 9).



9 The first "German House" at al-Qurna. Designed by Ludwig Borchardt, 1905; destroyed by the British in 1915. Courtesy of German Archaeological Institute, Cairo.

For the last three seasons before the war, Borchardt dug at Akhetaten, modern Tell al-Amarna. Akhenaten had moved his capital there from Thebes—a sharp break with the old gods in favor of the sole sun god, Aten. Borchardt's pioneering settlement archaeology contrasted with the usual emphasis on excavating tombs and temples. He left field supervision largely to his assistant, Hermann Ranke, but was on hand in December 1912 when the bust of Queen Nefertiti turned up in the workshop of the sculptor Thutmose. Chapter 3 takes up the uproar that followed the bust's public display in Berlin in 1923 and its publication.

America Stakes a Claim

Although the United States had no professional Egyptologists until the 1890s, amateur American interest in ancient Egypt was long standing and diverse. Tracing esoteric wisdom back to the pharaohs, Freemasons among the founding fathers put a pyramid capped by an "All-Seeing Eye" on the Great Seal of the United States in 1782; Americans still encounter it daily on the dollar bill. Bible-centered Americans saw Egypt as a land of plenty, oppression and plagues, divine deliverance, and refuge for the Holy Family. Classically minded elites associated the land of the Nile with Herodotus, Alexander, Cleopatra, Anthony, and Caesar. In the 1870s, American industrialists and financiers joined older elites uneasy about popular democracy in funding art museums in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia as a means of public education. William Vanderbilt funded the transport of one of "Cleopatra's Needles" from Alexandria to New York's Central Park, where the obelisk went up behind the Metropolitan Museum in 1881. The long-delayed completion of the Washington Monument four years later gave the District of Columbia the world's tallest obelisk.¹⁶

In 1896, Edwin Blashfield finished his painting *Evolution of Civilization* in the collar of the Library of Congress's dome. The figures representing Egypt and America sit side by side; civilization is shown as beginning in Egypt with "Written Records" and progressing around the dome to culminate in contemporary America, whose contribution is "Science" (see fig. 10).¹⁷

In the 1890s, American museums out to build up Egyptian collections subscribed to Britain's EEF, but aspiring Egyptologists headed to Germany for doctoral studies. Returning with German PhDs in many fields, Americans built research universities by grafting seminars and laboratories onto homegrown undergraduate colleges. Egyptologists George Reisner, James Breasted, and Albert Lythgoe were all born between 1865 and 1868, studied in Germany in the 1890s, established university or museum bases back home, led their first Egyptian expeditions between 1899 and 1906, and died between 1934 and 1942.¹⁸



10 Civilization from Egyptian dawn to American climax. Section of Edwin Blashfield's *Evolution of Civilization*, collar of the dome, Thomas Jefferson Building, Library of Congress, Washington DC, 1896. Photo: Carol Highsmith, Library of Congress, public domain.

Reisner studied Semitic languages at Harvard and went to Berlin intending to pursue Assyriology but ended up studying Egyptology under Adolf Erman. Erman arranged for Reisner to join Borchardt's international catalogue commission at Cairo. In 1899, Reisner led a University of California expedition financed by Phoebe A. Hearst, the widow of mining magnate George Hearst and mother of press baron William Randolph Hearst. Digging at half a dozen sites, Reisner worked out meticulous excavation techniques. After a plunge in gold mining profits forced Hearst to cut off support in 1905, Reisner returned to Harvard to teach Semitic archaeology. Harvard and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) agreed to cosponsor him on an Egyptian expedition. In 1910, joint appointments as assistant professor of Egyptology at Harvard and curator of the Egyptian Department at the MFA regularized the arrangement which kept him in the field almost uninterrupted until his death in Cairo in 1942.¹⁹

After trying pharmacy and the ministry, Reisner's fellow mid-Westerner James Henry Breasted also came to Egyptology through Hebrew and Semitic languages.²⁰ Standard Oil baron John D. Rockefeller recruited William Rainey Harper, Breasted's Hebrew professor at Yale, to found the University of Chicago. Harper dispatched Breasted to Berlin

for a PhD in Egyptian philology under Erman, and Breasted returned to spend his entire career at Chicago. In contrast to Reisner, a field archaeologist, Breasted excelled in philology and history. He eschewed the glamor of excavation and emphasized the urgency of copying and publishing fast-perishing inscriptions. From 1905 to 1907, a Rockefeller grant funded Breasted's epigraphic expedition to record the historical inscriptions of Nubia.²¹

In 1906, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA) and Brooklyn Museum joined Reisner and Breasted with field expeditions to Egypt, and in 1907 the University of Pennsylvania's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (University Museum) also jumped in. Financial tycoon J.P. Morgan came to dominate the MMA's board in 1905 and decided the museum needed its own Egyptian department and expedition. Alfred Lythgoe, like Reisner a product of Harvard and Germany, became Morgan's man. Lythgoe had studied at Bonn, learned field archaeology under Reisner, and in 1902 became founding curator of the Boston MFA's Egyptian department. Transferring to the Met in 1906, he founded his second museum Egyptian department and led the Met's expedition to the Middle Kingdom pyramid site at Lisht.²²

A German rite of passage was no longer indispensable. The MMA's Herbert Winlock had been fascinated as a boy with mummies in the Smithsonian, where his astronomer father was assistant secretary.²³ At Harvard in 1905, Lythgoe invited Winlock to join the Harvard-Boston Giza expedition; Winlock "accepted with a shout loud enough for the echoes of it still to fill my soul."²⁴ He followed Lythgoe to the MMA in 1906, excelled at field archaeology, headed the Met's expedition at Deir al-Bahari, and eventually directed the MMA.

Europeans often envied the resources American millionaires poured into Egyptology. The sixth American expedition in the field in 1907—the peak of prewar American field Egyptology—was financed by Rhode Island mining magnate Theodore Davis (1837–1915). Like Britain's Lord Carnarvon, Davis had the private wealth to dig as a hobby and made spectacular discoveries in the Valley of the Kings (1903–12). Unusually for his day, Davis relinquished most of his finds to the Cairo Museum, which named a room in his honor.²⁵

Maspero toyed with hiring one of Reisner's apprentices for the Antiquities Service until he discovered that the Harvard-Boston expedition paid them more in six months than his own inspectors made in a year.²⁶ The MMA in turn outbid Reisner and the MFA, luring Lythgoe and Briton Arthur Mace away with higher salaries.²⁷ In 1912, the MMA erected its landmark domed expedition house near Hatshepsut's Deir al-Bahari



11 Americans living in style: Dig house of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, al-Qurna, built 1912. Photo: D. Reid.

temple at Thebes (see fig. 11). J.P. Morgan thought MMA excavators should live in style, but his personal generosity came up short:

It was called Morgan House until someone realized that the great financier had merely advanced the money as a loan and then paid himself back out of museum funds; after that it was known as Metropolitan House.²⁸

Ahmad Kamal Pasha, Pioneer of Egyptian Egyptology and Pharaonism

Against this background of the prevailing Eurocentric narrative of nineteenth-century Egyptology, attention may now be turned to the countervailing themes of the emergence among modern Egyptians of both specialist Egyptology and a wider pharaonism among the general public. The same fateful summer of 1914 when Maspero left Egypt for good, Petrie for six years, and Borchardt for nine, the retirement of their colleague Ahmad Kamal from the Antiquities Service passed almost unnoticed.²⁹ Kamal devoted his life to a two-pronged struggle during the colonial age: to prove himself as a professional Egyptologist and to persuade his countrymen of the importance of their pharaonic heritage as a source of inspiration for modern revival and the struggle for independence (see fig. 12).

Five years younger than Maspero and two older than Petrie, Kamal was born in Cairo in 1851 to a Muslim father of Cretan origin who had probably entered state service under Muhammad Ali. In Cairo's elite Primary School (*Mubtadiyan*) and Preparatory School (*Tajhiziya*), Kamal learned the French that would enable him to enter the School of Egyptology when Khedive Ismail's minister of education, Ali Mubarak, opened it in 1869 and appointed German Egyptologist Heinrich Brugsch as its director. Mariette could not conceive of Egyptians as possible professional



12 Ahmad Kamal and the coffin of Queen Ahmose Nefertari from the Deir al-Bahari cache of royal mummies. Photo: É. Brugsch, in Edward Wilson, "Finding Pharaoh," as reproduced in John Romer, *Valley of the Kings* (New York, 1994), 139. As *Contesting Antiquity* was on press, an argument was made that this photo depicts not Ahmad Kamal but his colleague at the Bulaq Museum Emile Brugsch. See Dylan Bickerstaffe, "Emile Brugsch & the Royal Mummies at Bulaq," *KMT* 26, No. 1 (Spring 2015): 18–26.

colleagues and worried about German influence encroaching on his own antiquities domain. He refused to hire the school's graduates, and in 1874 the School of Egyptology closed. Unable to enter the field for which he had prepared, Ahmad Kamal had to fall back on teaching German in the schools and translating for state offices.

While a student, Kamal may have met the elderly Rifaa Rafi al-Tahtawi (1801–1873), who had shown an early interest in ancient Egypt, and would likely have encountered al-Tahtawi's school textbooks. After a religious education at al-Azhar, al-Tahtawi studied in Paris for five years (1826–31) while serving as chaplain to a student educational mission of Muhammad Ali's. Under the tutelage of Edmé-François Jomard, an engineer veteran of Napoleon's Egyptian expedition, and Sylvestre de Sacy, the dean of French Orientalism, al-Tahtawi read widely in French. Champollion personally reported to Muhammad Ali on al-Tahtawi's progress in his studies.²⁰

Al-Tahtawi is mainly remembered for his book describing life in Paris, for heading a bureau that translated French works for use in Egyptian schools, and for editing official publications. In 1835 Muhammad Ali also put al-Tahtawi in charge of collecting antiquities in a precursor of the Egyptian Museum. In 1868, al-Tahtawi drew on both Arabic and French sources for a pioneering Arabic history of ancient Egypt up to the Islamic conquest.

Okasha El Daly's *Egyptology: the Missing Millennium: Ancient Egypt in Medieval Arabic Writings* showed that medieval Muslims were not necessarily hostile to ancient Egypt, as often assumed because of the blasphemous Quranic (and Biblical) pharaoh who persecuted Moses and the Israelites. Sufis and other Muslims admired the monuments and legendary wisdom of pharaonic Egypt.²¹ In both Coptic and Muslim folklore, echoes of ancient Egyptian beliefs lived on.²²

Shortly before Mariette died in January 1881, Prime Minister Riyad Pasha secured, probably at the urging of minister of education Ali Mubarak, Ahmad Kamal's appointment as secretary translator at the Bulaq Museum. More open-minded than Mariette, Maspero supported the small school of Egyptology Kamal directed at the museum from 1881 to 1886 and hired several of its graduates. Unfortunately the school was sacrificed in order to fund the hires.

Maspero's successor, Eugène Grébaut (1846–1915, in office 1886–92),²³ advertised an opening that ruled out Egyptians: it required knowledge of hieroglyphs, hieratic, demotic, Coptic, Greek, and Latin. Grébaut's student Georges Daressy won the post. Nevertheless, Grébaut did bring Kamal into the Antiquities Service cadre as assistant curator, if only as a maneuver to keep Britons out. When Kamal heard a rumor that H. Brugsch's younger brother Émile Brugsch was leaving his more senior assistant curatorship and that foreigners coveted the post, he petitioned Prime Minister Mustafa Fahmi:

The sole indigenous Egyptologist and former student of Brugsch Pasha . . . I have been waiting during twenty-two years of government service to be promoted and rewarded for my sincere and beneficial services to the country. . . . Being assistant curator and in view of my seniority, merit, and Egyptian law, I respectfully take the liberty of confidentially asking you to help me obtain this post despite all foreign demands.²⁴

Kamal appended an Arabic note to his petition in French, pointing out that although a French assistant curator (Daressy) had similar knowledge and education, he himself also knew Arabic and had twenty-one years of service to the Frenchman's six. Kamal's appeal on patriotic grounds

to hire an Egyptian went unheeded. In any event, É. Brugsch stayed on until January 1914. The Institut égyptien elected Daressy to membership a decade before electing Kamal. Grébaut's successor, Jacques de Morgan (1857–1924, in office 1892–97),³⁵ reportedly wanted to dismiss Kamal and refused to speak to him for a whole year. Upon returning as Antiquities director in 1899, Maspero entrusted Kamal with archaeological and publication responsibilities but did not promote him. In 1913, Daressy was promoted over Kamal's head to secretary general of the Service, and in January 1914 James Quibell passed Kamal by to become museum curator. Both Europeans were over a dozen years Kamal's junior.

Kamal followed a two-track publication strategy, writing in French for Western colleagues and in Arabic for the Egyptian public. His French works included two volumes of the Egyptian Museum's *Catalogue générale* and items in the *Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte (ASAE)*, often reporting on his salvage work at plundered sites. His Arabic publications—invisible to European colleagues—included a grammar of ancient Egyptian, which highlighted its affinities with Arabic, and Arabic translations of guidebooks to the Egyptian and Greco-Roman museums. He wrote for the monthly *al-Muqtataf* and in 1886 did a twelve-part series on archaeology for *al-Abram*.³⁶ Sometime between 1906 and 1908, Kamal gave a series of lectures on ancient Egypt at the Higher Schools Club, and in 1908–1909 he taught a course at the private Egyptian University. Only Lord Cromer's retirement in 1907 had made the university itself possible; he had blocked it out of the not unrealistic fear that it might become a center of discontent with British rule. Maspero sat on the Egyptian University's board and would have had to recommend his subordinate Kamal to teach the course.

Kamal's lectures impressed Taha Hussein, the blind student from al-Azhar who would become a controversial professor, writer, and public intellectual after World War I. Hussein emphasized the breadth of the European-inspired university's curriculum compared to what he had experienced at al-Azhar and what a cousin had encountered at Dar al-Ulum, a teacher's college that combined traditional Arabic-Islamic and European-style subjects:

I had not forgotten a day when I was arguing with my cousin, then a student at *Dar al-Ulum*, and he, the *Dar al-Ulumi*, had said to me, the Azharite: "What do you know about knowledge, anyway? You're just an ignoramus, versed in mere grammar and fiqh. You've never had a single lesson in the history of the Pharaohs. Have you ever heard the names of Rameses and Akhenaton?"³⁷

But now, here I was in a university class-room listening to Professor Ahmad Kamal . . . talking about ancient Egyptian civilization. . . . Here he was making his point by reference to words from ancient Egyptian which he related to Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac, as the evidence required.

No sooner had I accosted my cousin than I drew myself up in proud scorn of him and that *Dar al-Ulum* about which he had been preening himself. "Do you learn Semitic languages at *Dar al-Ulum*?" I queried. My cousin replied in the negative. Whereupon I proudly explained hieroglyphics to him and how the ancient Egyptians wrote, also alluding to Hebrew and Syriac.

Kamal's published university lectures only reached the Fifteenth Dynasty; for some reason, he did not continue the course the following year. An Italian and three successive Egyptians followed him in teaching History of the Ancient East. In the early 1920s, Taha Hussein taught the course as mainly Greek and Roman history, with special attention to Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt.³⁸

Meanwhile, in 1910 Kamal set up an Egyptology section in the Higher Teachers College. A second cohort of students entered in 1912. Maspero did not hire Selim Hassan or any other graduates, however, and in 1913 or 1914 the program closed. Ahmad Kamal's son Hassan Kamal went on to Oxford intending to study Egyptology but came home with a British medical degree instead. Kamal's students Selim Hassan, Mahmoud Hamza, and Shafiq Ghurbal had to fall back on teaching secondary school. A decade passed before Selim Hassan and Hamza found a way back to Egyptology. Ghurbal went on to become a noted modern historian. With no program for training in place, it looked as though another generation of potential Egyptologists might be lost. Partly due to Kamal's efforts, however, pharaonism was stirring among a wider public.³⁹

Pharaonism on the Eve of World War I

The proliferation of Western expeditions, swelling tourism, and Ahmad Kamal's proselytizing all quickened Egyptians' interest in the pharaohs. In the realm of politics, three events in 1907 spurred the creation of the Watani, Umma, and several minor political parties: the execution of peasants who clashed with British soldiers hunting pigeons at Dinshaway, Cromer's retirement after a quarter of a century, and an economic depression. Mustafa Kamil (1874–1908) of the Watani Party and Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (1872–1963) of the Umma Party were both nationalist lawyers in their mid thirties who included pride in pharaonic Egypt in

their political and cultural visions. Lutfi al-Sayyid in particular, as general secretary of Umma and editor of its daily *al-Jarida*, emphasized pharaonism as a vital component of Egyptian national identity.

The landed notables of the Umma Party included later national hero Saad Zaghlul, who had married into the Turco-Circassian aristocracy. (He married the daughter of Mustafa Fahmi, the prime minister whom Cromer valued for his docility.) Having prospered under British rule, Umma Party landlords did not push for immediate independence. Instead they advocated top-down leadership by notables and gradual educational, social, and constitutional reform.

Lutfi al-Sayyid's grandfather and father had both been *umdas* (mayors) of their Delta village in Daqhaliya province. He attended the village Quran school, made the critical transfer to the state primary school in Mansura, and continued on to the elite Khedival Secondary School in Cairo. At the Cairo School of Law in the 1890s, Lutfi al-Sayyid's contemporaries included three future prime ministers (Ismail Sidqi, Abd al-Khaliq Tharwat, and Muhammad Tawfiq Nasim). As editor of the Ummah Party's *al-Jarida* from 1907 to 1914, Lutfi al-Sayyid preached loyalty to a unique Egyptian nation rooted in the territory of the Nile valley and in the pharaonic past. The political/religious loyalty many Egyptians felt for the sultan-caliph in Istanbul left him unmoved. In 1910, Muslim-Coptic tension came to a head when a follower of the Watani Party assassinated Egypt's first Coptic prime minister, Boutros Ghali.

Lutfi al-Sayyid insisted that a common ancient Egyptian heritage bound Muslims and Copts together and that successive conquerors, including the Arabs, had long since become Egyptianized.⁴⁰ He pressed for more pharaonic emphasis in the schools: "For the truth of the matter is that we do not know as much about the stature of our fatherland and its glory as the tourists do!"⁴¹

I don't ask that each Egyptian show proof of capacity of observation of a Champollion, encyclopedic knowledge of Egyptian antiquities of a Maspero or the archaeological competence of a [Ahmad] Kamal Bey. What we need are regular lectures and permanent teaching, at the Egyptian University or in other scientific establishments, of a sort that the sons of Egypt can have access to familiarity with their past, not in a scientific and precise manner, but in the manner in which the European tourists who visit our country know our history and that of our ancestors.⁴²

Al-Sayyid even praised ancient Egyptian travelers and merchants for spying out foreign lands as a prelude to imperial expansion, just as nineteenth-century French and British travelers had done.⁴³

The charismatic Mustafa Kamil died at thirty-three, a year after founding the Watani Party in 1907. He was the son of an ethnic Egyptian army officer at a time when Turco-Circassians still monopolized the upper ranks. After primary and secondary school, Cairo-born Kamil obtained a law degree from the University of Toulouse. Although Kamil's successor as party leader, Muhammad Farid (1868–1919), was of upper-class Turkish extraction, most of the party's activists came from the growing ranks of the *effendiya*—a middle stratum of officials, professionals, and students from state schools who characteristically wore European-style coat, trousers, and tie, along with a tarboosh (fez). They tended toward conservatism on religious and social issues, such as the emancipation of women, and looked to the Ottoman sultan-caliph for support even while demanding immediate and complete Egyptian independence from Britain.⁴⁴ Among Watanists, Ottoman and Pan-Islamic loyalties coexisted with territorial Egyptian nationalism, including strands of pharaonism. Mustafa Kamil hailed Egyptian Muslims and Copts as "one family" descended from the ancient Egyptians, denied that Egyptians were primarily of external Arab descent, and praised Egypt as the first cradle from which civilization had spread.⁴⁵ Choosing the quintessentially pharaonic Sphinx as their emblem, Watanists founded several Sphinx student societies in Europe. In March 1914, London's Sphinx Society hosted a tea party at the Savoy Hotel for Muhammad Farid, whom the British had exiled in 1912. In July 1914, on the eve of the Great War, the Sphinx Society of Geneva welcomed Farid in a ceremony replete with a sphinx flag and sphinx badges.⁴⁶

Also in 1914, a bronze statue of Mustafa Kamil that Watanists had commissioned from French sculptor Leopold Savine reached Cairo (see fig. 13). The head of a sphinx supports the orating Kamil, and a fellaha (peasant woman) on a plaque on the statue's pedestal heeds his call. Joining the sphinx and fellaha as national symbols anticipated Mahmoud Mukhtar's famous postwar sculpture *The Revival of Egypt*. The erection of Kamil's statue in a public square in Kitchener's Cairo was out of the question, so it was relegated to the courtyard of the private Mustafa Kamil School until 1940. Then Prime Minister Ali Mahir, challenging the popularity of the late Zaghlul and the Wafd, erected it in the renamed square that still bears Kamil's name.⁴⁷

A third political voice until his deposition in 1914, Khedive Abbas Hilmi II, also made use of pharaonist appeals. Inheriting the throne in 1892 at seventeen, Abbas clashed with Lord Cromer and encouraged Lutfi al-Sayyid and Mustafa Kamil in anti-British activities. Al-Sayyid soon went his own way, but Abbas and Kamil collaborated until falling out in 1904. In 1898, the cover of an educational magazine showed Abbas

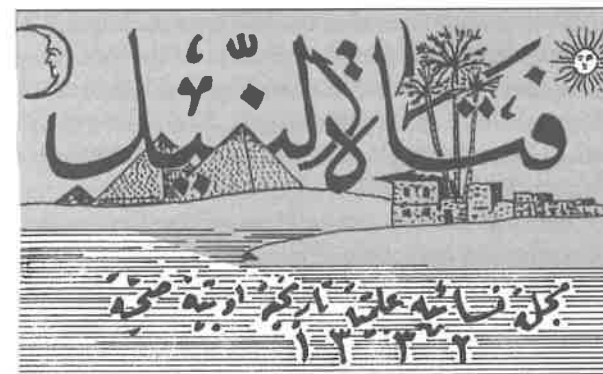


13 Mustafa Kamil draws strength from the Sphinx. By Leopold Savine, sculptor, 1910; erected in Mustafa Kamil Square, Cairo, 1940. Photo: D. Reid.

presiding over an Egyptian renaissance inspired by the Sphinx and Pyramids.⁴⁸ Abbas's court poet Ahmad Shawqi (1868–1932) was of Turkish, Circassian, Kurdish, Arab, and Greek descent, but lack of Egyptian blood was no barrier to his pharaonism—"a romance that riveted his attention most of his life."⁴⁹ Shawqi studied law in France. The poem he recited in 1894 at the International Conference of Orientalists in Geneva included a long section extolling the pharaohs. Around the turn of the century, Shawqi wrote three historical romances set in pharaonic times.⁵⁰

Nor did being Syrian Christian immigrants inhibit Salim and Bishara Taqla from naming the daily they founded in 1875 *al-Abram* (The Pyramids). Even if rarely on a conscious level, this famous newspaper still provides Egyptians a daily reminder of their pharaonic heritage.

14 Pyramids, palms, and a Nile village on the cover of magazine *Fatat al-Nil* (Young Woman of the Nile), 1913. Dust jacket of Beth Baron, *The Women's Awakening in Egypt*.



Pharaonism also cropped up in a range of social and ideological contexts in the women's press. Labiba Hashim (c. 1880–1947), who founded *Fatat al-sharq* (Young Woman of the East) in 1906, was a Syrian Christian who promoted Muslim–Christian unity. In 1914, her magazine hailed Queen Ahmose Nefertari, founding mother of the New Kingdom, as the first Egyptian woman actually to rule despite there being a male heir.⁵¹ Malaka Saad, the Coptic founder of *al-Jins al-latif* (The Gentle Sex), published an exemplary biography of Queen Hatshepsut in 1913 praising the intelligence and political skill she shared with her father, Thutmose I.⁵² More noteworthy was Sarah al-Mihiya's choice of the Pyramids—along with the sun, crescent moon, palm trees, and a village by the Nile—for the cover of *Fatat al-Nil* (Young Woman of the Nile) in 1913 (see fig. 14). Al-Mihiya, a pious Muslim steeped in Islamic learning, deplored unveiling and public mingling of the sexes. Yet her devotion to Islam and conservative social views in no way conflicted with her embrace of Egyptian specificity with the Nile name of her magazine title and the Pyramids on its cover.⁵³

Wartime Distortions: Egyptian and European Travail, American Opportunity

After the Ottoman Empire plunged into World War I on the German side on October 29, 1914, Britain severed Egypt's nominal tie to Istanbul and proclaimed a protectorate and martial law. Khedive Abbas II was deposed in favor of his pliable uncle Husayn Kamil, who was proclaimed sultan as a slap at his Ottoman former suzerain. Over one hundred thousand Egyptian laborers were conscripted for the war effort, draft animals were requisitioned, and restrictions severely reduced the area allowed for the lucrative cotton crop. Demand from British imperial forces in Egypt raised the price of wheat and other commodities, and inflation hit the public hard.