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Margaret Greene April 10, 2023

Two Canadian Collectors of Ancient Egyptian Art in the Nineteenth Century and Their Relationship to Coffins in the Michael C. Carlos Museum

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Abstract

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This study focuses on two collectors of ancient Egyptian art from the nineteenth century, Sidney Barnett and Dr. James Douglas. They collected artifacts for a museum in Canada, called the Niagara Falls Museum, opened by Thomas Barnett in 1827. Throughout the late 1850s and early 1860s, Thomas Barnett sent his son, Sidney Barnett, and his business partner, Dr. James Douglas, on expeditions to Egypt to purchase material for display, especially mummies. Some of these artifacts find their home on Emory's campus in the Michael C. Carlos Museum. These are contained in an acquisition the Carlos Museum purchased in 1999 from William Jamieson, who purchased the objects upon the closure of the Niagara Falls Museum.

By reviewing a variety of Barnett's documents as well as the writings and photographs of Douglas and his family, I will consider what motivated the two figures to turn to ancient Egypt in the first place, what inspired their interest in specific objects, and, especially for Barnett, how the objects were figured into the scheme of the Niagara Falls Museum. While Barnett's specific motivations for his interest in ancient Egypt are not expressly laid out in archival material, what is clear is that the concept of the museum as a container for didactic taxonomy facilitated inclusion of a wide array of material, including ancient Egyptian material. On the other hand, Dr. James Douglas' motivations appear distinctly focused on ancient Egyptian bodies over material culture. It is through the medicalized engagement with these bodies that Douglas forms knowledge about the ancient Egyptians, which is presented as unobjective and scientific. While different, these two elements resulted in the inclusion of material within the Niagara Falls Museum. Thus, the presence of ancient Egyptian material within the Carlos Museum is not the result of one reason or motivation, but rather the combined influence of several factors.

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Introduction

In the mid-nineteenth century, two Canadians traveled to Egypt to collect objects for a natural history museum in Niagara Falls, established in 1831.[1] The first of these figures is Sidney Barnett (1836-1915), who was the son of Thomas Barnett, the founder of the museum. The second is Dr. James Douglas (1800-1886), a Scottish-born doctor who had spent time practicing medicine in both the US and Canada.[2] Canadian antiquities dealer William Jamieson purchased much of the collection upon the museum's closure in 1998.[3] In 1999, the Michael C. Carlos Museum acquired a collection of ancient Egyptian objects, as well as seven mummies, from William Jamieson. This paper seeks to examine archival materials produced by and related to Sidney Barnett and Dr. James Douglas, now held by Niagara Falls Museums and the Carlos Museum, to understand more completely Barnett's and Douglas' relationship to the objects in the Niagara Falls Museum. Why are these two figures interested in ancient Egypt, and how is this interest reflected in their writings and purchase of antiquities?

The material examined in this thesis ranges from personal letters, to photos, to the minutes of meetings of governing bodies. Many different topics are discussed by Barnett and Douglas, including the scope and mission of the Niagara Falls Museum, as well as what makes an ancient Egyptian mummy more or less worthy of purchase. While these two figures are united in that they purchased antiquities for the Niagara Falls Museum in the early nineteenth century, what becomes clear in this analysis of material is that their interests are differently motivated and cannot be conflated. For example, especially important for Barnett is his interest in ancient Egypt

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[1] Ginger Strand, *Inventing Niagara: Beauty, Power, and Lies* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 83, 78.
[2] Jennifer Graham, "Photographic Views Taken in Egypt and Nubia by James Douglas, M.D. and James Douglas Jr.," MA thesis, (Ryerson University, 2012), 9, 10, https://rshare.library.torontomu.ca/articles/thesis/Photographic_views_taken_in_Egypt_and_Nubia_by_James_Douglas_M_D_and_James_Douglas_Jr_/14648733.
[3] Strand, *Inventing Niagara,* 83.

as related to his primary interest of expanding the collection of the museum. Thus, an important question related to the analysis of Barnett's material concerns how ancient Egyptian antiquities originally figured into the collection of the Niagara Falls Museum. This question of less importance to Douglas, who was not involved in the management of the museum, and who had less investment in what would attract visitors. Douglas' interest is motivated by a medical interest in the bodies of mummies. Also revealed in these analyses are the practical details surrounding Douglas' and Barnett's trips, and a partial identification of which objects in the Niagara Falls Museum Barnett and Douglas acquired in contrast to those acquired by later owners of the Museum throughout the twentieth century.

Certainly, the team at the Carlos spent considerable time investigating these two figures, but unfortunately much of the supplementary material promised by Jamieson was not delivered with the objects and mummies. Further, establishing the exact source of the objects and their collectors' motivations was necessarily of secondary concern to understanding the general contents of the collection and ensuring the application of necessary conservation treatments. Additionally, much of the previous research that was conducted on the background of these two figures was centered around a particular mummy that arrived at the Carlos with the collection. Based on the condition of the mummy and the pose of his arms, the mummy was initially identified as Ramesses I and was subsequently repatriated back to Egypt in 2004 (although now the mummy is simply labeled as a royal mummy). Understandably so, the majority of material produced by these initial inquiries is focused around identifying the place of origin for this specific mummy rather than the collection overall. Additionally, while Douglas and Barnett are frequently mentioned in brochures and guidebooks produced by the Niagara Falls Museum for visitors in the 60s, 70s, and 80s, often stories about these figures do not agree with one another.

At times, the separate trips of the men are conflated, and no consistent dates are presented for their travels, leaving other aspects of the collection's history unexplored. More research into these practical details is needed. Thus, I hope to produce a fuller understanding of these figures and their context in nineteenth century intellectual thought.

While not the primary focus of this paper, these questions are motivated by a major and recent concern in the discipline of Egyptology—the question of how to engage in self-criticism. Egyptologists take different approaches to this, borrowing techniques from other disciplines such as anthropology to engage with ancient Egyptian culture more directly. Others have turned to an examination of the history of the discipline—to locate the origin of ideas often situated in the beliefs of the scholars who first examined the material. Ideas put forth by the European and American scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (and earlier) about ancient Egypt were necessarily informed by their own cultural situation. These beliefs, at times racist, Orientalist, or otherwise problematic, remain implicitly in scholarship due to the cumulative nature of knowledge building. By examining the ideas and motivations of these early scholars, it may be possible to identify the origins of Egyptological ideas that now appear as a given and to allow for consideration of ideas outside of this original framework. My paper strives to take up the first step in this sort of self-criticism, to examine a piece of Egyptological history relevant to the objects display in the Michael C. Carlos Museum. One might ask, if the ultimate aim of this type of scholarship is to identify and move away from some of the more problematic aspects of early scholarship, does research exclusively on European and American collectors not further emphasize their perspectives? On the one hand, the fact that this work further highlights the perspectives of these two collectors is unavoidable. The perspectives of these two figures, however, are important to consider as they still actively shape public engagement with ancient

Egypt through the presence and display of the objects in the Michael C. Carlos Museum. Identifying and acknowledging these motivations will not only enrich our knowledge about the long histories of these objects, but also allow viewers and researchers to reflect on and therefore better understand how Barnett and Douglas' understandings continue to figure into our own.

Before embarking on a consideration of Douglas' and Barnett's interest in Egypt specifically, it would be profitable to broadly consider what material about ancient Egypt was available in North America during the nineteenth century. Certainly, North American scholars interested in ancient Egypt were physically farther away from archaeological sources of material culture than their European counterparts. In addition to this, for those in North America, there was a relative absence of imperial interest in Egypt, compared to Napoleonic France, for example, in the beginning of the century. For the British and the French, military involvement in Egypt resulted in officials stationed in Egypt amassing large collections of objects. These collections were often later offered for sale to major museums, such as the British Museum and the Louvre, so the display of objects was also, by association, a representation of the success of imperial activities.[4] Due to the lack of direct imperial involvement in Egypt for the US and Canada, while there was some ancient Egyptian material culture circulating in private collections, little was made visible to the public. As a result, most information about Egypt came through mediated forms, such as popular publications, such as the *Description de l'Egypte,* or through the appearance of ancient Egyptian architectural vocabulary in Egyptian Revival architecture.

Despite the limited amounts of ancient material circulating at the time, discussions about ancient Egypt proliferated among several interested groups. Scholars expressed a variety of

[4] See Stephanie Moser and her volume *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 2006) for more details on this effect in the British Museum specifically.

different motivations for examining ancient Egypt in their writings, including its association with biblical history, but also the contested position of the ancient Egyptian body and its relevance to the medical, the anthropological, and the phrenological. While there may have been few objects available for viewing, this specific interest in the ancient Egyptian body meant that there were several mummies on view in major cities in the US, as well as in Niagara Falls. Several scholars have undertaken writing histories of nineteenth century American Egyptology, and recent authors have taken a critical approach, reflecting on the discipline's overtones of Orientalism and relationship to scientific racism in the United States.[5] Therefore, in this section, I do not aim to outline a complete and totalizing history, but rather to highlight key examples of material Douglas and Barnett likely were aware of before they traveled to Egypt. It is not enough to say that people were interested in the bodies of ancient Egyptians simply because they were strange, weird, or 'curiosities.' Instead, conversations about ancient Egypt were motivated by the concerns listed above and reflected in the material below, although admittedly, this summary does not reflect the full range and variety of discussion.

As mentioned above, while North Americans were a greater distance removed from Egypt itself, several texts were available which discussed ancient Egyptian monuments, life, and customs. Arguably, one of the most important was the *Description de l'Égypte,* which was produced by a team of academics commissioned by Napoleon to record monuments throughout ancient Egypt during France's occupation. Despite his surrender at Alexandria in 1801, Napoleon's scholars returned to France and published the *Description* in sections beginning in 1809. By 1822, copies had arrived in North America, and some of the earliest editions were

[5] See Chrisitina Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014) and Scott Trafton, *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

purchased and gifted to the Harvard College Library and the United States Library of Congress. Additionally, some private individuals purchased copies throughout the 1830s, such as architect John Haviland.[6] The copies were limited in number, however, due to the expense of the volume, and generally inaccessible to the public.

Nonetheless, these volumes were key sources of inspiration for the Egyptian Revival architecture style that began to appear in buildings in major cities in the Northeastern United States.[7] Having its origins in France and England, features of Egyptian architecture were employed in American cemeteries, bridges, and a large prison in New York, officially named the Halls of Justice, but dubbed 'the Tombs.' Often, architects referred to ancient Egyptian forms through their paradoxical association with technological innovation, but also with timeless wisdom.[8] Taking a more critical position, Scott Trafton undertakes a thorough and critical discussion of other aspects of ancient Egyptian Revival architecture, focusing on its employment in graveyards and in the Halls of Justice in order to articulate how its employment reflected anxieties over where ancient Egypt fit into the imagined past of Europe and America. If Greece and Rome were the ancestors of American civilization, and by extension, imagined as white civilizations, ancient Egypt did not so easily fit into this scheme because of its unstable identity, epitomized in its employment in arguments over racial difference.[9] Trafton writes,

> "The racialized controversies in which ancient Egypt figured so prominently interfered with an smooth transition from "the ancient past" to "the nineteenth century," whether it was shaped into a conflict between pagan and Christian or Negro and Caucasian. As a result, Egypt became the sign of historiographic anxiety."[10]

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[6] Andrew Oliver, *American Travelers on the Nile: Early US Visitors to Egypt, 1774-1839* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2015), 35.
[7] Richard G. Carrott, *The Egyptian Revival: Its Sources, Monuments, and Meaning, 1808-1858* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 25.
[8] Carrott, *The Egyptian Revival,* 108.
[9] Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 148.
[10] Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 148.

Thus, employment of ancient Egyptian imagery in architecture is not representative of any specific or coherent idea about ancient Egypt at the time, but rather represents an impulse to contain and outline these anxiety inducing associations. Ancient Egyptian Revival architecture stands for the complex discussions that occur around ancient Egyptian imagery in the US throughout the nineteenth century.

Inspired by volumes produced by Europeans, North American scholars also turned to write about ancient Egypt. This influence is much more relevant for Barnett and Douglas, who both mention some of these volumes and authors by name or by implicit reference. Perhaps the most popular and infamous of these figures is George Gliddon. Gliddon was a US Consular agent in Egypt, who also spent time touring the US, giving wildly popular lectures on Egypt throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1843, he published a small volume entitled *Ancient Egypt*, which was incredibly popular, evidenced by the fact that he sold 24,000 copies.[11] The volume is representative of topics related to ancient Egypt that would have been of interest to a nineteenth century American or Canadian. The book included chapters discussing the Rosetta Stone (a relevant topic as hieroglyphs were translated by French scholar Jean-François Champollion in 1822), biblical chronology, and the race of the ancient Egyptians. While the book included illustrations of several objects from a private collection owned by the American Mendes Cohen, most of the discussion was on a theoretical or historical level rather than being pointedly engaged with material culture. Further, Gliddon's discussions about ancient Egypt were clearly inflected by his anxieties about racial categories. Trafton discusses this in detail in his volume. Americans like Gliddon looked towards ancient Egyptians, imagined as a 'primeval'

[11] John Wilson, *Signs and Wonders Upon Pharaoh: A History of American Egyptology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 41.

or one of the 'original' races to determine the origins of racial difference.[12] These discussions were often, if not always, tied up with the justification for the enslavement of African people.

Clearly, there were several ways in which ancient Egypt appeared in North America, mainly as mediated representations of Egypt through architecture and texts. Less prominent were large collections of material culture, like one might find in the mid-nineteenth century in major European museums such as the Louvre and British Museum. Of course, there were private collectors of Egyptian antiquities, including Mendes Cohen, mentioned above, but often those collections remained closed to the public until the late nineteenth century.[13] There are exceptions to this—one of the most notable being the Abbott collection. The collection, as indicated by its name, was obtained by Henry Abbott (b. 1812), a British born collector who purchased the objects while serving as a physician under Mohammed Ali.[14] He traveled with the collection out of Egypt to the US with hopes to sell it—finding no buyers, he exhibited it in 1853 in New York, where put on display at the Stuyvesant Institute among other places.[15] As well be discussed later, the Abbott collection, however, was relatively unpopular. In fact, an article published in Harper's Magazine (then later published as part of the introduction to the collection's catalogue) attributes this to Americans' pursuit of money over study.[17] And while the article emphasizes that citizens must act fast to purchase the collection, the reality was that there were few buyers for Abbott's objects—they were eventually purchased by the New York Historical Society for a little over half of what Abbott asked for.[18] Walt Whitman, who visited the collection on several occasions,

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[12] Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 84.
[13] Oliver, *American Travelers on the Nile*, 136.
[14] Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America,* 64.
[15] Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America,* 64.
[17] J.W. Watson, printer, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities, the Property of Henry Abbott, M.D. now Exhibiting at the Stuyvesant Institute, No. 659 Broadway, New York* (New York: 1854), 6, https://niagarafalls.pastperfectonline.com/archive/0B33D00C-1BE3-4326-A2AC-794888920290. I am using a copy with Barnett's note available through the digital archives of the Niagara Falls Museums, Ontario.
[18] Wilson, *Signs and Wonders Upon Pharaoh,* 39.

also writes about the collection's unpopularity and that the exhibits were often empty of visitors.[19]

More compelling for Americans, it seems, than collections of objects, were displays of ancient Egyptian mummies, where visitors could connect directly to the ancient Egyptians through their bodies. One of the first mummies that appeared in the US arrived in April 1823, named Padihershef was eventually put on display at the Massachusetts General Hospital and dubbed "appropriate ornament of the operating room."[20] The same mummy was put on display by Rubens Peale at his museum in Baltimore in June of 1824. The mummy was exhibited with a tattooed head from New Zealand and with Belzoni's illustrated book of temples and tombs.[21] In both cases, there is some attention paid to the material culture and context surrounding the body of the mummy—this seen in its presentation with Belzoni's book, but also in that detailed drawings of the coffin lid and base were commissioned by Massachusetts General Hospital.[22] Despite this, the main emphasis of both exhibitions is the mummy itself and this emphasis is made especially clear in that a hospital, a medical institution focused on study of the human body, was considered an especially appropriate place for the mummy. Further, if the mummies' display with Belzoni's book at Peale's museum represented some interest in its context, it is equally telling that it was displayed with a tattooed head, presumably as anatomical comperandus. Thus, Peale contextualizes the mummy with some context of its original location via the book, but also highlights its status as a specimen of the human body.

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[19] Walt Whitman, "One of the Lessons Bordering Broadway, the Egyptian Museum" in *New York Dissected* (New York: R. R. Wilson, Inc., 1936), 29.
[20]Massachusetts General Hospital, Board of Trustees, Records, 18 May 1823, Massachusetts General Hospital Archives and Special Collections, Boston; S. J. Wolfe and Robert Singerman, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century American: Ancient Egyptians as Artifacts* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2009), 7, 14.
[21] William T. Alderson, ed., *Mermaids, Mummies, and Mastodons: The Emergence of the American Museum* (Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 1992), 60.
[22] Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America,* 16.

Like many other contemporary museums, Peale's museum in Baltimore featured a variety of 'curious' attractions alongside its natural specimens, including "wire walkers," "female beauties," and "learned dogs."[23] In other words, the mummy was displayed at a place where categories were defined (through presenting natural specimens as examples) but also defied (via curiosities). While this might initially seem paradoxical, presenting objects contradictory to defined categories worked to uphold them. For example, presenting something explicitly labeled as curiosity or an oddity reaffirms established categories in that it refers to said object as abnormal for not fitting into the prescribed scheme. Further, the presentation of curiosity neutralizes the object that might be threatening to predetermined categories through its label as an outsider. Thus, in both cases—in the hospital and in the museum—the body of the mummy was placed into an environment where it was figured as evidence for stable understandings of the world.

Scott Trafton outlines this impulse—to create stable categories—as a broad trend in the nineteenth century. He writes about the central argument of his book:

> "This makes the history of American Egyptomania an acutely anxious one, as well as acutely racialized: what it represents are impossible dreams of eternal separation; unmanageable partitions between epistemologically distinct states; fantasies of social, cultural, or chronological segregation in a land that resists it at every turn."[24]

He continues to describe how this anxiety emerges from the ongoing competition between different rationalist structures: summarized on the broadest level, different groups asserted the ultimate 'truth' of the frameworks they established, but also relied heavily on opposing frameworks to construct themselves in contrast to. Trafton provides the general example of 'science,' which throughout the century necessarily constructed itself in opposition to 'pseudo-

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[23] Alderson, *Mermaids, Mummies, and Mastodons,* 52, 56, 63.
[24] Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 11.

science'.[25] In some ways, this dialogue may be less relevant to the Canadian context of the Niagara Falls Museum. Because Douglas is engaging with texts produced by American scholars invested in these ideas, and because Barnett is primarily concerned with his museum necessarily working to uphold some rational scheme, these ideas remain relevant. In other words, while this paper will refer to this 'taxonomic' impulse throughout, an important question to answer about Barnett and Douglas specifically is *what* and *how* their choice of objects and their contextualization seeks to categorize, define, and control ultimately unstable aspects of the world.

[25] Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 33.

Part I: Sidney Barnett, his Trip to Egypt, and The Niagara Falls Museum

If Americans and Canadians were able to engage with ancient Egypt through a variety of different means and for a variety of different reasons, how does this engagement appear in the Niagara Falls Museum and why? To understand how ancient Egypt appears within the museum, it is necessary first to understand the intended project of the museum. The Niagara Falls Museum opened in 1831, founded by Thomas Barnett.[26] By 1837, the collection was rapidly expanding as were the number of visitors to the museum, and Thomas Barnett had constructed a new building to accommodate this.[27]

An advertisement from 1855 outlines the highlights of the collection. B. Silliman of Yale College is quoted as saying in 1838, "…I have been greatly delighted with this Museum; arranged and prepared as it is with science, taste and skill" (Figure 1).[28] The other text on the flyer lays out this "arrangement and preparation," writing that the galleries present "the entire Forest Scene" and contain upwards of "Ten Thousand Interesting Specimens. Birds, Animals, fish, Minerals, etc." The museum describes these specimens as "a great variety of which were collected in the immediate vicinity; and it must be gratifying to Visitors to be able to see in one collection, so large a variety of The Productions of this Region of Country!"[29] When one views this advertisement, it might be surprising that this same museum acquired ancient Egyptian mummies just two years after this flyer was distributed, as the overwhelming emphasis of the flyer is on flora and fauna of the surrounding regions. The theme of the Niagara Falls Museum is

[26] Strand, *Inventing Niagara,* 78.
[27] Strand, *Inventing Niagara,* 79.
[28] Advertising Card, "Barnett's Museum and Indian Curiosity Store," 1855, Niagara Falls Museums Digital Archive, Niagara Falls Museum, Ontario, https://niagarafalls.pastperfectonline.com/archive/1277A79D-7C0C-47C2-B77A-000300107593.
[29] Advertising Card, "Barnett's Museum and Indian Curiosity Store."

what a museum today might categorize as 'natural history.' Where ancient Egypt fits into the Niagara Falls Museum is in the way in which the Niagara Falls Museum describes *what* it does with its specimens. The benefit the museum brings to the natural material is that it contains, organizes, and presents to the visitor the whole of nature. There is a special emphasis on that the collection is whole and complete—the great variety of animals is stressed, as is that the galleries present the "entire" forest scene.

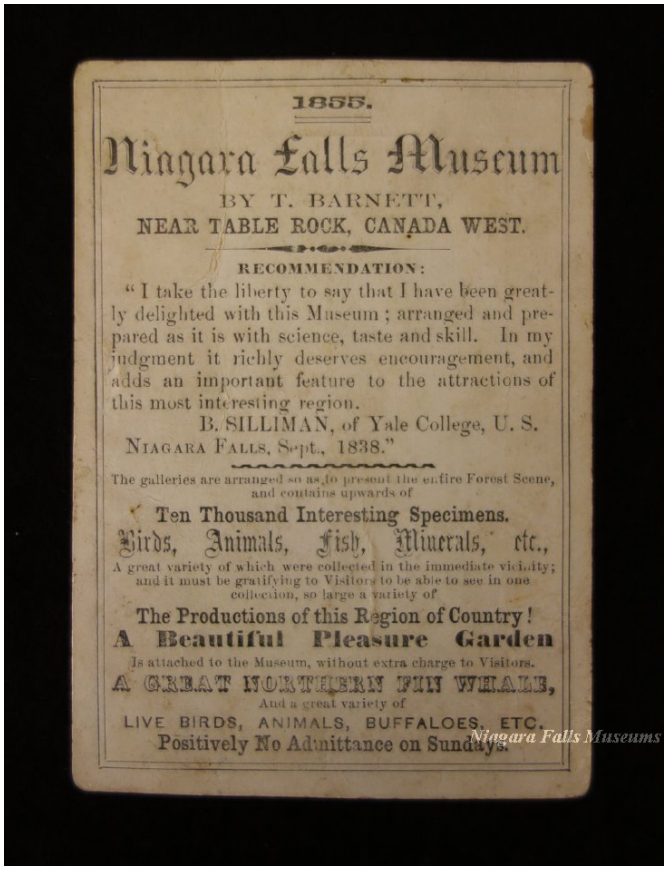

Figure 1. Niagara Falls Museum. Barnett, 1855. Courtesy of the Niagara Falls Museums.

On the reverse side of the flyer is an advertisement for "The Oldest Indian Curiosity Store and the Largest and Cheapest Assortment of Indian Work of Every Description"—also

apparently owned by Barnett (Figure 2).[30] It is not immediately apparent why Thomas Barnett puts these two very different ventures together. That these are included together suggests some sort of conceptual affinity, however, as Thomas Barnett believed both would be of interest to visitors to the Falls. In the same way that the flyer stresses the completeness of his collection of natural specimens, the ad for the "Indian Curiosity Store" stresses the completeness of the store's merchandise in being wholly representative of Indigenous culture. In both cases, the material is presented as 'complete' to the visitor for viewing or consumption in the container of the museum or store. Thus, the epistemological project of the Niagara Falls Museum is not limited to the single discipline of 'natural history,' but can more broadly be defined as containing aspects of the world in one place and defining or arranging them for the benefit of the museum visitor. There is some distinction between the two sections of Barnett's business, although this does not seem to be about the material itself rather than the way in which Barnett employs it —the natural material advertised on the front side of the card is characterized as something to learn from, and the "Indian Curiosities" is framed more as a commercial venture to purchase. In either case, the advertisement suggests that the goal of the museum was being 'wholly' representative in its organization over limiting the collection to one subject matter.

Additionally, North Americans were interested in ancient Egypt because of its perceived potential to figure into debates over unstable rational schemes.[31] As outlined briefly in the introduction, these included debates over the origins of racial difference, where ancient Egypt was figured both as evidence of polygeny (i.e. different racial groups having different places and times of origin and therefore different biological traits) and monogeny (i.e. a singular origin for

[30] Advertising Card, "Barnett's Museum and Indian Curiosity Store."
[31] Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 33.

humankind and an understanding of all races as equally human).[32] Ancient Egypt also appeared in debates over the truth of the Bible, with development of scientific disciplines, the 'scientific' was increasingly figured as anti-biblical.[33] Finally, and this will become more relevant in later discussions, ancient Egypt—especially ancient Egyptian bodies—figured in medical debates as well, such as in the case of Padihershef at the Massachusetts General Hospital.[34] Thus, ancient Egyptian material would have been interesting to a wide variety of visitors, therefore, was of particular interest to the Barnetts to absorb it into the supposedly all-encompassing scheme of their museum. In fact, ancient Egypt may have provided an additional contrast to local material from Canada in that it was from far away, further contributing to the idea of the museum as wide encompassing. Simply put, a museum with a greater number and a greater variety of attractions to see would have been more profitable.

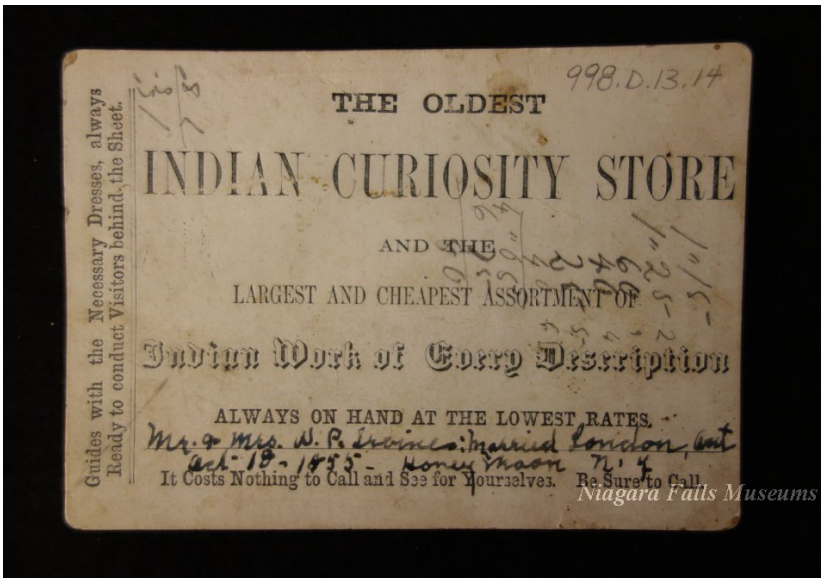

Figure 2: The Oldest Indian Curiosity Store. Barnett, 1855. Courtesy of the Niagara Falls Museums.

[32] Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 84.
[33] Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 53-54.
[34] Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America,* 14.

The Niagara Falls Museum was not run by Thomas Barnett alone. His son, Sidney Barnett, came of age working as an attendant in the museum while learning skills related to museum display, like taxidermy.[35] As far as is evidenced, his first international trip was the one he took to Egypt in 1856 on behalf of his father to obtain objects for the museum. Later, Sidney Barnett continued to travel, apparently in-between stints in the Canadian military, visiting different areas of South American and Cuba to collect additional objects and to conduct business.[36] In some ways, it is difficult to locate exactly why the Barnetts were interested in Egypt enough to fund an expensive trip. (In correspondence, Sidney Barnett tallies his expenses to $850, noting that the trip could be made for $600.[37] Considering that admission to the museum was 25 cents, this was a pricey investment.) In all evidence, however, it is clear that Sidney Barnett was familiar with popular, contemporary ideas about ancient Egyptian culture, and also an had interest in including the material in the museum, for a variety of reasons.

Evidence for Sidney Barnett's interest in Egypt appears in his engagement with the Abbot collection, one of the earliest, publicly accessible collections of ancient Egyptian objects. Again, the collection was obtained by Henry Abbott (b. 1812), who put it on display at the Stuyvesant Institute among other places.[39] While the Abbott Collection is interesting because of its status as an exception as a large public collection of ancient Egyptian objects in the US, it is especially relevant because there is strong evidence that Sidney Barnett visited the collection prior to his own trip to Egypt. Sidney Barnett owned a copy of the exhibition catalogue where he underlined or circled objects he seemed to find particularly interesting. Barnett's copy of the

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[35] Strand, *Inventing Niagara,* 86.
[36] Stand, *Inventing Niagara,* 88.
[37] Correspondence, "Sidney Barnett Writings on Egypt," 1860? Niagara Falls Museums Digital Archive, Niagara Falls Museum, Ontario. 3, verso, https://niagarafalls.pastperfectonline.com/archive/702D4CBA-1904-447C-90E5-681275346370.
[39] Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America,* 64.

catalogue is dated Nov. 5th, 1856 and Barnett reports that his trip to Egypt took place in 1856 through 1857. Further, it appears that he visited the collection in person rather than simply reading the catalogue, as the notes indicate he viewed the actual objects—for example, he writes "don't see any resemblance" about an earthenware fish.[40] While one should not expect a direct alignment between the objects Barnett marks in the Abbott collection and the objects later acquired for the Niagara Falls Museum, the catalogue represents a specific point of engagement for Barnett with the ancient Egyptian material available during the time. Thus, the catalogue stands as pertinent evidence for Barnett's specific interest in Egypt.

The catalogue of the collection was issued the same year of its initial display at the Stuyvesant Institute, in1853. Barnett's copy of the catalogue is a slightly later edition, published in 1854, with the addition of a Harper's Magazine article printed in the front. Barnett's catalogue begins with preface written by Abbott himself, followed by a brief introduction outlining the contents of the collection. Neither section is very lengthy—in the preface, Abbott simply describes his selection of objects as representative of the religious and other customs of the ancient Egyptians and references Wilkinson, Poole, and Lepsius, among other European scholars.[41] The introduction summarizes some highlights of the collection. While Abbott's preface emphasizes the objects as representative of ancient Egyptian life, the introduction specifically describes them as "…the ocular and palpable evidence of the authenticity of the Bible…in the most interesting form. We are made, as it were, contemporaries with Abraham, with the Israelites in Egypt, with Shishak, with Zerah, by witnessing rare specimens of their arts made in their time, and with which they were familiar."[42] Thus, the major emphasis in the

[40] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities,* 11.
[41] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities,* 3.
[42] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities,* 4.

introduction as to the benefit of the collection is biblical. Additionally interesting is that objects are placed at the center of acquiring this biblical understanding, as vehicles for viewers to experience similar things to ancient peoples. As explored above in the context of the Barnetts' museum, objects can be arranged in organizational schemes to describe relationships in the world. This comment adds additional support to the didactic benefit of objects in building out these schemes—that objects can afford viewers an *experience* like that of the Israelites. Not only does this comment reveal objects' ability to teach or provide a specific experience, but this comment puts forth an epistemological 'truth' of the Bible. This question was especially pertinent in this period—with the rise of 'scientific pursuits' at times taking precedence over the Bible. An example of this tension appears in the work of Gliddon about the purported origins of racial difference. Trafton quotes Gliddon who writes, "Scientific truth, exemplified in the annals of Astronomy, Geology, Chronology, Geographical distribution of animals, &c., has literally fought its way inch by inch through false theology."[43] This introduction of the Abbott catalogue is an interjection into that debate. Objects do not only provide sensory experience, but sensory experience demonstrating the truth of the Bible. Because of this comment, one might expect a large number of objects in the collection to be directly related to the Israelites. Only a handful, however, are directly connected, while the rest of the objects are representative of ancient Egyptian culture more broadly. An explanation for this comes from the fact that Abbott did not originally intend for his collection to be displayed in a museum—rather, he collected according to his own interests in particular objects rather than what might have appealed to a large audience. Barnett himself seems less interested in objects connected to the Israelites. For

[43] Josiah Clark Nott and George Robins Gliddon, *Types of Mankind; or, Ethnological Researches, Based uopn the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races, and Upon their Natural, Geographical, Philological, and Biblical History* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo 1854), 59-60.; Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 53-54.

example, object 897 is a bronze axe found at "Tourah" and is described as likely being used by the Jewish people.[44] Barnett leaves no comment on this particular object. Thus, it appears that although the objects were advertised as having a specific connection to biblical concerns to appeal to a wider audience, Barnett's interest is not primarily motivated by this connection.

The introduction also briefly mentions another pressing contemporary debate: the race of the ancient Egyptians. Again, Trafton explores the variety of viewpoints expressed in the nineteenth century on this, and it is unsurprising that the concern over race appears in an introduction to a collection of Egyptian antiquities. Nott and Gliddon's work *The Types of Mankind* provides a prime example as to how ancient Egyptian monuments figure into this question. Trafton covers this book in much more detail, explaining how ancient Egypt became evidence in debates over human origin, and whether the origins of difference races were different. Without moving too far astray from the Abbott collection, for Gliddon and Nott, the old age of ancient Egyptian monuments and that they "show[ed] the types of men to have been as distinct, and even more so, than the adulterated races of the present day" demonstrated that different races were biologically distinct; they used this idea to dehumanize non-whites and to justify chattel slavery.[45] While Gliddon and Nott demonstrate that those engaged in these debates turn to ancient Egyptian monuments and objects to answer these questions, their comments only represent one approach to this debate. In comparison, the introduction to the Abbott collection mentions race in relation to the objects in passing, saying about the "Egyptian type" that "scientific research is unable to refer to any of the primeval races, so as to determine the probable origin of the Egyptians."[46] The author directly connects the question of race to a

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[44] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities,* 57.
[45] Josiah Clark Nott, *Two Lectures on the Connection Between the Bible and Physical History of Man* (New York: Negro Universities Press, [1849] 1969), 85-86.; Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 52.
[46] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities,* 4.

sculpted head of Thutmose III (although the author calls him Thothmes), bringing the objects in the collection directly into this debate. While questions over race are alluded to, the author proposes no specific answer—he simply suggests that objects can play a role in answering these questions. Thus, several different concerns are expressed here—the introduction expresses an interest in the material itself, through highlighting works like the head of Thutmose III, but also describes the concerns that might lay behind this interest. Ancient Egypt was a contested battleground for these ideas, like the authenticity of the Bible and racial difference—and according to the introduction, the debates surrounding race and religion could be evidenced through objects.

While not included in all versions of the catalogue, Barnett's copy includes an article reprinted from *Harper's Magazine*, also published in 1854, discussing the reception of the collection and its value, arguing for its purchase by the citizens of New York. The article repeats points from the preface and introduction—that the collection is illustrative of scriptural history and would be the centerpiece of a "historical, scientific, and artistic museum."[47] It points to one primary benefit of owning the collection: "the concentration in one city of all possible sources of information and reference in all [possible] departments of human study."[48] As the article continues, it becomes clear that the comment is competitively motivated, pointing to the dearth of cultural institutions in the US as compared to European cities. Aside from the competitive sentiment, however, the desire to concentrate knowledge into one place also fits into the concern over taxonomy. The quote emphasizes acquiring these objects as "containment of…all possible sources of information." In other words, not only could objects potentially be used as evidence in arguments over race and religion, but a key part of their use was through their physical presence

[47] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities,* 6.
[48] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities,* 6-7.

and containment in one place, like the museum. Further, these ancient Egyptian objects were relevant to history, science, and art. They figured into several emerging academic disciplines.

It is surprising then, that this article also mentions the lack of interest in the Abbott collection by the American people. When Padihershef came to Peale's Baltimore Museum in 1824, the *Baltimore Patriot* reported that the exhibit was popular.[49] In fact, in just a little over a month, Padihershef brought in $1,842 in admissions (significant, considering the fee for admission was 25 cents for adults).[50] While the Abbott collection did contain several complete human and animal mummies, these only made up a fraction of the collection of over 1,107 objects. It is certainly true that popularity of Egypt-related exhibits could have diminished between 1824 and 1853, especially as there were larger numbers of mummies exhibited in the intervening 30-year period. Interest in Egypt had not entirely waned, however. In fact, as late as 1850, Gliddon's mummy wrapping event mentioned above was discussed by several newspapers as having good attendance.[51] The enduring interest in ancient Egypt is also evidenced by the popularity of Gliddon's book on Egypt published in 1843. There should be a distinction drawn between these different engagements with ancient Egyptian material, however. When it came to Egypt, perhaps audiences were more interested in immaterial history, imaginings, and medical science as related to mummies than material culture. For example, in the introduction of the collection, the objects rather than the mummies are emphasized—the highlights of the collection are listed as the signet ring of Cheops and a bust of the 'pharaoh of Exodus.'[52] In contrast, newspaper accounts record that visitors still were impressed by the mummies themselves over

[49] Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America,* 30.
[50] Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America,* 31.
[51] Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America,* 150.
[52] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities,* 4.

anything else. Wolfe quotes a newspaper article published in *The Independent* on November 24, 1853 in her chapter about the collection, where an anonymous reviewer writes,

> "Here are what are called a handsome mummy and a very handsome mummy, and a magnificent mummy, but I am not savant or amateur enough to see any beauty in a mummy; but the colors and hieroglyphs are very brilliant, and all of the figures are in wonderful preservation. On a piece of a covering of a mummy is the figure of an Israelite, bound and placed on the sole of a sandal as a mark of contempt. What a verification of Bible history..."[53]

This review highlights the mummies and describes them as having interest to visitors as both ends of a spectrum—the reviewer denies being an expert, but still expresses interest in the mummies specifically as being evidence of the truth of the Bible, just as advertised in the introduction of the collection. The average visitor then, may have been less interested in the whole of the Abbott collection as engaged with numerous and various examples of ancient Egyptian material culture. On the other hand, for this visitor, the mummies were of special interest and figured into popular debates.

These notes provide the best look into objects Barnett found particularly compelling while he was considering the formation of his own collection. Most of his notes are simply marks next to objects, but at points, he writes phrases such as "very good."[54] He does not make any remarks that are negative about objects. No specific group of objects emerges as a primary interest—Barnett underlined objects ranging from carved limestone slabs to Osirian figures.[55] He did underline some mummy-related objects, including a mummified cat and a miniature sarcophagus described by the author of the catalogue as a sort of *memento mori*, citing Herodotus.[56] He also apparently took interest in some bronze objects, writing next to a bronze

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[53] Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America,* 66.
[54] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities,* 13.
[55] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities,* 6.
[56] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities*, 10, 8.

vase "singular and good."[57] Overall, he seems interested in specific objects rather than broad categories. For example, while Barnett marked number 18 in the catalogue (an earthenware, painted Osirian figure), he passed over number 20, which the catalogue describes as a similar figure, perhaps even being made in the same workshop.[58] This might also reflect Barnett's eventual aim of purchasing objects himself—for the museum, he primarily would have been interested in purchasing representative objects, needing only one to go on display.

The only time he differs from this eclectic approach appears in the section of the catalogue that includes gold jewelry. From page 66 through halfway down 69, he marked all the objects, including the signet ring of Cheops and the necklace and earrings of 'Menes.' Curiously, he did not mark all gold jewelry in the Abbott collection, which spans over several pages, but still marked significantly more than any other category of object. Thus, the Abbott catalogue is informative in that Barnett was clearly interested in a wide variety of ancient Egyptian material but was especially interested in gold and the 'highlights' of the Abbott collection, which were advertised as featuring the names of famous pharaohs. Thus, Barnett highlights the 'flashier' objects in the collection, paying special attention to those with greater value (i.e. gold) and those featuring names that might be familiar to a large audience. If Barnett had a collection in mind for the Niagara Falls Museum, at this point, this is unsurprising—he would be interested in objects that would attract visitors to the museum, due to the fierce competition for customers at the Falls.[59]

Overall, the Abbott collection occupied an interesting space in the presence of ancient Egypt in North America. Even though the collection engages with a number of pressing concerns

[57] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities*, 36.
[58] Watson, *Catalogue of a Collection of Egyptian Antiquities*, 6.
[59] Strand, *Inventing Niagara,* 96.

for the mid-nineteenth century, such as concerning the containment of race and biblical truth, it was generally unpopular compared to exhibits with explicit emphasis on ancient Egyptian mummies. That Barnett visited the collection makes this catalogue relevant to those objects that eventually were acquired for the Niagara museum, even if, in contrast to the Abbott collection, the collection at the Niagara Falls Museum featured mummies prominently. In either case, whether evidenced by mummies or material culture, ancient Egypt could figure into these pertinent and popular debates. Aside from Egypt's figuration in these discussions, the another important aspect of the Abbott collection for Barnett was the potential for collection of ancient Egyptian objects with material value or with recognizable history—again, objects that would have been more rare, or of special interest to visitors.

In addition to this, Sidney Barnett gave a lecture entitled "Egypt: A Lecture" in November of 1861, which further evidences this interest and provides more specific details as to what may have motivated it. In the lecture, he recounted the highlights of his trip, as well as his views on ancient and modern Egypt. Barnett reveals why he and others might be interested in Egypt by triangulating the relationship between "Western" arts and sciences, ancient Egypt, and modern Egypt under Ottoman rule, while providing evidence for the relevance of objects *and* mummies in this discussion. At the very beginning of the lecture, Barnett establishes some justification for why ancient Egypt might appear in a taxonomical scheme of a museum primarily concerned with the sciences. He begins by heralding the progress of 'Western' science in contrast with 'Eastern' mysticism, writing, for example, "The wildest tales of the Arabian nights' entertainment fall short of the revelation of Astronomy and Geology…"[60] This is unsurprising

[60] Sidney Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 1862, Niagara Falls Museums Digital Archive, Niagara Falls Museums, Ontario, 2, http://niagarafalls.pastperfectonline.com/archive/C3F9591A-8F2C-4D2B-9409-045956311577. The version I used is a transcription of the handwritten lecture, available upon request, created by David MacKenzie for the Niagara Falls History Museum in 2017.

given the constructions of the 'Orient' that appear during the nineteenth century—what is more interesting is the way in which Barnett situates Egypt in this East/West divide, writing a few sentences later, "We would fain afford you a glimpse of the lands of Egypt; the cradle of knowledge in the Arts and Sciences; the land that kindled the first spark of civilization, which has spread westward, gaining strength as it rushed on with the mighty tide of Nations."[61] Thus, for Barnett, Egypt is the cradle of scientific progress for humanity—but this progress is now located in West instead of in Egypt itself. There is some affinity, then, between the scientific containment presented in the Niagara Falls Museum, and the ancient Egyptians.

After establishing this connection, Barnett moves on to discuss his travels within Egypt, commenting on the modern people and the landscape, rather than discussing ancient Egypt artifacts or sites in detail. Throughout his narrative, he repeats stereotypes about modern Egyptians that appear frequently in nineteenth century literature, performing what Edward Said has identified as Orientalism—creating an imagined "Orient" as a mirror to the West. Barnett implies the these 'failings' of modern Egypt in his earlier comment when he writes that the progress of the arts and sciences moved westward. Thus, Barnett separates ancient Egypt from modern Egypt, and preserves the value of ancient Egyptian material in contrast to stereotypes about modern Egyptians. For example, he says, "They like all Eastern nations are superstitious, predestinatious and given to discuss the ephemeral fleetness and fugacity of riches and power; but of this, how can we be astonished when we consider that they live in a soil where nations rose flourished and were gone ere Moses was born."[62] Barnett's mention of Moses reveals another, although less emphasized, relevance of ancient Egypt—its connection to biblical history. While Barnett privileges Egypt's imaginary role as the founder of Western Art and

[61] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 2.
[62] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 6.

Science, here, he reveals a reliance on a biblical framework. Thus, ancient Egypt is also secondarily relevant to biblical history.

Barnett goes on to describe each of the stops he makes as he traveled down the Nile, going through Alexandria and Cairo. In a way, he takes what could be called an ethnographical approach, describing at times the general "dress and manners" of the people.[63] Thus, on a conceptual level, he performs what his museum does—he brings details about the broader world into one space and presents them to the audience. The relevance of objects to this conceptual containment appear when Barnett's lecture notes indicate that he showed props to his audience. There is written in parenthesis "here is one" about a "Persian water pipe" and writing about coffee that it "is made very strong and drank without sugar or milk in cups *like these*."[64] Objects, while practically providing a visual aid for the lecture, are directly connected to the characterization of the people they are associated with. Like in the Abbott collection, objects are believed to enhance the viewer's ability to learn and connect with a different culture.[65]

Barnett uses similar language in the second half of the lecture, where he focuses slightly more on the ancient Egyptian material he saw while in Egypt. He refers to the "manners and customs" of the ancient Egyptians, reminiscent of the way he discusses the modern Egyptians.[66] In fact, this particular phrase—"manners and customs" echoes the title of two popular works about Egypt that were published in the mid-nineteenth century: Sr. John Gardener Wilkinson's book *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (1837) and Edward William Lane's *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836). Both volumes were relatively

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[63] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 10.
[64] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 12.
[65] For the shifting meaning and significance of objects removed from their original context and situated in the museum, see Daniel Miller, "Why Some Things Matter" in *Material Culture: Why Some Things Matter,* ed. Daniel Miller (London: University College London, 1998), 8.
[66] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 17.

popular throughout the century—in fact, Barnett mentions Wilkinson in the lecture, quoting him to describe ancient Egyptian religion.[67] Certainly, the contents of both books varied widely. However, the similarity in titles suggests that an ethnographical approach—concerned first and foremost with the 'character' of a people—could be taken in an analysis of both cultures.

Barnett also references ancient authors and their writings on ancient Egypt. He mentions Herodotus at several points during his lecture, crediting him with leaving "us many interesting details of this life manners and customs and history."[68] The phrase 'manners and customs' appears again. Thus, not only is this ethnographic approach available to modern scholars in this "age of progress,"[69] but was also the aim of the fifth century BCE historian. Barnett's aim of this ethnographic approach becomes pointedly clear towards the end of his analysis of the ancient Egyptian people. In the same way that the despotism of modern Egypt under Ottoman rule is situated in contrast to the West, again, modern Egypt also is a foil for ancient Egypt. On one hand, both cultures share some flaws, such as being superstitious (although, according to Barnett, for the ancient Egyptians, this was due to the corruption and deceit of the priests).[70] On the other, ancient Egypt holds more potential for study due to its place as the origin of the Western Arts and Sciences. He draws distinction between the two of them; he claims ancient Egypt as the predecessor to Western civilization, while negatively characterizing modern Egypt. Simultaneously, though, he conflates the 'manners and customs' of modern and ancient Egypt, characterizing both as "superstitious." Barnett attempts to characterize both ancient Egypt and modern Egypt within these preconceived understandings, even when, at times, they are contradictory.

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[67] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 19.
[68] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 17.
[69] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 1.
[70] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 19.

While Barnett uses specific objects as visual aids for his ethnographic analysis of modern Egyptian culture, he surprisingly does not do the same for ancient Egypt. Instead, his emphasis is on the monuments contained with the country, which he describes clearly inspired by the literary movement of Romanticism. The entanglement of ancient Egypt and the Romantic was by no means unusual—Percy Shelley penned "Ozymandias," a sonnet about Rameses II as early as 1818. Barnett focuses on the monumental intensely in his writing. For example, he writes about the landscape through which he traveled:

> "Oh! that I could find inspiration from the subject, to paint in vivid colours, to chisel in bold relief and in grand proportions, upon your minds the ruins of Thebes! ...where the great blocks of sandstone twenty and thirty feet in length and four broad have been split and rent by the action of fire, the Sculptures on the walls have been defaced and columns thrown down and destroyed in the former ages of war plunder and destruction."[71]

It is not just the monumental, but the monumental that has fallen into ruin that Barnett is explicitly interested in. Elizabeth A. Fay, in her volume, considers in detail why ancient Egyptian ruins captured the imagination of so many authors and scholars through the period. Most relevant for Barnett is the connection of ruin to the museum's general epistemological project. Fay locates this impulse in a highly influential Egyptological text produced during the first decades of the nineteenth century, the *Description de l'Égpte,* where both ruins and reconstructions are included as illustrative plates. In other words, in the *Description*, research on Egypt is suspended between a desire to understand ancient Egyptian structures as ruins (i.e. by documenting them in their ruined state) and to accept the possibility that a complete understanding is unknowable except through imagination (i.e. suggested by their projected reconstructions at times included in the *Description*).[72] To put it simply, through the ruin, ancient Egypt is uncomfortably situated

[71] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 23.
[72] Elizabeth A. Fay, *Romantic Egypt: Abyssal Ground of British Romanticism* (Lanham, Mayland: Lexington Books, 2021), 91.

between the knowable and the unknowable but is situated in a way that suggests the possibility of imaginative discovery.[73] Barnett says this himself, writing about Egypt: "History and Imagination alone can carry us back to those times when she sat mistress of the world!"[74] In other words, ancient Egypt is ripe for the project of the museum, invested in containing and defining the initially unknown and potentially unknowable.

> Barnett also dedicates part of his speech to discussing the availability of mummies.
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> "Thousands! Yes! Hundred of thousands! Of mummies still remain notwithstanding the immense number that have been carried away and destroyed and the traveller will find there now in some places where antiquarians have been making excavations piles of mummies thrown out partly buried by the sand a grim and awful sight and while he views these ruins these tombs and Arab men and boys will chase after him with fragments of them such as a foot a hand a head or some of the liver or the object of barter."[75]

Two things appear clearly in this quote here. First, is that this quote points to the wide availability of mummies for travelers to purchase when they came to Egypt. This partially explains Barnett's focus on them. The fact that Barnett includes no other objects, however, makes his focus on the mummy especially pointed. Even though he expresses disdain for those who sell mummy parts (specifically, the sellers who are Egyptian—this disdain, then, might come from more from the Orientalist stereotype of the unscrupulous Easterners rather than being attached to the sale of mummies themselves), Barnett certainly purchased mummies himself and brought them back to Niagara Falls, even if he does not describe his purchases specifically. This is evidenced in the later administrative documents, but also in the shorthand notes at the end of the manuscript. He writes, "Buying mummies at Thebes."[76]

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[73] Fay, *Romantic Egypt,* 93.
[74] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 18.
[75] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 25-26.
[76] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 29.

In one sense, the mummies described by Barnett are sort of 'ruins' themselves. Instead of being whole, they are instead "a hand, a head, or some of the liver." They are only part of what they once were and require the viewer imagine what they looked like completely. Their original appearance is unknown. At the same time, as evidenced by its appearance in a medical context elsewhere, the mummy was configured as a medical object professionals could gaze within and record via scientific measurements. In other words, like the physical ruins, the mummy paradoxically appeared both inscrutable, but also ripe for the new scientific understanding present in the nineteenth century. In fact, Barnett mentions one of these arenas which the mummy directly provides access to: "That they were of Asiatic origin there can be no doubt from the features, hair and form of the skull…".[77] Barnett does not necessarily have an interest in Egypt that is completely self-motivated. Clearly, his interest is also motivated by concerns present for many scholars in the nineteenth century—here, this concern is over the definition and stabilization of racial categories. When considered through this lens, it becomes obvious why Barnett emphasizes mummies rather than other ancient Egyptian objects.

Clearly, there was a motivation and a potential for ancient Egypt to figure into the collection of the Niagara Falls Museum, as having relevance to biblical and racial debates, and as being figured as the founder of the Western Arts and Sciences. How then, were ancient Egyptian objects incorporated into the museum? Detailed discussion of the museum's collection, including ancient Egyptian objects, appears in a report printed by a committee of the 6th Parliament of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada. As described in the report, the committee was formed to respond to a petition of Thomas Barnett to establish an international specimen

[77] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 17.

exchange to expand the holdings of the museum. The committee was established on March 24th, 1859, and discussion continued until April 13th, 1859.

The report, which records the events of the committee's meeting, discusses the value of Thomas Barnett's Museum in detail. It begins by outlining the goals of the committee to report how far Barnett had "contributed to promote the knowledge of Natural History in Canada and on the Continent of America, and how far the science would be advanced by"[78] allowing him to exchange specimens with other countries. Thus, this describes the reasons for the request—the Niagara Falls Museum was primarily focused on Canada but would have benefited from expansion to specimens from all over the world. In accordance with the earlier advertisement, Barnett's collection is primarily referred to as one of 'natural history.' Further evidence of this appears in that the three 'experts' called to evaluate the value of Barnett's collection are described or self-described as naturalists. The first called to testify, Mr. William Couper, describes the contents of the collection as very thorough and very good. He states that Barnett's collection is "principally a Canadian collection, and the more valuable as such."[79] This is a bit surprising—considering that he says this in a meeting discussing Barnett's desire to expand his collection to be international. Perhaps then this remark is simply a nationalistic one, and that an emphasis on Canada does not preclude including material from other regions. Mr. Couper then moves through the categories of mammals, reptiles, shells, and insects, again emphasizing that the collection includes a wide variety of specimens. A mention of the ancient Egyptian material comes directly after his assessment of the Entomological collection; "the Egyptian antiquities, amongst which are [two] mummies, and the remains of others, combined with the Indian relics,

[78] Anonymous, "Report of Selection Committee on Petition of Thomas Barnett," 1859, Niagara Falls History Museums Digital Archives, Niagara Falls History Museums, Ontario, 1, https://niagarafalls.pastperfectonline.com/archive/5B54B81B-19CF-4DCC-855B-387265345637.
[79] Anonymous, "Report of Selection Committee on Petition of Thomas Barnett," 4.

are very numerous and interesting, and of great use to schools and students generally."[80] Like the 1855 advertisement, this demonstrates the instability of academic disciplines in the nineteenth century—that anthropological or cultural material is conflated with biological material in the pursuit of an organized taxonomy.[81] Also interesting in this comment is Couper's specific emphasis on mummies for ancient Egypt. On one level, this is likely practical—because of the emphasis of other contemporary exhibitions, the mummy was one of the most characteristic and recognizable products of ancient Egyptian culture. At the same time, the mummy—at once an antiquity and a specimen of the human body—perhaps more easily fit into Barnett's museum of natural material. While the inclusion of ancient Egyptian material seems based on a broad understanding of the museum's project, the inclusion of ancient Egyptian bodies was perhaps even easier to conceptually group with other biological specimens. The mummy occupies several categories at once—thus, Couper emphasizes it as part of 'natural history,' situating ancient Egyptian mummies between the entomological and the conchological. While this is one possible explanation, again, Couper may just mention the mummies as a representative product of ancient Egyptian culture, well known to a wider audience. In any case, Couper mentions the use to "schools and students generally," and points to the didactic purpose the later experts continue to discuss.

The second expert examined is Mr. E. A. Routh of Drummondville, who describes himself as fond of Zoology and as very familiar with Thomas Barnett. He further articulates what makes Barnett's museum good besides the value and scope of the collection—that Barnett gives

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[80] Anonymous, "Report of Selection Committee on Petition of Thomas Barnett,*"* 4.

[81] This impulse is by no means unique to the Niagara Falls Museum but was apparent in the collections of many contemporary institution, including the forerunner of the Carlos Museum, the Emory College Museum, which included biological specimens and 'curiosities.' For more information, see Peter Lacovara and Betsy Teasley Trope, eds. *The Realm of Osiris: Mummies, Coffins, and Ancient Egyptian Funerary Art in the Michael C. Carlos Museum* (Atlanta: Emory University, 2001), 2. Special thanks to Dr. Shanley for this observation.

free admission to teachers and students.[82] In other words, his museum not only contained and organized material, but made that organization available for those to learn. The project of his museum was didactic. This is further emphasized in the examination of Professor Hincks—likely William Hincks, the first professor of natural history at University College, Toronto. He says about Barnett's collection,

> "I have no doubt of its being a very valuable collection, and if properly arranged and named, an important source of instruction. I believe the encouragement of a taste for Natural History in a country to be a great means of advancing both its material, and its moral and social progress, and I have a very high estimate of the value of Museums easily accessible and well conducted."[83]

Hincks is a little more critical of the museum than Couper, acknowledging the value of the collection, but also suggesting that it lacks proper arrangement and naming. This points to some of the practical problems of the Barnetts' museum at this time—in fact, there is a later note in the report that the building in which the collection is housed is "literally unfit for safety or convenience."[84] Hincks' comment, however, about the naming and arrangement suggests that it is not enough to simply house objects together. In other words, the specimens in the collection are informed by their particular placement or definition within the museum—and that definition, for Hincks, has implications for the "social and moral progress" of its visitors. Hincks emphasizes this again, when he characterizes the collection as "displayed in an instructive manner."[85] Again, this establishes that the collection of objects was not an end within itself but could be a tool for education through its organization.

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[82] Anonymous, "Report of Selection Committee on Petition of Thomas Barnett," 5.
[83] Anonymous, "Report of Selection Committee on Petition of Thomas Barnett," 6.
[84] Anonymous, "Report of Selection Committee on Petition of Thomas Barnett," 7.
[85] Anonymous, "Report of Selection Committee on Petition of Thomas Barnett," 7.

Of course, all of these comments are arguing for the wider benefit of the museum so that a specimen exchange might be established on Barnett's behalf, and perhaps because of this they overemphasize the didactic potential or benefit of Barnett's collection. Also, the museum as an educational institution for the greater benefit to society was, in some ways, more idealistic than practical. Clearly, Barnett has some concern for his museum's ability to teach something, as these scholars believe his collection as worthy of praise. As a businessman, however, he also had concern over what displays would attract visitors over his competitors, and so a number of motivations defined and shaped the project of the museum. This is additionally emphasized by his need to fund new building, more appropriate for the size of the collection, which according to the report, was under construction at the time.[86] Nonetheless, all of the testimony contained in the document articulates the imagined, ideal purpose for the museum. Not only did it contain and organize elements of the world into an understood framework, but a key goal of this organization was to share it with others. These arguments for the benefit of the museum were apparently convincing—Barnett was granted permission for his specimen exchange.

Ancient Egyptian artifacts also appear in another administrative document, where the dates for Sidney Barnett's trip to Egypt are expressly listed. Barnett wrote to the Parks Commissions of Queen Victoria Park to request financial assistance for the museum. In the letter, he lists the contents of the collection and mentions that he took a trip to Egypt in 1856-57 to collect antiquities, including "a large collection of bronzes and other antiquities, among which there were two mummies."[87] Admittedly, only the last two pages of the letter are preserved, and it was written well after Barnett traveled to Egypt, February 11th, 1911. While penned later than

[86] Anonymous, "Report of Selection Committee on Petition of Thomas Barnett," 8.
[87] Sidney Barnett, *"*Letter to Park Commissions of Queen Victoria Park," 1911, Niagara Falls Museums Digital Archives, Niagara Falls Museums, Ontario, 3, https://niagarafalls.pastperfectonline.com/archive/BEF16CCC-F9A2-43CA-9CA5-532405585229.

the specimen exchange committee report, the same ideas are repeated—the Niagara Falls Museum seems to primarily be associated with the natural sciences. For example, in the letter, Benjamin Silliman and Benjamin Silliman Jr., chemists and geologists at Yale University, are referenced as giving a positive review of the museum. Simultaneously, Barnett mentions collection objects from a variety of different cultures. Like in the previous report, mummies are emphasized as a highlight, along with bronzes. One could argue this again represents the dual status of ancient Egyptian bodies within Barnett's museum—as a human body and ancient Egyptian artifact. This is certainly one aspect of the mummies' presentation in the museum, as evidenced by the display of mummies in other medical contexts, like Padihershef at the Massachusetts General Hospital. Simultaneously, however, it does not appear that Barnett relies on this ambiguous status of the mummy to justify the conflation of the 'natural sciences' with the cultural. This is apparent in that Barnett also mentions the bronzes, which are certainly not biological specimens. This elision presents no problems—ancient Egypt material, whether 'scientific' or not, is folded into the scheme of the museum without problem, due to its wide-encompassing, generally 'didactic' purpose outlined here.

Thus, these three documents reveal Barnett's general in ancient Egypt and his belief that. ancient Egyptian objects would be of interest to visitors to the museum, because of ancient Egypt's relevance to pertinent contemporary debates. They also reveal it was no problem to incorporate ancient Egyptian objects in to the Niagara Falls Museum, otherwise focused on specimens from nature. They also lay out the general project of the museum as employing objects in "proper" arrangements to inform visitors of organizational schemes. There was no imperative for Barnett and his contemporaries to separate out ancient Egyptian objects, and mummies especially, from 'Canadian natural history' in order to fit into a museum ideally

figured as being properly arranged, all-encompassing, and didactic. Therefore, this wide sweeping purpose of the museum facilitated the inclusion of ancient Egyptian artifacts in Barnett's museum alongside objects from other cultures and time periods. While it may seem easy to differentiate between natural history specimen and 'art' for viewers today, this distinction is often taken for granted, and is not just unclear in the example of the Niagara Falls Museum. Later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, material culture produced by Non-Europeans continued to be categorized as 'artifact' rather than 'artwork' and therefore continued to be placed in institutions focused more on anthropology or ethnology rather than art history. [91] The Niagara Falls Museum is not unique in this elision.

If ancient Egypt figured into the organizational scheme established by the museum, then the question remains—how were the objects configured and to what ends? Unfortunately, the original display of Barnett's collection is not well preserved. There is one photograph available through the Niagara Falls History Museum Archives that shows the galleries circa nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Figure 3). All that is clearly visible is one open coffin in the glass case to the right, and to the left, what looks like a plaster reconstruction of a larger statue in an Egyptian style.

[91] For example, in the collection of Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, there are ancient Egyptian objects categorized as anthropological or ethnological. While not directly about ancient Egypt, the exhibition catalogue*, Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections,* Arthur C. Danto, eds. (New York: Center for African Art, 1988) takes up this question and issue head on, referencing the continuing discussion over these issues.

Figure 3. Egyptian and African Gallery, circa 1800's to early 1900's. Courtesy of the Niagara Falls Museums.

Thus, *how* Barnett specifically configured ancient Egypt in the museum remains unclear. Barnett's general interest in ancient Egypt is evidenced very clearly in his visit to the Abbott collection and his remarks on ancient Egypt. He appears interested in ancient Egyptian culture as an imagined origin of Western Arts and Sciences, which could justify its inclusion in the Niagara Falls Museum. Further, general and popular concerns as to ancient Egypt's figuration into racial and biblical debates would have made acquiring ancient Egyptian material advantageous for the museum to attract wide audiences. What is also clearly evidenced is *how* the epistemological project of the Niagara Falls Museum facilitated the inclusion of ancient Egyptian material even if unrelated to the majority of its original collection of Canadian flora and fauna. The museum was, ideally, to encompass a large variety of material, to arrange it and name it 'properly,' and to teach the material to the public. This project is directly engaged with the anxious stabilization of

rational schemes occurring throughout the nineteenth century. The instability of these schemes, along with the wide-ranging purpose of the museum meant that Sidney Barnett was easily able to include ancient Egyptian material.

Part II: James Douglas, his Travels in Egypt, and his Medical Examinations of Mummies

James Douglas Sr. was born in 1800 in Scotland, where he received his medical degree from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh in 1820. After receiving his medical degree, he spent time in India attending to patients, due to the fact that he had several family members working on behalf of the British government there.[92] Later, Douglas went to Honduras to work as a doctor, but while there, contracted a severe fever, and was transported to the United States to receive medical attention.[93] After recovering, Douglas settled in Utica, New York, where he began teaching at Auburn Medical College, with lectures often including dissections of cadavers.[94]

These cadavers were often procured unlawfully and unethically—Douglas writes about obtaining the remains of an enslaved person and of a "Scotch lad, without friends."[95] This was illegal, and Douglas was faced with threat of going to prison.[96] In 1828, when the body of a well-known townsman appeared on Douglas' operating table and Douglas' stagecoach driver recognized the body as his old employer, Douglas felt compelled to flee New York and resettle in Canada to avoid legal consequences.[97] Beginning in 1851 until 1865-66, Douglas went abroad a total of nine winters, visiting Egypt for six.[98] Perhaps Douglas' dealings with cadavers and his travel are connected—certainly, Douglas had to overcome legal and ethical barriers to obtain cadavers in the US and Canada to practice on. Visiting Egypt presented the opportunities to obtain human remains in the form of mummies at lesser expense. Other reasons for travel are

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[92] James Douglas and James Douglas Jr., *Journals and Reminiscences of James Douglas, M.D. Edited by His Son* (New York: Torch Press, 1910), 71, https://wellcomecollection.org/works/a9r2uc6q/items?canvas=1; Graham, "Photographic Views," 9.
[93] Graham, "Photographic Views," 9.
[94] Graham, "Photographic Views," 10.
[95] Douglas, *Journals and Reminiscences,* 129.
[96] Douglas, *Journals and Reminiscences,* 128.
[97] Douglas, *Journals and Reminiscences,* 129; Graham, "Photographic Views," 10.
[98] Douglas, *Journals and Reminiscences,* 180; Graham, "Photographic Views," 6.

articulated in his biography. On James Douglas' second trip to Egypt, his son, also named James Douglas, accompanied him at age 15. Writing about this trip, like Barnett, Douglas Jr. specifically points to the elision of modern and ancient that makes Egypt so interesting, writing in his father's biography, the *Journals and Reminiscences of James Douglas, M.D.*, "[James Douglas, Sr.] got a taste of…the intoxicating blending of the old and the new in architecture, government, and habits of the people, which Egypt affords beyond any other country even of the Old World."[99]

It was on this trip that the two met Auguste Mariette, who showed them his recent discoveries of the Apis Bull Catacombs and Ibis mummy pits at Saqqara.[100] Several other trips are mentioned in James Douglas Sr.'s autobiography, as is his own collection of ancient Egyptian objects, which were gifted to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1890 .[101] When one reviews catalogue entries for his objects still located at the Met, his collection seems typical for the period. It includes large amounts of figurines, especially shabti, which, on a practical level, were easier to transport out of Egypt. As for mummies and coffins, it appears that there are two coffins in the Met collection, as well as a number of animal mummies. Perhaps it is surprising that there are not large number of mummies in the collection transmitted to the Met. If Douglas interest in mummies was a medical one, his use of the mummies likely would have involved unwrapping and examination—this is shown in a text "On Two Mummies From Thebes" written by James Douglas Jr., which describes two mummy unwrappings conducted for a literary society. The mummies featured in this text and unwrapped by the Douglases do not seem to have been donated to the Met. This reveals an unfortunate truth—that mummies unwrapped were

[99] Douglas, *Journals and Reminiscences,* 180.
[100] Douglas, *Journals and Reminiscences,* 180.
[101] Douglas, *Journals and Reminiscences,* 253.

often discarded in one way or another after their use.[102] Also mentioned in Douglas' biography is that, while he had officially retired from medicine by the time the majority of this travels had commenced, Douglas did not entirely quit practicing medicine. James Douglas Jr. writes, "On the Nile he had acquired a reputation as a great *hakim* or physician."[103]

The most important trip the Douglases undertook, as related to the Niagara Falls Museum, was the honeymoon voyage of James Douglas Jr. with his new wife and his father. This trip took place in 1860-1861, it is evidenced through a photo album assembled by the Douglases, referred to as both *Photographic Views Taken in Egypt* and *Honeymoon on the Nile*, the photographic content of which has been carefully analyzed by Jennifer Graham in her master's thesis on the subject. What makes the photo albums additionally useful is the inclusion of captions with the photos, which the Douglases wrote to add further information regarding their interest in Egypt and their interest in particular antiquities they brought back for the Barnetts.

The photo album was likely printed in limited quantities by the Douglas family to give as gifts to friends and coworkers, so few copies survive.[104] There are a number of different versions of the album held by several archives. These include the Archive of Modern Conflict (AMC) in Toronto, the British Library in London, The Brooklyn Museum's Wilbour Library of Egyptology Special Collections in New York City, and Université Laval in Québec City. Jennifer Graham identifies the dates for some of the albums based on their watermarks. For the albums held at the British Library in England, the water mark indicates their assemblage in 1862.[105] The albums

[102] See also another example of this unfortunate truth in Rigg's account of Dr. Granville's mummy, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt,* 54-55.
[103] Douglas, *Journals and Reminiscences,* 190.
[104] Graham, "Photographic Views," 23.
[105] Graham, "Photographic Views," 26.

held at the AMC or at Université Laval have a watermark indicating they were assembled at a later date—1874, which aligns with a dedication written by Douglas in several of the albums, also dated 1874.[106] Unfortunately, the album held by the Brooklyn Museum's Library is no longer bound, nor is it clear how the album arrived to the library in the first place, which makes dating its printing difficult.[107] Nonetheless, as some of the albums were assembled at different times from the collection of photographs that the Douglases took while they were in Egypt, not all of the albums contain the same images.[108]

This is especially relevant considering the work done on James Douglas and his connection to the Niagara Falls mummies. In the archives held by the Michael C. Carlos Museum, a copy of the photobook is included. The copy, however, is a version from the Université Laval, which is not a master set, and excludes a photo that directly depicts coffins later acquired by the Carlos Museum.[109] Due to the exclusion of this photo, researchers at the Carlos relied on a photo entitled *Luxor- Mustapha Aga* and its accompanying caption which does mention a "very fine mummy" in double cases. Some of those initially working on the 1999 acquisition at the Carlos identified this comment with the repatriated mummy, thought to be Ramesses I.[110] This new photo, however, allows for more accurate identification of the mummy referred to in this comment, as well as others brought over by Douglas, which do not appear to include the repatriated mummy. As the entire Niagara Falls collection at the Carlos includes more than the coffins represented by the photobook, the direct depiction of several of the coffins in this new photo allows for identification of *which* coffins Douglas brought back. As Wolfe has

[106] Graham, "Photographic Views," 26.
[107] Graham, "Photographic Views," 15.
[108] Graham, "Photographic Views," 13.
[109] Graham, "Photographic Views," 28.
[110] *NOVA*. Season 33, Episode 1, "The Mummy Who Would be King," directed by Gail Willumsen, aired January 2, 2006, on PBS. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxEFOGvaKx4&t=1773s, 42:10.

identified, the Niagara Falls Museum continued to acquire coffins after the Barnetts no longer owned the museum.[111] Thus, to conduct an analysis of what shaped Douglas' choices concerning the objects he purchased, it is necessary to identify which they did. The new photo of the coffins allows for this possibility.

Thus, the photo album is an invaluable resource as related to the Niagara Falls collection. There are two photos with captions in which Barnett and the museum are mentioned directly. The first is a photo entitled *Luxor- Mustapha Aga*, which is present in the photo album in the Carlos' archives (Figure 4). The entry describes the Douglases meeting an Egyptian antiquities dealer, Mustapha Aga, who appears in the notes and journals of several other European visitors to Egypt during the time.[112] Douglas writes an anecdote about Mustapha Aga's business practices that Douglas seems to have witnessed. In the anecdote, Douglas writes that an English man wanted a first-class mummy, and asked to be present when the mummy was taken from the tomb. There they found two "very promising Mummy cases." Mustapha charged $250 for the first mummy to be unwrapped, but when it was, "no valuable ornaments were found."[113] The English man was disappointed, and so Mustapha allowed for the other to be unwrapped for an additional $100, and again the mummy was revealed to have no ornaments.[114] In this case, the value of the mummy for the English man comes not from any quality inherent to the body or the coffin, but in the 'valuable' ornaments that might be found under the wrappings. This explains why it was so important to this man to witness the removal of the mummy from the tomb—presumably in search of a mummy with ornaments still attached.

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[111] Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America,* 127.
[112] For example, Charles E. Wilbour was in contact with those in Mustapha Aga's network. See Wilson, *Signs and Wonders Upon Pharoah,* 82.
[113] Douglas*, Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*., 1874, box 2, Archive of Modern Conflict (AMC), Ontario; Graham, "Photographic Views," 112.
[114] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 113.

Figure 4. *Luxor- Mustapha Aga.* Douglas, 1874. From *Photographic Views in Egypt & Nubia.*[115]

Douglas, on the other hand, offers an alternative valuation of the mummies unwrapped for the man. He writes, "the first Mummy unwrapped was certainly a very good one, and its double cases very good. During my last visit, I obtained a finer one, in double cases, for Mr. Barnett, of Niagara Museum, for seven pounds."[116] Firstly, this note allows for a potential identification of this mummy with one held in the Carlos' collection. Identification is allowed by the description of the mummy as having 'double cases,' suggesting the presence of an inner and outer coffin. The only coffin acquired from the Niagara Falls Museum by the Carlos Museum having an inner and outer coffin is that of Iawttayesheret (1999.001.008). As for the mummy, it seems likely that Douglas refers to "the General" (1999.01.004). Based on later materials, it appears that this mummy was displayed at the Niagara Falls Museum in the inner coffin of

[115] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 36.
[116] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 113.

Iawttayesheret.[117] There is a possibility that between Douglas' trip and the 1999 acquisition by the Carlos other coffins with double could have been acquired by later owners of the Niagara Falls Museum. It is also possible that Douglas describes a coffin and coffin board, rather than two separate nested coffins, which could refer to other examples in the Carlos' collection. Finally, it is possible that mummies were rearranged in coffins after arrival to the museum, so just because a mummy is displayed in a particular coffin does not necessarily mean they were purchased together. That the coffin of Iawttayesheret is the only example with an inner and outer coffin, however, suggests strongly that Douglas references her coffin in this caption. Further, "the General" is a well-preserved mummy, which aligns with what Douglas later characterizes as 'good' mummies.

Secondly, this note demonstrates that for Douglas, in contrast to the English man, there is some value held by the mummies themselves—in fact, by the use of the comparative "finer," Douglas suggests that there are mummies of a variety of quality, some better and some worse. A description of what exactly might make a mummy valuable comes from the beginning of the description. About meeting Mustapha Aga and seeing his antiquities, Douglas writes, "We all went together, through the mud huts of the village, into one of the most dirty and miserable looking, where we found the Arab amidst a heap of heads of Mummies, pieces of mummy cases, mummy cloth, beads, bronzes, jars, pottery, and a miscellaneous collection from the tomb."[118] When looking for an understanding of which artifacts Douglas may have valued and why, this statement betrays little. In fact, it seems as though Douglas implies the antiquities listed are not notable at all by listing them all together without spending time on elucidating any detail. One

[117] Anonymous, "Niagara Falls Museum Educational Book," ~1970, Niagara Falls Museums Digital Archive, Niagara Falls Museums, Ontario. http://niagarafalls.pastperfectonline.com/archive/5241FD34-0687-40EA-892E-494647116235.
[118] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 112.

interesting point emerges in the specific mention of mummy heads and the pieces of mummy cases. In later examples, as a contrast, the artifacts that are highlighted as unique and valuable are 'whole' in that they are complete mummies with cases. This suggest mummy parts were less valuable than a complete body, also evidenced in Barnett's disparaging remarks in his lecture about antiquities dealers selling body parts of mummies.[119] This idea appears again in other captions. For example, from the caption of the photo *Osioot* (Asyut), Douglas writes about the mummy pits and the condition of the mummies there: "In front of this and of the other tombs which we visited, were piles upon piles of portions of mummies of men and wolves, mummy cloth of different textures, and broken jars. I picked up and saved some fine linen but could find nothing else worth taking away."[120] He finds both portions of mummies and also broken jars—perhaps, neither are worth carrying along due to their fragmentary condition.

The Douglases' album also includes a photo entitled *Mummies* (Figure 5), which is not included in the version of the album which the Carlos has, and therefore has not been examined in prior research on the Niagara Falls collection. The photo is different than many others in the album—rather than depicting a landscape scene or monument, the photo is tightly focused on three coffins and four canopic jars. The canopic jars are difficult to identify with any in the Carlos' acquisition from the Niagara Falls Museum. Douglas writes that "these jars" included organs.[121] Thus, it is not clear whether he refers to canopic jars in general or to the specific ones in the photo. While there were six canopic jars included in the 1999 acquisition, only one was a true canopic jar (1999.001.029), which was made to hold organs, and which does not match the silhouette of any included in the *Mummies* photo. The rest of the jars acquired from the Niagara

[119] Barnett, "Egypt: A Lecture, by Sidney Barnett," 26.
[120] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 26.
[121] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 88.

Falls Museum are ‘dummy’ jars, made in the Late Period in imitation of the jars hollow for organs. It is not impossible that the ones pictured in the photo are dummy jars, if Douglas refers to the jars holding organs as a general comment. However, the jars in the photo have a wider silhouette than the ‘dummy’ jars in the Carlos. This difference is made especially clear in a comparison of the jackal jar in the photo to the dummy canopic jar depicting Duamutef in the Carlos (1999.001.028) (Figure 6). The head of the jackal in Douglas’ photo leads directly into the body of the jar, while the Carlos example has a sort of ‘shoulder;’ the end of the wig does not directly align with the slope of the jar

Figure 5. *Mummies.* Douglas, 1874. From *Photographic Views in Egypt & Nubia.*[122]

[122] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, “Photographic Views,” 37.

Figure 6. Dummy Canopic Jar Depicting Duamutef. Egyptian. Third Intermediate Period, 1076-723 BCE. Limestone. Charlotte Lichirie Collection of Egyptian Art. 1999.1.28. Courtesy of the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University.

The coffins, on the other hand, can be firmly identified with coffins acquired from the Niagara Falls Museum. The coffin on the far left can be identified as the coffin of Pashedkhonsu (1999.001.015) (Figure 7.), as both have closed fists and the divine beard. Further, while the design on the coffin is difficult to make out in the photo, one can see clearly that there are details on the lid of the coffin modeled in plaster, raised above the surface. For example, just above the feet of the coffin, there are two shapes molded in plaster, one of them a circle, which matches the scarab pushing a sun disk modeled on the Carlos coffin above the feet. Just below the hands on the Carlos coffin, there is a more complex vignette with raised details. In the uppermost register, there are two large, seated Osiris figures with white crowns. Their bodies, crowns, and thrones are raised in plaster. Between them is a scarab pushing a sun disk above the hieroglyphic sign *nb.* Just below the hands, where the vignette would fall, are three small shadows, which follow the organization of the sun disk, scarab, and *nb.* Also visible on either side of these are two more

shadows that resemble a right-angle shape. This aligns with the raised thrones the Osirian figures sit upon on the Carlos coffin. More details are visible, but these make clear that the left coffin is likely that of Pashedkhonsu. The center coffin can be identified with the outer coffin of Iawttaysheret (Figure 8.), as both share a damaged area of similar shape in-between the lappets of the wig. Finally, the coffin on the right is the inner coffin of Iawttaysheret (Figure 9.), particularly obvious because the design on the bottom part of the coffin is visible in the photo.

Figure 7. Coffin Lid of Pashedkhonsu. Egyptian. Third Intermediate Period, Dynasty 21, 1076-944 BCE. Wood, pigment. Charlotte Lichirie Collection of Egyptian Art. 1999.1.15B. Courtesy of the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University.

Christina Riggs' consideration of archaeological photography is helpful in drawing out the interesting features of this photograph. Riggs argues that, while it is easy to assume the 'neutrality' of a photograph, photographic conventions employed by nineteenth century

archaeologists actually reflect the formation of relevant epistemological structures.[123] In fact, Riggs' argument takes a similar methodological approach to Trafton in analyzing the motivations behind the construction of knowledge (what Trafton sometimes calls rational schemes) in the nineteenth century. Both Riggs and Trafton's arguments turn the focus onto motivations behind these formations of disciplines like Egyptology and archaeology, rather than accepting them has a 'given.' In other words, archaeological photographs are not 'objective' documentation of finds, but instead reflect the photographer's understanding and categorization of the objects depicted. For much of Riggs' argument, she focuses on the relationship between colonialism, object photography, and the epistemological justifications that appear for colonialism contemporary to the photos. This was especially pertinent as export laws for objects became more stringent later in the century, and fewer physical objects were removed from Egypt. In cases where archaeologists were no longer permitted to remove objects from Egypt, a photo of the object could provide a reference for study while simultaneously representing the loss of the object through the stricter export restrictions.[124]

In the case of *Mummies,* this context of export restriction appears less clearly. While there is limited evidence that export restrictions were enforced in the 1850s and later, Douglas does not mention having any trouble with them, and seems to have acquired the objects for the Barnetts without much trouble. Riggs' argument becomes relevant in the framing of the photo, however. As mentioned above, the majority of Douglas' album is landscape and monumental photography. Only a handful of photos are close views of details from monuments, such as the photo *Judgement Scene,* taken of the wall of a chamber in the Temple of Deir el Medina at

[123] Christina Riggs, "Objects in the Photographic Archive: Between the Field and the Museum in Egyptian Archaeology," *Museum History Journal,* 10, no. 2 (2017): 143.
[124] Riggs, "Objects in the Photographic Archive," 146.

Thebes. The photo of the mummies is the only photo of objects removed from their context. Further, it is the only photo Graham potentially identifies as being made from wet plate collodion.[125] This is a different technique than the rest of the photographs, which are albumen prints from waxed paper negatives. It is impossible to know from the photobook caption what this indicates about the photo—perhaps it was taken at some point later after the Douglas returned from Egypt. Perhaps it was taken on behalf of the Douglases rather than by the Douglases themselves. In any case, the photo is also unique because it is staged. The coffins and canopic jars are pleasingly and symmetrically arranged. The outer coffin of Iawttaysheret, the largest coffin, is placed in the center, flanked by the two smaller ones. The canopic jars are all placed on little pedestals so that they are seen better. There is a tarp or fabric sheet used as a backdrop, and all three coffins are placed on little cushions. It also seems as if the photo is intentionally lit—none of the objects have deep shadows cast on them that would limit the appearance of details. The darkest shadows on the coffins fall underneath their chins, and underneath the hands of the coffin of Pashedkhonsu, highlighting the three-dimensional nature of their carved elements.

Thus, the photo has two key elements—it strives to present the objects as clearly and legibly as possible. It also aims to display them in a way that is visually pleasing. Riggs describes this phenomenon as it appears in museum photography specifically, characterizing photos like it as presenting these objects as "pretty things" and also as "real knowledge."[126] Riggs means that the photographs are presented as real knowledge in that they are intentionally framed to suggest a sense of objectiveness. In the *Mummies* photo, this appears in that the objects are simply displayed without any additional context. The viewer is directed to consider the

[125] Graham, "Photographic Views," 85.
[126] Riggs, "Objects in the Photographic Archive," 157.

objects alone as ‘specimens,’ without considering how they were acquired or photographed. The knowledge gained from viewing the photo seems natural, logical, or even scientific. The knowledge gained from looking at the photo, however, is not ‘natural’ or scientific as might be suggested by the framing but has been constructed by the photographer or curator.

Figure 8. Inner Coffin Lid of Iawttayesheret. Egyptian. Late Period, Dynasty 25, 722-655 BCE. Wood, gesso, pigment. Charlotte Lichirie Collection of Egyptian Art. 1999.1.8D. Courtesy of the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University.

That their organization is constructed does not mean that it does not make logical sense—clearly, Douglas groups these objects together due to their affinity with the human body and their association with the mortuary (see that the photo is called *Mummies* although only the coffins themselves are photographed). Nonetheless, the staging of the photo, in line with the curation of a museum display put forth understandings of the world as a ‘truth,’ when in reality, the museum and photo are actively involved in the structuring and creation of that knowledge. Thus, even

before their arrival to Barnett's museum, Douglas employs these coffins in the project of defining knowledge—in that he organizes them for study through the format of the documentary photography.

Figure 9. Outer Coffin Lid of Iawttayesheret. Egyptian. Late Period, Dynasty 25, 722-655 BCE. Wood, gesso, pigment. Charlotte Lichirie Collection of Egyptian Art. 1999.1.8B. Courtesy of the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University. © Bruce M. White, 2006.

To turn away from the composition of the photo, the title of the photograph suggests why Douglas may have been interested in these coffins specifically. As in the caption of the Mustapha Aga photo, Douglas places a priority on the mummy over other aspects of ancient Egyptian art. He titles the photo *Mummies* although it only depicts the mummies' coffins. It is possible that this is for practical reasons. Perhaps Barnett requested Douglas leave the coffins

closed until their arrival to the Niagara Falls Museum—clearly, there was some interest in having the mummies unopened to protect any valuable ornaments they may have been buried with. This concern is further reflected in the story about Mustapha Aga's English man, who wanted to see the mummies removed from the tomb and unwrapped himself. It is confirmed, however, that Douglas did at least see the mummies when he purchased them, as he describes some of them as "very fine,"[127] suggesting that it would not have been impossible to open the coffins and photograph the mummies directly. Even further, the English man's story suggests that examining the mummies themselves was a key part of assessing their value before purchase. There was no need for the coffins to remain sealed—Douglas could have opened them to photograph them. The title, then, points to a tension present in the photographic image. Certainly, the photo strives to present the objects clearly and directly in an effort to make them as legible as possible. The title, on the other hand, alerts the viewer to something which is present but cannot be seen—the body of the mummy. The coffins are the subject of the photo but become a sign of what Douglas is really interested in. Thus, the coffin becomes like the tomb, inviting opening so that the scholar can access the bodies of the ancient Egyptians. Like the ruins romanticized by Barnett, the mummy is simultaneously unknowable and knowable, and therefore is ripe for discovery and categorization.

In the caption accompanying the photo, Douglas continues to lay out what makes a mummy and coffin valuable, emphasizing a variety of different factors. In the first section of the caption, he outlines several different categories on mummies—while not following the exact format, one is reminded of Herodotus' *Histories*, Book II.86-88, where the Greek historian outlines categories of mummification available to more or less wealthy patrons. Other works

[127] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 112.

were published prior to Douglas' trip that cover this topic as well, such as Thomas Joseph Pettigrew' *A History of Egyptian Mummies,* which similarly lays out different classes of mummification for different economic classes.[128] For himself, Douglas explicitly says that the finer mummies are "expensively and carefully mummified, covered with gold leaf, wrapped in bandages of the finest linen, decorated with the rings, necklaces, and jewellery worn during life..."[129] He places special emphasis on the expensive ornaments attached to the bodies of the mummies, that would hold value due to their construction from precious metals. This is confirmed in the next paragraph, where Douglas describes a mummy found by Auguste Mariette as having an "intrinsic value...equal to 30,000 francs."[130] On one level, tombs provided a place for visitors to collect expensive objects.

Douglas also makes mention of the coffins alongside his assessment of the value of ancient remains. This mention is brief, however, especially considering that the photo features coffins primarily. About them, he says that the higher class (more valuable) category of mummies often were contained in "highly painted cases" and are often "in double cases." Thus, Douglas does make a distinction between different coffins that would have required more material investment on behalf of the deceased. Because of this, perhaps they were more difficult to find and therefore more highly sought after. Following this distinction, he does make an interesting comment about the relevance of the coffin to the body of the mummy itself: "Although the case generally corresponds to its contents, yet, sometimes very good mummies are found in the public tombs, without cases; and very inferior and worthless ones are often richly

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[128] For example, see Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, *A History of Egyptian Mummies, and an Account of the Worship and Embalming of the Sacred Animals by the Egyptians : with Remarks on the Funeral Ceremonies of Different Nations, and Observations on the Mummies of the Canary Islands, of the ancient Peruvians, Burman Priests, &c.* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1834), 52.
[129] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 85-86.
[130] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 86.

and elaborately enveloped and cased."[131] Here, Douglas draws out another aspect of his interest in mummies. On one hand, part of what made a mummy or coffin attractive for purpose was its so-called 'inherent' value—the expensive of the ornaments and richness of the decoration. The 'quality' of the body, however, was an additional aspect that did not necessarily align with the rest of the preparation.

In the next section of the caption, he tells a story about a mummy pit he visited in 1854. In the story, apparently a group of Egyptians found a mummy pit in Thebes, behind the 'Raeseum' (Douglas probably means the Ramesseum). The next day, Douglas visited with a group, where they found "many hundreds of mummies in excellent preservation."[132] Douglas himself took "two female heads, which had the flesh firm, and the teeth and hair perfect, even the colour of the cheeks was distinct."[133] This comment contradicts what might be expected from Douglas and Barnett's previously dismissive comments about individual mummy parts: that 'good' mummies are ones entirely preserved. That Douglas takes away only the heads is surprising. His approval of the heads does align with his previous comments in some way because the heads themselves are particularly well preserved—the skin, teeth, and hair all survive. Even though Douglas does not have the entire body, he is still able to view and access specific features of the ancient Egyptians as they were in life, and thus the heads retain their value. 'Wholeness' remains as only one aspect of the mummy's preservation.

Douglas continues, recalling a story about George Gliddon, who was particularly interested in examining ancient Egyptian remains in order to answer questions about the supposed origins of racial difference. The event Douglas describes is an infamous one which

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[131] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 86.
[132] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 87.
[133] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 87.

appeared in several different newspapers during the period. Douglas does not seem to have attended—he mentions that "*savans"* were invited to witness the unrolling. Further support for this is the mix up in Douglas' version of the story. Douglas reports that Gliddon read the hieroglyphic inscription and determined that the mummy inside was a high priest, but when unwrapped, the mummy was "a very inferior one, and a female."[134] It is highly likely that Douglas refers to an event that took place in June 1850 at the Tremont Temple in Boston. Gliddon, after translating the hieroglyphs on the side of the coffin, boasted that his mummy was a priestess or princess—but when unrolled, the mummy was clearly that of a male. In Douglas' version, the sexes of the mummies are mixed up. Trafton analyses this particular event with Gliddon by situating it in the mummy-unwrapping tradition more generally. Particularly, Trafton identifies that mummy unwrappings, public and private, were a way for groups of European and American scholars to uphold and reinscribe their own identity through the reveal and containment of the other.[135] In this context, ancient Egyptian bodies figured into a variety of pertinent debates in the nineteenth century, depending on whether Egypt was imagined as an Eastern nation, a Black nation, or as a biblical nation. Douglas does not specify where he believes mummies fit in. There are two factors present here as to why Douglas may have included this anecdote—first that Gliddon's story directly follows Douglas' account of "Arab" antiquity dealers "plac[ing] in [coffins] an inferior Mummy and sell it as presented on the case."[136] Thus, a coffin mix up is in some ways unsurprising, and there is some suggestion that Gliddon's mistake is not due to his own carelessness, but the realities of buying mummies in coffins. On the other hand, Douglas reports Gliddon's mistake as a personal failure "attributed to

[134] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 87.
[135] Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 84; Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt,* 54.
[136] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 87.

his inability to read the hieroglyphics."[137] Thus, the story is both humorous and also reflective of the mistakes that could be made when studying mummies. On a conceptual level, however, by presenting a humorous story in which the unwrapping of a mummy fails to confirm held beliefs, potentially due to the mistakes of the unwrapper, Douglas simultaneously upholds the mummy's place in knowledge building. It is not the method of unwrapping that is at fault for the confusion, but the either the fault of a coffin mix-up or hieroglyphic misreading.

After this story, Douglas goes on to talk about the coffins depicted in the photo, stating directly that he purchased them for "a very worth and enterprising gentleman, Mr. Barnet, the proprietor of the Museum at Niagara."[138] Like in the title, he elides the idea of the coffin and the mummy—he writes "the three mummies represented in the photograph." This caption was written sometime after the Douglases' return from Egypt, as it describes a letter from Barnett about the mummies, who apparently unwrapped them upon their arrival. Although Douglas did not get a chance to unwrap the mummies himself, he knows the contents of the coffins and is able to describe them. Douglas writes that within the coffin of Padshedkhonsu, there was a female mummy, and within the inner coffin of Iawttaysheret there was a "very indifferent mummy."[139] Most exciting is the mummy found in the outer coffin of Iawttaysheret, about which Barnett writes, "'We unrolled the Mummies two months ago. One of them is the finest ever brought to this country, as good, perhaps, if not better, than any in the world; the face and features are as perfect as possible. He was without doubt a warrior, or at all events, was killed in good health, for there are several wounds and scars on his face and breast.'"[140]

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[137] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 88.
[138] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 88.
[139] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 88.
[140] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 88. Again, this mummy is likely "the General." As is obvious from his name, the idea of this mummy being a warrior persisted until the mummy arrived at the Carlos in 1999.

Several key points emerge in these few remarks. First is that that the bodies in the cases were often not the original inhabitants of the coffin. Douglas remarks on this himself, but this is also made obvious in that there are mummies in both the inner and outer coffin of Iawttaysheret, when in the original burial, the cases would have been nested around one mummy. This rearranging of mummies and coffins could have occurred in antiquity, as coffin reuse was not uncommon, especially among families.[141] Douglas does not acknowledge ancient reuse in his caption, however, and mainly focuses on the coffin reuse of nineteenth century Egypt. Interestingly, this suggests that a higher value was placed on the mummy itself over the case, and points to the case as having value as an indicator of the quality of the mummy rather than having value in its own right (when the mummy was placed in the 'correct' coffin). At least, it suggests the primacy of the mummy over the coffin for Douglas. At the same time, however, the value of the coffin itself for Douglas and Barnett cannot be altogether dismissed. The coffins were displayed with the mummies, as indicated by the photo of the museum discussed in the above section. Further, Barnett does not express major disappointment when the mummies within the other coffins are not of 'good' preservation. The purchase by Douglas seems to be a 'success,' even if only one mummy lived up to the quality of the coffin.

This is another explicit confirmation that a well-preserved mummy is the most valuable type of mummy, specifically a mummy's whose face is well-preserved; "the *face* and *features* are as perfect as possible."[144] The implication of this is laid out less explicitly but is clear

[141] In fact, there was a coffin the Carlos acquired from the Niagara Falls Museum where this is the case. The coffin of Tanakhtnettahat (1999.001.017) was reused for the burial of a woman named Ta-Aset, and the names have clearly been changed. There is no evidence that this coffin was purchased by Barnett or Douglas, but it provides a convenient and relevant example of coffin reuse. See also Kathlyn M. Cooney, "Patterns of Coffin Reuse from Dynasties 19 to 22" in *Ancient Egyptian Coffins: Past – Present – Future* (Oxford, Oxbox Books: 2019), 96-108. In the case of Iawttaysheret, the reuse is almost certainly modern, due to that the coffin dates to the Late period. Reuse in antiquity was much more prominent in the Third Intermediate period compared to the Late period, about which Cooney writes and to which Tanakhtnettahat's coffin is dated.

[144] Douglas, *Photographic Views in Egypt and Nubia*; Graham, "Photographic Views," 88.

considering how these mummies figured into relevant debates of the time. If the mummy were to be imagined as a player in biblical stories, or into debates about race that were centered around minute differences in facial features, a mummy in better preservation would provide better and more stable evidence for this. This remark is not unique to Douglas. In fact, Dr. Augustus Bozzi Granville delivered a paper on mummy unwrapping to the Royal Society of London as early as 1825 in which he says similar things about the mummy he examines. Christina Riggs in her volume quotes the paper, highlighting Granville's remark that "the mummy before me, I determined, perfect and beautiful as it was" was worth dissecting, even if it meant a "sacrifice [of] a most complete specimen of the Egyptian art of embalming."[145] This idea that a good mummy is well preserved is one with history in the earlier part of the nineteenth century.

At the end of the caption, Douglas makes note of the four canopic jars at the feet of the mummy, mainly that they held the organs of the mummy. He identifies the heads of the jars as the Four Genii of Amenti. This is aligns with Wilkinson's identification of the four sons of Horus (See plate 61 of his volume, *the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians,* Figure 10.), again confirming Wilkinson's use as a common reference by Douglas. As noted above, these are likely not jars that were given to Barnett but were probably purchased for Douglas' own collection. Thus, what is significant about this paragraph is that it is the only mention of the religious or mortuary beliefs of the ancient Egyptians, and the only consideration of the significance of the objects in an ancient Egyptian context. This final moment and sole mention of this significance brings into sharp focus Douglas' emphasis on the mummies. The best mummies were those that were well preserved, especially of the face and features, making the mummies

[145] A. B. Granville, *An Essay on Egyptian Mummies* (London: W. Nicol, 1825), 15; Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt,* 54.

medical objects available to be figured into the scheme of the museum and into the variety of the ongoing debates of the nineteenth century.

While this is the main focus in this caption, it is important to note that James Douglas Jr. did maintain other interest in ancient Egyptian mortuary religion besides the medical value of mummies. In 1862, he delivered a lecture entitled "The Belief of the Ancient Egyptians Respecting a Future State" to the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec. There is some diversity of interest in ancient Egyptian culture as a whole (even if Douglas Jr. characterizes their religious beliefs as "absurdities which their misguided imagination created"[146]). In this photobook, however, directly connected to the Niagara Falls objects, the medical interest rather than a cultural one, still emerges as the primary focus.

Figure 10. Four Genii of Amenti. Wilkinson, 1841. From The New York Public Library.[147]

[146] James Douglas Jr., "The Belief of The Ancient Egyptians Respecting a Future State, Read before the Society, 15th May 1862" (Quebec: Literary and Historical Society, 1862), 164.
[147] Sir John Gardnner Wilkinson. *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, including their Private Life, Government, Laws, Art, Manufactures, Religions, and Early History* (London: J. Murray, 1841), plate 61, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-6fbf-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

This medical emphasis on ancient Egyptian bodies is further revealed in a text written by James Douglas Jr. in 1865 entitled "On Two Mummies From Thebes." While it is certainly important not to elide the positions and opinions of James Douglas Jr. and his father, both traveled to Egypt together and maintained a similar interest in ancient and modern Egyptians. Additionally, James Douglas Jr. also went on to briefly pursue a medical career like that of his father, which motivated both his and his father's interest in mummies.[149] James Douglas Jr.'s remarks in the text remain relevant regarding the collecting activity of the Douglases more generally. Unfortunately, the text is not about the mummies that the Douglas gave to the Niagara Falls Museum but is instead regarding mummies that Douglas Sr. unwrapped and presented in front the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec.[150] This presentation is captured in the article published in 1865.

At the very beginning of the article, a familiar anxiety is expressed. Douglas Jr. writes about the first mummy up for examination:

> "When my father opened the mummy before you in November last, he protected himself from the ridicule which follows mistakes on such occasions, by stating the many sources of error which may falsify the most careful diagnosis of the mummy. It was well that he did so, for a more thorough examination than we could make that night revealed a man and not a woman, as he judged it to be from the lid of the case."[151]

This bears a number of similarities to the story Douglas Sr. reports about Gliddon in the photobook, when Gliddon misidentified the sex of the mummy based on a mistranslation of hieroglyphs. Clearly, on a basic level, the Douglases worried about embarrassing themselves in front of their peers with academic over-confidence. This quote reveals additional justification the Douglases, and perhaps others, make for the unwrapping of these bodies—there is a deep anxiety

[149] Graham, "Photographic Views," 10.
[150] Graham, "Photographic Views," 11.
[151] James Douglas Jr., "Two Mummies From Thebes in Upper Egypt" (Quebec: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1865), 3.

over incorrect assumption and a particular emphasis on locating the scientific truth. An examination of the mummy case was not enough to reveal reliable information about the true locus of interest, the body.

Therefore, an opening and unwrapping was necessary to reach the sought-after knowledge. This encounter—the unwrapping—mirrors a moment Trafton terms as the "racial rupture."[152] Trafton characterizes the "racial rupture" as the place of entrance to a hidden space, such as the entrance to a tomb or the lid of the coffin, in this case.[153] Trafton undertakes an analysis of several relevant texts that express colonial anxiety over this rupture, specifically that in order to reify the status of the "other" against the status of the revealer, the rupture must be opened. This opening to the unknown, however, also represents a point of anxiety, as it also represents a potential for destabilization for the binary between categories. In other words, the penetration of the rupture is both necessary to uphold the colonial project of distinction between self and other, but also represents a risk to that distinction.[154] Trafton's in-depth analysis directly connects this to anxiety over racial categories in nineteenth century American minds. In this initial comment made by Douglas, Trafton's theory is pertinent, even if less explicitly connected to racialized concerns in an American context—clearly the mummy as a hidden object represents a source of anxiety about the unknown for the Douglases, and only by unwrapping the remains can they be easily fit into epistemological schemes (in this case, the medicalized binary between male and female).

The effort to 'diagnose' the mummy and therefore to assimilate it into these schemes continues throughout the article. Further, the comments about the mummies themselves reveal

[152] Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 89.
[153] Trafton, *Egypt Land*, 89.
[154] Trafton, *Egypt Land,* 90.

additional details about what might make a mummy more or less valuable. The first mummy discussed; James Douglas Jr. identifies the body as a young boy, and based on the condition of the skeleton, determines that the boy was physically disabled. He characterizes the value of the mummy, writing "It was not a mummy of the first quality, nor yet of the most inferior preparation."[155] This, just as presented in the photobook, seems to draw some inspiration from the description of mummy preparation as described in Herodotus' Book II, writing that while the body was covered in "bitumen" and cured in salt, the brain was not removed, and the organs were simply wrapped and cloth and returned into the cavity of the body.[156] Medical terminology is especially visible when Douglas describes the condition of the brain, using medical terminology like "calvaria," "occiput," "cerebrum," and "dura matter."[157] Finally, Douglas Jr. makes mention of the single ornament found on the body of the mummy, in gold.[158] The value of the body is again based on the quality of its preservation, and the expense of the ornaments.

In Douglas Jr.'s description of the second body, similar observations are made. Unlike the previous mummy, however, the coffin is described. Douglas writes about it; "From its elaborate workmanship it evidently contained a person of consequence."[159] The quality of the coffin is valuable because it might indicate the quality of the mummy contained within. Unfortunately for Douglas Jr., while the mummy in this coffin appeared to have reached adulthood, only his skeleton survived for the Douglases to examine. It is confirmed that a less well preserved body means a lower quality mummy, when Douglas Jr. notes, "..an unusual quantity of cloth was used to compensate for the deficiency of flesh."[160] His assumptions are

[155] Douglas Jr., "Two Mummies From Thebes," 3.
[156] Douglas Jr., "Two Mummies From Thebes," 4.
[157] Douglas Jr., "Two Mummies From Thebes," 4.
[158] Douglas Jr., "Two Mummies From Thebes," 5.
[159] Douglas Jr., "Two Mummies From Thebes," 5.
[160] Douglas Jr., "Two Mummies From Thebes," 6.

made clear here. Douglas Jr. additionally projects his judgement on the 'quality' of ancient Egyptian bodies backwards onto the ancient Egyptians themselves, supposing they pursued the aim of a perfectly preserved body. In the next paragraph, Douglas goes so far to suggest an imagined explanation for the state of the body, proposing that the body was that of a warrior who died on a foreign battle ground and whose remains had to travel a great distance before being embalmed.[161] There is an elision between the priorities of nineteenth century doctors looking for well-preserved bodies that allow for unambiguous examination and categorization, and between the priorities of the ancient Egyptians in caring for their dead.

An application of Trafton's theory of the "racial rupture" in Egyptological reception is complicated by a comment of Douglas Jr. found on the last page of the manuscript. To conclude, he writes:

> "These simple circumstances [around the mummies' deaths] form a link most intimate between that far-off past and the present, and make us feel that amidst the more external difference, whether of thought and opinion, or of outer life, there existed then as now the common human sympathies and natural impulses of the heart, which afford the best argument for the essential unity of our human race."[162]

In this moment, Douglas is not clearly assimilating the mummies to a binary scheme of "other" and "self," but concludes with a statement about the overall similarities between the ancient Egyptians and himself despite many differences. This statement does not fall entirely in line with the typical reaction to the rupture that Trafton lays out. Still, however, Douglas Jr. assimilates the new knowledge he learns through the unwrapping of the mummy into previously established schemes. The same mechanism appears here as has appeared time and time again—ancient Egypt represented a source of new, and therefore potentially disruptive knowledge, especially

[161] Douglas Jr., "Two Mummies From Thebes," 6.
[162] Douglas Jr., "Two Mummies From Thebes," 7.

considering its relevance to contemporary debates. The Douglases' reactions, seeking out evidence via well-preserved and unambiguous mummies, firmly establish Egypt as something familiar and therefore unthreatening. Douglas does this in his characterization of the unity of the human race—that despite "more external difference" there still exists a unity. The "more external difference" becomes clear in Douglas Jr.'s treatment of the ancient Egyptian religion in his solo lecture—"In the midst, therefore, of all the absurdities which their misguided imagination created, may we not trace unconscious prophecies of that clear revelation of life and immortality, which God has mercifully made to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ?"[163] Thus, there is nuance in how the Douglas imagine ancient Egyptians fitting into their understandings of their world and themselves.

Certainly, the Douglases' interest in ancient Egypt was likely, at least in part, driven by the prevalence of arguments over race waged by Gliddon. The Douglases still clearly believed in the necessity of uncovering, viewing, and gaining control over ancient Egyptian bodies through their unveiling, due to their emphasis on unwrapping in so many of their documents. Their arguments resulting from this unveiling, however, reach different conclusions than those such as Gliddon used as comparison. For the Douglases, the ancient Egyptians are claimed as 'less-developed' forerunners to Christians and as unified in the experience of humanity. This argument, especially that of unity, is essentially against the biological basis for racial difference, and is not unique to the Douglases. For example, see a pamphlet put out by the Canadian organization, the Belleville Young Men's Christian Association, which directly responds to Nott and Gliddon, writing, "And, if we may judge from the tone which pervades the writings of such men as Nott and Gliddon, we are more than justified in the suspicion that the important moral

[163] Douglas Jr., "The Belief of The Ancient Egyptians," 164.

and religious principles directly involved, in the dependent origin of each race, have...given great impulse to the advocacy of that idea," following with, "It is the *universal* brotherhood of man which makes human chattelism an abomination."[164] The Douglas' comment, then, shares similarities with this abolitionist argument.[165] Overall, Douglas' remarks here, although sharing the same method as Gliddon, have a different force, employing ancient Egyptian bodies in arguments against biological difference between racs. While one might expect Douglas Jr. to follow along with conclusions typical for the period, the Douglases' background becomes important in understaanding why they may have taken this stance. As being Scottish and also Canadian, while certainly they were aware of Gliddon's arguments, they would have had less at stake than a pro-slavery American in establishing this so-call racial difference. In contrast, this final remark in the paper reveals slightly more nuanced motivations for the Douglases in unwrapping ancient Egyptian bodies.

[164] William McLauren, "The Unity of the Human Race: a Lecture Delivered Before the Members of the Belleville Young Men's Christian Association, on the Evening of the nineteenth March, 1860: and Now Published at their Request," (Belleville, 1860), 8; additional thanks to Dr. Nyord for pointing out this example.
[165] While not discussed here, Trafton goes into considerable detail concerning how Black scholars played a major part in shaping the debate of polygeny vs. monogeny and responding to the problematic scholarship of those like Gliddon. For more details on this, see *Egypt Land,* beginning on 69.

Conclusion

In these documents related to Sidney Barnett and Dr. James Douglas, a variety of motivations are revealed surrounding the ancient Egyptian antiquities they purchased for the Niagara Falls Museum. For Barnett, his visit to the Abbott collection and his comments made in his lecture about his travels demonstrates familiarity with popular Egyptological ideas and writings by European scholars. Additionally, in his lecture on Egypt, he repeats Orientalizing ideas about the decline of modern Egypt from ancient Egypt, while also characterizing the ancient Egyptians as the founders of Western arts and sciences. These remarks and others are similar to those found in a variety of other sources throughout the period, including ancient Egypt's connection to the biblical and racial arguments, although Barnett makes no strong statement of opinion on these matters. On the other hand, what is clear is that Barnett was familiar with how ancient Egypt figured into these pressing debates and, therefore, how ancient Egyptian material would have been appealing to museum visitors.

What is additionally revealed is how the project of the Niagara Falls Museum facilitated Barnett's inclusion of ancient Egyptian objects even though unrelated to the rest of the collection. Even in his lecture, Sidney Barnett indicates the belief that viewing artifacts have the ability to be informative for audiences learning about a specific culture, as he used some objects as props in his speech. Barnett also figures ancient Egypt, and especially ancient Egyptian bodies, as a Romantic ruin—as something inspiringly unknown, and only possibly knowable through imagination, a subject ripe for presentation in the museum. Although focused primarily on natural material from Canada, the museum included material culture from a variety of different groups, including material from Indigenous groups and, later, from ancient Egyptians. While these categories might seem very different to the modern viewer, there was no problem for

Barnett in exhibiting these types of objects together. As articulated by Barnett, Abbott, and others, the key function of the museum was to present a complete collection of objects, contained and properly ordered, to teach the public about these organizational schemes. Thus, the museum's goal was not to simply teach about the objects, but also played a part in constructing the knowledge itself. With such a wide-reaching purpose, it is clear ancient Egypt was easily assimilated into the scheme of the museum. In addition to this, for Barnett and others, there was a particular emphasis on mummies within the museum. This could simply have been because mummies were particularly well-known examples of ancient Egyptian culture for the public (and potentially made other exhibits more popular, as demonstrated by the apparent unpopularity of the Abbott collection), but it could also be because of the mummy's ambiguous status as biological specimen and cultural object, "as an appropriate ornament of the operating room."[166]

On the other hand, Dr. James Douglas' photobook and related documents reveal more specific medicalized motivations for retrieval of ancient Egyptian objects, but especially mummies, from Egypt. As reported in Douglas' photobook, *Photographic Views Taken in Egypt,* Douglas was looking for 'good quality' mummies—mummies that were wholly preserved in the facial features and body to allow for medical diagnosis. For Douglas, the primary way to engage with ancient Egyptians directly was through unwrapping and examination of their bodies. Trafton's keen analysis has been employed throughout this project but becomes especially relevant when understanding Douglas' emphasis on the mummy over everything else—that a reveal of the unknown allows for its assimilation of with the 'other.' Douglas, however, and his son, James Douglas Jr., do not appear to have categorized the ancient Egyptians entirely as racial or Oriental other. Instead, the Douglases see the ancient Egyptians as part of a unified humanity,

[166] Massachusetts General Hospital, Board of Trustees, Records, 18 May 1823; Wolfe, *Mummies in Nineteenth Century America,* 14.

a conclusion opposed to the violently racist theories of polygenesis put forth by other early Egyptologists. It cannot be neglected, however, that the Douglases employ the same methods of Gliddon and Nott in that they require an unwrapping, reveal, and examination to formulate an opinion on who the ancient Egyptians were. Both the Douglases, and Gliddon, although reaching different conclusions, engage in anxious stabilization and formation of rational schemes present throughout the nineteenth century. It is important not to elide the two very different approaches of Barnett and Douglas—one more motivated by his desire to include relevant material in the museum, and the other clearly with more interest in the mummy as medical specimen. Their divergent interests do intertwine in interesting ways, however, and ultimately result in the inclusion of ancient Egyptian material in the museum.

The effect of their combined interest appears most clearly in the *Mummies* photo. In the caption of the photo, Douglas recounts Barnett's description of the quality of the mummy's preservation. For Barnett, his concern over the bodies is directly related to the museum. This is first evidenced in the unwrapping of the mummies themselves. Following the logic of the museum as not only displaying, but also containing and organizing objects, being able to see the bodies of the Egyptians must have been key to their didactic function.[167] This is especially emphasized with Barnett's mention of the quality of the body—that the face, hair, and wounds are fantastically preserved, and therefore provide the viewer more information about the person who the mummy was. Again, however, the coffin did remain on display with the bodies and were presented as containers of the mummies. The museum display thus indicates the

[167] See also Riggs' discussion of this phenomena. She points out that in archaeological excavation and collection, it is not only mummies unshrouded, but also shrines opened, and buried caches of sacred objects revealed. For Riggs, this removes a key aspect of the function of these objects for the ancient Egyptians, who did not produce these objects to be seen, Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt,* 180. She also discusses how these objects meanings change within a museum, where they are made visible in displays (or concealed in back storerooms), Riggs *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt,* 182. For a full discussion, see her chapter "Secrecy" in *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt.*

unwrapping—the presence of the visible body in the open coffin points to the moment of unwrapping or uncovering, and that the body represents a form of scientific inquiry and source of knowledge. Just as for the Douglases, Barnett appears to prefer preserved and unambiguous mummies, more legible, and more easily figured into the rational scheme of the museum. Douglas, on the other hand, prefers the unambiguous mummy for the same general reason—a mummy with better preserved features provided more information to learn from, analyze, and make conclusions about, and therefore, more easily lent itself to being employed evidence in arguments of pressing concern. In one way, the Douglases' photograph of the coffins carries out the same function as the museum in that it displays the coffins as real knowledge without acknowledging the role of the photograph in constructing that knowledge. Douglas points again and again to the bodies within the coffins, hidden in the photo, as potential sources of information, and represents the desire to see and understand the unknown, to stabilize it. Both figures are ultimately concerned with how to fit ancient Egypt into preconceived ideas and structures, but this concern manifests in very different ways. For Barnett, his interest is situated in the museum, and for Douglas, his interest is intensely focused on the body as evidence in its own right. Because Barnett also required well-preserved mummies easily figured into the museum, despite their diverging interests, their collaboration still resulted in acquiring satisfactory mummies for the museum.

The forces behind Barnett and Douglas' collection activity and the historical circumstances in which they collected continues to remain relevant, especially for visitors to the Carlos Museum. On one level, this paper demonstrates that not only the objects, but also the museum itself has a long and contested history as a taxonomical mechanism able to construct and uphold understandings of the world. In fact, the Carlos Museum began as one of these

taxonomical museums in the nineteenth century as the Emory College Museum. The museum began as a collection of biological specimens and ‘curiosities,’ to which William Shelton added ancient Egyptian antiquities in 1921.[168] While it is easy to write off the Niagara Falls museum as an illegitimate tourist trap compared to today’s institutions, one must not forget how the Niagara Falls Museum is representative of early museums overall. Understanding the origin of the museum, in the context of the Niagara Falls Museum and also the Emory College Museum should prompt reflection concern what ideas the museum upholds today. Christina Riggs argues this clearly—while the character of museums has certainly changed, the impulse to categorize and stabilize knowledge remains in certain practices (for example, she points to the continued practice of using medical imaging technology to see inside the bodies of mummies and to 'diagnose’ them).[169] To avoid presenting their ideas as unchallenged truth, as some of the earliest museums did through an air of scientific authority, today’s museums must be more open to discussion surrounding the displays of objects and choices made in curation, to better reveal how museum administrators, curators, and educators have a hand in creating popular understandings of ancient Egypt.

On another level, the choices made by Barnett and Douglas in purchase of objects are relevant because they continue to shape understandings of ancient Egypt through the presence of the objects within the museum. This idea is by no means unique—again, Riggs speaks in detail about how the display of particular ancient Egypt objects removed from their context produces ideas about ancient Egypt not fairly representative of ancient Egyptian understandings.[170] As a specific example, she points to funerary objects being displayed without covering as they would

[168] Lacovara, *The Realm of Osiris,* 2.
[169] Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt,* 196.
[170] Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt,* 182.

have been kept within the tomb. On one hand, the objects uncovering is necessary to their function in the museum of being seen. On the other hand, their concealment was key to the object's function to the ancient Egyptians. Therefore, their reveal is in service of the purpose of the museum, rather than representative of ancient practice. Where this appears for Barnett and Douglas is that their purchase of antiquities for the museum was clearly motivated, at least in part, by finding well-preserved mummies, easily diagnosed, and easily figured into the scheme of the museum. The very well-preserved mummy Douglas and Barnett describe (the "General") is not on view at the Carlos today, and the Carlos Museum's display places more emphasis on the coffin over the bodies of the mummies. Further, it is difficult to imagine what collections of ancient Egyptian art might have looked like without the influence of these motivations of these early nineteenth century antiquarians, as so many of today's collections have origins during this time. Still, perhaps this emphasis of Barnett and Douglas on the well-preserved body means that these are over-represented in the Carlos collection, and therefore not actually representative of typical ancient Egyptian burial practice. As Riggs points out, having a perfectly preserved body for eternity seems to be a desire projected back on the ancient Egyptians by Egyptological scholars today. [171] Douglas' medical interest in mummies and without Barnett's desire to have clear evidence to include in his museum clearly influenced the choices they made in purchasing objects and mummies, and therefore directly influences the scope of the collection at the Carlos Museum. The objects presented by the museum, in the case of both the Niagara Falls Museum and the Carlos Museum, are partially shaped by this nineteenth century desire instead of a desire to present material entirely representative of ancient Egyptian culture. Of course, material 'entirely representative' is an idealistic goal, and one that is ultimately unachievable for curators

[171] Riggs, *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt,* 78.

and museums. It is not just the decisions of early collectors that influence collections, but also the archaeological reality that some material survives better than others from antiquity. Thus, realizing how these factors influence collections, and adjusting understandings of ancient Egypt based on this is necessary for both museum professionals and scholars, many of whom are already taking up these questions. This paper brings to light the motivations of Douglas and Barnett in the hopes to facilitate these discussions in the future.

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