

Participants in the project

Project coordinator: The Isère Department

President

Jean-Pierre BARBIER

Vice President for Culture, Heritage
and Decentralized Cooperation

Patrick CURTAUD

Vice President for Departmental Buildings

André GILLET

Executive Director of Services

Séverine BATTIN

Deputy Executive Director

Laurent LAMBERT

Director & Deputy Director of Culture and Heritage

Aymeric PERROY & Odile PETERMANN

The Champollion Museum Curator

Caroline DUGAND,

assisted by **Maëva GERVASON & Manon SANCHEZ**

Director of Public Constructions and Work Environments
& Head of the Project Management Office

Philippe ROUGER & Marc COULON

Operations Manager

Elisabeth BERARD

Partnered institutions

The Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes DRAC

(French Ministry of Culture)

The City of Vif

Scientific Committee

Lionel BERGATTO, Marie-Françoise BOIS-DELATTE,

Christine CARDIN, Anne CAYOL-GERIN,

Olivier COGNE, Alain FAURE, Catherine GAUTHIER,

Jean-Claude GOYON, Sylvie GUICHARD, Valérie HUSS,

Jean-Pascal JOSPIN, Karine MADRIGAL, Céline RAMIO,

Alessandro ROCCATI, Vincent RONDOT,

Hélène VIALLET

We kindly thank the descendants of Jacques-Joseph

Champollion-Figeac & Jean-François Champollion.

Primary contractors

Architecture: **ARCHIPAT Gaël ROBIN & Nicolas CASTRO**

Museum design & scenography: **SCÈN'ART**

Landscaping: **REYNAUD PAYSAGES**

18 selected businesses

The Origins of Egyptology

Opening in 2020

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



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France's Isère Department is a veritable treasure trove of talents, home to many illustrious historical figures, notably during the 19th century: the composer Hector Berlioz, the painter Ernest Hébert, the writer Stendhal, the engineer Aristide Bergès... It was therefore only fitting that the Department dedicate a museum to the famed Champollion brothers. In the summer of 2020, Isère's 11th departmental museum will be inaugurated in the town of Vif, south of Grenoble, paying tribute to the Champollion brothers' lives and work.

This project was born of the desire to restore to the public a unique heritage site whose character and identity have been miraculously preserved. In this manner, the Department faithfully respects its commitment to the descendants of Jacques-Joseph Champollion-Figeac, the Egyptologist's older brother, following its acquisition in 2001 of the family estate.

As the site's guardian, responsible for the preservation, study and promotion of this exceptional heritage, the Department of Isère has undertaken an ambitious project: opening the *Maison des Champs* to the general public, thereby ensuring a Champollion memorial site of commensurate influence and prestige.

This new museum will constitute the only site in France entirely dedicated to the field of Egyptology, which the Champollion siblings helped found. Offering free admission to all visitors, it will transport the curious-minded from the banks of the Isère to the banks of the Nile...

Jean-Pierre BARBIER
President of the Isère Department



Manor house of the Les Champollion estate
© ISÈRE DEPARTMENT, CHAMPOLLION MUSEUM



Jean-François Champollion (1790-1832) and the table of phonetic signs, emblematic of his decipherment
© ISÈRE DEPARTMENT, CHAMPOLLION MUSEUM



Jacques-Joseph Champollion-Figeac (1778-1867), the famous decipherer's older brother and also a scholar
© ISÈRE DEPARTMENT, CHAMPOLLION MUSEUM

Key project dates

2001 Purchase of *Les Champollion* estate by the Isère Department

2004 Temporary public opening during the International Egyptology Conference

2006-2009 Initial, uncompleted renovation project

2016 Resumption of the project, targeting a 2020 opening

2017-2018 Study phase

2019-2020 Construction phase

Late summer 2020 Scheduled opening of the museum

The Champollion brothers

The *Les Champollion* estate in Vif faithfully preserves the memory of the Champollion brothers: Jean-François Champollion, the famed Egyptologist, and Jacques-Joseph Champollion-Figeac, his older brother and also a renowned scholar, archaeologist, journalist, librarian and university professor.

Dauphiné origins

Although born in Figeac, in the province of Quercy, both brothers were deeply attached to the Dauphiné. As a young adult, Jacques-Joseph moved to Grenoble, the cradle of his father's family, and rapidly had his younger brother join him, subsequently overseeing his studies. In 1807, the elder Champollion married Zoé Berriat. Their family would enjoy pleasant stays at *La Maison des Champs* in Vif, owned by the Berriats since 1778.

Siblings and researchers

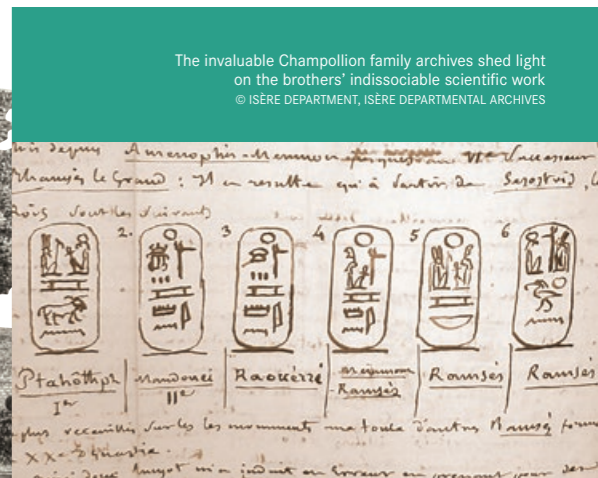
His working as a history professor and researcher in Grenoble allowed the younger Champollion brother to enjoy numerous stays in Vif up until 1824. Indeed, this provincial life suited him. In his second-floor bedroom at Vif, the Egyptologist would spend many hours studying Egyptian civilization and hieroglyphs. Encouraged by his ever-present older brother, he managed to finally decipher the complex hieroglyphic system in 1822.

The birth of Egyptology

This discovery represented an important milestone in the nascent discipline of Egyptology. The decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs allowed for the exploration of an entire civilization, with ancient texts suddenly rendered comprehensible. Jean-François Champollion subsequently dedicated himself to the study of Ancient Egypt, paving the way for numerous successive scholars.



Egypt as discovered by Jean-François Champollion in the early 19th century.
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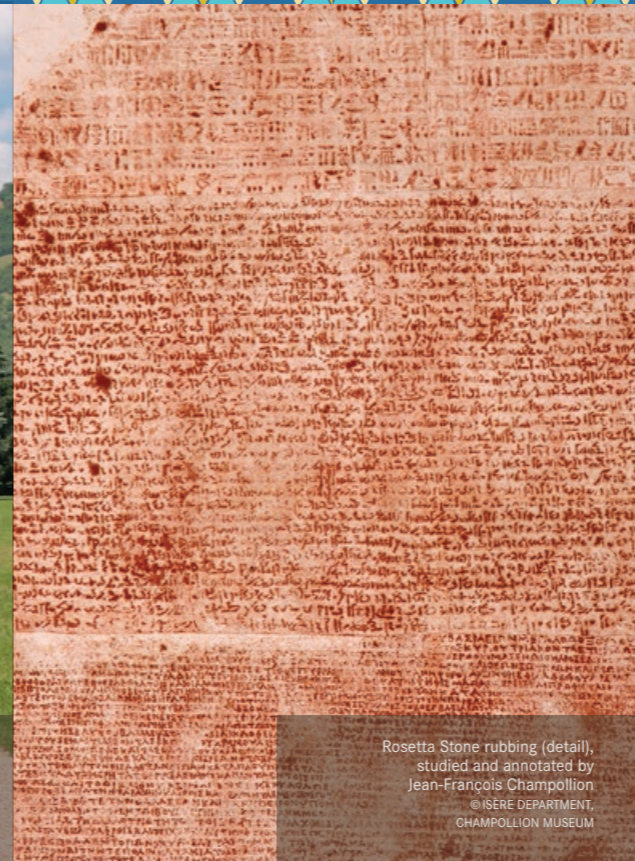
The invaluable Champollion family archives shed light on the brothers' indissociable scientific work
© ISÈRE DEPARTMENT, ISÈRE DEPARTMENTAL ARCHIVES



Woolen coat worn by Jean-François Champollion during the Franco-Tuscan expedition to Egypt (1828-1829)
© ISÈRE DEPARTMENT, CHAMPOLLION MUSEUM



The Champollion house at the foot of the Vercors Massif
© ISÈRE DEPARTMENT, CHAMPOLLION MUSEUM



Rosetta Stone rubbing (detail), studied and annotated by Jean-François Champollion
© ISÈRE DEPARTMENT, CHAMPOLLION MUSEUM



Ramesses II on his chariot, copied at Abu Simbel during the epigraphic expedition led by Jean-François
© ISÈRE DEPARTMENT, CHAMPOLLION MUSEUM

An 11th departmental museum

In October 2016, the President of the Isère Department, Jean-Pierre Barbier, announced the creation of a museum to open in 2020 within the grounds of the *Les Champollion* estate.

This project is perfectly suited to the Isère's strong cultural policy. Indeed, the Department already oversees no less than 10 museums, all of which offer free admission (since January 2004). Local authorities have invested €6.2 million in the renovation project, with the French State and the City of Vif both contributing funding.



Felt shashiya kept by Jean-François Champollion as a precious souvenir of his trip to Egypt
© ISÈRE DEPARTMENT, CHAMPOLLION MUSEUM

A memorial site turned museum

The *Les Champollion* estate was kept and cared for by the descendants of Jacques-Joseph Champollion-Figeac, the Egyptologist's older brother, up until the early 21st century. In 2001, the Isère Department purchased the property, committing itself to perpetuating the memorial work begun by the family, by preserving the estate and eventually opening it to the public.

This unique heritage site and ensemble amply justify the community's marked commitment. A listed historic monument, the estate comprises a manor house, outbuildings and a vast park covering 2.5 hectares. In the family house, the descendants fortunately preserved the original interior decors, furnishings, artworks and personal effects of the Champollion brothers.

Exceptional collections

Jean-François Champollion's personal effects include such exceptional items as his Hebrew Bible, his mahogany tiered writing desk intimately linked to the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs, and his Egyptian outfit worn during the 1828-1829 expedition. Fascinating rubbings of the Rosetta Stone, bearing his own handwritten annotations, and numerous other documents testify to his extensive research work. The renowned

Champollion-Figeac library comprises 1,100 works dating from the 16th to the 19th centuries and dealing with history, epigraphy, Egypt and the earliest research focusing on hieroglyphic decipherment. The collection attests to the brothers' far-ranging activity. It notably includes two proofs of the *Historical Preface to the Description of Egypt* entrusted by Napoleon Bonaparte to Joseph Fourier, assisted by Jacques-Joseph.

The family archives, listed as historical documents in 1997 and housed at the Isère Departmental Archives, constitute one of the finest intellectual, historical and scientific collections from the first half of the 19th century. This ensemble of 60 volumes of correspondence has been the subject of a detailed inventory since 2010.



Ignace-Antoine Melling, *Vue de Grenoble*, brown ink wash on paper, 1819
COLLECTION FONDS GLENAT POUR LE PATRIMOINE ET LA CRÉATION - © JM BLACHE



Mahogany desk, firsthand witness to years of research and deciphering
© ISÈRE DEPARTMENT, CHAMPOLLION MUSEUM



Permanent exhibition occupying the manor house. Museographic projection by Scèn'art. © SCÈN'ART

AMBIANCE SKETCHES © AGENCE ARCHIPAT

PLANNED LAYOUT © AGENCE ARCHIPAT

The museum design

The scientific and cultural project, conditioning the exhibition's content and layout, was established by the museum staff. This project also benefitted from the input of a scientific committee comprising Egyptologists, historians, art historians and heritage curators. The President of the Department has requested the 'Musée de France' appellation for the future institution; awarded by the French State, this label guarantees visitors a quality museum experience. Numerous partnerships have been established with other museums (museums of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region, as well as national and international institutions such as the Champollion Museum of Figeac and the Louvre), as well as with universities, historical societies and Egyptological associations. The museum will focus on three main themes: the complementarity of the two Champollion brothers, their research work and their contributions to the birth of Egyptology.

The Champollion siblings, founders of Egyptology A marriage of science and the Orient, at the foot of the Vercors...

Two men, one legend

The museum will focus on both Champollion brothers. The popular image of the renowned Egyptologist conceals a more complex reality. Jacques-Joseph, as his elder brother, substitute father and protector, had an important influence on the young Jean-François. The museum exhibition will shed light on this fraternal complementarity and complicity.

Their lives as researchers

The Champollion brothers' respective careers offer fascinating illustrations of 19th-century research. Indeed, their intertwined lives shed light on the researcher's particular approach and path: apprenticeship and emulation, recourse to primary sources, confrontation and transdisciplinarity, knowledge transmission and dissemination... This theme will prove of particular interest in Grenoble, home to an extensive scientific community.

The origins of Egyptology

Champollion's work and the fundamental contribution of his decipherment were the culmination of centuries of questionings and studies to lend voice to a silent civilization. By exploring the careers of the Champollion brothers, the museum will reveal the essential milestones leading to the creation of Egyptology as a nascent scientific discipline. Egypt would become the mother of all civilizations, replacing Ancient Greek and Rome, and provoking a vast movement within the arts and a radical change in perceptions.



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Key figures for the Champollion Museum

A museum in the heart of a vast park (2,5 hectares), with two exhibition spaces and a classroom/workshop

€ 6.2 M dedicated to the site's renovation

15 rooms imagined for the permanent exhibition

1.700 works and objects in the reserve collection

340 works and objects chosen for the permanent exhibition

108 objects entrusted by public and private institutions

27 scientific partners

The renovation project

An architectural project respecting the site's unique spirit

The Lyon-based agency Archipat, selected in September 2017, is made up of heritage architects, a landscaper and a museum specialist.

The architectural and landscaping project takes full advantage of the entire *Les Champollion* estate: the manor house, the outbuildings, the courtyards and the park. All essential functions of a modern museum will be housed by the existing structures. The manor will present a permanent exhibition on the lives and works of the Champollion brothers. The Isère departmental collections, further enriched by public- and private-collection consignments, will evoke the brothers' role in the rediscovery of Egypt and the birth of Egyptology. In the outbuildings, a temporary exhibition space will allow the museum to regularly renew its offer and explorations. A reception area, a museum shop and a classroom are also planned. The bucolic park and the kitchen garden will be recreated in

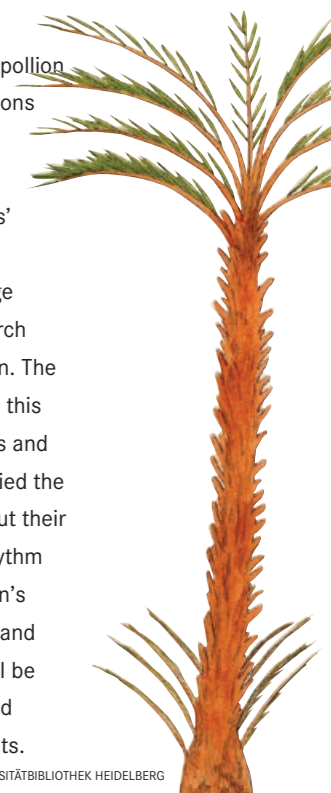
the spirit of the 19th century. With newly planted trees, flower beds and an orchard of local species, the landscaped grounds will contribute to the special ambiance of the *Maison des Champs*.

An immersive museum design

The scenography will allow visitors to immerse themselves in the 19th-century world of the Champollion brothers, mixing period recreations and contemporary installations. From Vif to Egypt, visitors will retrace step-by-step the siblings' fascinating intertwined careers. The museum's specific challenge resides in its showcasing research as the brothers' special vocation. The exhibition will lend tangibility to this shared passion, its quests, trials and errors. And just as it accompanied the Champollion brothers throughout their lives, Ancient Egypt will lend rhythm to the exhibition. This civilization's rediscovery in the 19th century and the wonderment it provoked will be translated by the abundance and diversity of the presented objects.



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