

The Contribution of Napoleon Bonaparte to Egyptology

Jock Matthew Agai¹, M. Yoserizal Saragih²

¹School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

²Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

leadershipserve@yahoo.ca, yosesaragih77@gmail.com

Abstract

Egyptology is a collection of many disciplines including history, arts, mathematics and sciences. While some scholars argued that the formal study of Egypt can be dated back to the pre-Greco Roman period, others objected to this notion and they proposed that Egyptology officially started from the 18th century after Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. Not all people applauded Napoleon as the father of Egyptology after his exploitation and exploration of Egypt. Many Afrocentric scholars blamed Napoleon for dissociating the Egyptian civilization from other Africans while a number of Eurocentric scholars emphasized only the legendaries or positive contribution of Napoleon. This paper is limited to not making conclusions about the position of both Afrocentric and Eurocentric scholars on Napoleon. The paper is an emphasis on Napoleon's contribution to Egyptology and to scientific studies. Using the background of his biographical engagements with other scientists, I argued that there are certain administrative skills endowed upon Napoleon that worth commendation for both Africans and non-Africans.

Keywords

Africa; archaeological discoveries; artefacts; excavation; perception; tradition



I. Introduction

The question of whether or not Egyptology existed as a scientific field of knowledge before or after Napoleon is central to this research. In other words, Napoleon's contribution to the study of Egypt is highlighted and regarded as *revolutionary* by some scholars while others objected to this view. Some regarded Napoleon's findings as revolutionary because before him, there was seemingly no large group of scientists that were involved in a thorough study of the Egyptian artefacts as he administered. In addition, those that came after Napoleon continued to rise upon his shoulder by following his footsteps in the study of the Egyptian artefacts. For example, Gaston Maspero at the order of the French government travelled to Egypt where he excavated and discovered the marred mummy of Ramses II on 5 July 1881. The mummy is still at the Egyptian Museum, a museum likely founded by Maspero himself in 1902. Maspero has contributed immensely to the collection of many artefacts in Egypt and his collections together with those of his predecessor Mariette Auguste have become the focus of the Egyptian Museum (Scheffler 2000:121).¹

Archaeological findings in Egypt continued throughout the 19th and 20th centuries with the astonishing discoveries made by the British Egyptologist Howard Carter between 1922 and 1923. In ancient Thebes on the west bank of the Nile River, Carter found the mummified remains of Tutankhamen, a pharaoh who led Egypt between 1361 BCE and 1352 BCE. The tomb of Tutankhamen had over 2000 other items including boxes of

¹cf. Gaston Maspero, "biography of Gaston Maspero," from <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Gaston-Maspero>, 1).

funerary figures, ivory game boards and many more (Scheffler 2000:117). Tutankhamen had 414 *shabtis* (images of servants) (Turner 1993:15). Carter's findings at the "Valley of the Kings" added the interest of Europeans, Americans and other people about the civilization of the ancient Egyptians. Thompson expressed the view that the attraction people had all over the world about Carter's findings contributed to the regard for Egyptology as a profession that attracted the interest of many people around the world. Thompson also said that some Assyriologists and archaeologists who specialized on the study of Mesopotamian artefacts were annoyed at the high level of obsession people had over Carter's findings and on Egyptology generally (Thompson 2015:3-4).

The popularity of the Egyptian artefacts from the 18th century can be attributed to the contribution made by Napoleon who led a group of scientists, engineers and geographers to conduct a scientific study on the archaeological finds from Egypt. Napoleon is praised as a hero by many not only because of his contribution to Egyptology but also to other endeavours that affected the lives of the French people. He brought about economic reforms by increasing trade and industrial revolution. He improved infrastructures and the monetary policies of France. He brought about religious freedom to the French people and he contributed to making the Jewish people to become citizens of France. He reformed the French laws by giving women equal rights as men (Markham 2018:1-2). However, not all people regarded Napoleon as a hero. Others see him as a dictator and racist (cf. Scales 1995:11-25; Gershenowitz 1980:204-205). I have mentioned some sentiments propagated by some Afrocentric scholars about Napoleon. This research is relevant for students of African studies because it highlights how some Afrocentric scholars responded to Napoleon and his researches about Egypt.

More so, while the Europeans were fascinated by the findings made in Egypt in the 18th and 19th centuries, there seem to be little or no record of similar fascination among other Africans during the same periods over the same findings except that some West Africans who associated their origins with Egypt.² There are many reasons why Africans were seemingly less involved in Egyptology in the 18th and 19th centuries. Tyldesley said that even the Egyptians themselves were less concerned about excavating their monuments until western archaeologists unveiled certain artefacts about the ancient Egyptians (cf. Tyldesley 2005:7-9). The view according to which Africans were less interested in Egyptology is regarded by many Afrocentric scholars as untrue (Scale 1995:11-25).

Afrocentric scholars have argued that Africans had interest on Egypt before, during and after the 18th and the 19th centuries but were limited in expressing their interest towards Egypt because of the influences of slave trade, colonialism and the non-availability of professional archaeologists (Scales 1995:29-30; Agai 2018:30).³ Afrocentric scholars have argued that there were speculated forms of contact between the Egyptians and West Africans before, during and after the 18th century. Both Lucas and Parrinder wrote about the migration of the ancient Egyptians to West Africa during the predynastic and dynastic periods while Samuel Johnson, the renowned writer of the Yoruba history highlighted on the migration of the Coptic Egyptians to Nigeria (Agai 2016:16; Parrinder 1951:200; Lucas 1970:412-413; Johnson 1921:6-7).

²The popular view on how some Africans responded to Egyptology in the 18th and 19th centuries pertained to the association of their origins from Egypt. Samuel Johnson for example in the 19th century, taught that the Yoruba people of Nigeria, the Gas people of Ghana and the Dahomians of Benin Republic have a tradition according to which they originated from Egypt (Johnson 1921:15). Agai said that the rise of the Egyptology in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries might have influenced some Africans to associate their origins with Egypt (Agai 2016:113-120).

³Wesler suggested that there were not enough archaeologists and palaeontologists in West Africa compared to the ones found in Europe and America (Wesler 2002:3, 8, 19-24).

Chiek Anta Diop is one among many scholars who argued that the separation of Kush and Khamitian civilization from other African civilization is a deliberate attempt by Eurocentric scholars to deny Africans the evidence of some of their earliest civilization (Diop 1974:9). Stacey Scales noted that the Khamitian civilization predates the Greek and the European civilization by thousands of years (Scales 1995:16). Afrocentric scholars have blamed Napoleon not only for destroying the evidence of ancient African civilization, but also, for distorting and misappropriating information about the Khamitian civilization. Scales said:

During the eighteenth century for example the French, under Napoleon, were also at the height of plotting and executing a territorial conquest of Northeast Africa. These endeavors involved not only an acquisition of the regions resources but also an appropriation of information regarding Khamitian civilization (Scales 1995:12-13).

In other words, Scales said that Napoleon also colonized information about African civilization (Scales 1995:13). This research is centred on the scientific contribution of Napoleon to Egyptology and to scientific studies. I neglected the Afrocentric and the Eurocentric weaknesses of Napoleon, instead, I concentrated in writing about the positive influence he made to humanity especially to the French people and on the lessons that can be learnt from his skills of administration. This is important because there are a number of countries in Africa that were colonized and are directly or indirectly influenced by the French government up-to this day. Countries like Cameroun, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mali and others still speak French as their lingua franca (cf. Agai 2018:30-39).

II. Review of Literature

With regard to the origins of Egyptology, there is a tradition among some Egyptologists according to which Tuthmosis IV and Prince Khaemwaset are regarded as *world's first Egyptologists* simply because they preserved and restored the remains of their ancestors. It may be recalled that Tuthmosis IV, the younger son of the 18th Dynasty King Amenhotep II cleared away sand and repaired the broken statue of Hor-em-akhet, the god of the Sphinx while Prince Khaemwaset, the fourth son of Ramesses II cleared sand, repaired and restored the neglected ancient pyramid cemeteries of Sakkara and Giza (Tyldesley 2005:21-22).

However, Tyldesley said that Tuthmosis IV and Prince Khaemwaset might not have been the first Egyptologists because they were other Egyptians leaders that preserved Egyptians artefacts before them. He said that King Djoser, the 3rd Dynasty king stored certain galleries beneath his Sakkara Step Pyramid. Among the items stored by King Djoser are 40, 000 old stone vessels and cups together with some inscribed names of the 1st and the 2nd Dynasty pharaohs (Tyldesley 2005:22-23). King Djoser's interest in preserving artefacts led him to build a step-mastaba or step-pyramid⁴ of about 204 feet using precisely cut stones in the Old Kingdom Period (Schwantes 1969:58). In addition, during the Second Intermediate Period, the monuments of Hatshepsut's father were destroyed. Hatshepsut, an 18th Dynasty female king is said to have boasted of restoring the monuments. An inscription carved on the Speos Artemidos, a temple dedicated to the lion goddess Pakhet in Middle Egypt expressed her joy of this achievement of restoring her ancestor's legacies:

⁴A step pyramid comprised of many layers of chambers built on top of each other in an ever decreasing sizes until the sides appeared triangular in shape.

I have done these things by the device of my heart. I have never slumbered as one forgetful, but have made strong what was decayed. I have raised up what was dismembered, even from the first time when the Asiatics were in Avaris of the North Land, with roving hordes in the midst of them overthrowing what had been made...⁵ (Tyldesley 2005:22-23).

More so, the interest which the people of the ancient world like the Semitic Peoples had over Egypt might have been due to many reasons but most importantly the amusements generated by the Egyptian cultures and their monuments. The Assyrian leader Assurbanipal conquered Egypt in 721 BCE. The Assyrian defeat over Egypt in 570 BCE also led to the dethronement of pharaoh Apries in Egypt (Caldwell & Gyles 1966:161-162, 166). Alexander the Great also, seized power in Egypt in 332BCE⁶ (Shinnie 1965:23-24, 34). Herodotus, the historian of Halicarnassus (c. 484- 420 BCE) visited Egypt during the Saite Period and he recorded what he saw including the practice of mummification (Tyldesley 2005:27). One may not rule-out a possible formal or academic study of the Egyptian artefacts by some of the above leaders in the ancient times but evidence for such a speculated view is rare or unavailable. In addition, the interests the leaders in the ancient times had over the Egyptians artefacts were concentrated strictly on restoration and preservation of the artefacts. This limitation of knowledge about the scientific study of the Egyptian artefacts by the above leaders in the ancient times makes it possible to regard Napoleon as an outstanding person in the field of Egyptology.

Furthermore, the specific period which Egyptology started is still contested (Tyldesley 2005:22). It is evident that the collections and the preservations of the Egyptian artefacts are associated with the origins of Egyptology. However, the modern definition of Egyptology goes beyond mere collection and preservation of artefacts. The scientific or modern study of Egypt which involves the combination of various disciplines to produce a seemingly *accurate* interpretation of the Egyptian culture is a precursor for Egyptology. This is evidenced in Napoleon's methods of studying Egypt. Napoleon made it possible to argue that laboratory technology, medicine, botany, zoology, architecture, archaeology, history, mathematics, chemistry, arts, anthropology, linguistics and geography are few disciplines among many needed to compliment Egyptology. In order words, Egyptology involves the combination of all these subjects only when they are centred on illuminating further information on and about Egypt.

It is not surprising that Scales defined Egyptology as the scientific reading of the Khamitian culture, history and archaeological remains found in Egypt (Scales 1995:11). Tyldesley noted that whatever it is that leads an individual to work on the Egyptian soil with the aim of illuminating knowledge about the ancient Egyptians is a direct contribution to Egyptology. In order words, he said that the methods and the motives for investing or researching on the Egyptian soil may vary, yet, Egyptology is complimented as a result of such research or researches (Tyldesley 2005:7-8).

In addition, it is likely that these scientific fields of knowledge mentioned above that involves the combination of various subjects to shed light on Egypt were not officially implored in the ancient collection and the preservation of the Egyptian artefacts pre and during the Greco-Roman periods. It is for this reason that it can be suggested that Egyptology might have only emerged when these various fields of knowledge were implored in the study of Egypt particularly from the Enlightenment Period. Syon also noted that Napoleon's contribution to science can be attributed to a movement that began

⁵Originally from Gardiner, A., 'The Great Speos Artemidos Inscription,' *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 32(1946), pp. 47-48.

⁶From 671 BCE, Egypt was invaded six times by foreigners (Redford 2006: XIII).

during the Enlightenment period and flourished in the French Revolution (Syon 2017:3). Mark Hopkins defined the Enlightenment Period as a period where moralism, rationalism and naturalism dominated the activities of humans from the beginning of the 18th century (Hopkins 2003). Though the preservation of Egyptian artefacts were done long before the 18th century AD, there seemed to have never been a thorough scientific study of the Egyptian artefacts or archaeological remains until the time of Napoleon.

III. Research Methods

The method implored in this research is library-based and this is so because the researcher relied on sources that explained the findings made by Napoleon and his team of researchers. It is therefore important to note that Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 and his discoveries of the Egyptian artefacts attracted more archaeologists and tourists to Egypt especially the Europeans (Adamo 2013:73).⁷ Thompson discussed Amelia's description of the Europeans attraction to Egypt after Napoleon's discoveries:

It may be said of some very old places, as of some very old books, that they are destined to be forever new. The nearer we approach them, the more remote they seem; the more we study them, the more we have yet to learn. Time augments rather than diminishes their everlasting novelty; and to our descendants of a thousand years hence it may safely be predicted that they will be even more fascinating than our selves. This is true of many ancient lands, but of no place is it so true of Egypt. ... The Interest never flags – the subject never palls upon us – the mine is never exhausted (Thompson 2015:1).⁸

It is likely that Napoleon followed in the part of his hero Alexander of Macedon (ca 330BCE) to *liberate* the Egyptians from British rule (Jeffreys 2003:1). Another reason for his invasion of Egypt can be attributed to French imperialism (Scales 1995:12). At the age of 16, Napoleon was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the artillery and he became a captain at 23, a brigadier general at the age of 25. He became a commander of the Army of Italy at 26 and the First Consul at 30. He made himself an emperor at the age of 35 (Weller 1999:62). It was at the age of 29 that the French general was appointed by the Directory, a body of Revolutionary France to lead an army meant to invade Britain after his victory over Italy (Gallagher 2015:1). Instead of invading Britain directly, Napoleon thought it wiser to damage a major part of Britain's source of income and imperial domain by firstly capturing Egypt and secondly by cutting off England's land route to India (Tyldesley 2005:43-44, 47). Napoleon might have also been interested in expanding the French culture or civilization. This might have been necessitated because there was a tradition according to which the French people and the Germans originated civilization (Botz-Bornstein 2012:2). Jeffreys added:

The Egyptian campaign, which followed a brief intervention in Italy (similarly intended to be a combination of military, fact-finding and collecting exercises, and an imposition of cultural superiority over a supposedly backward neighbour), was also considered an extension of French revolutionary and republican culture into a primitive but deserving part of the world (Jeffreys 2003:2).

⁷Napoleon was born on 15 August 1769 in Casa Buonaparte in the town of Ajaccio, Corsica in France and he died on 5 May 1821.

⁸ Originally from Amelia Edwards, *Pharaohs, Fellahs and Explorers* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1891), 3-4.

In May 19, 1798, Napoleon alongside 17, 000 troops with 700 horses, and about 150 scientists and engineers together with 300 Maltese sailed for Egypt and arrived at Alexandria on July 1, 1798 (Tyldesley 2005:43-44, 47). The team Napoleon went to Egypt with included a group of professionals tagged *Commission des Sciences et Arts d’Egypte*. The professionals were scientists and included an illustrious band of 167 scholars (Gallagher 20153). The professionals comprised of 52 engineers, 11 surveyors, 8 surgeons, 7 chemists, 6 interpreters, 5 architects, 5 designers, 5 printers, 4 mineralogists, 4 astronomers, 4 economics, 3 botanists, 3 zoologists, 3 pharmacists, 3 painters, 3 archaeologists, 2 writers, 2 musicians, 1 engraver, and 1 sculptor and the rest were students (Tyldesley 2005:43-44, 47). A unique feature about the study of Egypt before Napoleon is that it was individualistic and antiquarian in nature not gathering a crowd of researchers/scientists as it was done during the time of Napoleon (Jeffreys 2003:1).

In addition, it is of note that there were many scholars and researchers that visited Egypt before Napoleon, but they did not study the Egyptians artefacts from an intense scientific perspective as he did. Felix Fabri, the German friar who published *Wandering of Felix Fabri* recorded his adventures of Egypt in 1482. Other Europeans that travelled to Egypt and recorded their adventures before Napoleon are: Sicard who went to Egypt in 1726; Reverend Richard Pococke, a British, in 1743; Friderik Norden, Danish, in 1768 likewise James Bruce a British explorer (Tyldesley 2005: 43-45).

The French, led by Napoleon waged war against the Mamelukes⁹ and they defeated the Mamelukes. The Mamelukes were the military-wing that started to rule Egypt after the Turkish Ottomans conquered and handed over Egypt to them in 1517 (Gallagher 2015:1). In August 23, 1799, Napoleon left Egypt for France after suffering a defeat from Britain and Ottoman rulers in Egypt (Tyldesley 2005:46). Thirty-four of Napoleon’s soldiers died in Egypt. Those of them that did not die returned to France. They dedicated their lives to the study of the Egyptian artefacts which they took to France from Egypt (Brier 2015:60).

Napoleon set-up a library so that the monuments, hieroglyphs, plants remains, artefacts and other materials they found in Egypt might be studied. It was for this similar reason that he founded the *Institut d’Egypte*, described as the first world Egyptological Society in August 21, 1798. The society was grouped into four disciplines: mathematics, physics, political economy and arts (Tyldesley 2015:49). Brier said that Napoleon’s initiatives which brought about a formal study of Egypt marked the beginning of formal Egyptology: “It was a severe case of Egyptomania, but even more important, it marks the beginning of scientific Egyptology” (Brier 2015:50).

Another thing that made Napoleon popular was his finding of the Rosetta stone in July 1799 in the Nile Delta.¹⁰ The Rosetta stone written in 196 BCE is inscribed a thank you message from the priest of Egypt to Pharaoh Ptolemy V who subsidized taxes for the Egyptians (Brier 2015:56-57). One of Napoleon’s members of staff by the names Denon Vivant returned to France and published *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt* in 1802. Other editions of a similar publication were produced in different languages by Vivant. The publication of Denon Vivant also included some drawings of Egypt and Brier noted that “the drawing Denon had made provided the first accurate depiction of Egypt that Europe had ever seen” (Brier 2015:60).

⁹ The word ‘mamelukes’ means ‘bought man’ or ‘slave’ in Arabic (Brier 2015:46).

¹⁰ The Rosetta stone contained inscription and the study of the inscription enabled scholars for the first time in the nineteenth century to be able to decipher hieroglyphics (J. Jones, “Egypt and Europe in the 19th century” courses.wcupa.edu/jones/his312/lectures/Egypt.htm. (2014), 1).

More so, the groups of scholars and professionals Napoleon worked with in order to decipher the Egyptian artefacts were highly meticulous and dexterous to the point that they did their work with precision. They published *Description de l’Egypte* (Brier 2015:60). *Description de l’Egypte*’s first instalment was published in 1809 and the writing of the entire book was completed in 1828, seven years after Napoleon’s death in his island of St. Helene (Brier 2015:61-64). The book *Description de l’Egypte* was voluminous and expensive. Brier said that there has never been such type of a voluminous book ever published before. The book contained the first comprehensive map of Egypt together with some photos and notes on ancient monuments, Egyptian natural history and modern Egypt in the 1800s. The book was printed in one thousand sets of 21 volumes. Each volume of the book contained about 1, 000 large engraving and the engravings alone cost about 600, 000 Franc. The book’s description of Egyptian temples and tombs and especially its paintings of Karnak and Luxor temples attracted the attention of the Europeans to further love and to travel to Egypt (Brier 2015:61-64). Tyldesley echoed how *Description de l’Egypte* illuminated further understanding of many biblical stories that have certain correlations with Egypt:

But it was the *Description* that opened European eyes to Egypt’s archaeological potential, and sparked a Europe-wide fashion for anything and everything with ‘Nile-Style’. Suddenly, the biblical stories, and the stories of the classical authors, had become real, and genuine Egyptian antiquities were in demand (Tyldesley 2005:50).

Around the middle and the end of the nineteenth century, the formal knowledge and the study of Egypt was widespread in Europe and in America as well (Thompson 2015:2). The contributions of Napoleon to Egyptology are insurmountable. There is no record of any other specific individual that have done what he did with regard to the study of ancient Egypt. He would not have been what he was without the support of his team of researchers. In other words, his team of researchers deserve a special recognition for their contribution to originating and spreading the concept of Egyptology. They made Egyptology a scientific field of knowledge through the administrative support provided by Napoleon. It is for all these reasons that I suggest that Napoleon deserved the title “the father of Egyptology” similar to Isaac Newton “the father of physics” or Charles Darwin “the father of biology.”¹¹ The difference being that Newton and Darwin researched as individuals while Napoleon administered a team of researchers.

IV. Results and Discussion

The fact that Napoleon administered and introduced, many scientists to be involved in the study of the Egyptian artefacts suggest that he had a unique interest for science. Weller said that Napoleon’s display of great knowledge in mathematics at the age of 5 and 6 are indications of his continued interest for science and mathematics throughout his adulthood (Weller 1999:62). Guillaume de Syon noted that Napoleon’s interest for science and mathematics motivated him into artillery training at the *Ecole Militaire* from where he was acquainted with distinguished mathematicians, physicists and natural scientists. His acquaintances with renowned scientists led him to study formally or informally through them (Syon 2017:1). Particularly, Napoleon studied under Monge, the father of descriptive geometry and one of the founding members of *Institute of France*. Also, Laplace,

¹¹Cf. (Darwin 1987:508; Raven & Johnson 1999:420).

Napoleon's school examiner together with Berthollet supported the admission of Napoleon into the Institute of France (Syon 2017:1).

More so, Napoleon gathered many scientists and other professionals together and harnessed from their various skills what finally led to the emergence of modern Egyptology. In other words, he practiced the "delegate leadership style" in which he motivated and created a conducive environment for those he worked with. Rohmantika Wulandari and others noted that leadership by delegation do contributes to staff motivation and better outcome or output "...it is expected that each individual employee is willing to work hard and enthusiastically in completing work so that it will produce high work productivity..." (Wulandari et al 2021:3295). Another principle of learning implord by Napoleon is what is described as by Dwi Novita Sari "the Number Head Together learning model" in which learners or perhaps researchers are allowed to interact with one another on their findings. Napoleon gave his team of researchers an opening to interact with their sources. Sari further noted that:

The Number Head Together learning model is part of an interactive learning model that emphasizes specific structures designed to influence student/s [researchers] interaction patterns in searching, processing and reporting information from various sources which are finally presented in front of the class so that they can train students to share information, listen carefully and speak with calculation so that students are more productive in learning (Sari 2021:23).

Furthermore, it is important to note that a number of scientific discoveries flourished in France when Napoleon was in power. In other words, he challenged, supported and gave many scientific assignments and exercises to many scientists in France. Scientists like Claude Berthollet, Joseph Louis Lagrange (1736-1813), Gaspard Monge (1746-1818), Pierre Simon Laplace (1749-1847), Adrien-Marie Legendre (1752-1833), Joseph Fourier (1769-1830) and Antoine Lavoisier (1743-1794) might have benefited from the most conducive atmosphere of scientific research created by Napoleon (Weller 1999:61). Charles Coulston Gillispie said that during the time of Napoleon, France led the world in scientific research "[n]ot only was French scientific community the most brilliant in the world, it was also the most highly institutionalized - a circumstance which permits us to be definite about its history" (Gillispie 1959:678).

Most of the scientists Napoleon met became his friends and he rewarded them greatly with political appointments and with monetary rewards (Syon 2017:2). One of Napoleon's favourite scientists, Georges Cuvier who supported the view of geological evolution through the process of cataclysms was appointment as the czar of the science and education ministries in France (Gershenowitz 1980:210, 206). Monge, whom Napoleon travelled with to Egypt, was charged with the responsibility of tracing the Roman canal that connected the Red Sea to the Nile River. On their return to France from Egypt, Napoleon appointed Monge as the director of *Ecole Polytechnique* established in 1794. The polytechnic was meant to assist the French people in doing scientific research that will boost industrial activities (Syon 2017:2).

Some scientists who got the full support of Napoleon have made some significant contribution to scientific knowledge. Nicolas-Jacques Cont  developed a factory that manufactured materials for producing French army uniforms together with a time measuring machine in 1799 (Syon 2017:2). Berthollet determined the composition of ammonia in 1785, hydrogen sulphide in 1789 and prussic acid in 1787. He also supported and popularized Lavoisier's theory of combustion and system of chemical nomenclature in 1785. Berthollet established the use of chlorine and hypo-chlorides as bleaching agents in

1785. In other words, he was responsible for discovering bleaching agents. Laplace, the mathematician and mathematical astronomer with the help of Lavoisier designed the first ice calorimeter around 1777. Laplace scientific work on the stability of the solar system gained him full membership in the Academy of Sciences around 1785 (Weller 1999:61-62).

Napoleon also contributed to other aspects of knowledge. The *Code of Napoleon* for example is used as the basis of law in France and other countries. He also reorganized the educational system in France (Markham 2018). He worked with geographers and artists including Vivant to draw and design the maps of Egypt (Tyldesley 2015:49; Syon 2017:2). Without the political and financial support provided by Napoleon to the many scientists listed, their researches would not have received the attention it received.

However, it is important to note that not all scientists were supported by Napoleon. There is a view according to which he only supported scientists that adhered to his principles and beliefs system. Gershenowitz said that Napoleon disliked for another French scientist Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829) was because of Lamarck's theory according to which there is a natural tendency for geological and biological progression which contradicted the *modus operandi* of Napoleon's rise to power through series of political catastrophes (Gershenowitz 1980:204, 206). While Napoleon might be described by many as a dictator and as someone who hated people with varied intellectual ideologies (Gershenowitz 1980:205), his interest for science and the scientific community together with his political leadership laid the foundation for French's rise to power in the 19th century. Syon echoed "[n]onetheless, several of Napoleon's actions laid the foundation for further developments in French science and education and for France's industrial transformation later in the nineteenth century" (Syon 2017:4).

V. Conclusion

The impact of colonialism and slave trade in Africa contributed to the perception according to which Africans were less human than the Europeans (Agai 2018:20-22). The rise of Egyptology in the 18th century together with the stereotypes created about Africans contributed to the debate according to which the ancient Egyptians that originated the Egyptian monuments were not Africans. O'Connor and Reid noted that the "European perceptions of Ancient Egypt have had a profound influence on the African continent" (O'Connor & Reid 2003:4). It is for a similar reason that Folorunso pointed that in the mid-nineteenth century, some African-American missionaries that came to evangelize Christianity in West Africa debated the denial of Egypt as an African country (Folorunso 2003:84).

African American writers in the mid-19th century, who were mostly missionaries in West Africa, resisted these European trends which seemed 'determined to pilfer Africa of her glory' in particular by denying that Egypt was 'Africa's dark browed queen' (Folorunso 2003:84).

Furthermore, one of the effects of the popularity of Egyptology since the 18th century is the rise of the American Afrocentrism which came about because some Europeans dissociated African civilization from the innovations of the ancient Egyptians (cf. O'Connor & Reid 2003:3). Adamo said that in 1810, Blumenbach dissociated the Egyptian civilization from the rest of Africa (Adamo 2013:73, 85).¹² Agai also said that a

¹²Information about Blumenbach was originally obtained from Blumenbach, F., 1865. "Anthropological Treatise," translated by T. Bendyche, London; Anthropological Society (Adamo 2013:73, 85).

number of literatures written in the 19th century about ancient Egypt declassified Egypt from Africa (Agai 2013:89-90). O'Connor, Reid and Adamo reiterated that the perception of Egypt as a non-African territory contributed to the interpretation of the Egyptian artefacts by the 18th and 19th centuries archaeologists as Indo-European or Ancient Near Eastern (O'Connor & Reid 2003:1-5; Adamo 2010:457).

Napoleon who might be regarded as the father of modern Egyptology from the 18th century is blamed by many Afrocentric and Asia-centric scholars as the originator of the theories that separated the Egyptian civilization from the civilization of other Africans. Afrocentric scholars proposed that Napoleon's disregard for the Khamitian civilization is attributed to his disregard for the black race thus a racist or an ethnicist.¹³ While it might be true that Napoleon's invasion of Egypt is a sign of a disregard for the African race, it is equally important to note that many Europeans, before and during the 18th century did not regard territorial imperialism as morally insane, instead people that led imperialist movements like Napoleon were regarded as heroes.

Instead of developing further Afrocentric disregard for Napoleon, it would have been appropriate to derive lessons about the good aspects of his life. Most importantly, his administrative skills and love for his country led him to gather, develop and motivate the growth of science for the benefit of his people. Although Napoleon's methods of obtaining the Egyptian artefacts are questionable, yet, his collection, preservation and the study of the artefacts should be appreciated as a contribution to science and as a propeller for further academic and administrative discourse on how Africans can use what they have for the benefit of their own people.

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¹³David Markham said that Napoleon cared for humanity to the point that he abolished slavery by freeing the serfs (Markham 2018:1). Napoleon appreciated his connection with the Catholic Church and he refused to accept scientific theories that contradicted the beliefs of the church (Gershenowitz 1980:204). These views about Napoleon suggest that he might not have been hashed on other people because of their race. His interest for the invasion of Egypt could be geared towards his ego to remain a relevant leader in Europe and for science and mathematics to prevail in his time.

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