

Ozymandias and the British discovery of Ancient Egypt

by

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Two hundred years ago, Percy Bysshe Shelley published his famous sonnet, 'Ozymandias of Egypt'. The poem was inspired by the removal from Egypt of a colossal bust of Ramesses II, now one of the treasures of the British Museum. This lecture will examine the archaeological background to Shelley's masterpiece – the story of the bust and why it was removed – and set it in the context of the wider quest by early 19th-century British explorers and adventurers to unearth and acquire pharaonic antiquities. The years between the discovery of the Rosetta Stone (in 1799) and the decipherment of hieroglyphics (in 1822) emerge as an important, if lesser-known, period in the birth of Egyptology as a discipline.

The Speaker: Toby Wilkinson is Professor of Egyptology and Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Lincoln, UK. Hailed by *The Daily Telegraph* as 'the foremost Egyptologist of his time', he has held academic posts at the universities of Cambridge and Durham, and is the prize-winning author of eleven books which have been translated into eleven languages. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Historical Society, a Bye Fellow of Clare College Cambridge, and a member of the international editorial board of the *Journal of Egyptian History*.



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Australian Institute of Archaeology, Terrace Way, Macleod

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University parking restrictions do not apply after 5pm)

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