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BRITISH EGYPTOLOGY (1882 – 1914)

علم المصريات البريطاني (1882 – 1914)

*Kathleen Sheppard*

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## BRITISH EGYPTOLOGY (1882 – 1914)

## علم المصريات البريطاني (1882 – 1914)

Kathleen Sheppard

Britische Ägyptologie (1882 – 1914)  
Égyptologie britannique (1882 – 1914)

*The period from 1882 – 1914 has been called the “Golden Age” of Egyptology, but that term is problematic in light of the fact that it was a Golden Age only for Europeans and Americans. In Britain, the founding in 1882 of the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF, now Egypt Exploration Society [EES]) and the beginning of the Great War in 1914 bookend this tumultuous period of Egyptology. During this period, political, religious, economic, and institutional structures impacted the intellectual development of British Egyptology as practiced both in Britain and in Egypt. The establishment of Egyptology as a university-taught subject was crucial to the field. By 1904, the signing of the Entente Cordiale between France and Britain meant that France recognized diplomatically that Britain occupied Egypt. In turn, the French had control over the direction of the Antiquities Service; however, that service was ultimately under the control of the British.*

سميت الفترة من 1882 — 1914 بـ "العصر الذهبي" لعلم المصريات، لكن هذا المصطلح يمثل إشكالية لأنه كان عصرًا ذهبيًا بالنسبة للأوروبيين والأمريكان فقط. في بريطانيا وخلال عام 1882 كان تأسيس صندوق استكشاف مصر (الآن جمعية استكشاف مصر) وبداية الحرب العظمى (الحرب العالمية الأولى) خلال عام 1914 متزامناً لهذه الفترة من علم المصريات. حيث أثرت الكيانات السياسية والدينية والاقتصادية خلال تلك الفترة على التطور الفكري لعلم المصريات البريطاني في كل من بريطانيا ومصر. وكان إنشاء علم المصريات كموضوع يدرس بالجامعة أمراً حاسماً لهذا المجال. بحلول عام 1904، كان توقيع اتفاق الوفاق الودي بين فرنسا وبريطانيا يعني أن فرنسا اعترفت دبلوماسياً بالاحتلال البريطاني لمصر. في المقابل، كان الفرنسيون يسيطرون على توجهات مصلحة الآثار. ومع ذلك، أصبحت مصلحة الآثار في نهاية المطاف تحت سيطرة البريطانيين.

**I**n 1882 two major events took place that impacted the practice of British Egyptology—the first meeting of the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF, renamed Egypt Exploration Society [EES] in 1919) in London in March and the British bombardment of Alexandria in July. The next 40 years would comprise what many call the “Golden Age” of Egyptology. This

term is problematic, so we must always question for whom this period was a Golden Age. It was so for the West: primarily Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. Because of the colonial situation in Egypt, these countries had unprecedented control over, and access to, the historical artifacts of the country’s entire history. By 1914, hundreds of thousands of artifacts of

Egyptian history had been excavated from the ground and dispersed to collections all over the world (Stevenson 2019). In that same year, the Great War (World War I) began, tearing up lives, land, and much of the world for the next five years.

Driven by violent colonial practices and a pervading sense of cultural superiority, British Egyptology focused on the appropriation and interpretation of a culture not its own, while at the same time oppressing and silencing indigenous voices and labor (e.g., Wortham 1971; Fagan 1975; James 1982; Reid 2002). The accepted general storyline of this period of British Egyptology is one of salvage and preservation by heroic men and their crews (e.g., Drower 1985; Thompson 2015a, 2015b, 2018). Due to the important work of current scholars, the narrative is becoming more accurately inclusive and less colonial, but there is a lot of work still to be done (e.g., Carruthers, ed. 2014; Riggs 2014; Mairs and Muratov 2015).

### *Controlling and Exploring Egypt*

In 1877, Amelia Edwards asserted in her travelogue *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* that, in Egypt, “The work of destruction, meanwhile, goes on apace. There is no one to prevent it; there is no one to discourage it. Every day, more inscriptions are mutilated—more tombs are rifled—more paintings and sculptures are defaced” (Edwards 1877: 323). She wrote with urgency to her fellow Britons to save the Egyptian monuments from the Egyptians themselves. Just two years before this, the Khedive Isma’il had sold his shares in the Suez Canal to the British government because he could not afford payments on the loans he had taken out from Western powers to build infrastructure and modernize Egypt. This acquisition gave Britain majority control in the Suez Canal Company, and they intended to keep it. In 1879, Isma’il was deposed in favor of his son, Tewfik, who was seen as more amenable to working with the European powers coming into Egypt. Not wanting a hostile foreign takeover, an Egyptian army officer named Ahmad ‘Urabi rose up as the voice of the Egyptian people and would

remain so over the next three years. By early 1882, ‘Urabi had forced Tewfik to dismiss his cabinet, strengthen the people’s representation, and strengthen the army; the nationalist ‘Urabi Revolt had begun (Cole 1993; Goldschmidt 2004: 44). In March of the same year, on Edwards’ initiative, the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF) was founded and held their first meeting in London. In July, however, in order to fight the nationalist uprising, the British bombarded the port city of Alexandria, and by August, British forces had moved into the country and taken control of the government, re-establishing a subservient Khedivate under Tewfik. This situation gave Britain control of Egypt and made it possible for Europeans to continue to run roughshod over Egyptian sovereignty for the next seventy years with little to no repercussions (Reid 1999). The British had also gained safer access to sites and antiquities, meaning that the practice of British Egyptology is inextricably bound up with violence and exploitation (Mitchell 2002: 179-205; Reid 2002: 172; Colla 2007).

The British maintained a few primary reasons for their interest in Egypt. The first and strongest was colonial control, which in turn impacted the study of ancient Egypt. When Britain gained control of Egypt in 1882, their purview included not only industry, economics, and politics, but also ancient monuments and their history (Mitchell 1988, 2002; Reid 2002; Colla 2007: 72-165). In fact, in 1882, Reginald Stuart Poole, Edwards’ co-secretary of the EEF and the Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, argued that the ancient Egyptian monuments “exist for the benefit of the [British] nation, and it is our duty to wake public interest in the matter, and to do our utmost to save for future instruction those treasures which, like the Egyptian tombs, we may live to lament in vain” (Poole 1882: 24). Maintaining their political and economic control over Egypt would motivate and bolster support for British Egyptology for the foreseeable future (Reid 2002; Colla 2007). Indeed, from the founding of the EEF in 1882, Edwards’ main goal was to promote Egyptology to the British and American public in order to raise money

for the Fund so they could support more salvage and preservation work throughout Egypt. She worked closely with a number of well-known archaeologists and museum curators who had expertise all over the Mediterranean world. Significantly, she had gone from having just a few subscribers for the Fund in England in 1882 to having over 160 in the UK and US by the end of 1886 (Drower 1982; Moon 2006: 211-243).

The first excavations funded by the EEF were not performed by a British Egyptologist at all because, arguably, there were none (Thompson 2015b: 15). Instead it was the Swiss Egyptologist Edouard Naville who excavated for the Fund at their first site, Tell al-Maskhuta, in the eastern Delta, beginning in January of 1883 (Naville 1885). The following season, in 1883-84, Naville was unavailable, so Poole suggested to Edwards newcomer Flinders Petrie. Petrie, just 30 years old at the time, had recently finished work on the Giza plateau, measuring and surveying the pyramids, and had published his book, *The Pyramids and Temples of Gizeh* (Petrie 1883). As he had not performed excavation per se, he was happy to have the opportunity to do so and began his excavation career in late 1883 at Tanis (San el-Hagar) in the northeastern Delta (Petrie 1885, 1888). He quickly became Edwards' protégé at the Fund. They both understood the importance of the timely publication of results—Edwards for the public in newspapers and magazines, Petrie for Fund subscribers and scholars in annual site reports. They both knew the value of displaying their finds each year to the public, with the dual purpose of keeping subscribers happy and recruiting new ones. They were also both mindful of the need to conserve money at a fund dependent fully on public subscription support, making Petrie a favorite of both Edwards and the EEF because he was frugal (Moon 2006: 175-210). He did so well in his first season that the EEF asked him to excavate the following year in the western Delta to find the Greek site of Naukratis, which he did (Petrie 1886). He also had a new assistant with him, the Oxford-educated classicist Francis Llewellyn Griffith, who became a well-respected hieroglyphic expert.

Petrie soon became known not just for his methodical excavation work, but also for being interested in the small finds, like potsherds, small statues, and beads, as opposed to large statues and monuments. Using these smaller pieces others discarded led to one of Petrie's fundamental contributions to the discipline: using pottery for dating artifacts and establishing a timeline of ancient Egypt.

### *Funding Institutional Egyptology in Britain*

Most of the money to support not only exploration in Egypt but also the institutions in Britain that would prepare new Egyptologists to go out into the field was not public money. Societies such as the EEF and the British School of Archaeology in Egypt (BSAE, founded by Petrie in 1905), along with universities and museums at University College London (UCL), Oxford, Manchester, and Liverpool, relied on private donations and subscriptions (Thornton 2013). In order to raise funds, societies sent publications to those donating a minimum amount, whereas artifacts were promised to those willing to give a substantial sum. Amelia Edwards started this tradition, but textile manufacturers, as will be clarified below, continued it.

Upon Edwards' death in 1891, she bequeathed money, books, and her antiquities collection to UCL to fund the first dedicated department of Egyptology in Britain, complete with the endowed Edwards Chair of Egyptology. One of the main stipulations of her endowment was that all of the classes and all scholarship opportunities at the newly founded department would be available to students of both sexes (Janssen 1992: 2). Other provisos in Edwards' will made it clear to all concerned that Petrie was her first choice for the position of chair holder, including her statement that the first person to hold the chair could not be a man over the age of forty (Janssen 1992: 3). In November of 1892, just under two years shy of his fortieth birthday, Petrie was named the first Edwards Chair of Egyptology at UCL, and,

consequently, the first university chair-holder of Egyptology in Britain.

The department also saw the first two-year classroom-based training program in the United Kingdom. When Margaret Murray arrived at UCL in January of 1894, Petrie was in the field excavating in Coptos for the season. This was, in fact, the same season in which he began training excavators he had hired from the town of Quft who would become his most trusted workers, known around Egypt and Palestine as “Quftis” (Doyon 2018: 174). When Petrie returned to London in the spring of that year, Murray found him to be an inspiring and competent teacher, and he found her a worthy student. Griffith was one of Murray’s early instructors as well, reportedly scribbling hieroglyphs on a blackboard until the whole class was so confused they were left teaching each other. From 1898, Murray was teaching introductory hieroglyphs and, because Petrie was gone most of the academic year to excavate, Murray soon took over much of the classroom teaching. She ultimately taught upwards of five to six classes per academic term (Sheppard 2013: 45). In order to fully train Petrie’s British excavators, Murray developed a two-year training program that officially welcomed its first students in 1911. An early syllabus from the 1912-13 academic term shows that the course had components in the history, religion and customs, language, art, physical anthropology and ethnology, and mineralogy and geology of Egypt. Murray taught five of the classes, including Egyptian history, Egyptian religion, and hieroglyphs, and brought in other professors to teach specialized subjects (Janssen 1992:12; Sheppard 2014: 118-120).

While Murray taught a number of Egyptologists who would become known as “Petrie’s Pups,” her main group of students she referred to as “The Gang” (Sheppard 2014: 120-125). The Gang included Myrtle Broome, Guy and Winifred Brunton, and Reginald (Rex) Engelbach. Although they learned field techniques from Petrie, The Gang’s success in the discipline itself was clearly and primarily linked to the tools and

ideas they learned in their classes with Murray at UCL. In fact, Murray’s teaching would prove to be her greatest legacy, these students and several others later becoming influential at all levels of British Egyptology, including Engelbach, who became Chief Keeper at the Cairo Museum in 1931 (Bierbrier ed. 2012: 178-179; Sheppard 2013: 81-104; 2014).

Many other early Egyptological institutions were tied not only to the EEF and UCL, but also to Amelia Edwards herself. Petrie Pup and EEF Egyptologist Francis L. Griffith married one of Edwards’ closest companions, Kate Bradbury, in 1896. Bradbury herself was an Egyptologist who was independently wealthy, and this wealth passed on to Griffith when she died in 1902. Griffith was appointed Reader in Egyptology at Oxford in 1901 and remained tied to the university for the rest of his life. Griffith’s work focused on hieroglyphs and language study and the students he trained were, like Murray’s, academically ready for the field (Stevenson 2014: 23-26). By 1924 he was a professor of Egyptology and remained so until his retirement in 1932. Upon his death in 1934, his will endowed Oxford with the wealth left from Kate Bradbury’s father’s estate; later, this money, combined with the estate of his second wife, Nora Cobban MacDonald, would establish the Griffith Institute at Oxford.

In Manchester, the establishment of Egyptological collections was also woven into the fabric of the cotton industry in Egypt because of colonial control over Egypt’s agriculture and *fellahin* (farmers) (Forrest 2011; Gold 2020). In fact, by 1919, most of the cotton grown in Egypt was processed in the spinning mills of Bolton, a large textile production center in Greater Manchester (Forrest 2011). Jesse Haworth was a wealthy textile manufacturer from Bolton who toured Egypt in 1880 and later became acquainted with Amelia Edwards. While his initial visit seems to have had more of a connection to his religious interests and Edwards’ book than to his textile business, Haworth donated money to the EEF as well as to Petrie for continued excavations, which proved fruitful

for the collections at the Manchester Museum, officially established in 1888 (Alberti 2009: 66-73; Forrest 2011: 4, 34-38). Petrie's work at Deir Rifeh in the 1906-07 season was partially funded by Haworth, so Petrie promised the Manchester Museum an entire, untouched, Middle Kingdom tomb in return (David 2007; Alberti 2009: 68-69; Sheppard 2013). Margaret Murray unwrapped one of the mummies from this tomb in front of a large Manchester audience in 1908 (Sheppard 2013). Haworth also donated money for an extension to the Manchester Museum in 1912, and further funds both in 1919 and upon his death in 1920 (Bierbrier ed. 2012: 246). Marianne Brocklehurst, who came from another Manchester-area textile family, traveled in Egypt in 1874 alongside Edwards' *dahabeah* (houseboat), then four more times between 1882 and 1896. During this time, she also set up her own extensive collections in Macclesfield comprised of purchases and other artifacts acquired on her journeys. She had acquired a mummy on her first trip and also collected two well-known papyri (Brocklehurst 2004; Forrest 2011: 5-7, 10; Bierbrier ed. 2012: 80-81).

The University of Liverpool saw its first reader in Egyptology in 1902. John Garstang was another of Petrie's Pups, having trained with Petrie in the field at Abydos in 1899. Garstang also founded the Institute of Archaeology at Liverpool in 1904, was appointed a professor there in 1907, and remained in that position until 1941. While his earlier work placed him at Beni Hassan, Naqada, and Hierakonpolis, he later moved south into Nubia, where he identified the site of Meroe in 1909; he continued his work in Nubia until 1914 (Thompson 2015b: 260-261).

The institutionalization of Egyptology in the United Kingdom between 1882 and 1914 was tied to private money from wealthy patrons such as Amelia Edwards, Jesse Haworth, and Francis Griffith. Their money went to institutions like the EEF, and universities and museums, where vast networks of Egyptologists trained and thereafter dispersed throughout Britain,

prompted by the growing economic and political investment in Egypt's past.

### *Working in Egypt: Racism and Religion*

By 1886, Petrie's *The Pyramids and Temples of Gizeh* (1883), with its quantitative methods and accurate conclusions, caught the attention of Francis Galton, the founder of eugenics (the endeavor to improve the human species by selective breeding). Galton then hired Petrie to use his accurate methods to capture and study different racial types portrayed on temple walls all over Egypt. These photos were published as *Racial Photographs of the Egyptian Monuments* (Petrie 1887; Sheppard 2010; Challis 2013, 2014). From this publication of 190 photographs, Galton and Petrie began to work together on racial studies for the next two decades. Petrie continued working with Karl Pearson, Galton's colleague and the first holder of the Galton Chair of Eugenics, after Galton's death in 1911 (Sheppard 2010). Petrie fully embraced the new study of eugenics, sending thousands of skulls back to Galton, Pearson, and the eugenics lab at UCL. Eugenics influenced Petrie's theory about a "New Race" in Egypt. By 1896, he argued that remains he had found in Naqada were those of a New Race of cannibals who had occupied Upper Egypt c. 3000 BCE (Petrie and Quibell 1896; Challis 2016). It was ultimately determined that the remains were not of a new race, but rather those of a Predynastic people who had lived in the area from 4800 to 3100 BCE (Sheppard 2010; Challis 2016). Petrie was slow to give up his theory of a new race, however. His ideas about race profoundly shaped British perceptions of ancient and modern Egypt.

These white, British men—Petrie, Galton, and Pearson—were driven not only by the concept that they belonged to a superior culture meant to enlighten and save the rest of world, but also by a number of religious beliefs. The British public held fast to the physical connections to Biblical prophets such as Abraham and Moses that Egypt offered (Gange 2013a). Bringing artifacts back to London, such as the obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle that stands on the Thames

Embankment, was one of the ways in which they could strengthen that direct relationship. One minister, the Reverend James King, wrote that the obelisk should be “interesting to the Christian because this same venerable monument was known to Moses and the Children of Israel during their sojourn in the land of Goshen” (King 1893: 6). Further, Petrie and the abovementioned Reginald Stuart Poole, among many others, believed that Egypt would provide a foundation on which accounts in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible could be supported, or indeed proven to be true (Gange 2013b)—the Holy Family’s flight into Egypt to save the infant Jesus from King Herod being one of the most cited of such narratives (Matthew 2:13-18; e.g., Gange 2013a).

#### *Hidden Hands: Diggers and Dealers*

While Murray and her colleagues at UCL were preparing the next generations of British Egyptologists to be museum administrators or go into the field with Petrie, Petrie himself was training a selected cadre of Egyptian workers at sites all over Egypt. From the start of his career in 1883, Petrie had depended on the work of Egyptians to successfully excavate (Quirke 2010: 19). As early as 1888 he had chosen his right-hand man in the field, Ali Suefi, who came from the village of Lahun. Ali Suefi worked as Petrie’s trusted and knowledgeable site foreman until Petrie left Egypt for Palestine in 1919, and he continued to work for Petrie Pup and original member of Murray’s Gang, Guy Brunton, in the 1920s (Drower 1985: 348-376; Quirke 2010: 20-21). In 1893, Petrie began excavating at the site of Koptos (Quft), where he recruited and trained a group of excavators now known as Quftis. They and their descendants quickly became a “special class of archaeological foremen” who were able to turn excavation into a “stock-in-trade,” where they trained each other to form generations of foremen and excavators who came from the same town (Doyon 2018: 174). Excavations depended on these men for their careful observational work and their critical local knowledge. Their intellectual contributions were excluded, however,

because their work was minimized as simply digging (ibid.).

The Quftis excavated all over the Middle East, including at Megiddo for James Breasted in the late 1920s and early 1930s (Cline 2020). Petrie’s success and the success of all Egyptologists, whether or not they were British, depended on the hard work of Egyptian excavators, yet Petrie still argued that most of the workforce needed to be continually watched to guard against theft and vice (Petrie 1904: 28; Quirke 2010: 30-31). He thought most Egyptians were childlike and needed to be trained, not only in excavation technique but also in more “Western”-style behavior. He did not name many Egyptians in his publications, but their names do appear in the archives. Petrie judged their potential in each position often on the characteristics of their faces, which was not unusual for the enthusiastic eugenicist he was (Quirke 2010: 31; Sheppard 2010; Challis 2013). According to Petrie, “the broad face and square chin are necessary tokens of stamina; and the narrow feminine faces are seldom worth much” (Petrie 1904: 20; Quirke 2010: 31). Quftis were therefore only to be given jobs such as basket-boy (or girl), digger, overseer, but never archaeologist. Western Egyptologists from Britain and elsewhere also actively suppressed and denied education both within and outside of Egypt to early Egyptian Egyptologists, such as Ahmad Kamal and others, and thus denied them jobs in the discipline (Reid 2015: 29-33).

Antiquities dealers were also pivotal in the practice of British Egyptology within Egypt. As early as 1886, E. A. Wallis Budge, noted EEF detractor and Keeper of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities at the British Museum, depended on dealers in Cairo and Luxor to find, collect, and sell him some of the best pieces ever found in Egypt (Budge 1920; Thompson 2015b: 123-126). In the 1880s through the 1920s, dealers of both Egyptian and European descent continued to be central to British Egyptologists’ acquisition of the best pieces, with or without provenance. Dealers such as American Ralph Huntington Blanchard, who had a shop near Sheppard’s

Hotel in Cairo, and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo itself were seen as legitimate sellers of antiquities, with clientele like Petrie, Budge, and Alan Gardiner. Those dealers who tended to be painted as thieves were Egyptians (e.g., Benson and Gourlay 1899: 21-23).

Well-known Egyptian dealer Muhammed Mohassib began his career as Lucie Duff Gordon's donkey boy in the 1860s and from her learned English. In the 1880s he opened an antiquities shop in Luxor and immediately attracted a number of high-profile buyers, including Petrie, Howard Carter, and Americans Theodore Davis, Emma Andrews, and Charles Wilbour. He had corresponded with Wallis Budge in the 1890s about important pieces that he knew Budge would want for the British Museum (Budge Correspondence: 21 June 1894). In fact, Mohassib would often save the prize pieces for his most important buyers—that is, those who could and would pay the highest price. Through his shop, and through the implicit approval of the British colonial government, Egyptologists and wealthy tourists took artifacts from Egypt that are now in museums around the world (Abd el Gawad and Stevenson 2021). When Mohassib died, he was seen as so important to the British Egyptological community that Percy Newberry wrote his obituary for the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, and he appears in *Who Was Who in Egyptology* (Newberry 1928; Bierbrier ed. 2012: 376-377).

#### *Work in Egypt: Travel and Public Communication*

There were a number of people who traveled from Britain up and down the Nile during this so-called Golden Age, and who wrote and published travelogues, journals, and letters. Mary Brodrick, Helen Mary Tirard, Margaret Benson, and Janet Gourlay were just a few of many British women who arrived in Egypt with two main goals: to understand the country (through an unavoidably colonial lens) and to publish their findings for the public.

Mary Brodrick had been one of Petrie's students at UCL from 1892 to 1906. She had

also studied Egyptology under Gaston Maspero in 1888, and continued to work for Maspero in Egypt from 1897 to 1908 (Bierbrier ed. 2012: 81). As early as 1889 she had been giving lectures at the British Museum to the general public on Saturdays, and she had begun charging for her lectures as many other women experts did at the time to make ends meet (Thornton 2018: 51). Around 1890, she began editing and translating Auguste Mariette's 1867 *Outlines of Ancient Egyptian History*, which was published in England and the United States to great acclaim (Mariette 1892). In the 1890s she traveled extensively through Egypt, going up the Nile frequently, gathering information about travel. Combining this with her Egyptological knowledge, she completely revised the ninth (Brodrick 1896) and tenth (Brodrick 1900) editions of Margaret Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Lower and Upper Egypt*, which were aimed at the British tourist public and which marked her biggest impact on the field (Thornton 2018: 34, 53). For the 1896 edition, she fully revisited Alexandria and made changes to the *Handbook's* description of the city. No longer the bombed-out city it was just ten years earlier, Alexandria was now full of culture, with diversions like the seaside, hotels, and antiquities. She also traveled into Upper Egypt and Sudan, changing the outline of the book as she went, which impacted the travels of unknown thousands of people.

Helen Mary Tirard was one of the honorary secretaries of the EEF when she took a steamer trip up the Nile with her husband in 1888 (Thornton 2018: 51-52). Their boat, the *S.S. Rameses the Great*, was one of the largest of Cook's steamers (i.e., a steamship in the fleet of tour company Thomas Cook & Son, established by British mass-tourism entrepreneur Thomas Cook), and it was full for the journey. Sailing out from Cairo, the steamer traveled all the way to the Second Cataract. Tirard would later publish a travelogue from her trip, *Sketches from a Nile Steamer: For Use of Travellers in Egypt* (1891), in order to excite travelers about ancient Egypt and to help them through the "confused chaos" of Egyptian temples by providing information along the way (Tirard 1891: vii).

Like many women travelers to Egypt at the time, Tirard continued to have an impact on Egyptology beyond her *Sketches*. She translated Adolf Erman's *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben* (1885) into English as *Life in Ancient Egypt* (1894). She was a noted lecturer and gave a number of talks at the British Museum. She was also an influential member of the EEF Committee, not just with her intellectual work but also with her money, donating hundreds of pounds in support of the EEF and its salvage mission from 1887 until her death in 1943 (Bierbrier ed. 2012: 542; Thornton 2018: 51).

British women were not in Egypt for travel alone. Maggie Benson first arrived in Luxor in 1894 with her brother, Fred. The two excavated together from 1895 to 1897 in the Temple of Mut at Karnak. Maggie, who was Oxford-educated at Lady Margaret Hall, was the one granted the excavation permit, making her the first woman given such permission in Egypt (Bierbrier ed. 2012: 54). Because Auguste Mariette, with Karl Lepsius, had cleared part of the temple area in the 1840s, and had also created a map of the temple that appeared in Mariette's 1875 book on Karnak (Mariette 1875), the pair were told they would likely not find anything at all. Permission to dig was nevertheless granted (Benson, A. ed. 1917: 120). Petrie and Newberry encouraged the Bensons and gave them advice. Janet Gourlay, who had been one of Petrie's students at UCL in 1893, joined them in 1896 (Bierbrier ed. 2012: 219; Sheppard 2019). They were able to clear the area of debris so that they could update Mariette's map of the Mut precinct, as well as find and place in their appropriate spots hundreds of statues and partial statues. Benson and Gourlay's work was documented in their *The Temple of Mut in Asher* (1899), which became a crucial publication of the site. The two were also influential in moving women toward being able to excavate in Egypt as lead archaeologists.

Many British women worked in Egypt during this period as crucial members of archaeological excavation teams. They ran the camps and did much of the administration—

paying workers, cataloguing and illustrating finds, writing letters, and keeping up with the dig journals. Those who would excavate very often did so under a male lead archaeologist, so their names were usurped on publications. This happened frequently to Hilda Petrie, wife of Flinders Petrie. From the time they were married in 1897 she became Petrie's right hand in the field, yet her name rarely appears in the published record (Stevenson 2015, 2019). Similarly, Margaret Murray, Winifred Brunton, and Myrtle Broome carried out valuable on-site work, copying and recording tombs with their teachers and husbands (Murray 1905; Brunton 1926; Gardiner 1935).

### *International Agreements and Disagreements*

Despite the fact that Britain retained political, economic, and military control in Egypt during this Golden Age, the French had controlled the Antiquities Service (Service des Antiquités) since the 1870s. Therefore, the success of British Egyptology depended upon international cooperation among the British and French. To this end, in 1904 Britain and France signed the *Entente Cordiale*, a crucial agreement, part of which made official the situation that, if Britain were to maintain their colonial dominance in Egypt, France would continue the directorship of the Antiquities Service. The agreement strengthened the power of the director general and ensured that Egyptology would continue to be under imperial rule (Thompson 2015b: 129-130). As Egyptology became increasingly international in the early twentieth century with the arrival of German, Italian, Russian, and American excavations, these new international groups began to divide up sites.

By 1914, however, international relations on the continent were having an effect on the rest of the world, and on Egyptology as well. With the coming of the Great War, Britain's attention shifted to combat and funding the war effort on fronts in France and Turkey. Gaston Maspero, who had been famously friendly to British Egyptological efforts, retired in early 1914. Howard Carter's partnership with Lord Carnarvon had barely begun and had not yet yielded much fruit.

Alexandria was about to become a seeding ground for British troops coming out of Gallipoli, and Cairo and Luxor would virtually become British barracks and hospitals. The Golden Age was coming to an end.

### *Conclusions*

For almost forty tumultuous years, from 1882 through 1914, British Egyptology developed from an amateur field pursuit, performed mostly by wealthy men, into a university-based discipline with an increasingly diverse group of people deployed in the field. Many of the names on permits and publications were those of wealthy British men, and British

Egyptology was funded largely by private individuals with a genuine interest in Egypt. Most of the work in this period was guided by men who portrayed the image of cultural superiority and the need to save deteriorating monuments and artifacts. Women, however, aided these imperial efforts as well. Moreover, Egyptians had agency within this work, and their often-overlooked contributions are in the process of being uncovered and discussed by current scholarship and historians. Egyptology needs to incorporate these stories into the traditional narrative, creating a more accurate picture of the history of British Egyptology.

## *Bibliographic Notes*

The history of British Egyptology has a decades-long tradition of biography, site histories, and grand, sweeping disciplinary histories. The traditional positivistic narratives mostly highlight the work British men have done (Wortham 1971; James 1982, 1992), and some of these include criticisms, however light, of the destruction left behind (Fagan 1975). Biography, both of men and women, has constituted an important genre in this history (Drower 1985; Bierbrier ed. 2012; Sheppard 2013). Full disciplinary and institutional histories have always been popular because they tell exciting stories of sites and the people involved in uncovering them (Janssen 1992; Thompson 2015a, 2015b, 2018; Wilkinson 2020). This narrative is now changing, due to new scholarship that tells many of the same stories with newly discovered characters, thanks to new perspectives and new archives coming to light (Riggs 2014; Mairs and Muratov 2015; Doyon 2018). There is moreover a shift away from grand, sweeping disciplinary narratives towards edited volumes containing more in-depth histories of ideas, people, sites, and methods (Carruthers ed. 2014; Thornton 2018). It is worth noting that the new standard literature is being researched and produced mostly by Western, white, and increasingly female academics, which is in and of itself a complex issue of privileged voices.

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