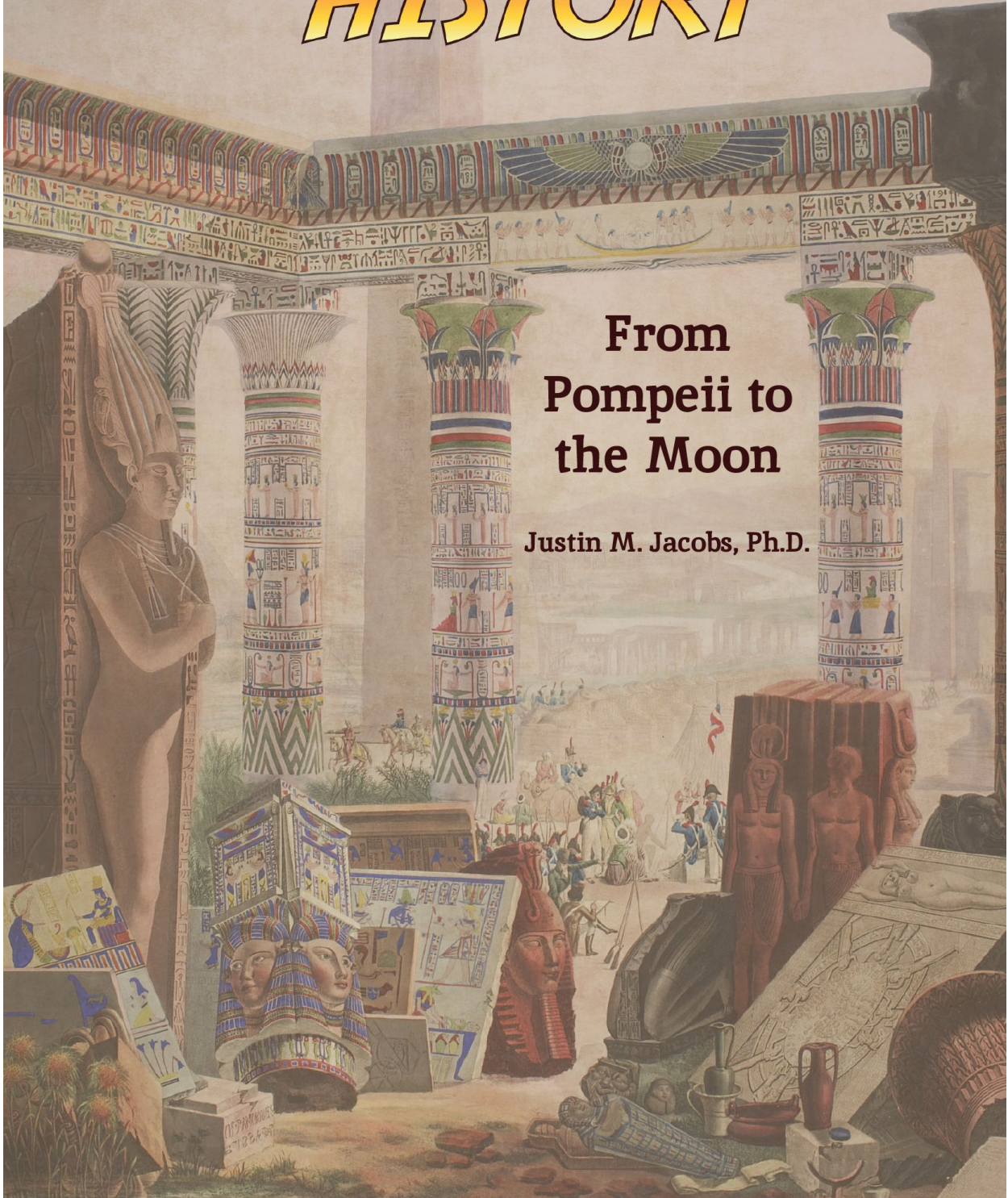


INDIANA JONES IN HISTORY

From
Pompeii to
the Moon

Justin M. Jacobs, Ph.D.



CHAPTER THREE

Consuming Indiana Jones

In 1819, three years after its removal from the west bank of the Nile at Luxor, Belzoni's seven-ton head of granite—baptized the “Younger Memnon” so as to invoke a respectable Greek pedigree—was gently mounted upon its new resting place: a marble pedestal in the Townley Gallery of the British Museum. The grey fog of London was a world away from the desert rays of the Egyptian sun that had long baked its serene visage. More importantly, the Memnon's colossal size and alien contours left it poorly served by the classical décor of its new home. The hallways of the British Museum had been designed to showcase the flowing and comparatively petite forms of Greek and Roman art, not those of the monolithic and more angular Egyptian. In fact, during Belzoni's time most European collectors did not even consider Egyptian antiquities to be a form of “art” at all. In a letter to Henry Salt, the British consul in Cairo who had sponsored Belzoni's labors in the field, Joseph Banks, the director of the British Museum, described the Memnon Head as unfit to be placed alongside Greek and Roman “Fine Art.” Instead, it was showcased in a separate “Egyptian Room,” effectively cordoned off from the acknowledged artistic forbears of Western civilization. “Whether any statue that has been found in Egypt,” Banks continued, “can be brought into competition with the grand works of the Townley Gallery remains to be proved.”

Banks was putting it gently. By 1819, the weight of seven decades of scholarly disapproval rested heavily upon the shoulders of the Younger Memnon. In 1753, when the British Museum first opened its doors, an eclectic assortment of mummies, sarcophagi, statuary, and ritual talismans from

Egypt already decorated its halls. Among the mostly upper class and cosmopolitan patrons of the museum, however, such familiarity seems only to have bred contempt. Jan van Rymdyk, the author of a 1778 guidebook to the “Museum Britannicum,” declared his intention not “to put myself in Perspiration concerning any of the Hieroglyphic Emblems, or Monstrosities of the Egyptians, for it is all Labour in vain, or washing a Blackamore white.” In another guidebook from the previous year, Alexander Thomas contrasted the antiquities of Greece and Italy, “where all the polite arts were carried to the highest perfection” and “where wit and elegance resided,” to the unfortunate specimens from Egypt, “where a deity was represented with the head of a dog” and “a lion was the most respectable inhabitant of one city.”



Figure 3.1. The animal gods of ancient Egypt. Anubis (with a dog's head) and Nephthys (with the body of a hawk) prepare a corpse for the afterlife.

The most damning indictment of all, however, was delivered in 1786 by John Woodward, a well-known physician and collector. “There never appears one single figure that shews any thing of art or good work,” he concluded. “Their limbs are stiff, and ill-proportioned; their bodies awkward, shapeless, and far inferior to the life. ... No people living had ever so enormous and perverse a fancy as they appear to have had. They really aimed at something that was hideous, deformed, and monstrous; a beast, or a fowl, with the head and face of a man; the head of a dog, or some other brute, of an hawk, or the like, upon an human figure.” Once again, the impossible standard against which Woodward insisted on judging the ancient Egyptians was that represented by the Greco-Roman tradition. “They seem to have affected what was ugly and irregular, as much as the Greeks, the Romans, and others, who had something of spirit and a genteel fancy, did what was handsome, well-proportioned, beautiful, and like nature.” At best, the works of the pharaohs were regarded as “wondrous curiosities.” At worst, they were “monstrous curiosities.” Either way, they were mere oddities, unfit to be judged alongside the transcendent artistic productions of what were then regarded as the boundaries of Western civilization.

Boundaries, however, can change. Sometimes they are changed by the fortunes of the battlefield. But just as often they are transformed through advances in knowledge. More than anything else, it was this glaring lack of knowledge about the Pharaonic era among European scholars that helped to reinforce its “curious” qualities and ensure its continued separation from the Greeks and Romans. As late as 1819, the year of the Memnon installation, Egyptian hieroglyphs remained as impenetrable as ever. Everyone could see that the pantheon of Pharaonic gods included dogs and birds, but no one knew why. Until the unfamiliar Egyptian spirits, rites, and mummies could be placed into some sort of socio-political or historical context, no self-respecting European gentleman was prepared to claim a hybrid dog-god as part of his own cultural heritage. As a result, most people who took an active interest in Egyptian antiquities and other Pharaonic *miscellanea* did so on the presumption that they offered a conduit to

the mystical wisdom of the occult. The underground trade in mummies is a case in point: though superstitious ship captains often refused to set sail from Alexandria if they learned of a mummy onboard, once in Europe, these desiccated corpses were quickly ground into a fine powder and sold as a potent remedy for various ailments.

A wondrous curiosity indeed! For as long as anyone could remember, Egypt had been synonymous with the dark alleys of the occult, not the splendid plinths of the leisured classes. Slowly but surely, Belzoni began to change all that. In 1821, still smarting over the lack of recognition and compensation once expected to derive from his exploits in Egypt, the Paduan giant undertook his most ambitious project yet. Hoping to cash in on tales of his strength, daring, and hydraulic ingenuity along the Nile, Belzoni organized a life-size reconstruction of Pharaonic tombs and artwork for an indoor display in London. Opened to the general public in 1821, the exhibition contained a virtual reproduction of the tomb of Seti I, complete with decorated walls and scale models. Visitors were mesmerized. One man saw in the exhibition “the most gratifying consequence of exploring the remains of ancient Egypt” and delighted in the memory of sitting “in them as in the realities themselves,” among “the presence of objects that fill the mind with pleasing wonder.” Another visitor described “the vivid colours and extraordinary figures on the walls and ceilings, the mummies scattered in various places, the statues of fine earth.” The inevitable result was the cultivation of an emotion “of grand and poetical nature; fed as the imagination is by the strangeness and stillness of the scene, and the partly ascertained, and partly unknown nature of the objects.”

Belzoni’s exhibition provided a feast for the senses, not for the mind. What he succeeded in doing was to package the pharaohs into a capitalist commodity for paying consumers. We will refer to this phenomenon as “Egyptomania.” Though consumers of Egyptomania may end up learning something about ancient Egypt, such knowledge is an incidental by-product of the chief intended experience: a visual and exotic delight for the senses. Belzoni, having failed to make the pharaohs

palatable to educated European elites, marketed them instead to the general public. As the self-proclaimed sophisticate continued to sneer at the Memnon Head in the halls of the British Museum, thousands of Londoners proved more than willing to part with a shilling for the opportunity to gawk at Belzoni's indoor panorama. Admittedly, the line separating these two audiences was porously drawn. Contemporary drawings of Belzoni's reconstructed tomb show well-groomed gentlemen in top hats and coattails, flanked by respectable ladies weighted down by flower bonnets twice the size of their heads. As long as the pharaohs remained outside the hallowed grounds of the British Museum, it seems, even a stodgy sophisticate could indulge in a modest helping of Egyptomania from time to time.

Belzoni's ambitions, however, had never been modest. In order to drum up enthusiasm for his London exhibition, he pursued a variety of promotional initiatives among both high-born and low. The London *Times* carried advance notice of the exhibition, while the publisher John Murray arranged for the publication of Belzoni's personal narrative of the expedition to coincide with the opening of his panorama (editions in French, Italian, and German followed soon thereafter). For those who wished to imagine themselves by Belzoni's side, waist deep in the scalding sands of Egypt, a separate folio volume containing forty-five lavishly illustrated color plates was also put on sale. With much of London abuzz, Belzoni then made the shrewd acquaintance of Thomas "Mummy" Pettigrew, an enterprising physician with a penchant for hosting morbid "unwrapping" parties. When Belzoni offered one of his Egyptian mummies for a promotional undressing—"the most perfect mummy known in Europe, entire in all its limbs and the hair visible on its head," according to a later catalogue—Pettigrew readily obliged. Then, as the London exhibition stretched into the early months of 1822, Belzoni tried to maintain public interest by publishing two additional volumes of plates, one of which was presented as a gift to the Duke of Sussex.

After twelve months of healthy ticket sales, the exhibition finally closed its doors. Less successful incarnations soon

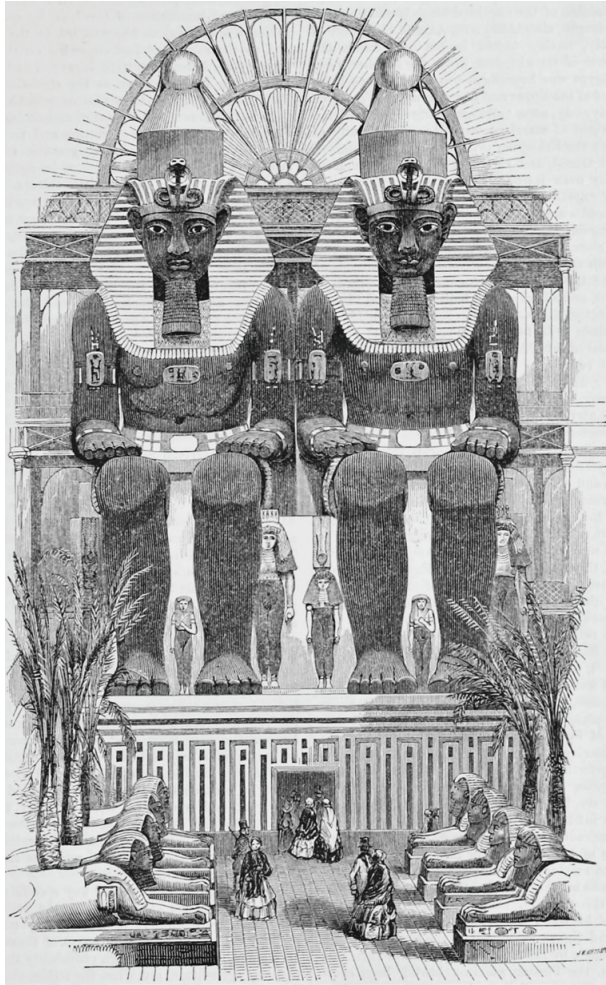


Figure 3.2.
Egyptomania in London.
A re-creation of the Abu Simbel colossi for the Egyptian Court in the Crystal Palace exhibition of 1854. The origins of this and every other international showcase of ancient Egypt can trace their origins back to Belzoni's 1821 indoor panorama of the tomb of Seti I in London.

followed, first in Paris, then back in London. Despite these diminishing returns, Belzoni's indoor panoramas left an institutional legacy that far outlived their creator. For the rest of the nineteenth century, the discovery of any previously unknown ancient civilization would be packaged and sold to the general public in ways that were strikingly similar to the commercial models first pioneered by Belzoni. In 1839, John Stephens and Frederick Catherwood embarked on an expedition to Central America in order to investigate early rumors of what would eventually be identified as the ruins of the Mayan civilization. Upon their return, Catherwood painstakingly re-created water-color scenes of the jungle ruins, which were offered for sale as lithographs. Catherwood was also an accomplished painter of indoor panoramas, with a resumé of exhibits in London, New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. A decade later,

London hosted the first “world’s fair,” sparking a host of imitators over the next fifty years, from Paris to Philadelphia. These visually indulgent spectacles displayed the diversity of the world in ways that both delighted and instructed the general public, most often by resorting to familiar stereotypes of dynamic Westerners and stagnant Orientals. Exhibits on European and North American nations, for example, highlighted progress in science and industry. Exhibits for places like Egypt and China, however, invariably took their cues from Belzoni’s original London panorama, highlighting the “wondrous curiosities” of an ancient civilization whose descendants had fallen from grace.

Egyptomania—along with all the other “manias” spawned by its success—was what the masses consumed. The true European sophisticate would seldom admit to being enchanted by such “monstrous curiosities,” even if he, too, could not entirely resist their exotic allure. In general, though, social elites tended to echo the sentiments of a 1774 guidebook to London, which cast a dim view on the intellectual capacity of those “idle men and women” who wandered into the British Museum, only to “return neither wiser nor better,” their “understandings being as much darkened as their memories are unretentive.” For them, only the fleeting and superficial experience of Egyptomania was deemed suitable. The self-appointed guardians of scholarly and cultural standards needed their own, more respectable means of interaction with the pharaohs, one not premised upon the vulgar novelty of visual stimuli.

In 1822, the French scholar Jean-François Champollion rose to the occasion. Based upon a comparative analysis of the trilingual Rosetta Stone and hieroglyphs etched into an obelisk transported to England by Belzoni, Champollion advanced his now celebrated claim regarding the nature of Egyptian hieroglyphs. Long viewed as the inscrutable signs of an arcane priesthood, the hieroglyphs were now shown to be anything but. According to Champollion, the ancient Egyptian script was governed by phonetic values much like any other script. The individual graphs didn’t represent profound ideas or abstract concepts. Rather, they represented mundane consonants and vowels, which were then strung together to spell similarly mundane words.

In short, the hieroglyphs were useful, not mystical. Though they could and did record the exploits of gods and kings—often in tedious detail—they were also used to record the number of oxen in a stable and a list of groceries to buy. For many Egyptomania enthusiasts, this was a disappointment, to say the least. But for scholars, collectors, and other social and cultural luminaries throughout Europe, Champollion had unlocked a whole new mode of engagement with Egypt: Egyptology. The land of mummies now had a recorded history—thirty-six centuries of it, in fact. Thomas Young, one of the first to attempt a translation of the Rosetta Stone, had given up the pursuit after all his early glosses seemed only to reveal details of “ridiculous rites and ceremonies.” He claimed to see “nothing that looks like history.” But Champollion had managed to give to Young and every other European scholar a respectably boring list of the names of kings, temples, and wars in ancient Egypt, one sure to keep the fickle crowd at bay.

Yet the poor benighted masses were not the only people the Egyptologists wanted to keep at bay. So, too, were the modern-day inhabitants of Ottoman Egypt—mostly Arabs, Copts, and Turks—excluded from the newly fashioned cultural identity imposed upon the country by Egyptologists. Though they had managed to recover more than three millennia of previously unknown dates, names, and battles, the Egyptologists had not done so for the edification of their contemporaries in Egypt. On the contrary, all the information yielded by the hieroglyphs was interpreted as an additional commentary on the origins of Western civilization. In other words, no European scholar responded to the unlocking of the hieroglyphs by humbly conceding the august pedigree of a rival Oriental civilization. Instead, they portrayed the pharaohs as the earliest progenitors of their own civilization—one defined, in suitably vague terms, as “Western.” This shift can be traced in one of the first guidebooks for the British Museum to be published after Champollion’s linguistic coup. “The object of the present work,” its author noted, “is to publish a Selection of the Choicest Monuments existing in the National Collection of this country. It commences with those of Egypt, from the high authenticated antiquity of many of them, and from their being the source

from which the arts of Sculpture and of Painting, and perhaps even the Sciences, were handed to the Greeks—and from the Greeks to us. They are the Alpha of the history of Art.”

With the Pharaohs now reimagined as the cultural ancestors to the Greeks, there was no longer any need to invent outlandish, speculative identities for the artifacts of ancient Egypt. The Memnon Head was the first to experience this transformation. With the hieroglyphs now deciphered, it was no longer possible to claim that this represented the head of Memnon, an Ethiopian king alleged by Homer to have participated in the equally legendary battle of Troy. The hieroglyphs were clear and unequivocal: the head belonged to Ramses II (1303–1213 B.C.), one of the most powerful pharaohs ever to rule over a Nile kingdom. On first glance, however, by stripping Europe’s most famous “wondrous curiosity” of its literary associations with a celebrated Greek battlefield, the Egyptologists had appeared to bring about a dramatic devaluation of Belzoni’s prize find. But a second glance reveals quite the opposite. For if the death of King Memnon, “lone Trojan warrior,” is followed by the birth of King Ramses, “grandfather of all Greeks,” then we need not wonder at the lack of anxiety among Egyptologists toward the replacement of one cultural ancestor (Memnon) with another (ancient Egypt). To put it another way, the cracking of the hieroglyphic code enabled European scholars and politicians alike to broaden their horizons far beyond individually prized works of art like the Memnon Head and instead to claim all of Egypt as their inheritance—to the exclusion of anyone imagined to be outside the ever-shifting boundaries of Western civilization.

Egyptology and Egyptomania were born and raised in Europe, not Egypt. Both traced their origins to the 1820s, and each bore the cultural DNA of its father: one given life by a low-born Italian circus freak eager to please the masses, the other by a cerebral bookworm whose life’s work could only be appreciated by a tiny sliver of humankind. Belzoni died in 1823, Champollion in 1832, both tragically young. Scarcely had they breathed their last, however, before the intellectual and commercial enterprises they pioneered began to spread beyond the boundaries of Europe. Ironically, the first expansion was

Transition from
Barbarism to Civilization

30th Century B.C.

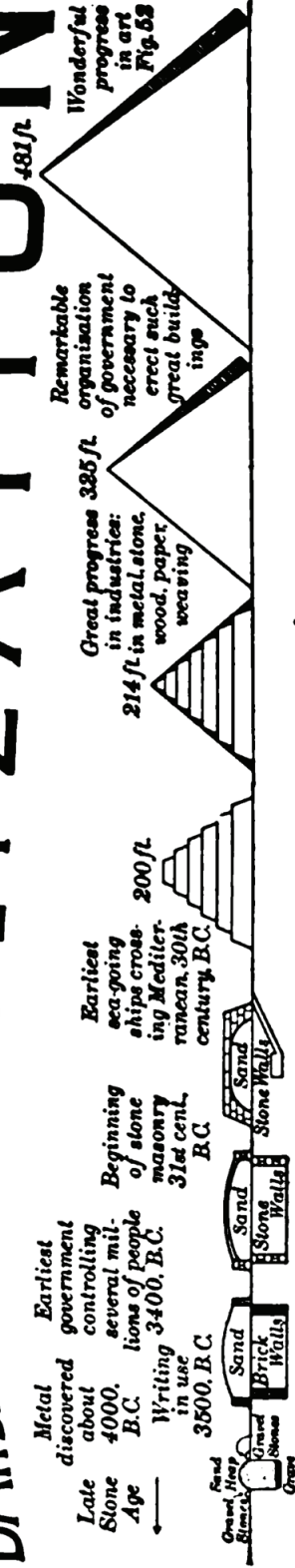
29th Century B.C.

4000
B.C.

3000
B.C.

3900
B.C.

BARBARISM - CIVILIZATION



Metal discovered about 4000 B.C.
Earliest government controlling several millions of people 3400 B.C.
Writing in use 3600 B.C.
Beginning of stone masonry 31st cent. B.C.
Earliest sea-going ships crossing Mediterranean 30th century B.C.

Great progress 385 ft. in industries: 214 ft. in metal, stone, wood, paper weaving
Remarkable organization of government necessary to erect such great buildings
Wonderful progress in art (Fig. 53)

- 1 Sand heap surrounded by circle of desert stones over grave dug in desert gravel (see Fig. 25). (From 5000, B.C. onward)
- 2 Sand heap and enlarged grave, both surrounded by walls of sun-dried brick. (About 3400, B.C.)
- 3 Same as No. 2, only wall of grave has become stone - the earliest stone masonry. (About 3050, B.C.)
- 4 Sand heap covered and surrounded by stone masonry (see Fig. 42). (Thirtieth century, B.C.)
- 5 Terraced royal tomb made by placing a series of tombs like No. 4, one above another (oldest great building of stone masonry shown in Fig. 36). (2980, B.C.)
- 6 Royal tomb made like No. 5, but with the terraces filled up with masonry in one slope, producing the first pyramid. (About 2930, B.C.)
- 7 First pyramid planned to be such from the beginning. (About 2910, B.C.)
- 8 Great Pyramid of King Khufu at Gizeh, the largest of all pyramids and the greatest stone building ever erected by ancient man. (Begun 2900, B.C.)

At most 150 years
(from earliest stone masonry to the Great Pyramid)

into Egypt itself. Europeans brought their baggage—both literal and metaphorical—back into Egypt by rail and steam: two modes of transport that simultaneously embodied and enabled the growing reach of European empires. In September 1830, the first commercial steam engine line began to transport passengers by rail from Liverpool to Manchester. By the end of the decade, steamships could ferry a growing number of modestly moneyed travelers from any number of ports in Europe to Alexandria, Jerusalem, or Constantinople in about two weeks—less than half the time it had taken previous generations to make the same trip by wind and sail.

Their arrival in Egypt gave rise to a tourist industry that catered exclusively to the needs of the burgeoning leisured classes of Europe and North America. By the middle of the nineteenth century, a modestly successful Englishman could book a month-long vacation to Egypt via a London-based travel agency; stay in comfortable Victorian-style lodgings in Cairo; interpret everything he saw through an English-language guidebook indebted to the cultural prisms of Egyptology and Egyptomania; speak, eat, and dress exactly as he might do back home; trace the itineraries of famous European and American poets, novelists, and princes who had carved their name in various monuments on previous trips; and return home with affordable souvenirs manufactured to foreign tastes. The superficial contours of Egypt became so well known that a review of one travelogue in 1863 declared “that Egypt as a place for descriptions of travel is almost exhausted; the Nile entirely so. The river is as familiar as the Thames, and the traveller, unless he has something new to say ... might as well publish an itinerary of his journey from Calais to Rome.” No European who went to Egypt as a tourist was obliged to learn a single word of Arabic unless already inclined, nor

Figure 3.3 (Opposite). From barbarism to (Western) civilization.

In his widely adopted textbook on the history of Western civilization, first published in 1914, American Egyptologist James Breasted equates ancient Egypt with the monumental tombs of its elite classes, and portrays them as marking the transition from barbarism to civilization.

conform to Muslim sensibilities in matters of dress, custom, or habit. (By contrast, Belzoni and all previous generations of Western travelers in Egypt and the Near East had invariably donned turbans for men and veils for women, in conformance with local customs.) With the possible exception of his local *dragoman*, or guide—contracted through a Western-owned travel agency or hotel—the European could in fact now spend months and even years in Egypt without ever having engaged in a single substantive interaction or discussion with someone who was actually born and raised in Egypt.

The ideological influence of Egyptology and Egyptomania is readily apparent in the letters of Lucie Duff-Gordon, an Englishwoman who lived in Egypt for seven years in the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1865, she published for public consumption many of her letters to family and friends back home. In them, we can see how an educated European with the means to travel to Egypt made sense of the land and people around her. According to the book's preface, Lady Duff was inspired by “the wretched condition of the Arabs” in Egypt to publish her letters and thus bring attention to their

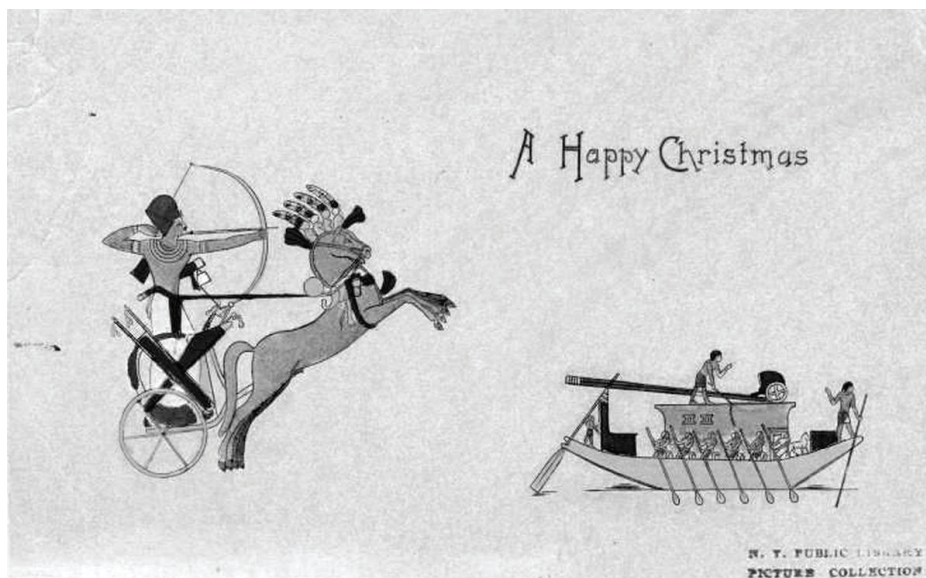
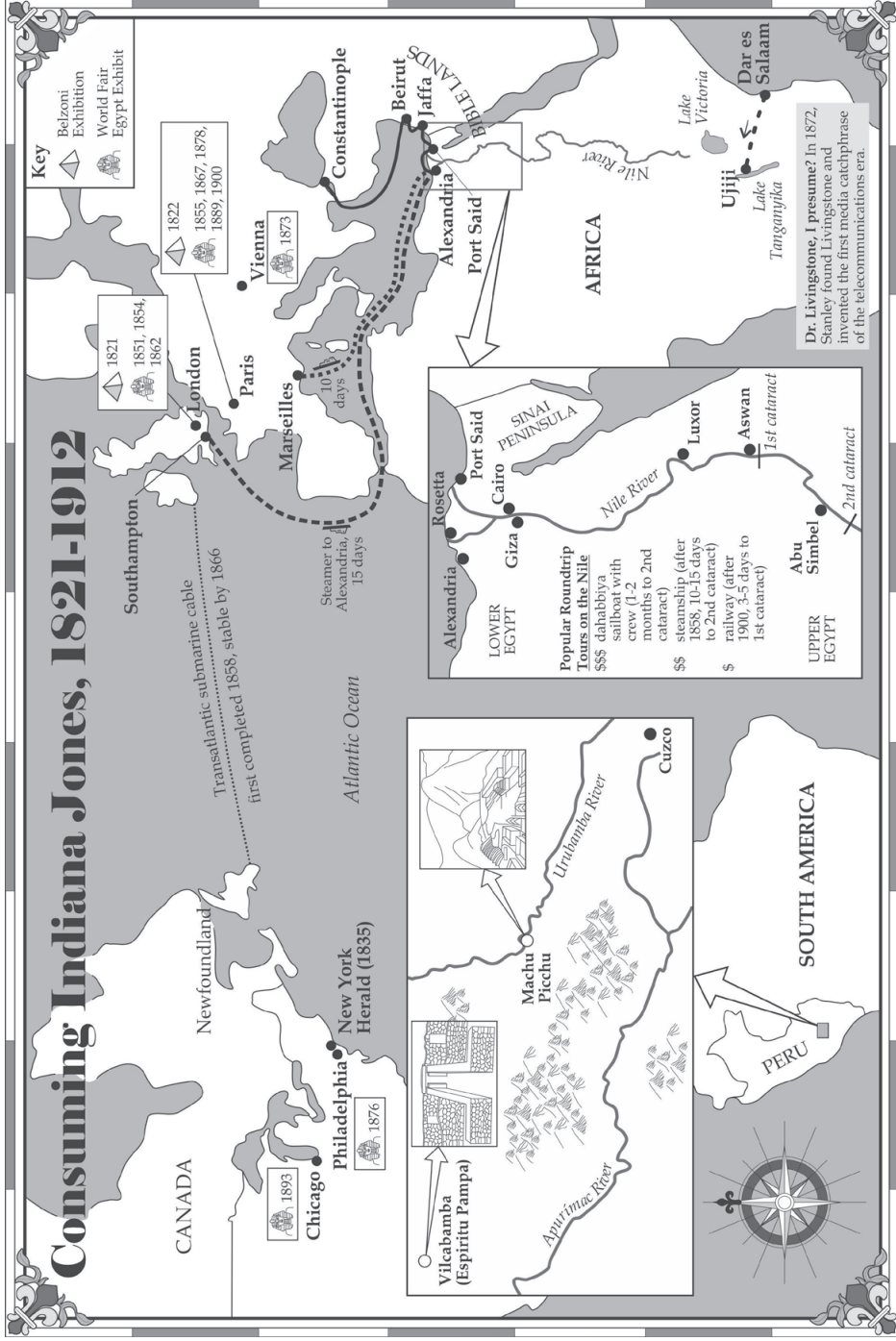


Figure 3.4. Merry Christmas from the Pharaohs. A tourist postcard from Egypt fuses the cultural preferences of Western visitors—Christianity and the pharaohs—into an anachronistic but profitable commodity.

plight. Though she saw in them “the relics of a most ancient and noble race, once the possessor of a high and distinct form of civilization,” they had long since been “crushed under the same barbarian force which destroyed the last remnants of the civilization of Greece.” Who were these so-called barbarians? Why, the Turks, of course, who dominated the Ottoman bureaucracy. For most Europeans, the Turks were the original “Oriental despots,” whose rise to power ushered in an era of widespread stagnation across the eastern Mediterranean and Near East. As a result, it fell to selfless men like Lord Elgin to venture into the lands of the barbarians and rescue whatever remained of the ancestral civilizations now struggling under the yoke of the Turks.

Because the Orient was synonymous with the Ottomans, and because the Ottomans were synonymous with stagnation, Lady Duff regarded the present-day inhabitants of Egypt with a mixture of pity and contempt. She referred to her Arab servants as “dear, good, lazy fellows, or rather, children; their ways amuse me infinitely.” In another passage she assures the recipient of her letter that “you would like the people, poor things! They are complete children, but amiable children.” In evaluating these “children,” Lady Duff deployed an early version of the “nature vs. nurture” argument. Anything deemed unpleasant among the Egyptians was said to be due to the corrupting influence of their figurative “parents”—the Turks. Anything worthy of praise, however, was chalked up to a miraculous biological inheritance from their figurative “ancestors”—the forbears of Western civilization, among which the pharaohs were now included. In this vein, one local man was described by Lady Duff as having “walked straight out of a hieroglyph.” Another was said to look “so much like Father Abraham” that “I felt quite as if my wish to live a little a few thousand years ago had been fulfilled.” She variously described Egypt as an embodiment of “the real Arabian Nights,” the setting for “a passage in the Old Testament,” or a country in which “all is so scriptural.”

Consuming Indiana Jones, 1821-1912



For Lady Duff as for most Europeans and Americans, the history of Egypt began with the pharaohs and ended with Islam. Anything that fell outside these chronological parameters was simply not worth discussing. Within these parameters, however, two topics towered above all others. The first, noted above, was the ways in which the civilization of the pharaohs was imagined to have laid a foundation for the rise of the Greeks. The second was less ambitious, but far more pedantic: biblical archaeology. This field of study shared much in common with its cousins on the Nile. Much like Egyptologists, those who scoured the Near East for evidence of the peoples, places, and events mentioned in the Old Testament took their work very seriously, and imagined it to carry momentous implications for the history of Western civilization. Conversely, much like those who indulged in Egyptomania, the ranks of biblical “archaeologists” also included a substantial number of amateur enthusiasts who cared little for the big questions of history. Instead, they devoted themselves to a narrow and sensationalist pursuit of unexplained “mysteries” and “wonders” recorded in the Judeo-Christian canon.

Just as with Egyptology and Egyptomania, proponents of both modes of engagement with the so-called “Bible lands” often found themselves forced to share the same space. Their cumulative efforts are best represented by the activities of the London-based Palestine Exploration Fund, founded in 1865 to promote scientific research capable of shedding light on the history of Egypt, the Near East, and the Levant as alluded to in the scriptures. Not just any scripture, however: only events, peoples, and places mentioned in the Hebrew and Christian Bibles were deemed suitable for archaeological investigation. This overt and unabashed bias permeated the pages of the Fund’s hugely popular *Quarterly Statement*, first issued in 1869 and still in operation today. Much ink was spilled in an attempt to identify all the place names mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, and then to mark them on a map overlaid with their latter-day Arabic-language equivalents. As in Egypt, the present-day inhabitants of the region were regarded with a mixture of pity and contempt. If the people of Palestine were of any interest at all, it was only to shed light on

the ancient Hebrew and Christian societies that had somehow survived within the unconscious recesses of their minds. In 1858, the popular John Murray guidebook even went so far as to tell its readers that “the Bible is the best handbook for Palestine; the present work is intended to be a companion to it.” Unfortunately, the Bible may have brought the tourists, but the tourists made it harder to find traces of the Bible. “Many of the ancient and peculiar customs of Palestine are fast vanishing before the increasing tide of Western manners,” the founders of the Fund claimed upon its establishment, “and in a short time the exact meaning of many things which find their correspondences in the Bible will have perished.”

Correspondences with the Judeo-Christian scriptures were what mattered. To biblical archaeologists and their attentive audiences, it was of little consequence that toponyms such as “Iraq” had existed within Muslim societies for more than a millennium. The region was instead habitually referred to as “Mesopotamia,” an archaic Greek phrase meaning “between the rivers” (the Tigris and Euphrates). Much as the appellation of “Memnon” was chosen to suggest a respectable Greek pedigree for a work of Egyptian sculpture, “Mesopotamia” was deliberately invoked to erase the presence of any society, language, or religion to arise in the region since the spread of Islam. Western interest in the Islamic identity of the Near East ebbed so low that a 1892 advertisement in the pages of the *Quarterly Statement* for a book entitled *Palestine Under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500* was forced to promote it as a “novelty” product. The sale of such a book was justified on grounds that “hardly anything has been done ... in English” and that “no attempt has ever been made to systematize, compare, and annotate” Western knowledge about Muslim societies in the Bible lands.

The practice and consumption of Egyptology, Egyptomania, and biblical archaeology was so pervasive within Euro-American communities—both at home and abroad—that all but the most educated of its members would be hard pressed to say anything about the lands and peoples of the Middle East that was not derived from the ideological agendas of these three phenomena. This was still the case up until very recently,

when the exportation of radical Islamist terrorist organizations into Europe and America finally forced many Westerners to confront the present-day political and cultural complexities of the Middle East for the first time. For confirmation of the lingering sway Egyptology, Egyptomania, and biblical archaeology continue to hold in our own times, however, we need to look no further than Hollywood. Indeed, two of the plot lines for the first three Indiana Jones films focus on the adventures of a Western archaeologist (Egyptology) who spends the majority of his time in Muslim lands, yet is concerned solely with “wondrous curiosities” (Egyptomania) mentioned in the Hebrew and Christian bibles (biblical archaeology). (As a brief aside, I can still recall my giddy selection of Egypt as the subject of a “country study” assignment in the sixth grade—only to discover, much to my dismay, just how little the encyclopedia entry for “Egypt” resembled the Egypt of my imagination. After pleading with my teacher, I received permission to ignore the Egypt of today in favor of the Egypt of yesterday. My class presentation on “Egypt”—how to disembowel and preserve a mummy—earned an “A”!)



Figure 3.6. A parody of a parody of a parody.
At Legoland California, a popular children’s toy is used to re-create the Luxor Hotel in Las Vegas, itself a re-creation of common Egyptomania motifs first popularized by Belzoni in 1821.

What can account for such a consistent aversion to the cultures, customs, and lore of the Muslim Middle East? The answer is simple: humans are biologically wired to be enamored with themselves. Apply this principle to a larger group of humans—a city, nation, religion, or culture—and we can expect to find entire groups of people to be more favorably disposed toward the customs, habits, appearance, and language of their own group than toward those of others. We can think of this tendency in terms of what we will refer to as a preference for one's own ethnic or cultural "avatar," either real or perceived. Simply put, an avatar is the embodiment of one person or idea in the shape of another person. In the present context, the original person—or idea—is "the West" (or "Westerners"), however loosely defined. The "avatar" then becomes the person who embodies or represents this Western identity to an audience back home while he or she lives and travels outside Western lands. The creation of an avatar can be premised upon perceived ethnic traits (skin color, physique, hair), perceived cultural traits (language, food, religion, dress), or both. It helps explain why a terrorist attack responsible for the deaths of a hundred people in Paris, for instance, is far more likely to elicit the sustained emotional investment of the Western public than the tragic demise of tens of thousands of culturally and ethnically unfamiliar people in distant Syria.

Throughout the entirety of the time span covered by this book, light-skinned men of European descent and Christian faith served as the most common ethnic and cultural avatars for a Euro-American audience back home. Few people in London, Paris, or New York were interested in hearing about the travails of Belzoni's Arab porters, for the simple reason that it was difficult to imagine oneself in their skin. But with someone like Belzoni, they all had a definite impression of his Italian background, possibly shared or were at least sympathetic to his Catholic faith—at least when contrasted with Islam—and knew that in most habits of daily life he resembled them more than either of them resembled the Egyptians. As a result, an increasing number of literate consumers proved willing to part with a few coins for the opportunity to read

about the marvelous adventures of their own cultural or ethnic avatars in lands they would likely never visit themselves.

In the United States, some of the first profitable ventures in this vein were the aforementioned expeditions of John Stephens and Frederick Catherwood to Central America. Between 1839 to 1843, Stephens and Catherwood undertook two separate expeditions to Mesoamerica and produced three beautifully illustrated sets of their archaeological travel accounts. Priced within range of the American middle-class consumer, the first double-volume set sold more than twenty thousand copies within the first three months of its printing. This was no homage to the Mayan peoples whose ruins were chronicled within its pages, however. For at the top of Stephens and Catherwood's agenda was a scarcely concealed desire to claim an indigenous antiquity in the Americas equal to that of the Old World, one worthy of U.S. patronage. Outlandish theories about the migration of ancient Egyptians to Mesoamerica were debunked and replaced with a theory of indigenous construction by civilized peoples whose ancestors had degenerated under the weight of Spanish despotism. (Note the exact parallel to the role ascribed by Europeans to the Turks, who were said to have debased the once glorious races of the Near East.) Significantly, the great Mayan ruins of Mesoamerica were said to have been built by peoples who migrated southward from North America, where the less spectacular archaeological finds of Native American burial mounds were said to presage the more impressive ruins further south.

With all Spanish influence in the Americas deemed corrosive and the pre-Columbian indigenes said to have originated in North America, Stephens and Catherwood were now free to claim the great monumental ruins of Mesoamerica—said to rival those of the Old World—for the United States alone. “The casts of the Parthenon are regarded as precious memorials in the British Museum,” Stephens wrote, “and casts of Copan would be the same in New-York.” Because they belonged by “right to us,” Stephens “resolved that ours they should be.” Just like the Arabs of the Near East, the latter-day descendants of the Mayans and other indigenous peoples were also of little concern, having forsaken any and

all claims to the ruins in their midst by their alleged indifference to Western science, preservation, and education. No wonder the American reading public devoured Stephens and Catherwood's books with such gusto: here they learned that they were the one and only heirs to an indigenous American antiquity equal to, but not derivative of, the pyramids and monuments of Europe and the Middle East. We might think of this as "the Mayan mirage."

By the second half of the nineteenth century, the vicarious thrills of Western avatars like Stephens and Catherwood were about to become even bigger business. In 1858, the first submarine telegraph cable was laid across the Atlantic Ocean, connecting the westernmost tip of Ireland with the easternmost tip of Newfoundland. In 1866, after eight years of setbacks and repairs, the "trans-Atlantic cable" was deemed stable. Messages that used to take ten days or more to cross the ocean by ship could now be transmitted in less than twenty-four hours by wire. This technological breakthrough initiated a sea change in the popular consumption of the historical Indiana Jones. Previously, any profits yielded by the commodification of Egyptomania, biblical archaeology, or the Mayan mirage (beyond the tourist industry, that is) came in the form of public exhibitions or the sale of lengthy travelogues. These were random and contingent affairs, profitable only for the duration of the exhibit or print run of the book.

But with the newfound ability to transmit the written word across the globe within a mere day or two, the exploits of adventurous and daring Western avatars could now be packaged and serialized in newspapers and periodicals on a regular and affordable basis. This made available an audience far larger than had ever been tapped before, giving rise to a new business model dominated by what legal scholar Tim Wu refers to as the "attention merchants." Mostly newspaper editors and other media magnates, these bold entrepreneurs published written and visual content sure to capture the attention of a wide swathe of the reading public, then resold the attention of their audiences to advertisers eager to pitch their products to captivated consumers.

But how could they capture the attention of an audience large enough to bring in the most lucrative advertisers? Salacious accounts of homicides and other criminal activity—adapted from police reports and interviews—were the first resort of the attention merchant, both then and today. But for those who could afford to underwrite more ambitious narratives, culled far beyond the local police precinct, Belzoni and his Egyptomania business model offered an endless store of commercial possibilities. The first man to exploit this potential to its fullest capacity was James Bennett, Jr., owner of the *New York Herald*. By the time the trans-Atlantic cable was complete, the *New York Herald* had already amassed a daily circulation of 84,000 readers, reputed to be the highest of any newspaper in the world. Like Belzoni, Bennett had a knack for showmanship. He once famously claimed that the purpose of his newspaper was “not to instruct but to startle and amuse.” Entranced readers were treated to page after page of sensationalized news, gossip, rumors, and hoaxes, all justified on the basis of being “in the public interest.” From our perspective, the *New York Herald* was the literary embodiment of the “wondrous” and “monstrous curiosities” brought to Europe from Egypt by Belzoni a half century earlier, now made cheaply available on a daily basis to all literate men and women from the comfort of their homes.

In 1869, three years after the stabilization of the trans-Atlantic cable, Bennett decided to exploit its potential to its fullest capacity. During a meeting in Paris, he met and contracted the itinerant American traveler and writer Henry Stanley for an ambitious assignment: lead an expedition through East Africa with the intent of locating and reporting upon the whereabouts of David Livingstone. Livingstone, a Scottish Congregationalist with the London Missionary Society, had spent most of the past several decades attempting to convert the native peoples of central Africa and to track the source of the Nile. He failed on both accounts. Far more successful, however, was a travelogue he penned in 1857 entitled *Missionary Travels*. In it, Livingstone portrayed himself as a manly Christian explorer waging a moral crusade against the Arab-run slave trade in Africa. The book and its various

sequels brought Livingstone both fame and wealth, neither of which deterred him from returning to his favorite haunts in east-central Africa. Before long, however, news of Livingstone's activities slowed to a trickle. Eventually, he vanished entirely, giving rise to speculation of an untimely demise somewhere in an African jungle. By the time Bennett met Stanley in 1869, no one had heard from Livingstone in nearly four years.

Bennett, however, did not commission an expedition from Stanley because he was genuinely concerned about Livingstone's welfare. He did so because he wanted to profit from the serialized reports of a fearless Western explorer trekking among lions, snakes, and cannibals in search of the world's most famous Christian missionary. All the ingredients for a blockbuster scoop were in place: not just one but two Western avatars, each drawn from one side of the Atlantic, beset on all sides by dark-skinned savages and immoral Muslims, and fed to an avid public in endlessly profitable doses, all without the lengthy lag time associated with the book publishing industry. For two full years, from 1870 to 1871, Stanley's riveting accounts of his movements from Dar es Salaam to the shores



Figure 3.7. Stanley Meets Livingstone.

An imaginative rendering of the first "reality" expedition made profitable by the trans-Atlantic cable, as serialized for Western audiences in the pages of the *New York Herald*.

of Lake Tanganyika filled the pages of the *New York Herald*. A bestselling book, *How I Found Livingstone*, followed in 1872. In it, Stanley dedicated his labors to Bennett, whose “generosity” and “liberality” were said to have “originated, sustained, and crowned the enterprise.” No longer were archaeologists and explorers confined to the patronage of kings, dukes, and earls. The trans-Atlantic cable had enabled a new species of capitalist entrepreneur—the print media tycoon—to usurp the role of cultural and social trendsetter once reserved for the titled elite.

Stanley knew that Bennett’s readers were interested only in him and Livingstone, not Africa or the Africans. In justifying his frequent use of the first person pronoun, Stanley observed that he was “writing a narrative of my own adventures and travels, and that until I meet Livingstone, I presume the greatest interest is attached to myself, my marches, my troubles, my thoughts, and my impressions.” He presumed correctly. The “*New York Herald Expedition*” (for such it was called) brought lifelong and posthumous fame to both Stanley and Livingstone. But why? Unlike Belzoni, neither man discovered anything that was yet unknown to their audiences back home. And though Livingstone had garnered some minor fame for his tirades against the Arab-run slave trade in Africa, everything else he set his hand to had ended in abject failure. For his part, Stanley was a competent writer and occasional journalist, but he, too, had accomplished very little worth capturing the attention of future historians. So why has everyone in the Anglophone world heard of Stanley and Livingstone?

The answer is simple. Together, Stanley and Bennett created the world’s first media catchphrase. The words “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?” are familiar to nearly every literate person in the English-speaking world. This despite the fact that very few of them actually know who spoke it; when, where, or why it was spoken; who Livingstone was; or why they should care. In order to satisfy the “public interest”—as Bennett would have phrased it—the uninspiring answers are, in order: Henry Stanley; 1871 in the town of Ujiji, as a greeting to Livingstone; a failed missionary and explorer; and you shouldn’t care one bit. The whole expedition was a media stunt, designed to sell advertising space in the *New*

York Herald. And it worked. Readers found the phrase so memorable and hilarious—who else but another white man could possibly merit such a gentlemanly greeting in the wilds of Africa?—that Stanley managed to profit off of its reproduction for years to come, even going so far as to perform it in staged reenactments before captive audiences.

So Stanley found Livingstone. That was the story. It did not matter that Livingstone had never been “lost” in the first place. In fact, he had been living in peace and comfort along the shores of Lake Tanganyika for years, surrounded by local peoples with whom he was on friendly terms. Nor did Livingstone return with Stanley to Western civilization. All Stanley came back with was a signed letter from Livingstone attesting to the fact that Stanley had reached Ujiji and the two of them had met and conversed. That letter legitimized what can only be described as a very expensive and elaborate media stunt—the first of its kind. We might say that the significance of the *New York Herald* Expedition of 1870–71 lies in the fact that it was completely insignificant in every conceivable way other than the profitable spectacle it created for itself. In other words, it was famous for having made itself famous, like any number of celebrities and reality television contestants of our own day and age. The new era of print journalism enabled by the trans-Atlantic cable meant that spectacles, in and of themselves, staged or unstaged, could generate an endlessly reproducible profit for any attention merchant capable of packaging and transmitting them to audiences throughout the world.

Not every trade lent itself to such spectacles. The business of archaeologists and explorers, however, did. From this point forward, many of them would grapple with the dilemma of how to balance their scholarly credentials against the prospect of lucrative profits awaiting them in the realm of the attention merchants. In fact, those best known to us today usually achieved their fame as a direct result of publicity generated from a profitable partnership with one of the titans of print media. This was certainly the case with Hiram Bingham, who is often credited with the “discovery” of Machu Picchu. A closer look, however, reveals that Bingham’s fame derives less from any scholarly feat—of which he could claim few—than from

his ability to exploit the two winning features of Belzoni's business model: Western avatars and wondrous curiosities.

In 1875, just three years after Stanley published *How I Found Livingstone*, an austere missionary family in Hawaii welcomed Bingham into their lives. After escaping stateside to obtain graduate degrees at Berkeley and Harvard, Bingham found his interest in Latin America piqued by the 1898 Spanish-American War. A series of exploratory trips to Venezuela and Bolivia followed, mostly in search of historical records concerning Simón Bolívar, the "founding father" of several South American countries. Still unable to secure anything other than an adjunct teaching position at Yale, Bingham returned to South America in 1908 as his university's representative to the Pan-American Scientific Congress. A trek through the mountains of Chile and Peru followed, leading to Bingham's first glimpse of the monumental ruins of the Incas, all dated to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Bingham saw in the Incan ruins the architectural legacy of a people who had fought the Spaniards long before Theodore Roosevelt or Simón Bolívar had done so.

Excited at the prospect of making his mark in a virgin field, Bingham returned to Yale and began his search for a suitably compelling research question. The one he chose, if successfully answered, was sure to turn heads: Where was Vilcabamba, the final refuge of the last Incan king on the eve of its destruction by Spanish soldiers? In order to find it, Bingham needed to return to Cuzco, a mountaintop town in southeastern Peru that once served as the capital of the Incan empire. Now it was the launching point for any trek into the surrounding peaks and valleys, where Bingham hoped to find the ruins of Incan civilization. Bingham struggled to find financial backing for his expedition, with Yale contributing its name ("The Yale Peruvian Expedition") but little else. In an early display of his proclivity for showmanship, Bingham managed to raise some of the money by contracting a series of articles for *Harper's Magazine*, with the promise of far more to come for any editor beguiled by his tales of the "lost cities" of the Incas.

On July 19, 1911, Bingham set off from Cuzco in search of Vilcabamba. Just five days later, he found Machu Picchu instead. Actually, the word "found" is a bit misleading.

Everyone from the Peruvian subprefect of Cuzco to a drunken merchant outfitter of the expedition clear on down to the Indian porters carrying his luggage all knew about the ruins already. In fact, the only reason Bingham even bothered to climb the peak in the first place was because local informants had tipped him off to some “old ruins” at Huayna Picchu (“Young Peak”), surmised perhaps to contain a link to Vilcabamba. In fact, the ruins were atop Machu Picchu (“Old Peak”), just over the ridge. After a mere five hours at the site, Bingham left the ruins at Machu Picchu and continued his search for Vilcabamba. One month later, he “found” it, too, nestled in the thick jungle amongst a smattering of unimpressive ruins. Though the historical identity and importance of either site was not immediately obvious, numerous clues suggested that the ruins on Machu Picchu were not those of Vilcabamba, the last refuge of the besieged Incas. The clearest testimony of this came from the lips of Bingham’s own native guide, who repeatedly referred to the jungle floor ruins—not Machu Picchu—as “Vilcapampa.”

Bingham had a decision to make. He had been led to two different Incan ruins, and had every reason to believe that one of them—that of Machu Picchu—was certainly not “the lost city of the Incas.” But the more likely candidate, Vilcabamba, lacked the aesthetic allure of a mist-enshrouded mountaintop site. Machu Picchu was undeniably beautiful. Vilcabamba, buried in a forbidding tangle of jungle undergrowth, was an Incan encampment built in haste and bereft of splendid architecture and romantic beauty. Moreover, built as it was toward the end of the Incan empire, after a full century of contact with the Spaniards, Vilcabamba also revealed extensive use of red tiles in the construction of its buildings. To Bingham, the lost city of the Incas should evince pure Incan ingenuity, not cultural exchange with Europeans. Seen in this light, Machu Picchu was a much more attractive candidate for Bingham’s “lost city,” even if he already knew that it could not be the last refuge of the Incas. (It would later be determined that Machu Picchu represented a much earlier Incan site, built prior to contact with the Spanish, and served as a ritual retreat for the king.)

There was just one problem. During the brief five hours Bingham had spent atop Machu Picchu, he had already managed to spot the name of a potential rival, etched in charcoal on the walls of one of the temples: "Lizarraga 1902." Who was Lizarraga? Before he could tout his "discovery" of Machu Picchu as the "lost city of the Incas," Bingham had to make sure that no other Western avatar had beaten him to the site. According to notes scribbled in his journal while in the field, Bingham appears to have resigned himself to the likelihood of defeat. "Augustin Lizarraga is discoverer of Machu Picchu," he wrote after having learned the full name of his predecessor, "and lives at San Miguel Bridge just before passing." Later, however, Bingham decided to pay a quick visit to the Lizarraga abode in person, just to make sure. When a man with much darker skin than himself answered the door, Bingham knew that Machu Picchu was now his. Though the man turned out to be Augustín's brother, Bingham already had all the information he needed to know that only he could serve as an acceptable Western avatar to audiences back home. For the Lizarragas were, as Bingham himself later put it, "half-castes." No one in New York, Paris, or London would pay money for the vicarious thrill of being put in Augustín Lizarraga's shoes.

With that, Bingham returned home to regale the American press with tales of the lost city of the Incas: Machu Picchu. Following the same model of reporting that made Stanley and Livingstone famous, journalists from all the major New York papers lapped up Bingham's evocative description of Machu Picchu. Bingham became an overnight sensation, even earning a meeting with President Taft. Funding, too, was now much easier to come by. Not only did Yale finally open its checkbook, but the National Geographic Society also proved eager to associate itself with Bingham. At the invitation of Gilbert Grosvenor, the editor of *National Geographic Magazine*, Bingham lectured to an audience of 1,200 at the Masonic Temple in Washington, D.C. Before long, Bingham was able to organize the "Peruvian Expedition of 1912 under the Auspices of Yale University and the National Geographic Society." One year after he had spent a mere five hours at the site, Bingham returned to Machu Picchu with a formidable crew at his

disposal. This time he cleared away the ubiquitous overgrowth, washed off the charcoal graffiti (including “Lizarraga 1902”!), dug up the graves, and took hundreds of pictures.

The end result was the next installment in the Egyptomania craze, this time featuring the Incas. As evidence that Bingham was far more interested in popularizing a romantic image of an ancient civilization for mass consumption than he was in crafting a responsible scholarly narrative, we need look no further than the title of the *National Geographic* article he penned upon his return in 1913: “In the Wonderland of Peru—Rediscovering Machu Picchu.” If the evocation of Belzoni’s “wondrous curiosities” in the title was not proof enough, just consider the sheer number of Bingham’s own photographs that were published alongside the article: a whopping 250! With just over ten thousand words in the entire article, this is approximately one photogenic image of Machu Picchu and its environs for every forty words of text. Or, to put it another way, one photo for every single sentence or two! This was a visual smorgasbord for the eyes, not for the brain, and it was transmitted to 140,000 subscribers across the globe. With the prospect of endless fame and fortune now before him, Bingham stuck to his preferred version of Machu Picchu until the day he died. In 1948, he exploited the manufactured romance and mystery of the site one last time with the publication of a predictably titled book, *Lost City of the Incas*, now considered a “classic” of the genre.

That genre is the genre of Indiana Jones, long before Harrison Ford took up the role. Not the historical Indiana Jones, of course, but the consumed Indiana Jones. The consumed Indiana Jones invites the leisured classes of the world to tag along vicariously on expeditions into the unknown corners of the world, confident in their ability to tramp through jungles and deserts, ward off hostile natives (or Nazis), rescue damsels in distress (an aloof missionary in Africa will also do), and return home laden with treasures.

One of the last men to invoke the glamour of the archaeological hunt was Howard Carter, whose discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun will be treated more fully in chapter 6. Here it will suffice to note that, upon discovery of the tomb in 1922,



Figure 3.8. Avocados from Peru.

The exotic allure of Machu Picchu, first popularized by Hiram Bingham in the pages of *National Geographic Magazine*, is still used to market any number of products—including avocados—to Western consumers eager to embrace the escapist fantasies of the age of exploration. Copyright and courtesy of the Peruvian Avocado Commission.

Carter and his wealthy patron, the Earl of Carnarvon, managed to transition almost instantaneously from the exclusive and profitless world of Egyptology into the inclusive and profitable world of Egyptomania. Within weeks of the discovery, the Earl of Carnarvon contracted with the *London Times* for a monopoly on access to the site, and began to showcase the tomb to friends, business associates, and anyone else he wished to impress. Before long, a chaotic circus atmosphere enveloped the tomb.

Although Carter himself may have been an Egyptologist, the tomb was sold to the public as Egyptomania. The socially reticent Carter found the earl's theatrics irritating, to be sure, but still he performed his expected role as obliging host. Nor was Carter himself numb to the financial opportunities yielded by his discovery of the tomb. Much as with James Bennett, Jr. and the “*New York Herald Expedition*” a half century earlier, Carter knew how to package his discovery for the general public. In his own account of the initial discovery—of which there are several versions—Carter re-created the alleged dialogue between himself and Lord Carnarvon as he obtained his first glimpse by candlelight of the treasures in the tomb:

At first I could see nothing, the hot air escaping from the chamber causing the candle flame to flicker, but presently, as my eyes grew accustomed to the light, details of the room within emerged slowly from the mist, strange animals, statues, and gold—everywhere the glint of gold. For the moment—an eternity it must have seemed to the others standing by—I was struck dumb with amazement, and when Lord Carnarvon, unable to stand the suspense any longer, inquired anxiously, “Can you see anything?” it was all I could do to get out the words, “Yes, wonderful things.”

Here we see Carter making use of all the literary conventions of Egyptomania that have made it so predictably profitable for nearly two hundred years: mist-enshrouded ruins, strange animals, and the glint of gold, all of which cause the viewer to be “struck dumb with amazement.” The most telling words of all, however, are saved for the end: “wonderful things”! There are few words more consistently evocative of the commercial allure first tapped by Belzoni a century before. It is thus little wonder that “wonderful things” has entered the popular lexicon as an easily recognized phrase, nearly on par with “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?” As with Belzoni—not to mention Bennett, Stanley, and Bingham—Carter had a very specific audience in mind when he wrote these words. In the passage quoted above, Carter makes reference to “others standing by,” all of whom are named in the preceding pages: Lord Carnarvon, Lady Evelyn, and Arthur Callender. They are named because each one is a *somebody*: Carter’s friends, patrons, or colleagues. Compare this passage with one that appears just seven pages earlier, when he describes a moment just after the discovery of the outermost gate of the tomb, prior to the notification of the outside world:

It was a thrilling moment for an excavator. Alone, save for my native workmen, I found myself, after years of comparatively unproductive labour, on the threshold of what might prove to be a magnificent discovery.

Note the carefully phrased oxymoron in the second sentence: “alone, save for my native workmen.” The phrase contradicts

itself. Yet from Carter's perspective—and likely that of his readers, too—to be surrounded by natives *was* to be alone. After all, none of them was a somebody. They were all nobodies. Or, to put it somewhat more delicately—and to resurrect the parlance of this chapter—*they were not Western avatars*. At any given time, Belzoni, Stanley, Bingham, and Carter moved in the company of ten, twenty, sometimes even upward of one hundred local officials, guides, escorts, porters, servants, diggers, cooks, and surveyors. Most of these people had long been familiar with the sculptures, tombs, and ruins that the foreign explorer wished to visit, and had long viewed these things through their own unique interpretive prism. In most cases, the foreign explorer would not—and could not—have found it without their assistance. For example, the first stairs leading down to Tutankhamun's tomb were found by Carter's Arab waterboy. But this detail is carefully elided in Carter's narrative by his resort to the passive voice: "a step cut in the rock had been discovered," he writes. Behind the façade of public narratives, however, the historian can gain an occasional glimpse of the complex tensions that must have run through excavations like these. In 1907, Aurel Stein, who gained global fame through his expeditions on the Silk Road (see chapters 5 and 6), got into a heated debate with one of his Indian assistants, Ram Singh. In the private refuge of his unpublished diary, Stein was forced to acknowledge Singh's "bitter feelings about work supposed to have been done for others' credit."

Unfortunately for Ram Singh and every other hired hand to accompany an expedition, none of them could fulfill the exacting conditions imposed upon anyone who wished to profit from the commercial identity of a Western avatar: light, preferably white skin; spoken and written proficiency in a major European language; immersion in, and sympathy for, Judeo-Christian theology; and knowledge of the dominant historical narrative of Western civilization (Egypt to Greece to Rome to modern Europe) through which any new discovery was expected to be contextualized. As a result, though Euro-American explorers and archaeologists were rarely the first to "find" anything, they were usually the first to "discover" what had already been found by others. To say that they

“discovered” an artifact or site is to say that they were the first to bring them to the attention of audiences back home in such a way so as to highlight the ideological conventions expected of any Western avatar (white, Christian, and educated) in non-Western lands. Once fulfilled, these ideological conventions could then be commodified and sold for a profit. In the case of scholars, this usually meant the acquisition of a plush university post, a new academic title, an increase in salary or research funds, or the prestige of an endowed chair. In the case of those willing and able to cross the line from “-ology” to “-mania,” this meant the acquisition of celebrity fame and perhaps even fortune.

Either way, the consumed Indiana Jones offered nothing but bit roles for the “natives.” True, they might prove useful or obstructive on occasion. But the dramatic tensions and productive engines of any expedition account were invariably reserved for Western avatars. For about a hundred years, from Belzoni to Carter, published narratives of this sort, based at least in part on actual experiences on the ground, flourished in the West. After Howard Carter and the tomb of King Tut, however, the daring exploits of intrepid Western avatars trekking through exotic lands were relegated to the fictional world of novels and film—and there they stayed. Why? The answer is simple. As it turns out, the *consumed Indiana Jones* bore very little resemblance to the *historical Indiana Jones*. The former has existed continuously from Belzoni down to the present day. The latter, however, was undisputed master of his domain for only the briefest stretch of time, and eventually exited the historical stage entirely. How the “natives,” “half-castes,” and “Orientals” of the non-Western world first began to push him off that stage is told in the next chapter.

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