

William Flinders Petrie and the Egyptology Collection at the Manchester Museum, England

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Abstract: Sir William Flinders Petrie (the grandson of Captain Matthew Flinders who explored the coast of Australia between 1797 and 1803) had a brilliant career as an archaeologist that spanned five decades, and his contribution to the subject in developing scientific methodologies for excavation is unparalleled. Initially, it was Amelia B. Edwards, a founder of The Egypt Exploration Fund in London, who recognised Petrie's genius, and ensured that he was recruited as one of the Fund's first archaeologists. However, disagreements with the Committee led to a parting of the ways, and in 1886, he had no excavations in view and his career faced premature extinction. Amelia Edwards then introduced Petrie to Jesse Haworth, a textile manufacturer with an interest in Egyptology who lived in Manchester, England. He took up the support of Petrie's work and, for many years, he financed his excavations. Finds from these sites came to form the basis of two major collections: at The Petrie Museum, University College London, and at The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester. The recent establishment of the endowed KNH Centre and Chair for Biomedical Egyptology at the University of Manchester has fulfilled Jesse Haworth's hope that the university would establish a professorship in Egyptology.

When, in 1925, Winifred Crompton, then Curator of Egyptology at the Manchester Museum, was asked the question: "How does Manchester come to possess so fine a collection of Egyptological material?" she replied:

"It is due to the interest taken by one Manchester man, the late Dr. Jesse Haworth, in ancient Egypt. For years, he and Mr. Martyn Kennard financed the excavations of Professor Petrie. After the results of his work had aroused public interest all over the country, excavation societies were formed whose members subscribed to the work. The most important of these are the British School of Archaeology in Egypt directed by Sir Flinders Petrie, and the Egypt Exploration Fund. The rules of these societies provide that all objects found go to public museums, in proportion to the amount subscribed from various localities. As Dr. Haworth continued to subscribe largely, Manchester has always received a goodly share." (Crompton 1925: 37).

The establishment of this collection at The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, England, is in fact the result of the interaction of four individuals who played a crucial and significant role in the beginnings of Egyptology in Britain. The first of these is William Flinders Petrie.

William Flinders Petrie

Petrie was born in 1853, the only child of William and Anne Petrie. He was thought to be too delicate to go to school and was therefore educated by his parents. His father was a chemist, civil engineer and surveyor, and his mother - a daughter of Matthews Flinders, the explorer of Australia - was a geologist and collector of ancient coins. As a child, William Flinders Petrie "ransacked marine store shops of Woolwich for coins, thus beginning archaeology at the age of eight." (Drower 1985: 17).

Encouraged by his father, he began his work in Egypt in 1881 with a survey of the Great Pyramid, and this inspired him with enthusiasm for ancient Egypt, but what he saw in Egypt filled him with alarm because of the rate at which the monuments and archaeological evidence were being destroyed.

Amelia Blandford Edwards

The second significant individual is Amelia B. Edwards who, in 1882, was a founder of the Egypt Exploration Fund in London, established to promote and finance excavation in Egypt. The Fund largely owed its inception to her energy, enthusiasm and zeal; she contacted influential people and secured the interest of the Press, and, once the society was launched, it recruited archaeologists,

sponsored annual excavations, and published reports. It was also necessary for the Fund to secure contributions, and in order to capture public attention and support, sites connected to Biblical narratives were chosen for the society's first excavations.

Amelia Edwards was born in London in 1831. She came into Egyptology by chance - in fact, as the result of inclement weather - but she was to have a profound effect upon the way in which the subject developed in Britain. As a young woman, she had joined the staff of the *Saturday Review and Morning Post* and became a successful novelist. Also, between 1855 and 1858, she wrote five novels.

In 1873, she went on a walking tour of France; it rained heavily, and she and her companion decided therefore to go on to Egypt:

"The thing was no sooner decided than we were gone....without definite plans, outfits or any kind of Oriental experience." (Rees 1998: 36).

On this visit to Egypt, she and a party of friends hired a *dahabeeyah* and visited the major sites. It was an overwhelming experience and, brought face to face with the monuments and the antiquities, she wanted to learn as much as possible. This visit resulted in Amelia Edwards writing her famous book, *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile*, which recounted this voyage of discovery, but even more importantly, she discovered a sense of her own mission and responsibility to try to help to save the monuments. This became her lifelong campaign,

Another founder of the Egypt Exploration Fund was R.S.Poole, the Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, and Amelia Edwards introduced Flinders Petrie to him. She recognised Petrie's genius, and promoted and developed his career. He excavated for the Egypt Exploration Fund between 1884 and 1886, making the spectacular discovery of the Delta city of Tanis, and was launched on a brilliant career. However, his impatient personality and ways of going about things soon brought him into conflict with the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Fund. In particular, he strongly disliked Poole, and in 1886, his association with the Fund ended. Therefore, when he went to Egypt at the end of 1886, he had no excavations in prospect, but by the time he reached Aswan, he received good news: a telegram saying that an anonymous friend in England had placed a considerable sum at his disposal for excavation. This anonymous patron was Jesse Haworth, a Manchester textile manufacturer.

The biography of Amelia Edwards (Rees 1998: 56) describes relations in the Egypt Exploration Fund at that time, and Miss Edwards' part in alleviating the problems:

"The record of jealousy, self-seeking and stabbing-in-the-back among distinguished Egyptologists must rank high even in the annals of academic rivalries. Among this turbulence, Amelia cultivated

an expertise as mediator and soother of fevered male egos without which it would hardly have been possible for work to continue and prosper."

Amongst her greatest contributions, however, must rank her role in introducing Petrie to Haworth, since this undoubtedly saved the young archaeologist's career from premature extinction.

Jesse Haworth

Jesse Haworth was born near Manchester (a major industrial city in the north of England) to a family of modest means. On leaving school, he was employed by yarn merchants in Manchester, and through his own hard work, he eventually became a partner in the firm. As a young man, he was interested in Sunday School work and became superintendent of the Eccles Congregational Sunday School. Although he was never prominent in the political life of Manchester, he was held in the highest esteem in business and was one of the longest established members of the Royal Exchange in Manchester. As he gradually acquired wealth, his main interest lay in the direction of the arts and he collected Wedgwood china and paintings.

Jesse Haworth's interest in Egypt probably began as early as 1877 when he and his wife read Amelia Edwards' book *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile*. They enjoyed it so much that they decided to make the same Nile journey in 1882, and from this time onwards, they never ceased to take a very great interest in Egyptology.

A subsequent meeting with Amelia Edwards inspired Jesse Haworth to give financial support to the subject, and in 1887, he secured the throne and gaming board of Queen Hatshepsut which had been discovered in Egypt the previous year. The throne was exhibited at the Jubilee Exhibition in Manchester in 1887, and at its close, presented by Jesse Haworth to the British Museum. (Petrie 1932: 22).

However, it was Amelia Edwards' intervention that now persuaded Jesse Haworth to begin to support practical excavation in Egypt. Petrie (1932: 79) recalls that he learnt who his anonymous sponsor was:

"While in England, I heard that the offer of help in excavating came from Jesse Haworth of Manchester, through the kind intervention of Miss Edwards. Just at the same time, I had an offer of assistance from Martyn Kennard, who had a family interest in Egypt. Nevertheless, I did not wish to pledge my time to be entirely at the service of anyone. The plan, which worked very smoothly, was that I drew on my two friends for all costs of workmen and transport, while I paid all my own expenses. In return, we equally divided all that came to England. Thus it was in my interest to find as much as I could."



Figure 1: William Flinders Petrie (centre), at the excavations at Kahun; he is accompanied by his wife, Hilda, and a visitor, Mr. Cameron. (Copyright: The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, Manchester, England)

Haworth put his money at Petrie's disposal without any reservation, to do as he liked with it in the cause of science. Miss Edwards wrote to Petrie (Petrie Papers 9(iv): 26; Drower 1985: 127) that:

"Jesse Haworth is a religious man and if you could throw any light on the Bible, he would be gratified. But he does not want plunder, and he wishes to keep quite out of sight and not be mentioned in any way."

In August 1887, Petrie visited Manchester to meet the Haworths and stayed with them at their home, The Grange in Altrincham, a town near Manchester. Thus began a warm friendship which lasted until Jesse Haworth's death many years later in 1921.

The Site of Kahun

Petrie now had the financial backing but he needed a major site to excavate. The Egypt Exploration Fund had laid claim to the sites in the Delta, and the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation offered Petrie the Fayoum. Here, he set out to survey the pyramids of Hawara and Lahun. However, as he records (Petrie's Journal, February 24 - March 2, 1887), it was the townsite of Kahun which attracted his attention:

"The great prize at Illahun was unknown and unsuspected by anyone. On the desert adjoining the north side of the pyramid-temple, I saw evident traces of a town, brick walls, houses and pottery. Moreover, the pottery was of a style as yet unknown to me."

The town wall started out in a line with the face of the temple; and it dawned on me that this could hardly be other than the town of the pyramid builders. A little digging soon put it beyond doubt, as we found cylinders of that age and no other. So that it was evident that I actually had in hand an unaltered town of the XIIIth Dynasty, regularly laid out by the royal architect for the workmen, and stores required in building the pyramid and its temple."

Petrie continued his clearance of Kahun until the end of 1889, by which time he had emptied and planned more than 1,800 rooms; at that date, it was the first and only time that a complete lay-out of an Egyptian town had been obtained.

Excavation of the Site

Petrie cleared the rooms systematically (David 1986: 101-113). He formed the workmen in a line along the outermost street. They cleared this first line of rooms, turning the debris into the street behind. Then, they worked the next row of rooms, and so on. In this way, the buildings were mostly filled up again, to prevent decay and destruction of the brick walls, while every object was certain to be uncovered. Thus, Petrie measured and planned each chamber as it was cleared, so that it was possible to see the original scheme of the architect and the subsequent expansion of the town.



Figure 2: A fire-stick discovered at Kahun (c.1890 BC). Such items of domestic use are rare from Egypt, since most evidence is derived from funerary sites. (Copyright: The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, Manchester, England).

He kept journals giving some details of his work, but the exact find spot of most objects are not recorded. Sometimes, he comments on his more unusual discoveries, such as the babies he found buried amongst the houses (Petrie's Journal April 8 -15, 1889):

"Many newborn infants are found buried in the floors of the rooms, and, strange to say, usually in boxes made for other purposes, evidently, by their form. In short, unlucky babes seem to have been conveniently put out of the way by stuffing them into a toilet case or clothes box and digging a hole in the ground for them....I fear that these discoveries do not reflect much credit on the manners and customs of the small officials of the 12th Dynasty."

Aegean Pottery

One of Petrie's most interesting discoveries at Kahun was the so-called "Aegean" pottery. He began excavating the site in April 1889, and the Khamasin wind brought blinding sand, and he was temporarily blinded by ophthalmia. He considered closing the dig down, but cured himself with quinine and went on digging.

Now, a few sherds of quite a different type turned up - delicate, polychrome ware. He had never seen anything like it, and with great intuition, he recognised and identified it as "Aegean." Copies of his journal were sent to his parents, Miss Edwards, his sponsors Haworth and Kennard, and his colleagues Griffith and Spurrell. They were urged to keep this information secret, and not to tell the Press, as this might prevent the sherds from being allowed back to England for study. He sent 101 boxes to Cairo, where the Antiquities Director made his division, but he was not interested in the Kahun material, and let most of the finds and all the papyri leave Egypt.

The End of the Excavation

In the Fayoum, Petrie had carried out the simultaneous excavation of the sites of Lahun, Kahun and Gurob. He wrote (Petrie's Journal, 8 -15 April, 1889) :

"On my Illahun days, I have my wash, before I go out, carry my breakfast tied up in a towel, look over this place (Kahun) on my way, and get to Illahun about 10 or 11....After seeing the work there, I have breakfast about noon: go over to Tell Gurob, look over that and pay up, and then come back."

Petrie's final record of the site (Petrie's Journal, 30 - 31 December, 1889) states:

"I do not expect that my friends will hear anything more now from Kahun and Gurob; the places are done for, and well have they repaid us, by the insight we have gained in the life and manufactures of the 18th and 12th dynasties. I have now really outlined the greater part of the long blank of hitherto undefined history of domestic and personal objects which had been such an attractive unknown region to me."

The Manchester Collection

It had been agreed that Haworth, Kennard and Petrie would each take one-third of what Petrie discovered at these sites, and back in England, the objects were mainly divided between Petrie's own collection (now held in the Petrie Museum at University College London, England), and Haworth and Kennard who presented them to the Manchester University Museum in 1890. Over the next nine years, Haworth and Kennard were the main supporters of Petrie's excavations, and a succession of gifts of antiquities continued to be made to The Manchester Museum by Haworth over many years.

The museum had acquired its first major Egyptian antiquity in 1825, with the gift of the mummy and coffins of Asru, a Chantress of Amun at Karnak. However, by 1911, Haworth's generous donations persuaded the University to consider a scheme to extend the Museum, to provide suitable accommodation to house and properly display this outstanding collection (Anon 1912).



Figure 3: *The Egyptian Gallery in The Jesse Haworth Building, Manchester Museum, when it was first opened in 1912. The central case displays the tomb group of the Two Brothers. (Copyright: The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, Manchester, England).*

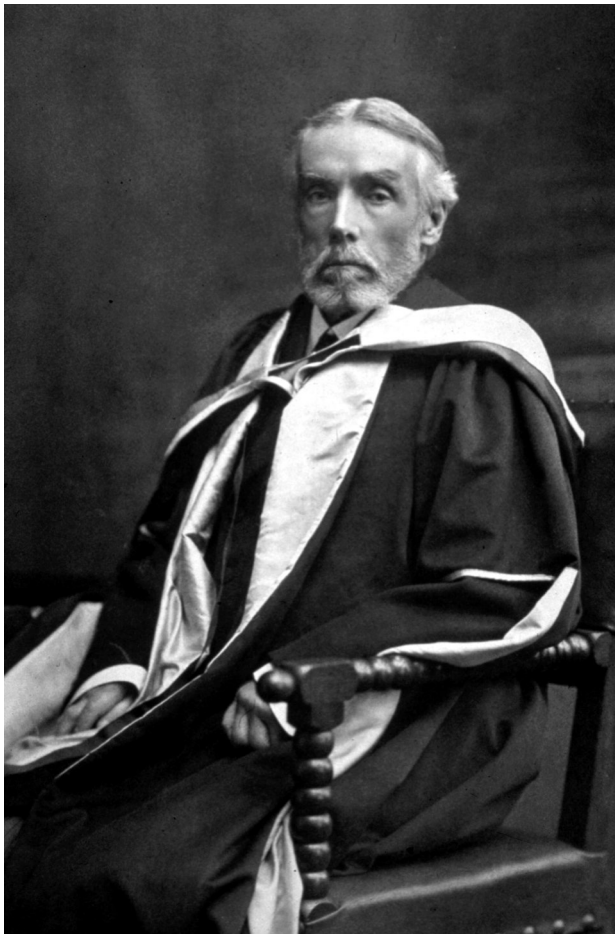


Figure 4: *Jesse Haworth when he received (1913) the honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of Manchester, in recognition of his patronage of scientific excavation. (Copyright: The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, England).*

A public fund was opened for this, but it was Jesse Haworth's generosity which enabled this scheme to be put into effect. In 1912, he gave two-thirds of the funds to establish the Jesse Haworth Building, which he opened on October 30th, 1912 (Crompton 1925: 39). The Petries were present at the Opening, and on the previous day, Petrie had marked the occasion by giving a lecture. In 1913, the University conferred on him the honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws in recognition of his services to the cause of learning, and as one of the first patrons of scientific excavation.

In 1920, Jesse Haworth approved plans for a second extension to the Museum, intended to provide further display areas and much needed workrooms and storage space for the Egyptian collections. He gave a further £10,000 for this in 1919 and, under the terms of his Will, another £30,000 and his private collection of Egyptian antiquities were donated to the museum. Unfortunately, he died in 1921 and did not see this second extension which was opened by his widow in 1927.



Figure 5: Dr Margaret Murray (third from left) and some of her team, unwrapping the mummy of Khnum-Nakht, one of the Two Brothers, at the University of Manchester in 1908. (Copyright: The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, England).

Continuing Links Between Manchester and Petrie

The association between Petrie, Haworth and Manchester was to prove a lasting relationship. Under the terms of Amelia Edwards' Will, an endowed Chair of Egyptology was established at University College London; this was held by Petrie who became Britain's first professor of Egyptology.

In 1906, a major event took place in Manchester when he was invited to address a large audience in the Chemical Theatre of the University on the subject of "The Hyksos and Israelite Cities." Newspaper cuttings describe how, for an hour and a half, the audience listened with rapt attention to his account of this discovery. Finally, Petrie appealed for public support for the work of exploration, which depended entirely upon the financial assistance of persons interested in Egyptology. From then onwards, the people of Manchester took up the active support of the subject. Petrie's suggestion that a local society operating on the lines of the Egyptian Research Students Association in London be set up was acted upon, and the Manchester Egyptian Association was immediately founded. This was to further the study of Egyptology in the area in every possible way. Jesse Haworth was elected its first president, and it held regular meetings. A highlight for the Association was the annual Museum Lecture which was

given by Petrie and described by his wife Hilda as "Our usual fantasia in Manchester." In later years, Lady Petrie herself gave this lecture.

The Manchester collection continued to grow apace. When the 1912 extension was opened, some of the highlights which were displayed on the public galleries for the first time, included, in addition to the material from Kahun and Gurob, the complete tomb-group of the Two Brothers, excavated at Rifeh in 1905-6. At the time of its discovery, this was described as one of the finest collections of its kind that had ever been found in Egypt. This group was purchased for the museum by public donation in 1907, for the sum of £500, of which Jesse Haworth contributed £150 (Murray 1910). Other significant material now placed on display included finds from predynastic and Old Kingdom sites, particularly stone objects and tomb wall reliefs; a unique collection of soul houses; and mummies and painted panel portraits from the Fayoum site of Hawara.

Margaret Murray

In order to catalogue and organise the rapidly expanding collection, Petrie seconded his assistant Margaret Murray to Manchester for five years; her remarkable contribution included cataloguing and organising the objects that arrived annually at the museum from Petrie's excavations. Born

in Calcutta, the daughter of an English businessman, she had intended to take up a career in nursing, and acted as sister-in-charge of Calcutta Hospital in an epidemic when she was only 21. However, she could not qualify as a nurse in England, because she was too small in stature for acceptance.

She therefore began a career in Egyptology, entering University College London in 1894. She trained under Petrie, and took up a post in his department as junior lecturer in 1898, thus becoming the first full-time woman in Egyptology in Britain. From 1924 - 1935, she was Assistant Professor at University College London, where she obtained her doctorate in 1935. She not only assisted Petrie at University College London and on his excavations, but she also excavated in her own right in Egypt.

During her time in Manchester, Margaret Murray's most significant work was undoubtedly her pioneering studies in palaeopathology. She brought together an interdisciplinary team of scientists to study the mummies of the Two Brothers. In 1908, on May 6th, instead of holding their usual meeting, members of the Egyptian Association and their friends were invited by the Chairman and Committee of the Museum to attend the "unrolling" of one of the mummies. From the contemporary report (The Manchester Guardian, May 7, 1908):

"The ceremony took place in the Chemical Theatre of the University, Miss Margaret Murray conducting the proceedings, with the assistance in the unrolling of Mr. Standen, Mr. Wilfred Jackson, Miss Wilkinson and Miss Hart-Davis. The unrolling was witnessed by 500 people and lasted one and a half hours. At the close of the ceremony, members of the audience who wished to have a piece of the mummy wrappings as a memento were invited by the Chairman of the meeting to leave their names and addresses."

The Manchester Museum archives preserve the continuing correspondence between the Petries and the Haworths, and the Petries and Margaret Murray, providing information about fund-raising, excavation, and domestic details of visits to Manchester. The Petries also kept in close contact with Winifred Crompton, Margaret Murray's successor in Manchester. She often stayed with them in London, and went for two weeks to Petrie's camp in Egypt to learn about techniques employed in finding and preserving at their source the objects that were to come into her care.

Future Development of Egyptology at Manchester

The Petrie Museum at University College London and The Manchester Museum share complementary collections - the fruits of Petrie's unparalleled career. The lives of the people who were instrumental in creating these collections were also closely interwoven - without Petrie's discoveries, Haworth's funding, Amelia Edwards' patronage and intervention, and Margaret Murray's dedicated and pioneering work, they would not exist today. It was these

people's vision and determination that ensured that these collections exist to be used for teaching, research and public enlightenment.

In November 2003, the KNH Centre for Biomedical Egyptology, headed by the KNH Chair in Biomedical Egyptology, was established in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Manchester. This unique Centre, which will focus on research and teaching in the areas of biomedical and scientific Egyptology, has been made possible through the generous benefaction of Kay N. Hinckley, whose enthusiasm for Egyptology developed as the result of a Nile cruise she undertook in the 1990s. The establishment of the Centre provides the means to continue the development of the research first initiated by The Manchester Egyptian Mummy Research Project in 1973, and brings to fruition, after a hundred years, the vision for Egyptology in Manchester that was held by Dr Jesse Haworth, who hoped that his example of supporting Egyptology would be followed, and that someone would offer to endow a Chair of Egyptology in the University.

The KNH Centre, with its emphasis on the application of scientific techniques in Egyptology, provides the opportunity to take forward the immense contribution made to Egyptology in Manchester by Petrie, Haworth and Margaret Murray.

The history of Egyptology in Manchester is the result of a series of individual, apparently insignificant decisions: Amelia Edwards' choice to travel on to Egypt because of inclement weather in France, Jesse Haworth's random purchase of her book, and Kay Hinckley's choice of a Nile cruise on which a lecture about the Manchester Mummy Project first aroused her interest in our work. Nevertheless, these personal choices regarding travel options and reading matter have not only profoundly influenced the development of the subject in Manchester; they have ultimately changed the whole course of Egyptology.

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