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# The Power of Corrupt Political Environments and its Effects on Museums: A look at Egypt's Modern-Day 'Indiana Jones': Dr. Zahi Hawass

Christine Smith

State University of New York, Buffalo State College, smithcm444@yahoo.com

### Advisor

York Norman, PhD.

### First Reader

York Norman, Ph.D.

### Second Reader

Michael Lazich, Ph.D.

### Third Reader

Birsen Bulmus, Ph.D.

### Department Chair

Andrew D. Nicholls, Ph.D., Professor of History

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The Power of Corrupt Political Environments and its Effects on Museums:  
A look at Egypt's Modern-Day 'Indiana Jones': Dr. Zahi Hawass

An Abstract of a Thesis in  
History

by

Christine Marie Smith

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Masters of Arts

May 2014

College at Buffalo  
State University of New York  
Department of History and Social Studies Education

## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The Power of Corrupt Political Environments and its Effects on Museums:  
A look at Egypt's Modern-Day 'Indiana Jones': Dr. Zahi Hawass

Egypt has been a nation plagued with political corruption since the early years of colonialism. After being under French and then British domination throughout the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, the 1952 Revolution under Egypt's Free Officers gave, Egypt a rare opportunity for independent political and cultural growth. Although change occurred politically—as seen in the Suez Crisis—Egypt's antiquities remained stagnant and still under the influence of foreigners. Egypt's antiquities were directly supervised by the British and the French until that time, but remained influenced even after the political revolution. There were few Egyptians involved in preservation of antiquities or the establishment of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo in 1897. It was not until Dr. Zahi Hawass, regarded by many as 'Egypt's Modern Day Indiana Jones,' that a true transformation of the Egyptian Museum and its antiquities occurred. Hawass rose to the center of his field and became known internationally by his recognizable appearance, dressed in his denim shirts and jeans complete with 'Indiana Jones' hat. He also limited foreign access to the dig sites, and tried with some success to reclaim artifacts lost earlier. Yet, Hawass was dogged by corruption charges despite, or perhaps because of these successes. The times—at least in this aspect—never changed.

Christine Smith  
May 15, 2014

Buffalo State  
State University of New York  
Department of History and Social Studies Education

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Approved by:

York Norman, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of History and Social Studies Education  
Chairperson of the Committee  
Thesis Adviser

Andrew Nicholls, Ph.D.  
Chair and Professor of History and Social Studies Education

Kevin Railey, Ph.D.  
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

## THESIS COMMITTEE

Approved by:

York Norman, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, History and Social  
Studies Education Department

Michael Lazich, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, History and Social  
Studies Education Department

Birsen Bulmuş, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of History,  
Appalachian State University

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*"We are the only ones who really can care about the preservation. Maybe some foreigners who came to excavate care about preservation, but the majority care about discoveries....We are the guardians of these treasures, but they belong to the world."*

Zahi Hawass, (2003)

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Foreign powers dominated Egypt culturally and politically for much of its modern history. Muhammad Ali, the founder of modern Egypt made key compromises with the British, who established a protectorate later in 1882, and retained control over much of the country until Gamal Abdul Nasser and the Young Officers took over in 1952, and nationalized the Suez Canal in 1954. Such political change should have altered Egypt's cultural setting. However, despite such revolution Egypt's museums and antiquities policies seemingly remained unchanged. Institutions such as the Louvre and the British Museum still maintained power over dig sites and the 107 halls of the Egyptian National Museum remained the same since the establishment in 1902. From its neoclassical style designed by a Frenchman, Marcel Dourgnon, to the unchanging exhibit halls, the influence of outsiders over the museum is apparent. Such designs indicate westerners remained the dominant influence over Egypt. The power of westerners over the nation's cultural heritage is evident in such settings as museums, historical sites and politics. Until 1953 the Egyptian Antiquities Service was controlled by French directors, all discoveries at the Valley of the Kings were made by foreign archeologists until 2007 and only since 1983 have all artifacts excavated become the property of the Egyptian Government, such as Dr. Hawass's new discoveries at Saqqara. This paper will show how the correlation between Egypt's cultural heritage and its political environment



changed under its most famed Egyptologist and showman, Dr. Zahi Hawass (b. 1947).<sup>1</sup>

Westerners, not Egyptians, have taken on the task of preserving the countries antiquities since the colonial period. Foreign fascination with Egypt's history led to the campaign to protect the valued artifacts of Egypt's past. Thus, there has always been the ulterior motive of owning the antiquities, not just conserving them.

For instance the removal of the Rosetta stone in 1802, Egypt's most famed artifact, did not arise from concerns about conservation, but instead from selfish politics. The French discovered the artifact in the wake of Napoleon's 1798 invasion, but it is currently housed in an English museum. Many argue that if England had not removed the Rosetta stone from Egypt it would not have survived as long as it has. But if westerners had not invaded Egypt and demanded antiquities would the Rosetta stone even have been considered "in danger"? The foundation of the largest collection of the antiquities began westerner's claim over Egypt's antiquities. Egyptians at first did not have a hand in the early conservation or collection of antiquities. Instead, people like Auguste Mariette (1858-1881) and Gaston Maspero (1881-1886), were the driving force behind the beginning of Egyptian antiquities.

The establishment of the Egyptian museum began as a conglomeration of former personal collections by wealthy bureaucrats, but eventually was put under the official supervision of a foreign director, such as Mariette. Mariette was charged with collecting, storing, preserving and the discoveries made. In 1849, under directions of the Louvre,

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<sup>1</sup> I had the fortunate opportunity to travel to Egypt in January 2011 to complete my Master's thesis as well as work at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. This opportunity would have included working with Dr. Zahi Hawass. Due to the unforeseen political unrest that occurred I was forced to evacuate and end my stay before I was able to work at the Museum or with Hawass. As such I have continued my interest with both the museum as well as the iconic man that created what the museum is today.

the national museum of France, Mariette traveled to Egypt, intending to collect artifacts for his home institution's Egyptian department. His discoveries were sent back to France, until 1858 when he accepted a position from the Egyptian Government. Although Mariette became an employee of the Egyptian government, Egypt was not truly an independent state. Many of the archaeological decisions made were for political reasons, such as the gifting of the entire collection in 1855 to the Austrian Archduke Maximilian. For nearly a century after Mariette took office, the Antiquities Service, a government service dedicated to preservation, as well as the Egyptian National Museum, founded in 1897, was headed by French scholars until 1952, leaving no place for Egyptians in Egypt's history during this period.

In 1952 a movement to end British tyranny was led by a secret group known as the Free Officers. This group comprised of various Egyptian military members with the common goal of freeing Egypt from foreign domination. General Muhammad Naguib was the figurehead of the movement, but Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser quickly became its leader. The Egyptian Revolution of 1952 began as a military coup d'état that overthrew King Farouk and the British. All political opposition groups were abolished and Egypt was transformed into a nation controlled by a military dictatorship dominated by Gamal Nasser after a short struggle for power that ended in 1954.

Yet, while Egypt had gained its political independence after the coup, Nasser's rise to power, and the Suez Crisis of 1956, foreign domination of Egyptian culture, particularly the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, persisted. When Nasser came to power the opportunity to reshape Egypt in the image of Egyptians finally presented itself. Cultural

institutions like museums are among the strongest foundations for developing and promoting national identity. With such a dramatic shift from an openly foreign-dominated society to its newly established national one, the museum naturally should have followed suit. The museum had the opportunity to change its primary focus on foreign tourists, an elitist group, to a national epicenter dedicated to the promotion of growth and education of Egyptians. But this seemingly logical transformation took place nearly a half-century later under Hawass.

Not surprisingly, there are virtually no sources that trace the historical evolution of the Egyptian Museum. As a result, I have made use of primary sources, namely the periodically published museum guides of the Egyptian National Museum (1902-present), general theoretical literature about national museums, and those social scientific studies that have touched on the Egyptian case in particular.

James Cuno's book *Who Owns Antiquities?* (November 2010), touches on the relationship between nations and museums. Cuno discusses how archaeology, and museums are intimately linked to the nation it is in. Museums have often times been the subject to political ambitions by nation's governments, like those in Germany prior to and during WWII. Yet, Egypt's museums have had a different relationship with its government. Because Egypt has only achieved independence after 1954, its museum has had only 60 years to change and evolve. Such developments occurred very slowly, dramatically increasing only within the past ten years.

Another subject discussed by Cuno is where objects originated and are currently housed. Cuno examines how objects cross boundaries, making it difficult to map national

identities. With so many of Egypt's antiquities "stolen" or "relocated" throughout the years, the cultural relationship has not always meant the same to Egyptians. The Egyptian Museum in Cairo has dealt with the problems of repatriation in the years following colonialism, but it was not until Zahi Hawass that these requests were no longer polite.

Foreign relations have also played a central role in the development of Egypt's cultural heritage. An abundance of literature documenting the countless discoveries of antiquities can be traced back as early as Herodotus (484-425 BC), and the exploration of the ancient Greeks. Therefore there is no shortage on information surrounding Egypt's political atmosphere from that time until the present day, including a broad swath of interested powers, such as Athens, Macedonia, Rome, the Umayyads, Fatamids, Mamelukes, Ottomans, to the French and British. Comments on Egypt's politics are plenty, but observations about how politics have affected Egypt's cultural heritage, museums especially, are few.

Economics is another key understanding to the relationship between Egypt and foreign nations. John Waterbury's *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (May 1983) gives an in-depth analysis into the economic situation from 1954 to 1981. Egypt has always relied heavily on foreigners for economic support. Waterbury shows that reliance on economic and fiscal ties to other countries continued, such as from Suez Canal revenues, remittances from Egyptian working in other Arab countries, its own oil exports, and massive amounts of foreign aid. Foreign visitors to museums and other touristic sites were also key revenue sources in this regard

Fouad Ibrahim, author of *Egypt: An Economic Geography*, offers a synthesis of

Egypt's economic situation in its cultural, political, and historical context. Ibrahim highlights that tourism has become even more important than remittances, oil, and the Suez Canal since Sadat's assassination in 1981. Tourists generate a large profit for museums and therefore have become the targeted audience. Because most tourists are foreign, the museums have often times been ran by foreigners and geared to satisfy their needs.

There are few texts that address all the impact that these factors have had specifically on the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. One book able to do so is *Whose Pharaohs? Archeology, Museums, Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* by Donald Malcolm Reid. Although this book addresses economic, political and social challenges that have created the current environment of the museum, it predates the most significant political era for Egypt, namely the era of military rule from Nasser onwards. Reid traces the impact that foreign nations have on modern Egypt, with open discussions on the dramatic increase of tourism after the development of the Suez Canal which brought economic change to Egypt. From the development of the Canal, Pharaonic history became more accessible to Egyptians. Reid argues that Egyptians were doomed to failure in the hostile environment created by foreign archeologists like Mariette. *Whose Pharaohs?* offers a great examination to the early years of Egyptology, but this paper focuses on the succeeding period, and not the colonial era per se. Economics, politics, and nationalism are all key factors that play a significant role in shaping the current state of the museum. These factors have all in major ways determined the overall environment which Dr. Zahi Hawass became a part of. In order to

navigate such a complex surrounding, it can be argued that the controversial image associated with Hawass was a necessary evil.

This slow transformation will be discussed in the second chapter focusing on the political careers of Egypt's three presidents, Gamal Nasser (1954-1970), Anwar Sadat (1970-1981) and Hosni Mubarak (1981-2011). The intention of this chapter is to trace the political evolution of the Egyptian National Museum during this time. Small changes occurred during Nasser's and Sadat's rule that improved the museum but its targeted audiences remained primarily foreign. It was not until President Hosni Mubarak that Egypt began to make the significant changes to Egypt's antiquities institutions. Egypt took nearly fifty years for its cultural inheritance to shift from western influence to a much more openly Egyptian-oriented organization. This major shift was due in large part to Dr. Hawass.

Hawass's career was paved with controversial events that questioned whether his intentions were self-fulfilling or selfless. The third chapter will explore his long career, corruption and unpopularity. My goal is to present a clear understanding of the political and cultural environment created by western influences. Hawass's controversial career is the subject of this discussion. The political evolution from colony to dictatorship should have influenced a cultural growth as well, but this change did not occur until Dr. Zahi Hawass.

## Chapter Two: Egypt's Political and Cultural Evolution

### *Museums as an outgrowth of foreign colonial interests:*

The French invasion of Egypt in 1798—aimed at disrupting Britain's communication with India—had unexpected effects in regard to the country's antiquities. In the midst of his five-year occupation, Napoleon Bonaparte inadvertently triggered the movement to pursue historical artifacts. Some men on his staff were both soldiers and scholars whose purpose was to study and gather information. Napoleon charged these members with the responsibility of cultivating the arts and sciences while measuring and exploring the ruins, which engaged the world's curiosity for centuries.<sup>2</sup> Such fascination can be traced back to 450 BC, nearly two-thousand years prior to French occupation, when Herodotus traveled to Egypt. In his travels Herodotus made many written accounts describing the culture and history of that country.

Members of Napoleon's expedition were known to reference Herodotus. Although these scholars disparaged many of his testimonies, they still were inspired by his curiosity to explore. In this spirit, French scholars such as Vivant Denon made new discoveries in 1798:

We had only two hours to devote to the examination of the pyramids...I had taken drawings and measurements...I had filled my mind, and I hoped to retain many observations...but on endeavoring to recall them to memory the next morning, I found I had a volume of

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<sup>2</sup> Herbert Fisher, *Napoleon* (New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1913), 72.

queries still to make. I returned from my journey both mentally and bodily fatigued, and found my curiosity more stimulated than satisfied by my visit.<sup>3</sup>

There was no outcry for a national museum in Egypt until the excavation of the Rosetta Stone, one of the most significant discoveries in Egyptian history. Discovered by soldiers assigned to Napoleon's outfit in 1799, the stone was unearthed without knowledge of its significance. Later the stone became key to unlocking the ancient Egyptian language.

The stone did not remain in Egypt long after its discovery. In 1801, when the British gained virtual control over Egypt, the stone went to the British Museum.<sup>4</sup> This particular case was used to illustrate how foreign interests could save Egyptian antiquities. There were no established museums, or safe storehouse, in Egypt at the time of the artifact's removal. Many scholars argued that the stone may never have survived for as long as it did if it was not taken away.

Muhammad Ali (1805-1847) realized that he needed to store such artifacts in a central location in order to safely preserve them. Nevertheless, members of the Ali family sometimes gave away pieces of the collection to cultivate political and financial standing with foreign delegates.<sup>5</sup> Jean-Francois Champollion<sup>6</sup> pleaded with Ali in 1830 to protect Egypt's artifacts from this perceived abuse:

All of Europe will take notice of the active measures ...(to conserve) the temples, palaces, tombs, and all kinds of

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<sup>3</sup> Vivant Denon, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt* (New York: Arno Press, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> The British expelled the French from Egypt in 1801 and as a result confiscated all Egyptian antiquities that had been collected by the French, including the Rosetta Stone.

<sup>5</sup> Donald Malcolm Reid, *Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 54.

<sup>6</sup> Jean-Francois Champollion was a French scholar who deciphered the Rosetta Stone in 1822.



monuments attesting to the power and grandeur of ancient Egypt.<sup>7</sup>

Such arguments eventually persuaded Ali. In 1835, he decreed that all priceless antiquities be collected and stored in a new museum. Although the law deterred the destructive removal of antiquities from tombs, it did not prevent the abuse from diplomats.

Foreign institutions continued to send expeditions to Egypt despite the declaration. One such institute was the Louvre Museum in Paris. In 1850, the museum sent Auguste Mariette to Cairo to retrieve artifacts for its European collection. Mariette prioritized saving Egypt's antiquities from looters. This aspiration drew in powerful admirers such as Ferdinand de Lesseps (1805-1894), a French diplomat and entrepreneur.<sup>8</sup> De Lesseps persuaded the Abbas Hilmi Pasha of Egypt, one of Muhammad Ali's successors, to send Mariette to retrieve antiquities intended to be presented to Prince Napoleon of France upon his royal visit.<sup>9</sup> Although the royal visit was canceled, de Lesseps swayed the Pasha to appoint Mariette to Director of Ancient Monuments for Egypt. Mariette soon resigned from the Louvre in 1858 and instead was employed by the Egyptian Museum in Cairo to conduct excavations on behalf of the Egyptian Government. From now on he would receive funding from the Egyptian government instead of France, which meant he needed to retain the interest of the Khedive's support. Mariette is known for his creation of the Antiquities Service, the establishment of the first national museum in the Near East, and the campaign to end the

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<sup>7</sup> G. Maspero, *Guide du visiteur au Musee du Cairo* (Cairo, 1915), ix-x.

<sup>8</sup> Brian Fagan, *Archaeologists: Explorers of the Human Past* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 59.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

destruction and exportation of antiquities from Egypt.<sup>10</sup>

Mariette was welcomed as the new director of antiquities in 1858, thereby beginning the almost century-long tradition of appointing Frenchmen to this post. Mariette also curtailed future unauthorized removal of Egyptian antiquities. Prior to Mariette's arrival the Egyptian government gave all Egyptian antiquities in stock to Archduke Maximilian of Austria in 1855.<sup>11</sup> Mariette found himself at the mercy of the Pasha in order to gain funding. Mariette needed to supply a steady stream of artifacts to keep in good standing with the Pasha. He had to guard against the Pasha gifting them to distinguished visitors.<sup>12</sup> A movement against such occurrences began. In 1858 Said Pasha, de facto ruler of Egypt, established the Antiquities Service to curtail the illicit trafficking of antiquities. The Service was responsible for excavations and also for approving and supervising any foreign archaeological work. French scholars headed the organization for nearly a century until 1953, when the Service named Mostafa Amer (1953-1956) -- its first Egyptian director.

Mariette became director of historical monuments and the Egyptian Museum in Bulaq in 1863, five years after he was named the first director of the Egyptian Antiquities Service. He started by enforcing the ban on the exportation of antiquities without a permit, ceasing a number of European excavations. These actions also curbed the gifting of antiquities to foreign dignitaries. One such incident was when the Empress Eugenie requested Queen Aahotep's jewelry, which was recently discovered by Mariette in 1867. When the Pasha told the empress that she would need Mariette's permission to obtain the

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<sup>10</sup> Rosalie David, *The Experience of Ancient Egypt* (Routledge, 2002), 119.

<sup>11</sup> Tim Murray, *Milestones in Archaeology: A Chronological Encyclopedia* (ABC-CLIO, 2007), 226.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

pieces, he declined.<sup>13</sup>

While interest in Egyptian antiquities boomed, the rest of Egypt was in crisis. Economically Egypt's financial problems continued to present a challenge. When Said Pasha died in 1863, the public debt of Egypt was 3,293,000 pounds. This grew to 68,110,000 pounds by 1876 under his successor, Ismail Pasha (1830-1895).<sup>14</sup> Egypt's dependence on foreign financial assistance began to grow and this led to the creation of a foreign led Public Debt Administration that took over the government's budget. The PDA demanded drastic cuts which destabilized the regime to such an extent, Ismail was forced to abdicate in 1875.

Part of Ismail's vast expenditure was sixteen million pounds spent on the Suez Canal.<sup>15</sup> Persuaded by Egyptians, Ferdinand de Lesseps established the Suez Canal Company in 1854. The company completed the canal in 1869 with Egyptian labor and was to operate it until 1953. The highly strategic canal—which dramatically reduced shipping time and cost in travel from Europe to Asia—was another reason why Great Britain declared Egypt a protectorate in 1882.

While the canal project was underway, Mariette convinced the government to build two additional display halls for the Bulaq museum. He targeted the new stream of foreign visitors who used the canal.<sup>16</sup>

Continuing this tradition of pleasing foreign visitors was Gaston Maspero (1846-1916) who succeeded Mariette after his death in 1881. Maspero had the Egyptian

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<sup>13</sup> Brian Fagan, *Archaeologists: Explorers of the Human Past*, (Oxford University Press, 2003), 60.

<sup>14</sup> Evelyn Baring, *Modern Egypt* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Donald Malcolm Reid, *Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 105.

government transfer the museum's collection to the palace in Giza in 1887 after it had outgrown its current location.<sup>17</sup> Originally intended to be a temporary location, the Giza museum opened in January 1890. Plans for a new museum were under way. In 1895 a jury consisting of only Europeans selected Frenchman Marcel Dourgnon (1858-1911) to design the new Egyptian Museum in Cairo in Tahrir Square. Construction began in 1897 and was completed in 1900 but the museum did not open to the public until November 5, 1902.

Unlike the Suez Canal, the museum was an exception to the foreign domination of most Egyptian state institutions. When foreigners seized control over the Suez, self-interest was the main motivator. Foreigners took over the creation and operation of the Suez Canal due to Egypt's enormous debt which it incurred. However, the museum continued to be funded by the Egyptian government and therefore was able to remain independent. Mariette touted that it was Egypt's right and responsibility to retain and protect its own heritage.<sup>18</sup> While directors and scholars in the museum opened the door to a largely European audience they still had to abide by Egyptian rules.

#### *Challenges under Nasser and Sadat:*

The 1952 coup d'état undoubtedly ushered in a new political age for Egyptians. As British political rule over Egypt ended and the French domination over the museum

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<sup>17</sup>Maspero was not present for this transfer. In 1886 he temporarily resigned due to his wife's failing health, returning to Paris for thirteen years. In his absence three Frenchmen headed Egypt's antiquities: Eugen Grebaut (1886-1892), Jascques de Morgan (1892-1897), and Victor Loret (1897-1899).

<sup>18</sup>Rosalie David, *The Experience of Ancient Egypt* (Routledge, 2002), 121.

came to a close, the Egyptians were officially “free.” What followed was a military government led by the Free Officers, soon to be headed by Col. Gamal Abdul Nasser. British colonial rule and the monarchy were gone. Within two years, the Suez Canal, whose control by Great Britain and France was the symbol of colonial oppression, was nationalized, an outcome that withstood a desperate attempt by the two European powers along with Israel to retake it by force. But what did these developments mean for the museum? Were they ready for such a huge shift? Would the museum be able to survive much less thrive without foreign influence? Foreigners successfully operated the museum since its establishment, with the Egyptians supposedly remaining apathetic. This new political climate would test the relationship Egypt’s ties to their cultural heritage.

Gamal Abdul Nasser, Egypt’s second (and most praised) president, created an authoritarian government that dominated Egypt for the next sixty years. Although Nasser’s rule made many Egyptians fearful for their lives, he did bring about a new ideological vision, that of pan-Arabism, stressing the ethnic and linguistic unity of Arab peoples in and beyond Egypt.

Yet, the process of change at the Egyptian Museum was gradual, largely limited to establishing its subservience to a new nationalized bureaucracy. In 1956, the same year that the power of the presidency was ratified, the government established the Supreme Council for the Development of Arts and Literature, thereby ensuring that the state was now the largest patron and supporter of the arts.<sup>19</sup> Reporting directly to the presidency,

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid; Jessica Winegar, *Creative Reckonings: The Politics of Art and Culture in Contemporary Egypt* (Stanford Studies in Middle Eastern) (Stanford University Press, 2006) 143.

the Supreme Council was responsible for the cultural development of Egypt by protecting the arts financially, morally and spiritually.<sup>20</sup> Under the Council, the state funded the acquisition of art, grants for travel and study abroad, and national exhibitions inside and outside of the country.<sup>21</sup> The formation of a Ministry of Culture in 1958 expanded the state's cultural support.<sup>22</sup> The government was now the main definer of Egypt's cultural heritage.

Prior to Nasser's assumption to power Egypt adopted "Law No. 215," which protected antiquities by strictly retaining them within Egypt's borders.<sup>23</sup> However, in 1960 Nasser tried to change the law immediately before the construction of the Aswan High Dam.<sup>24</sup> Nasser supported construction of the dam because it would industrialize Egypt, making the country self-sufficient after years of foreign rule.<sup>25</sup> However, the construction of the dam would have destroyed a large area filled with artifacts. To prevent this, Nasser lifted the ban against the removal of antiquities to incentivize foreigners to excavate and salvage these artifacts.<sup>26</sup> Nasser wanted to see the nation financially independent but wanted to avoid devastating Egypt's cultural heritage in the process. However, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo remained in the exact state as it was under colonial rule. It could be argued that Nasser did not have time to transform the museum along Arab nationalistic lines or, more likely, that he simply chose not to do so given its international audience. The museum was established by westerners, designed by

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> The Ministry of Culture is responsible for maintaining and promoting the culture of Egypt (Wikipedia).

<sup>23</sup> Angela Porter, "Pharaohs, Nubians, and Antiquities: International Law Suggests it's Time for a Change in Egypt," *Howard Law Journal*, Vol. 56, Issue 2, (Winter 2013), 550.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*

westerners and funded by westerners, whose fascination with Egypt was still strong. Any change to the exhibits in particular could have catastrophically impacted the museum's finances or number of visitors. Keeping the museum in its original condition therefore benefited both the state and its international benefactors. This can be seen in the figure below:

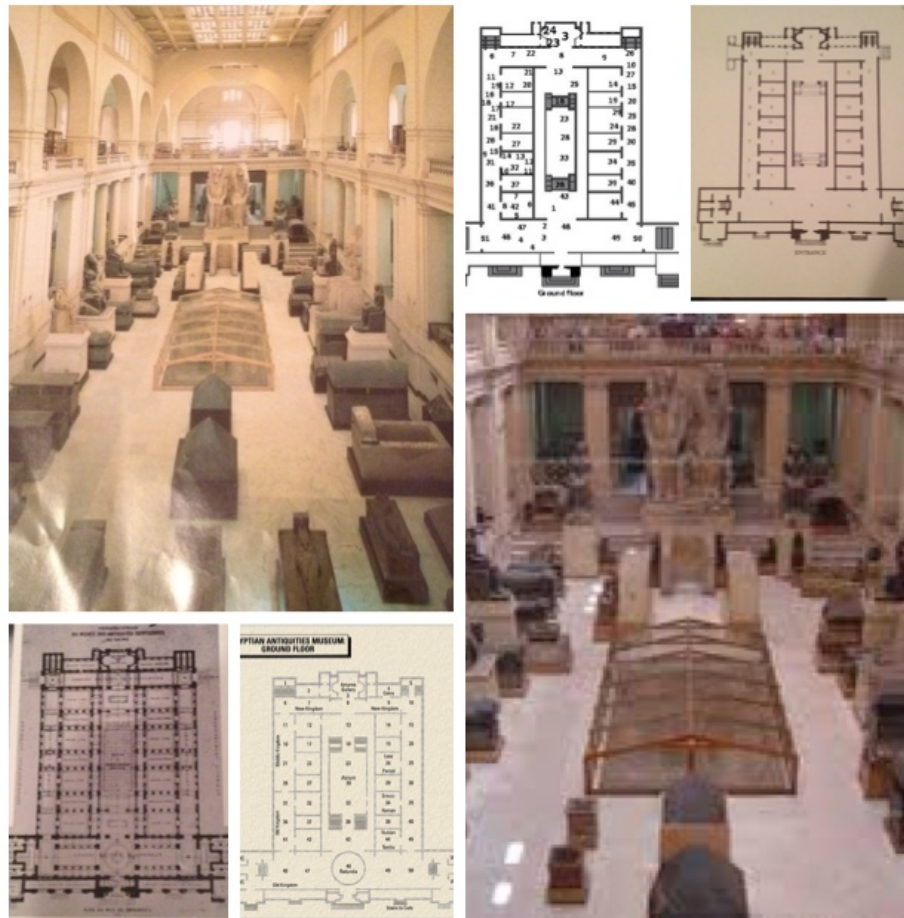


Figure 1: A compilation of the main exhibit area and the exhibit layout from 1901 to present day. In order from top left moving clockwise: 1987 image of main exhibit hall, 1972 building floor plan, current image of main exhibit hall and floor plan, and 1901 floor plan.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> <http://egyptphoto.ncf.ca/egyptian%20museum.htm>, Official Catalogue, The Egyptian Museum Cairo, and Egyptian Treasures from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo

Unlike other changes made when Nasser rose to power the museum remained in the exact state as it was from its establishment in 1902. Figure one is a prime example of the continued representation of foreign investment in the museum. Many of the pieces have not been moved from their present day location since being displayed. The image of the main hall from 1987 is the identical to that of a more recent photo from 2001. Many of the exhibits on display, particularly the main hall, had no alterations made for the last century. Although Nasser did not change the museum's exhibition or floor plan he did make other improvements. For instance, he increased the museum the budget, allowing for fluorescent lighting, and he made the Mummies Room available every day.<sup>28</sup>

Nasser also allowed for Egypt's antiquities to travel outside of the country.<sup>29</sup> The museum sent 119 items as part of a traveling international exhibition called "Five Thousand Years of Egyptian Art." The exhibit circulated throughout Europe and parts of Asia, attracting thousands of enthusiasts far beyond its borders.<sup>30</sup> Allowing the artifacts to leave the country in a secure manor allowed for visitors to have a glimpse of the mysterious treasures of Egypt, and encouraged them to travel to Egypt, potentially a great boon to the tourist sector of the Egyptian economy.

Shortly thereafter, a new exhibition of thirty-one Tutankhamen artifacts traveled around the world from 1961 to 1963, attracting record-breaking crowds. For instance, in

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<sup>28</sup> Mohammad Hassan Abdul Rahman, *Egyptian Museum Cairo* (Italy: Newsweek, Inc. 1972), 14.

<sup>29</sup> The Egyptian artifacts were permitted to leave the country, due to the end of Law No. 215 in 1960. It was a "win-win" situation for Nasser. The construction of the Aswan Dam at roughly the same time greatly benefited the agricultural sector, but it would have destroyed thousands of years of Egyptian history. Nasser's decision to allow the excavation and removal of artifacts paved the way to a temporary change in Egypt's international relationship. It is not clear how many artifacts came from the area that would be affected from the Aswan Dam.

<sup>30</sup> Mohammad Hassan Abdul Rahman, *Egyptian Museum Cairo* (Italy: Newsweek, Inc. 1972), 14.



Japan the exhibit drew in 2, 930, 944 visitors.<sup>31</sup>

In short, Nasser's relationship with the Egyptian Museum was far more subtle than one might have expected from the father of pan-Arab nationalism. He may have ended ninety-four years of French control of the Antiquities Service, but foreigners were still very much a part of Egypt's cultural economy.<sup>32</sup> Thus, continuing to satisfy foreign curiosity in ancient Egyptian artifacts by keeping its traditional exhibits and sending further ones abroad remained a high priority. Nonetheless, Nasser did make sure that the state now became an active participant in protecting and displaying Egypt's antiquities.

Such shift is shown in the 1972 catalogue, printed two years after Nasser's death, where it noted:

Today the Museum, which has been strongly supported by the present government, is under the Ministry of Culture, which directs the Antiquities Service, maintains the Museum, publishes its catalogues, and sponsors traveling exhibitions of its treasures.<sup>33</sup>

The government's support of the museum briefly continued after the unexpected death of Nasser in 1970. His successor, Anwar Sadat, was a Free Officer appointed to Vice President in 1969. A number of Egyptians hoped that Sadat would ultimately be more flexible. Many political leaders under the old regime believed that Sadat was not strong enough to rule without their "assistance." Sami Sharif, a former politician under Nasser's regime stated: "There is nothing to worry about. Sadat must do as we say. If he does not,

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>32</sup> Donald Malcom Reid, *Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, Ltd. 2002), 294.

<sup>33</sup> Mohammad Hassan Abdul Rahman, *Egyptian Museum Cairo*, (Italy: Newsweek, Inc. 1972), 167.

we will just dispose of him.”<sup>34</sup> Such beliefs were quickly dispelled.

Sadat maintained Nasser’s one-party system under the National Democratic Party, and he did not hesitate to crack down on his political opponents. Egypt became a tense and unhappy country towards the end of his rule. For instance, the *Qanoun Al-Aib* (The Law of Shame), approved in 1980, criminalized “libelous” expression by Egyptians. Violation of the law included: “broadcasting or publishing gross or scurrilous words or pictures which could offend public sensibilities or undermine the dignity of the state or of its constitutional institutions.”<sup>35</sup> The law passed despite popular protests, and led to serious encroachments on political expression.<sup>36</sup>

Sadat limited his reforms to economics and foreign-policy. Sadat’s economic policies benefitted the upper and upper middle classes, to the exclusion of the others.<sup>37</sup> Private businesses flourished during the 1970s after Sadat encouraged bureaucrats to make investments in the private sector. Those that were wealthy remained wealthy, while the majority of Egyptian citizens were largely left to fend for themselves. Sadat also eased restrictions towards foreign imports, a measure aimed at pleasing the United States, whom he hoped to replace the Soviet Union as his main superpower patron. Those who hoped for greater democratization and human rights were bitterly disappointed<sup>38</sup>

Egypt’s relationship with the U.S. improved vastly under Sadat’s regime. In 1974 President Nixon visited Egypt marking the beginning of U.S. and Egyptian cooperation.

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<sup>34</sup> Maye Kassem, *Egyptian Politics: The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 20.

<sup>35</sup> Anthony McDermott, *Egypt from Nasser to Mubarak: A Flawed Revolution* (New York: Croom Helm, Ltd, 1988), 114.

<sup>36</sup> Don Schanche, “Proposal to Govern Public and Private Behavior Condemned as Threat to Democracy Proposal Stirs Row,” *Los Angeles Times*, 1980.

<sup>37</sup> Asif Haroon Raja, “Egypt under Anwar al-Sadat and Hosni Mubarak (1970-2011)”, *Asian Tribune*, 2011.

<sup>38</sup> Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society 1945- 1981* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 115.

Nixon stated in on June 12, 1974 after his arrival to Egypt that:

The United States welcomes the opportunity to cooperate with you and your government in your programs for economic progress to which you are devoting and dedicating so much of your very great energies today.<sup>39</sup>

This visit to Egypt in 1974 restarted a positive relationship between Egypt and the U.S. As such Sadat overturned Nasser's previous decision to cancel a tour of King Tut's exhibit to the U.S. when relations between the two countries were unstable.<sup>40</sup> So in 1976 fifty artifacts from the King Tut exhibit showed in six cities in the U.S. starting with the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.

Sadat was, of course, pivotal in realigning his country with the United States, and abandoning Nasser's dependence on the Soviet Union as his main superpower patron. This new alliance with Washington was cemented under the Carter administration with the Camp David Accords, signed on September 18, 1978. Sadat recognized Israel's right to exist in exchange for the Sinai Peninsula, which Nasser had lost during the disastrous Six-Day War. Prior to the signing of the agreement Sadat addressed the Knesset<sup>41</sup> in regards to Israeli/Egyptian relations:

It is sufficient to say that many months in which peace could have been brought about had been wasted over differences and fruitless discussions on the procedure for the convocation of the Geneva Conference....it is my fate to assume the responsibility on behalf of the Egyptian People, the main duty dictated by this responsibility is to exhaust all and every means in a bid to save my Egyptian Arab people...overlook the past, in a bold drive towards

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<sup>39</sup> Richard Nixon, "Remarks on Arrival in Cairo, Egypt June 12, 1974", *The American Presidency Project*, April 2014 <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=4245>>

<sup>40</sup> "Public Museum News," *Art Journal*, Spring 1976.

<sup>41</sup> Knesset is the Israeli legislative branch of government.

new horizons...<sup>42</sup>

This decision sent shockwaves through both Egypt and the rest of the Middle East. Most Middle Easterners, including Egyptians, perceived the Accords as betraying the Palestinians and the Arab people as a whole in favor of narrowly-conceived national interests. Egypt was kicked out of the Arab League, and lost diplomatic recognition from nearly every Arab country. Opposition at home also dramatically increased, particularly from the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups. These developments made Sadat paranoid.

This tendency can be seen in his policies regarding the museum. For instance, in 1980, Sadat gave a speech to a conference on culture in which he urged the reburial of Pharaonic mummies “with full honors.” Such a request was strange and immediately raised concerns both in Egypt and abroad. According to Sadat the mummies should not be on display because of Egypt’s monotheistic creed, which forbade dead bodies from being partially unwrapped:<sup>43</sup>

I cannot accept exposing the remains of Egypt’s pharaohs in exhibitions for people to view, this is against our religious concept. And when I say that, I mean the commandments of the three religions.<sup>44</sup>

Consequently the Mummy Room at the Egyptian Museum was closed.

The Council of Antiquities deliberated on possible solutions to this issue. The

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<sup>42</sup> Anwar Sadat, Speech to the Knesset, November 20, 1977.

<sup>43</sup> “Egyptologist’s Ponder Fate of Mummies that Sadat would reinter: Three Plans Proposed,” *New York Times*, October 1980.

<sup>44</sup> “Egyptologists shocked by Sadat Proposal to Rebury Royal Mummies,” *Gettysburg Times*, October 1980.

first solution suggested was to build a new burial chamber for the mummies.<sup>45</sup> The second was to allow only scholars to gain access to the mummies. The final suggestion would be to return the mummies to their original burial grounds in Luxor. Oddly enough the mummies were placed into storage for the next nineteen years until Hosni Mubarak rescinded the decision. As such, the tourist industry suffered, at least in part.

Nevertheless, tourism in Egypt increased substantially under Sadat. Mohammad Hussein Bazaraa, chief of the U.S. Egyptian Government Tourist office, credited the increase in tourism to both Sadat's visit to Israel and the traveling King Tut exhibit.<sup>46</sup> One travel agent stated: "I think Tut was just as important as Sadat. The exhibit is like a taste of Egypt and they want to go and eat the whole meal."<sup>47</sup> The increase in tourism also led to greater foreign investment in Egypt. One such project under Sadat was a tourist complex by the Giza Pyramids built largely with American investment. This signaled that Egypt's political compromise could positively impact its economy. Indeed, it was Sadat's own political belief that Egypt could only flourish after achieving a peaceful settlement with Israel;<sup>48</sup>

What is peace for Israel? It means that Israel lives in the region with her Arab neighbors, in security and safety. To such logic, I say yes. It means that Israel lives within her borders, secure against any aggression. To such logic, I say yes. It means that Israel obtains all kinds of guarantees that ensure those two factors. To this demand, I say yes.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Egyptologist's Ponder Fate of Mummies that Sadat would reinter: Three Plans Proposed," *New York Times*, October 1980.

<sup>46</sup> Henry Gottlies, "Sadat, Tut Making Tourism Boom," *Los Angeles Times*, April 1978.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*

<sup>48</sup> Gil Feiler, "Economic Relations Between Egypt and the Gulf Oil States, 1967-2000: Petro Wealth and Patterns of Influence," (Sussex Academic Press, 2003), 221.

<sup>49</sup>Hagai Zamir, *Say Yes to Peace*, April 2014 < <http://www.sayyestopeace.org/Famous%20Quotes.asp>>

Sadat's efforts paid off and were reflected in the increase in tourism. This is borne out in the following statistical chart on the number of tourists visiting Egypt from 1952-1981 (in the thousands):<sup>50</sup>

	<i>Arabs</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Grand Total</i>
<u>Year</u>	<u>total</u>	<u>total</u>	<u>total</u>
1952	21	55	76
1966	156	323	579
1967	167	178	345
1968	184	134	318
1969	194	151	345
1970	231	127	358
1971	260	168	428
1972	314	227	541
1973	333	202	535
1974	412	264	676
1975	437	355	792
1976	535	449	984
1977	475	529	1004
1978	455	597	1052
1979	397	667	1064
1980	479	774	1253
1981	579	797	1376

The number of visitors increased when peace talks began in the mid-to-late 1970s. Most were foreign visitors. The total number of tourists continued to increase after the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978. Sadat's political tactics were working internationally however; domestically Sadat was not as popular.

Nasser expelled foreigners from Egyptian politics while building a united Arab

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<sup>50</sup> *ibid*

nation but remained economically submissive to outside nations. Sadat reopened Egypt to Westerners by signing a peace treaty with Israel, becoming a 'traitor' to his own nation. Both men dominated Egypt with an authoritarian iron fist eliminating any political rivalry. Although their politics differed from one another they both remained under the influence of foreign wealth which kept Egypt's economy afloat. Egypt may have achieved political "freedom" but economically it was still dependent upon foreign aid. With few natural resources, Egypt's economy relied on other means of income. Tourism became a large source of the nation's revenue.

The museum was a true testament to the relationship between Egypt and foreign nations. After the foreign political adversaries were forced from Egypt in 1952, Egypt's leaders had the opportunity to reshape the mission of the museum. Yet, very little changed, as can be seen with the museum's original exhibit displays. No new exhibitions showcasing Egypt's hard-won independence or Cairo's centuries of Arab heritage were ever developed.

The few changes that were made were far more bureaucratic than substantial. On the one hand, Nasser allowed for Egypt's artifacts to travel abroad but only at his discretion. When relations between Egypt and the west soured, Nasser pulled all traveling exhibits, and tourism to Egypt suffered. On the other, Nasser did build new lighting systems and other facilities.

Sadat, his successor, followed up on Nasser's renovations with improvements of his own. His greatest success was the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel, which thereby also re-opened tourism to his country from the west.

*Changes during the Mubarak era:*

Nasser and Sadat molded Egypt in their image. Nasser may have promoted Arab unity while alienating Western influences, Sadat, however, embraced the presence of foreign powers, moving away from isolation towards peaceful relations. Still both leaders were authoritarian, and eliminated all other political competition. Under their regimes, Egypt became politically stagnate with relations between foreign nations and Egypt fluctuating, and the economy relying heavily on foreign support.

In this atmosphere, the museum was lost in the shuffle. There was no balance between an independent Egypt and stable foreign relations. For example, the fluctuation and instability of Egypt's tourism directly affected the potential number of visitors to the museum. Egyptians took control over the Antiquities Service but progress was slow if not nonexistent. Egypt's cultural heritage had market potential but remained largely unfulfilled.

Tourism gradually increased under Mubarak, and new discoveries ensued, and, in general, the museum had a brighter future. Mubarak built strong foreign relationships, maintained a thin veneer of democracy, and worked towards strengthening an ailing economy. Yet, political, economic and cultural change did not rapidly occur under Mubarak, as political corruption remained a constant for this virtual dictator.

Mubarak was Sadat's Vice President at the time of his assassination leading to



Mubarak's assumption to power. Becoming president in 1981 Mubarak stood as the longest serving ruler of Egypt since Muhammad Ali. Although Mubarak was the only presidential contestant after Sadat's assassination, he required approval from the National Democratic Party and the Egyptian Parliament. Therefore, an election on October 14, 1981 took place where Mubarak ran unopposed. Although a 'democratic election' was held, Egypt still remained an authoritarian state. Mubarak denied this reality:

Certain people are demanding freedom and democracy as in the U.S., France, and Britain. But, I say that these countries reached their current level of democracy because they had good industrial and agricultural bases...All their people were educated, and they did not have housing problems...If I had these conditions I would have allowed freedom and complete democracy without hesitation...Not yet able to assimilate full democracy, we are dealing with a weary people and we must put controls on everything. When we achieve economic stability, rest assured that we will be afraid of nothing...<sup>51</sup>

After his assumption of power he declared a state of emergency, tightened the controls on universities and the press, and arrested all those openly opposed to the regime. Egypt was formed in the image of its oppressor.

When Mubarak assumed command, one of his first political acts was the instatement of Emergency Law. Under this law, the governing authority, i.e. the President, gained greater power and control. The regime argued that the Emergency Law was justified due to the threat of Islamist terrorism that often times targeted Egypt's tourism sector. Under the Emergency Law, Mubarak was able to manipulate the law to strengthen and solidify his regime.

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<sup>51</sup>Bruce K. Rutherford, *Egypt After Mubarak: Liberalism, Islam, Democracy in the Arab World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 233.

Mubarak controlled all forms of freethinking from the press to politics. The strict control over the political arena in Egypt allowed for Mubarak to maintain the illusion of democracy that satisfied the western nations while still sustaining authoritarian rule. This required keen strategic positioning of power on the regime's behalf. For instance Egypt's parliament decided which legislation needed to be promulgated. At first glance, this process seemed to fulfill the genuine democratic nature of governing. However, Mubarak's regime was in full control over the direction of the parliament. Only needing two-thirds of the votes, Mubarak was in a position to allow the opposition to win seats but not enough to block his legislation.

To guarantee the majority, the government took various measures such as choosing which groups formed political parties and manipulating the votes accordingly. Legally Mubarak was able to determine what parties/person could and could not run for political office. The law on political parties limited new parties and restricted existing ones. The law states that "new parties have to be distinct from existing parties, cannot be based on class or religion, and should promote national unity and social peace and accept the results of referenda."<sup>52</sup>

Political competition took place only under the Mubarak's restrictive terms. Even so, limited opposition still opened the regime to potential defeat. The regime targeted voter's decisions against such potential, most often through bribery and violence. For instance, the regime would pay local citizens to cause disturbances at the polling stations election day to either get them to shut down or to discourage voters from attending.

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<sup>52</sup> Lisa Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 40.

One of the most notable corrupt acts by the regime was the parliamentary elections in 2005. Government security forces and hired citizens blockaded access to polling sites where there was a strong support for opposition candidates. Some extreme cases involved open fire on citizens who attempted to vote. Other strategies used were the stuffing of ballot boxes and bussing in non-residents to vote in strong opposition districts. Under Mubarak “condemnation of corruption has disappeared...corruption has become part and parcel of the regime itself...in other words, since the 1960s corruption has been gradually legalized.”<sup>53</sup>

The easiest way for the west to maintain influence was to accept Mubarak’s government. When Mubarak took office he continued Sadat’s position on Israel, maintaining its peace agreement, which further benefited foreign nations. In return for embracing the Camp David accords, Egypt received foreign aid from the U.S., including military assistance totaling approximately two billion a year.

But foreign aid, directed primarily towards the military was not enough to keep Egypt’s economy afloat. Egypt had no strong export industry, and most citizens lived in poverty. One of the largest economic boosts was the tourist industry, which contributed to tens of thousands of Egyptians income, through employment as tour guides, diggers, scholars, hotel employees and shop owners.<sup>54</sup> But even with this economic stimulant and clear foreign interest, Egypt’s tourist industry faced problems.

Egypt experienced the highest percentage of tourist volatility in the first years of Mubarak’s rule. General political unrest in the Middle East and violence in Egypt

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>54</sup> Bruce K. Rutherford, *Egypt After Mubarak: Liberalism, Islam, Democracy in the Arab World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 296.

depleted the number of tourists traveling to Egypt. From 1990 to 1997, the Mubarak regime faced serious threats by Islamist insurgents which resulted in 1300 casualties and billions of dollars in damage to the tourist industry.<sup>55</sup> During 1990-91 alone the cancellation rates for tours in Egypt were nearly 70% and the hotel occupancy fell as low as 35%.<sup>56</sup>

But the most notorious event that dramatically affected the tourist industry was on November 17, 1997 when sixty-two people were killed at Hatshepsut's temple, an archaeological site. As a result, foreign governments warned citizens against traveling to Egypt and major travel companies canceled tours to Egypt, costing the country a significant amount of potential revenue.<sup>57</sup> Mubarak responded to the attack stating:

This could happen anywhere in the world. We are very sorry. Such people who kill human beings are not Muslims, Christians, or Jews...they are criminals.<sup>58</sup>

Tourists were deterred from traveling to Egypt both by the bad press as well as their own nation's warnings. Both the U.S. and Japanese embassies alerted its citizens not to travel to Egypt "until the security situation is clarified and further notice is provided."<sup>59</sup>

Mubarak faced an international incident that not only dramatically affected the community at large but also Egypt's largest revenue surplus. As such, a swift response was needed to keep Egypt's tourism industry afloat. Therefore, the government tightened security around popular tourist sites and became more involved with Egypt's cultural

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<sup>55</sup> Fawaz A. Gerges, "The End of the Islamist Insurgency in Egypt?: Costs and Prospects, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Autumn, 2000), 592.

<sup>56</sup> Shereen Abdel Hassan Nosier, *Estimating the International Tourism Demand for Egypt 'An Economic Approach'*, (University of Hull, 2012), 33.

<sup>57</sup> Susan Muaddi Darraj, *Hosni Mubarak*, (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007), 16.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid*

<sup>59</sup> "World Tourists massacred at temple," *BBC World News*, November, 1997.

heritage. Mubarak continued the partnership between the government and the arts initiated by Nasser. The Ministry began to rebuild institutions like the Cairo Book Fair, the Culture Palaces and the Cairo Opera House.<sup>60</sup> The state went from being one of the largest hindrances to cultural institutions to one of its key promoters in just a few years.

During Mubarak's presidency the state surpassed any other cultural contributors, becoming the largest patron of Egypt's cultural heritage. One of the many projects that Mubarak participated in during his presidency was the restoration of the Alexandria Library in 2002. Plans to restore this building existed since 1974 but it took twenty-eight years to execute. The completion of this project supposedly exemplified regime's efforts at modernization. Yet, Snohetta, a Norwegian firm, was given the restoration project after winning an international competition. Egyptian architects were outraged over the project being granted to a foreign company. The use of foreigners as the developmental heads for key cultural projects was a theme that became all too familiar in Egypt.

Further promotion of Egypt's antiquities can be seen throughout Mubarak's supremacy. In 1992, land was set aside by President Mubarak for a new museum to create more room for the large Egyptian antiquities collection. In 2002 Heneghan Peng Architectural, an Irish firm won the international competition to design the Grand Museum of Egypt. The museum was projected to cost \$350 million and was expected to attract at least three million visitors each year. The Mubarak regime understood and therefore endorsed this huge revenue boost for Egypt's economy.

Mubarak also realized the need for foreign currency and took action to promote tourism. In addition to the enhanced security measures around the major tourist

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<sup>60</sup> Elliott Colla, "State Culture, State Anarchy," *Jadaliyya*, February 2011.

attractions and the promotion of archeological sites, Mubarak's regime developed the Antiquities Service.<sup>61</sup> Continuing the long-standing tradition of promoting Egypt's heritage for the benefit of foreign tourists, the Antiquities Service focused on foreigners as its targeted audience. The new catalogues, as opposed to the ones from previous regimes, offered a more comprehensive, user-friendly guide to both the museum and Egypt's cultural heritage.

The history of the museum, described in the new catalogue, highlighted the treasures that foreigners sought. Translations were offered in English, French, German and Arabic which offered greater accessibility to foreign audiences. Dr. Ahmed Kadry, Chairman of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization, stated:

Through informative, thoroughly researched text and highest quality illustrations, this new catalog should meet the needs of the countless visitors who come to marvel at the masterpieces housed in the Egyptian Museum of Cairo...The Egyptian Museum houses the largest, and most important material source on ancient Egyptian civilization, with works of art as well as objects of invaluable historical and religious significance, to which this guide is now a necessary introduction.<sup>62</sup>

The Egyptian Museum became a destination for tourists to witness firsthand the mysteries of Egypt. The catalogues from the Mubarak era complete focus on the audience. An example of this is within the 1987 catalogue, a comprehensive guide which provided information such as museum hours, a guide to using the catalogue as well as suggestions for what sections to visit within the museum based on the visitor's time.

Moreover, it is important to note that both the head of the Museum and the

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<sup>61</sup> Molefi Asante, *Culture and Customs of Egypt*, (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 35.

<sup>62</sup> Ahmed Kadry, *Official Catalogue The Egyptian Museum Cairo*, (Organisation of Egyptian Antiquities, The Arabian Republic of Egypt, 1987), 7.

Minister of Antiquities were now Egyptians, personifying the notion that Egyptians were finally in control of their ancient heritage.

But those that were chosen to lead the cultural heritage mission of the museum were chosen by the state. Being chosen by the state meant governmental control over that employee and therefore the museum. Thus it is no surprise that the Minister of Culture from 1987 to 2011, Farouk Hosni, was a close friend of both the President and the first lady Suzanne Mubarak.

Hosni drafted a new cultural policy that was geared towards creativity and making culture more accessible to the public at the beginning of his career as Minister of Culture.<sup>63</sup> He was also credited with the idea of building the Grand Egyptian Museum<sup>64</sup> (GEM), most notably endorsed by the Mubarak regime. In addition to his conception for the GEM project, Hosni also developed and modernized the infrastructure of many cultural institutions. His work included the building of more than one-hundred cultural centers, translating thousands of books into Arabic and twenty-seven other world languages, and founding eighteen museums.<sup>65</sup>

Hosni's career focused on the servicing and educating of people. But at the end of the Mubarak regime Hosni was accused of receiving illegal funds amounting to nine million dollars throughout his career as Minister of Culture. Accusations of corruption did not end with Hosni. Others associated with the regime, such as Zahi Hawass and Mubarak's wife Suzanne Mubarak, also had questionable legal cultural relations.

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<sup>63</sup>“Farouk Hosni, Minister of Culture of Egypt,” *Unelections*, April 2014  
<[www.unelections.org/files/faroukhosniCV.pdf](http://www.unelections.org/files/faroukhosniCV.pdf)>

<sup>64</sup> The Grand Egyptian Museum would be built near the Pyramids and would offer more exhibit space with for the exuberant amount of antiquities not being displayed in the current museum.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*

Serving the Mubarak regime for twenty years Hosni worked closely with Suzanne Mubarak, who herself had become a huge advocate for cultural institutions throughout Egypt. Suzanne became a huge patron to Egypt's nonprofit organizations, including the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. She had no museum experience or connection with the institute yet in 1999 she wrote the foreword to the Egyptian catalogue. Her contribution to the catalogue silently confirmed the political involvement of the Egyptian government with the museum:

The legacy of ancient Egypt is not, however, the possession of modern Egypt alone, but is a gift to the whole world...This is a reflection not only of the fascination that ancient Egypt continues to exert across the world, but also of the invaluable contribution the international community has made to its rediscovery and to our growing understanding of its civilization.<sup>66</sup>

In addition to her contribution to the museum catalogue, Suzanne became highly involved with various other cultural nonprofit organizations throughout her time as First Lady, particularly those that serviced children. According to her, education and culture should be the core of raising children and preparing them for the future.<sup>67</sup> She became a show-woman for such cause by serving as the founder and chairperson of the Egyptian Society for Childhood and Development, the founder of the National History Museum for Children, and the initiator and founder of Egyptian Children's Literature Centre for Documentation Research and Information. Suzanne's resume also included several honors for her global humanitarian work, which included the founding of the Women's

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<sup>66</sup>Francesco Tiradritti, *Egyptian Treasures from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1999), 4.

<sup>67</sup>Rania Khallaf, "'A better tomorrow' for children," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, November 1998.



International Peace Movement in 2003 and the End Human Trafficking Now campaign. When asked what was most important to Suzanne Hosni responded: “to win an international award.”<sup>68</sup>

Because of her high profile marriage, her various positions were believed to have served as covers for profit-making activities on behalf of her husband.<sup>69</sup> She had been accused personally of controlling a \$145 million account belonging to the Alexandria Library, which her husband restored in 2002.<sup>70</sup>

She also was alleged to collude with Zahi Hawass, the former Minister of Antiquities, to take artifacts and donations to fund her projects.

Yasser Seif, head of the International Associated for the Development of Environment and Culture made one of these allegations. Seif accused Farouk Hosni and Zahi Hawass of gifting a piece of ancient jewelry to Suzanne during the opening of the Jewelry Museum in April 2010. Hawass stated that no artifacts could be taken out of the museum without government approval and that he never gave or helped facilitate such acts.<sup>71</sup> This particular accusation was never proven.

Many of these charges were similar to those of corrupt foreign leaders of the 1800s, who abused the Egyptian antiquities. Although the abuse is not as apparent as before—such as the granting of antiquities to foreign dignitaries in 1855, when the Khedive gifted the museum’s contents to the Archduke of Austria—the use of antiquities as political pawns still existed during the Mubarak era.

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<sup>68</sup> Suzy Hansen, “Egypt’s Mean Queen,” *Newsweek*, January 2012.

<sup>69</sup> Muriel Mirak-Weissbach, *Madmen at the Helm*, (Ithaca Press, 2012), 36.

<sup>70</sup> Suzy Hansen, “Egypt’s Mean Queen,” *Newsweek*, January 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Fathya el-Dakhkhni, “Former ministers deny giving ancient jewelry to Suzanne Mubarak,” *Egypt Independent*, July 2011.

The tradition of corruption passed on from an Egypt ruled by foreign elites to an independent Egypt. It did not matter if the nation was openly ruled by a foreigner or secretly controlled by international currency. The manipulation of foreign interests for self-benefit became essential to Mubarak's thirty-year rule. Although foreign nations were no longer at the helm of Egypt's government, their financial support helped to fuel a powerful authoritarian government.

Foreigners still had a stake in Egypt politically and culturally, but Mubarak, unlike his predecessors, created a cohesive, yet openly corrupt relationship.<sup>72</sup> It is from this relationship and the development of this new climate that Dr. Zahi Hawass, head of the SCA, becomes the center of the cultural and political controversy. Accusations of Hawass being involved with the Mubarak began to surface throughout his career, but after the 2011 Revolution the tales of corruption erupted.

From his questionable relationship with Suzanne Mubarak to his flamboyantly aggressive personality, Hawass became the focus of anger with all that was believed to be wrong with Egypt. Hawass has, however, always maintained that his relationship with Suzanne Mubarak was not fraudulent stating that, "I have never been a politician in my life. I was not a friend of anyone."<sup>73</sup>

Relying on foreigners for assistance in the development of cultural institutions and the country's dependence on tourism as income were also key components for Mubarak's involvement in Egypt's antiquities. Foreigners were the leading contributors both financially and educationally. Financially they loaned money, supplied workers,

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<sup>72</sup> Openly corrupt in the sense that the people of Egypt were aware of the political corrupt environment that the Mubarak regime created.

<sup>73</sup> Joshua Hammer, "The Rise and fall and Rise of Zahi Hawass," *Smithsonian Magazine*, June 2013.

and were the main target-audiences for tourism. Educationally, they were the scholars and the researchers that continued to spread Egyptomania to a seemingly never-ending global demand.

The corrupt regime set the tone for Hawass's career, however. The regime, characterized by nepotism and questionable dealings, left its stain on Hawass. Many of his career choices and appearances were no doubt influenced by the political climate that was created under Mubarak's authoritarian rule.

### Chapter Three: The Modern Day ‘Indiana Jones’

#### *Hawass background:*

There was nothing that came out of the ground in Egypt that Dr. Zahi Hawass was not aware of, but his involvement in the archeological community is one that can be debated. There are two views of Dr. Hawass, the hero of the Pharaohs or the ruler of the underworld. This chapter’s intention is to evaluate Hawass’ career as the leading figure of Egyptian antiquities, looking at both sides of the argument.

Hawass can recall the exact moment when he discovered his love for archeology:

One day I was preparing to go to Cairo, dressed very nicely in my best clothes, and the workmen asked me to come and see the new discovery of a tomb. I followed them, and they started teaching me how to excavate. Well, I began to like it. I descended into the tomb, no longer caring that my nice clothes were getting very dirty...while I was cleaning, I saw a statue. It was of Aphrodite, Greek goddess of love and beauty, I began to clean the statue with my brush. At that moment, I fell in love with archeology.<sup>74</sup>

Soon afterwards, Hawass was appointed inspector of antiquities throughout the 1970s. With the help of a Fulbright scholarship, Hawass received his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania in 1987 at the age of 40.<sup>75</sup> Afterwards Hawass became the

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<sup>74</sup>Elaine Furst, “Dr. Zahi Hawass: Egypt’s Real Life Mummy Chaser”, *Scribol Pop Culture*, April 2010 <<http://www.environmentalgraffiti.com/archaeology/news-dr-zahi-hawass-man-who-chases-mummies#dLpsZIL6KHFkqFYF.99>>.

<sup>75</sup> Zahi Hawass, “How I fell in Love with Archeology”, *Zahi Hawass*, April 2010

General Director of Antiquities for the Giza Pyramids, Saqqara and Bahariya. By 2002 Hawass was head of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), the governing group in charge of all archeological sites and museums in Egypt. From this point on Hawass he was catapulted into fame. Hawass' career however was not always centered on his success.

Doubts about the legality of Hawass' work were not uncommon. When Hawass was accepted to the University of Pennsylvania on the Fulbright scholarship, allegations arose that it had been given under illicit circumstances. A. Robert Smith,<sup>76</sup> a biographer, stated during an interview with Hugh Lynn Cayce son of Psychic Edgar Cayce that:

I got him a scholarship at the University of Pennsylvania in Egyptology, to get his PhD. I got the scholarship through an ARE (Association for Research and Enlightenment) person who happened to be on the Fulbright Scholarship Board. He (Hawass) had aided Mark (Lehner) to work at the Sphinx, and I am very appreciative.<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, in March of 1993 Hawass was involved in a scandal involving the discovery of a hidden door inside the Great Pyramid by Gantenbrink's robot.<sup>78</sup> When Gantenbrink announced his discovery the Egyptian Antiquities Organization banned him from resuming his work after claiming he did not go through the "proper channels." The organization continued to make accusations that the project was a "hoax." As the scandal progressed, Hawass was relieved from his post in 1993. Dr. Bakr, the main spokesman against Gantenbrink, was eventually let go a few months later and in early 1994 Hawass

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<<http://www.drhawass.com/blog/how-i-fell-love-archaeology>>.

<sup>76</sup> A Robert Smith wrote a biography about Hugh Lynn Cayce entitled "Hugh Lynn Cayce: About my Father's Business." Full Citation?

<sup>77</sup> "The Zahi Hawass Saga: Who is Telling the Truth?," *Tahrir-Egyptian Antiquity News*, April 18, 2012.

<sup>78</sup> Philip Coppens, "The Egyptologist, the Sphinx and the cover-up," *Nexus Magazine*, August-September 2009.

was reinstated. The details of this scandal remain unclear to this day.

### *Rise to Stardom*

Hawass' career was well on its way even after the controversies of the 1990s. His confidence was overpowering and unrelenting, but what he was trying to achieve and who he was doing things for? Hawass stated: "I am not doing this for fame. I am already famous. I am not doing this for power. I do not need power. I am doing this because I am the only one who can do it. It is the first time that Egypt is being explained to the public."<sup>79</sup>



As his career progressed Hawass gained recognition both domestically and internationally as a modern day "Indiana Jones."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Sharon Waxman, "The Show-Biz Pharaoh of Egypt's Antiquities," *New York Times*, June 13, 2005.

<sup>80</sup> Hawass was compared to the famous character Indiana Jones, due to his wardrobe and occupation. He was typically seen wearing a button-down denim shirt, jeans and a hat that was similar to that of Indiana

But his appearance was not the only famous attribute of Hawass. One journalist best described Hawass as such:

There are scientists who say he is too concerned with self-promotion and is often loose with facts. There are Egyptian antiquities workers who complain that he takes credit for their accomplishments. But his penchant for drama and his virtual monopoly over Egypt's unrivaled ancient riches have earned him [much at] a time when tourism dollars are increasingly scarce. 'Whether we like it or not, he is a star, and he lives the life of a star, when he goes to a place, people gather around him to talk to him. Many professors give lectures; but people pay more to hear Zahi Speak.'<sup>81</sup>

Hawass was indeed a showman. Hawass was a man that submerged himself in the gimmicks that helped to put archeology in Egypt on the path of international recognition. Archeology is not known for producing celebrity figures or record breaking crowds but when Hawass came into the archeological scene he created waves of mass hysteria

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Jones.

<sup>81</sup> Michael Slackman, "Egypt's Tomb Raider, Off and (Mostly) on Camera," *New York Times*, April 17, 2009.

reinvigorating Egyptomania.<sup>82</sup> When Hawass took control of the SCA he began making plans to transform the Egyptian museums as well as the archeological sites. The future according to Hawass meant implementing site management policies, an aggressive museum-building program, training for all workers, tracking down artifacts that had been “stolen” from Egypt, and educating the general public.

Hawass went into great detail over his plans for the transformation of Egypt during an interview in the journal *Archeology*. Hawass spoke frankly about his goals stating:

Over the years I have had the privilege to witness the ever-growing interest in our extraordinary past. Now Egyptians are interested in our antiquities, they come to listen to my public lectures. They ask me about my adventures and are intrigued with our new discoveries. I plan to increase the interest in Egypt’s children.<sup>83</sup>

Hawass did not just stop with the education of Egyptians: “I believe that Egyptology is not just for Egyptians: It is for everyone. These monuments do not belong to us. They belong to everyone, and we are only the guardians.”<sup>84</sup> With his global thinking Hawass took his dream beyond the borders of Egypt. Hawass changed the previous laws that did not allow Egypt’s artifacts to leave the country and joined with National *Geographic* to create a traveling exhibit. In 2004 the exhibit entitled “Tutankhamen and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs,” left the sanctuary of Egypt for the halls of international museums. The tour of 50 objects from the reign of King Tut and 70 others from various kingdoms were set to travel from Europe to the U.S. and Australia

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<sup>82</sup> Egyptomania was a term that was coined in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when explorers began to travel to Egypt pursuing historical discoveries that would help fuel the fascination with this ancient culture.

<sup>83</sup> Zahi Hawass, “Shaking up the Land of the Pharaohs,” *Archeology*, July 3, 2002.

<sup>84</sup> Tim Radford, “King of the Pharaohs,” *The Guardian*, November 27, 2003.



(where it received the highest number of visitors). Unlike the previous King Tut exhibit from the 1970s which included the funerary mask, the 2004 exhibit was comprised of less famous pieces from the Egyptian Museum. For many the exhibit exceeded expectations:

These fragile, dry collars are as amazing as Tut's gold death mask: They show the swift passage of time, just as the tomb finds defy it. Seeing short-lived botanica arrayed in a display case some 3,300 years after they were delicately put together is a gift of historical accident. But it seems to emphasize not only how transient human life is, but, as we see with Tut and his tomb, also how long its traces might be felt.<sup>85</sup>

Even though the exhibit failed to produce the golden mask of King Tut, the smaller less famous (even unknown) pieces in this collection were able to inspire. Hawass succeeded in getting millions to attend, proving that Egyptomania was still very much a part of the world.

But for all the positive press that Hawass received there was equal or greater criticism. One visitor to the King Tut exhibit had this to say:

I felt it was one of the biggest rip-offs I have ever seen. Discovery Channel and NatGeo should be ashamed of themselves for pawning this off in the manner that they did...Don't waste your money on what the Discovery Hucksters have put together...I used to have a great admiration for the Egyptian Director of Antiquities, Zahi Hawass, but after seeing the amount of junk that is being sold...I have lost a great deal of respect for him.<sup>86</sup>

Hawass was not just taking criticism internationally, but he was also contributing to it himself. He made harsh criticisms about the museum, archeological sites and both

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<sup>85</sup> Edward Rothstein, "Mystique of Tut, Increasing With Age," *New York Times*, April 22, 2010.

<sup>86</sup> Daveels, "King Tut Exhibit NYC-rip off," *Fodor's*, July 14, 2010.

foreign and domestic archeologists:

We are the ones who care about preservation. The majority of foreigners care about discoveries.<sup>87</sup>

Hawass was openly critical in his statements towards foreigners and was determined to see the relationship with Egypt change:

People do not like dramatic changes but I am well trained, and I believe Egypt antiquities needs this passion. I know who my enemies are, and I don't care. They are the amateurs who want to drill in the pyramids, and the antiquities dealers we put in jail. The failures who do nothing in their lives. They do not like success in general.<sup>88</sup>

There was no doubt that tensions between the international community and Hawass began to shift after he became head of the SCA. But it was not just abroad that Hawass had harsh statements. He was also very open in his criticism about the state of Egypt:

For the last 100 years, curators sat down to drink tea, but they did not do their jobs. How many artifacts are in the basement? It was awful.<sup>89</sup>

Many Egyptians, such as those who worked in the museums, were openly uninterested in the artifacts that came out of Egypt unless they in some way benefited themselves:

'We feel the might of this history when we get paid,' said Sayyid Saber Shabaan, 21, when he stopped to take a 10-minute break. 'But if we do not get paid, we feel nothing.'

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<sup>87</sup> Tim Radford, "The King of the Pharaohs," *The Guardian*, November 27, 2003.

<sup>88</sup> Sharon Waxman, "The Show-Biz Pharaoh of Egypt's Antiquities," *New York Times*, June 13, 2005.

<sup>89</sup> Michael Slackman, "Those Forgotten Mummies in the Cellar Must Be Cursed," *New York Times*, November 2005.

We are used to these things. We are always here.’<sup>90</sup>

The passion that Hawass had for Egypt was not the same passion for many Egyptians. Many were capable of museum and archeological work but did not pay much heed unless they personally benefitted from it. It was only strong foreign demand that caused them to seek out this career.

But even with his campaign to ignite Egyptian’s interests Hawass was well aware of the state of many of the archeological sites and was quick to judge Egypt’s role:

I did something very important that people will appreciate in the future. Our monuments are stored in very bad storage magazines: you yourself can go and open them, by hand, get in and take artefacts. Or you can go and bribe a guard. That is something I really looked at carefully, at the beginning. I contracted the Egyptian army to build for us 37 new storage magazines, with well-made shelves, conservation rooms, photography department, [and a} lab for recording: it is like a museum, but not open to the visitor; it is a museum for scholars to keep and records monuments, and these are fantastic: we completely stopped most of the artefacts from leaving Egypt.<sup>91</sup>

Hawass was intent on shaking up the museum and archeological community through changing the traditional passive roles of Egyptians and demanding more from both Egyptians and foreigners. Taking any means necessary to achieve his goals resulted in him being labeled as “selfish,” “stubborn,” and “narcissistic”: many of the same traits international critics had characterized Hawass with.

*Shaking up foreign domination and breaking “traditions”:*

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<sup>90</sup>Michael Slackman, “In the Shadow of a Long Past, Patiently Awaiting the Future,” November 16, 2008.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*

Foreigners became some of Hawass's toughest critics, judging nearly everything that he did, especially after he took position as the head of the SCA. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, for example, has had a complicated relationship with Dr. Zahi Hawass and Egypt over the years. The King Tut exhibit, which Hawass had planned, was intended to spread knowledge about Egypt as well as raise money for the new National Museum that was to be built on the Giza Plateau. Hawass insisted in this regard on an additional entrance fee for visitors to the King Tut exhibit. The Metropolitan's refused to change their policy on charging visitors extra for a special exhibition, and declined to participate.<sup>92</sup> The Met's director, Philippe de Montebello, reported to Hawass that he was unable to persuade the Board of Trustees to break the museum's policy and charge a separate admission for the exhibit. In 1976 when the original exhibit was on display a separate fee was not placed on visitors with Egypt making no profit. These rules were in place then and have remained the same since. But still one only can wonder why the museum, which was projected to receive millions of visitors from this exhibit and make a large profit, was so unwilling to charge extra to assist Egypt:

Twenty-six years ago King Tut captured the hearts of everyone; this will capture the hearts of people again. It will bring peace, and strengthen relations between American and Egypt. King Tut is back.<sup>93</sup>

However much the exhibit may have helped popularize Egypt to an American public, more practical considerations behind exhibitions abroad were always just below

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<sup>92</sup>Sharon Waxman, "The Show-Biz Pharaoh of Egypt's Antiquities," *New York Times*, June 13, 2005.

<sup>93</sup>Sharon Waxman, "King Tut Treasures Will Return to U.S., but Won't Stop at the Met," *New York Times*, December 1, 2004.

the surface. After the original exhibition came to a close in Germany in 1981, one of the artifacts was damaged. It was after this that the Egyptian Parliament recommended that the treasures not leave Egypt again. But Hawass and Farouk Hosni, the Egyptian Minister of Culture, persuaded the Egyptian Parliament in 2003 to allow the antiquities to once again travel as a way to raise money. Hawass's intentions may not have been to merely spread knowledge with the new King Tut exhibit: Funds were needed to help promote his plans for change in Egypt.

Hawass continued facing various challenges in his pursuit to end foreign domination of Egypt's museums and archeological traditions after his promotion to 'the head of Egypt.' Besides the annual masses of tourists from abroad, nearly 95% of the excavation sites throughout Egypt were led by foreigners. Historically foreigners played an active role in preserving Egypt's most treasured antiquities found in the country's cultural departments, museums, and heritage sites throughout Egypt. The preservation of artifacts, like the Rosetta Stone, is on account of foreign contribution to conservation.

The Rosetta Stone is an ancient artifact that was discovered by French soldiers in 1799 and is said to be one of the greatest discoveries of all times. The Stone is inscribed with a decree from Ptolemy V, King of Egypt 196 BC. The true value of the Stone was that it provided a key to the modern understanding of Egyptian hieroglyphs. The Stone has repeats the decree in three separate languages on its façade: hieroglyphs, Demotic and Ancient Greek. Scholars were able to translate the Stone and from there unlocked the language of Ancient Egyptians.

Originally discovered by the French, the British took possession over the Stone in

1801 after seizing control of Egypt. It was transported to London and has been on public display in the British Museum since 1802. One can argue that without the vested efforts of foreigners the stone may not have survived if it remained in Egypt. In recent years, Hawass began an active campaign in which previous policies regarding foreigners were to change. Such policies included accountability for archeological sites, artifacts leaving Egypt, and the repatriation of Egyptian artifacts that had been 'looted.' Archeological sites were required to have a set minimum quota of Egyptian workers as well as permission from Hawass to excavate new projects. The SCA also controlled the Department of Returning Stolen Artifacts whose sole responsibility was to investigate and recover stolen artifacts. All these measures were part of Hawass's plan to change Egypt's current antiquities environment.

Another key component was the demand to return various artifacts from European and American museums. He stated in an interview with ART news in 2006 that the artifacts were "icons of our Egyptian identity, they should be in the motherland; they should not be outside of Egypt."<sup>94</sup> Some of the antiquities that Hawass called upon to be returned were: Nefertiti's bust in Berlin, the Rosetta stone in London, and the Dendera zodiac in France.

Nefertiti's bust was discovered in 1912 by a German archaeological team led by Ludwig Borchardt. The bust is over 3,000 years old and depicts one of the most influential and famous women of Ancient Egypt, the Great Royal Wife of Akhenaton, Nefertiti. Debate over the fairness of the bust leaving Egypt is one of the reasons behind

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<sup>94</sup>Sylvia Hochfield, "Zahi Hawass, the head of Egypt's antiquities council, is mounting a campaign to repatriate artistic icons from museums around the world," *ArtNews*, May 2006.

the demand for its return. The bust was negotiated as a part of the division of the archeological find between Egypt's chief antiquities inspector, Gustave Lefebvre, and Borchardt. It was said that Borchardt had been deceptive about the true value of the bust. The bust did in fact return to Germany legally with Borchardt, but for many, including Hawass, it was invalid.

The Dendera zodiac, from the ceiling of a chapel located in a temple at Dendera, Egypt, is a map of the ancient sky from 50 BC. A French antiquities dealer, Sebastien Louis Saulnier, commissioned Claude Lelorrain to remove the zodiac from the ceiling. It was moved to Paris in 1821 and installed in the Royal Library of Louis XVIII in 1822. It remained in the library until 1922 when it was moved to the Louvre where it is currently housed. Unlike Nefertiti's bust that was 'negotiated' out of Egypt, the zodiac was simply taken. Like so many artifacts that have left Egypt, most were not obtained legally or with the knowledge of the Egyptian people.

Although these items were "looted" from Egypt by foreign agents, most Egyptians at the time did not understand the value, and some argue that many Egyptians to this day still do not. Regardless, Hawass insisted that these artifacts be returned to Egypt where they rightfully belong:

I am saying: I give you exhibitions. [Then] you should help me. Ninety-five percent of Egyptians never saw the Rosetta stone, never saw the bust of Nefertiti, never saw the Zodiac in the Louvre, never saw the statue of Hemiunu architect of the Great Pyramid at Hildesheim Museum, never saw the statue of Ankhakhaf, architect of the second museum at Boston Museum of Fine Arts in America. I need them to be shown for a (short) period of time: even though I know all of them went, legally, in old times, except the bust of Nefertiti. What I am saying is that we

need to have ... cooperation.. I believe that Egyptology is not just for Egyptians, [but] ... for everyone. These monuments do not belong to us, they belong to everyone. We are only the guardians.<sup>95</sup>

There was not much that Hawass was not willing to do to “encourage” the return of many of artifacts that had gone missing over the years. He had gone as far as threatening countries that were unwilling to cooperate with his demands:

If any museum has stolen artifacts and is not willing to return them to us, I will stop them from working in Egypt. They do not deserve to be in Egypt....People destroy and steal because they know there is a market. If museums will announce they are not buying stolen artifacts, no one will go and destroy a tomb or open a magazine by force.<sup>96</sup>

Many museums understood this threat should not be taken lightly. Hawass was in control of every archeological site and was capable of prohibiting anyone from being involved in Egypt.

The Louvre was one of the most frequent targets of Hawass’s intimidation. Kimberly Alderman, an art law expert at the University of Wisconsin, spoke about the Louvre’s permits being pulled in 2009 after the museum refused to return requested artifacts believed to have been stole form a Luxor tomb in the 1980s. According to Hawass, the artifacts were part of Tetiky’s tomb which Dr. Eva Hoffman’s Egyptology team discovered were removed prior to their inspection in 2008. Hawass requested the artifacts to be returned in January 2009, at which time the Louvre stated that the approval of the French Ministry of Culture was required to approve any repatriations. After

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<sup>95</sup>Tim Radford, “The King of the Pharaohs,” *The Guardian*, November 27, 2003.

<sup>96</sup> Sylvia Hochfield, “Zahi Hawass, the head of Egypt’s antiquities council, is mounting a campaign to repatriate artistic icons from museums around the world,” *ArtNews*, May 2006.



waiting for nearly a year, the Louvre reapplied for an archaeological excavation permit. Hawass denied the request, thereby losing its excavation permits. Only two days after this rejection, Frederic Mitterrand, France's Minister of Culture, agreed to Hawass's original request. Hawass, however, did not lift the ban on the Louvre's excavation until the artifacts were back in Egypt. Museums, like the Louvre, learned that if you want to continue to work in Egypt you needed to "play by Hawass's rules."

As a result many feared enduring the same fate as the Louvre and therefore began to make preemptive measures to prevent such an occurrence. Therefore in 2010 the Met agreed to return many of the items that Hawass requested because the consequences of not returning them far outweighed the price of various pieces. Alderman, an art law expert, stated:

Egypt has in the past pulled excavation permits when museums would not cooperate with them on repatriation of objects that they have demanded returned. It's a negotiation dance. The Met wants to keep doing its digs, and may be willing to give up these objects that are not the most economically valuable in the world.<sup>97</sup>

Hawass was intent on his demands and goals for the future of Egypt. He was a strong advocate for the repatriation of Egypt's artifacts from foreign nations. But he also was a harsh critic when it came to his view on the position that foreigners have led in the preservation and conservation of Egypt's treasures. In the beginning of his career as head of the SCA he had this to say in regards to foreign involvement:

We are the only ones who really care about the preservation, he says. Foreigners who come to excavate maybe some of them care about preservation but the

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<sup>97</sup> Marlon Bishop, "Metropolitan Museum Returns Antiquities Found in King Tut's Tomb to Egypt," *New York Times*, August 2, 2011.

majority care about discoveries. I made these new rules: If you come and discover a tomb, you should preserve it, you should do the conservation, don't give it to me to do.

I spent, in the last year, half a billion Egyptian pounds in preservation, not one pound came from foreign aid, because most of the foreigners working in Egypt concentrate on discoveries—and we do help them, but we ask: If you discover something, you should really publish it.

There was to be no more poorly negotiated deals like that made for Nefertiti's bust or rapid excavations like those in the Valley of the Kings when tombs were discovered and then resealed because its contents were not of greater value. Instead of having just the responsibility of moving dirt, the foreign teams were to do a significant amount of work after as well. Hawass was particular:

In the rules we are making, you need to publish it in your language, and also in Arabic, because this can help the Egyptians to understand. And if you discover something you cannot go and reveal it in your country without telling us. It has to be reviewed by us and announced by us in your name. Then, after that, you can take it and announce it everywhere.<sup>98</sup>

Getting famous was something that foreigners were most interested in achieving. When Egyptomania first shook the international communities in the nineteenth century, people flocked to Egypt to get a piece of history so that they could bring home and show off. Most excavations were privately done and the pieces that were discovered ended up in private collections never to be seen by the general public. Hawass was a tough critic of this tradition. There was more archeology than just antiquities, as many artifacts simply become just another piece in someone's collection.

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<sup>98</sup> Tim Radford, "The King of the Pharaohs," *The Guardian*, November 27, 2003.

Hawass did not earn a good reputation within the foreign community. Archeologists did not like him because he changed the playing field and demanded more than just quick discoveries. International museums did not like being called thieves as some of their most prized collection pieces were likely asked to be returned. Those seeking fame were called amateurs by Hawass, and were singled out for condemnation:

“They are the amateurs who want to drill in the pyramids, and the antiquities dealers we put in jail.”<sup>99</sup> In sum, Hawass was a man of action being met with adversity leading to the question of whether his work was legal or honest.

*Political corruption:*

Political corruption is an open secret in Egypt. As such, Egyptians are quick to judge those in any position of power. Dr. Zahi Hawass was no exception. When Hawass first came onto the scene he was very critical towards the past with the work of both Egyptians and foreigners. This earned him a reputation that has traveled outside the borders of Egypt.

For many people outside of Egypt, Hawass was seen as the Indiana Jones who spread Egyptian history to the world. But for the people of Egypt he was seen by many as just another corrupt official. But was he? Thus, there are two very different views of Hawass: the hero of Egypt and just another tainted authority figure.

One supporter of Hawass asserted:

No director since Auguste Mariette, who founded the

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<sup>99</sup> ibid

service in 1858, has done more. He modernized the ancient, arbitrary and uniformed bureaucracy that had existed before and moved the offices from a dusty, remote slum into a modern office building in central Cairo and one that operated swiftly and efficiently.<sup>100</sup>

For every positive statement made in favor of Hawass's work there were just as many, if not more, negative comments. Labor disputes in Egypt were a sensitive issue for him. After the Revolution in 2011 many workers protested outside of Hawass's office demanding his immediate resignation. One protester disparaged:

'He does not care about us,' said 22-year old Gamal el-Hanafy, who graduated from Cairo University in 2009 and carried his school certificates in a folder. 'He just cares about propaganda.'<sup>101</sup>

Hawass focused on excavation, ownership and exhibition of Egypt's antiquities, and of course, his public profile cost him much support among his more modest co-workers. The main concern that the students had were the wages that had been offered to them: a three-month contract at 450 Egyptian pounds (approximately \$75) a month. This salary was pennies in comparison to how much the tourist industry brought into Egypt.<sup>102</sup> Those earning such salaries would wonder where the revenues of millions of foreign tourists who came to Giza alone were, as every person was charged 160 Egyptian Pounds (\$27). The cost of three tickets alone would fully cover the monthly wages of a single museum attendant. Workers thus sought greater transparency and demanded an actual living wage.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Stephanie Pappas, "Egypt's 'Indiana Jones' at Center of Archaeology Uproar," *LiveScience*, February 15, 2011.

<sup>101</sup> "Protesters target Egypt's antiquities chief," *USA Today*, February 14, 2011.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid*

<sup>103</sup> *ibid*

Workers, colleagues and reporters constantly gossiped that Hawass's net worth was in millions of U.S. Dollars. An Egyptian researcher told Bikya Masr, an independent news site in Egypt, this:

He (Hawass) is paid thousands of dollars for each appearance he makes for the Discovery Channel and every time he writes or appears anywhere. The man makes so much money that it is no wonder he tries to curtail other opinions. Everyone in the council knows what goes on, but he is the boss and his rules go, so there is little we can do.<sup>104</sup>

Hawass was also scrutinized for his contract with the National Geographic Society. Hawass had his own show with NGS in which he earned \$200,000 an episode as an explorer-in-residence. This position however was made possible because of his ability to have complete access to the ancient sites that were featured on the program. Along with his show, Hawass and the NGS collaborated on the design and execution of the traveling King Tut exhibit. Due to the exhibit, many of Hawass's own private ventures were featured.

These other ventures included: his self-entitled clothing line, published books, public speaking engagements (earning \$15,000) and other various projects. All of this was due to the position that he held with the Ministry of Antiquities, which earned him a government salary. The clothing line was due to his work with Arts and Exhibitions International, which secured Hawass's permission to take Egypt's King Tut artifacts on a world tour. The executives of the company made a separate contract with Hawass to market his clothing line. A second company, Exhibit Merchandising, was hired to operate the gift shop in the Egyptian Museum but was also the company responsible for

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<sup>104</sup> Naomi Astral, "Criminal archaeology—Zahi Hawass," 2012.

selling replicas of Hawass's famed hat for years.

Additionally, Hawass was accused of signing an illegal deal with the American Geographical Society to display Egyptian antiquities, which, according to Egyptian law, was in violation against laws protecting antiquities. According to the law, the renting of Egypt's heritage was strictly prohibited. However, Hawass, prior to the launch of the traveling exhibit, claimed in 2004 to have changed the law so that he could spread the education of Egypt throughout the world. Scandal over this issue was brought into the spotlight only after the Revolution. Was the changing of the law truly legal and was Hawass's intent solely for the spreading of education?

Hawass's self-promotion has been another leading factor to the accusations questioning what his true intentions were. In 2010 Hawass commissioned James Weber, a New York photographer, to do a photo-shoot advertizing Hawass's new clothing line at the traveling King Tut exhibit in Times Square. In many of the photos the models were posing with authentic Egyptian artifacts. Egyptians were outraged when this became public knowledge that ancient artifacts were used by a government employee to promote his personal affairs.<sup>105</sup>

One journalist, Sarah Carr, remarked sarcastically:

You might be thinking there is an ethical question surrounding a minister using 5,000 years worth of a country's heritage as a backdrop for private enterprise in a crass fashion. Perhaps that he is a low rent hustler. You would be wrong. As Moftases points out, the Zahi Hawass trademark is owned by Andres Numhauser. Numhauser is international vice president of Arts and Exhibitions International which is responsible for the New York

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<sup>105</sup> Danny Ramadan, "Egyptian Antiquities Minister Sentenced in Prison, Under Fires for Fashion Faux Pas," *Hyperallergic*, April 18, 2011.

exhibition Weber used as his backdrop for the Zahi Hawass clothing line photo shoot. So it's all kosher.<sup>106</sup>

After news of this photo-shoot spread Hawass's office, the Ministry of State for Antiquities, released a formal statement that none of the artifacts were ever touched but were merely a back drop. The office insisted that there was no violation of the artifacts and the shoot complied with all safety measures. Furthermore Hawass made it known that all profits from the clothing production company were to be donated to the 57357 Children's Cancer Hospital in Cairo.<sup>107</sup>

These charitable donations came under fire in 2012 when the Public Funds Prosecution office in Cairo filed charges against Hawass. The charges included wasting public money, exposing Egyptian antiquities, and stealing in collaboration with the previous regime.<sup>108</sup> The fact that the charity in question was run by Suzanne Mubarak, wife of the President of Egypt, did not help matters. Prosecutors alleged that Hawass's donations were illegal since Mrs. Mubarak's charities were privately owned.<sup>109</sup>

The reality of the accusations is that many of them may simply be unfounded or over-exaggerated. After all, many of the charges stemmed from the fact that Hawass was a protégé of Hosni and Suzanne Mubarak, and thus an easy target for the Tahrir protestors of 2011 and the succeeding Muslim Brotherhood government. Moreover, many of the specifics of Hawass's alleged corruption, such as the actual revenue he pocketed and antiquities he stole, were never fully verified. It is certain, however, that Hawass made many enemies within his career, both foreign and domestic due to his lack of

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<sup>106</sup> *ibid*

<sup>107</sup> *ibid*

<sup>108</sup> "Egypt's 'Indiana Jones' faces charges," *Ahram Online*, April 2, 2012.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid*

humility and abrupt behavior.

Because of his at times questionable nature Hawass was a journalist's dream, offering scandal and entertainment to audiences around the world. Media headlines toyed with the battle over of whether Hawass was a hero or a villain

*Media headlines:*

Hawass was in full control over his image and the persona that he created, using the media to promote Egypt using himself as a catalyst. Even Hawass's closest friends have been known to agree with the stereotypes and open criticisms that have become synonymous with Hawass's name. "The Show-Biz Pharaoh of Egypt's Antiquities", one of the many clever headlines that the press has come up was elaborated upon by Farouk El-Baz, an Egyptian-American director of the Center for Remote Sensing at Boston University:

He is a media whore, and as far as I am concerned, there is nothing wrong with that. There are scientists who work in the lab, and there are people who understand how to talk to people at the lowest possible level. That is Zahi. He has changed the face of archaeology in Egypt, from an esoteric topic about the past to something so exciting to discover, so interesting, so approachable.<sup>110</sup>

So much of who Hawass was and how the public viewed him can be associated with a larger than life character, Egypt's own 'Indiana Jones.' Hawass was quick to both accept and embrace this title.

Hawass hoped to promote himself as the smiling face, and adventurous mascot of

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<sup>110</sup> Sharon Waxman, "The Show-Biz Pharaoh of Egypt's Antiquities," *New York Times*, June 13, 2005.



Egyptian tourism. He was successful in this role in changing many of the views towards the Middles East at a time when cultural tension between the Muslim world and the West was high. “The King of the Pharaohs,” another headline that painted the pages of foreign newspapers decorated Hawass in the typical narcissistic light:

When he pushed a lamp too far in a tomb at Bahariya, the wire broke, and he fainted from the shock. ‘When I got up I told my colleagues that if anything had happened to me, everyone would believe in the curse.’<sup>111</sup>,

Hawass believed himself to be the only one capable of doing his job. Whether or not this was true can now be proven as Hawass’s fall from power was very public and followed world-wide.

*The fall of Egypt’s ‘Indiana Jones’:*

Hawass was not a politician but he knew politics, he was not an actor but he always was performing and he did not have a degree in public relations but he was always capable of promoting himself and Egypt. When Hawass was forced from his position as the head of the SCA it was a very public and scandalous event. Many of those that were involved in his demise believed Hawass to be just another pawn of the previous regime.

Before Mubarak’s fall in February 2011, Hawass spent nearly two decades promoting Egypt and its antiquities to audiences around the world. He was responsible for creating large exhibits like King Tut in 2004, various discoveries such as the Valley

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<sup>111</sup> “The King of the Pharaohs,” *The Guardian*, November 27, 2003.

of the Golden Mummies and changing the old ways of the SCA. Besides all of this, he provided a face for the Western world, one that was both agreeable and likable. He began his push for an increase in tourism in 1998, after he reopened the Sphinx to the public after it had been closed for nearly a decade. Tourism had been Egypt's largest economic sector and remained so even after the global economic crisis that had a dramatic affect on other areas of Egypt's economy.

But the 'glory days' of Egypt's tourism plummeted in 2011 after riots and protesting began across the country. During this time the people of Egypt were calling for the then President Mubarak to step down after forty years in power. Just a few days into the uprisings, the protesters of Egypt set fire to the National Democratic Party's headquarters located in Tahrir Square adjacent to the National Museum. At this moment protesters took action to protect the museum against the nearby flames as well as looters. But the protesters were not able to completely protect the museum, as it was broken into by vandals who either stolen or destroyed various artifacts. Through all the hysteria two popular social media sites were overwhelmed with one question: "Where is Zahi Hawass?"

When Hawass finally arrived to the museum several days following the looting he assured the media that everything was fine.

People began to enter the museum. They climbed over walls, forced open doors and entered the museum's vast souvenir shop. I am glad that those people were idiots, they looted the museum shop. Thank God they thought that the museum shop was the museum.<sup>112</sup>

Hawass spoke to the *Washington Post* on Monday January 21, 2011 reporting the

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<sup>112</sup>Rania Abozeid, "The Break-In at Cairo's Prized Museum," *Time World*, January 30, 2011.

situation of the museum break in. He maintained that “nothing is stolen from the Cairo Museum.”<sup>113</sup> Still he was concerned:

I was worried; I have been protecting antiquities all my life. I felt [that] if the Cairo museum is robbed, Egypt will never be able to get up again.<sup>114</sup>

But it was later discovered that some seventy eight pieces had been stolen and countless others irreparably damaged.<sup>115</sup> Whether the number of artifacts that were missing happened during the looting or prior to it remains unknown. Regardless, Hawass’s hollow reassurances only fueled the angry protesters against him. Hawass himself exclaimed:

All the devils came for me. The accusations brought against me were just the talk of people who hated me for years.<sup>116</sup>

Hawass was correct in stating that the people that rose up against him had been those that hated him for years. Many Egyptians resented Hawass for his arrogance towards his own citizens:

Hawass had never hidden his dislike for Egyptians and found them unworthy of their own heritage putting up countless concrete walls he (Hawass) built around towns and villages to separate the inhabitants from the antiquity sites.<sup>117</sup>

In February a group of Egyptian archeologists protested outside of Hawass’s office demanding higher wages and job security. Hawass resigned on March 5, 2011 in the

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<sup>113</sup> Brain Vastag, “Egyptian antiquities chief reports damage but no theft at Cairo museum,” *Washington Post*, January 31, 2011.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid*

<sup>115</sup> Andrew Burmon, “Golden Mummies: What Happened to the Indiana Jones of Egypt?”, *Huffington Post*, July 16, 2012.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid*

<sup>117</sup> *ibid*

belief that the controversy surrounding him, and the protests against Mubarak in general, made his job impossible. Hawass recognized that the tourist Egypt's cultural heritage was suffering due to the Revolution he stated: "We need the money brought in by tourists who visit our sites and museums to fund these things and, at the moment, there are no tourists."<sup>118</sup>,

Hawass then sought exculpation:

In response to the horrible rumors that I am stealing antiquities. How could this be?! How could a man who has given his life to protecting and promoting antiquities, be accused later of stealing them?! Because of all of these things, I believe that if I stay in my position for another six months, I will never be able to protect the antiquities I love and I will never be able to work during this mess. All my life, I have been excavating, discovering, writing books and giving lectures all over the world. My work is responsible for bringing many tourists to Egypt, which helps our economy. But now I cannot do this! Therefore, I have decided to resign.<sup>119</sup>

But his resignation did not last long as the interim government asked him to come back on as Antiquities Minister. Not long after assuming his new position, Hawass was charged with a civil suit over a land dispute. Hawass lost the case and was found guilty of corruption. In July 2011 the government removed Hawass from his position.

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<sup>118</sup> David Braun, "Zahi Hawass: Why I Resigned," *National Geographic*, March 6, 2011

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*

#### **Chapter Four: Conclusion**

As shown in the previous chapter Dr. Hawass was a product of his environment. The political foundation of Egypt was built on corrupt politicians. After the “freeing” of Egypt from Britain, the nation became oppressed by Egyptian political leaders, such as Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak. The environment which Hawass became a part of was created by years of authoritarian rule. Yet it was under Hawass, when he acted as the head of the SCA, that this dynamic began to change. Although his character was questioned throughout his career, and even more so after his fall, his accomplishments outweighed the controversies. He raised millions of dollars for Egypt’s antiquities with the traveling King Tut exhibit in 2012, but his critics offered few praises. His ‘connection’ with Suzanne Mubarak made him the center of political scam calling his success into question.

The attention that Hawass brought to Egypt’s antiquities was astounding. Through his numerous TV appearances, the permitting of traveling exhibitions, new discoveries, books and controversial interviews, Hawass was at the forefront of popularizing archeology, becoming Egypt's virtual “Indiana Jones.” No one within Egypt could rival his power except for the President himself. This kind of influence in any country, let alone Egypt, was both rare and controversial. Many of his critics called him conceded, corrupt, egotistical and rude. Egypt was a nation plagued by political

corruption. Dominated by nations like France and England for centuries, it was not a country in control of its own destiny. Relying on foreigners politically, economically and socially, there were few things that were truly Egyptian. The religion, currency, language, and government were all products of colonial interference. Nearly everything in Egypt during the twentieth-century can be traced back to foreign influences. Its language and religion came from the Arab invasion, the currency and government emulated the British. Even the cultural heritage was overrun by foreign investors and scholars such as the Louvre and British Museum, each with its own goals and agenda. When Egypt finally achieved its independence in 1952, the opportunity to recreate a nation in the image of Egyptians presented itself.

Yet, foreign influence lingered in Egypt, especially in terms of its archaeological heritage. The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, located in Tahrir was conceptualized, established and designed by foreigners. The fact that Marcel Dourgnon designed the current museum, in 1912, complex in Tahrir Square can be viewed in two different ways. One interpretation is that the decision was ahead of its time, demonstrating that Egyptian antiquities were not solely for Egyptians. But another, more logical, reasoning, given the nation's history as a colony, is that Egyptians were not trusted with such a large task.

All directors of the museum were foreign nationals until Mostafa Amer's appointment in 1953. During the era of colonial domination, it was only natural that foreigners maintained sole control over Egypt's antiquities. There would be no reason to continue such power after the Revolution of 1952 that expelled the British from its borders. Although Egyptians finally took over as directors of the museum, foreign

interests still had a hold over its mission. The museum focused on the needs/desires of foreign tourists while neglecting Egyptians. Unfortunately Egypt was unable to break free of foreign involvement. Financially Egypt did not have strong industries that could sustain the needs of the country, independent of foreign assistance. As a result Egypt became tethered to foreign nations for support. This financial dependence influenced many of the political decisions of the twentieth century creating a corrupt political environment.<sup>120</sup>

Due to this environment Hawass was subject to a different standard in comparison to museum directors throughout the world. Unlike nations such as France, whose rules and regulations monitored political activity, Egypt's government designed laws to satisfy self-interest. A prime example would be Emergency Law initiated by Mubarak after Anwar Sadat's assassination in 1981. Under Emergency rule the establishment of political parties, oppositions to Mubarak's NDP, were illegal.

After the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak during the revolution in 2011, Hawass came under fire mainly in regards to his political connection to Mubarak. Regardless of his political ties or accusations of corrupt behavior Hawass achieved more for Egypt's cultural heritage in ten years than others had done in fifty. Hawass re-wrote the previous standards of foreign controlled dig sites and cultural centers. Instead of focusing on the discovery of artifacts, Hawass made archeologists responsible for educating both Egyptians and international visitors.

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<sup>120</sup> A prime example of this was the alliance formed between the Soviet Union and Egypt in 1967 resulting in the Six Day War between Egypt and Israel. Another would be the strong relationship between the U.S. and Egypt during the Mubarak era. The U.S. offered a substantial amount of financial military funding which arguably would have an impact on the political relations between the two nations.

No longer were foreign archeologists permitted to choose where they wanted to excavate. Likewise, Hawass did not grant permission for new excavation projects from Giza to Abu Simbel. Hawass soon gained a reputation of strict control over every site, which often times created waves, particularly in the foreign press. Prominent museums and institutions that previously would simply be given whatever dig site they chose now had to ask for permission from Hawass, and often times were denied. In addition, each organization responsible for a dig site no longer could simply excavate but also was responsible then to conserve and educate. Hawass required that all finds be published within five years, otherwise permits would be revoked. Hawass also worked to broaden his museum's audience to Egyptians, and not just foreigners. One such project was the education of Egypt's youth through the exhibit of replicated artifacts from the museum placed in schools throughout Egypt.

Foreigners undoubtedly were still the highest financial providers to the museum from 2001-2010 with over twelve million tourists traveling to Egypt every year and, of that, nearly two million visit the museum.<sup>121</sup> The financial support generated by foreign institutions, investors and tourists allowed for Hawass to develop Egypt's cultural institutions. Investment in the projects such as the development of the Giza plateau in 1998, and plans for a new Grand Egyptian Museum, started in 2010 with an original completion date of 2014, was among some of Hawass's ideas.

Even though Hawass, appointed by Mubarak, was the fruit of an undemocratic military dictatorship, one cannot deny his achievements, such as his fostering of tourism

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<sup>121</sup> Jeannie Sowers and Chris Toensing, *The Journey to Tahrir, Revolution, Protest and Social Change in Egypt*, (Brooklyn: Verso, 2012), 219.



and his effective promotion of Egyptian history. Yet none of this would have been possible without Mubarak's endorsement.

For instance in 2009 during his campaign to reclaim lost or stolen artifacts Hawass demanded the return of five limestone wall paintings from the Louvre Museum in Paris. The artifacts were purchased in 2000 and 2003 from a gallery action after being stolen from a Luxor tomb in the 1980s.<sup>122</sup> When the museum director ignored Hawass's request, he blocked the Louvre from their excavation at Saqqara. Mubarak personally congratulated him after talking to Sarkozy, the Director of the Louvre, "Zahi...What you did was perfect."<sup>123</sup> This example alone shows strong governmental support of Hawass's campaign. Mubarak could have easily controlled this situation by forcing Hawass to reopen the dig site. Instead, Mubarak supported Hawass. Although Mubarak was a corrupt leader, Hawass understood the necessity of aligning with him because without Mubarak's support Hawass would be unable to achieve as much as he did.

Hawass was undoubtedly aware of how Egypt's political leaders could impact the museum. Two negative examples were when Nasser severed the connection with the west after canceling an exhibit set to travel the U.S. and when Sadat's decided to close the mummy display in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo Mubarak had the same power and influence, but Hawass was smart enough to recognize this, and openly sought to channel such support in a more positive direction.

Moreover, Hawass's achievements included requiring archeologists to focus on conserving artifacts, publishing all finds (in multiple languages), and generating a larger

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<sup>122</sup> Joshua Hammer, "The Rise and Fall and Rise of Zahi Hawass," *Smithsonian*, June 2013.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid*

budget for artifacts. In 2004, for the first time in years a large exhibit of Egyptian artifacts, Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs, left the safety of the museum to travel around the world. Modifications were made to the exhibit in 2008 with a new name “Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs.”<sup>124</sup> Hawass anticipated the exhibit to generate both cash and publicity to fund his ambitious programs back in Egypt. A campaign to reclaim what was stolen began by demanding artifacts to be returned from prominent museums in England and France. In 2003 the archeological and museum communities were shocked when Hawass called for the return of the Rosetta stone. Such new ways and actions angered a lot of people.

One such critic was Salima Ikram, professor at American University in Cairo, who worked with Hawass over eight years. “[Hawass] is dictatorial, egotistical and just plain wrong, and he tends to drive his staff and everyone else mercilessly. But he will listen...to those strong enough to stand up to him...”<sup>125</sup> Criticizing colleagues, shutting down dig sites and micro-managing every aspect of Egypt’s antiquities proved to be the best way to achieve results. The corrupt environment that became a customary tradition to Egypt did not deter Hawass. Instead, Hawass only achieved more. To Willeke Wendrich, A UCLA professor of Egyptian archeology:

Maybe cooperation would be better served if he formulated things slightly differently. But it’s counterbalancing what

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<sup>124</sup> Suzanne Mubarak wrote the forward to the book that corresponded with the exhibit. She introduced the exhibition: “For the last three years, I have followed the success of the exhibition ‘Tutankamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs’ as it traveled through Europe and the U.S. Leaving Egypt for the first time in a quarter of a century, the golden boy is once again acting as our ambassador...I am very glad that we are sending another spectacular exhibition to entertain and education our friends around the globe.” Some of the profits from the tour went towards renovating the Suzanne Mubarak Children’s Museum.

<sup>125</sup> Mike Boehm, “Eternal Egypt is his business; the man behind Tut’s return zealously preserves his countries past. He’s drawn both admiration and ire.” *Los Angeles Times*, June 2005.

has been going on too long, a colonialist attitude that hasn't disappeared even now. I think the way he acts is partly his personality, but it's partly a reaction to a very arrogant treatment of Egyptians and Egyptian officials.<sup>126</sup>

The blending of show business and science appealed to the foreign audiences, the bold demands for the return of stolen artifacts appeased Egyptians as well as Hawass's ego, and the strengthening of the training of tour guides promoted local achievement. Dennis Forbes, an editorial director of *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* recognizes that Hawass's personality and style did not fit well in some academic circles.

Some people think that a true scholar is not supposed to be a star, he's wine and dine and lionized....he's the first antiquities chief who has really had an impassioned attitude toward the job. He's out there. He's everywhere.<sup>127</sup>

But the reality was everything that Hawass did in some way benefited Egypt as well as himself. Since his dismissal in 2011 from the head of the Ministry of Antiquities and as the supreme chief of all Egypt's antiquities, Hawass's legacy and Egypt's cultural heritage is on the verge of destruction. Tourism has dramatically dropped over fifty percent, preservation work has slowed to a near halt, and the Grand Egyptian Museum remains incomplete.

Hawass was the face of Egypt that foreigners could both recognize and accept. With his dismissal the fate of Egypt's antiquities is unknown. It is difficult to say whether Hawass will return as the ruler of Egypt's cultural institutions or if he will remain expelled. With a strong foreign presence and the need to recapture foreign interests, Hawass would be Egypt's strongest asset. Speaking out against the Muslim

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<sup>126</sup> ibid

<sup>127</sup> ibid

Brotherhood after the revolution, President Mohamed Morsi (2012-2013), would not have been inclined to return Hawass to his position.<sup>128</sup>

There is no indication that Hawass will be returning to head Egypt's antiquities market. However, it is my belief that Hawass is needed. Foreigners are Egypt's strongest and most profitable tourists. In order to regenerate this, a familiar face, like Hawass, is more likely to settle foreigner's hesitations and fears. He was the Indiana Jones of Egypt, dressed head to toe in denim with his famous hat. Easily recognizable, Hawass created a persona that will be hard to re-create. There is no knowing if Hawass will ever return but if he does not Egypt's antiquities will never again be the same.

Hawass's achievements were great. He single-handedly created a thriving tourist industry for Egypt as well as spread Egyptology internationally. Reaching thousands of tourists, educators and Egyptian fans, Hawass was able to bring the celebration of Egypt's cultural heritage to new heights. But the greatest contribution may be that the face of Egyptology was finally an Egyptian. Regardless of corruption or personality defects, Hawass's achievements outweigh any discrepancy to his decade long career. His over-the-top personality can be recognized by millions around the world, an achievement that no one else has made for archeology. As such, Egypt may never have another Indiana Jones.

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<sup>128</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood's official site published in 2013 promised to invest twenty billion U.S. Dollars in the tourist industry. A spokesperson for the Freedom and Justice Party's tourism committee stated: "We are looking to institutionalize Egypt in this new era, position revolution, and we understand the past regime focused on the concept of the one man show to keep the control of the country within a few people...but there are many talented people with great capabilities in tourism and Egyptology....our job is to bring the best talent onboard to ensure thrusting new leaders to create a sustainable Egypt."

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