



## **Souvenirs and New Ideas: Travel and Collecting in Egypt and the Near East**

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# Souvenirs and New Ideas: Travel and Collecting in Egypt and the Near East

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Early travelers to Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, Turkey and the Levant recorded and remembered their journeys by collecting or creating mementos of places they visited. This natural inclination took many guises, ranging from painting landscapes or, later, taking photographs to acquiring souvenirs, very often antiquities. The collection of antiquities, a controversial and usually illegal practice today, was in the 18th and 19th centuries not necessarily either, and many privately assembled collections now form the basis of major national museums. *Souvenirs and New Ideas* explores the human desire to retain the memory of a foreign journey, in a series of essays that examine the collections of a variety of travelers, from intrepid female solo voyagers to European royalty. Their acquisitions included souvenirs ranging from Egyptian mummies and ancient artifacts, to paintings and sketches of places visited, to the raw material for books written at leisure, both scholarly and popular. In their desire to share with those at home some of what they had seen, these voyagers contributed to an understanding of societies little known at the time, and the stories of their travels continue to entrance.

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