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Harco Willems

A Geopolitical Perspective on Some Early Developments in Egyptology: Lepsius at the Second International Congress of Orientalists (1874)

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A Geopolitical Perspective on Some Early Developments in Egyptology

Lepsius at the Second International Congress of Orientalists (1874)

HARCO WILLEMS

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the effects of the Second International Congress of Orientalists (London, 1874) on Egyptology. During the congress, Lepsius gained support for three initiatives for new projects. This first concerned the establishment of a transliteration system for Egyptian, the second the establishment of a list of hieroglyphic symbols, and the third a publication of the extant sources of the Book of the Dead. The study first gives an overview of the developments in Egyptology in the nineteenth century and the entanglement of Egyptology with international politics and commerce, a constellation in which French Egyptology was for a long time the most influential by far. In the debate on what is today called the Book of the Dead it is shown how French Egyptology, mostly followed by British Egyptology, interpreted texts of this genre following Champollion's idea that is was a '*(Grand) rituel funéraire*'. In the footsteps of Lepsius, German Egyptologists, however, rather spoke of the *Todtenbuch*, a different terminology which at the same time reflected a very different conception of what these texts really were. In this debate, Lepsius chose to ignore the strong arguments marshaled by de Rougé in favor of Champollion's interpretation. In the 1870s this debate had reached a stalemate. The article argues that the German victory over France in the Franco-German war (1871) created new conditions that enabled Lepsius to make decisive steps in promoting his *Todtenbuch* hypothesis.

Keywords: *(Grand) Rituel funéraire*, *Todtenbuch*, Book of the Dead, History of Egyptology.

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article examine les effets sur la discipline égyptologique du Second Congrès International des Orientalistes (Londres, 1874). Au cours de ce congrès, Lepsius a obtenu le soutien qu'il recherchait concernant trois initiatives qui lui importaient sur le plan scientifique. La première concernait la mise en place d'un système de translittération pour la langue égyptienne, la seconde l'établissement d'une liste de signes hiéroglyphiques, et la troisième une publication des sources existantes du Livre des Morts. L'article présente tout d'abord un aperçu des développements de l'égyptologie au cours du xix^e^ siècle et les liens unissant l'égyptologie à la politique et au commerce international, qui ont pendant très longtemps assuré la prééminence de l'égyptologie française. Dans le débat se rapportant à ce qui est actuellement désigné comme le Livre des Morts, l'égyptologie française, suivie par l'égyptologie britannique, a retenu l'interprétation de Champollion, qui voyait dans ce genre de textes un (Grand) rituel funéraire. À l'inverse, en s'appuyant sur l'interprétation de Lepsius, les égyptologues allemands ont retenu la désignation de *Todtenbuch*, qui traduit une approche totalement différente de ce que ces textes représentent. À l'occasion de ce débat, Lepsius s'est abstenu de répondre aux arguments probants avancé par de Rougé en soutien de l'interprétation de Champollion. Au début des années 1870, le débat se trouve dans une impasse. Cet article tente de montrer que la victoire prussienne contre la France en 1871 a créé les conditions permettant de faire triompher la désignation de *Todtenbuch* chère à Lepsius.

Mots-clés : (Grand) Rituel funéraire, *Todtenbuch*, Livre des Morts, histoire de l'égyptologie.

On Saturday 19 September 1874, eight Egyptologists convened at Samuel Birch's home in London. They were participating in the Second International Congress of Orientalists, organised by the same Samuel Birch.[1] The congress addressed topics from all conceivable orientalist disciplines. Examples of themes discussed were "The state of the Chinese language at the time of the invention of writing", "On the difficulty of rendering European ideas in Eastern languages", or "On the first person of Dr. Hincks' Permansive Tense

1 Two publications appeared in connection with the conference: *Report* 1874 and Douglas (ed.) 1876. For a recent account of the congress, see Lüscher 2014, pp. 40–42.

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in Assyrian terminating in *–ku*". Egyptology was a first-rank discipline at this meeting. Of the 48 lectures, no fewer than nine concerned Egyptian topics.[2] That amounts to almost 19%.

As the Egyptologists also had things to discuss that would be of little interest for the plenary sessions, however, Birch organised a "separate meeting of Egyptologists of the Hamitic section" at his place.[3] Those present were the German Richard Lepsius, who chaired the session, the Norwegian Jens Lieblein, the Brits Samuel Birch and Peter Le Page Renouf, and four other Germans: Lepsius's former student Ludwig Stern, and the professors August Eisenlohr, Georg Ebers, and Heinrich Brugsch, professor of Egyptology at Göttingen, but also director of the Madrasat al-Lisān al-Qadīm (School of the Ancient Language) in Cairo,[4] which he represented on this occasion.[5]

Some things are remarkable about this group. Firstly, no French representative was there. In view of the prominence of French Egyptology in the course of the nineteenth century, this must be deemed highly unusual. By contrast, the newly founded German Empire was represented very well, with no fewer than four persons, besides Brugsch, who represented Egypt, but who was a German professor as well. Johannes Dümichen, a fifth German professor, who did attend the conference and was a member of the "Hamitic section" (see n. 2), was not present at this meeting.[6]

Lepsius tabled three issues on which he hoped the Egyptologists could come to adopt a common policy. The first concerned the transliteration of Egyptian by means of a phonetic script based on the Latin alphabet. This was a point he had been trying to get implemented since almost three decades. Lepsius, who had a keen interest in exotic languages, had already before his expedition to Egypt (1842-1845) been developing his ideas on how to transcribe the language of people he would meet with in the course of his travels, and for this he sought contact with missionaries working in northeastern Africa.[7] On the basis of suggestions received from this corner, he developed his own transcription system, a "standard alphabet" to be used for all oriental languages, at the "Alphabetical Conference" held in London in 1854.[8] Lepsius

2 The Egyptological papers were: H. Brugsch Bey, "The Exodus and the Egyptian Monuments" (*Report* 1874, p. 28; Douglas (ed.) 1876, pp. 260–281); A.B. Edwards, "On the Royal Tombs at Abydos" (*Report* 1874, p. 29); A. Eisenlohr, "Des Mesures Egyptiennes, Resultat des études du Papyrus mathématique du Musee Britannique" (*Report* 1874, p. 29; Douglas (ed.) 1876, pp. 282–288); J. Lieblein, "Deux communications égyptologiques" (*Report* 1874, p. 33; Douglas (ed.) 1876, pp. 295–296); St. John Vincent Day, "Examination of the Fragment of Iron from the Great Pyramid of Gizeh" (Douglas (ed.) 1876, pp. 396–399); G. Ebers, "On the great Medical Papyrus Discovered by Prof. Dr George Ebers (*Report* 1874, p. 29; Douglas (ed.) 1876, pp. 427–430); W.R.A. Boyle, "On the Proportions of the Great Pyramid at Gizeh (or Djizeh)" (*Report* 1874, p. 30; Douglas (ed.) 1876, p. 430); J. Dümichen on his contribution to "Badecker's Handbook on Egypt" (*Report* 1874, p. 34; Douglas (ed.) 1876, p. 430); B.H. Cooper, "On the Date of Menes (u.c. 4736), Egypt's Protomonarch according to Diodorus, Manetho, the Turin Pharaonic Papyrus, and Hieroglyphical Monuments bearing Dates of the Thirty-Year Cycle, mentioned on the Rosetta Stone" (*Report* 1874, p. 53; Douglas (ed.) 1876, p. 436).

3 *Report* 1874, p. 57.

4 Reid 2002, pp. 116–118. As Reid points out, the school was, however, closed down due to an intervention by Auguste Mariette during Brugsch's absence in Europe.

5 An account of this meeting was published in the transactions of the congress: Douglas (ed.) 1876, pp. 439–443.

6 The absence of the French is all the more startling as they had dominated the Egyptological representation during the First International Congress of Orientalists at Paris and the French representation in the Congress had implored the French to attend the second congress in London (see Reid 2002, p. 133; Gady 2005, p. 266).

7 See Mehlitz 2011, pp. 252–257; Richter 2015, pp. 13–19; Solleveld 2020.

8 Mehlitz 2011; Kemp 1981, pp. 28–34; Richter 2015, pp. 13–19; Solleveld 2020, pp. 193–195.

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had tried to convince his colleagues not only by using scientific arguments, but also political ones. He argued:

> *Dadurch ist den Europäischen Colonieen und deren Machthabern, wie auch den Missionaren ein Mittel gegeben, ihren geistigen Einfluß auf jene Völker geltend zu machen.*[9]

The reference to missionaries reflects a scholarly concern that is no longer *en vogue*, but which was considered quite important back then. European expansion not only took the form of outright colonisation of exotic regions, but also of the conversion of the 'savages' and 'barbarians' living there to Christianity. The citation accordingly shows that the scholar Lepsius already early in his career understood how to use political arguments in furthering his scholarly aspirations. Soon after the conference, he published a German and an English book in which the same system is outlined in great detail.[10] Moreover, it was soon endorsed by the Church Missionary Society.[11] He also presented the transcription system at a conference in Berlin in 1862, and in the second edition of the English version of his book, published in 1863. This last publication acknowledges the support of the Church Missionary Society on the title page.[12] Now, in 1874, he presented the "Lepsian Missionary Alphabet"[13] to his Egyptological colleagues in London, who unanimously supported his proposal to adopt it for the transliteration of ancient Egyptian. For a while, Egyptologists followed Lepsius, but in subsequent decades, it became clear that the Egyptian script does not include signs for vowels and that there were therefore fundamental problems with Lepsius's transcription system. In 1889, a new system was proposed in the *Zeitschrift für* Ägyptische *Sprache und Altertumskunde*, which comes very close to the one generally in use today, and this soon led to the abolishment of the earlier system.[14] Yet, in 1874, Lepsius carried the day.[15]

Secondly, Lepsius raised the idea of developing a consistently organised hieroglyphic sign list, in which the nature of the hieroglyphic depictions, not the sound values of the signs, should be the point of departure. The sign list should be organised starting with signs depicting human beings, followed by higher and lower animal species, minerals, celestial bodies and earthly phenomena, and objects of all kinds, followed by a category of as yet undetermined signs. In every class the sign numbering should begin from 1.[16]

This idea was carried, and Ludwig Stern was proposed to carry out this task. He effectively started work on this immediately after the conference. Already in 1875, Lepsius was able to publish a booklet entitled *Liste der hieroglyphischen Typen aus der Schriftgiesserei des Herrn F. Theinhardt in Berlin*.[17] This publication offers a catalogue of the typeset cut by the printer Ferdinand Theinhardt, which Lepsius had developed immediately after the return of the

9 Lepsius 1855a, p. 6.
10 Lepsius 1855a; Lepsius 1855b.
11 Solleveld 2020, p. 195.
12 Lepsius 1863.
13 *Report* 1874, p. 57; Douglas (ed.) 1876, pp. 439–441.
14 Brugsch, Erman 1889.
15 For Lepsius's standing among linguists, which lasted until the end of his life, see Richter 2015, pp. 13–21.
16 *Report* 1874, p. 28 and 57; Douglas (ed.) 1876, pp. 441–442.
17 Lepsius 1875a; Janssen 1952, pp. 118–119; Smitskamp 1979, pp. 322–324; Lüscher 2014, pp. 77–79.

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Prussian expedition to Egypt in the late 1840s. By the 1870s, this Theinhardt font had come to be widely used across Europe in many printing houses. However, no overview of all signs included in the typeset was available to Egyptologists. The publication of the *Liste* meant an important step forward in this regard. In the preface of this volume, Lepsius explained:

> *Die Durchführung der Vertheilung in 25 Klassen und der Anordnung im Einzelnen hat für den besonderen vorliegenden Zweck der Liste Hr. L. Stern, Assistant an der ägyptischen Abteilung des Berliner Museums, übernommen, der sich auch bekanntlich der Ausführung der auf dem internationalen Orientalisten-Congreß zu London im vergangenen Jahre gestellten wichtigen Aufgabe der Ausarbeitung einer allgemeinen Sammlung und Anordnung sämmtlicher von den Originalmonumenten bekannten Hieroglyphen unterzogen hat und bereits damit beschäftigt ist.*[18]

The publication of this catalogue offered an overview of the signs to a wide readership, and it was organised in accordance with the proposal put forward at the congress. In subsequent decades, as several signs were reinterpreted, researchers suggested numerous changes to the Theinhardt list. An updated version of it was published in Berlin in 1900, and this for instance formed the basis of Möller's hieratic palaeography,[19] and later of the Gardiner sign list (1927), which is still in general use by Egyptologists.[20] Although current sign lists therefore differ from the original Theinhardt list, their structure still follows the model laid down by Lepsius.

Thirdly, the group decided it was imperative that a full edition be made of "the Bible of the Old Egyptians, the Ritual, as Champollion called it, or the Book of the Dead, as Lepsius styles it, as critical and complete as possible:"

> *In order, however, to render possible the carrying out of such an undertaking, which far transcends the powers of one individual, from a pecuniary point of view, as well as for the purpose of securing for the plan the guarantee of the higher authority, it will be necessary to enlist the support of some National Academy, or some government, or of both. Professor Lepsius expressed his readiness to back such a proposal at Berlin with all his influence.*[21]

A scientific committee was to supervise the work on the Book of the Dead, and if funding could be found, Édouard Naville was proposed to be charged with the task of collecting the source material. On this point, too, the eight men agreed.

These proposals were subsequently presented in the form of three congress resolutions, which were unanimously carried. The conference was a great success for Lepsius's scientific diplomacy.

All of this sounds very modern. What Lepsius was able to achieve was an international network aiming to collaborate on large research themes. This is what researchers in the twenty-first century are doing all the time, but in the second half of the nineteenth century, it was still an approach almost unheard of. Something important was happening in Egyptology and undoubtedly in other disciplines as well. From the perspective of the history of science, it

18 Lepsius 1875a, p. V.
19 Möller 1909, p. V.
20 Gardiner 1927 (ed. 1957), pp. 438–548; *Catalogue des caractères d'impression hiéroglyphiques* 1928.
21 *Report* 1874, p. 28; *Report* 1874, pp. 57–58; Douglas (ed.) 1876, pp. 426–427, 442–443.

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is interesting to investigate under which circumstances Lepsius was able to achieve his aims, and how his initiatives resounded among his colleagues. In this article I will therefore first investigate how the main powers of Egyptology functioned up to the Second International Congress of Orientalists and after. We will then follow, as an example, the scholarly debate on one of the three topics addressed by the 1874 congress resolution: the Book of the Dead. Finally, I will address the interplay between research and politics that I already hinted at before. It will appear that Lepsius's successes cannot be properly understood unless the politics of his day are taken into consideration.

THE EGYPTOLOGICAL 'POWERS' OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Three nations dominated Egyptology at the time: France, Britain and Germany.[22] While it is fully justified to mention them in one breath, it is important to realise the fundamental differences in character of the Egyptologies from these countries. As will appear, Egyptology, small though it was in terms of the number of people involved, played a rather central role in the cultural and even political awareness of the day. This has led to effects that still make themselves felt in twenty-first century Egyptology.

France

In the eighteenth century, the era of the Enlightenment, French culture was characterised by a desire for knowledge. The idea to include a large committee of *savants* in Napoleon's army to record everything recordable in Egypt echoes this mental template and the committee's publications stand in the tradition of earlier French attempts to compile encompassing overviews of knowledge, like Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*.[23]

On 3 Fructidor of year VI of the French revolution, i.e. on 22 August 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte opened the *Institut d'Égypte* in Cairo, of which the members were elected from among the scientific committee. From the outset the institute issued a scholarly journal: *La Décade* Égyptienne.[24] Over the next three years, the scholars and scientists accompanying the French army would publish numerous articles in this periodical, and on 1 Frimaire of year VIII of the revolution (22 November 1799), this led to an invitation to the members of the institute to contribute their work to an encompassing publication.[25] This undertaking would finally result in the publication of the *Description de l'Égypte*.[26] A remark on the introductory pages to

22 In the case of Germany, the term nation is of course incorrect, as the German Empire was created only in 1871; see below.
23 Blom 2005.
24 On the opening of the institute, see Anonymous 1798.
25 Anonymous 1799, p. 300. For the historical context, see Solleveld 2018, pp. 284–285.
26 There are two editions: 1) the imperial edition: *Description de l'Égypte ou recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française publié par les ordres de Sa Majesté l'empereur Napoléon le Grand*, 9 vols. (text) and 11 vols. (plates), Paris, 1809-1830; 2) the édition Panckoucke has the same title except for the last phrase, which is replaced by "*dédié au Roi*", 26 vols. (text), 14 vols. (plates) and 1 vol. (planches in plano), Paris, 1821-1829.

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the second edition of this work—"On aurait pu l'intituler *Encyclopédie de l'Égypte*"[27]—clearly shows the extent to which the *Description* was regarded as the heir to the eighteenth century *Encyclopédie*.

Today, the *Description* is justly renowned as a landmark in the history of scholarship. But it is more than just that. For many years, over 2,000 scholars, draughtsmen, and printers were engaged in the preparation of its publication,[28] which implies the French state was able and willing to invest incredible sums of money in the institutional support of this undertaking. The *Institut d'Égypte* had admittedly been forced to close down after the French defeat in 1801, but the members of the scientific committee of the French army were provided the means to continue their work in France.[29] The French had been militarily defeated in Egypt, but the project of publishing the *Description de l'Égypte* at least gave them the possibility to claim a scientific victory of sorts.[30] With Jean-François Champollion's decipherment of the hieroglyphic script in 1822, France achieved another major feat. In the course of the nineteenth century this led to the sentiment that Egyptology was a "science française", and major efforts were made to maintain this status.[31] The most manifest sign of this attitude was the creation, in 1831, of the only chair worldwide in Egyptology at the *Collège de France*, which was intended for Champollion personally.[32] Apart from this signal event, the presence of Egyptology in French academia did not really take off before the late 1860s,[33] but in other ways the discipline rested on increasingly strong institutional foundations. Enormous sums were provided by the state from the 1820s onwards for the purchase of collections of Egyptian antiquities.[34] Also, starting with the Franco-Tuscan expedition directed by Champollion, the French government sponsored some thirty archaeological missions to Egypt. In the process, Auguste Mariette was introduced to the Egyptian scene in the 1850s.[35]

During their frequent visits to Egypt, the French scholars developed a close relationship with the Egyptian viceregal court. In this context, at the request of Egypt's viceroy Muḥammad ʿĀlī, Champollion in 1829 wrote a document containing detailed recommendations for the conservation of Egypt's monuments. This inspired the viceregal conservation decree issued in 1835.[36] Although this decree did not readily lead to any significant changes, a seed had been sown. In

27 Panckoucke 1821, third unnumbered page at beginning. Cf. Strathern 2007, pp. 423–424.

28 The exact count is not clear. Thompson writes that, "by summer 1809 it had thirty-six salaried personnel …" (2015a, p. 105). Y. Laissus mentions forty-three authors and 294 'graveurs' (2005, p. 215). However, C.L.F. Panckoucke (1821, unnumbered first and second pages) lists no fewer than 63 scientists, scholars and painters, and he states on the third page that work on the preparation of the publication in France had required a staff of two thousand persons.

29 That the disappearance of the institute was not readily accepted in France can be gleaned from a book published in year XI of the revolution, *i.e.* in 1803, two years after the return of the French army: Galland 1803. On its title page, the author is said to be "membre de la commission des sciences et arts, *séant au Kaire*".

30 On the publication of the work and its national appeal, see Gady 2005, pp. 52–60.

31 Gady 1999; Gady 2006, pp. 44–62; Gady 2005, pp. 68–76 and *passim.*

32 Gady 2006, pp. 49–50; Gady 2005, pp. 76–84. Already in 1826 Champollion also had a curatorship and teaching position at the Louvre, where he seems not to have effectively taught, however.

33 Gady 2006, pp. 49–52. In fact, after Champollion's death, there was a brief interlude when there was no academic Egyptology in France at all (Gady 2005, pp. 132–138).

34 Gady 2006, pp. 53–54; Gady 2005, pp. 88–94.

35 Gady 2006, pp. 54–55; Gady 2005, pp. 282–283; Podvin 2020, *passim.*

36 Reid 2002, pp. 54–56; Gady 2005, pp. 125–132, 149–157, 160; Gady 2007; Fahmy 2016, pp. 89–104. In the wake of the release of the decree, mention is frequently made also of the creation of a museum for Egyptian antiquities. However, Gady (2007) has shown there is very little evidence that it really was a functioning institution or that it was frequently visited.

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1858, this ultimately led to the creation of the *Service de conservation des antiquités*, which was later rebaptised *Service des Antiquités.* This institution received not only a French name, but had in fact been founded under strong French pressure, and was also headed by a Frenchman: Auguste Mariette. Since the *Service* was from the outset intended to include a newly created museum, he was also in charge of this crucial institution. The French institutional presence in Egyptology continued to grow.[37]

In the same years, due to private initiatives in which French residents in Egypt played a significant role, attempts were made to revive the institute on Egyptian soil, leading to the reestablishment, in 1859, of the *Institut Égyptien.* It is true that it was not a French institute: it was created under the auspices of the Egyptian viceroy Muḥammad Saʿīd Pasha. However, it had a French name, and it would later even be rebaptised into *Institut d'Égypte*, clearly echoing the name of its Napoleonic ancestor. An explicit link with the earlier institute is that Edmé-François Jomard, a prominent member of Napoleon's scientific committee, was appointed honorary member, and in 1861 even honorary president of the *Institut Égyptien.* The French were moreover strongly represented in the institute's staff.[38]

In histories of Egyptology, these developments are usually approached from a purely internal disciplinary perspective. However, the Egyptological developments interlocked with processes on the international political and commercial scene. In the spring of 1856, at the Conference of Paris, a peace treaty was concluded to end the Crimean War between Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Britain and France. All parties had suffered dearly during this conflict, and the treaty was a give-and-take, leading to a text on the basis of which every government could claim the war had not been fought in vain. The agreement included among other things paragraphs ensuring the rights of the non-Muslim populations within the Ottoman Empire, and the opening up of it to western banking and commerce.[39] This resulted in a rapidly expanding western influence. Egypt, nominally still part of the Ottoman Empire, had already been receptive to such influence before, but the process now gathered momentum.

Particularly under khedive Ismaʿīl, Egypt pursued a policy of modernisation, in which foreign specialists and capital played a central role. In the process, western banks came to play an increasingly strong role, supported by the (French-speaking) mixed courts, which ensured a western-style legal context in which foreign investors could flourish. This led to very large infrastructural projects, like the construction of the Egyptian railway network, or the strong expansion of the sugar cane industry, necessitating a modernisation of the irrigation system and the creation of a network of partly French-built sugar factories across Upper Egypt.[40]

Perhaps the most significant element in this process was the digging of the Suez Canal. In the *Description de l'Égypte* one can already find evidence that the French had the idea of digging a canal through the Suez isthmus.[41] Although the plan never materialised, the idea remained alive. In the years of viceroy Muḥammad ʿĀlī, an hydrological engineer of French

37 Reid 2002, p. 100; Gady 2005, pp. 177–222, 233–236; Podvin 2020, pp. 97–150.

38 Beaucour 1970; Reid 2002, pp. 120–122 and table 10 on p. 303; Gady 2005, pp. 232–233.

39 Figes 2010, pp. 427–428. For the relationship with Egypt, see Laurens 2002, pp. 329–330.

40 Hunter 1998; Bodenstein 2014.

41 Panckoucke 1822, pl. 11 and 13 shows a provisional plan of where the canal should be located, cross-sections of it at different places along its trajectory, and geodetic levels of the Suez isthmus, calibrated to the nilometer on al-Rawḍā island in Cairo.

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extraction, Linant de Bellefonds, worked in many parts of Egypt, i.a. also occupying himself with the planning of the Suez canal.[42] In 1858, these plans finally led to concrete results. With support of the Egyptian viceroy, the French diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps founded the *Compagnie Universelle du Canal maritime de Suez*. Based in Paris, this company succeeded in building the canal between 1859 and 1869, with international partnerships in which French parties and the viceroy were the most important. The French held 52% of the of the shares, the viceroy had 44%.[43]

Meanwhile, there were also strong cultural links between France and the Egyptian viceregal court. The princes that would later become viceroys received part of their training from French teachers or even in France itself.[44] A very major event worth mentioning here was khedive Ismāʿīl's visit to the 1867 World Exhibition in Paris, where he had frequent encounters with Baron Haussmann, who was in charge of the revamping of Paris. This inspired Ismāʿīl to create a 'Haussmannian' new town centre in Cairo, located between the medieval town and the Nile.[45]

In the late 1860s, the opening of the Suez canal marked the apogee of khedive Ismāʿīl's rule, but the large investments required for the modernisation of Egypt had their downside. The money was supplied by European banks, and high interest payments began to put increasing strains on Egypt's finances.[46] Gradually, Egyptian economic assets came in European, mostly British and French, hands. In 1875, Ismāʿīl had to pass his 44% share package in the Suez Canal to the British government in fulfilment of Egypt's debts to that country. From now on, the Canal, the driving force of Egypt's economy, was 52% French and 44% British.[47] But this was not enough to alleviate the debt crisis. In 1876 the crisis came to a head. In a complex game in which Egypt, France and Britain each strove to protect their own interests best, France created the *Caisse de la Dette Publique*, which served to settle Egypt's debts to European investors. The *Caisse* was to include commissioners from France, Britain, Austria and Italy. But it only became fully operational in November 1876, when the British accepted to appoint a British commissioner on the condition that the organisation would be headed by two controllers, one British, the other French, who would at the same time take seat in the Egyptian government.[48] As a result, British and French officials, who were at the same time the most influential cabinet members in the country, could directly interfere in the way the country spent its money. In this constellation, the British provided the Minister of Finance, and the French the Minister of Public Works. This system, called "Dual Control," would remain in place until 1882, when the British-led "veiled protectorate" began, and French influence dwindled.[49]

42 See Linant de Bellefonds 1844 (see https://gallica.bnf.fr/services/engine/search/sru?operation=searchRetrieve&version=1.2&query=%28gallica%20all%20%22linant%20de%20bellefonds%22%29&lang=en&suggest=0); Bierbrier 2012, p. 334. The same interest is found in the writings of Michel Chevalier, an influential member of the Saint Simonian movement (Perry 2019, pp. 120–121).

43 Piquet 2018, pp. 38–41.

44 Abu Lughod 1965, p. 435.

45 Abu Lughod 1965, pp. 439–446; Reid 2002, pp. 215–217; Arnaud 2002.

46 Hunter 1998.

47 Hunter 1998, p. 195; Piquet 2018, p. 41.

48 J. Bouvier offers a fascinating account of the negotiation process (1960, pp. 75–104; see specifically pp. 83–99).

49 Reid 1998, pp. 221–224; Gady 2005, pp. 297–298.

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Although the British won in the long run, the preceding lines have shown how deeply intertwined French culture, commerce, and politics were with Egyptian affairs.[50] The creation of the *Institut Égyptien* and of the *Service des Antiquités*, and the appointment of the Frenchman Auguste Mariette as the first director of the *Service,* are symptomatic of this entanglement, and in this constellation, foreign excavations by nations other than France became almost impossible.[51] In fact, the idea to have Mariette found the *Service des Antiquités* was instilled in viceroy Muḥammad Saʿīd by Egyptian and French officials including Ferdinand de Lesseps, and was strongly supported by emperor Napoleon III.[52] Although formally an Egyptian organisation, the *Service* can at least be said to have been propelled by a strong drive from the side of the French government. This only increased under the Dual Control, when a French minister directed the Ministry of Public Works.[53] Since the *Service des Antiquités* was part of this ministry,[54] the Egyptian antiquities service now not only had a French director, but was part of an Egyptian ministry directed by a French government official.[55]

In 1882, with the establishment of the 'veiled protectorate', the British took on an even stronger role in Egyptian political and economic affairs. Under Consul General Sir Evelyn Baring (later promoted to Lord Cromer), who had formerly been the British financial controller in Egypt, another governmental reform took place. The Dual Control system came to an end. Although the *Caisse de la Dette Publique*, with its British, French, Italian and Austrian commissioners, remained in place, responsibility for the Ministry of Public Works now passed to an Egyptian minister, under whom a British under-secretary of state functioned.[56] Clearly, French influence in Egypt had suffered a blow, but in several domains including Egyptology, France was still in the game, partly due to the fact that the country had developed important new initiatives just before the British takeover. The French president Léon Gambetta intended to regain some of the influence France had lost to Britain. This ultimately did not work out, but an area where France could, and did, grasp the initiative, was the cultural domain.[57] Early in 1881, the French government sent Gaston Maspero to Egypt to found the *École du Caire*, which was later to be rebaptised *Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire.* Maspero became the first director.[58] When Mariette died early in 1881, Maspero took over the directorship of the *Service des Antiquités*, being succeeded as head of the École du *Caire* by Eugène Lefébure.[59] In the same years, the Egyptian government began to develop the idea of creating an organisation aiming to protect medieval Islamic

50 Only a few topics could be discussed here. An overview of the ways in which the French entanglement in Egyptian affairs manifested itself can be found in the contributions in Panzac, Raymond (eds.) 2002.

51 Reid 2002, p. 101; Gady 2005, pp. 230–232.

52 Reid 2002, p. 100.

53 Reid 2002, p. 136; Reid 1998, pp. 219–224.

54 The *Service des Antiquités* was formally integrated in the Ministry of Public Works by the viceregal decree of 7 March 1860, see Fahmy 2016, p. 105.

55 Through this channel, the French government even supplied money to the *Service des Antiquités* at a time the Egyptian khedive was in financial problems: Gady 2005, pp. 305–307.

56 Daly 1998, pp. 239–240; Fahmy 2016, pp. 173–174. French influence in the Ministry nevertheless remained strong: a French secretary general, to whom the director of the *Service* reported, served under the British under-secretary of state (Gady 2005, pp. 371–372).

57 Cf. Pakenham 1991, pp. 128–131.

58 Gady 2005, pp. 311–321.

59 Reid 2002, pp. 172–175; Gady 2005, pp. 322–337. However, unlike Mariette, Maspero only briefly held the directorship of the museum, which in 1883 passed to Émile Brugsch, who, however, was administratively subordinate to Maspero.

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monuments: the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe*. The decree proclaiming its establishment, dated 18 December 1881, was issued before the imposition of British rule, but establishing the committee took time, and it never became as thoroughly French as the *Service des Antiquités* was. The nationality of its members was mixed, including Egyptians, British, French, and an Austro-Hungarian chairman. But French influence was strong.[60]

In the course of the nineteenth century, there had been a growing awareness in France of the desirability of preserving ancient architecture. In 1840, this led to the creation of a *Commission des monuments historiques*. Led by none other than Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, this institution firmly entrenched itself in French society. No comparable organisation existed anywhere in Europe, and when the Egyptian government created the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* it was patterned on the model of the French *Commission*, French was the administrative language it used, and French engineers formed a significant proportion of the members.

From the outset, the structure of the *Service des Antiquités* defined by Mariette had consisted of two *Services*: a *Service de fouilles* and a *Service de conservation des antiquités*.[61] This implies that this organisation, with its strong French character, had already developed a tradition in the field of monument conservation. Conservation architects trained in France would soon play a significant role, for instance in the restoration of Karnak.[62]

Summing up, French Egyptology was, from 1798 onwards, strongly embedded in state-sponsored institutions, and this not only in France, but in Egypt as well. In the late nineteenth century, this process gained even more force when the *École du Caire* was founded. This French institution entertained very close ties with the *Service des Antiquités* and its museum. This explains why French Egyptology was quantitatively the strongest worldwide throughout the nineteenth century. One effect of this is that a large part of the Egyptological literature, in the past, but still today, is in French. Even at a time when Britain became the dominant Western power in Egypt, its main interest was economic and political rather than cultural, and the French position in Egyptology was left intact. In 1904, when Britain and France concluded their *Entente cordiale*, the treaty formalised this situation by including a clause stipulating that the directorship of the *Service des Antiquités* would remain French.[63] Little would change in this until the Egyptian revolution of 1952. Considering the enduring predominance of French Egyptology, it is all the more remarkable that it was almost invisible during the London conference of 1874.

Great Britain

By comparison, Egyptology in nineteenth century Britain was rather amateuristic. Of course, there were many people who took an interest in ancient Egypt, but most had no institutional basis. The best-known British "proto-Egyptologists" were travellers, who often made drawings

60 Reid 2002, pp. 213–237; Fahmy 2016, pp. 133–167.
61 Fahmy 2016, p. 105; Podvin 2020, pp. 109 ff.
62 Reid 2002, p. 196; Fahmy 2016, pp. 192–198, 378–447.
63 Reid 2002, pp. 195–196.

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of and diary accounts about monuments across Egypt. Many of these remain precious testimony of what archaeological sites looked like in the first half of the nineteenth century. The most important explorer of this group was John Gardner Wilkinson, who lived in Egypt for a long time, and included many of his drawings in his *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, a book that was frequently reprinted. Other British travellers, like Joseph Bonomi, Francis Arundale, and Robert Hay, produced similarly fine artwork, much of which remains unpublished until the present day. But they worked on their own, with little or no financial backing, and their impact on the unfolding Egyptological debate was only modest.[64] There were neither academic chairs in Egyptology nor British Egyptological institutes on Egyptian soil.

It is true that the British Museum housed the most important Egyptian antiquities collection in the world, but Egyptian antiquities were initially not a priority for the museum. The first 'institutional' Egyptologists there were Samuel Birch and his successor Sir Peter Le Page Renouf. Birch was trained a sinologist, while Le Page Renouf read Hebrew, but both taught themselves Egyptian and developed into specialists in Egyptian funerary documents. In the case of Birch, care for the Egyptian collection at the British Museum was initially only one of his wide-ranging tasks. After being appointed Keeper of the Department of Antiquities of the British Museum in 1844, and later Keeper of Oriental Antiquities (1866), he gradually began to focus more and more on Egyptian antiquities.[65] Sir Peter Le Page Renouf succeeded him as Keeper of Oriental Antiquities in 1886.[66]

The turning point for British Egyptology came in 1882, when a group of Egyptological amateurs led by the novelist Amelia Edwards founded the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF).[67] Unlike Mariette, his predecessor as head of the *Service des Antiquités*, Gaston Maspero immediately proved receptive to the idea of welcoming British excavators in Egypt, and before long he became one of the vice presidents of the EEF.[68] The choice of the first research area eyed by the new organisation, the eastern Nile Delta, was driven by the desire to find remains that could be related to accounts concerning Egypt in the Old Testament. It is characteristic for the limited degree to which Egyptology had matured in Britain that the person chosen to direct the first EEF excavations was not a Brit, but the Swiss Édouard Naville, whose first work (1885) endeavoured to find the route of the Exodus. Later excavations aimed to trace the location of the "Land of Goshen" and Tall al-Yahūdīya, the "Mound of the Jew".[69] But soon, the EEF also engaged the young, self-taught archaeologist William Matthew Flinders Petrie, whose first excavation for the EEF also concerned an Eastern Delta site. This was Tanis, referred to in the Old Testament as Zoan.[70]

In 1892, Amelia Edwards died. She left a bequest to University College London, which included her significant Egyptological library, and sufficient means to fund the Edwards professorship in Egyptian archaeology, on which Petrie would be appointed in the same year.[71]

64 For a rapid overview over the work of these early British travellers, see Thompson 2015a, pp. 149–171.
65 Bierbrier 2012, p. 59; Thompson 2015a, pp. 210–211; Thompson 2015b, pp. 164–165.
66 Bierbrier 2012, p. 461; Thompson 2015b, pp. 165–166.
67 Thompson 2015b, pp. 12–15.
68 Gady 2005, pp. 352–362.
69 Naville 1887; Naville 1890.
70 Petrie 1885; Thompson 2015b, pp. 15–18.
71 Janssen 1992, pp 1–5; Bierbrier 2012, pp. 172–173; Thompson 2015b, pp. 54–57.

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Finally, British Egyptology had a firm institutional backing, although it depended on private funding. New chairs in government-funded universities would follow in the next decades. It is therefore fair to say that, in the nineteenth century, there was much less government interest for Egyptology in Britain than there was in France. This must have been the main reason why Britain, which dominated Egypt, never came to dominate Egyptology in quite the way France did. These conditions lie in a distant past, but they are not without relevance for understanding Egyptology today. Unlike France, Great Britain never created a full-blown Egyptological institute in Egypt down to the present day, even though there exist such institutes in neighbouring countries, like Jordan and Iraq.

Germany

The German situation was again different. Until 1871, the country did not even exist. Instead, the area now called Germany was a collection of dozens of larger and smaller kingdoms, duchies, counties, and other *Fürstentümer* loosely united in a political alliance called *der Deutsche Bund* (see below). The only really major powers were Austria and Prussia. Like France and Britain, Prussia aspired to found a large Egyptian museum. To this end, it bought the antiquities collection of the horse dealer Giuseppe Passalaqua, who convinced the Prussians that, along with his antiquities, they had to buy him as well.[72] In this way, Passalaqua in 1828 became the first director of the Berlin museum. For a while, Prussian Egyptology consisted only of this still relatively modest collection.

In the 1830s, however, a young specialist in Umbrian inscriptions, Richard Lepsius, gradually came under the spell of ancient Egypt. As a protégé of important men like Carl Josias von Bunsen and Alexander von Humboldt, he was given the opportunity to copy Egyptian texts all over Europe, and, back in Berlin, was introduced at the Prussian royal court.[73] Lepsius understood the art of how to deal with his scientific and royal patrons, and in this way he managed to obtain extensive funding to make his epoch-making journey to Egypt and Nubia.[74] The publication of this undertaking, in the form of the *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien*,[75] was patterned on the *Description de l'Égypte.* More than that, it was intended to surpass the quality of the French work. This intention seems to have been realised not only in the *minutiae* of documentation, but even by something as trivial as the size of the books: the *Denkmaeler* are marginally higher and wider than the plate volumes of the imperial edition of the *Description*.[76]

This is an interesting point. The *Denkmaeler* is of course first and foremost a monument of scholarship. But its publication served at the same time to visibly present Prussia as a scientific rival to France. That such nationalistic competition was taking place in nineteenth century Europe is of course not new. But it is somewhat surprising that this competition between

72 Mehlitz 2011, pp. 202–203. The Berlin Museum also acquired part of the collection Baron Johann von Minutoli had assembled during his expedition to Egypt (1820): see Bierbrier 2012, p. 376.

73 Mehlitz 2011, pp. 25–75.

74 Mehlitz 2011, pp. 77–169.

75 Lepsius 1849-1859.

76 Mehlitz 2011, pp. 220–221. I express my thanks to Wouter Claes for helping me in comparing the sizes of the *édition impériale* of the *Description* and the *Denkmaeler* in the library of the RMAH in Brussels.

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countries made use of a little *Orchidäenfach* like Egyptology. We will see, however, that later in the nineteenth century, Egyptology frequently played this role.

Lepsius must have possessed great diplomatic skills. Besides being offered the opportunity to make his journey to Egypt, he was also appointed to a professorship in Egyptology at Berlin that was especially created for him. The university in fact did not have a budget for this, but the king made the funds available, much to the envy of Lepsius's colleagues.[77] Moreover, once the collection Lepsius had acquired in Egypt arrived in Berlin, Lepsius began to make inroads into the museum where the objects would be displayed.

The director of the Egyptian collection, Giuseppe Passalacqua, was not nicely treated in the process. Although Lepsius initially had no position in the museum, plans for a *Neues Museum* of sufficient size to shelter the Egyptian collection were not discussed with Passalaqua, but with him only. Lepsius, who considered Passalaqua an amateur, apparently did not see anything untoward in this. It is understandable that the two men did not get on very well.[78]

In this connection, it is of importance to briefly recall the 'Brugsch affair'. In 1847, the young Heinrich Brugsch, who still attended secondary school, frequented Passalaqua's Berlin Museum in Monbijou Palace—the *Neues Museum*, where Lepsius's finds would later also be displayed, had not yet been built. Passalaqua soon noticed that Brugsch was an exceptionally gifted young man, and developed a strong affection for him. When an important collection of books on Egypt were put on sale, Brugsch was keenly interested. However, he lacked the means for the purchase. On being informed of this, Passalacqua suggested him to request a stipend from the king, a request which he, Passalaqua, would endorse. The king, however, first asked Lepsius to examine Brugsch's qualities, which led to a rather damaging assessment. The stipend was rejected. It is not unlikely that Lepsius's low esteem for Passalaqua played a role in this. As a result, Brugsch for a while lost his motivation to continue his Egyptological studies, and began to contemplate a more promising career path. Passalacqua, however, took unusual steps to rekindle his pupil's ambitions. He was aware that Brugsch had, as an autodidact, even mastered Demotic and was preparing the first Demotic grammar ever. Passalaqua therefore approached von Humboldt for support. Humboldt obtained a much more positive impression of Brugsch than Lepsius had, and provided the funds for having the Demotic grammar printed. He also circulated it to leading European scholars, including viscount Emmanuel de Rougé in Paris, who was deeply impressed by the work. He even expressed his admiration in a scientific article.[79]

It seems that Lepsius was not amused.[80] Brugsch, of course, was not aware of the tension that was building behind his back. One day in 1848, having just begun his academic studies in Berlin, he wanted to attend a lecture given by Lepsius, but as he entered the lecture hall, Lepsius angrily summoned him to instantly leave the room. In his memoirs, Brugsch remarks that he was surprised and felt deeply humiliated by this treatment, which in fact led to Lepsius being reprimanded.[81] As a result of these events, the relationship between Lepsius

77 Mehlitz 2011, pp. 179–183.
78 Mehlitz 2011, pp. 201–219.
79 For the episodes recounted in this paragraph, see Brugsch 1894 (ed. 2003). For de Rougé's impression of the Demotic grammar, see de Rougé 1848, p. 322 and *passim*.
80 Mehlitz 2011, pp. 183–184.
81 Brugsch 1894 (ed. 2003), p. 52; Mehlitz 2011, pp. 184–185.

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and Humboldt cooled, never to fully recover,[82] and de Rougé's extremely positive reaction to Brugsch's grammar may also have left a scar.

The atmosphere between Lepsius and de Rougé did not improve. In late 1855, a parchment inscribed with a Greek text was offered to the Academy of Sciences in Berlin by the antiquities dealer Constantine Simonides. In the document, a certain Uranios presents an encompassing and unique account of Egyptian history. The manuscript was rather expensive, and when the Berlin Academy of Sciences could not rapidly furnish the sum required, Lepsius provided half the amount from his own pocket. However, the Uranios text was a fake, and when this became known it led to great public exhilaration. According to the diary of Elisabeth, Lepsius's wife, a comedy play about the scandal was even staged in the *Königsstädtisches Theater* in Berlin, in which one of the protagonists was called Lipsius. International scholarship wrote scathingly about Lepsius. This was for instance the case in France. Lepsius's protests, adressed in 1856 to Emmanuel de Rougé, met with a cold shoulder: the irritations about the way Brugsch had been treated, clearly had not yet subsided.[83]

Although there is evidence that Lepsius and de Rougé did entertain social contacts,[84] these interpersonal tensions may have played a part in a debate between de Rougé and Lepsius that would erupt a few years later, and which concerned the correct interpretation of what is today usually called the Book of the Dead.

THE *(GRAND) RITUEL FUNÉRAIRE* AND THE *TODTENBUCH*

The papyri inscribed with these texts had already attracted the attention long before Champollion had deciphered the hieroglyphs. The first 'facsimile' publication of a part of a Book of the Dead appeared as early as 1653, in François de La Boullaye Le Gouz's travel account of a trip he had made to Egypt.[85] Another manuscript, interpreted at the time as 'le calendrier égyptien', was discovered in the late seventeenth century.[86] Such pieces were kept in the *cabinets de curiosités en vogue* at the time.

Many other papyrus scrolls of this type were discovered during Napoleon's campaign to Egypt.[87] Several of these were physically lying on Champollion's desk when he was working

82 In 1855, there was an opportunity to appoint a vice-director at the Berlin Museum. Passalaqua, in tandem with von Humboldt, advanced Brugsch for this position, avoiding to inform Lepsius. With difficulty, Lepsius managed to prevent the realisation of the plan, securing the position for himself (Mehlitz 2011, pp. 213–217).

83 Mehlitz 2011, pp. 262–265. The comedy was written by Ernst Dohm and entitled "Simonides oder die Wissenschaft muß umkehren." Since the *Königsstädtisches Theater* had been closed in 1851, Elisabeth's remark that the play was enacted there must be incorrect (Freydank n.d., https://berlingeschichte.de/bms/bmstext/9810prob.htm). Most likely, therefore, it was staged in the *Königsstädtisches Vaudeville Theater*, which had opened in the Blumenstraße in Berlin in 1855 (http://dictionnaire.sensagent.leparisien.fr/Rudolf%20Cerf/de-de/, accessed 13 July 2021). After having been found out, Simonides had to pay back his money, and tried his luck elsewhere. He i.a. sold forged Greek papyri to the British art collector Mayer (see Peet 1920, p. 1; Bierbrier 2012, pp. 512–513). For this episode, see now also Gertzen 2022, pp. 40–41.

84 Gady 2005, pp. 242–243.

85 De La Boullaye Le Gouz 1653, p. 357; currently papyrus Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 46; for a detailed account, see Lüscher 2017; Lüscher 2018, pp. 6–7.

86 Lüscher 2018.

87 A first example was already published in great detail in 1805: Cadet 1805.

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on the Rosetta Stone, and Barbara Lüscher recently discovered that he made remarkably exact facsimile copies of one of those.[88] Therefore it can cause little surprise that, soon after he had deciphered the principles of hieroglyphics, he immediately attacked these documents.

The ease with which Champollion was able to penetrate their true sense almost instantly after he had deciphered hieroglyphic writing is astounding. In 1823, while he was sailing up the Nile together with Frédéric Cailliaud, he was informed of the discovery of a mummy at Thebes. This mummy, belonging to a man called Petamenope, also contained a small papyrus. In his report, Champollion was able to offer a translation of the document which betrayed a remarkable insight in this type of texts.[89] His translation of the title of the document is impressive: "*Le Livre des portes concernant la manifestation à la lumière*".[90] Today, it would be translated as "The book of the chapters for going out into the day(light)", but considering that hieroglyphic writing had only just been deciphered, this translation is remarkable. Champollion translated the entire document, and remarks in passing that this type of sources was a "*rituel funéraire.*"[91] Unfortunately, he did not explain why he was of this opinion. At the beginning of his account he only points out that these texts consist of "*formules relatives à l'embaumement, au transport des morts dans les hypogées et contenant une foule de prières adressées à toutes les divinités qui pouvaient décider du sort de l'âme …*"[92] Here, he may have been inspired by the frequent vignettes depicting mummies on embalming beds or funerary processions.[93] In this publication, Champollion also refers repeatedly to the three different parts into which the *rituel funéraire* could, in his view, be broken down, and which he subdivided further into paragraphs. He did not specify what these parts were, but he discussed his ideas with Ippolito Rosellini, who later informed Lepsius about them. On this basis we know that the first section corresponded to what is now known as chapters 1 to 15 of the Book of the Dead, the second to chapters 16 to 125, and third to the rest.[94]

The designation *rituel funéraire* also appears in Champollion's catalogue of the Egyptian papyri in the Vatican, published in 1825.[95] His idea that the texts represent a funerary ritual was accepted by the first Egyptologists, for example in Edward Hincks' catalogue of the papyri in Dublin, which appeared in 1843.[96] However, meanwhile a very different interpretation of these texts had been put forward by Lepsius.

In 1836 and 1841, Lepsius visited Turin, where he investigated the late funerary papyrus of a man called Iufankh (Turin 1791), a document of exceptional length which had already been studied by Champollion.[97] In 1842, he published his copy of this document, which he designated as a "*Todtenbuch*": a Book of the Dead.[98] According to Lepsius, the Turin papyrus

88 Lüscher 2018, pp. 24–26, 36–38, pl. 1–12.
89 Champollion 1827, pp. 2– 54.
90 Champollion 1827, p. 22.
91 Champollion 1827, p. 38, 41 and 48.
92 Champollion 1827, p. 22.
93 In what would later be called Book of the Dead chapters 1, 17, 32, 151 and 182.
94 Lepsius 1842, p. 5.
95 Champollion 1825, p. 4 and *passim.*
96 Hincks 1843, *passim*.
97 Lepsius 1842, p. 4; Mehlitz 2011, pp. 42–44; Lüscher 2014, pp. 7–10, 39.
98 Lepsius 1842. Although Hincks 1843, p. 4 shows he was aware of Lepsius's new designation, he did not use it in the rest of the catalogue.

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was the "*bei weitem vollständigste hieroglyphische Exemplar des Todtenbuches, welches bis jetzt bekannt geworden ist*",[99] and he based his subdivision of the *Todtenbuch* into 165 chapters on this document. This subdivision, which replaces Champollion's subdivision in three parts, is generally used until the present day.

The use of the expression *Todtenbuch* instead of Champollion's *rituel funéraire* was not just a matter of words. Lepsius explicitly criticised the idea that these papyri had a ritual function. This is clear already from the first line of his book, where Lepsius writes categorically:

> *Die Ägypter pflegten ihren Todten, außer andern Gegenständen für die lange Reise der Seele nach dem Tode auch eine Papyrusrolle, gleichsam als schriftlichen Paß mit ins Grab zu geben, der ihnen eine günstige Aufnahme an den vielen Pforten in den himmlischen Gegenden und Wohnungen verbürgen sollte.*[100]

Here, there is no longer any reference to ritual writings, but instead of a passport enabling the deceased to enter the netherworld. Lepsius continues:

> *Dieser Codex ist kein Ritualbuch, wofür es Champollion's Bezeichnung "Rituel funéraire" zu erklären scheint; es enthält keine Vorschriften für den Totenkultus, keine Hymnen und Gebete, welche von den Priestern etwa bei der Beerdigung gesprochen worden wäre; sondern der Verstorbene ist selbst die handelnde Person darin, und der Text betrifft nur ihn und seine Begegnisse auf der langen Wanderung nach dem irdischen Tode. Es wird entweder erzählt oder beschrieben, wohin er kommt, was er thut, was er hört und sieht, oder es sind die Gebete und Anreden, die er selbst zu den verschiedenen Göttern, zu welchen er gelangt, spricht.*[101]

This citation shows that, only twenty years after the decipherment of hieroglyphic writing, a fundamental debate had erupted on the function of the Book of the Dead. For Champollion, the texts served a ritual purpose during the funeral. By contrast, Lepsius considered the Books of the Dead as collections of knowledge concerning the mythological world of the hereafter, serving as a passport authorising the deceased to enter the world of the gods. These two poles—a ritual interpretation versus a compendium of mythological knowledge for the deceased—still today dominate the debate on the purpose of Egyptian funerary texts.

However, this polarity should not be regarded exclusively as a difference of scholarly opinion. To a degree, it also reflects how different ways of thinking developed in the emergent francophone and germanophone Egyptological schools.

In the late 1850s, Emmanuel de Rougé studied the numerous funerary papyri in the Louvre, and developed a keen eye for how these texts developed. Without doubt, he was a more gifted philologist than Lepsius and had reached a deep understanding of what his German colleague called the *Todtenbuch*. In 1860, he took up the gauntlet in a very long article published in the

99 Lepsius 1842, p. 4.
100 Lepsius 1842, p. 3.
101 Lepsius 1842, pp. 3–4.

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Revue Archéologique. The title of this work, "*Études sur le rituel funéraire des anciens Égyptiens*", already shows that de Rougé was not convinced by Lepsius's ideas on the *Todtenbuch*.[102] Even though he accepted Lepsius's subdivision in 165 "chapters",[103] he rejected his arguments against Champollion's ritual interpretation. It is not unreasonable to suppose that de Rougé's tense relationship with Lepsius may have nourished his critical attitude to the *Todtenbuch* hypothesis.

According to de Rougé it was essential to pay attention to the numerous variations between the different versions on papyri transmitting the *rituel funéraire*. On this basis he made a fundamental discovery. While he admitted that numerous papyri present the chapters in the order indicated by Lepsius's sequence, he showed that all pertinent documents should be dated to the Saite period or later. This was also the case for the Turin papyrus which Lepsius took as his point of departure. However, de Rougé showed that many other sources were much older, and that all of these present the chapters in different and unique sequences.[104] This led to the insight that a difference must be made between a "Saite recension" of the Book of the Dead, of which Lepsius had published a version in 1842, and a much older "Theban recension", which went back even as far as the Middle Kingdom.[105] Stated differently, Lepsius's ideas concerned a secondary and late reinterpretation of the texts. Moreover, de Rougé correctly noted that many of the late examples bristle with errors.

De Rougé rejected Lepsius's term *Todtenbuch*, and he emphatically argued that Champollion's designation *rituel funéraire* should be retained. He writes:

> *En effet, plusieurs chapitres du livre contiennent des prescriptions pour certaines parties des funérailles ; d'autres prières sont formellement indiquées comme devant être récitées pendant la cérémonie de la sépulture.*[106]

To make his point, de Rougé among other things refers to Chapter 1, which is accompanied by a vignette depicting the funerary procession and rituals carried out on the mummy in front of the tomb. This undeniable fact presents a formidable obstacle to Lepsius's interpretation.

An argument which Lepsius considered vital was that the *Todtenbuch* very frequently features the deceased as the speaker. He considered this fact as definite proof that the texts could not have been used in ritual performance. De Rougé reasoned differently. He writes:

102 De Rougé 1860a. The study was also published as a book, with additional plates: de Rougé 1860b. In what follows, we refer to the former of the two publications. Later, de Rougé (1861-1876) also published a monograph entitled *Rituel funéraire des anciens Égyptiens : texte complet en écriture hiératique publié d'après les papyrus du Musée du Louvre et précédé d'une introduction à l'étude du rituel*. On p. II he repeats the essential elements of his interpretation developed in the earlier article.

103 De Rougé 1860a, p. 70 and *passim*.

104 De Rougé 1860a, pp. 70–71.

105 Admittedly, de Rougé did not yet use the terms "Saite recension" and "Theban recension". The latter term appears for the first time in the circular letter issued by the committee of the International Congress of Orientalists in 1875 (see Lüscher 2014, p. 60). Most of the Theban versions referred to by de Rougé date back no earlier than the early New Kingdom, but in de Rougé 1860a, p. 71 he refers to examples on a coffin in the Louvre which he dates to the XIIth Dynasty.

106 De Rougé 1860a, p. 73.

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Quoique les paroles soient ordinairement mises dans la bouche du défunt, elles étaient certainement récitées pour lui par les assistants ; on voit même, dans la première vignette du livre, un prêtre qui lit le formulaire qu'il tient déployé entre ses mains.[107]

The example of Chapter 1 clarifies his reasoning. In this text, it is the deceased that speaks. For example, he states about himself: "I have departed from here, no blemish having been found in me. The balance was found empty of reprehensible acts on my part".[108] These words undoubtedly mean that the deceased claims to have successfully passed the divine judgement. For Lepsius, the consideration that a dead person is speaking made it inconceivable that these words are part of a ritual. For de Rougé, this objection did not pose an obstacle, since he believed that the deceased speaks, as it were, through the mouth of the lector priest, who is depicted in the vignette to this text. This idea is now almost forgotten, but that does not imply it is wrong. In a recent study, I have presented a large amount of examples that seem to corroborate de Rougé's point of view.[109]

An important effect of de Rougé's article was that French-speaking Egyptologists continued to use Champollion's expression *rituel funéraire* instead of Lepsius's *Todtenbuch*. A clear example of this is the Swiss Egyptologist Édouard Naville. He was a student of Lepsius's, and when he travelled to Egypt for the first time, Lepsius asked him to search for versions of the *Todtenbuch* on the walls of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings. In letters sent from Egypt in 1868, Naville reports on his unsuccessful search, referring repeatedly not to the "Livre des Morts", but to the "Rituel".[110] At this point in his career he did not yet toe Lepsius's line. François Joseph Chabas also used the term, reserving the expression *Todtenbuch* for the papyrus of Iufankh in Turin published in 1842 by Lepsius.[111]

The same happened in Britain. In 1867, Samuel Birch published a translation of the Turin *Todtenbuch*. The title of his chapter, "The Funereal Ritual or Book of the Dead" gives prominence to Champollion's expression (also in the size of the printing), and this term is used throughout in the rest of the chapter. This suggests he sided with Champollion and de Rougé.[112] In an article published in 1882, he still used the term.[113] Peter Le Page Renouf, who was born in Guernsey, and therefore a French native speaker, accepted Champollion's terminology as well.[114]

107 De Rougé 1860a, pp. 73–74; de Rougé 1861-1876, p. II.
108 Lüscher 1986, pp. 62–64.
109 Willems 2019.
110 For a transcription of the relevant passages, see van Berchem 1989, pp. 65–66, 87–88; Lüscher 2014, p. 10.
111 Chabas 1861. The latest examples of the use of the term 'Rituel funéraire' in an Egyptological publication are two isolated references in Dewachter 1986, pp. 32–33 and p. 77. This author seems to consider the papyrus on which the texts were written as a funerary ritual, and the texts themselves as chapters of the Book of the Dead.
112 Birch 1867, pp. 123–133.
113 Birch 1882.
114 Le Page Renouf 1860; Le Page Renouf 1862ab; Le Page Renouf 1863.

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He still used the term "funerary ritual" in Champollion's sense in 1886.[115] Stated differently, the important French-speaking world did not pick up Lepsius's idea, and by implication followed a radically different interpretation of what these texts were about, and Britain followed suit. It should be stressed that the scholars cited here were then the greatest specialists worldwide on this type of texts. In view of his tense relationship with de Rougé, this must have hurt Lepsius.

His reply to de Rougé's article was to come very soon. In 1867, Lepsius published his *Aelteste Texte des Todtenbuchs nach Sarkophagen des altaegyptischen Reiches im Berliner Museum.*[116] This book contains the publication of the Middle Kingdom coffins of Montuhotep and Sobkaa in Berlin.[117] Lepsius had discovered that some texts written on these coffins were very early versions of chapters known from the Todtenbuch. This explains the title of the work. Today, the texts on Middle Kingdom coffins are rather designated as Coffin Texts, but it is true that the CT on the Berlin coffins include numerous texts that would survive in the later Book of the Dead.[118]

In his introduction, Lepsius gives an overview of the debate concerning the *Todtenbuch* that had developed in the course of the nineteenth century. This offers him an opportunity to criticise de Rougé at length.[119] He begins by summarising what he had written already in 1842 on the Turin *Todtenbuch*, adding the conclusion:

> *Diese Ansicht von der Entstehung und dem Inhalte des Werkes hat sich seitdem hinreichend bestätigt und wird wohl von niemand mehr bezweifelt.*[120]

This statement is clearly disingenuous. It is true that other German Egyptologists, like Heinrich Brugsch, had come to adopt the term *Todtenbuch*,[121] but we have seen that French

115 In the preface to Birch 1886. This is the publication of the Middle Kingdom coffin BM 6654 = de Buck T1L in that scholar's edition of the Coffin Texts (for the key to the siglum, see Willems 2014, pp. 306–307). Le Page Renouf was aware of the fact that the texts on coffin T1L stood in the tradition of the earlier Pyramid Texts, which had just been discovered, and which were being published in a series of articles by Maspero, which started in 1882. Le Page Renouf refers to these texts as "the primitive Egyptian Ritual". Although he is here not referring to texts of the *Todtenbuch*, the Pyramid Texts were then, and are still, generally considered as precursors of the Book of the Dead. Therefore, Le Page Renouf was clearly, still in 1886, of the opinion that this type of texts offers a rendering of a ritual. However, in two earlier articles he had also used the term Book of the Dead (le Page Renouf 1884; 1885a-b).

116 Lepsius 1867.

117 Mentuhotep's coffins (Berlin 9-11) had been discovered during Passalaqua's 1823 excavations in the Assāsīf in Western Thebes. Despite Lepsius's low opinion on Passalaqua, Passalaqua's report is of a quality superior to what was customary in the early nineteenth century (1828, pp. 117–138). While Lepsius offered a detailed publication of the texts on the inside of the coffins, the rest of their decoration and the archaeological context were also published by Steindorff 1896. For the coffin of Sobk-aa (Berlin 45), see Steindorff 1901, pp. 1–10.

118 In Adriaan de Buck's publication of the Coffin Texts on these coffins, those of Mentuhotep are designated as T1Be, T2Be and T5Be. The coffin of Sobk-aa bears the siglum T3Be. For these sigla, see Willems 2014, pp. 304–305. As was pointed out in n. 105, Lepsius was not the first to point out the existence of these early precursors, as de Rougé had already seen in 1860 that such early versions exist.

119 Lepsius 1867, pp. 1–26.

120 Lepsius 1867, pp. 1–2.

121 In a private letter to Brugsch, written on 11 June 1869, Naville also used it (see van Berchem 1989, p. 140). It should be noted that in this letter written in French, only this word is written in German. Naville may not have bothered too much, doubtless being aware that the German recipient of his letter routinely used it.

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and British Egyptologists still widely spoke of the *rituel funéraire* and its variants at the time Lepsius wrote these words.

De Rougé had based his idea that the texts render a funerary ritual primarily on Chapter 1, with its vignette which displays a funerary procession. He also referred to a number of spells containing postscripts which explain that the text should be recited over a mummy amulet. Lepsius disagreed.[122] As regards the relevance of the vignettes to Chapter 1, his criticism is verbose, but not easy to comprehend. As regards the second point, he correctly criticised the fact that de Rougé had not specified which chapters he was referring to, but he assumed that de Rougé was referring to Chapters 155–160, which are accompanied by postscripts of the kind here discussed. Lepsius repeats what he wrote already in 1842: according to the postscripts, it is the deceased that speaks, and therefore the texts cannot be of a ritual nature. However, he did not even mention de Rougé's alternative explanation that priests could have recited the texts in the name of the deceased. He keeps emphasising that as the deceased is the speaker, no ritual can be intended, and concludes about the postscripts:

> *Die Texte*[123] *an die sich die genannten Klauseln*[124] *anschliessen, enthalten in der That keine einzige Vorschrift, haben in keinem Theile des Todtenbuches irgend etwas zu thun mit dem was der Verstorbene oder die Priester, oder die Nachgelassenen zu vollbringen haben; sie enthalten nur Anreden des Verstorbenen selbst an die Götter der Unterwelt, die er nach seinem Tode spricht. … Es wird kein Priester genannt, der eine Ceremonie zu verrichten, ein Amulett zu weihen, ein Kapitel vorzulesen habe.*[125]

A final argument is that a ritual according to Lepsius presupposes a strictly prescribed sequence of action, and that, therefore, a ritual handbook should follow a similarly strict sequence.[126] We will return to this claim below.

Taking all together, Lepsius's criticism either avoids entering into a real debate with de Rougé's argumentation, or resorts to apodictic claims that are not always based on evidence. So an argumentative stalemate was reached between the French, who continued to use Champollion's term *rituel funéraire*, and German Egyptologists, who used the term *Todtenbuch* and interpreted the texts in a totally different way.

All of this changed in 1874, during the Second International Congress of Orientalists, which unanimously endorsed Lepsius's proposals, including the idea that he would approach the Prussian authorities to find funding for the project of publishing the *Todtenbuch*. According to an article published in 1875, Lepsius obtained this funding almost immediately.[127]

122 Lepsius 1867, pp. 2–3.
123 I.e. the chapters of the *Todtenbuch*.
124 I.e. the postscripts.
125 Lepsius 1867, pp. 5–6. It is somewhat contradictory that he on pp. 3–4 nevertheless assumes that the postscripts to Chapters 155–162 *are* ritual instructions. These passages state that the chapters should be recited over a mummy amulet that is placed on the mummy on the day of burial. According to Lepsius, this can only mean that a person recited these texts over his own amulets while still alive, and that the amulets were then placed on his mummy after his death. Although this is not how Egyptologists would interpret such passages today, even Lepsius's interpretation implies the texts had a ritual function, something he strongly disagreed with.
126 Lepsius 1867, pp. 6–7.
127 Lepsius 1875b.

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In December of the same year, the organising committee of the International Congress of Orientalists sent a circular letter to Egyptologists in different countries stipulating the details of the project.[128] As had been decided already during the congress, Édouard Naville was appointed to carry out the work. The text of the letter is mostly an expanded version of the accounts published in the *Transactions* of the 1874 congress,[129] but there were some small but significant changes. During the congress, the text was still referred to as "the Ritual, as Champollion called it, or the Book of the Dead, as Lepsius styles it" (see n. 21), but the circular letter instead speaks of the "*livre que Champollion avait désigné du nom de* ***Rituel funéraire*** *et qu'on appelle maintenant le* ***Livre des Morts***", suggesting the debate was now settled. Also, a supervisory committee was appointed, which besides Lepsius and Naville included Samuel Birch and the Frenchman Chabas. De Rougé, who had recently died, could of course not be invited, but it can be doubted he would have been asked if this would still have been possible. Instead, de Rougé's successor Gaston Maspero, another first rank French philologist, could have been asked. However, the French member chosen for the committee was Chabas, a former student of Lepsius. Chabas had published important work on the *rituel*, and so, from a scientific point of view, this choice was certainly justifiable. However, Chabas had no academic affiliations.[130] Unlike Birch, who, through the British Museum, was able to contribute materially to the project, Chabas would therefore not have been able to supply such support. This raises the suspicion that institutional French Egyptology was less welcome.

Naville rapidly set to work, and in 1886 he published his seminal *Das Todtenbuch der alten Ägypter*.[131] As the title demonstrates, Naville, who had earlier spoken of the *rituel funéraire*, after his appointment under Lepsius's wings crossed sides and became an ardent defendant of the *Todtenbuch* hypothesis. In the third volume of his work, he briefly addresses this issue, repeating the point of view Lepsius had published in 1867.[132] This is what Naville has to say about the matter:

> *Und ohne Zweifel haben wir im Todtenbuch nicht das, was ein Ritual bildet. Es ist kein Buch, welches die bei der Ausübung eines Cultus zu beobachtenden Ceremonien vorschreibt. Die seltenen Angaben dieser Art, welche sich finden, genügen nicht um den von Champollion gewählten Titel zu rechtfertigen. Allerdings heißt es z.B. im 1. Kapitel, diese Worte sollen am Tage der Bestattung gesprochen werden; auch stellen die Vignetten dazu den Leichenzug dar. Aber man lese den Text und man wird darin vergebens eine Anspielung an irdische Vorgänge suchen. Es findet sich darin keine Vorschrift über die Ordnung der Ceremonie und über das, was dabei gethan oder gesagt werden soll.*[133]

The passage in roman denies that the *Todtenbuch* had a ritual function. But in the underscored passage, Naville had to admit this is nonetheless the case in Chapter 1. He does the same in regards of chapters concerning the application of amulets to the mummy. Yet, according to

128 This document was recently republished: Lüscher 2014, pp. 59–62.
129 Douglas (ed.) 1876.
130 Bierbrier 2012, pp. 112–113.
131 Naville 1886, vol. I.
132 Naville 1886, vol. I, pp. 18 ff.
133 Naville 1886, vol. I, p. 19.

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him, this is insufficient. Other reasons are given as well, but they completely conform to the by now familiar points of views of Lepsius:

1. the deceased is the speaker so this cannot be a ritual (pp. 19–20);
2. priests are not mentioned (pp. 19–20);
3. in a ritual, priests would be the acting persons, in the *Todtenbuch* the actors are gods (pp. 20–21);
4. the action is said to take place in "Amenthes", the realm of the dead (pp. 20–21);
5. the organisation of the *Todtenbuch* does not conform to a fixed sequence (pp. 21–23). From this, Lepsius had concluded it could not be a ritual manual. Naville mentions the irregularity, but does not draw any conclusion from it. It is however likely that he means to say the same thing.

It is noteworthy that neither Lepsius nor Naville really address the strong arguments adduced by de Rougé. We have seen that he adduced an argument against point 1), but neither Lepsius nor Naville even mentions it. It now seems likely, however, that de Rougé's argument—the most crucial one!—is highly relevant (see ad n. 109). Points 2) and 3) are interrelated. Naville points out that during funerary rituals, one of the officiants approaching the deceased wore a jackal mask. Whereas, according to him, no such priest is ever mentioned in the *Todtenbuch*, the texts do frequently feature the god Anubis approaching the deceased, and therefore it cannot be a ritual (p. 20). This is a crucial example. Lepsius and Naville were clearly not fully aware of a feature in Egyptian rituals that is now well accepted. Rituals are acts in the real world, but they serve to transform earthly realities into mythological ones. The priest is wearing an Anubis mask to signify his identity with the god in the course of the ritual. It is quite common for priests to play divine roles. Since, in the pragmatic context of the ritual, the officiant *is* a god, a text about gods might at the same time concern priests. This does not mean that all gods mentioned in funerary texts are priests, but it cannot be concluded either that a text about deities is incompatible with a ritual function.[134] Point 4) assumes that "Amenthes", i.e. *ỉmn.t.t* "the West", always designates the netherworld. The word often has that connotation, but it only came to do so because the west was (ideally) the location where tombs were located, and this is as much an earthly region as the empire of the dead. Finally, the point that rituals conform to a strict scenario, and that a ritual recitation would have to display an equally rigid sequence, a point that has long haunted Egyptology, is highly questionable.[135] Rather, rituals are a very dynamic form of human behaviour.

The implication is that none of the arguments put forward by Lepsius and repeated by Naville are compelling. Lepsius, of course, only published one source of the *Todtenbuch*, and therefore it is understandable that he did not have a complete overview of the evidence. In Naville's case, however, the situation is different. His work was based on no fewer than seventy-seven manuscripts. The titles or postscripts in many of these include explicit references to rituals. In some cases, it is stated that the text should be recited over an amulet that is being attached to a mummy (1). In other cases, texts are said to be for recitation over a drawing of the deceased,

134 The very purpose of the *ɔḫ.w* rituals is to integrate the deceased into the divine world, which is done by priests. For this fundamental principle, see Assmann 2002, pp. 13–37.

135 Willems 1996, pp. 8–10; Willems 2016, pp. 134–140.

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or of certain deities, or over statuettes or sacred objects, for the benefit of the deceased (2). Or the text is said to be recited while the mummification bed is to be erected or lifted up (3). Yet other texts are for recitation during lunar festivals (4), or were recited as a mummy was erected in front of the tomb, or during the Opening of the Mouth ritual, which took place there (5). Other ritual acts are the funerary procession (6), lighting torches and extinguishing torches in milk (7), recitations while passing gates with an image of the deceased (8), or recitation during the act of kneeling down for a god (9). In Naville's own publication, no fewer than twenty-eight chapters can be found, which contain such explicit references to ritual use, and many of these occur frequently in different sources.[136] It should be added that in numerous other manuscripts that have become known since, such ritual indications have also turned up. Of course, Naville could not have known about these particular instances, but the chapters just referred to offer more than sufficient evidence to substantiate that at least a significant part of the *Todtenbuch* was of a ritual nature. Moreover, while it is true that about one hundred and fifty chapters published by Naville had no postscripts suggestive of a ritual function, that does not imply the texts did not serve such a purpose. Postscripts are not an obligatory part of the chapters in the *Todtenbuch*. They are frequently omitted, although they often surfaced as new sources were documented.[137] Moreover, Naville only published manuscripts of New Kingdom date; but in later sources, postscripts referring to ritual acts are very common.[138]

Since Naville must have known very well how common ritual prescriptions are in the *Todtenbuch*, it is hard to understand why he downplayed the importance of this fact. Perhaps it was difficult for him, as an assistant to Lepsius, to do otherwise. But the fact remains that their conclusion was ill-founded.

Whether or not they were right did not matter anymore, however: Lepsius and Naville were on the winning side. After Naville had published his monumental work, the words *Todtenbuch*, *Livre des Morts*, or Book of the Dead became commonplace, as they remain today. The term *rituel funéraire* was soon forgotten.

The question is *why* Egyptologists across the board came to accept Lepsius' approach. A—naïvely idealistic—view is that debates among scholars are decided exclusively by scientific arguments, but no such thing happened here. The French point of view had the better arguments, or was at least based on arguments that Lepsius and Naville failed to address. Yet it was somehow simply overruled. But since France had always been the leading nation in Egyptology, how was this possible? I think the answer is that the Germans won because, in 1874, they had the power and the money.

Here we have to dwell briefly on European political history and the role of Egyptology in this connection.

136 Examples of case 1) are Chapters 30B, 100, 155, 156, 160; 171, 175; of case 2), Chapters 130, 133, 134, 151; of case 3), Chapters 169–170; compare Chapter 182; of case 4), Chapters 141–143; of case 5), Chapters 23 178; of case 6), Chapter 1; of case 7), Chapters 137A-B; of case 8), Chapter 147; of case 9), Chapters 183–185. Unclear ritual practices are alluded to in the postscripts to Chapters 71 and 125.

137 For instance, in Erik Hornung's translation of the texts, which also focuses exclusively on New Kingdom source material, ritual postscripts also appear in Chapters 13, 89, 135, 144, and 148 (Hornung 1990).

138 This is for instance the case in several of the so-called "Chapitres supplémentaires au Livre des Morts" published by Pleyte (1882).

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As noted before, Germany had never been a unified country. It was rather a collection of rural states of different kinds and sizes, which had, since the Treaty of Vienna in 1815, been loosely united in what was called *der Deutsche Bund*, in which Austria-Hungary was the most prominent state.[139] However, by the 1860s, the Prussian chancellor Bismarck pursued a successful policy aiming to increase Prussia's power in the *Deutsche Bund*. In his approach of the many different German principalities, he mastered an array of forms of political manipulation, ranging from hectoring to flattery to *divide et impera*. To assert Prussian predominance, brutal military force was not shunned. In 1864, he instigated a war over Danish attempts to include Schleswig-Holstein, with its large German-speaking population, in the kingdom of Denmark. A German force led by Austria and Prussia defeated the Danes.[140] This process left the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia the dominant states in the *Deutsche Bund*. By defeating Austria in the war of 1867, Prussia became the uncontested leader of the germanophone world.[141] Subsequently, Bismarck succeeded in uniting the German principalities behind Prussia in the ambition of defeating a common extraneous enemy. This enemy was France.

In 1870, war erupted between the united German armies and the French, who suffered a humiliating defeat in 1871. This was Bismarck's moment of glory. The French emperor Napoleon III lost his throne, and was replaced by Adolphe Thiers, who had led the peace negotiations with Bismarck and was later in 1871 elected the first president of the Third Republic. The peace negotiations had disastrous consequences for France, which had to pay a war indemnity of five billion francs in five years to Germany.[142] Meanwhile Bismarck achieved the greatest success of his career by subordinating the noble heads of all of the German principalities to Wilhelm I, the king of Prussia, who in the process became the first German Emperor. His coronation took place on 18 January 1871 in the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles, as German artillery was shelling Paris.[143]

It is interesting to see Lepsius's reactions to these events. Already early in the war, he wrote to Naville:

> *Mit bloßen Niederlagen und tausendfacher Schmach kommt aber Frankreich dies mal nicht davon. Wir hätten diesen blutigsten Völkerkrieg nicht, und Europa hätte längst gesicherten Frieden, wenn man 1815 seine Schuldigkeit gethan hätte*[144] *und nicht der thörigsten Meinung gewesen wäre, ein Dynastienwechsel könne die […] übermutige Natur der Franzosen im Zaume halten. … Der Europäische Frieden hängt allein von Frankreichs materieller Schwächung ab. Elsaß und Lothringen müssen zu uns, nicht bloß weil sie einst schnöde geraubt wurden und noch jetzt in Sitte und Sprache Deutsch sind, sondern vielmehr noch, weil Straßburg, Metz, Théonville, etc. zu ihnen gehören, weil sie diesseits der wirklich natürlichen Grenzen, die unser Land schützen, … liegen.*[145]

139 Simms 2004.
140 Green 2004, pp. 82–84; Steinberg 2011, pp. 210–223.
141 Green 2004, pp. 85–86; Steinberg 2011, pp. 246–257.
142 Wawro 2009, pp. 300–306.
143 Wawro 2009, pp. 282–283; Ullrich 1997 (ed. 2007), pp. 19–26; Steinberg 2011, pp. 289–311.
144 I.e. in drafting the Treaty of Vienna, which defined the borders of post-Napoleonic Europe.
145 Letter dated 30 August 1870, from Lepsius to Naville, Bibliothèque de Genève, Manuscrits et archives privées Ms. Fr. 2527 (Mehlitz 2011, p. 312; for the archival fonds, see https://archives.bge-geneve.ch/wform/wform/recapitulatif/278/75d7a3e0e5469330b5ac1b7082c77615/n:74).

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A few months later, this is precisely what happened. France lost Alsace Lorraine to the German Empire. Perhaps surprisingly, all these events had momentous consequences for German Egyptology.

Already since the late 1860s, the young discipline had been expanding fast. Since 1846, the chair held by Lepsius had been the only professorship in Egyptology in Germany, but in 1867, a second had been created in Göttingen for Heinrich Brugsch.[146] In 1870 a third followed in Leipzig for Ebers.[147] 1872, after the founding of the German Empire, saw the creation of two new chairs. The first was the one in Heidelberg, which went to Eisenlohr.[148] The second went to Dümichen, whose post was in Strasbourg.[149]

The timing and location of this second appointment must have been politically motivated. Strasbourg had until 1871 been part of France, and was only incorporated in Germany after the French defeat. Immediately after this, a new university was founded here, significantly named after the German emperor who had been insultingly crowned at Versailles: The Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität Strasburg.[150] On the instigation of Bismarck himself this university was created to assert German presence in Alsace Lorraine and the ambition was to establish it as one of the front-ranking German universities. It excelled from the start in exotic disciplines like Sanskrit and Egyptology, and the latter was probably meant as a typically Bismarckian humiliation of the French. France, the leading nation in Egyptology, had to relinquish a part of its territory, and precisely here Germany created a leading German Egyptological institute.[151]

Funding, of course, was not a problem. France had to pay its 5 billion francs to Germany, which suddenly had enough money to finance all kinds of new initiatives.[152] Lepsius must have been very well informed about this. Heinrich Abeken, who had been a member of the team he had led into Egypt years before, had meanwhile become assistant to Bismarck and he was also close to the emperor.[153] Through this connection Lepsius must have known almost first-hand what policies were being developed in the highest circles, and he must have been well-placed to explore the channels to obtain a share of the finances. Late in 1873, he gave the impetus to a reform program of the Prussian Academy of Sciences. He did not use this only for Egyptological purposes. Rather, he strategically developed a wide-ranging scheme from which the whole Academy of Sciences was to benefit, and which incidentally also led to the creation of the German Archaeological Institute, with its two first branches in Italy and Greece.[154] But for Egyptology, there was sufficient money as well, as Lepsius knew very well. Meanwhile, the French government did not have a franc to spare. Undoubtedly this explains why hardly any French participants were present in London.

It was under these circumstances that Lepsius launched his three plans during the meeting in Samuel Birch's house. When he suggested to his colleagues that he could ask his government

146 Bierbrier 2012, p. 84.
147 Bierbrier 2012, p. 170.
148 Bierbrier 2012, p. 175.
149 Bierbrier 2012, p. 164.
150 Roscher 2006, pp. 41–62. As Stephan Roscher describes, the creation of this German university had already before the war been an ideal widely shared among German academia.
151 Roscher 2006, pp. 170–171.
152 Mehlitz 2011, pp. 267, 274–275.
153 Mehlitz 2011, pp. 273–274.
154 Mehlitz 2011, pp. 266–276.

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if it would support his research plans, he must have known already he was likely to get this funding, and that neither France nor Britain would be able to do the same. Less than a year after, Naville embarked on his work. This implied he had to carry out Lepsius's agenda, being to prepare the publication of the Book of the Dead. Meanwhile, de Rougé had died, and Champollion's idea that these funerary texts were of a ritual nature receded into oblivion, without serious attempt to investigate it. The first article Naville published, already in 1873, no longer concerned the *rituel funéraire*, but the Book of the Dead. Of course, Naville may already have known at the time that Lepsius was creating a job for him.

It is not quite clear where the name Book of the Dead advocated by Lepsius came from in the first place. In a recent book, Stephen Quirke relates the term to the phrase *kutub al-amwāt*, "Books of the Dead" used by inhabitants of Qurna to refer to papyri found on mummies.[155] However, Lepsius coined the term before he had ever set foot on Egyptian soil, so this cannot explain the origin of the word *Todtenbuch*.

Almost a century and a half after the London conference, it is becoming clear that many chapters of this compilation of texts were ritual texts after all. It is true that—following in the footsteps of Lepsius—many Egyptologists still find it hard to accept that chapters in which the deceased is speaking in the first person singular, could have a ritual purpose. These texts are for this reason frequently referred to as "Totenliteratur", i.e. literature meant for being read by the deceased.[156] However, many of these texts have postscripts indicating that they were recited in a ritual context, for instance over a mummy amulet. These postscripts sometimes indicate exactly how the amulet should be attached, and cases are known where the real objects were found on bodies in precisely the locations specified by the postscripts.[157] In these cases the ritual had clearly been carried out in accordance with the prescriptions. This is unequivocal evidence that a text being written in the first person is no valid argument against the ritual hypothesis (see in detail the article cited n. 109). The name Book of the Dead is therefore certainly not an improvement over Champollion's *rituel funéraire*. If the choice should be between these two, then *rituel funéraire* should definitely be preferred.

However, this is not a completely accurate name either. The texts found on these papyri are probably mostly ritual in nature; this is true. However, they do not derive from one ritual, but from numerous different ones, and many of these were originally not meant for funerary purposes. Some were used for ritual practice during lunar festivals. Others are explicitly said to have been used for royal rituals. And many other usages are referred to in the postscripts to these texts. Their funerary use is therefore often of a secondary nature (n. 109).

So, while Champollion's terminology is much to be preferred to the one invented by Lepsius, it does not cover the proper meaning of these texts either. For this reason, it would perhaps be best to discard both terms, and replace them by the term the ancient Egyptians themselves used: "Coming forth by Day" (*prỉ.t m ḥrw*). This idea was already promulgated in the title of Wallis Budge's translation of these texts, published for the first time in 1898.[158] Wallis Budge was right, of course, and so was Stephen Quirke, who used the title "Going out

155 Quirke 2013, p. vii; Scalf 2017, pp. 22–23.
156 The term derives from Sethe 1931. There are numerous accounts of this term; see, e.g., Assmann 2001, pp. 321–348.
157 E.g., Žabkar 1985.
158 Budge 1898. See also Allen 1974.

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in Daylight" for his recent translation of these texts (n. 155). But although I strongly advise researchers to follow in the footsteps of Budge and Quirke, I am not very confident that my advise will resonate among Egyptologists. The force with which Lepsius was able to impress his vocabulary on Egyptology leaves little room for doubt that the inappropriate "Book of the Dead" is the term that will survive.

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