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Sir John Gardner Wilkinson: The Preservation and Pillage of Ancient Egypt

By Megan Ryan

Abstract

This paper analyzes the debate over the role of John Wilkinson in the development of Egyptology in the late-nineteenth century. Scholars have debated the early importance Wilkinson had during his lifetime. Some argue that Wilkinson's work was marginalized during his lifetime, and that his research was not fully appreciated until the past twenty years. Here, I demonstrate that Wilkinson's work formed the foundation for the work of many of his contemporaries. This, coupled with a number of other arguments, indicate that Wilkinson's work must have been seriously considered among academic circles during his time.

Introduction

Before the nineteenth century, the inability to read hieroglyphics considerably limited scholarship on ancient Egypt; while architects could appreciate the grandeur of its monuments and academics could study its history through texts from other societies, no one could reconstruct the history of Egypt from ancient Egyptian accounts. This inhibition, though, did not seem to deter academic or popular interest in Egypt. Napoleon's Egyptian campaign (1798-1799) initiated a significant amount of European interest in Egypt's antiquities and overall mystery. When Jean-François Champollion published his work deciphering hieroglyphics in 1826, he opened up an entirely untouched field of research about Egypt, allowing scholars access to an entirely new wealth of information. The nineteenth century proved a pivotal point for archaeology and for ancient studies; for while European interest in Egypt flourished, the practices of archaeology and the study of ancient Egypt itself remained largely unrefined.

Some scholars debate the early importance of the work of Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (1797-1875), a man now widely considered one of the Fathers of Egyptology. Wilkinson was the first to conduct in-depth site study in Egypt, which greatly distinguished his work from other Europeans at the time. He also targeted much of his printed work toward public audiences as well as academic ones. For these reasons, despite the many recognitions and awards his work received, some argue that academics studying Egypt during the early developments of Egyptology marginalized Wilkinson's work, and scholars have only come to appropriately appreciate his findings in the past twenty years. I argue, though, that because of his impact on the practice of Egyptology and its establishment as a reputable field of study, he and his research were both considered very important—if not crucial—to understanding ancient Egypt among academic circles in the mid- and late-nineteenth century.

Literature Review

One of Wilkinson's contemporary authors, Ernest Edwards, lends some insight about how Wilkinson was perceived toward the end of his academic career. *Portraits of Men of Eminence in Literature, Science, and Art* (1863) featured Wilkinson among one of its biographical sketches. Here, Edwards describes Wilkinson's career in terms of his awards. He highlights his distinguishing recognitions both in connection to, as well as apart from, his association with Egyptology.ⁱ In defining Wilkinson's importance in the study of Egypt, Edwards even goes so far as to credit him with the deciphering of hieroglyphics, as Wilkinson was able to deduce the names of kings using only Thomas Young's notes before Champollion's were published.ⁱⁱ While Edwards seems to be the only author to make such a bold claim, he

clearly recognizes Wilkinson as a crucial figure in the development of Egyptology and helps illustrate some opinions of Wilkinson during the nineteenth century.

In *Uraeus: A History of British Interest in the Antiquities of Egypt in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries* (1967), John David Wortham reviewed the history of the development of Egyptology with particular emphasis on important Englishmen who contributed to the field. Wortham argues that Wilkinson was the leading scholar in Egyptology until Flinders Petrie entered the field and revolutionized its practices in the 1880s.ⁱⁱⁱ He looks at the importance of Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of Ancient Egyptians* with respect to the existing work at the time and assesses its impact on future research in the field, showing that Wilkinson's work must have been given proper credit among scholars at the time. Wortham also acknowledges that later scholarship eventually replaced Wilkinson's work as more hieroglyphic studies became available to scholars. Yet, he continually stresses the importance Wilkinson had on the developing field of Egyptology.^{iv}

In his article, "Sir John Wilkinson Papers: An Update," from *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* (1992), Jason Thompson discusses Wilkinson's career through what is essentially a catalogue of both his published and unpublished works. Thompson reiterates Wilkinson's distinguished place among the founders of Egyptology, and discusses the importance of *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*—Wilkinson's most celebrated work—in the nineteenth century.^v Thompson also analyzes the significance of Wilkinson's sketches and drawings, perhaps his most valuable contributions to the field today^{vi} because, aside from being recognized for their accuracy, they depict both sites and monuments that have since been destroyed.

In his biography, *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle* (1992) published the same year, Thompson writes with particular attention to Wilkinson's life and work in Egypt and the impact

he had upon the developing field in the nineteenth century. In this work, Thompson reviews the progress of Wilkinson's academic career alongside the development of Egyptology and in comparison to other Europeans working in Egypt at the same time. He thus recreates a topical study of Wilkinson's work through the lens of modern Egyptology. Thompson seemingly contradicts his other writings, though, now arguing that while Wilkinson's work was important, scholars in the developing Egyptological field did not value its true importance because they did not consider Wilkinson a scholar, but merely an "educated traveler," consequently overlooking much of his written work.^{vii} Here, Thompson's book seems somewhat incongruent, because while he claims that nineteenth-century scholars did not appreciate Wilkinson's written work, he also clearly establishes Wilkinson as the leader and founder of Egyptology upon whose work most other scholars relied.^{viii}

I hope to illustrate that Sir John Gardner Wilkinson was indeed considered one of the leaders of Egyptology by his contemporaries and that his work was fully appreciated in the nineteenth century. I will be looking specifically at his discoveries and correspondence with such notable figures as Thomas Young and Jean-François Champollion; the impact of some of his specific works, most notably his Egyptian chronology and his famous *Manners and Customs of Ancient Egyptians*; and finally the opinions of him and uses of his work by later leaders in the field, such as Sir Flinders Petrie. I hope to demonstrate that even while "the full potential" of his work still may not be fully "realized,"^{ix} he was certainly recognized and duly appreciated in the mid- and late-nineteenth century.

Background and Brief Biography

European imperialist ambitions account for the majority of European involvement in Egypt for the larger part of the nineteenth century. The main European figures working in Egypt at the time were three men from competing nations, each hired by their respective countries to gain the lead in the so called “Antiquities War” that grew in Europe after Napoleon’s Egyptian campaign.^x Henry Salt, the Egyptian consul of the British Museum, worked in Egypt for a number of years collecting a variety of very important artifacts that he eventually sold to the Museum,^{xi} most of which are still proudly on display. For many of his excavations, he enlisted the help of Giovanni Belzoni, an Italian specialist in transporting large items. Belzoni and Salt together excavated a number of important sites, including Abu Simbel and the tomb of Seti I in the Valley of Kings; however, neither had much interest in smaller artifacts nor in the preservation of the sites, and many of their tactics would appall current archaeologists. For example, in the excavations of the tomb of Seti I, Belzoni used a battering ram to clear the entrance.^{xii} Salt’s leading competitor, Bernardino Drovetti, also scoured Egypt to collect treasures for the French government.^{xiii} By “the 1820’s the English and French Consuls in Cairo—Henry Salt and Bernardino Drovetti—were scrambling all over Egypt trying to outdo each other in carrying off antiquities,”^{xiv} for France and Britain both largely considered Egyptian artifacts merely another venue to assert their national dominance.

While Europeans were very interested in Egypt’s grandeur and mystery, no practiced academic study of its history existed in the early part of the century. Before the development of Egyptology as an established field, the only reliable sources of academic information about ancient Egypt came from classical sources.^{xv} The twenty-volume *Description de l’Egypte*, published in multiple segments between 1809 and 1822, marked the beginning of European study of Egypt for academic purposes. Previous literature published on Egypt came almost

entirely from accounts of interested travelers,^{xvi} a considerably popular trend among Europeans in the 1800s. The book was a compilation of discoveries, charts, sketches, and observations made by French specialists and researchers during Napoleon's Egyptian campaign (1798-1799).^{xvii} After the *Description*, the next landmark publication on ancient Egypt was Champollion's decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics in 1826. Prior to that time, since no one could read hieroglyphics, scholars were very limited in their studies of ancient Egypt as they had to base their knowledge almost entirely upon speculation rather than actual study.^{xviii}

Sir John Gardner Wilkinson began his Egyptian studies during a very important time in the development of Egyptology. Born in 1797, Wilkinson had early exposure to exploration and ancient artifacts, as his father was a member of two antiquarian societies and his family had close connections to a few friends who worked as explorers in various areas of Africa. In 1813, Wilkinson began attending Harrow, where he gained his first real contact with ancient world studies.^{xix} After graduating from Harrow, he continued his studies at Oxford; however, as Oxford did not have an ancient history department due to lack of strong academic resources,^{xx} Wilkinson decided to leave after three years without a degree, but with the ambition to pursue a career in the British Royal Navy.

Before he entered the Navy, Wilkinson embarked on a "Grand Tour" of Europe.^{xxi} His travels brought him to Italy, where he met the distinguished Sir William Gell, one of the world's leading academics in ancient history.^{xxii} Gell recognized Wilkinson's remarkable intelligence and interest in ancient history. He successfully persuaded Wilkinson to consider pursuing concentrated study in ancient Egypt; and in the summer of 1821, Gell personally tutored Wilkinson in all his knowledge of the ancient civilization. As Gell was in close correspondence with Thomas Young—one of the contributors to deciphering hieroglyphics—Wilkinson's

training included the existing research on hieroglyphics before Champollion's publication of his findings in the following years. Consequently, Wilkinson was the first to study in Egypt with any knowledge of the ancient language.^{xxiii} When Wilkinson did eventually travel to Egypt later that year, Gell boasted that Wilkinson was "better prepared to study its past than anyone who had traveled there since antiquity."^{xxiv}

On his first of four visits, Wilkinson spent thirteen years living in Egypt collecting an expansive variety of information. His compiled research eventually included eighty-three sketchbooks and more than eighty-one volumes of loose-leaf papers, comprised of everything between drawings, proofs, journals, correspondence, copies of engravings, and various other materials.^{xxv} He published a number of works on ancient Egypt, the most famous of which was his five-volume *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, a comprehensive work that covered virtually every aspect of Egyptian life other than politics, first released in 1837. He later republished a shorter version ten years later.^{xxvi} Wilkinson based the book on his knowledge of hieroglyphics and his other observations of ancient Egyptian sites, concentrating his research efforts primarily on the well-preserved walls of tombs in and around Thebes.^{xxvii} Wilkinson also published a number of other important works on ancient Egypt, some of which targeted a public rather than academic audience. His *Handbook for Travelers in Egypt* gave remarkably comprehensive advice on how and where to travel in Egypt, and his *The Egyptians in the Time of the Pharaohs: A Companion to the Crystal Palace Egyptian Collection* gave the history of the artifacts within the collection, as well as the context of the Egyptian history.

Wilkinson's work and methods set him apart from other distinguished Europeans working in Egypt—namely Salt and Drovetti. Despite being an Englishman, Wilkinson had no attachment to any museum or governmental organization, unlike his predecessors. He lived off

of his inheritance and studied for the sake of his own interest and for the benefit of academia.^{xxviii} The absence of any governmental or organizational attachment freed him to recognize and appreciate the importance of small artifacts and inscriptions that lent insight to the lives of the Egyptians, rather than only the grand artifacts that caught the eyes of collectors. Wilkinson's attention to detail allowed him to compile such a comprehensive work as *Manners and Customs* and set him apart from all other authors at his time. His education also enabled him to assess the academic value of the sites that he excavated, an advantage that also contributed to distinguishing him in the early 1800s.

Arguments Against Wilkinson's Early Importance

Despite Wilkinson's accomplishments, many have argued against his importance as a scholar of ancient Egypt. One argument against Wilkinson's academic influence comes from the fact that he was widely considered an "educated traveler" rather than a scholar. Touring Egypt was a relatively popular trend in Europe in the nineteenth century. Due to the heightened interest in Egypt with the discovery of the Rosetta Stone and Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, many upper-class Europeans spent time traveling Egypt to see its wonders, often compelled by their visits to publish their observations as non-academic accounts of the country. Thompson argues that Wilkinson's contemporaries considered him nothing more than a "man of leisure and an amateur scholar."^{xxix}

Several documents support this claim, most importantly a series of correspondences between Sir William Gell and leading Europeans in Egypt, including Henry Salt and Baron von Bunsen, a "Prussian diplomat and oriental scholar."^{xxx} Wilkinson spent some of his time working alongside Salt and Bunsen, and for a short time, Jean-François Champollion joined

them. In one of his letters to Gell regarding his recent work with Wilkinson, Salt states that Wilkinson's "interest...in our Egyptian antiquities far exceeds that of ordinary travelers,"^{xxxix} clearly indicating that while he held a relatively high opinion of Wilkinson, he hardly considered him a scholar. Bunsen also kept correspondence with Gell during his work in Egypt and, similar to Salt, indicated that he had little faith in Wilkinson's research in comparison to other academics at the time. For instance, at one point in their work, Wilkinson corrected Champollion's placement of Senusert I (Osortasen) in his chronology. Bunsen seemed quite troubled that Wilkinson, an unaccredited Englishman, could critique, much less disprove, Champollion, a "learned and distinguished" scholar.^{xxxii}

Interestingly enough, according to Thompson, Wilkinson even referred to himself as a traveler rather than a scholar: "Wilkinson considered himself a gentlemanly traveler and writer, one of the many men of letters who were a common feature of the literary landscape of Victorian England."^{xxxiii} Wilkinson used similar terminology to describe the work of his colleague, Robert Hay, a man who, like Wilkinson, actively worked to open academic research in Egypt.^{xxxiv} In the introduction to his book, *The Egyptians in the Time of the Pharaohs: Being a Companion to the Crystal Palace Egyptian Collection*, Wilkinson calls him an "English traveler"^{xxxv} and never actually distinguishes him as even familiar with ancient studies.

One very likely explanation for this categorization is the simple fact that the term "Egyptology" was not coined until 1859, considerably late in Wilkinson's career,^{xxxvi} something that Thompson himself acknowledges. With that in mind, the fact that he was considered a "gentleman traveler" did not necessarily have a negative connotation, nor does it automatically indicate any lack of attention or marginalization of his work on academia's behalf. Also, there were no academic experts on Egypt at the time. Wilkinson entered a virtually untapped field of

study as hieroglyphics were not even deciphered until five years after he began his work. Thompson never specifies exactly what academic circles marginalized Wilkinson's work; however, to my knowledge, there were no "academic circles" regarding ancient Egypt at that time. If there were, Wilkinson was likely the leading expert, as he was the only one to study ancient artifacts *in situ* with knowledge of the majority of existing literature and research on the subject. However, as Wilkinson was among the founders of the field, any scholars to whom Thompson may refer could not have been Egyptologists, as there was no "field" to speak of when he conducted his research. The experts with whom he did work were either linguists, architects, or merely antiquities collectors, none of whom truly have definitive authority to distinguish between trivial and valuable historical research.

Another argument as to why the Victorian "elite"^{xxxvii} arguably did not value Wilkinson's published work was because not all of his published work targeted academia; in some instances, as mentioned earlier, Wilkinson addressed a broader public audience, as was the case with his *Handbook for Travelers in Egypt*, where he used his expertise in Egypt as a means to encourage the already popular trend of European travel to ancient sites. His second, simplified publication of *Manners and Customs* also targeted a broader audience than merely academics, because, according to Wilkinson, "Egyptian history, and the manners of one of the most ancient nations, cannot but be interesting to every one."^{xxxviii}

Much, if not most, of Wilkinson's research remains unpublished, another possible argument against his importance in the 1800s.^{xxxix} While Wilkinson did publish a large amount of material on Egypt during lifetime, most of his sketches, charts, and journals exist only in manuscript form in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.^{xl} Being in Egypt, he experienced a considerable amount of trouble convincing publishers to print his materials in England.^{xli}

According to his letters to William Gell, he sent many of his journals and portfolios to England ahead of him where they remained unopened until his return, which, in some cases, was at least seven years later.^{xlii} Considering the sheer volume of material he compiled on ancient Egypt, it is hardly surprising the majority never reached the public; even so, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* initially consisted of five volumes until he re-published a condensed version in 1847.^{xliii} Therefore, his amount of unpublished research hardly indicates any lack of importance in the 1800s.

Assessment of Wilkinson's Impact on the Development of Egyptology

One strong indication of Wilkinson's place among academics in the nineteenth century is his close work and correspondences with Thomas Young and Jean-François Champollion, indisputably two of the most respected and distinguished men of scholarship in the 1800s. Wilkinson's involvement with Thomas Young began early in his academic career. At Harrow, one of Wilkinson's professors, George Butler, studied under Thomas Young,^{xliv} consequently familiarizing him with the leading work on ancient Egypt at an early stage. Also, as mentioned previously, William Gell inspired and cultivated Wilkinson's interest and knowledge of ancient Egypt, while Wilkinson was on his Grand Tour of Europe. Thanks to his expansive knowledge of the ancient world, Gell kept correspondences with a number of people with academic interests in Egypt, including not only Wilkinson, but Young and Champollion as well.^{xlv} Wilkinson's academic background and involvement with both Gell and Butler provided him a venue through which he eventually came to work personally with Thomas Young.

Gell largely acted as an intermediary of ideas between discoveries in Egypt and academics in Europe, and consequently sent Young's research to Wilkinson and Wilkinson's

drawings of hieroglyphics to Young.^{xlvi} Both men relied on each other's research to keep their respective work both current and accurate. As Young was unquestionably considered one of the most influential scholars in the nineteenth century, the fact that he relied on Wilkinson's collected data and analysis proves that Wilkinson's work was influential among scholars in his time. If academics truly considered Wilkinson a mere traveler and marginalized his work as interesting observations, Young would never have considered studying his research, much less base his own studies upon it. At one point, Young even helped publish Wilkinson's work while he was abroad,^{xlvii} a favor he certainly would not have extended unless he considered Wilkinson's research valuable to understanding ancient Egypt.

Wilkinson also worked alongside Jean-François Champollion, the man credited with deciphering hieroglyphics with the added research of Thomas Young. Champollion visited Egypt and worked with Wilkinson in Thebes in 1828, as indicated in Wilkinson's letter to Gell written that same year. Given Champollion's importance in the intellectual mainstream at the time, the fact that Champollion considered Wilkinson a peer worth studying alongside proves that Wilkinson must have held an important place in academia.

Interestingly enough, during their combined studies in Egypt, Wilkinson actually critiqued and corrected some of Champollion's translations, demonstrating that he must have had at least an equivalent knowledge of both hieroglyphics and ancient Egypt to Champollion. In his letter to Gell, Wilkinson states that Champollion "certainly has too many theories unfounded and contrary to experience,"^{xlviii} which clearly indicates a degree of uncertainty regarding Champollion's conclusions. He also continues to call much of Champollion's study ungrounded and, in some instances, blatantly "incorrect,"^{xlix} particularly in his distinction between the sun gods and the kings. In a previous letter, Wilkinson informed Gell that he corrected Champollion

and Young on some of their translations, specifically their translations of several cartouches.¹ As stated earlier, because of his extensive work with hieroglyphics, some scholars, such as Ernest Edwards, assert that he is responsible for translating them rather than Champollion, as he was able to decipher the names of several kings using Young's discoveries before Champollion had published his findings.^{li} As Wilkinson successfully corrected flaws in the work of the leading European scholars at his time, he clearly had a significant impact upon Egyptian studies in his day.

Using his knowledge of hieroglyphics and the advantage of his location within Egypt, Wilkinson constructed the first lineage of ancient Egyptian kings,^{lii} a distinction that gives him considerable merit in the establishment of the field of Egyptology. For much of his dating, Wilkinson relied heavily upon Biblical connections, a fact recognized by those outside of the field and severely debated by many within it. By using the Bible as an academic resource, Wilkinson catered his work to both academic and public spheres, even noting in his forward of *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* that everyone should take interest in ancient Egypt because "the name of Egypt need only be mentioned to recall the early impressions we have received from the study of the Bible."^{liiii} Upon their publication, Wilkinson's Biblical connections immediately affected scholarly views, soliciting the attention of even the *Westminster Review*, a quarterly periodical established in the 1820s. The *Review* issued an article in 1841 discussing Wilkinson's work; while skeptical of some of his Biblical connections, they accepted his chronologies and acknowledged them as a base for future research.^{liv} The *New York Times* offered further evidence for Wilkinson's influence in an 1853 article covering a lecture from the Reverend J. P. Thompson. Thompson refers to Wilkinson's Biblically-based Egyptian dates as fact, connecting Joseph with the reign of Osarbozza, and using Menes as a

means to date King David.^{lv} The way in which Rev. Thompson references Wilkinson's work indicates that even as early as the 1850s, much of academic research relied on Wilkinson's studies as a foundation for future work.

Champollion made only one trip to Egypt in his lifetime,^{lvi} during which time he joined Wilkinson in his translation research in Thebes.^{lvii} Wilkinson heavily supported, if not contributed, to Champollion's connection between the Biblically mentioned Shishak and Egypt's Pharaoh Shoshenk. In his book, *The Egyptians in the Time of the Pharaohs*, Wilkinson establishes on the first page that he endorses this theory that the two kings were one in the same, and uses that opinion as the foundation for his work,^{lviii} which eventually became the base for the accepted chronology for the ancient world.

Similarly, Wilkinson also linked the Israelite slavery in Egypt with his Egyptian dating system. In *The Egyptians in the Time of the Pharaohs*, Wilkinson compared his observations about architecture and brick-making practices—as observed in a painting inside a Theban tomb—to descriptions of Israelite labor mentioned in the Bible.^{lix} He used this connection not only to prove Israelite presence in Egypt, but also to date their captivity and exodus. Through his observations, Wilkinson placed the Israelites in Egypt toward the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, during the reigns of either Seti I or Rameses II,^{lx} a theory widely accepted and incorporated into virtually all other academic study on ancient world chronologies.

Even during his lifetime, Wilkinson's claims met controversy, but the fact that his work even merited debate among scholars again confirms his notable place among academics in the nineteenth century. Also, as previously mentioned, these two assertions form the basis for most of ancient world chronology. Now, after more than 120 years of scholarship has relied upon the accuracy of these dates, some Egyptologists, such as David Rohl, have begun a new academic

debate surrounding the possible inaccuracy of these two connections,^{lxi} further emphasizing the fundamental importance of Wilkinson's conclusions. His work had to have been influential in his time; otherwise, these two hypotheses—particularly his connection between the Israelites and the Eighteenth Dynasty—would never have formed the foundation of many ancient world chronologies.

Aside from his work with chronologies and kings lists, Wilkinson's impact on Egyptology also came through his most famous work, his originally five-volume *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*. As the first reliable source on the lives of ancient Egyptians, this masterpiece, based on thirteen years worth of study of Egyptian artifacts, remained the most accurate account for the larger part of the century.^{lxii} One of the most popular books about ancient Egypt in the 1800s,^{lxiii} his book thoroughly addressed virtually every aspect of ancient Egyptian life other than politics. Some scholars even believed that "those who wish to understand the ancient Egyptians must do so with this work as their guide"^{lxiv} and that no library was considered complete without a copy. Even the public spheres acknowledged the work for its impressive scholarship; the *New York Times* praised the book and even went so far to compare Wilkinson's work to a hypothetical reconstruction of a lost British Empire 5,000 years in the future. The review concludes by stating that the book "cannot fail to recommend commend [itself] to a very wide circle of readers."^{lxv}

Perhaps most importantly, Wilkinson's initial drive to meticulously study Egypt laid the foundations for future archaeologists and ancient historians. Without his studies, important figures, such as Sir Flinders Petrie, may not have had a field into which to enter. In his 1892 inaugural address to University College London, Petrie acknowledged Wilkinson for his approach to study in Egypt and implored his contemporaries to model their studies after

Wilkinson's.^{lxvi} As a number of years passed between Wilkinson's work and Petrie's speech, Wilkinson clearly left a defined legacy in the study of Egyptology if nearly half a century later, the Father of Modern Archaeology and one of history's most renowned Egyptologists praised Wilkinson's work as a model for future approaches.

Conclusion

Ancient Egypt was one history's most spectacular civilizations and the remarkable preservation of its art and monuments continues to fascinate thousands of people globally. As these artifacts constitute such a large part of national pride, scholars must compile a more complete understanding of the men who made their study possible, such as Wilkinson. For example, controversy still exists over where many of Egypt's most prized treasures—*e.g.*, the Rosetta Stone, which is currently at the British Museum in London—should be permanently displayed. As antiquity is a key component of national identity, understanding the development of Egyptology and the role that the English and other Europeans played in Egypt's preservation and the emersion of Egyptology as a field of study may help settle current disputes surrounding these issues.^{lxvii}

John Gardner Wilkinson received a knighthood in 1839 for his contributions to the study of ancient Egypt^{lxviii} and likely received more recognition^{lxviii} for his work than any other Egyptian scholar at his time.^{lxix} He received honorary memberships to at least six academic societies, all interestingly relating to architecture or ethnology, rather than ancient history;^{lxx} and he was also distinguished as one of the jurors and exhibitors of the 1851 Great Exhibition in London.^{lxxi} As a result of his extensive travels and collecting, he contributed more than 300 artifacts to the British Museum,^{lxxii} most of which are still on display in the Egyptian exhibit there today. While

the majority of his work remains in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, scholars rely on his accurate drawings of sites that have hence been destroyed.^{lxxiii}

By assessing the impact Wilkinson had on leading scholars in the 1800s, including Young and Champollion, Wilkinson's work must have received due attention during his lifetime, regardless of whether he was considered an "educated traveler" or not. Wilkinson's chronology alone proves that, as the foundation of ancient chronology and its modern debate, academics appreciated his work enough to use it as a foundation for more than 100 years of research. Considering the extent of his research on ancient Egypt—including four separate trips to the country during his lifetime^{lxxiv}—Wilkinson's work provided the foundations for the vast majority of scholarly work in Egypt and prepared academic study for Sir Flinders Petrie's revolution of archaeology later that century. Without question, Sir John Gardner Wilkinson should be acknowledged as the "Father of Egyptology," an appropriately earned title that forever distinguishes his place in the annals of history.

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- ⁱ Ernest Edwards, *Portraits of Men of Eminence in Literature, Science, and Art*. (London: Lovell Reed & Co., 1863) 80
- ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 75.
- ⁱⁱⁱ John David Wortham, *Uraeus: A History of British Interest in the Antiquities of Egypt in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 233.
- ^{iv} *Ibid.*, 237.
- ^v Thompson, Jason. "The Sir Gardner Wilkinson Papers: An Update." *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 78, (1992), pp. 273-274. 273.
- ^{vi} *Ibid.*, 273.
- ^{vii} Jason Thompson, *Sir John Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), xi-xiv.
- ^{viii} *Ibid.*, 165, 189-190.
- ^{ix} *Ibid.*, xii.
- ^x Holger Hoock, "The British State and the Anglo-French Wars over Antiquities, 1798-1858," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Mar., 2007), pp. 1-264, 57-58.
- ^{xi} John D. Wortham, *The Genesis of British Egyptology, 1594-1906* (Norman, Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press, 1971), 60-61.
- ^{xii} *Ibid.*, 62.
- ^{xiii} Donald M. Reid, "Indigenous Egyptology: The Decolonization of a Profession?," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 105, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1985), pp. 191-387, 234.
- ^{xiv} *Ibid.*, 234.
- ^{xv} Peter Ucko and Timothy Champion, *The Wisdom of Egypt : Changing Visions Through the Ages*. (Portland: Cavendish Publishing, 2003), 161.
- ^{xvi} David G. Jeffreys, *Views of Ancient Egypt Since Napoleon Bonaparte: Imperialism, Colonialization, and Modern Appropriations* (London: Cavendish Publishing, 2003) 1.
- ^{xvii} Wortham, 49.
- ^{xviii} *Ibid.*, 60.
- ^{xix} Thompson, 2.
- ^{xx} *Ibid.*, 4.
- ^{xxi} *Ibid.*, 6.
- ^{xxii} Jason Thompson, "Purveyor General to the Hieroglyphics: Sir William Gell and the Development of Egyptology." *Views of Ancient Egypt Since Napoleon Bonaparte*. Ed. David Jeffreys. (Coogee: Cavendish Publishing, 2003), 78.
- ^{xxiii} Thompson, *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle* xi.
- ^{xxiv} Thompson, *Views of Ancient Egypt Since Napoleon Bonaparte* 79.
- ^{xxv} Sarah J. A. Flynn, *Catalogue of the papers of Sir John Gardner Wilkinson 1797-1875*. (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1997), under "Sketchbooks 1815-1875," <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/1500-1900/wilkinson/wilkinson000.html>.
- ^{xxvi} *Ibid.*, under "Introduction."
- ^{xxvii} Wortham, *Uraeus*, 237.
- ^{xxviii} Thompson, *Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle*, 2.
- ^{xxix} Thompson, *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle*, 168.
- ^{xxx} Thompson, *Sir William Gell*, 81.
- ^{xxxi} "Letters to Sir William Gell from Henry Salt, [Sir] J. G. Wilkinson, and Baron von Bunsen. H. R. Hall, Henry Salt, J. G. Wilkinson and Baron von Bunsen." *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Jun., 1915), pp. 133-167. Published by: Egypt Exploration Society, 138.
- ^{xxxii} *Ibid.*, 137.
- ^{xxxiii} Thompson, *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle*, xi.
- ^{xxxiv} John D. Wortham, *The Genesis of British Egyptology, 1594-1906* (Norman, Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press, 1971), 63.
- ^{xxxv} John Gardner Wilkinson and Samuel Birch, *The Egyptians in the Time of the Pharaohs: Being a Companion to the Crystal Palace Egyptian Collection*. (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1857.), vi.
- ^{xxxvi} Thompson, *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle*, xi.
- ^{xxxvii} *Ibid.*, xiv.

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- xxxviii Sir John Gardner Wilkinson, *The Manners and Customs of Ancient Egyptians vol. 1.* (Boston: S.E. Cassino and Company, 1847), vi.
- xxxix Thompson, *The Sir Gardner Wilkinson Papers*, 273.
- xl *Ibid.*, 274.
- xli Wilkinson, 161.
- xlii *Ibid.*, 142.
- xliii Flynn, under “Introduction.”
- xliv Wortham, *Uraeus*, 234.
- xlvi Thompson, *Sir William Gell*, 78.
- xlvii *Ibid.*, 79.
- xlviii *Ibid.*, 80.
- xlviii Wilkinson, 160.
- xlix *Ibid.*, 158.
- ¹ Wilkinson, 157.
- li Edwards, 75.
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- lxi Rohl, 127.
- lxii Wortham, *The Genesis of British Egyptology*, 65.
- lxiii Wortham, *Uraeus*, 237.
- lxiv Edwards, 78.
- lxv *New York Times*, paragraph 3.
- lxvi Thompson, *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle*, 223.
- lxvii John Tierney, “A Case in Antiquities for ‘Finders Keepers,’” *New York Times.com*, November 16, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/17/science/17tier.html?_r=1&scp=6&sq=Rosetta%20Stone&st=cse (accessed March 20, 2010).
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- lxix Thompson, *Sir Gardner Wilkinson and His Circle*, 165.
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- lxxi *Ibid.*, 79.
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- lxxiii Thompson, 273.
- lxxiv Flynn, paragraph 4.

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