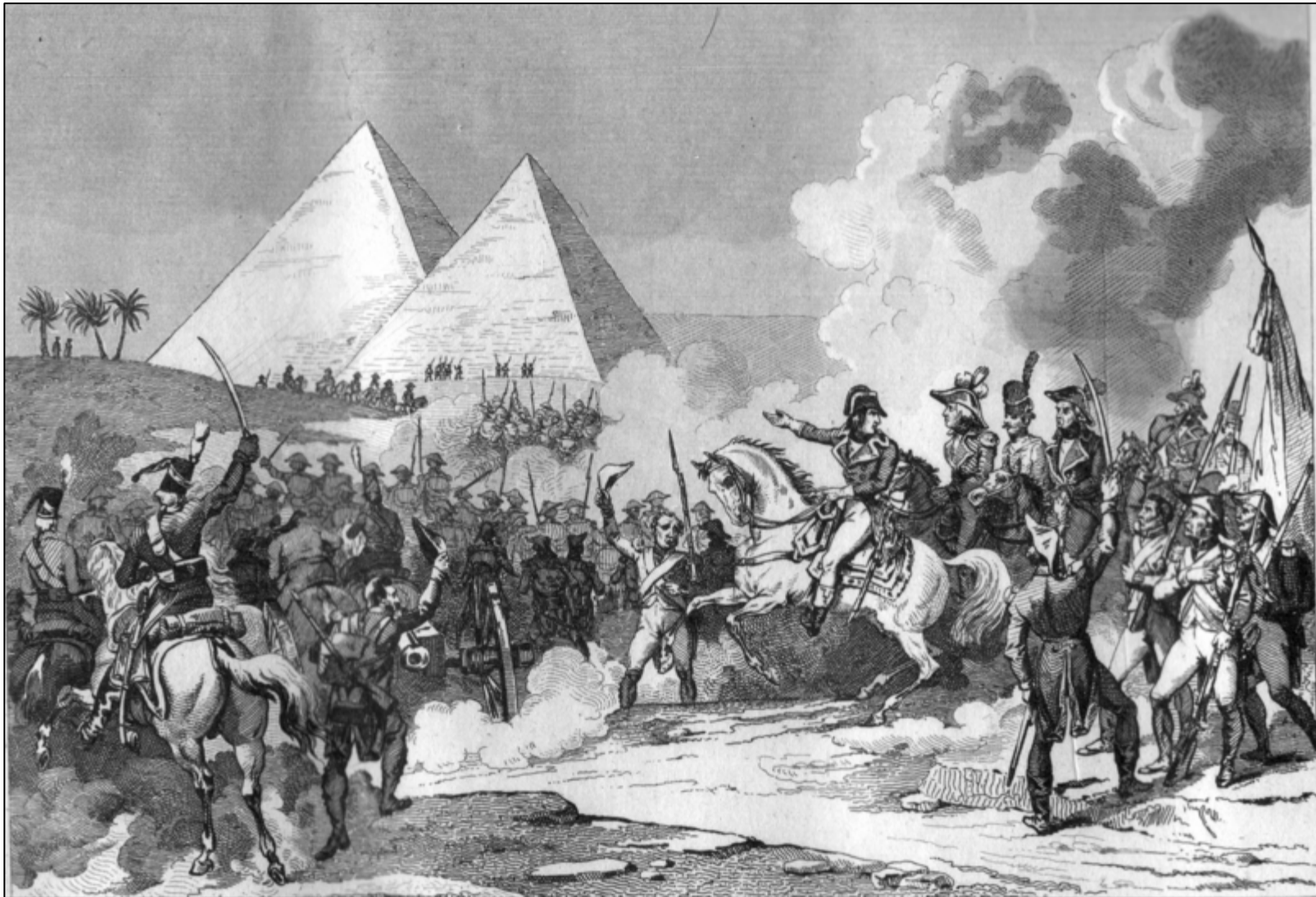


Bonaparte in Egypt (Pyramids at the Louvre)





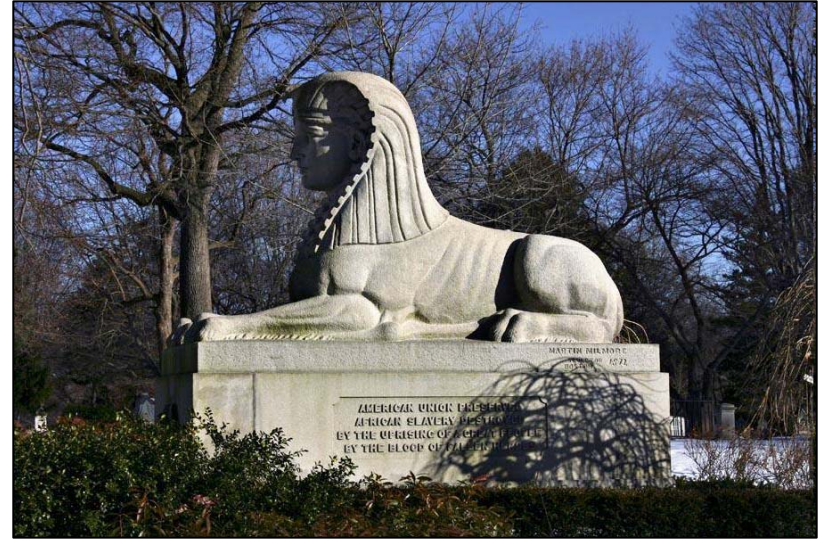
“Battle of the Pyramids,” from *Histoire des armées françaises* (1835)

French Army of the Orient attacked Mamelouk Egyptian forces, 3 thermidor VI (21 July 1798)

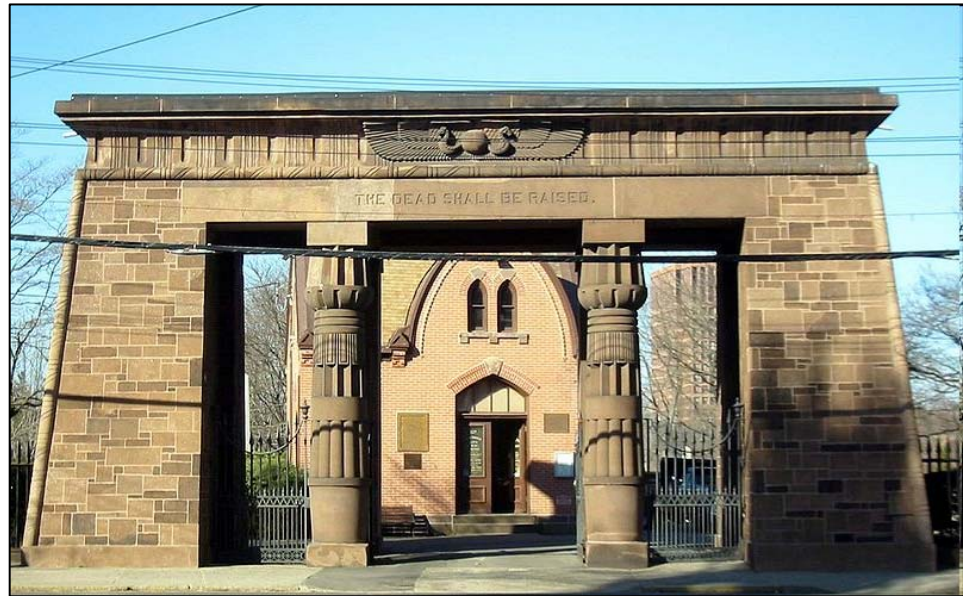
Bonaparte in Egypt: in the history books



Bonaparte in Egypt: in the decorative arts



Thomas Hope, *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* (1807).



Egyptian Revival: in England and New England

The French in Egypt, 1798-1801

36,000 land troops

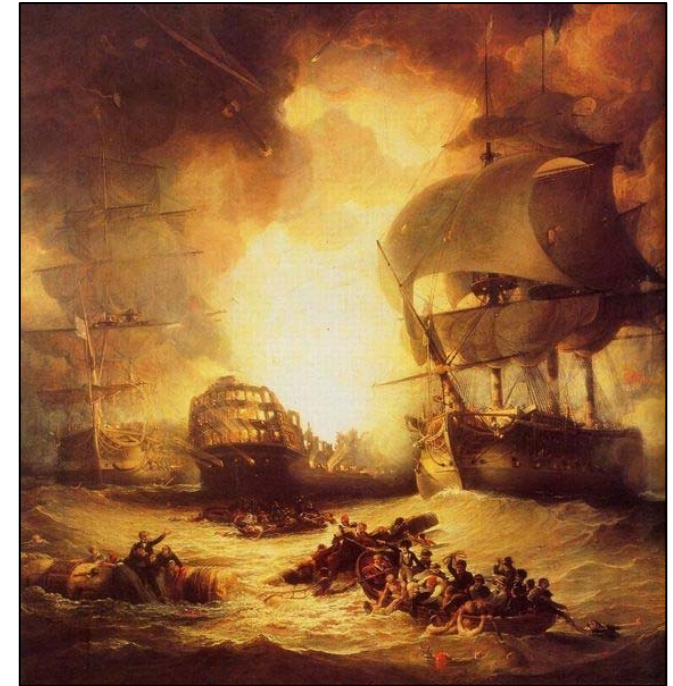
276 officers

28,000 infantry; 2,800 cavalry; 2,000 artillerymen

1,157 military engineers

15,000 sailors

approx. 200 scientists, writers, and artists



George Arnald,
The Battle of the Nile (1827)

1798: the invasion of Britain



Sept. 1797, *fructidor coup*
late 1797, Peace of Campo Formio
spring 1798, Jacobin election victories
May 1798, Bonaparte embarks for Egypt



Why Egypt?

“Among the sites likely to strike and astonish the European traveler arriving in Africa, few are as suited to this task as Alexandria. The name, which reminds us of the genius of a man justly famous; the location, which is so picturesque; the palm trees that rise like parasols and those open houses that seem not to have a roof... all this lets the traveler know that he is in another world. When he comes down to earth, a crowd of unknown objects assails all his senses...”

Volney, *Voyages in Egypt and Syria* (1787),



Perspective view of Alexander's superb palace in Egypt
(L. Mt. Vanier del. et sculp. 1762)



Volney's tombstone, Père Lachaise Cemetery, 1820

Marigny, *Histoire des arabes* (1750)

de Tott, *Memoires sur les turcs* (1785)

Volney [CF de Chasseboeuf],
Voyages in Egypt and Syria (1787)

Why Egypt?



“Arrival of Bonaparte in Egypt”

“What finer enterprise for a nation which has already given liberty to Europe and freedom to America than to regenerate a country that was the first home to civilization ... and to carry back to their ancient cradle, the arts, sciences, and industry...”

Colonial Commission (Council of 500), April 1798.

“Europe is too small; great reputations can only be made in the Orient.”

Bonaparte, cited in the *Souvenirs historiques* of Elie Krettly, a captain in his forces.

Why Egypt?



“Soldiers! You have come to these lands in order to pull them from barbarism, to bring civilization to the Orient, and to free this beautiful part of the world from English control. We are going into battle. Remember that from the top of these monuments, forty centuries are watching you...”
Bonaparte to the French troops, July 1798.



Why Egypt?

Egypt in the Ottoman Empire

Ottoman Empire, c. 1300-1923

1453 conquest of Constantinople

1512-1520 conquest of Egypt

1520-1566 Suleiman the Magnificent

1683 second siege of Vienna

alliances with Louis XIV and Louis XV

mamelukes—enslaved Orthodox Christians (from Armenia, Georgia, etc.)

trained as soldiers and then freed;



“Constaninople: A city in Romania and the capital of the Turkish Empire” (Paris, 1760)



"The people of Egypt are most wretched. How will they not cherish the liberty we bring them?"

Army engineer Jean-Honoré Say, 1798.

"The people live in adobe huts; but Bonaparte will without doubt put an end to this state of affairs. Prosperity, the daughter of liberty, will allow them to abandon their hovels..."

Bernoyer, the quartermaster, writing to his wife.

"People of Egypt: you should administer yourselves. Let the wisest, the most learned, and the most virtuous govern and the people will be happy."

Bonaparte's proclamation to the Egyptians.

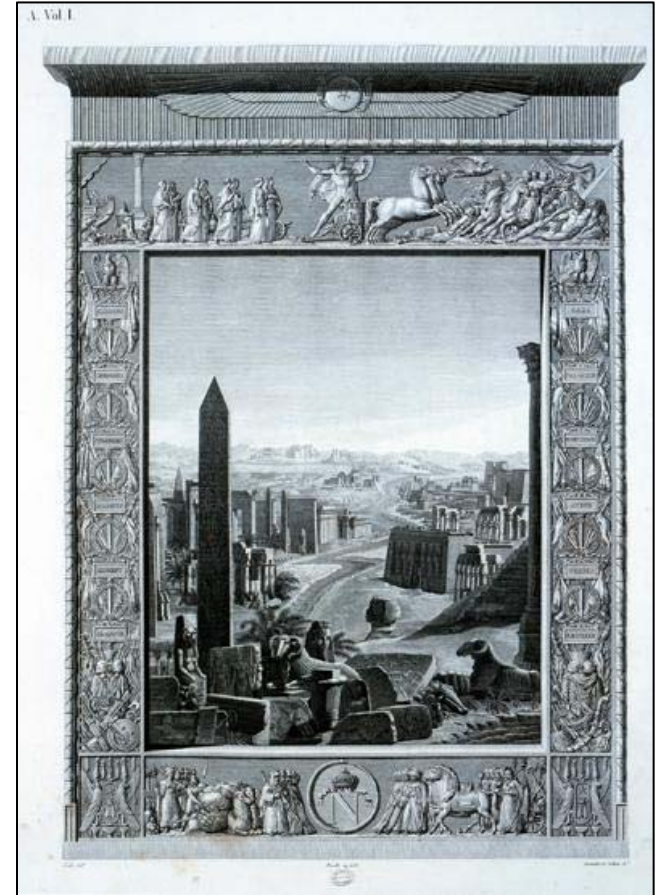
“Tell the people that we are true muslims”
Bonaparte’s proclamation, 1798.



Bonaparte in Egypt: which “sister” is the older?



Antoine-Jean Gros, *Napoleon visiting the plague stricken at Jaffa*, 1799 (1804); approx 17 x 24 feet



François-Charles Cecile,
frontispiece to the *Description of
Egypt* (1809-1822)

Orientalism is a style of thought based upon a distinction made between “the Orient” and the West... It is an institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, ruling over it...

it is Western ignorance which becomes more refined and complex, not some body of positive Western knowledge which increases in size and accuracy.

Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978)



“The Poet” & “The Astronomer”
Arts and Trades in Modern Egypt