

Lunds Universitet
Historiska Institutionen
HISS33
Examiner: Yvonne Maria Werner
Supervisor: David Larsson Heidenblad
Seminary: 2019-09-27, kl. 13.15–15.00, LUX:B429

Egyptology in the Periphery

Valdemar Schmidt and the making of Egyptology in Denmark
1872–1925



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Abstract

Egyptology in the 19th and early 20th centuries developed simultaneously with increased imperial presence in Egypt by the European imperial powers, which would have influence on how the discipline was practised. The history of Egyptology has for this reason primarily focused on the big four – Great Britain, France, Germany and USA – and on Egypt itself. The aim of this study is to examine how Egyptology was established and practised in a non-imperial Scandinavian country – Denmark.

Through the agency of Valdemar Schmidt, the initiator of the Egyptology at the University of Copenhagen, I ask the following 3 questions; (1) How did Valdemar Schmidt practise Egyptology? (2) What was his working relation to Egypt and the rest of Europe? (3) Are there any changes over time, and if so, what were they?

Several results can be shown. First, I argue that Schmidt, as the first academic Egyptologist in Denmark, was profoundly influenced by prehistoric archaeology and comparative linguistics, both with Danish roots in the first half of the 19th century. This affected his scientific views in that he believed in using a quantity of sources, even those which many would regard as trivial in order to reconstruct the past. This focus on the small and trivial has previously been attributed to William Matthew Flinders Petrie at least 15 years after Schmidt, and it has been proposed he had done so as for practical purposes as it was easier to take smaller objects out of Egypt and distribute between the subscribers. I argue, in the case of Schmidt, that the way he practised Egyptology was in many ways unpractical and costly, indicating he was more shaped by the scientific ideals of the national context he worked in.

I show how most of the primary and secondary sources needed for his practise were not found in Denmark but were spread in several collections and libraries all over the world. Schmidt spent a large part of his career travelling to museums and studying museum objects to acquire knowledge which he later would communicate to a Danish audience through his many public lectures. I also argue his museum studies should be regarded as fieldwork as he was on a time constrain and tried to make the most of the time he had by, for example, travel at night and never eating anything during the museums opening hours.

In the case of Egyptology, I show how Denmark could be considered belonging to a European periphery. It was hard to get access to books and materials needed. Much of Schmidt's practise therefore aimed to upheave this sense of periphery and create a milieu in Denmark where Egyptology could be studied. I also argue that Schmidt initially did not consider Egypt itself central to his practise compared to several European museums. This would eventually change as he got involved in the antiquities trade around 1890.

The outbreak of the World War I affected his practise inasmuch he was cut off from access to the European museums and libraries that he needed for his studies. From this I argue Danish Egyptology relied on access to Europe to be able to function. World War I also broke down the ideals of scientific universalism in the warring countries, but as an Egyptologist from a neutral country, Schmidt still regarded international cooperation crucial and expected everything to turn back to normal as soon as the war was over.

Finally, I show how Egyptology in Denmark was not a financially rewarding career. Even with state support, Schmidt had to spend much of his own money on the acquisition of source material and publishing.

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1. Introduction

Today most people have some sort of concept of ancient Egypt. Thinking of it might bring images of pyramids, mummies, and sphinxes to mind. Yet this has not always been the case. The study of ancient Egypt through the scholarly discipline of Egyptology has a history in and of itself, and the interest in the results achieved by Egyptologists took off in the second half of the 19th century. Ancient Egypt and Egyptians got tied into all kinds of discussions about race, science, history and religion in the 19th and 20th centuries in a way which perhaps many modern historians have not always fully appreciated. As historian David Gange pointed out “almost every major figure of the second half of the nineteenth century, from Gladstone to Darwin, Ruskin and Morris, recorded their views on Egypt and Egyptologists”.¹

Our perception and knowledge of ancient Egypt is to a large part a modern construction and discovery² and, as I write these lines, not even 200 years have passed since the days when the hieroglyphs covering the walls of Egyptian temples and monuments were deciphered by Jean-François Champollion, and thus opening up a new world which had been inaccessible for thousands of years.

The history of Egyptology is a relatively new field of study and, because of its connection to the imperial presence in Egypt, it has mainly focused on France, Great Britain, Germany and the USA – and of course Egypt itself. Less attention has been paid to how Egyptology was established and practised in the more peripheral parts of Europe, for example the Scandinavian countries.

Probably very few of those reading this thesis have ever heard of Valdemar Schmidt, and those who have would most likely associate him with his involvement with the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, the Danish art museum where he laid the foundation for the Egyptian collection in 1892. However, two decades before lending his service to Glyptoteket he had started to teach Egyptology and Assyriology as a private docent at the University of Copenhagen – making him, not only the founder of these two academic disciplines in Denmark, but for many years also the main authority on these subjects. This study, therefore, intends to investigate how Egyptology was established and practised in Denmark through the agency of Valdemar Schmidt.

¹ Gange, David, *Dialogues with the dead: Egyptology, in British culture and religion, 1822–1922*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, p. 3–4

² Thompson, Jason, *Wonderful things. A history of Egyptology. 1: From antiquity to 1881*, The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo & New York, 2015, p. 10

1.1 Purpose of Study

The aim of this study is to widen our understanding of how Egyptology emerged and developed by studying its establishment and practise in the peripheral Scandinavian country of Denmark during the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

The aims will be achieved through the analysis of the professional life and career of Valdemar Schmidt, the man who is considered to have brought the discipline to Denmark in the 1870's, and who for a long time remained the main expert on ancient Egypt in the country.

Furthermore, since the days of Edward Said and the postcolonial tradition in historiography, several historical studies have been conducted on the European discourse or image of the Orient. Those studies examined how the Orient provided the West with a contrasting image of itself and helped shape a western identity. The Orient became what Said called Europe's "Other" and having created this otherness and filled it with different values served as legitimization for Europe to exert control and dominance over non-Europeans. Oriental knowledge is thus suggested to have served an imperial interest. Said argued that scholars played a substantial part in this matter as they brought the classic Orient into contemporary culture and "created it" using their knowledge and modern techniques.³ According to Said's chronology, it all started with Napoleon Bonaparte's campaign in Egypt 1798.⁴

When Said wrote his ground-breaking work the focus of his attention was Britain and France, asserting that they were pioneers regarding Oriental studies until after World War II when America took the lead. Subsequently, this binary model has been criticised and refined through several studies over the years and Said's description of a monolithic Europe is being replaced by a more pluralistic and multicultural model. While often acknowledging Said's insights, empirical historians many times find his model to rigid, inflexible and unsubstantiated in historical particulars.⁵ Historian Suzanne Marchand has for example criticised Said for purposely excluding Russians, Dutch, Greeks, Italians, and in the case of Marchand's own research, the Germans to fit his narrative "despite the well-known fact that they [the Germans] were the pacesetter European scholars in virtually every field of oriental studies between about 1830 and 1930".⁶ By studying an Egyptologist from non-imperialist Denmark, I intend to problematize this monolithic conception of Europe further.

³Said, Edward W, *Orientalism*, Random House, New York, 1979 p. 121

⁴ Said, 1979, p. 42

⁵ Reid, Donald M. *Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I*, University of California Press, 2002.

⁶ Marchand, Suzanne L. *German Orientalism in the Age of Empires. Religion, Race and Scholarship*. Cambridge University Press. New York, 2009, p. xviii

Furthermore, the practical and material turn which has taken place in the history of science and humanities in recent years has encouraged historians to turn their attention towards – not only what people in a certain time or place knew or thought about something – but also to the practical aspects of scholarship where empirical research of how knowledge was actually produced and circulated has been conducted. Inquiry into archival research and the act of publishing has shown to be instrumental in illustrating how people in different times and places acquired knowledge about something. This practical approach has gained ground within the history of orientalism as well – emphasizing the fact that the image of ancient Egypt we have today is for the most part a product of scholarship from the last two centuries.⁷

1.2 Research Questions

The questions for this study are; (1) How did Valdemar Schmidt practise Egyptology? (2) How did Schmidt relate to Egypt and the rest of Europe in his practise? (3) Are there any changes over time, and if so, what were they?

1.3 Theoretical framework – The practise of Egyptology

As already mentioned, in the study of orientalism discourse analysis has been used more than once – and has subsequently been criticised and nuanced. Nevertheless, as revolutionary as the Saidian model once was in unveiling power structures and evoking critical reflections in how depiction of others always entails power relations of some sort, perhaps it is now reaching its limitation in what new knowledge and insights it can bring. At this point, there is far too often a reiteration of what we have already known for some time – people make simplified representations of the objects they are describing.

A further problem arises where knowledge is at risk of being reduced to nothing more than a question of power and ideology in the way we depict others and in the way we construct the past. As put forward by Suzanne Marchand “too frequently, discourses are identified by selectively assembling lines and phrases from disparate texts, and in an attempt to make power relations paramount, modern commentators are led to pick out metaphors or generalizations that have more to do with our own interests than with the authors’ original ideas”.⁸ This relates back to Said’s theoretical framework which risks to become a form of conceptual baggage,

⁷ Thompson, 2015 (1), p. 10

⁸ Marchand, 2009, p. xxi

according to historian David Gange, where Egyptologists agendas are being assumed rather than carefully reconstructed.⁹

In the last decades or so historians have proposed a more practical approach to the historiography of orientalism, one where the knowledge making practises are historicised and one where we ask– not only what people thought and knew about certain things – but how they knew them. Historians taking this approach therefore asks where sources and information are obtained from and what tools and techniques are used to extract knowledge out of the sources. Historians of science made this tread into the practical aspects of science in the 1980’s, which according to the professor of history and philosophy of science, James Secord, writing in 2004, has “been the single most significant transformation in our field during the past twenty years”.¹⁰

In her book *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire. Religion, Race and Scholarship* historian Suzanne Marchand defines orientalism, not as a discourse, but as a *set of practises*.¹¹ It was something scholars did in their everyday lives that made them into orientalists. These practises could include learning to read hieroglyphic, hieratic or demotic Egyptian or Assyrian and Babylonian cuneiform and so on, keeping up with the developments in the field, getting a hold of primary as well as secondary sources to work with, applying for funds to finance excavations/studies and getting published and so on. In the theoretical framework of this study, Egyptology will be defined in a likewise manner. That is, it will be defined as a set of practises with the purpose of creating and communicating knowledge about ancient Egypt.

These practises also encompass factors that are often taken for granted and a lot of the times left unsaid, like taking notes or acquiring a book needed for research, copying, editing, publishing, getting access to archives and collections. Especially in today’s technological society, where we are often no more than a few clicks on our computers away from getting precisely the information we are looking for, that it is easy to forget the limitations that earlier scholars have dealt with.¹²

Through the studies of individual scholars, it is possible to put forth many different questions to get insights into the different strategies employed to produce and transmit knowledge, as well

⁹ Gange, 2015, p. 73

¹⁰ Secord, James A. Knowledge in Transit, *Isis*, 95 (2004), pp. 654–672, p. 658

¹¹ Marchand, 2009, p. xxiii

¹² Putnam, Lara, The Transnational and Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast, *American Historical Review*, April 2016, pp. 376–402, p. 380

as how these scholars legitimized their roles in the cultural, economic and political conditions which prevailed at the time.¹³

There is one aspect that will be especially central for this study, and that is the geographic setting, as well as the national and international contexts. With Schmidt being the first Egyptologist in Denmark, there was certain geographic isolation from colleagues in the field. Add to this the fact that the geographic location of Egypt, and the political situation of imperial rule, made it more accessible to some than others, generally the French and the British. Therefore, historians have adopted more transnational approaches to look closer on how Egyptology functioned across national borders. For example, Archaeologist Alice Stevenson points out that the methodological nationalism, where nation states are considered the central units for analysis, often becomes problematic and how, for example, the British model of archaeology in the 1880's, where sponsors from all over the world financed British archaeologists in Egypt in return of a share of the excavated objects "created a vast network that allowed objects to move across state boundaries".¹⁴

As I have already stated in my purpose, I intend to break down the monolithic concept of Europe and, not only treat Denmark as an independent part of Europe, but also examine how a Danish Egyptologist moved between national and international contexts. Historians of science has used the terms Centre/Periphery to discuss and problematize where the cores and outskirts of scientific and scholarly research lay, and what this would implicate. In the case of Denmark's geographic role in science, Rikke Schmidt Kjærgaard, with PhD in science communication, has argued there are no simple distinctions between centre and periphery when it comes to popularization of science in Denmark during the 19th century. With local and regional distinctions, a small town could be in the periphery of a big city and so on. "In the mind of the Danes", she writes, "there were little recognition of being in the European periphery".¹⁵ Schmidt Kjærgaard, however, wrote about the popularization of the natural sciences and the technology where the object of study is not necessarily conditioned after the geographic location where it's being conducted. Experiments concerning electricity, air-pressure etc. could

¹³ For several examples on the subject, see Holenstein, A, Steinke, H & Stuber, M, Introduction: Practises of knowledge and the figure of the scholar in the eighteenth century, in *Scholars in Action. The Practise of Knowledge and the Figure of the Savant in the 18th Century, Volume 1*, Holenstein, A, Steinke, H & Stuber, M (eds.), Brill, 2013. pp. 1–41

¹⁴ Stevenson, Alice, *Scattered Finds. Archaeology, Egyptology, and Museums*. UCL Press, 2019, p. 106

¹⁵ Kjærgaard Schmidt, Rikke, Electric Adventures and Natural Wonders: Exhibitions, Museums and Scientific Gardens in Nineteenth-Century Denmark, in *Popularizing Science and Technology in the European Periphery, 1800–2000*, Faidra Papanelopoulou, Augustí Nieto-Galan & Enrique Perdiguero (eds.), Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009, pp. 135–155, p. 154

in theory be conducted anywhere. There is necessarily no centre or periphery in and of itself. Professor in Nordic literature, Elisabeth Oxfeldt, regarding orientalism in Danish and Norwegian literature and culture, also pointed out how the centre-periphery binaries are relative. Instead, Oxfeldt proposed, we should talk about centres and peripheries in plural.¹⁶ But would the insights of Schmidt Kjærgaard and Oxfeldt be transferable to humanistic scholarship and the study of ancient cultures such as Egypt? Or does the geography play a more pivotal role, making it legitimate to talk about a centre and periphery Egyptology? I will throughout this thesis discuss Schmidt's conception of periphery and centre in the scholarship of Egyptology, and the role the geographic setting played for his practise.

1.4 Method and sources

In 2017 the *History of Humanities* journal ran a thematic issue called *Practises of historical research*. In the introduction, three of the contributors were convinced "that the most fruitful way to implement these insights is not abstract theorizing but the careful empirical study of scholarly practises".¹⁷ Therefore, with the purpose of achieving a thoroughly comprehensive empirical study, a variety of available sources will be methodologically combined with what could be called scholarly biography of Valdemar Schmidt. This does not encompass a portrayal of his life from cradle to grave, but one that is limited to the professional life of a scholar and his or her practise of their craft. Because of Schmidt's admittedly significant and central role in bringing Egyptology to Denmark, studying his professional life would help illuminate how knowledge was created and circulated through the agency of individual scholars.

I have chosen to use a variety of sources to construct Schmidt's professional life such as books, articles, letters and newspaper articles. Although these sources overlap in many ways, each of them has its own way of elucidating certain angles of Schmidt's professional life. First, I will analyse a selection of Schmidt's published work. He authored several books, most of them in the 1870's, up until 1919, when his last scholarly work was published in Denmark (and finally his autobiography in 1925). The books used for this study, all written in Danish, are: *Indledning til Syriens historie i oldtiden efter ikke-bibelske kilder* (1872), *Assyriens og Ægyptens gamle historie efter den nyere tidens forskninger. Volume 1* (1872), *Østerlandske indskrifter fra Den Kongelige Antiksamling* (1879), *Levende og døde i det gamle Ægypten*.

¹⁶ Oxfeldt, Elisabeth, *Nordic Orientalism. Paris and the Cosmopolitan Imagination 1800–1900*, Narayana Press, 2005, p. 13

¹⁷ Friedrich, M, Müller, P & Riordan, M, *Practises of Historical Research in Archives and Libraries from the Eighteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, in *History of Humanities*, Vol 2, no. 1, 2017, pp.3–13, p. 7

Album til ordning af sarkofager, mumiekister, mumiehylstre o. lign. Volume 1 & 2 (1919) and *Af et langt livs historie* (1925).¹⁸

I have also used the two articles authored by Schmidt: *Førcolumbiske Opdagelser af Amerika, Geografisk Tidsskrift, bind 1* (1877) and *Auguste Mariette, Illustrerte tidene*, (1881).¹⁹ The most valuable information for the purpose of this study was contained in the introduction chapters. In these introductions, Schmidt shared with his readers the history and current state of the discipline, his preferred sources as well as the routines and practises for his research.

The next category of sources is Schmidt's letter correspondence. The Danish State Archives bought a few of them on an auction in 1958. The Royal Library in Copenhagen also have several letters. For the purpose of this study I have chosen to include the following letters from the available selection;

- Letters from Valdemar Schmidt to his student, the Danish Egyptologist and librarian of the Royal Library in Copenhagen, H.O. Lange. 38 letters, 1891–1925. NKS 3736, 4°. Royal Library in Copenhagen.
- Letters from Valdemar Schmidt to his student, the Danish Egyptologist Henry Madsen. 34 letters, 1900–1908. NKS 4927, 4°. Royal Library in Copenhagen.
- Various letters to Valdemar Schmidt, NKS 2473, 2°, Royal library in Copenhagen.
- Letters to and from Valdemar Schmidt 1860–1908. Danish State Archives in Copenhagen.

Schmidt's letters were often chaotic, with many abbreviations and a lot of text packed into a small space, which might be noticed in some of the quotations. As a source, the letters are the closest we can come to find out the actual practise. It is through the letters we get closest to see how he actually worked as they are in real time. It's where his hopes and disappointments are best expressed, and the frustration when things don't go according to plan gets clearly conveyed in the letters to colleagues and students.

¹⁸ The titles in English: The introduction to the history of Syria in ancient times after non-biblical sources (1872), Assyria's and Egypt's ancient history after recent times research, volume 1 (1872), Eastern inscriptions from the Royal Antiquity Collection (1879), Living and dead in ancient Egypt (1919), From a long life's history (1925)

¹⁹ The titles in English: Pre-Columbian discoveries of America (1877), Auguste Mariette (1881)

A third category of sources is a vast amount of newspaper articles covering the entire period in question. These are accessible online.²⁰ I have used the referenced service to search and collect newspaper articles from several newspapers all over Denmark. These articles, have been searched through with the help of Optical Character Recognition (OCR), looking for articles discussing Valdemar Schmidt and his practise. There were over 7000 matches in total, but after clearing out irrelevant articles²¹, there were around 100 articles I found significant for this study.

By using several different kinds of sources, I am able to capture several different perspectives and stages in Schmidt's practise. The sources complete each other.

The text passages historians studying the practise of humanities are looking for are texts about practises of historical research.²² I have therefore examined my source material carefully to identify passages where Schmidt discusses Egyptology and his everyday craft and practise, both in his books and his letters. The newspaper articles have, for the most part, contained descriptions of certain events or lectures or an interview, but also several descriptions of his practise as well.

Although the subject of this study is Egyptology, the reader will soon enough notice the mentioning of other topics and subjects, mainly Assyriology. This is, however, a part of the discipline's interdisciplinary nature and I will discuss them in so far as they relate to Schmidt's Egyptological practise.

As Valdemar Schmidt has not been the object of historical studies, and the literature covering him is mostly of encyclopaedic character or so-called festschrifts, there is not much to compare with concerning accounts of his career. The lack of comparative Danish and Scandinavian literature on the topic makes it necessary to compare with the international literature that is mainly focused on Britain, France, Germany, USA and Egypt.

1.4.1 Translation

Most of the sources used for this study, with a few exceptions, are written in Danish and have been translated into English by me. This has occasionally proven to be quite challenging with older words and different syntax, but I have tried to maintain the original meaning in the translation as much as possible.

²⁰ <http://www2.statsbiblioteket.dk/mediestream>

²¹ There was, for example, a clothing store manager with the same name who advertised frequently in the newspapers around the turn of the century.

²² Bod, R, Kursell, J, Maat, J & Westeijn, T, Practical and Material Histories of the Humanities, History of Humanities, Vol 2, no. 1, 2017, pp. 1–2, p. 2

When referring to the museum which Schmidt eventually would get involved with, I will consistently use the phrasing *Glyptoteket* which is the definite form of *Glyptotek*. Although, the older spelling *Glyptothek* or *Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek* might appear in direct quotations.

The term *Videnskab* often used in the Danish sources is to be understood in the same way as the German word *Wissenschaft*, that is there is no distinction between science and scholarship as there is in English.²³ I have in each occasion decided whether to translate it to science or scholarship based on the context in the Danish sentence.

1.5 Disposition and demarcation

The chapters are divided chronologically into three periods of time, 1872–1882, 1882–1914, and 1914–1925. At a first glimpse, this division might cause some confusion but there is naturally a good reason for it both in the way it corresponds with Schmidt's career but also in the general history of Egyptology.

The first chapter, *The Foundations of Danish Egyptology (1872–1882)*, covers the period from when Schmidt published the first volume of his history about Egypt and Assyria in 1872, followed by his PhD in 1873 and work as a private docent the following year up to the death of Auguste Mariette in 1881, and Gaston Maspero's takeover of the antiquities service. The reason for this division is the changes which took place in Egyptology in the 1880's, which will be discussed at length further down.

The second chapter, *The Golden Age (1882–1914)*, covers the period when Great Britain took control over Egypt and the excavations began to be funded by foreign private investors through subscriptions to the newly funded Egypt Exploration Fund. The period ended with the outbreak of the First World War which broke down many of the ongoing projects and international cooperation. As for Valdemar Schmidt, it was during this period that he first got employed as a temporary docent (*midlertidig docent*) in 1883 and later became involved with buying and collecting antiquities for *Glyptoteket* in 1892.

The third chapter, *Egyptology disrupted (1914–1925)*, begins with the outbreak of World War I and its consequences for Egyptology, and ends with the aftermath, when Schmidt would finally publish his masterpiece (1919) and write his autobiography (1925). Schmidt became

²³ Møller Jørgensen, Claus, *Humboldt in Copenhagen. Discipline Formation in the Humanities at the University of Copenhagen in the Nineteenth Century*, in *The Making of Humanities. Volume II: From Early Modern to Modern Disciplines*. R. Bod, J. Maat & T. Weststeijn (Eds.), Amsterdam University Press, 2012, pp. 377–395, p. 393

fully employed as a Docent at the university in 1916, at the age of 80, and finally retired from the university in 1922, due to high age.

1.6 State of the field

Looking back in 2007, Elliott Colla, an Associate Professor of comparative literature, pinpointed four trends or narratives in writing the history of Egyptology. First is the so-called *colonial enlightenment narrative*.²⁴ Drawing much from the ideas expressed in primary sources, this narrative maintains the necessity of putting ancient Egyptian artefacts under European control since they otherwise would have been destroyed, or the knowledge they contained would not be extracted in a correct manner. Although Colla pointed out much of this narrative remains in the scholarship of today, it has been challenged by another revisionist narrative from the 1970's, the *colonial rape narrative*.²⁵ Mostly produced in the west, this narrative pays closer attention to the colonial rhetoric in western Egyptology and produced titles such as the 1991 book *The Rape of Egypt, How the Europeans stripped Egypt of its Heritage* by Peter France, in which he argued, as the title of the book might suggest, Egyptian artefacts were shipped off to Europe under the pretence that the Egyptians were incapable of managing their own heritage. Europeans, first and foremost, sought to expand their personal reputation and wealth, or that of their countries, whereas an ambition to increase human knowledge was considered unusual.²⁶

It was also during this period Edward Said wrote his classic *Orientalism* (1978) where he argued the Egyptian campaign of Napoleon in 1798 and the subsequent publishing of *Description de l'Égypte* set off a development in which Egypt and other Islamic countries turned in to an object of western knowledge. Said cites Jean-Baptiste Joseph Fourier, writing in the preface that Egypt was once a great civilisation which had contributed immensely to the art, science and religion, but later concluded "This country, which has transmitted its knowledge to so many nations, is today plunged into barbarism".²⁷ According to Said the French, and later the British, came to regard it as their mission to save Egypt from barbarism and restore it to its former glory – which meant it needed to be annexed. Another classic from this period, and one which has sparked much controversy and debates, is Martin Bernal's 1987 book *Black Athena*. In his book, Bernal suggests that because of racism and eurocentrism

²⁴ Colla, Elliott, 2007, *Conflicted Antiquities. Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, p. 11

²⁵ Colla, 2007, p. 12

²⁶ France, Peter, *The Rape of Egypt. How the Europeans Stripped Egypt of its Heritage*, Barrie & Jenkins, London, 1991, p. 104

²⁷ Said, 1979, p. 85

western scholarship has denied the Egyptian influences on Greek culture and subsequently on western European ideas. Bernal writes:

After the 1780's, the intensification of racism and the new belief in the central importance of 'ethnicity' as a principle of historical explanation became critical for perceptions of ancient Egypt. The Egyptians were increasingly detached from the noble Caucasians, and their 'black' and African nature was more and more emphasized. Thus the idea that they were the cultural ancestors of the Greeks – the epitome and pure childhood of Europe – became unbearable.²⁸

Following *Black Athena*, the Egyptian race question resulted in a fiery debate in the 1990's, with several books being written on the topic.²⁹

The passiveness and omission of the Egyptian agency has since the beginning of the 21st century been criticised by several authors and historians, a trend which Colla has called *national enlightenment narrative*.³⁰ The most recognized of these are perhaps Historian Donald Malcolm Reid's 2002 book *Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, museums and Egyptian national identity from Napoleon to World War I* where he reasserted the connection between Egyptology and imperialism but at the same time, he wrote Egyptians into the history of Egyptology by examining how Egyptology helped shape a national identity in modern Egypt. The people of Egypt had primarily kept an Islamic identity, one which had little to do with pharaonic times. Simultaneously, European domination held the Egyptians back from having opportunities to educate themselves on the subject. As Reid's purpose was to demonstrate the political bearings of Egyptology, his focus was on Egypt where the contact between westerners and Egyptians mostly occurred and not on Egyptological activities in European museums and universities.³¹

Another approach in a similar manner is the history from below where attention is paid to the people working on the excavations. Historian of art and archaeology Christina Riggs for example has analysed photographs of excavations, which often gives a nuanced picture of the collective efforts which are put into archaeological excavations, instead of the narrative of a

²⁸ Bernal, Martin, *Black Athena. The Afrocentric roots of Classical Civilization. Volume I. The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785–1985*, Free Association Press, London, 1987, p.224

²⁹ See for an example; Lefkowitz, Mary, *Not out of Africa: how Afrocentrism became an excuse to teach myth as history*, New York Basicbooks, 1996. Lefkowitz, Mary & Rogers, Guy Maclean, *Black Athena Revisited*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel hill & London, 1996. Berlinerblau, Jacques, *Heresy in the university. The Black Athena controversy and the responsibilities of American intellectuals*, Rutgers University Press, 1999.

³⁰ Colla, 2007, p. 13

³¹ Reid, 2002, p. 10

lone discoverer. Regarding the excavations of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922, she wrote "Egyptians in their hundreds, and from across the social spectrum, played fundamental roles in the most famous archaeological discovery ever made in Egypt".³²

The last narrative Colla called the *agnostic narrative*. This narrative stress that the practises are constructed and that an ambiguity prevails within Egyptology.³³

As we have seen so far, the historiography of Egyptology in the last decades of 20th century was intertwined with postcolonial ideas of unveiling power structures. However, in recent years historians have drawn attention to the religious interests at play. Writing about Egyptology in Great Britain, historian David Gange has argued that in response to challenges to religion put forward by Darwin's theory of evolution and the critical biblical scholarship arising in Germany, British Egyptologists would put their techniques to use, first and foremost, in order to save the biblical narrative. After Heinrich Schliemann's discovery of Homers Troy in 1872, a city thought to be just a myth, they deemed it possible to bring some of the stories from the Old Testament into life.³⁴

Historian Suzanne Marchand, as she pointed out the plurality of different interests by German orientalists, noticed a strong interest of religious questions by German scholars as well. She argued that "the cultural politics of Orientalistik were defined much less by modern concerns – such as how to communicate with or exert power over the locals – than by traditional, almost primeval, Christian questions".³⁵ Questions that were discussed included: what parts of the Old Testament were true and relevant for Christians? What did ancient Israelis owe to neighbouring civilizations? What language was spoken in the Garden of Eden and where was it located? As Germany in the mid-nineteenth century was in no need to train bureaucrats, judges and soldiers for colonial purposes, their scholars were much freer to focus on questions traditionally related to the University – religion.³⁶ As Valdemar Schmidt came from a long family line of priests, and got a University degree in theology in 1859, it would be of interest to test these theories on him. What role did religion play in his practise of Egyptology?

Another area of study is the relation between Egyptology and museums. One of the questions that arise is to what extent the evolution of museums shaped the way in which ancient Egypt

³² Riggs, Christina, Shouldering the past: Photography, archaeology, and collective effort at the tomb of Tutankhamun, *History of Science*, 2017, vol.55(3), pp 336–362, p. 361

³³ Colla, 2007, p. 14

³⁴ Gange, David, 2006, Religion and Science in late nineteenth-century British Egyptology, *The Historical Journal*, 49, 4, pp. 1083–1103, p. 1084

³⁵ Marchand, 2009, p. xxiv

³⁶ Marchand, 2009, p. 104

was presented to a growing, museum going public. Archaeology professor Stephanie Moser, for example, had studied how ancient Egypt was represented in the British museum 1759–1880 and argued that the museum had formed the perception of Egypt long before it was put under more scientific rules and constrains, not only for the British but for international visitors as well. Moser concluded that:

The museum created a powerful conception of ancient Egypt before a more scientific and archaeological understanding of Egyptian antiquity was formally established; and thus when research projects and scholarly works on ancient Egypt started to proliferate in the late nineteenth century, it was impossible to eradicate the images already created by the museum.³⁷

Elliott Colla, an Associate Professor of comparative literature, studied the invention of artefacts, that is, how objects from archaeological excavations made their way into the museums and collections, while at the same time getting invested with meaning. Artefacts are not to be seen as mere passive historical objects created by a human subject as they played an active role in creating power relations. The great irony was how the same cultural artefacts could mean different things to different groups. They could serve to legitimize colonial rule by the Europeans and at the same time, from an Egyptian nationalist perspective, contest colonial rule.³⁸ Not only were the artefacts of pharaonic Egypt historical remnants, but they also had great impact on contemporary society and politics. Colla, who pointed out that Egyptology's dependence on the material objects it studied could not disentangle it from the political and social control over these objects, has called Egyptology "perhaps the first academic discipline whose fortune wholly depended on colonial domination".³⁹

The most recent addition to the history of Egyptology is perhaps contained in the archaeologist and senior lecturer of museum studies Alice Stevenson's 2019 book *Scattered finds. Archaeology, Egyptology and Museums*. Stevenson, taking a similar material approach to Colla, sought to understand how people engaged and interacted with artefacts and pointed out that ancient Egyptian material were not only products of the past, but contributed in shaping the present. Furthermore, by studying the traffic of artefacts, from Egyptian soil to other countries museum settings, the agency of people often left out from the historiography of

³⁷ Moser, Stephanie, *Wonderous curiosities. Ancient Egypt at the British Museum*, The University of Chicago Press, 2006, p. 233

³⁸ Colla, 2007, p. 273

³⁹ Colla, 2007, p. 76

Egyptology becomes much clearer. For example, more than any other museum discipline, Egyptology was being managed by women. There were five full committee members of the EEF that were female and of the 29 local honorary secretaries in Britain, more than half were female according to the annual report for 1899–1900. At least 176 of the 559 subscribers could further be identified as women. Moreover, according to Stevenson, many of these women were also involved in the women’s suffrage movement “meaning that fundraising and collecting for museums potentially empowered other political agendas”.⁴⁰ Furthermore, as the title of her book might suggest, Stevenson examined how Egyptian objects spread all over the world through privately funded British archaeology. Through different so-called object habits, meaning attitudes toward objects and motivations for collecting, Stevenson studied the cultural incentive behind collecting Egyptian artefacts.⁴¹ In the case of Denmark she argued there were two object habits, one more archaeological in the National Museum and one art historical in Glyptoteket.⁴² Schmidt would eventually be the central character in the acquisition of Egyptian artefacts to the Danish museums, which would make an analysis of his collection practises definitely fruitful.

A further area of study, which to some extent has already been touched upon, is the link between scholarship and entertainment in relation to ancient Egypt. In a recent article, Carole Jarsaillon for example discusses the thin line between Egyptomania, meaning a popular and aesthetic fascination of ancient Egypt, and Egyptology, which is the historic scholarly discipline that studies ancient Egypt. Jarsaillon argued that the so called didactic Egyptomania and Egyptology were not two exclusive phenomena, but in fact coexisted and interacted with each other throughout the 19th and 20th century to promote an interest in ancient Egypt. She wrote “Egyptomania laid the groundwork for Egyptology to be recognised as a successful science, and Egyptology, in return, inspired Egyptomaniac productions, in which Egyptologists themselves participated”.⁴³

In the first half of the 19th century people in Great Britain and France would gather to watch performers unwrap Egyptian mummies. These events have also been an object of study as historians have asked themselves where they would fit in between Egyptomania and Egyptology – were they primarily made for entertainment or did they serve a scientific and

⁴⁰ Stevenson, 2019, p. 57

⁴¹ Stevenson, 2019, p. 2

⁴² Stevenson, 2019, p. 114

⁴³ Jersaillon, Carole, 2018, Modern Egyptomania and Early Egyptology: The Case of Mariette’s 1867 Egyptian Temple, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts, An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 40:4, 359–376, DOI: 10.1080/08905495.2018.1484610, p. 360

scholarly purpose? Gabriel Moshenska studied surgeon Thomas “Mummy” Pettigrew’s mummy unwrappings in the 1830’s and concluded that there were different measures Pettigrew could have taken to make the performances seem more scientific, for example the choice of venue or front row audience.⁴⁴ Kathleen L. Sheppard, who had studied the unwrapping of the two brothers by Margaret Murray at the university of Manchester in 1908, concluded that those mummy unwrappings struck a balance between Egyptomania and Egyptology and that Murray’s goal was to allow the public to be a part of scientific inquiry and thus to be able to learn. In other words, Sheppard wrote, “rather than separate the mania from the -ology, she wanted instead to bring reason and understanding to the mania”.⁴⁵ What can be understood from these studies is that there seems to be a consensus that Egyptomania and Egyptology were never fully separated but in many ways completed one another.

Despite recent subaltern and material theoretical frameworks, the historiography of individual actors never really left Egyptology. Jason Thompson in his 3 volume *Wonderful things. A history of Egyptology* pointed out that “in the end, the story of Egyptology is the story of the people who created Egyptology”. It is not possible, according to Thompson, to omit the great names of the discipline as the narrative would not make much sense.⁴⁶ However, apart from these great names of Egyptology, Thompson pointed out that there was a lot to be gained from studying the so called minor characters, those who were a part of the field of Egyptology but left few traces and never achieved fame. Those minor characters, according to Thompson, “were often the people who enabled the interactions of people and ideas that expanded into new levels of awareness. From relative anonymity they provided the foundations and initiated lines of thought that others developed into the great advances of Egyptology”.⁴⁷ So even if their names were long forgotten they played a large part in connecting peoples and ideas. Thompson devoted one page to the Scandinavian Egyptologists, Jens Daniel Carolus Lieblein in Norway and Karl Fredrik Piehl in Sweden.⁴⁸ There is no mention of Valdemar Schmidt in Denmark, meaning there is definitively a gap to be filled by this study as he could be considered to be one of these minor personalities.

⁴⁴ Moshenska, Gabriel, Unrolling Egyptian mummies in nineteenth-century Britain, *British Journal for the History of Science*. Vol. 47 (3), Sep2014, pp. 451–477, p. 477

⁴⁵ Sheppard, Kathleen L. Between Spectacle and Science: Margaret Murray and the Tomb of the Two Brothers, *Science in context*, 25(4), pp. 525–549, 2012, p. 528

⁴⁶ Thompson, 2015 (1), p.12

⁴⁷ Thompson, 2015 (1), p. 13

⁴⁸ Thompson, 2015 (2), p. 185–186

In a Scandinavian context some literature has been written on the subject. Tomas Björk has analysed the image of the orient from a Swedish perspective. Björk concluded, although Sweden did not have an empire, swedes were nonetheless significantly affected by the imperialist ideology, and still are to this day.⁴⁹ Although Björk is aware of the criticism against Said's binary model, it is not something he himself seems to make a point out of. Björk concludes that nothing seems to have changed from the 19th century until today. He argues that the same demonising stereotypes of the east are still used to maintain ideological and political dominance.⁵⁰

Elisabeth Oxfeldt, on the other hand, takes the Scandinavian periphery into account as she argues that Denmark and Norway "imported Oriental imagery to position themselves not against their colonial other but rather in relation to central European nations".⁵¹ Denmark strived toward becoming a modern and cosmopolitan nation by importing oriental imagery from other European nations and because of a conflictual period with Germany, Denmark aligned itself culturally with France most of the time.⁵²

Martin Zerlang, just like Oxfeldt, pointed out the peculiarities in Danish Orientalism. Due to Denmark's non-participation in the imperial race, the representations of the orient became softer and more peaceful, focusing more on the similarities rather than the differences.⁵³

So far, however, little attention has been paid to the scientific and academic studies of the Orient. Both Oxfeldt's and Zerlang's main purpose was to study the imaginary representation of the Orient in various literature, travelogues, fairy tales, poetry and so on. This study thereby has a gap to fill.

1.7 History of Egyptology

In July 1799, while building a fortification near the city of Rosetta at the time of Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, a group of soldiers stumbled upon an odd-looking stone block. A message in three different alphabets was engraved on the face of the stone, with Greek quickly being identified in the bottom and hieroglyphs on the top. However, the Rosetta stone, as it eventually would be called, would not remain in French hands for too long. The French army capitulated

⁴⁹ Björk, Tomas, 2011, *Bilden av Orienten. Exotism i 1800-talets svenska visuella kultur*, Atlantis bokförlag AB, Stockholm. p. 421

⁵⁰ Björk, 2011, p. 421

⁵¹ Oxfeldt, 2005, p. 13

⁵² Oxfeldt, 2005, p. 12

⁵³ Zerlang, Martin, 2006, Danish orientalism, *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, 18:2, 119–135, p. 133

to the British in 1800 (Napoleon had already returned to France by that time) and the stone came in British possession. It has been exhibited in the British museum since 1802.⁵⁴

Copies of the stone's inscriptions immediately started to circulate around Europe and got the attention of several scholars who tried to figure out the meaning of the inscription. Although some contributions had been made by others⁵⁵ it was the young linguist Jean-François Champollion who finally solved the puzzle.⁵⁶ This discovery turned the vast amount of decorated stone blocks scattered around in Egypt to no longer be viewed as just mere monuments of art to be appreciated for their aesthetic beauty, but to be recognised as historical documents with recorded events from thousands of years ago, and for the first time in many centuries, scholars could read them. This would eventually lead to a new field of scholarship, Egyptology.

Over the next few decades, European presence increased in Egypt as European officers, architects, engineers, doctors, and so on were invited to help reform and modernise the country. Numerous objects would from the 1820's be sold and sent home to enrich the European museums, most notably the British museum and the Louvre, but also in other European cities like Leiden and Turin.⁵⁷

While working for the Louvre museum in Paris, Auguste Mariette (1821–1881) was sent on a mission to Egypt in 1850 to acquire manuscripts for the Louvre collection. Mariette, who to an extensive part was self-taught in reading hieroglyphs and Coptic, would eventually become a prominent figure in mid-century Egypt. In 1858, Mariette was appointed as Director-General of the newly established National Antiquities Service and, thus, secured a monopoly for himself as the only archaeologist with the power to licence excavations in Egypt. The finds from these excavations would be displayed in the newly opened National museum in Bulaq, Cairo.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Thompson, 2015 (1), p. 102–104

⁵⁵ Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, a french arabist, had succeeded in identifying the equivalents of the Greek names Alexander and Ptolemy in the demotic script by 1802. His former student, the swede Johan David Åkerblad further gained some territory by producing a demotic alphabet (half of it was shown to be correct) and succeeded in identifying 16 demotic words like Greek and temple and so on. Thomas Young later suggested the demotic and hieroglyphic script was related. He identified 218 demotic and 200 hieroglyphic words (about half of them being correct). He realized the demotic script contained both phonetic as well as ideographic signs. Had he applied this insight to the Hieroglyphs, he might have solved it. But he did not. Thompson, 2015, p. 111–120

⁵⁶ Tyldesley, Joice, Egypt, in *The History of Archaeology*, Paul Bahn (eds.), Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London & New York, 2014, pp. 73–89, p. 74. He had studied Latin, Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac and Chaldean in school. Later, he also studied Sanskrit, Ethiopic, Chinese and Parsee.

⁵⁷ See chapter 11 in Thompson, 2015 (1), p. 209–222 for an overview of the early museum acquisitions in Europe.

⁵⁸ Tyldesley, 2014, p. 76

The heavy investments made on modernization and Europeanization during the reign of Muhammed Ali's grandson Ismail Pasha (reign 1863–1879), and a costly war with Ethiopia, had placed the country in debt. By 1875, Ismail had sold the Egyptian and Sudanese shares in the Suez Canal Company. Unable to repay his debt, Britain and France interfered and took control over the economy, establishing the so-called Dual control over Egypt and eventually, after the Urabi revolt in 1881, Great Britain seized control over Egypt. Although, the French kept control over all cultural matters. The head of the Antiquities service would always be French by convention, making conflicts inevitable.⁵⁹

After Mariette's death in 1881, Egypt's economic crisis became one of the first things his successor Gaston Maspero needed to deal with as he decided to open up excavation rights to foreign funders. The following year the Delta Exploration Fund was founded and would soon enough change its name to the Egypt Exploration Society (EES). Its purpose was to, with the approval of the Egyptian authorities, finance properly conducted surveying and excavations by professional Egyptologists and to protect Egyptian heritage.⁶⁰

At that point the career of, the perhaps most famous Egyptologist to this day, William Flinders Petrie took off. The young autodidact Petrie (1853–1942) was asked by the EEF to conduct an excavation in Tanis 1883/1884 and accepted. Over a 40-year period Petrie advanced Egyptian archaeology, developed methods of chronological classification and made more discoveries than anyone else.⁶¹

The system set up for excavations in Egypt ordained the excavator at the end of the season to bring the finds to Cairo where it was to be inspected by an official from the Antiquities service who selected what they wanted to keep and allowed the excavator to keep the remainder. The excavator's share was later divided by the financiers of the excavation, museums and private individuals. This was to some extent regarded as a win-win situation at the time. The Antiquities Service in Cairo selected first what they wanted to keep without paying anything, and the financiers got quality objects from Egypt. However, there would be one downside and that was the scattering and possible disappearance of objects.⁶²

The Germans with their tradition of language and philology, and their exclusion from Egyptian archaeology, formed the Berlin school of Egyptology, producing grand works on the Egyptian language and grammar.⁶³ Oriental studies in German-speaking central Europe

⁵⁹ Tyldesley, 2014, p. 77

⁶⁰ Tyldesley, 2014, p. 77

⁶¹ Thompson, 2015 (2), p. 17–24

⁶² Thompson, 2015 (2), p. 123

⁶³ Thompson, 2015 (2), p. 164

differed from the French/British counterparts, and there were multiple reasons for this: namely the late entry of imperial Germany into the colonial race, Habsburg Austria's border with the Ottoman Empire, dominance of state-sponsored universities and so on.⁶⁴

1.7.2 Short introduction to Valdemar Schmidt

After graduating in theology in 1859, at the age of 23, Valdemar Schmidt (1836–1925) and his friend Henrik Scharling travelled to Egypt for the first time in 1860. Schmidt would spend the next nine years in Europe studying Egyptian hieroglyphs with Heinrich Brugsch in Berlin, and later Coptic with Emmanuel de Rougé in Paris. In these years he also represented Denmark in several archaeological congresses, eventually returning to Copenhagen in 1869 to serve as General Secretary in the archaeological congress, which awarded him a Professor's title. He earned his PhD in 1873 for his dissertation about the history of Syria from non-biblical sources and started lecturing as privatdocent in Egyptology and Assyriology at the University of Copenhagen the following year. In 1883 he became temporary docent and officially introduced Egyptology as a university discipline in Denmark. In 1892, Schmidt began helping brewer, art collector and philanthropist Carl Jacobsen, in collecting Egyptian artefacts for his Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek – an art and antiquity museum inspired by the Glyptothek commissioned by the Bavarian king Ludwig I in Munich. Schmidt would travel to Egypt almost every year up until the outbreak of the war to buy antiquities for Jacobsen. Schmidt and Jacobsen had already met in Paris in their youth and in 1887 Jacobsen had arranged an expedition to Greece together with several archaeologists and art historians, among them Valdemar Schmidt.⁶⁵

In 1916 he finally got full employment at the University but retired in 1922 at the age of 86. He died at the age of 89 in 1925.

Valdemar Schmidt did not only learn “dead” languages but also several that were very much alive – French, German, English, Italian, Greek⁶⁶, Arabic and Turkish.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Marchand, 2009, p. xxiv

⁶⁵ Jørgensen, Mogens, Valdemar Schmidt og Carl Jacobsen – Videnskabsmanden og mæcenen. Et kapitel i dansk ægyptologis historie i *Tidenes Morgen. På sporet af kulturens kilder i det gamle Mellemøsten. Festskrift til ære for orientalskolen Valdemar Schmidt, grundlæggeren af de mellemøstlige oldtidsstudier ved Københavns Universitet, skaberen af den ægyptiske samling i Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek*. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 2008, p. 167

⁶⁶ Jørgensen, 2008, p. 165

⁶⁷ Schmidt, 1925, p. 45

2.1 The Foundations of Danish Egyptology (1872 – 1882)

Up until the 1870's Egyptology, and oriental studies in general, had progressed in a slow and often quiet pace – and were by no means an obvious career path for anyone to take. In the 1860's, in the Germanies for example, known for their high academic standing and reputation, it was still regarded as a risky and unrewarding field of study and there were rarely any job opportunities guaranteed.⁶⁸ This situation thereafter began to change, and in the wake of the German unification new professors chairs in Egyptology started to pop up and the discipline became more and more specialized at universities.⁶⁹ It was also during these years that the media and the general public increasingly directed their interests to what archaeologists were uncovering on Egyptian soil and to what stories were being communicated in the hieroglyphs along the temple walls and on the grand monuments and structures which had been erected thousands of years ago. There was also an increase in scientific journals which clearly demonstrated the specialisation of the orientalist disciplines.⁷⁰

In Egypt, through the creation of the Antiquities service in 1858, Frenchman Auguste Mariette virtually held a monopoly on excavations, one which he would carefully protect until his death in 1881. That meant that up until 1881 archaeological practises in Egypt were reserved for a select few. The French, thereby, held a strong institutional presence in Egypt and could count several archaeological accomplishments to their nation's record sheet. Consequently, this meant that others, like the Germans, were excluded.

However, Egyptology at European universities, both in the Germanies and in France, was not of an archaeological character at the time, but of a philological one. The first professor's chair in Egyptian archaeology would not be created until 1892 at the University College London, funded by a donation from Amelia Edwards, and its first holder was no other than William Flinders Petrie.⁷¹

In this chapter I will mainly focus on Schmidt's career during the 1870's, the time from which he published his first fully scientific study on the history of Egypt and Assyria until the death of Mariette.

⁶⁸ Marchand, 2009, p. 203

⁶⁹ Reid, 2002, p. 114. Starting with Heinrich Brugsch in Göttingen 1868, Johannes Dümichen in Strasbourg 1872, August Eisenlohr in Heidelberg 1872 and Georg Ebers in Leipzig 1875.

⁷⁰ Marchand, 2009, p. 164

⁷¹ Thompson, 2015(2), p. 57

2.2 Trivial objects and comparative archaeology

After spending most of the 1860's studying in Europe, Berlin and Paris for the most part, Valdemar Schmidt finished his Doctor's dissertation on the ancient history of Syria from non-biblical sources (*Indledning til Syriens Historie i Oldtiden efter Ikke-bibelske Kilder*), which he would defend at the philosophical faculty in the early months of 1873. In the introduction, Schmidt explained his view on how Egyptology and Assyriology must be done:

Assyriologists and Egyptologists endeavour must first and foremost aim to prepare a reliable groundwork for upcoming studies, that is, they must *on the one hand* seek to decide the meaning of the symbols, understand the syntax, language formation, and word meanings, through the interpretation of inscriptions, and *on the other hand* work to arrange the most important of the achieved historic substance after a chronology, in which regard one is not yet further advanced than to preliminary decide the chronology and to give framework of the most significant of the history of the concerned countries.⁷²

The vast amount of effort that went into the study of Egypt and the rest of the ancient world thus immediately becomes clear. Not only would it be necessary to first learn and understand languages and systems of writing which had been dead for millennia, in order to correctly decipher the sources at hand, but as far as chronological orders go it needed to be constructed from a very rudimentary stage of the understanding of the time period. At that phase, secondary literature was still rare and for the most part one had to start from virtually nothing.⁷³ Most of the sources had not yet been used or prepared by others for their studies but were completely new and uncharted territory. Schmidt concluded that it had never been easier to say and write what no one else had yet written.⁷⁴

Although some of the ancient written sources recovered from Egyptian soil could be considered of historical character – meaning their intent was to record a person or an event for future societies – most of the sources were not. They were grave inscriptions celebrating great men and their achievements, but with far too few details to get a clear and full picture of the events they described. This lack of detailed and meaningful descriptions forced Egyptologists to find other ways, according to Schmidt. This meant making use of other sources that were not

⁷² Schmidt, Valdemar, *Indledning til Syriens Historie i Oldtiden efter Ikke-Bibelske Kilder*, København, FR. Wøldikes Forlag, 1872 (1), p. VII

⁷³ Schmidt, 1872 (1), p. VIII

⁷⁴ Schmidt, Valdemar, *Assyriens og Ægyptens Gamle Historie eller Historisk-Geographiske Undersøgelser om det Gamle Testamentes Lande og Folk. Første del*, København, FR Wøldikes forlag, 1877, p. II

meant for historical purposes, like financial transactions, letters, lists and so on, which were used as complementary sources.⁷⁵ Schmidt explained in 1872:

At the first glimpse would certainly most of these seem *meaningless* or without any considerable payoff or content for history, but through further investigation one will find, that almost all of them contain small contributions which – no matter how disappearingly small they are on their own – when they are combined would spread a clear light on many circumstances and time spans in which the real historical sources leaves us in the dark.⁷⁶

As we can see, Schmidt stressed the use of what could be considered small and trivial sources, that which on their own did not seem to be of much value whatsoever, but when used in combination with each other could contain valuable information which could further historical inquiry. The metaphor of spreading light in the dark is also interesting as it makes the point of the ancient past as something unknown which needs to be lightened up, and this cannot be done by the written historical sources on their own. A limited trust of written sources had started to mature in several north-European historians minds in the first half of the 19th century, through text-critical awareness, leading to a division of time into history and prehistory.⁷⁷

The idea, which we have already seen examples of, that every single piece of artefact could contain potential knowledge when compared to others, was something Schmidt would restate over and over in most of his written works throughout the 1870's. For example, in 1876 he had been one of the founding members of the Royal Danish Geographical Society and he wrote the first article in the first issue of the society's journal in 1877 about whether it was plausible the Phoenicians discovered America or not, a problem which had come up at the Americanist congress in Nancy in 1875 which Schmidt had attended. Although that article was admittedly not about Egypt, it still provides a critical insight into the scientific views Schmidt nurtured at the time. He stated that concerning the Phoenicians voyages to America it must admitted that a dead end is reached when:

...one only takes written sources into consideration; luckily, a new way to a solution has opened up in recent years, which is *the comparative antiquarianism* [*sammenlignende*

⁷⁵ Schmidt, Valdemar, *Assyriens og Ægyptens Gamle Historie Efter den Nyere Tids Forskninger. Første del*, Kjøbenhavn, FR Wøldikes forlag, 1872 (2), p. 13–14

⁷⁶ Schmidt, 1872 (2), p. 14

⁷⁷ Risbjerg Eskildsen, Kasper, *The Language of Objects. Christian Jürgensen Thomsen's Science of the Past, Isis*, 103, 2012, pp. 24–53, p. 28

Oldgranskning]. This science is still in its infancy, but one dares to hope, that when it has reached so far in all countries, that all possible attentiveness is used to record those antiquities that are found, and arrange them cunningly, then would it be able to enlighten us about many until now disputed and obscure questions in the history of geography, as well as many other fields.⁷⁸

First, we notice how Schmidt emphasized the importance of collecting and comparing everything. He saw this new science as a solution for the scarcity of written sources and he put much optimism into this relatively new comparative method, thinking on all the possibilities it would generate once all countries got so far and systematically organized their historical relics in the way he envisioned. Once again, he pointed out much being covered in darkness that could be brought to light through comparison. Furthermore, this would not only apply to the history of geography, but also various other fields. He was picturing this comparative method being useful for numerous applications.

In the case of this article, Schmidt is talking about small glass pearls that had been found in several European countries and at the time were being kept in museums. Similar pearls had been found on American soil and thanks to the comparison between all these pearls one could conclude that they were of pre-Roman origin, and since the Phoenicians were prominent in glass manufacturing it was not deemed too unlikely that they were of Phoenician origin. It was, of course, still too early to be sure of anything, but Schmidt was hopeful that those types of questions would be possible to answer one day when all countries had organised and systemised their material remnants of the past so that they could be compared.

In 1879, Schmidt had finished transcribing Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions kept at the Danish Royal collection into Danish in *Østerlandske indskrifter fra Den Kongelige Antiksamling samlede og oversatte af Valdemar Schmidt*. Once again, he reiterated in the introduction that the initial impression of these inscriptions might deem them useless. He wrote:

The eastern inscriptions in the Royal antiquity collection, which we here sought to transcribe into Danish, would probably seem to most to be of fairly modest value; one might perhaps even think they barely even deserve to be made public. This is, however, far from being the case. When scholarship in the course of the last years has been able to spread not so modest clarity on so many points in the old eastern antiquity, then this fortunate

⁷⁸ Schmidt, Valdemar, *Før-columbiske Opdagelser af Amerika, Geografisk Tidsskrift, bind 1, 1877*, pp. 153–157 p. 155

result owes a large part to the circumstance that careful comparisons have been done between inscriptions that are of no other nature than the inscriptions in the antiquity collection, and which cannot be said to be of more content than these.⁷⁹

Here we notice how Schmidt felt the need to defend why he had spent several years transcribing and publishing the hieroglyphs and cuneiform scripts from the Royal collection which some critics might have considered to be a waste of time (I will return to this practise on transcribing and publishing material further ahead). Schmidt pointed out once again that the light that had been shone on so many areas in the ancient past had done so thanks to the comparison of trivial inscriptions which could initially be considered of very low value.

To sum up and conclude what we have gone through this far: Schmidt's methodological approach in the 1870's, when all the above citations were written, was to collect as many sources of various kinds as possible – no matter how small and trivial – and compare those in order to shine as much light as possible on the ancient past which was much covered in darkness. But where did these ideas come from and how did they compare to other ideas of Egyptology at the time?

This care for trivial objects can be traced back to the pioneer of prehistoric archaeology, Christian Jürgensen Thomsen, the Danish archaeologist and museum man, who in the early 19th century had been responsible for the division of prehistory into a three-age system – Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. The term artefact is also linked to Thomsen whose idea it was that artefacts were not just unique pieces by themselves but were also part of a context and could be placed within taxonomical frameworks, and thus created relative chronologies. This became the foundation of prehistoric archaeology as a modern science.⁸⁰

However, these principles were not a part of how Egyptology was being practised internationally at the time, and I would argue that Valdemar Schmidt embraced these ideas at a truly early stage in the history of Egyptology and by doing so we could conclude that he was more influenced by the national intellectual milieu of Denmark than he was of international Egyptologists.

According to Elliott Colla, it would take a long time before Thomsen's principles were incorporated into Egyptology, and that did not occur until the Flinders Petrie years in the second half of 1880's.⁸¹ Donald Reid wrote that this gap between the advances made in prehistoric

⁷⁹ Schmidt, Valdemar, *Østerlandske Indskrifter fra Den Kongelige Antiksamling Samlede og Oversatte af Valdemar Schmidt*, Kjøbenhavn, Hoffensberg & Traps Etabl. 1879, p. 1

⁸⁰ Risbjerg Eskildsen, 2012, p. 24

⁸¹ Colla, 2007, p. 8

archaeology in the middle of the century and the methodological advances being used in Egypt might be explained by “the richness of Egypt’s historic remains”.⁸² Alice Stevenson, in her description of Danish Egyptology, pointed out the early influence on European archaeology by Thomsen and Worsaae in the early to mid-19th century and the gaps over most of the second half of the century until the 1890’s when Carl Jacobsen established Glyptoteket and received help from Valdemar Schmidt with his Egyptian collection.⁸³

As Gaston Maspero took over the Antiquities service after the death of Auguste Mariette in 1881, he loosened the French monopoly on excavations and invited foreign investors and excavators to Egypt. In 1882 the Egyptian Exploration Foundation (EEF) was founded in London with the purpose of, through subscribers, financing these excavations, solving the financial problems Egypt and the Antiquities service had faced in the 1870’s. After only one season with swiss epigrapher Édouard Naville, who himself had valued grand monuments, Flinders Petrie took the role of the main excavator in 1884. Petrie, Jason Thompson wrote, “opened up an entirely new dimension of archaeological awareness with his reverence for small objects that had been routinely discarded without benefit of recording”.⁸⁴

The scientific purpose of Flinders Petrie regarding his focus on small objects has been up for questioning. Alice Stevenson has argued the purpose of his fieldwork and the switch to trivial objects was not necessarily driven by a scientific devotion, but was to provide museums and investors with portable objects that were a lot easier to get out of Egypt than the monumental and unique finds.⁸⁵ Amelia Edwards, the founder of EEF, shared Petrie’s affection of the small things and used her influence to promote a public consciousness for them.⁸⁶ Taking this view, the museum collection was to be regarded as a prominent force in the development of Egyptian archaeology, and more so than scientific convictions.

However, if it was the case that the institutional setup of Egyptology shaped the scientific practise, this would not explain Schmidt’s reverence for small objects at least 12 years before Petrie’s first excavation (and even more since he had been working on his two 1872 books since the 1860’s)? At that time, Schmidt was not involved with any collecting activities.

In the second half of the 19th century, archaeologists celebrated the published essay *Brief outlook on Monuments and Antiquities from the Nordic Past* by Thomsen from 1837 (translated into German the same year and to English in 1848) as a starting point of “scientific

⁸² Reid, 2002, p. 177

⁸³ Stevenson, 2019, p. 113–14

⁸⁴ Thompson, 2015 (2), p. 18

⁸⁵ Stevenson, 2019, p. 33

⁸⁶ Stevenson, 2019, p. 36

archaeology”. In it, Thomsen introduced the so called Three-age System for the first time, in which he divided prehistory into Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age.⁸⁷

Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen argued that Thomsen’s archaeological model was to be understood in relation to the developments in the fields of history and philology. In the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century a critique and challenge against the universal history, often incorporated with a biblical chronology and philosophical systems. Instead historians, under the lead of Leopold von Ranke, began to focus more on texts and archives. The older the texts, the more unreliable they were. Consequently, human history became shorter and the term *prehistory* was conceived to mark a line between real, text-based history, and the unknown darkness that came before. Risbjerg Eskildsen wrote “the conclusion of this critical investigation was that the Northern countries had no history before the arrival of Christianity”.⁸⁸ It was in this context that Thomsen started to organize Scandinavian material remnants of the past and compare them to each other. It was a reaction to the abandonment of universal history and the steps into a more text-focused, documented history.

Thomsen’s student and assistant, J.J.A Worsaae would continue and develop this practise. Worsaae, who had earned a Professor’s title and become a docent at the University of Copenhagen in the 1850’s, had been an important figure in developing archaeology. In 1843 he wrote (translated into English in 1849):

A very important rule is, that all antiquities, even those which appear the most trivial and most common, ought to be preserved. Trifles often afford important information, when seen in connection with a large collection. That they are of common occurrence forms no objection; for historic results can be deduced only from comparison of numerous contemporary specimens.⁸⁹

The similarities between this quote and the writings of Schmidt in the 1870’s are striking. This is perhaps not that strange considering Schmidt attended Worsaae’s archaeological lectures in the mid-1850’s.⁹⁰ Furthermore, and perhaps this being the most decisive moment for Schmidt’s view on Egyptology, in the late 1860’s he would team up with Worsaae and represent Denmark and Danish prehistoric archaeology internationally – first in Paris 1867 during the world fair, and later in 1869 when he became General secretary at the archaeological congress in

⁸⁷ Risbjerg Eskildsen, 2012, p. 24

⁸⁸ Risbjerg Eskildsen, 2012, p. 29

⁸⁹ Worsaae, J.J.A, *The primeval antiquities of Denmark*, I. Shrimpton, Oxford, 1849, p. 156

⁹⁰ Schmidt, 1925, p. 44

Copenhagen – Worsaae served as the president of the congress. It was through this service – and not anything involving Egypt or Assyria – that Schmidt would be rewarded with the Professor’s title in 1869.⁹¹ It was also Worsaae who first indicated Egypt might have a prehistory based on some newly discovered flint tools in 1867.⁹²

Furthermore, when the Norwegian Egyptologist Jens Lieblein referred to Schmidt in 1873, he called him “*Der Dänische Archäolog*”.⁹³

Another example of Schmidt’s involvement in Danish archaeology was an interesting letter he had sent to the antiquarian and collector of the British Museum, Augustus Wollaston Franks. To provide some context, in the mid-19th century, the Danish archaeologists, Japetus Steenstrup and J.J.A. Worsaae, both of whom Schmidt knew and had been involved with in the archaeological congress, had been excavating so called Kitchen middens (Køkkenmødding), pre-historic waste dumps. These kitchen middens became popular within archaeology internationally and when the antiquarian and collector of the British Museum visited Copenhagen in 1874, Schmidt, who had recently left the city to spend some time at his family home in Jutland, sent a regretful letter to Franks apologizing for having just missed his visit. He expressed his hopes that Franks would still be there when he got back to Copenhagen and that they then could take one day to go see a kitchen midden together. It would only take half a day and Schmidt knew the way and means of transport and would be able to act as a guide.⁹⁴ This letter serves as an example of how Schmidt regarded himself as an authority, and perhaps as an ambassador, for Danish archaeology. He would also hold lectures at the university in European prehistory in 1874–1875.⁹⁵

The final evidence, and perhaps also the most direct, of the influence from prehistoric archaeology on Schmidt’s scientific perceptions was his own historical overview of Egyptology. There were two strands on which the discipline originates according to Schmidt – *comparative linguistics* and *prehistoric archaeology* – both of which were founded by Danes, Schmidt pointed out.⁹⁶

Comparative linguistics is based on the notion that all languages are, one way or another, related in family trees, and by comparison it was possible to trace these relations. Much of its

⁹¹ *Svendborg Amtstidende*, October 7, 1869, p.2

⁹² Stevenson, 2019, p. 42

⁹³ Lieblein, Jens, *Die Aegyptischen Denkmäler in St. Petersburg, Helsingfors, Upsala und Copenhagen*, Christiania, 1873, p. 77

⁹⁴ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to A.W Franks, September 30, 1874

⁹⁵ Jørgensen, 2008, p. 173

⁹⁶ Schmidt, 1872, p. 2–4, *Videnskabelig Sprogssammenligning and Forhistorisk arkæologi* in Danish

initial developments are owed to Rasmus Rask. The other one, prehistoric archaeology, had in recent years gained recognition as a science. Schmidt wrote and advocated that through the study of material remnants it had become possible to trace humankind back to times previously unheard of. Prehistoric archaeology had its beginnings in, even though he doesn't mention him by name it is clear from the context who he means – Christian Jürgensen Thomsen.⁹⁷

Risbjerg Eskildsen argued that Thomsen's comparative archaeology was more influenced by the likes of Rasmus Rask, and only later became more associated with the natural sciences like geology.⁹⁸ The fact that Schmidt saw his discipline as a descendant of these two could support this conclusion.

I conclude that Danish Egyptology, through Valdemar Schmidt, was more influenced and shaped by Danish prehistoric archaeology and the context of a scarcity of written sources which had led to the comparative studies of objects, than by international Egyptologists that were either preoccupied with grand monuments or philology at the time. The apparent gap between Thomsen and Flinders Petrie can be filled by Valdemar Schmidt who brought comparative archaeology of many trivial objects into Egyptology in the 1870's, and he had done so without the pressure of rewarding financial backers. But if we have established Schmidt's scientific views on how things ought to be done, that leaves us with the question, what did he do? Or in other words, how did he get hold of his source material?

2.3 Museum studies, publishing and International cooperation

As the first Egyptologist in Denmark Schmidt was, as I have argued, heavily influenced by a Danish scientific and intellectual context of prehistoric archaeology. However, most of his sources were not found in Denmark, which is why we need to ask ourselves how he obtained them. In a footnote of the article on Phoenicians, Schmidt wrote that he could point to a:

...hitherto little appreciated Assyrian cuneiform script, which can be read on a clay tablet in the British Museum, which he [Schmidt] transcribed a few years ago, but which later was published in a facsimile.⁹⁹

This footnote can be seen to suggest that Schmidt had visited international museums and transcribed the material from their collections. However, as the quote might indicate, this clay

⁹⁷ Schmidt, 1872, p. 4

⁹⁸ Risbjerg Eskildsen, 2012, p. 27

⁹⁹ Schmidt, 1877 (2), p. 156

tablet had later been published, which meant that there was no longer a need for anyone to travel to London to transcribe it. The idea of access to sources, and to upheave a peripheral situation for Danish Egyptology, was something which would occupy Schmidt's mind in the second half of the 1870's, and something I will eventually return to. The fact that Schmidt transcribed this clay tablet, which he claimed had not been appreciated by anyone, before it was even published shows that he actually took notice of what others perhaps might initially have considered trivial.

Schmidt had to travel to various museums in Europe to be able to carry out research. In the 1877 foreword to his 1872 book on Assyria and Egypt, Schmidt commented that his initial plan had been to add corrections to the first volume of the book in his second volume. Yet, to actually do that had shown to be:

...impossible *now* to produce *here*, with the available means, given that it would claim to be absolute, and the author has because of this preferred to, the next time he goes to London and Paris, to compose a writing on its own about recent times most important discoveries in the ancient eastern history, and publish it immediately when he gets home. A supplement to this writing would then be able to contain corrections and add-ons for current work.¹⁰⁰

Schmidt considered it impossible to give full and complete corrections to his Assyrian and Egyptian history from Copenhagen (where he wrote this foreword). The sources were located in Paris and London and he considered it preferable and even necessary to travel there and survey them before he could publish any corrections. This goes on to demonstrate Denmark's peripheral limitations to conduct Egyptological research in the 1870's. It also shows his dedication to make sure his work was corrected and up to date.

The geographic boundaries could be upheaved. In 1877, he wrote to the Royal Ministry of Church and Education¹⁰¹ applying for a grant so he could publish his transcriptions of the Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions housed in the Royal collection of Copenhagen. He put forward his argument for this grant:

At the first international oriental congress in London it was unanimously acknowledged that – under the oriental scholarships present standpoint and progress is it for each and everyone's for their immediate progress and success a necessary condition, that all old

¹⁰⁰ Schmidt, 1877, p. V–VI

¹⁰¹ Kongelige Ministerium for Kirke- og undervisningsvaesendet.

eastern inscriptions and texts, which are to be found in Europe's collections, as soon as possible get published in facsimile with associated descriptions and enlightening remarks; above all this applies to the oldest of these inscriptions, the Egyptian and the Assyrian...¹⁰²

First off, we must draw our attention to how Schmidt referred to the International Oriental Congress – although he called it the first, it was really the second. The first one was held in Paris in 1873 and the second in London in 1874. These international congresses were a new phase in the international cooperation in Egyptology, as well as other orientalist disciplines, and Schmidt would partake in them for the most part of his life.¹⁰³

Secondly, Schmidt's argument noted that eastern inscriptions were spread all over Europe and highlighted how important it was for them to get published and spread together with useful commentaries. Schmidt further pointed out that that should be done as soon as possible for the progress of scholarship, hinting that the pace of scholarly progress might otherwise be impeded.

As historian Michael Riordan had shown, editing and publishing primary records was a part of the historical discipline and its professionalisation process of the 18th and 19th century. This was done, not only for the purpose of spreading knowledge, but also to preserve the records for future generations. However, at the end of the 19th century, the demand for a narrative, backed up by annotations, reduced record publishing to an auxiliary practise.¹⁰⁴ Lorraine Daston describes how “big science” projects in the end of the 19th century employed substantial resources and personnel to collect and organize material and create archives which could be used for future research. In the case of Daston's study, this involved Latin epigraphs and data of historical star positions. These big, mostly state funded, projects became important for prestige by states like Prussia and France who felt they were losing out against Great Britain in imperial competition.¹⁰⁵ Publishing also made it easier to fact check quotes and claims, making historical practice more transparent, as noted by Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen.¹⁰⁶

In this case, however, it wasn't a grand project subsidised by a single state, the orientalist had in mind, but several smaller projects where learned individuals backed by funding from their states published what were in their collections. What would set Egyptology apart from

¹⁰² Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Det Kongelige Ministerium for Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsendet, March 31, 1877

¹⁰³ Reid, 2002, p. 130–134.

¹⁰⁴ Riordan, Michael, Materials for History? Publishing Records as a Historical Practise in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England, *History of Humanities*, 2(1), 2017, pp. 51–77, p. 73–74

¹⁰⁵ Daston, Lorraine, The Immortal archive: Nineteenth-Century Science Imagines the Future. In Daston, Lorraine (eds.), *Science in the Archives. Pasts, Presents, Futures*, The university of Chicago press, 2017, pp. 159–182 p. 161

¹⁰⁶ Risbjerg Eskildsen, 2008, p. 430

other forms of archival history was the expertise needed to carry out the task. Although, more and more were acquiring the skills needed for these tasks, the quantity would never be close to those speaking classic or vernacular languages. Due to Schmidt's argument that the Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions were the most important:

...the congress approved to address specialists in the different countries and request them to work towards the publications of inscriptions like this and thereby be of use for scholarship.¹⁰⁷

The congress had agreed upon the necessity that the operation was to be conducted by specialists in all countries – and in the 1870's Denmark there were very few people who could do it. For this reason, it had taken longer than Schmidt expected – he had previously received funding from the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters.¹⁰⁸

Even though the collecting and preservation associated with publishing played a large part for Schmidt, there were more practical concerns regarding geography at play, if we keep Schmidt's scientific methodology of comparing everything in mind as we go through these next passages. In his 1877 introduction to his book about Egypt and Assyria he wrote:

...The works are few, even though their numbers increase year after year, after it becomes more and more possible – thanks to the many renditions of inscriptions, which are administrated by the governments of Europe's cultural countries – to study the old eastern records in other locations than in London and Paris, than in Cairo and the rest of Egypt, than in Leiden, Turin and Berlin.¹⁰⁹

The works he was referring to were the scholarly writings on the ancient east, which had been increasing in numbers parallel to the published facsimiles of the inscriptions being held in the collections. It was thanks to the circulation of primary sources that it had become more achievable to include Egypt and other ancient civilizations in historic writings. This was being funded by the European governments and, as highlighted earlier, Schmidt had been trying at that point to get the Danish government more involved in his publishing practise. However,

¹⁰⁷ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Det Kongelige Ministerium for Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsendet, March 31, 1877

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Det Kongelige Ministerium for Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsendet, March 31, 1877

¹⁰⁹ Schmidt, 1877, p. II

what was most interesting in that statement was the geographical advantages of certain locations. The materials of study were confined to Egypt and a few European cities that had accumulated noteworthy collections of Egyptian artefacts. Nevertheless, publishing allowed historical sources and records to circulate and reach more peripheral geographical sites.

Schmidt's vision for the future of Egyptology was that it one day would be possible to study and practise it in more than a few selected places. That through the publishing of these sources one would be able to sit in other geographic locations and still have access to the collections in London, Paris and so on. Here we can clearly observe how Schmidt considered Egyptology as a collective, international enterprise already in the early 1870's. Everyone had to contribute to make sure the materials being unearthed in Egypt were not being reburied again in the dark parts of a private collection. Schmidt continued with the same line of reasoning in his publication of the Royal collection in 1879:

The old memorials with inscriptions which have been discovered in the Orient, are spread over almost the entire world; but since it can't be expected of everyone to travel around and take notes of the inscriptions, which he would have use for in his studies, all worshipers of these studies are already in agreement that nothing would serve scholarship more than trustworthy editions of all the oriental inscriptions, which are spread around in public and private collections.¹¹⁰

Once again Schmidt explained to his readers the necessity of publishing transcriptions for the simple reason that it would not be possible for single individuals to travel around and take notes themselves. Here, one could also observe the concept of an international scholarly community in Schmidt's mind when he talked about scholarship as it was something without borders and something that its practitioners would serve by doing their part.

The purpose of publishing historical records was not merely for spreading the knowledge, but also for preservation of this records. However, as far as the findings of this thesis, Schmidt never seemed to mention preservation at this point – his main ambition and purpose of transcribing and publishing at that time seemed to be the elimination of limitations of Egyptology in peripheral geographic locations. One might therefore wonder where the geographic centre of Egyptology was according to Schmidt.

The answer to that questions is perhaps not as obvious as one might think. Elliott Colla argued “despite the Eurocentric focus that still predominates in Egyptology's autobiography, it is

¹¹⁰ Schmidt, 1879, p. 1

difficult to imagine that the discipline's center of gravity has ever been securely located in Europe. Indeed, the actual work of Egyptology has never strayed far from the Egyptian countryside".¹¹¹ This may perhaps be true in many cases but regarding a Danish Egyptologist like Schmidt, I would argue, Egypt actually wasn't the centre of the disciplines gravity, at least not by this time, but one of several centres. In 1881, after the death of Auguste Mariette, the director of the Antiquities Service in Cairo, the weekly magazine *Illustreret Tidende* published an obituary by Schmidt in which he wrote:

It is not too many years ago that everybody who seriously wanted to study the old Egyptian language would get far more in return by studying the great Egyptian antiquity collections in Europe, in London, Paris, Leiden, Turin, Florence, Berlin, than by travelling to Egypt itself. Certainly, there were not so few hieroglyphic inscriptions to study; but they were usually not very fruitful for the development of scholarship as the inscriptions that were transferred to Europe.¹¹²

Although Schmidt's point was that things had then changed for the better and through the work of Mariette Cairo had a terrific museum suitable for scholarly studies, the importance he attached to the European museums is interesting. Just as he pointed out previously, it was London, Paris, Leiden, Berlin, and Turin – and in this case, Florence – which he considered central points for Egyptological studies. Moreover, as previously mentioned, when Schmidt wanted to publish corrections for his book, he wrote that it would be impossible to do so before he had gone to Paris and London to revise his sources, and to examine new ones. As a further illustration of the importance of the European collections for Schmidt's practise of Egyptology one could turn to a notification from a newspaper in February 1882 to read "Professor, PhD, Valdemar Schmidt once again intends to, at the end of this month, leave for Paris to undertake final studies in local collections for his great Egyptological work".¹¹³ Here it can be observed how Schmidt left Denmark to undertake the final work on his great book about Egypt. He did not go to Cairo; he went to Paris. Based on this, I would argue that Egypt as a geographic place was not centre for Valdemar Schmidt in the 1870's when it came to his Egyptological practise.

Publishing primary material was expensive and required funding. As indicated, Schmidt applied for state funding for the publication of Egyptian and Assyrian sources in the royal

¹¹¹ Colla, 2007, p. 17

¹¹² Schmidt, Valdemar, Auguste Mariette, *Illustreret Tidende*, February 6, 1881, nr 1115, 22, p. 1

¹¹³ *Ribe Stifts-Tidende*, February 17, 1882, p. 3

collection. He did get economic support. In December 1879, the Danish ministry of culture awarded him 1000 kronor yearly which he had deserved for his “published extensive works in Egyptological direction and concerning the history of Assyria”.¹¹⁴ But it doesn’t seem like he got support for the publishing of all his works. In the same letter to the ministry he wrote that after he was done with his work on Egyptian and Assyrian history he had conducted work and written a piece on the prophetic scriptures of the Old Testament, but because there would be a large amount of, not only Hebrew, but also Arabic and Syrian words, which would make it all more expensive.¹¹⁵ There is no mention of this work anywhere else in the sources and it is not part of Schmidt’s bibliography, indicating he might not have gotten the means to get it published.

Another newspaper wrote that Schmidt “from his own private fortune has used so much to the publishing of his great works in Egyptological direction and about the history of Assyria, that this seems to burden him”.¹¹⁶ The conclusion to be drawn here, was that there certainly was not any financial gain in Schmidt’s line of work in the 1870’s, on the contrary, even though he eventually got some financial backing, he still had to put a lot of his own capital into his work.

Although Schmidt obviously was not the only one who saw great value in publishing primary sources, he did stress the importance in most of his writings in the 1870’s, which suggests that he considered it an important part of how Egyptology was to be done. As I have argued this far, this was prompted by his scientific views of using as many fragmentary sources as possible to construct an as full representation of the past as possible.

The artefacts found on Danish soil, remained in Denmark. Most of the artefacts needed for his research on Egypt were not to be found in Denmark – they were not even found in Egypt – but were spread over “almost the entire world” as he pointed out.¹¹⁷ And since it was far easier to spread facsimiles than to travel to each location, it became the most logical conclusion. Moreover, just as he expected other scholars and governments to fund and carry out this work, so too did he apply for government grants and dug into the Royal collections of Egyptian inscriptions.

¹¹⁴ *Svendborgs Avis. Sydfyns Tidende*, December 29, 1879, p. 2

¹¹⁵ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Det Kongelige Ministerium for Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsenet, March 31, 1877

¹¹⁶ *Vestjylland eller Herning Folkeblad*, January 8, 1880, p. 2

¹¹⁷ Schmidt, 1879, p. 1

2.4 The universal historian

As previously mentioned, the 1870's were times of rapid specialization within oriental studies. The number of new books written, and the discoveries made each year made it harder and harder for single individuals to devote their time and energy to more than one field. However, in this section I will argue that Schmidt did not go through this process of specialization, but instead had a greater universal interest regarding history and was knowledgeable and appreciated in several different fields of inquiry.

After he earned his doctor's degree in 1873, several Danish newspapers ran an article introducing Schmidt to the Danish people. Firstly, he was described as a well-travelled person who was well respected abroad. The article elaborated "he has travelled around in a large part of Europe and is a personal friend with almost all of the most prominent scholars".¹¹⁸ Furthermore, he had represented Denmark in both the world fair in 1867, which earned him a knighthood in Dannebrogorden, and the archaeological congress in Copenhagen in 1869, which earned him the title of Professor. The article ends with:

Hopefully he will one day be employed by the university, since his discipline every day wins more and more ground, and studies thereof become very important in many ways; for example in regards of explaining many things in holy scripture.¹¹⁹

The author of the article clearly saw potential in Schmidt's future work and hoped for the introduction of his discipline into the university curriculum. The quoted article further noted that Schmidt's discipline could be of importance for many different purposes, not least interpreting the bible, which had been his purpose with his dissertation. A lot seemed to have been expected from him in terms of the range of topics he could shed light on.

Just as Schmidt's focus on comparing trivial objects could be attributed to the influence of prehistoric archaeology, so too could his interest in universal history. Not only did time become shorter as historians like Ranke turned to the archives and text-based sources, the geographic scope also became narrower. The universal history of the enlightenment, which focused on the history of the entire humankind throughout the ages, came under questioning.¹²⁰ Thomsen's three-age model, however, supposed a diffusionist development where all cultures would go

¹¹⁸ *Bornholms Tidende*, February, 20, 1873, p. 1

¹¹⁹ *Bornholms Tidende*, February, 20, 1873, p. 1

¹²⁰ Risbjerg Eskildsen, 2012, p. 28

through the stages as they came in contact with each other.¹²¹ It is this return to a universal history which can be noted in Schmidt's scientific views and his writings.

As an example of his wide geographic interest, in March 1874, he held a lecture at the Royal Society for Ancient Nordic Manuscripts, founded in 1825 by Rasmus Rask and others, about "The transfer from prehistory to history in southern Europe and the countries by the coasts in eastern part of the Mediterranean", where he compared the use of bronze and iron in different cultures, bronze belonging to prehistoric times and iron to historic.¹²²

Several Egyptologists and historians have pointed out the scepticism towards Egyptology from theologians and classic scholars, and sometimes rivalries. In Germany, for example, theology was losing students and prestige rapidly and classicists, although still much respected, felt they were losing out as well. Orientalist scholarship offered more freedom and opportunity to stand out. However, as Suzanne Marchand noted, this institutional historiography did not present a complete picture as "There were many friendships and working relationships across the faculties, and one has only to examine the footnotes of some of the works of this era to see a great deal of cross-reading going on".¹²³ This leaves us wondering about Schmidt's relationship to theology and classic scholarship. In his dissertation about Syria he wrote:

Eastern sources alone would however not be enough for studies on ancient Syrian history. The country and its inhabitants did not only come in contact with the eastern, but already from a fairly early age with western people, of which the Greeks and later the Romans came to greatly influence the country and its inhabitants' fate. [...] In other words, it would be necessary to go through the old Greek and Roman authors to collect from them all accounts of the classic peoples relation to Syria and of events which influenced Syria and its peoples history.¹²⁴

The classical authors could, and should, still be consulted as they potentially provided information which could be of use. Schmidt deemed it necessary to use them, and almost wrong to neglect them. However, they were not to be considered authorities taken at face value but had to be put up for comparison together with the rest of the sources available. The Greek authors contained narratives which the oriental sources lacked, and it was "a necessity to

¹²¹ Risbjerg Eskildsen, 2012, p. 39

¹²² *Den til Forsendelse med de Kongelige Brevposter privilegerede Berlingske Politiske og Avertissementstidende*, March 28, 1874, p. 9

¹²³ Marchand, 2009, p. 162

¹²⁴ Schmidt, 1872, p. IX

carefully test these accounts historical value”.¹²⁵ As one can deduce, this fell right into the line of Schmidt’s methodological inclinations – all sources needed to be compared and tested before being discarded.

Then what about the Bible and the Old Testament? David Gange has argued that the 1870’s were times of polarisation. As biblical criticisms were on the rise, so too was biblical orthodoxy. Egyptian archaeology could serve the purpose of defending the Bible against naturalism to a satisfactory extent. Archaeology became the science used to prove many of the biblical stories or fill in the missing gaps of the bible.¹²⁶ Alice Stevenson pointed out it was the Antiquity of man and the spread of civilization that was being discussed in relation to Egypt in 1870’s Great Britain.¹²⁷

Schmidt regarded the Old Testament as one of the most important historical sources preserved for historians, and it was through years of studying the Old Testament that he was led to his historic-geographic studies. In his dissertation, he wrote “But no matter how great value the books of the Old Testament have for the historian, so must one often enough wish to have other trustworthy sources at hand”.¹²⁸ The purpose of the Old Testament was to describe the religious history of Israel, not the political, he argued.

We are able to see a shift in Schmidt’s view regarding the trustworthiness of the Old Testament books over the course of a few years in the 1870’s. In his dissertation of 1872 he wrote that because of the stories of the Old Testament we were able to, with a high level of certainty, follow the Israeli people back to a thousand years before the time of Alexander the great.¹²⁹ In 1877 he did not consider the narrative that certain anymore as a “corrosive critique tried to undermine their value [the books of the old testament] so much, that one would not be able to trust too much of this once remarkable range of sources”.¹³⁰ David Gange has shown how British Egyptologists protested the new timescale regarding the age of the earth proposed by geologists.¹³¹ Valdemar Schmidt never seems to have had a problem with neither the new perceived age of the earth nor the antiquity of man. Already in 1872 he wrote that it did not take long before the new science of prehistoric archaeology could trace the human race back to

¹²⁵ Schmidt, 1872, p. IX

¹²⁶ Gange, 2013, p. 126

¹²⁷ Stevenson, 2019, p. 42

¹²⁸ Schmidt, 1872, p. V–VI

¹²⁹ Schmidt, 1872, p. V

¹³⁰ Schmidt, 1877, p. I–II

¹³¹ Gange, 2013, p. 29

times which previously had been hard to conceive but which two other sciences had helped spread light on, namely geology and palaeontology.¹³²

To sum up, Egyptology in Denmark was from the start closely associated with theology and biblical studies. Schmidt had a degree in theology, it was through the study of the old testament he got interested in Egyptology and he kept writing on the topic (for example the previously mentioned book about the Old Testament prophets which never got published). However, the conflict between the biblical narrative and antiquity of man taking place in England was not embodied within him. His interest was not to save the bible from any threats posed by the new sciences of the century. He embraced them as ways to reach knowledge and illuminate much of the biblical past.

2.5 Conclusion

Egyptology in the second half of the 19th century could generally be said to be composed of a philological and an archaeological approach. I have shown that Danish Egyptology from the start, through the agency of Valdemar Schmidt, could be considered to be closely related to prehistoric archaeology and the principles it embraced. Schmidt had in the years leading up to his doctoral dissertation been involved in Danish archaeology and was awarded the Professors title through his contribution as a General secretary at the international archaeology congress in Copenhagen 1869, and he would continue to lecture on prehistoric archaeology throughout the decade.

Furthermore, I have shown that Schmidt was remarkably early in his attention to small and trivial objects. It is generally understood that this shift first took place in the mid-1880's when Petrie and the British had taken over the excavations in Egypt, and that there had been a gap between the prehistoric archaeology from mid-century up until this time. Valdemar Schmidt filled this gap as he immediately took this position and regarded Thomsen as a forefather to Egyptology.

In the case of Valdemar Schmidt, it was not the practise that shaped his scholarly views, but his scholarly views were formed by the national, scientific milieu of Denmark, which shaped his practise of the discipline. These views ordained him to use as many sources as possible, and the absolute majority of the sources for Egyptology were found outside Denmark, this meant two significant parts of his practise was to travel to museums and publish the sources available to him with the expectation that others would do the same. The circulation of published sources

¹³² Schmidt, 1872, p. 4

would break the geographic isolation in the practise of Egyptology. It was Schmidt's hope that the circulation of facsimiles and transcribed inscriptions would break the geographical limitations of Egyptology. He hoped that one day it would not be necessary for everyone who wanted to study the Egyptian inscriptions to go to Leiden or Paris to study their collections, but that these would be available at a library in Copenhagen for example.

I have also shown how Schmidt did not specialize on Egypt but wrote and taught a universal history on how different cultures interacted and affected one another. This too is closely related to the ideas of prehistoric archaeology where all cultures through contact with one another go through certain stages in their development. Schmidt was a very eclectic scholar and doesn't seem to have had an aggravation against other disciplines like theology and classic studies but studied both the Bible and the Greek texts to make his understanding of the ancient world as complete as possible.

3.1 The Golden Age (1882 – 1914)

The 1880's saw vast changes within Egyptology, first and foremost, through the increasing British influence after the British occupation in 1882. As the director-General of the antiquities service in Cairo, Auguste Mariette, died in 1881 his successor, Gaston Maspero, recognized the economic need to open up the excavation for outside financiers and archaeologists, and solely focus on the preservation – Mariette had tried to do both to an economic breaking point. On 27 March 1882 the Egyptian Exploration Fund was established and sent their first excavator, Édouard Naville, who would soon enough be replaced by William Flinders Petrie in 1884. As previously mentioned, this led to a shift of focus from grand monuments to small objects, a principle endorsed by Valdemar Schmidt at least a decade before.

As for Schmidt's professional life, two things would change during this period. He would first, after 9 years of teaching Egyptian and Assyrian as a private docent at the university, become employed as a temporary docent in 1883 – a position he would hold for 33 years until he got full employment in 1916. Secondly, in the early 1890's he would team up with brewer and patron Carl Jacobsen and assist him in creating a collection of Egyptian art and artefacts that were to be displayed at Glyptoteket, the Danish art museum.

3.2 The manifold educator

The sources from the 1880's are unfortunately scarce, as far as first-hand information goes, given that Schmidt wrote no books during this time and the preserved letters are few. We do, however have some letters showing how he lent his expertise to different projects and that he could act as an adviser, just as we saw the author of the newspaper article hope and expect for in the previous chapter.

In 1888, the numismatic, archaeologist and director of the coin cabinet and antiquities collection at the Royal museum, Ludwig Müller wrote that he no longer had the time to wait for notes on some Babylonian inscriptions, which he had been promised by Schmidt.¹³³ In another letter, Müller had asked Schmidt to come up to the coin cabinet because he had found the name of a new Egyptian god which he himself knew nothing about.¹³⁴ This letter was undated, however the date had to be before 1891 as Müller died that year. So here we have two examples of how Schmidt was sought out for his help and advice (due to his wide range of knowledge).

¹³³ Letter from Ludwig Müller to Valdemar Schmidt, April 22, 1888

¹³⁴ Letter from Ludwig Müller to Valdemar Schmidt, undated

In 1885, the Danish historian Camillus Nyrop wrote: “You once promised me some text to some Phoenician pictures. I would be thankful to know when I dare to expect these necessary writings for the pictures...”¹³⁵ So even though the sources are few we can conclude Schmidt was sought out by his colleagues and friends asking him for his expertise on a wide range of topics regarding the ancient world.

This appreciation of his knowledge would continue even after the turn of the century. For example, in 1901 a stele with 282 ancient laws inscribed in Akkadian cuneiform was found during an excavation in Susa. The following years would see several published translations and commentaries on the laws commonly known as the laws of Hammurabi. In early 1905, the young student Wilhelm Marstrand wrote and thanked Schmidt for his information about Hammurabi and remarked “I am looking very much forward to see your translation of Hammurabi’s laws”.¹³⁶ There are no indications that Schmidt actually did a translation of Hammurabi’s laws on his own though. Nevertheless, these individuals were all tied to the University or the Danish intellectual life, in one way or another, and sought out Schmidt for advice on a variety of topics regarding the ancient world, showing how his knowledge was useful over the strict discipline lines.

Schmidt would also keep entertaining the Danish public with lectures on a vast array of topics. Just to name a few; in December 1887 he held a lecture at the Geographic society about the annunciation of the shepherds’ (Juleevangeliet in Danish – the birth of Jesus as described in Luke 2) significance for geographic history.¹³⁷ In March 1889, he held a lecture at the Geographic society about *the stage for older Jewish history in the light of recent geographic research* mainly focusing on the Mesopotamian city of Ur, where the Jewish patriarch Abraham originated from.¹³⁸ From these two lectures we can see how he still considered biblical history an interesting and important subject of study. In 1883, he spoke at the geographic society about the different races in north and middle Africa.¹³⁹ In 1888, he spoke about his visit to Athens the year before and brought hundreds of photos with him to show.¹⁴⁰ In another lecture he gave in 1883, he spoke about the recent Danish scientific expeditions to Greenland.¹⁴¹ What all the

¹³⁵ Letter from Camillus Nyrop to Valdemar Schmidt, August 5, 1885

¹³⁶ Letter from Wilhelm Marstrand to Valdemar Schmidt, January 17, 1905

¹³⁷ *Dagblad (København)*, December 11, 1887

¹³⁸ *Skive Folkeblad*, March 3, 1889 p. 1

¹³⁹ *Fyens Stiftstidende*, November 30, 1883, p. 1

¹⁴⁰ *Morgenbladet (København)*, May 6, 1888, p. 2

¹⁴¹ *Lolland-Falsters Folketidende*, August 28, 1883, p. 1

above examples suggest is that Schmidt's scholarly interests had not narrowed down with time. To the contrary, he kept a wide and diverse historical interest, ranging over several disciplines.

There are a few comments on his university work around this time. In a letter to his student, Henry Madsen, he complained: "I have so many hours of exams every day, that I won't be able to go to Ny Carlsberg the coming days".¹⁴² In a letter to his other student, H.O. Lange, he complained he did not have enough time to buy a vase the last time he was in Egypt "I now have two months exams! First. But I long for Egypt's hotpots, less for mosquitos and vermin".¹⁴³ Although it is not enough to draw any decisive conclusions, these remarks at least hint that the work at the university was not his preferred task, and that he favoured spending time in Egypt or at Glyptoteket.

Schmidt seems to have been appreciated not only in Copenhagen's scientific milieus but also by the working class. In the beginning of December 1892, he was invited by the society for education of workers (Foreningen til undervisning for arbejdere) and, with free entrance for all, he would speak about his travel memories from Egypt. Two days after the meeting, it was reported that it had been "so well visited, that the lecture hall at 4 o'clock was filled to maximum and many had to leave without being able to come in".¹⁴⁴ He seems to have been able to excite people with his lecturing. The following section is a study of a special lecture that took place in November 1895.

3.2.1 Unwrapping the mummy

The public unrolling of Egyptian mummies had become quite a common phenomenon in France and Great Britain in the middle of the 19th century. In a mixture of entertainment and scientific education, large crowds would gather to be charmed by charismatic performers unwrapping and dissecting mummies. In Victorian England, the most famous of these mummy unwrappings was performed by Thomas Pettigrew between 1833 and 1851, earning him the nickname Thomas 'Mummy' Pettigrew.¹⁴⁵

The scholarly discussions among archaeologists and historians of science surrounding these mummy unrollings, involves the extent to which they were performed for entertainment and

¹⁴² Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, June 11, 1903

¹⁴³ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, December 7, 1899

¹⁴⁴ Horsens arbejderblad, December 6, 1892, p. 3

¹⁴⁵ Moshenska, Gabriel, Thomas "Mummy" Pettigrew and the Study of Egypt in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain, in *Histories of Egyptology. Interdisciplinary Measures*. William Carruthers (eds.), Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York, 2015, pp. 201–214, p. 206

socializing purposes and the extent to which they could be regarded as a scientific practise – or in other words, whether they were to be considered manifestations of Egyptomania or Egyptology.

Gabriel Moshenska has studied Thomas Pettigrew and the mummy unwrappings in Great Britain in the middle of the 19th century and how it was to be understood within the cultural and scientific context of the time. He has shown that there are several ways the unwrapping could be performed to be considered more scientific, for example the choice of venue or the presence of professional Egyptologists in the room.¹⁴⁶ Science historian Kathleen Sheppard studied the unwrapping of “the two brothers” conducted by Margaret Murray at the University of Manchester in 1908, several decades after Pettigrew. Sheppard argued that Murray’s “work should be viewed culturally as poised between spectacle and science, drawing morbid public interest while also producing ground-breaking scientific work that continues to this day.”¹⁴⁷

A more critical approach was taken by Christina Riggs who pointed out that the popularity of these mummy unwrappings reached its peak at the turn of the century, around the same time the belief in racial and sexual characteristics and typologies were very widespread. Through a more careful reading of these mummy unwrappings and dissections, it was evidential that what seemed to be objective and scientific knowledge were subjective comments on skin colour, nose sizes, female breast sizes and so on belittling and ‘othering’ the ancient Egyptians.¹⁴⁸

In 1895, Schmidt would unroll what, as far as what can be read from the sources, his first mummy at the yearly meeting of the Geographic society and, according to the newspaper reports, the hall was “of course filled to the last by a plentiful, interested audience” indicating there was a great curiosity for Schmidt’s work in the 1890’s Copenhagen.¹⁴⁹ In the following section I will compare Schmidt’s performance with those in Great Britain (which are the only previous studies of mummy unrollings I have been able to find). The only contemporary sources I have been able to find on how this evening unfolded are a few newspaper articles. This seems to have been an issue for Sheppard as well in her study of Margaret Murray’s unwrapping.¹⁵⁰ Although I want to be careful not to draw any far-reaching conclusions, there is still much information to be learned from these articles that could contribute to the understanding of the culture behind these kinds of events.

¹⁴⁶ Moshenska, 2014, p. 477

¹⁴⁷ Sheppard, Kathleen L. *Between Spectacle and Science: Margaret Murray and the Tomb of the Two Brothers*, *Science in context*, 25(4), pp 525–549, 2012, doi:10.1017/S0269889712000221, p. 525

¹⁴⁸ Riggs, Christina, *Egypt. Lost civilizations*, Reaktion Books Ltd, 2017, p. 128–129

¹⁴⁹ *Nationaltidende*, November 6, 1895

¹⁵⁰ Sheppard, 2012, p. 537

The usual format for these occasions in the middle of the 19th century was to first start off with a lecture on Egyptian history and religion followed by the performance which was accompanied by commentary. The mummies were usually laying on a table and during the performances the textiles were gradually being removed and fragments of the wrappings together with other artefacts found on the mummy, like amulets, were passed around in the audience to touch and smell, making them a part of the show.¹⁵¹

In Schmidt's case, the event was hosted by the Geographic society and he started off with a lecture, not about Egyptian history and religion, but on how humans, more than anything else, had shaped the geography of the earth. He gave several examples of these changes before concluding that:

As man plays a prominent role in Geography, it is – already because of that – natural, that one within Geography especially puts weight on getting to know the different nations.¹⁵²

After this he shifted to Egypt and the mummification process. It seems like he adapted the lecture to the circumstantial setting. Since it was being hosted by the Geographic society the lecture focused on geography and the impact of humans and then transferred into the topic which probably was the reason most people had come. The reason I dare to claim this is that the newspapers in the days before the event announced that an Egyptian mummy would be shown and explained by Schmidt.¹⁵³

The newspaper reported that Schmidt stood in the middle of the room with a mummy laying on a table. A rich collection of photographs covered the walls all around the room “serving as a further illustration for the Professor's excellent lecture”. Pictures on the walls like this had, according to Moshenska, been used in Pettigrew's shows as well, serving as illustrations for the lectures and atmospheric backdrops.¹⁵⁴ In comparison to what was common in Pettigrew's time, Schmidt used photographs. Unfortunately, it did not go into further detail of what these photographs portrayed.

After the transfer from geography Schmidt started to talk about the ancient Egyptians and different periods in their history, especially in relation to “mummy coffins and mummification”. He taught the audience how it was possible to date mummies through different methods and

¹⁵¹ Moshenska, Gabriel, Unrolling Egyptian mummies in nineteenth-century Britain, *British Journal for the History of Science*. Vol. 47 (3), Sep2014, pp. 451–477, p. 454

¹⁵² Nationaltidende, November 6, 1895, p. 2

¹⁵³ *Sjællands-Posten (Ringsted)*, November 1, 1895, p. 1

¹⁵⁴ Moshenska, 2014, p. 476

concluded that the mummy laying right before their eyes was, based on the clothing, 2100 years old. The mummy itself had been bought by Schmidt at a museum close to Cairo for 125 Francs, the newspaper reported, and the plan was that after the event it would be turned over to the ethnographic museum in Copenhagen.¹⁵⁵

At the end of the unrolling the crowd gathered around the mummy “eager to get a fragment of the cloth covering the mummy”.¹⁵⁶ This had been a common ritual in these mummy unwrappings. The audience were often allowed to keep pieces of the mummies. Moshenska has argued this could be interpreted as a way to ease potential disappointment.¹⁵⁷ However, in this case there seems to have been none of that. How are we to understand Schmidt’s unwrapping in the spectra between Egyptomania and Egyptology?

Elliott Colla has argued that Egyptologists tried to purify Egyptology from the contamination of Egyptomania and make it scientific distancing themselves from the cultural dissemination of Egyptian imagery.¹⁵⁸ In response to this has Kathleen Sheppard argued, although she points out it may be true in many cases, some Egyptologists like Margaret Murray did not want to purify Egyptology as much as they wanted to correct the errors of popular conceptions of Egypt. Valdemar Schmidt seems to have been considered an entertainer and as we have already seen people flocked to see his lectures on various topics, and the unwrapping of a mummy was no exception. He engaged in much of the popular cultural fantasies of Egypt. For example, in a lecture a few years later he had brought home dresses from Egypt and had some women dress up as Egyptian princesses in one of his lectures.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, since the 1870’s Schmidt had lectured on burial rites in ancient times and for over a decade he had worked on his book about Egyptian burials. This, in combination with his Professors title and position at the university, contributed to the scientific aspects of the event.

Moshenska concluded it was “the constitution of the audience more than any other factor that appears to have inscribed them [mummy unrollings] as scientific or otherwise”.¹⁶⁰ Pettigrew reserved the front seats in some of his events for the social elite, and the scholarly elite in others. The value of the event was enhanced in either case, as a form of entertainment in the first instance and more scientifically relevant in the other.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ Moshenska, 2014, p. 473

¹⁵⁶ Nationaltidende, November 6, 1895, p. 2

¹⁵⁷ Moshenska, 2014, p. 473

¹⁵⁸ Colla, 2007, p. 179

¹⁵⁹ Ringsted Folketidende, September 25, 1899, p. 2

¹⁶⁰ Moshenska, 2014, p. 477

¹⁶¹ Moshenska, 2014, p. 477

Schmidt's unwrapping was held at the Geographic society which of course involved several scholarly and scientific personas, as well as laymen. But in this case, what mostly attributed to this event being recognized as scientific was neither the audience nor the venue, I would argue, but rather the lecturer, or as the newspaper referred to him throughout the article – *The Professor*. There was at this time no one in Denmark, and probably very few in the world, that were more knowledgeable about ancient Egyptian burial rites, than Valdemar Schmidt. It had been the main concern of his studies for a decade.

Regarding the racist and sexist discourse pointed out by Riggs, it did not seem to have been a crucial part of Schmidt's lecture, and although I have to point out that my sources here are too few to draw a definitive conclusion, it was not focused on in the newspaper report. However, from what was reported in the article, the lecture's main focus was geography and chronology, the same themes which had always preoccupied Schmidt's mind. I believe this difference is best explained by the fact that Schmidt was an archaeologist, while Thomas Pettigrew was a surgeon and Grafton Elliott Smith in Riggs example was a professor of anatomy.

This event, as far as I have been able to find and what the newspapers seems to have reported in the years to come, was Schmidt's first public mummy unrolling, but not his last. However, from what I have been able to find in the newspaper reports he seems to only have unwrapped animal mummies thereafter, which adds to the proposition that Schmidt was less interested in promulgating racist and sexist ideas, and more interested in the burial rites and practises of ancient Egyptians. In December 1901, for example, he held a lecture on the topic of "Egyptian mummies" and unrolled one of the "holy cats" which had been brought to Denmark on a Danish steamship.¹⁶² In another lecture he had a mummified bird with him, although it is unclear whether it was being unwrapped or not.¹⁶³

According to Sheppard there had been a few protests in the British newspapers about the ethics of unwrapping mummies. As far as I have been able to find, there did not seem to have been any protests in Denmark which perhaps could partly be explained by it being a new phenomenon in Denmark, whereas it had had a long tradition in England and had been criticized before as being a spectacle.¹⁶⁴

At the same time, it would not be possible to conclude that Schmidt produced groundbreaking scientific work as Sheppard did in her study on Margaret Murray. Murray's unwrapping was definitely more scientific than Schmidt's as she had assembled a team of

¹⁶² Korsør avis, December 4, 1901, p. 1

¹⁶³ Ringsted Folketidende, September 25, 1899, p. 2

¹⁶⁴ Sheppard, 2012, p. 533

scholars and scientists consisting of experts on medicine, textiles, chemistry and linguistics, and while they were dissecting the two mummies in front of an audience in a lecture hall at the University of Manchester they took careful measurements and notes which were later published.¹⁶⁵ In this aspect, Schmidt's lecture would fall more under the label of Egyptomania as he was not conducting any scientific research. Schmidt's lecture also involved geography and the impact of humans rather than strictly focusing on the mummies themselves.

In as far as it could be considered scientific, it would be within the educational realm. Schmidt demonstrated his extensive knowledge on the topic – like how mummies could be dated and so on – and he would not jeopardize the scientific correctness for sensation. Yet, at the same time the fascination and excitement for ancient Egyptian mummies was a driving force for the audience, which is demonstrated by the fact that they all flocked to get a piece of the mummy's cloth. As several others have concluded, Egyptomania and Egyptology reinforced each other. People came to the lecture out of a fascination and interest for ancient Egypt, and Schmidt took the chance to educate them about the chronology and geography of the ancient world.

3.3 Fieldwork in the museums

Although he had envisioned that the circulation of published source material would diminish the need for travels, this would never be the case. Just as he had done in the 1870's, Schmidt continued to travel to museums and at that time there seemed to have been a great expectation of what all these years of museum studies would result in. A newspaper article from 1902 described how Schmidt had travelled to Kristiania in Norway to study some mummies and sarcophagi at the museum. The article explained to the readers:

The professor, who is occupied with a great work about the Egyptian mummies, which is based on exceedingly significant material, has visited most of the museums that have collections from Egypt, and will keep conducting study trips, notably a few in southern Russia. His work will thereby be as complete as it is conceivable with the material now available for research.¹⁶⁶

This was the same book he reportedly went to Paris to finish up in 1881. 21 years later it was still in the making, and the expectations, from what can be read from this newspaper article, seems to have been high. It would be the most complete work on Egyptian mummies

¹⁶⁵ Sheppard, 2012, p. 538

¹⁶⁶ Kallundborg avis, April 16, 1902, p. 2

conceivable as he had collected sources from most of the Egyptian collections available for research.

Very few studies have been done on scholars' routines in museums. However, more has been done on the usage of archives for historians, opening for some comparison between the different practises. While both practises were elaborated to provide information for historical work, there are several significant differences between museum research and archive research. Firstly, the accessibility of these two spaces differ. As Andreas Erb has shown in his research on archive usage in Anhalt up until 1848, scholars needed to petition to use archives, which could be denied. The access needed to be renegotiated every time.¹⁶⁷ Historian Phillipp Müller also pointed out how the Bavarian state archive first and foremost served the interests of the state and historians that wanted to use the Bavarian archival material for research needed to go through a vetting procedure.¹⁶⁸ In the 19th century, archives did, however, become more public, but this did not necessarily attract any visitors as the archives were often not constructed for them as there were no working facilities and so on.¹⁶⁹ The museum on the other hand was a public space where application in advance was not necessary. It was constructed for the purpose of receiving visitors and exhibiting objects to an interested audience. Nevertheless, there were spaces within the museum that were closed to the public, or at least required some sort of permission. Schmidt wrote to Henry Madsen from Turin in 1901:

There is a large Egyptian museum. It is especially rich in Papyrus. But only the special ones are exhibited. The others are concealed in a small pawn room [pantret lille værelse] in the middle of a great hall and is only given out for research. There are many good papyri¹⁷⁰

As we can see there were both open and closed spaces in the museum. What was shown to the public was only a portion of what was being stored, and it was selected by someone who considered them special enough for display. It was, according to Jason Thompson, often the

¹⁶⁷ Erb, Andreas, *Petitioners, Servants, Claimants: Archives Usage and Historiography in Anhalt from Early Modern Times to 1848*, in *History of Humanities*, Vol 2, no. 1, pp. 131–151, p. 131

¹⁶⁸ Müller, Phillipp, *Archives and history: Towards a history of 'the use of state archives' in the 19th century*, *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol 26, no. 4, pp. 27–49, p. 27

¹⁶⁹ Huistra, Pieter, *The Documents of Feith: The Centralization of the Archive in the Humanities in Nineteenth-Century Historiography*, in *The Making of Humanities. Volume II: From Early Modern to Modern Disciplines*. R. Bod, J. Maat & T. Weststeijn (Eds.), Amsterdam University Press, 2012, pp. 357–375, p. 363

¹⁷⁰ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, March 16, 1901

undisplayed items that served as the best material for Egyptological research.¹⁷¹ In the closed room one could get access to more sources for research (against some security deposit, one would have to assume). In this room there were, according to Schmidt many good papyri as well. This shows how he was not just a regular visitor absorbing what the museum staff had put out for exhibition. He had knowledge of what was going on behind the scenes and what the museums were in possession of that was not exhibited. The fact that he knew there were many good papyri among the non-exhibited ones suggests he at least might have gone through them.

It would be of greatest interest to know how an Egyptologists/archaeologist navigated these public spaces in a museum. Schmidt wrote to Henry Madsen:

I always revise the museums all the way through, and it would be particularly pleasant to revise the Egyptian museum [in Berlin] all the way through with you, preferably on Saturday as there won't be as many strangers that day in the museum as there would be on Sunday.¹⁷²

This tells us that whenever Schmidt arrived at a museum, he always tried to explore it in its entirety all the way through and not just certain portions. As the museums, in comparison to the archives, were public spaces with non-scholarly visitors and tourists, this of course became a challenge to conduct research in a museum milieu. Historians in the archives had to share the space with civil servants and other workers.¹⁷³ In the museum, Schmidt had to share the space with tourists and visitors, and he seems to have preferred there being as few people as possible. His experience had made him aware of which days were more suitable than others for this purpose. Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen studied historian Leopold von Ranke's travels to European archives and concluded that archival research resembled fieldwork more than laboratory experiments and museum research. Ranke spent months traveling to the archives and relied on the aids of archivists and others for his work. Museums on the other hand were sites of knowledge that provided space and training for future practitioners, Risbjerg Eskildsen pointed out.¹⁷⁴ Just like the laboratory, it was usually possible to return to the museum to conduct research. This of course poses the question of whether Schmidt's museum research could be regarded as fieldwork.

¹⁷¹ Thompson, 2015 (1), p. 209

¹⁷² Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, July 22, 1900

¹⁷³ Huistra, 2012, p. 371

¹⁷⁴ Risbjerg Eskildsen, Kasper, Leopold Ranke's Archival Turn, Location and Evidence in Modern Historiography, in *Modern intellectual History*, 5, 3 (2008), pp. 425–453, p. 450

Schmidt was known as a simple man not dwelling too much in luxury, neither at home nor when he travelled. A journalist met up with him in 1910 for an interview, right before he took off for Egypt. When told by the journalist that it must be more comfortable for Schmidt to travel these days when the trains had sleeping cars he answered “no, I always travel third class. I tried to travel in second once, but I couldn’t sleep on the entire trip”. He preferred sitting up the entire way to Egypt he explained and when asked if he would at least eat something on the way he answered that he usually had some bread from home with him. However, he explained, “when I am at the museums, I never eat. Why should I do that?”¹⁷⁵ We find support for the statement that he never eats at the museums from a letter to Henry Madsen where he described his one day visit to the museum in Leiden where he decided to only drink one cup of coffee during the whole day “so I have the entire time for the museum”.¹⁷⁶

In another letter to Madsen, when he had planned a short visit to Berlin before going to Raciborz and Vienna, he wrote “I will arrive Saturday morning February 7th and first go to the library and around 11 o’clock to the museum and stay there until closing time”.¹⁷⁷ These accounts, I would argue, show how Schmidt wanted to make the most of his days at the museums. He considered his travels to the Egyptian museum collections as work and not vacation and must have realized the artefacts he did not get to study in the museums would have to be postponed to an uncertain future. One difference between fieldwork and laboratory work was the temporality and time constrains in fieldwork. It was not possible to come and go as one wanted every day.

Another way in which Schmidt tried to make the most of the time he had was to travel by night and visit the museums in the daytime. This was effective considering both time and money. Schmidt regarded Leiden, and Holland in general, so expensive and wrote to Madsen “I have now for a long time only been in Leyden from morning until evening without staying anywhere”.¹⁷⁸ The last time he went, he arrived with a ship from England in the morning and left for Germany in the evening, he explained. In 1903 he wrote to Henry Madsen from Cornwall, England, where his niece lived, explaining he felt shut out from the rest of the world but that next day he would start his journey again:

¹⁷⁵ *Svendborg avis. Sydfyns Tidende*, April 7, 1910, p. 2

¹⁷⁶ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, February 27, 1907

¹⁷⁷ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, February 4, 1903

¹⁷⁸ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, January 22, 1907

Travelling by night, Visiting museums by day – without any residence or address. I will visit Le Havre, Rouen, Paris, Brussels, Namur and several other places. A few times I might want to get to a bed, but I don't know where.¹⁷⁹

Once again, we see an example of how Schmidt wanted to make the most of his study trips to the European museums. His plan seemed to have been to travel in the nights and, thus, be able to visit the museum throughout the entire day. He realized he might need sleep at some time but left the decision of when and where open. Later in the same month, he sent another letter to Henry Madsen: “I will be in Berlin on Tuesday (tomorrow). Next day in Vienna (Wednesday). Next in Budapest (Thursday). Travelling every night”.¹⁸⁰ In yet another letter to Madsen from 1908 he wrote “I was in Egypt a short trip this Easter without stopping on the way or go to bed, neither on my way there nor on my return”.¹⁸¹ When he wrote the previous letter he was in Munich but planned to take the train to Berlin the coming night and then to Copenhagen the night after that.¹⁸²

Sometimes the working environment was not the best. The museum in Leiden was being renovated the last time he was there, he wrote to Henry Madsen, so “it was immensely cold. There were namely no fire or heat in the museum – stone floors”.¹⁸³ He still seemed to have stayed there the entire day.

Every year the archaeologist Flinders Petrie would exhibit his latest finds in London before shipping them off to the subscribers of EEF. Schmidt would often take the chance to visit the exhibition. In 1909, he wrote to a friend that he was just on his way to London to see Petrie's exhibition of which there were “a few days gap before the objects are split between the subscribers, of which most of them are in America as usual”.¹⁸⁴ In a letter to Henry Madsen in 1903, he wrote that he had heard there was an exhibition in Berlin from a recent excavation in Abusir but it could wait. “I really want to see it, but I think it will stay in the museum and everything will be possible to see later anyway” he wrote, but he was going to see Petrie's exhibition in London as the objects soon after would be spread “with the wind”.¹⁸⁵ In a letter to Lange already in 1895 he wrote “Petrie's exhibition is over, but most of the things need to be

¹⁷⁹ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, August 5, 1903

¹⁸⁰ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, August 24, 1903

¹⁸¹ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, April 30, 1908

¹⁸² Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, April 30, 1908.

¹⁸³ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, February 2, 1907

¹⁸⁴ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Jens Lorenzen, June 29, 1909

¹⁸⁵ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, April 25, 1903

seen before they are spread. It was really interesting but there were not any texts and just a few hieroglyphic inscriptions”.¹⁸⁶

It is quite obvious that Schmidt wanted to see Petrie’s exhibited material before it was too late. It was a priority as it was of a more temporary circumstance, while the artefacts in Berlin for example would still be there. Most of Petrie’s artefacts would eventually go to America where they would become even more inaccessible for Schmidt. This spread is perhaps one of the absolute greatest differences I can see between the archive research of the historian and the museum study of the Egyptologist. The historian would find documents about local or national history in the archives and these were not being bought or spread, but rather often centralised. When Ranke wanted to research Venetian history, he travelled to Venice, the Egyptian artefacts on the other hand were being scattered all over the world. Schmidt did not travel to all museums to collect material for global history, but to find material to write about something very particular – sarcophagi and mummies. In other words, for him to find research material of a particular theme in Egyptian history, he could not find it in a certain location but had to visit numerous.

Although Schmidt seemed to prefer planning his destinations beforehand, he was still able to make changes. While in London, he wrote to Lange in 1911 “I have now decided to give up my summer travels and stay here in London in July, at least until the end of Price’s auction. It would interest me greatly to see what the different objects are sold for”.¹⁸⁷ It was a very famous collection according to Schmidt and he expected it to be very expensive.

My main argument in this section is that Schmidt considered these travels essential to him keeping up with the field and later being able to communicate and teach this knowledge in Denmark. Even though he surely enjoyed them, his yearly travels are not to be considered any kind of vacation to relax from his work at the university. His travels allowed him to conduct the fieldwork he needed to do to be able to perform his university commitment, as most of the sources used for Egyptology were to be found outside of Denmark. As the case with fieldwork, he had to make the most out of the opportunity he got and be as effective as possible when he visited the museums. As previously mentioned, this is demonstrated by the fact that he often travelled by night and did not eat anything when he did his museum research. Furthermore, he had to prioritise certain exhibitions as he knew he would not get a chance to view them later.

¹⁸⁶ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, August 12, 1895

¹⁸⁷ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, June 29, 1911

One, therefore, concludes that museum studies were an essential part of Schmidt's practise of Egyptology. However, what role did then Egypt itself have for a Danish Egyptologist at the turn of the century? As we saw in the 1870's, it was the European metropolises like Paris and London that Schmidt considered most important for Egyptological research and not Cairo (even though its reputation under Mariette had been vastly improved). In the interview from 1910, right before leaving for Egypt, Schmidt was asked by a journalist what he was going to do there and answered:

There are plenty of new things I need to see down at the museum in Cairo – partly things that have to do with the collection of Glyptoteket, partly concerning my work about the old sarcophagi and coffins I've now been working on for over 27 years.¹⁸⁸

Here we get the two reasons why Schmidt travelled to Egypt in the early 20th century. At that time, he was buying Egyptian objects for Glyptoteket in Copenhagen. I will return to his cooperation with Glyptoteket in more detail in the next section of this chapter. What is interesting now is his great work on sarcophagi which he had been working on. This is the same book that the newspapers reported he was travelling to Paris to finish up in 1882. At that point, he said he had been working on it for over 27 years which would implicate that he started around that time (he would claim in 1919 that he had been working on for over 50 years though but this could just be a question over how he defined "working on"). Nevertheless, Egypt had become more central for him in the last decades and he seemed to have visited it almost every year and had become great friends with many of the international Egyptologists.

In November 1903, he wrote to Lange from Cairo and reported on how several Egyptologists arrived for the winter season. He wrote that he had met up with German Egyptologist Ludwig Borchardt, who would later discover the famous and controversial bust of Nefertiti which is housed in the Neues Museum in Berlin today. Schmidt was invited to see the new *palace* that Borchardt was building by the Nile. He also wrote that Edouard Naville was excavating at Der el-Bahri and that he met the British Egyptologists James Quibell and Howard Carter (who would excavate the tomb of Tutankhamun two decades later) at the museum that very same day. Maspero had arrived in Alexandria the same day as Schmidt. Guiseppe Botti in Alexandria had died 10 days before Schmidt arrived. Petrie and Gerstang, however, had not yet arrived in

¹⁸⁸ Østsjællands Folkeblad. Dagblad for Storhedinge-, Faxe- og Kjøgekredsen, April 6, 1910, p. 2

Egypt but were expected to within a month.¹⁸⁹ In another letter to Lange from 1910 he sent greetings from Borchardt and Quibell.¹⁹⁰

Schmidt's extensive travelling was so well known by that time that anecdotes and stories about them had spread in the academic world. There was, for example, one story going around that he had forgotten to cancel his daily bread delivery from his baker before he took off to Egypt. When he got back home there was a mountain of bread rolls covering his entire door. He would also apologize for being late to his lectures by explaining that he had come "straight from Egypt". Once he had met a colleague in Paris and told him he was on his way to Budapest but when he was a bit on his way, he decided to go home to Copenhagen first to check his mail.¹⁹¹

There was also a poem written for his 70th birthday by Edvard Lehmann, the founder of the Geographic society, and later published in the newspapers for his 80th birthday from which the first verse goes:

From Moscow I just arrived
On my way down to Rome
Yes, on my way down to Rome
But as I sat by Spree
I had an idée:
There is something at the British
Museum I need to see.
I follow my niece
From Cornwall to Algiers
And down in Marseille have I
forgotten a book paper
And therefore I need to go
500 miles in a row
Good bye, good bye, good bye!¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, November 1, 1903

¹⁹⁰ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, April 16, 1910

¹⁹¹ *Nationaltidende*, January 6, 1916, p. 4

¹⁹² *Nationaltidende*, January 6, 1916, p. 4. In Danish: Fra Moskov nys jeg kom, pa vejen ned til Rom, Ja, paa vejen ned til Rom. Men bedst jeg sad i Spree, saa fik jeg en idee, Der er en Ting på British Museum jeg maa se. Jeg følger min niece, fra Cornwall til Algier, og nede i Marseille har, jeg glemt en Bog papir. Og derfor maa jeg væk, 500 mil i træk. Farvel, Farvel, Farvel!

All these stories and anecdotes need to be taken with a grain of salt, as the newspapers themselves also pointed out. Nevertheless, they do show how travelling had become so associated with him that it had become a part of his scholarly character, or persona, as historian Herman Paul called it. There were ongoing debates over how the personas of historians, the qualities they were expected to display in their profession, changed after the 19th century archival turn. Increased attention to archives could turn them from knowledgeable armchair historians to devoted note-takers.¹⁹³ But these two conflicting personas which Paul identified in the 19th century historical science were both being embedded in Schmidt's character. As previously mentioned, he held public lectures on a variety of topics every year, often with filled rooms. At the same time, he was the savant who travelled around and as effectively as possible searched through entire museums and took notes. Those were the two characteristics he was known for to the Danish public. The fact that Schmidt remained unmarried and without children must have been necessary for his scholarly persona and the way he practised Egyptology and it would be harder for him to spend so much time travelling as he did if he had a family life at home.

Apart from travelling to the museums himself it was, thanks to his international connections, possible to get material sent to him. In December 1903, Schmidt wrote Henry Madsen:

If you could find the time, I would really like to have transcripts of the small – poor stela from the XXII–XXV dyn – which are found in the Berliner Museum close to the window [...] I want to photograph the aforementioned in Berlin but would like to study the text first, if you could make the sacrifice and make a temporary copy.¹⁹⁴

By this time, he did not only have a vast network of international friends but also former students working abroad, Madsen in Berlin and Lange for a short while in Cairo. They would send drawings to each other and several of the letters received by Schmidt had hieroglyphic signs in them. In this case, Schmidt was studying a stele at Glyptoteket and for some reason, unbeknown to us, was in need of the text of these steles in Berlin. In another letter he thanked Madsen for “the pictures that I intend to reproduce in my book about sarcophagi etc.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Paul, Herman, The heroic study of records: The contested persona of the archival historian, *History of the Human Sciences*, 26(4), pp. 67 – 83, 2013, p. 68

¹⁹⁴ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, December 2, 1903

¹⁹⁵ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, undated

3.4 The scholar and the Museum – Involvement with Glyptoteket

Valdemar Schmidt is perhaps most remembered today for his involvement with Glyptoteket in Copenhagen. This section will take a closer look at some of the things he did there, and what Glyptoteket meant to him.

The Egyptian antiquities trade is a rather understudied subject, as Fredrik Hagen and Kim Ryholt pointed out, earlier studies had mostly concentrated on the plundering and excavating practises of collecting, when in fact the majority of Egyptian artefacts entering Europe were actually bought.¹⁹⁶ As Hagen and Ryholt went in depth with how the trade was conducted in Egypt, and did so primarily through the work of Valdemar Schmidt's student H.O. Lange, some of the information in the next section might overlap with their work (among other things they use the letter correspondence between Schmidt and Lange). Nevertheless, as my purpose is not to make a comprehensive study of the antiquities trade per se but to understand how it could be one of the many practises performed by Egyptologists at this time, Hagen and Ryholt serve as a valuable complement.

The brewer son and later founder of Glyptoteket in Copenhagen Carl Jacobsen first met Valdemar Schmidt during his student years in Paris in 1866.¹⁹⁷ Schmidt guided Jacobsen through the Egyptian collection at the Louvre. They would subsequently meet on a few more occasions and in 1887 Schmidt was invited by Carl Jacobsen together with several other scholars and scientists on an expedition to Greece. Jacobsen would eventually ask Schmidt to help him buy Egyptian antiquities for Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, or simply Glyptoteket.

Although Jacobsen had already obtained a few Egyptian artefacts for his collection at Glyptoteket in the 1880's, it was first through his cooperation with Valdemar Schmidt in 1892 the real Egyptian collection began. In an interview from 1899 Jacobsen brags about how his "Egyptian collection far exceeds the one in Munich" and the reason for this success is because Jacobsen benefitted from expert help. He commented:

While so many Glyptothèques all over the world have an infinity of rubbish, quite worthless stuff, I have severely made sure that only that of which had excellent artistic or scientific

¹⁹⁶ Hagen & Ryholt, 2016, p. 7–9

¹⁹⁷ Glamann, Kristof, *Øl og Marmor*, Gyldendal, 1995, p. 111

worth got taken up in my Glyptothek. The reason this succeeded, I thank several scholars for...Also Valdemar Schmidt has been a devoted assistant for the Egyptian collection.¹⁹⁸

This is a very interesting view, that Jacobsen consciously took the help of scholars when he built his collection and regarded it of importance to uphold a scientific hallmark for his collection. He surrounded himself with learned men from the university. Regarding the Munich Glyptothek, it had actually been the first museum to arrange its rooms after a chronology based on scientific, archaeological criteria several decades before¹⁹⁹ and had served as an inspiration to Carl Jacobsen.

Around this time the academic Egyptologists and archaeologists had leading roles in the antiquities trade, lending their expertise to collecting for museums or even private collections, which is something they are less likely to have today. Great Egyptologists like Howard Carter, Ludwig Borchardt and even Flinders Petrie were all vigorous buyers.²⁰⁰ Stephanie Moser has shown how Egyptologists became more involved with museum acquisitions in the second half of the 19th century and the growth of the Egyptian collections paralleled with the increasing acceptance of Egyptology as a discipline. She does, however, assert that acquisitions for museums were not motivated by any scientific goal but “by a desire to have a collection unrivalled by its European competitors”.²⁰¹

In the early 1890’s, Schmidt got trusted with a large sum of money to buy Egyptian artefacts for a collection at Glyptoteket. In July 1892, it was reported in the newspapers that there in “these days have arrived 47 large boxes Egyptian sculptures, bought on Mr. Carl Jacobsen’s account by Egyptologist Professor Dr. Valdemar Schmidt.²⁰² Schmidt’s involvement in the Egyptian collection was being advertised and his reputation as an expert on the subject might have attracted some interest. Another article the same year describes to the readers how Schmidt tried to bargain about some masks which had recently been found in an oasis but “as usual the Arabs demanded a too outrageous price”.²⁰³ The masks were brought to Cairo and 6 of them sold to England and France. However, the author of the article wrote, Schmidt was still negotiating buying 4 of them to a Danish collection, most likely Glyptoteket.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁸ *Dannebrog (København)*, January 20, 1899, p. 1

¹⁹⁹ Moser, 2006, p. 152–153

²⁰⁰ Hagen & Ryholt, 2016, p. 42

²⁰¹ Moser, 2007, p. 220

²⁰² *Bornholms Tidende*, July 9, 1892, p. 1

²⁰³ *Frederica Dagblad*, May 7, 1892, p. 2

²⁰⁴ *Frederica Dagblad*, May 7, 1892, p. 2

A letter correspondence with H.O. Lange, Schmidt's student who he had introduced to the antiquities trade, as well as his other student Henry Madsen, gives us some insight into how he viewed and conducted his mission of acquiring antiquities. Lange stayed in Egypt in 1899/1900 and Schmidt acted as a middleman between Jacobsen and Lange.

Jacobsen did not care much for small objects. After a meeting with Jacobsen, Schmidt sent a letter to Lange in Cairo, thanking him on Jacobsen's behalf for the last buy which at the time was on its way to Copenhagen. However, Jacobsen had asked Schmidt to tell Lange that what he was really interested in was big objects, or one really big object, which could be called a "*Grand Monument*" and could be housed in the great hall of Glyptoteket, just as they had done in the British Museum or the Louvre. He realised it would not be an easy thing and perhaps even quite expensive, but if it was possible this was his wish.²⁰⁵

Schmidt would eventually acquire a Grand Monument for Jacobsen. In 1910, he followed the archaeologist Quibell to Saqqara to take a look at some Mastabas which had been cleared from sand. He chose some reliefs which were cut out for him and brought to the Museum in Cairo for sale. The museum chose to keep some of them and the rest were sent to Copenhagen.²⁰⁶

However, Schmidt would also buy smaller objects for the Glyptoteket which perhaps did not always impress Jacobsen. He bought 200 terracotta figurines from Egypt's Greek-Roman period but Jacobsen would not exhibit them because he thought they were ugly and insignificant. After a German art historian had acknowledged their worth, they would be exhibited. Mogens Jørgensen, the curator at Glyptoteket, read Schmidt's and Jacobsen's correspondence and pointed out that Jacobsen highly valued Schmidt's expertise and would follow his advice most of the times.²⁰⁷

The letter correspondence between Lange and Schmidt shows they knew the antiquities dealers by name and knew what they had in store. In July 1900, Schmidt wrote how he thought the vase with the ships that Ali had was too expensive at 8 pound sterling (the aforementioned vase) but Salomon had a big, beautiful Coptic vase and asked Lange to ask for how little he was willing to let it go.²⁰⁸ In a letter from 1891 he wanted to know the name of a certain antiquities dealer and if it could be Phillip.²⁰⁹

It took time to buy antiquities. Schmidt had returned from Cairo and told Christian Blinkenberg, the curator of the antiquity collection at the National Museum, that he had found

²⁰⁵ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, March 8, 1900

²⁰⁶ Ryholt & Hagen, 2016, p. 50

²⁰⁷ Jørgensen, 2008, p. 173

²⁰⁸ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, July 5, 1900

²⁰⁹ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, June 30, 1891

a prehistoric vase with ships on it but did not have enough time to buy it since he only had a few days left in Cairo. Blinkenberg was disappointed but as Schmidt explained in a letter to Lange “I told him it takes time to buy from the Arabs – smuggle the vase to Cairo – get a box for it – present it to the museum for permission to export and so on”.²¹⁰

A common topic often recurring in the letters is the scarcity of money. In a letter to Lange in January 1900 he wrote “Jacobsen is complaining about the lack of money”.²¹¹ There were many building projects going on at that time, not only at Glyptoteket but also at the brewery. In a letter to Lange in June 1900 Schmidt wrote “Jacobsen is gone, probably in Paris – so I can’t hear anything from him – and [the letter says og=and, but it is most likely supposed to be om=if] he can buy more. He is building very much at the brewery”.²¹²

In a letter to Madsen in 1906 he wrote “I am going to speak with Jacobsen about the two stela. But the money is scarce. I noticed it with the new catalogue. Even if I do the illustrations which I myself pay for, doesn’t matter.”²¹³

At that point, it still was not an easy task getting a hold of all the books needed for Egyptology and Assyriology in Denmark. In 1896, Schmidt sent the catalogue of Glyptoteket’s artefacts to the consistory. Apparently, they had been waiting for a while as Schmidt apologized for not getting it done earlier. He gave the reason that he had to get new books which were nowhere to be found in Denmark. Also, he was waiting for new artefacts to arrive at Glyptoteket, which were on their way, as he did not want some sections to be too sparse.²¹⁴

Glyptoteket became very important to Schmidt. He not only spent a lot of his time and own money to help with its development, he also seemed to have considered it an excellent place to educate people. A newspaper article wrote “surrounded by a troop of students, he year after year undertook his round through the antiquities collection and the halls of Glyptoteket, explaining and interpreting”.²¹⁵ What could be understood from this is that Glyptoteket had become of great importance for Schmidt’s University work as well. He brought his students and used the collections to instruct and educate them.

One of the most important tools of navigating in the museum was the museum catalogue. Schmidt would himself prepare several catalogues for Glyptoteket. The nature and disposition

²¹⁰ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, December 7, 1899

²¹¹ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, January 24, 1900

²¹² Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, June 21, 1900

²¹³ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, November 25, 1906

²¹⁴ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Høje Konsistorium, December 13, 1896

²¹⁵ *Berlingske Politiske og Advertissementstidende, Aften*, January 6, 1916, p. 3

of a catalogue could be contested though. In 1906, while working on his catalogue, he sent a letter to Henry Madsen:

I will also correct myself after the visitors and make it [?] repeat the same explanations several times at the different objects [...] Then people came and asked me What is? I answer, it is explained previously and show it to them, then I always get the same answer. You should have repeated it here. This is not a book to read through, to look up in.²¹⁶

Schmidt seemed to have been able to take criticism from the museum visitors about his work on the museum catalogues, showing his educational persona and that it was important that people gained something from using his work.

Cataloguing was an immense undertaking, perhaps not always associated with the practise of Egyptology. The first professionally trained woman Egyptologist in America, Caroline Ransom (1872–1952) turned down an academic career to devote her time to become an assistant curator in the department of Egyptian art. Jason Thompson wrote “her most immediately valuable contribution was assessing and cataloguing the vast amount of material pouring in from the Egyptian Expedition”.²¹⁷ Schmidt devoted so much of his time and his own money to catalogue the objects at Glyptoteket that I would propose this should be considered one of his principal practises of Egyptology.

One final example to show Schmidt’s devotion to Glyptoteket, and how serious he took his involvement with its collections, was an incident when a German from Munich was allowed to take photographs and publish what he wanted in Glyptoteket. Schmidt expressed his disagreement over the choices to Henry Madsen:

I haven’t had the least with the choice of the Egyptian objects to do. I wasn’t there that summer when Bruckmann’s people were there. There was a German dr. with them – who did not have a trace of comprehension of Egyptian art and he has [?] selected objects he thought could interest, and left the best out.²¹⁸

Schmidt asked them to leave a couple of pages blank so he could choose “some of the best small objects” for them but they ignored the things he chose.²¹⁹ He went through a list with

²¹⁶ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, November 12, 1906

²¹⁷ Thompson, 2015 (2), p. 241

²¹⁸ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to Henry Madsen, July 10, 1907. The underlining is in the original letter

²¹⁹ Ibid.

Madsen over some of the things they had chosen that he would not choose. He was seemingly upset as he would get the blame for the “bad selection”.²²⁰

Alice Stevenson pointed how out the art historical facets of Glyptoteket, and the more archaeological milieu of the National museum shaped the conception of Egypt in Denmark. At Glyptoteket, she wrote, the “individual responses to art would be encouraged, rather than be imposed through scientific sequencing”.²²¹ It is true that Jacobsen had a strong interest in art and was more interested in grand monuments than small objects. Just as Stephanie Moser argued, that the strive to build collections unrivalled by European competitors were of great importance, certainly was important for Jacobsen. As we saw he did compare his collection to the ones in Munich, Paris and London. However, he did surround himself with scholars and archaeologists like Schmidt with the intent to make use of their scholarly competence, and Schmidt seems to have intended to turn Glyptoteket, not only into an impressive art gallery, but also to a place for scholarly learning and education.

3.5 Conclusion

The main change from the previous period was the more significant role of Egypt in Schmidt’s professional life. When he spoke about doing research in the 1870’s it was mostly the European museums he had in mind, although he pointed out the increasing importance of Cairo, thanks to the hard work of Auguste Mariette. The reorganization of the antiquities service after Mariette’s death in 1881 increased the pace of excavations in Egypt and Egyptology entered the so-called golden age.

During that period there were two main projects that would occupy Schmidt’s mind – his great book on Egyptian sarcophagi and the Egyptian collection at Glyptoteket. Although he had become an associate Professor in 1883, that seemed not to have been his greatest pleasure as he rarely mentioned it in his letters except for when his duties stopped him from travelling or visiting Glyptoteket.

What he on the other hand did do, and what seemed to have taken up a lot of his time and attention, was travelling and visiting museums. This seemed to have been such a major part of his character that even stories and anecdotes were made up, passed around and even making their ways into newspapers. These museum studies should, I have argued, be regarded as

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Stevenson, 2019, p. 114

fieldwork. He planned his trips and took measures to be as effective as possible to use the time he had to collect data, for example through travelling by night and planning his meals.

Even though the significance of Egypt had increased, it was still not the only centre of the discipline, but, as I have shown, one of many. The European museums and exhibitions were in many cases just as important.

Schmidt's interest in universal history was still resilient and I have argued he took the role as an educator of the Danish public. He held popular lectures on a variety of topics as well as helped out his colleagues with several different tasks.

4.1 Egyptology disrupted (1914 – 1925)

The last decades of the 19th century saw more international scientific organizations than ever before, and the first decade of the 20th century opened up excavations in Egypt for Germans and Americans. This state would, however, not last forever. As World War I broke out the ideals of scientific universalism got turned on its head, intensifying nationalistic fervour and turning the Egyptologists that met every winter in Cairo, into bitter enemies. In this chapter, I will discuss how World War I affected Egyptology in a neutral Scandinavian country like Denmark. Before that, let's look at what eventually happened to the book on Egyptian sarcophagi and mummies which Schmidt had been working on for decades and why it had taken him so long.

4.2 Magnum Opus

After decades of collecting sources from Egyptian museums and collections in Europe and Egypt, Schmidt had finally finished his Magnum Opus in the early months of 1914, a book about all the Egyptian sarcophagi, mummies and burial artefacts he had come across over the course of a few decades, organized in chronological order, complete with photographs, stereotypes and sketches, written in a world language as he called it, French. This would finally be the international contribution to Egyptology he had been working for. He made an agreement with a printing house in Brussels and sent portions of his material. The printing would start in August 1914, but as set date eventually arrived, Europe and the rest of the world had other things on their mind – The First World War had just broken out and Brussels was occupied by enemy troops.²²²

The French version of the book did, unfortunately, never get published but a compressed version intended for the Danish audience did, however, get released in two volumes in 1919. The first volume at the beginning and the second one at the end of the year. The book contained more than 1500 illustrations of sarcophagi, mummies and objects they had been buried with, together with short descriptions to every illustration.²²³

I will return to a more detailed study about what the war meant in the next section, but for now let's first pay closer attention to the work that went into this book, as it not only gives us a quite detailed account of Schmidt's work the previous decades, but also of how Egyptology has evolved over the years. Schmidt sums up his work in the foreword:

²²² Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. IV

²²³ The first volume contains 860 illustrations and the second volume contains 650 illustrations.

When the composition of this work has taken so long time, 50 years, it could probably to a large extent be attributed to the circumstance that the material is very spread and needs to be collected from over 50 places, on several continents, and the extensive material needs to be worked through with precision, which takes time”.²²⁴

We are immediately given a sense of the enormous work he had put into it, which perhaps should not be too surprising by now. As far the amount of time he dedicated to it, he writes 50 years here, although different numbers are given in other sources.²²⁵ There was the newspaper article in early 1882 reporting that Schmidt had gone to Paris to finish up his work, so we can assume he had been working on it at that time. Most likely he has been working on it since at least the 1870’s. Nevertheless, we are also provided an appreciation of the geographic range of his work the past decades, about 50 museums on several different continents, referring to Asia, Europe and Africa (I haven’t found any evidence suggesting he ever visited America during this time). As we have seen so far, there is nothing that suggests he was expected to do all this travelling or that he did not do it out of his own free will. This could be interpreted as a manifestation of his scientific views – the more sources, the more scientific could the composition be considered to be. Even though he worked with a large amount of material, he did not seem to have been in a rush going through the material. It needed researched with care, indicating he considered it of great importance that the information was as scientifically correct and sound as possible.

When Schmidt started working on the book, he could not have imagined the pace Egyptology would take in the 1880’s. He wrote:

During his studies, the author [Schmidt] has gone through all the material he has been able to find. All the sarcophagi in large and small collections in Europe and Egypt has been object for his research. During the composition of his work the research material numerous times, to the authors great delight, were significantly enhanced, particularly with the discovery of the royal mummies at Der el-Bahri and after that the many finds attributable to Service des antiquités, the American Davis, the English societies which excavations were led by Edouard Naville, Flinders Petrie, John Gerstang and their skilled staff.²²⁶

²²⁴ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. IV

²²⁵ His student Maria Mogensen, for example, claimed he had worked on it for 30 years in Schmidt, 1925, p. 122

²²⁶ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. III–IV

The material grew year after year, and Schmidt got more and more material to work with, which seems to have been to his great delight. Not everyone had been so delighted. To many, the rapid expansion of new source material being excavated from the 1880's and onwards would almost be too much to handle. Suzanne Marchand cites the German Egyptologist Adolf Erman's recollection of how lucky he was to have published his work *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum* in 1886, because in the years to come "a huge wave of knowledge began to deluge us, [a wave] I could hardly have worked through to completion. Then came Petrie's digs and those of his followers; then came the clay tablets from Tell el Amarna, which at the time had the effect of a revelation. The pyramid texts introduced us to the perceptions and language of the most ancient period... Then came the numberless inscriptions and papyri – a truly endless [body of] material".²²⁷ Erman's practise of Egyptology, as a philologist belonging to the Berlin school, naturally differed from Schmidt's, but from both of these quotes we get an idea of how the golden age presented Egyptologists with more sources than they could ever process. Adolf Erman managed to get his book published while Valdemar Schmidt kept adding new material to his for a few more decades.

Although collecting considerable material certainly added to the time it took to finish his work, it was still not the main reason according to Schmidt himself. He wrote:

But what has been the worst roadblock for a quicker work, is the lack of money to get the necessary stereotypes done. These have costed 9000 kr, the obtained photos 2000 kr.²²⁸

As I have shown in the previous chapters, Schmidt paid for much of his earlier publications as well as the catalogues for Glyptoteket out of his own pocket. Moreover, in his autobiography he wrote about how he had inherited a large sum from a diseased relative in 1892 which he used to:

...obtain illustrations for my Egyptological works and for their printing, which devoured my entire capital, so the lack of money has stopped me from getting my descriptions of the Egyptian sarcophagi published in a world language.²²⁹

²²⁷ Marchand, 2009, p. 205

²²⁸ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. IV. According to <http://www.historicalstatistics.org/Currencyconverter.html> "11000 Danish krone [1804-2015] in year 1919 could buy the same amount of consumer goods and services in Sweden as 19264.7942345732 EU euro [1998-2015] could buy in Sweden in year 2015".

²²⁹ Schmidt, 1925, p. 27

It is of course not possible to know how much he actually spent on his book in total. However, as we can see, toward the end of his life he regarded his financial situation as his greatest obstacle for getting it completed. He even recalled how lucky he considered himself in 1879 when he got the yearly payment from the state.²³⁰ In his autobiography he also recalls how he, since the archaeological congress in Copenhagen 1869 always wanted to write a new book about the prehistory of Denmark but “the lack of money and time for careful studies has to this date hindered me from treat the prehistoric times in Denmark in a new writing”.²³¹

One might wonder, why did he feel the need to spend so much on illustrations? Schmidt wrote that there had been a growing number of international books written about sarcophagi in recent years, compared to when he started out. Nevertheless, there were still a great amount available that had not yet been studied and there were “not yet in any language a synthetic overview over what one could call the Egyptian sarcophagi through time” that it must be considered obvious that such work required to be “richly illustrated”.²³² He explained:

Under these circumstances the author has decided to treat this question, which for more than fifty years has been the object of his studies, and he has for far longer than a human lifetime, year after year, spent everything of what money he could obtain, for the acquisition of sketches and photos of Egyptian sarcophagi, as well as, particularly, the creation of stereotypes for illustrations.²³³

It was obvious to Schmidt that there was some space that needed to be filled. What is interesting though was how he emphasised how he had spent money from his own pocket to finally be able to get it done. I think it’s safe by now to draw the conclusion that Egyptology was not a financially rewarding career in 19th and early 20th century Denmark, at least not in the way Schmidt practised it.

There were, however, ways for him to keep the costs down. He did not only use photographs and stereotypes as illustrations, but he also took help from his niece Ingeborg to make sketches. She was his closest family the last decades of his life and joined him numerous times on his travels. He wrote:

²³⁰ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. III

²³¹ Schmidt, 1925, p. 64

²³² Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. III

²³³ Schmidt 1919 (1), p. III

On the travels the author [Schmidt] has pointed out the pictures which his niece thereafter carried out with greatest fidelity and diligence, drew from the Egyptian collections from morning to evening without tiring. The author hereby brings his niece his best and most sincere gratitude.²³⁴

Just like he took help from former students like Henry Madsen to send him sketches and copies of Egyptian artefacts in Berlin, so too did he get help from his closest family member to make drawings he could use for his book. And according to Schmidt she was diligent and could spend the entire day drawing without tiring.

Schmidt had spent a lifetime and much of his hard-earned money to finish his work. But who did he write for? Who was his intended audience? I have previously shown Schmidt's devotion to educate the Danes in ancient history through his popular lectures, and a similar purpose seems to have been the case for his book as well. In the introduction to his second volume he wrote:

As he [Schmidt] now hands over this book to the public, the author immediately wants those who will have this book between their hands to pay attention to that, for a rewarding reading of this book there is no need for special knowledge or a special education. The book is intended to be read and understood by each and every one who has interest in old civilized nations [kulturfolk]...²³⁵

There was no need for any prior knowledge to read Schmidt's book, just an interest in the topic at hand. Schmidt continued on and explained the intent with his book was to:

...give an overview over, how in the different time periods of Egyptian history sarcophagi, mummy coffins etc were used, had looked like, how they were prepared and decorated. He [Schmidt] also hopes with this book to give each who wishes it a guide in hand to recognize the sarcophagi from different time periods, to be able to differentiate them from one another, and also on his own be able to date the sarcophagi he might encounter.²³⁶

This purpose echoes similarly to what he taught at the mummy unwrapping 24 years earlier where the newspaper reported how the audience learned how to be able to date mummies through different methods. And just as we concluded Schmidt's use of Egyptomania, the

²³⁴ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. IV

²³⁵ Schmidt, 1919 (2), p. I

²³⁶ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. II

popular and entertaining demonstration of Egypt, to be able to teach and educate people how they themselves could understand and make sense of Egyptian artefacts on their own, without any prior knowledge or expertise. He saw this as an educational book for an interested general public. But if this was a popular scientific book, what then did a scientific work look like in Schmidt's mind? He wrote:

The author has not in the book put forward and explained a single hieroglyphic inscription, nor a single Greek inscription, notwithstanding not so few of recently found Greek inscriptions despite their importance rarely are precisely published, so the learned who have use for these inscriptions for their research, often complain about they can't find trustworthy publications of the inscriptions anywhere, that might be significant for their and others studies.²³⁷

Scholars needed trustworthy transcriptions and explanations for further studies. The difference in Schmidt's mind between a popular scientific presentation of Egypt and proper science was that his real scientific work aimed to be useful and further the field of Egyptology. It was supposed to help the "learned" to conduct their studies. And just as he considered Egyptology an international field, so too did he aspire to publish in an international language.

In the history of science there have been discussions over what is popular science and proper science.²³⁸ Schmidt separated between popular science and academic science. His Danish version was meant as something everyone could enjoy and as an easy way to learn the typology and chronology of ancient Egyptian burial rites. His planned French version, however, was meant to be more than that. It was meant to be his academic contribution to the discipline, a scientific reference work which could be used by scholars who wanted to study the death and funeral rites of ancient Egypt. Perhaps there would eventually be a shortened Danish version if everything went as planned, but Schmidt had worked on his French version for decades, suggesting he might have wanted to leave a legacy in the international arena. His Scandinavian counterparts had by this time already done it. The Swedish professor in Uppsala Karl Piehl had published several works in French and created the international journal *Sphinx*. Professor Jens Lieblein in Kristiania, Norway had throughout his career published several works in French and German.²³⁹ All of Schmidt's major works had been in Danish.

²³⁷ Schmidt, 1919 (2), p. 1

²³⁸ See for example Secord, 2004 for a discussion on popular science

²³⁹ Thompson, 2015 (2), p. 185–186

Just as Schmidt did not expect a war in the beginning of 1914, so too, did he not expect it to end in a near future in the beginning of 1918. He took the decision by then to delay his French version, and instead publish a watered-down Danish version. And even then, he had to wait due to the priorities of the printing presses, and when his Danish version came out, the war was over. In the second volume he stresses that the Danish volumes are just an extract.²⁴⁰

We know today that Schmidt never would publish the full version of his masterpiece in French. The war did not, however, crush his hopes that he one day would. In the second volume of the Danish version he wrote:

The outbreak of the world war nevertheless hindered the publishing of this scientific work completely [...] Now the author hopes, after coming home from Belgium not too many days ago, to get the printing of the French work going as soon as possible in Belgium.²⁴¹

4.3 The War and its aftermath

The First World War boosted national antagonism and jealousy affecting, not only over ideas and perceptions of Egyptology ought to be done, but the institutions and antiquities as well.²⁴² However, it is also a barely explored topic leaving room for much to be done. Egyptologist and historians of science has studied the relation between Great Britain and Germany during and after the war. Germany had recently, after decades of exclusion, won the concession to excavate at El-Amarna in Egypt. This right would be revoked in the wake of the war and would remain so after, and according to Gertzen “sent severe shock waves through German Egyptology, which had been under the illusion that scholarship would not be influenced by political events...”.²⁴³ It also had much direct consequences as several promising young Egyptologists perished in the fronts, and those too old to fight themselves, like Adolf Erman, lost their sons and other family members.²⁴⁴ But how did World War I concern Egyptologists outside the Great powers and warring nations? How was Valdemar Schmidt affected by the ongoing war?

²⁴⁰ Schmidt, 1919 (2), p. I

²⁴¹ Schmidt, 1919 (2), p. I

²⁴² Gange, David, *Interdisciplinary Measures. Beyond Disciplinary Histories of Egyptology*, in *Histories of Egyptology. Interdisciplinary Measures*. William Carruthers (eds.), Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York, 2015, pp. 64–77, p. 70

²⁴³ Gertzen, Thomas L. The Anglo-Saxon Branch of the Berlin School: The interwar Correspondence of Adolf Erman and Alan Gardiner and the Loss of the German Concession at Amarna, in *Histories of Egyptology. Interdisciplinary Measures*. William Carruthers (eds.), Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York, 2015, pp. 34–49, p. 46

²⁴⁴ Thompson, 2018, p. 9

International travel was, as I have already demonstrated, essential for him and this is perhaps revealed more than anything through the outbreak of the world war. During the war years Schmidt had been cut off from the continent, not even communication through letters had been functioning, as they were all sent back. Yet he still tried to keep some of his work going by travelling to the countries he did have access to, Sweden and Norway, with the intent of doing some revision work for the book. But as he writes in 1919:

Just a fragment of these [the source material for his book] are to be found in the Scandinavian countries, the only ones that have been accessible during the war. The great majority of objects, on which the research for present work rests on, are spread over the rest of the entire world, of with most of these countries the regular communication was cut off in 1914.²⁴⁵

The number of objects available to him in Scandinavia were limited. But it was not only the Egyptian objects that were lacking in Scandinavia – so too were the books and secondary literature that he needed for research. Schmidt explained in the first volume of his work on sarcophagi:

...add to this, a few hundred books which the author has used [...] are nowhere to be found here in this country, but need to be found in the libraries abroad.²⁴⁶

Most attention has been payed to the museums and artefacts this far, which of course was the main sites and primary sources for Schmidt's studies, but as we can see a great portion of the Egyptological literature were only found in the libraries abroad. In another place he apologizes for some of the errors in his book which could be explained by Samuel Sharpe's book *Egyptian inscriptions* is not available in up the north.²⁴⁷ Schmidt undoubtedly experienced Denmark's peripheral situation. He had based most of his work on primary and secondary sources which were not available in Scandinavia.

After the communication with Brussels were cut, Schmidt desperately tried to get hold of the printer:

²⁴⁵ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. IV

²⁴⁶ Schmidt 1919 (1), p. IV

²⁴⁷ Schmidt, 1919 (2), p. II

The authorities of the hostile occupation in Belgium soon interrupted the communication between the author [Schmidt] and his for many years used printer in Brussels and did not allow under the entire time that followed no correspondence whatsoever between the author and the printer. Every time the author tried to get a written message sent to the printer, it came back to him unanswered with a written remark that the military administration did not find a reason to allow the card to be sent to the address. The last time the rejection was sent barely fourteen days before the total breakdown of the reign of violence.²⁴⁸

Through this quotation we are able to sense some of the desperation and helplessness Schmidt must have felt when he had sent large portions of the material he had spent, not only several decades, but also a lot of money, to collect, and suddenly not be able to get in touch with the people in possession of this material.

It was not possible to anticipate when the war would be over, and the situation return to normal. Schmidt wrote:

When the war in the beginning of 1918 seemed to be lengthy, the author took the decision to publish those illustrations to which he had the stereotypes in Denmark, with a short Danish text; but as the printing shops were heavily busy, it is not until now [march 1919] after the course of many months, the author managed to get the first volume printed.²⁴⁹

From this we can see he waited four years before he took the decision to prepare his Danish version of the book, not knowing the war would end later that year. But even then, it would take some time before he would be able to get it printed. According to the plan:

...he [Schmidt] would in the summer of 1914, when the manuscript in French was ready, have begun with revision of the work of all the objects of which he has provided pictures for illustrations of the work. He would on at least six trips in the holidays from the university have looked up all these objects, that are spread in over fifty collections on several continents, measured all the objects and supplemented his notes on them, and therewith have described the different objects that are not depicted, but more or less checks out with them of which the author was in possession of pictures. But all this was stopped by the total blockage which came with the war.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Schmidt, 1919 (2), p. I

²⁴⁹ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. IV

²⁵⁰ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. IV

Schmidt did not consider his work finished just because he had sent it away to the printing press. There was revision work needed to be accomplished as it probably had been several years since he last saw the described artefacts. He wanted to make sure the information corresponded with the illustrations, as well as taking measurements of them. He did proceed with his revision work and in the middle of August 1914 he was reported lost somewhere in Europe. The last time anyone had heard from him he was in Switzerland, but that was a long time ago and people was starting to get worried.²⁵¹ He was eventually found and together with 250 other Danes that had been stuck in Europe at the outbreak of the war he was transported home with a train from Zürich on August 22, 1914.²⁵²

The war obviously interrupted much of the scholarly projects internationally, not least the excavations in Egypt itself, but even as a Scandinavian scholar, the breakdown of the communication certainly did exacerbate things. Schmidt, whose main work were done in the European museums, would not have access to the rest of the world which he needed, and even by doing the best of the situation and visiting the countries he did have access to this were not even close to enough. His main workplaces were on the European continent and in Egypt. And in this specific case of Valdemar Schmidt, to have finished his life work and his intended legacy in early 1914 and send his illustrations to the print shop in Brussels right before the communication was cut, we can definitely conclude the First World War had a tragic outcome. In an interview made on his 80th birthday in 1916 he was asked if he would travel that year, he answered that he sure hoped so for his own sake, but:

...I need to wait until the traffic conditions becomes a little more normal. There are a lot of museums I need to visit and study a multitude of objects.²⁵³

In a comprehensive study on how scientific cooperation declined during World War I by Alessandro Iaria, Carlo Schwarz and Fabian Waldinger, they show with massive quantitative data how the flow of knowledge reduced, resulting in reduced productivity from scientists relying on frontier research from abroad compared to the frontier research from home. For

²⁵¹ *Østsjællands Folkeblad. Dagblad for Storhedinge-, Faxe- og Kjøgekredsen*, August 19, 1914, p. 2

²⁵² *Den til Forsendelse med de Kongelige Brevposter privilegierede Berlingske Politiske og Avertissementstidende*, August 24, 1914, p. 3

²⁵³ *Berlingske Politiske og Avertissementstidende, Aften*, January 7, 1916, p. 4

example did the citations decline 85% from papers in the enemy camp (allied and central).²⁵⁴ However, they did not decline in neutral countries.²⁵⁵ However, this study centres on the natural sciences and technology, and so called frontier science where new ideas perpetually were being made and put in use by others. In the case of Schmidt's practise of Egyptology was it not necessarily the fresh ideas of others he missed the most during the war, but to travel to the museums and examine his sources. It was more about the geographical limitations than the intellectual that bothered Valdemar Schmidt.

In this section of the study I conclude contrary to what happened to Egyptologists in the warring nations the idea of scientific universalism did not break down in Denmark but stayed the same. Schmidt continued to stress the importance of international cooperation the same way he had done before. Furthermore, it was not primarily the ideas of others he felt most in need of, but the material sources spread in European and Egyptian museums and libraries. Sources which were not available in Denmark or the rest of the Scandinavian Peninsula.

The war did have dire consequences for Valdemar Schmidt. But it did eventually end, which leads us to the interesting question how the war had affected the field of Egyptology in the years to come. Concerning natural science and technology, Rikke Schmidt Kjærgaard has argued, there were little recognition by the Danes that they belonged to a European periphery. When it comes to a practising Egyptologist like Valdemar Schmidt, for who it was essential to get access to primary and secondary sources in the European museums and libraries, Denmark could be considered to belong to the periphery.

After the war, things had definitely changed. In the summer of 1919, he was once again able to travel in the European countries, yet, the effects of the war were still noticeable in many places. He writes:

At the British Museum for example was a large portion of the rooms, at the time of war, turned into offices, which had been made necessary by the war, and they are still used for this. The cabinets with antiquities are fully covered with planks, thus making the exhibited objects not visible, and this unfortunate circumstance for researching scholars [videnskabsmænd] is still persisting. British Museum will reasonably not be fully

²⁵⁴ Iaria, A, Schwarz, C & Waldinger, F, Frontier Knowledge and Scientific Production: Evidence from the Collapse of International Science, in *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May2018, Vol 133, No. 2, pp. 927–991, DOI: 10.1093/qje/qjx046, p. 929

²⁵⁵ Iaria et al, 2018, p. 955

accessible before June 1920, and thus it is not until then its rich antiquity collection could become object for profound studies.²⁵⁶

So even if he could travel again the traces of the war were still physically present in the halls where he used to conduct his museum researches. The collections were covered and hidden away, and it would take time before everything was expected to turn to normal. In Schmidt's mind, the war kept disturbing scholarly and scientific progress even after it was over.

Schmidt recalls the many friendly encounters and that he had been really lucky "thanks to the foreign collections officials' compliance to be able to work in museums and libraries daily, often from early mornings to late nights".²⁵⁷ This help and service from archivists is something which had been pointed out by several historians who has researched the archival turn in historiography. Risbjerg Eskildsen showed how travelling historians were depended on the aid from archivists and benevolence of document owners.²⁵⁸ Schmidt did not forget to mention them in his book. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1919 this too seemed to belong to the past. He wrote:

On the last trip however no less than half score days' work was lost, as the time entirely went to long stays at police stations, passport offices and consulates, which resulted in the author [Schmidt] not got to go through all the books that are not available here [in Copenhagen] but which are of great importance for the, by the author in the present work, conducted research.²⁵⁹

For someone like Schmidt who wanted to be as effective as possible on his research trips, and work from early mornings until late nights, this must have felt as a waste of time. He needed to revise books he previously seemed to have used but the aftermath of the war had tightened control and security, which meant more time spent in consulates and passport offices than in museums and libraries. In his autobiography he remembers another incident when the tightened post-war security caused problems for him:

During the war I travelled a few times to Norway and Sweden. But in 1918 I once again set out through Germany to Holland, Belgium, France and England. On my way home over

²⁵⁶ Schmidt, 1919 (2), p. II

²⁵⁷ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. IV

²⁵⁸ Risbjerg Eskildsen, 2008, p. 430

²⁵⁹ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. IV

Warnemünde all my records, most of them written in French and Italian, were confiscated for inspection – and I have never seen them since.²⁶⁰

Even though the state of post-war Europe in many ways made Schmidt's work more difficult and his sources more inaccessible, it wouldn't have the same negative consequences it would have for scholars from the warring nations. Germany, for example, lost its concession to excavate El Amarna. As Thomas L. Gertzen has shown, the Germans almost expected everything would turn to normal after the war and that the scientific community stood outside the national, chauvinistic conflicts which had plunged the world into war. As Adolf Erman, the German Egyptologist, complained to his British colleague Sir Alan Henderson Gardiner about losing the excavation rights he got the reply asking if he really believed the French Director of the Antiquities service, who had seen his country ran over by the German army would want to resume from where things were before the war, or if the British, who had stood side by side with the French in defending Egypt from Ottoman and German invaders would go against the French in this matter. Gardiner continues:

Had all scholars been internationalists, had they stood entirely aloof from the actions of their governments, then I can conceive that their work might have had some just title to special consideration; but everywhere, as you know as well as I, the Professors, with a few signal exceptions, have been the most extreme chauvinists.²⁶¹

Gardiner was right. In late 1914, 93 German scholars and scientists had signed a manifesto endorsing their government's war effort, resulting in protests from French scholars. Purges of German scholars in Institut d'Égyptien were to follow after the war under French lead and conventions involving Germans were boycotted and any collaboration on German publications were out of question.²⁶² Schmidt might have felt that things were harder for him to conduct his research after the war, but as far as one can tell from his writings, he would never have any difficulties because of his nationality. And Gardiner might first and foremost have had Professors in the warring nations in mind when he spoke of the few exceptions, however, the

²⁶⁰ Schmidt, 1925, p. 112

²⁶¹ Letter from Sir Alan Henderson Gardiner, August 19, 1920 as cited in Gertzen, Thomas L. *The Anglo-Saxon Branch of Berlin School. The Interwar correspondence of Adolf Erman and Alan Gardiner and the Loss of German Concession at Amarna, Histories of Egyptology. Interdisciplinary measures*, Routledge 2015, p, 42–43

²⁶² Reid, 2002, p. 292–93

ideals of scientific universalism and cooperation Schmidt had held throughout his entire career stood as strong as ever. He writes:

The study of ancient Egypt is not an easy thing. It demands therewith not only serious work, but also special brilliance and a perseverance which is not frequently met. Every cultural nation [kulturfolk] must do their part in this undertaking, which impossibly can be accomplished by a simple people. The science of Egyptology must have able colleagues in all countries, but if their diligence and work is going to bear plentiful fruits, they need stable and easy access to study old Egyptian original works of different types. These artefacts can't be too far away. In other words, in order for a country's scholars to be a part of the work for continually spreading more light over the old Egypt in every aspect, there needs to be a good collection ancient Egyptian art and tool objects present in the country. There are now terrific renditions of multiple artefacts, not least of things from Egypt; but this is not enough; there needs to be originals. To travel to Egypt and study ancient remnants there can't easily be expected from every man.²⁶³

Schmidt wrote these lines just a few months after the world war had ended. Egyptology was a complicated project and it demanded a certain expertise which were not easily found. This is why everyone had to cooperate. There needed to be trained Egyptologists in every country. And once again he stresses what I consider to be one of the main concerns in his practise of Egyptology – getting access to sources.

Nevertheless, if we compare the above quote to how he had reasoned 40 years before, when he in 1879 had transcribed and published the inscriptions in the Royal collection. Back then the disperse of Egyptian artefacts had almost seemed as a problem which needed to be overcome by publishing facsimiles because, as he argued back then, it wouldn't be possible for everyone to travel around in all the private and public collections. Now, 40 years later, he still emphasizes the need for publishing the Egyptological material, yet at the same time argues it was beneficial for original artefacts to be dispersed as everyone did not have the opportunity to travel to *Egypt*. Why this change?

A lot had happened in 40 years, but one obvious change is that Schmidt at this time had were museum man. He had been responsible for collecting and buying Egyptian art and artefacts for Glyptoteket since early 1890's which naturally meant he would consider the antiquity trade

²⁶³ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. II

important. And as we saw in the previous chapter, he made use of mummies for education and entertainment purposes, which of course requires there are mummies available.

Furthermore, the political situation was sensitive. In March 1919, when Schmidt wrote the introduction to the first volume, a revolution against British control was taking place in Egypt, which eventually resulted in greater autonomy, and later a unilateral declaration of independence and the establishing of a monarchy. Most likely, an ongoing revolution in Egypt flickered a worrying feeling for the future of Egyptology. The system of subscribers financing the excavations in exchange for keeping some of the discoveries had been set up for almost 40 years at this point, and several of the greatest discoveries had been made during this time. Gertzen has shown how this fear of Egyptian nationalism was taken into consideration in Great Britain's firm stance against the Germans. If the Entente allowed the Germans back into Egyptian archaeology the Egyptians themselves would interpret this as a sign of weakness.²⁶⁴

At the same time, we can't simply dismiss the scientific reasons we are presented with. As we saw in previously, he used the collections at Glyptoteket for his classes. It seems as if there were a lot more information to be gained which did not show up in photographs and transcriptions. Furthermore, the reliability of the transcriptions could never fully be trusted, which the American Egyptologist James Breasted learnt when he visited El-Amarna and realized one of the transcriptions he had used for his dissertation were incorrect.²⁶⁵

And it is in this context we also, as far as I have been able to find, get a comment on modern Egyptians as a nation when he writes:

Over this transfer of ancient Egyptian artefacts [from Egypt to Europe] everyone should be happy, not least those Egyptians who care about their country's past.²⁶⁶

The Egyptians did not have the means or knowledge to study and preserve their cultural heritage and history. Donald Reid, who has researched Egyptians role in Egyptology had lagged behind for two reasons. Firstly, there were an Islamic Egyptian identity which did not want to acknowledge kinship with pharaonic Egypt, and secondly, because western imperialism tried to stop the indigenous attempts to educate Egyptian Egyptologists.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Gertzen, 2015, p. 45

²⁶⁵ Thompson, 2015 (2), p. 218

²⁶⁶ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. II

²⁶⁷ Reid, Donald M. Indigenous Egyptology: The Decolonization of a Profession? in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol 105, No. 2 (April–June 1985), pp. 233–246, p. 233

When we compare how Schmidt described his work in 1872 with how he described it in 1919, we can conclude that remarkably little had actually changed in regard to his scientific views and practise. More and more discoveries were being made each year and in Schmidt's view these continuously had to be incorporated with the already existing material.

At the beginning of what was to become his last year, 1925, Schmidt was asked by his publisher to write down his memoirs. It was published posthumously and in one of the two postscripts, his student Maria Mogensen, comments the book by pointing out it is obvious to the reader what Schmidt found important in life is his family and his travels. But, Mogensen comments, "if one wants to know what all these travels and museum studies led to, the book is quiet". Furthermore, in Mogensen's view it also left one wondering what it meant when Schmidt wrote "in the year 1883 I was tied to the university Docent in Egyptology" and just left it like that without any further comments about what this meant.²⁶⁸ And she was right. The way Schmidt decided to sum up his life is mostly about how he travelled Europe and Egypt, studied at their museums and participated in congresses of different kinds, and for someone who laid the foundation of two disciplines at the University, it is remarkably quiet about it.

There are of course a few comments about his university work, and just as we have already seen in a few letters he doesn't seem to have been too excited about it. Commenting on the employment at the university he wrote:

After my employment at the university as a docent I was no more able to, like I've been before, be available for committees, which arranged for Denmark's participation in exhibitions, congresses etc. but was limited to the university breaks.²⁶⁹

University work seems to have been more of a limitation, hindering him from doing things he would rather do. Schmidt considered himself to have been representing Denmark abroad in an international context. In 1919 he wrote similar comments on his employment:

The author now saw to every year, what at not too few universities is managed by two full time Professors, even more at the larger universities. And for this work, which included among other things the purchase of very expensive books for the tuition, the author was lucky enough to get a pay check at a size which one has seen unemployed decline as mockery, but as the author in his unfortunate position were very happy with.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Schmidt, 1925, p. 121

²⁶⁹ Schmidt, 1925, p. 75

²⁷⁰ Schmidt, 1919 (1), p. III

One thing he did write extensively about was his collecting of material. For example, when he wrote about his studies. He commented on several museum catalogues. For example about his first visit to Leiden in 1865 he writes about how the Egyptologist Conrad Seemon had “prepared an excellent catalogue over the Egyptian museum...which is of use to this day, but the new director, Dr Boeser, has published a new catalogue (in German).²⁷¹ This was all he had to say about his first visit to Leiden 60 years later. Another example is when he visited the Egyptian collections in St Petersburg. The Egyptian museum had an “excellent tools for correctly understand the meaning of the collection, particularly a catalogue authored by the great Russian Egyptologist Woldemar Golénischeff”.²⁷²

Of course, Schmidt had himself been responsible for several catalogues for Glyptoteket by this time. Nevertheless, to put so much attention towards museum catalogues in an autobiography so many decades later must suggest he had considered them so essential for his studies that he remembered their usefulness.

Looking back at the end of his life, Glyptoteket seems to have meant a lot to him. The last sentence in his autobiography is “February 1922 I retired [from the university], but still kept holding lectures at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek every six months”.²⁷³ This shows how he up until his last days certainly enjoyed to lecture and educate people about the things he had spent his life studying and researching. His retirement from the university did not mean his involvement with Glyptoteket was terminated.

At the age of 87 in 1923 Schmidt must have felt it was time to prepare for what would happen with his property at the time of his death. Schmidt wrote his will, entrusting Lange who was Head librarian at the Royal library at this time, with safekeeping his personal books from his parental home until his living relatives had the space to store them. However, regarding his books on Egypt and Assyria he had other plans:

I just need to remark that I have transferred my Egyptian and Assyriological books to Glyptotheket, where most of them are already arrived, but where the space at this time is outmost limited. It is my hope and others hope, that Glyptotheket with the years may be able to afford to build a few rooms for the Egyptological and Assyriological books, that are of such great value for the understanding of these antiquities and their inscriptions.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ Schmidt , 1925, p. 55

²⁷² Schmidt, 1925, p. 91

²⁷³ Schmidt, 1925, p. 112

²⁷⁴ Letter from Valdemar Schmidt to H.O. Lange, June 29, 1923

Schmidt donated his Egyptological and Assyriological books to Glyptoteket which can be seen as verification of the importance Glyptoteket had in his life. It doesn't seem to have been the University that fulfilled his purpose but Glyptoteket which he for the last 30 years had collected antiquities and written museum catalogues for, as well as holding lectures at. It was here his books could be put to use. For Schmidt Glyptoteket was more than an art museum. It was a scholarly centre for education and learning.

Valdemar Schmidt passed away at the age of 89 on June 26, 1925.

4.4 Conclusion

In this last chapter I have studied how the World War I and its immediate aftermath affected the practise of Egyptology in Denmark. As Schmidt in his professional life was dependent on the access to the European museums and libraries, as well as to Egypt, the war broke down all communication with the rest of Europe. He travelled the Scandinavian countries during the war, but their collections were not as comprehensive as the ones in the rest of Europe and Egypt.

His Magnum Opus in French which he had been working on for several decades was finished in 1914 but the war hindered the publishing and thus his scientific contribution to international Egyptology. A shorter, popular version in Danish did eventually get published after the war.

The ideals of scientific universalism which broke down in the warring nations did not occur in the case of Schmidt in a neutral country. His belief that Egyptology was best performed through international cooperation prevailed as strong as ever during and after the war.

I have also shown in this chapter how he by the end of his career considered his financial situation as one of the greatest obstacles of his career. Egyptology was not an economically rewarding career choice in 19th and early 20th century Denmark. On the contrary, Schmidt had used much of his own money to finance his work and publications.

5.1 Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn about the history and development of Egyptology from my research? How has my study furthered our understanding of how an academic discipline was established in a country? How did the geographic location matter in the practise of early Egyptology?

The aim of this study has been to shed a light on how out how Egyptology was established and practised in the European periphery in the 19th and early 2th century. I have done this by studying the career of the Danish Egyptologist Valdemar Schmidt, who is considered to have established Egyptology as an academic discipline in Denmark. I have brought several new insights to the history of Egyptology.

My first conclusion is that Valdemar Schmidt was more influenced by the Danish prehistoric archaeology of his time than he was by contemporary international Egyptology. Schmidt had become involved with archaeology in the 1860's and represented Denmark in a numerous archaeological congresses and events internationally. At the same time, he held the ideals of scientific universalism in high regard, always stressing the needs of international cooperation. This result goes on to show that even though scholars thought of themselves belonging to an international, scholarly community, were their practises always local and situated. The national contexts in which they operated shaped and formed their practises.

The focus on the small and trivial objects is generally not considered to have entered Egyptology until the Flinders Petrie years in the mid-1880's. Some have argued this was shaped by more pragmatic incentives – that is, it was easier to transfer smaller objects from Egypt into the hands of the financial backers – than it was by pure scholarly concerns. Even though this certainly might have been the case with Flinders Petrie, I have shown how Valdemar Schmidt maintained the importance of comparing trivial objects at least 12 years before Petrie's first excavation, and I also argue he did so, not because it was more practical for him, but because of scholarly and scientific convictions. These ideals did not make his practise any easier. On the contrary, they costed him much time and money.

I have also shown how eclectic Danish Egyptology was. Over and over again did Schmidt stress the importance of using as many of the available sources, not just archaeological ditto, but also the Old Testament and the classic Greek authors, for comparison and confirmation, to be able to construct an as complete image of the past as possible. He also held popular lectures on a variety of topics. I would argue Schmidt was remarkably open in his practise of Egyptology and could be considered a universal historian who could move over disciplinary lines with ease.

This means Danish Egyptology went through the process of specialization fairly late, if it could ever be said to have done so at all during Schmidt's lifetime.

How did Schmidt practise Egyptology then? I have shown the greatest concern in Danish Egyptology was to get access to sources, both primary and secondary. How did Schmidt solve this? He travelled to all the museums containing Egyptian collections. I propose these museum travels are to be considered as fieldwork. For Schmidt to be able to cover as many museum objects as possible in the time frame of his travels, he developed certain strategies. For example, he mostly travelled by night to be able to spend the entire days at the museums, revising them through and through and never ate anything in during the opening hours. He also prioritized the more temporary exhibitions, like those of Flinders Petrie, as he knew once they were over it might be too late to ever get a chance to inspect the artefacts. I have compared these strategies to studies on how historians utilized the archives during the same period and pointed out several differences. The museums were open spaces which he had to share with tourists and other visitors. Also, the Egyptian artefacts were scattered in museums all over the world whereas the archives had become more centralized.

Another theme discussed in this study is the affect World War I had on Egyptology in Denmark. Studies on the matter has pointed out the death of universalism in the scientific community as scientists and scholars from the warring nations supported the war effort in respective countries. This resulted in bitter feelings for many years to come. Thomas Gertzen has shown through correspondence between Erman in Germany and Gardiner in Great Britain how the Germans seem to have wanted to go back to normal after the war, but this was an impossibility to the French supported by the British. I have shown how scientific universalism did not die in Danish Egyptology with the First World War. On the contrary, did it become very clear to Valdemar Schmidt how dependent he was on access to Egypt and the rest of Europe. Not only were the majority of sarcophagi he was studying accessible in these places, but also more than hundred books that were not available in Denmark. Add to this the circumstance that he had sent portions of his book which he had been working on for several decades to be printed in Brussels and were not able to get in touch with them through the entire war.

The answer to my second question, how did Schmidt relate to Egypt and the rest of Europe in his practise, thereby is that access to these places were essential to him and Egyptology could not function in Denmark without it. For a practicing Egyptologist, Denmark existed in the periphery.

There was an international community in which scientific works on Egypt were published in so called world languages – French, German and English. Schmidt had been working for

decades with his contribution to the international scientific community but failed to do so due to the outbreak of the war and the hardships it brought with it.

Could we then identify any changes over time? There are two changes I would like to point to. First, the role of modern Egypt. Elliott Colla argued it's hard to think of the centre of the discipline's gravity being located anywhere else than in modern Egypt. But for a Danish Egyptologist in the 1870's, it wasn't. This changed with his involvement with Glyptoteket in 1892. It was through the collecting practises that Egypt became more essential. Glyptoteket also seemed to have become of great importance to Schmidt, and something he wanted to turn into a location for the training of new Egyptologists. This could be demonstrated by the fact that he took his students there and also donated his library to Glyptoteket. He also spent much time and money on preparing the museum catalogues, a tool which I have shown as essential for his practise.

When it comes to the financial situation, I conclude that Egyptology was not an economically rewarding career in Denmark. Schmidt seems to have struggled throughout his entire career with financing his work, and he had to spend a great deal of money out of his own pockets, not least for the acquisition of pictures and photographs for his work on Egyptian sarcophagi.

In the history of Egyptology there has also been discussions on the relationship between Egyptomania, that is, the popular and aesthetic fascination of ancient Egypt, and Egyptology, which is the historic scholarly discipline that studies ancient Egypt. Many have proposed that Egyptologists often used Egyptomania to draw attention to and teach people about Egypt. My research supports this conclusion as Schmidt attracted large crowds through his lectures where he would use mummies, Egyptian dresses and so on to create a setting and an atmosphere in which he would educate the audience on ancient Egyptian scholarship, for example, how to date mummies and so on.

On a last note I want to return to the point made in my theory chapter, that in today's digitalized world we perhaps don't always understand the conditions earlier scholarly research were restricted under. As I browse through the Danish version of Schmidt's intended Magnum Opus, and look at all the sketches and black and white photographs of mummies, sarcophagi and smaller objects used for burial rituals, I know that many of these objects are available to me from behind my desk at home through online databases and so on. But to reflect on all the time and money put into this work makes me convinced of the importance that historiography can't just be about shifting trends, representation and power. It has to be combined with a greater insight into the actual craft, labour and collecting that went into historical writing.

5.1.1 Further research

This study has focused on the practise of Egyptology in Denmark. Even though it might be possible to determine some generalisations of Scandinavia as a whole, this is not enough. There needs to be conducted further research on Egyptology in the rest of the Scandinavian countries and preferably be able to compare the work in these countries with each other and the rest of the world. For instance, both Lieblein in Norway and Piehl in Sweden were considered philologists while Schmidt in Denmark was considered an archaeologist. Lieblein and Schmidt were born one generation earlier than Piehl. Lieblein and Piehl both published several of their scientific works in French and German and Piehl started the international *Sphinx* in 1896. There are several differences on the surface that might have shaped how Egyptology was practised in each of the Scandinavian countries which needs to be researched deeper.

Another possible field of study, perhaps even less examined than that of Egyptology, is the history of Assyriology. In the case of Denmark, it was Valdemar Schmidt who laid the foundation of Assyriology at the University of Copenhagen, but what was the case in the other Scandinavian countries?

I am also convinced more research on how scholars navigated museums could be very fruitful. How unique as Schmidt in this regard? Or did other orientalist search the museums as systematically?

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6.1.5 Front cover

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