

## **2 The Object of Study: Egyptology, Archaeology, and Anthropology at Oxford, 1860–1960**

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“Egyptology is . . . a prolific branch of the great science of anthropology, probably destined to illuminate the general history of mankind more searchingly and powerfully than the anthropology of a hundred other countries” (Griffith 1901, 9).

In his inaugural lecture given at the University of Oxford’s Ashmolean Museum on 8 May 1901, Francis Llewellyn Griffith, Reader of Egyptology, outlined his vision for the future of the discipline. It was an address that was full of optimism for the manner in which his specialist subject would contribute to the developing science of anthropology. Yet as the twentieth century progressed disciplinary boundaries became far less permeable and Egyptology found itself increasingly isolated from other subjects. Accounting for such disciplinary cleavages is not simple and Griffith’s perspective highlights only one moment in the complex and entangled relationship of Egyptology, archaeology, and anthropology. His address also highlights one very particular social and intellectual setting for the academic enactment of Egyptology: the University of Oxford. A brief case study of aspects of Egyptology at this institution within the context of British Egyptology and anthropology forms the basis for this chapter.

Broader accounts of the estrangement of Egyptology from anthropology have been offered before (Adams 1997) but, as Gosden (1999) has highlighted for the divisions between archaeology and anthropology, any such attempt is made problematic by different academic traditions across the world. Moreover, disciplinary histories are not simply linear narratives of intellectual advancement. Rather, they are products of specific, often fortuitous,

sociopolitical circumstances and competing voices (cf. Gosden 1999, 34; Mills 2008). What follow here is only a series of snapshots taken from the perspective of a small cast of individuals, but nevertheless their role in the development of British Egyptology, anthropology, and archaeology may illuminate some wider themes in the ruptures and abrasions experienced more generally at disciplinary boundaries. My aim is to avoid an internalist account of the development of Egyptology as a university subject, and instead to situate it within the wider intellectual culture of the time (cf. Mills 2008, 17).

In particular, I wish to demonstrate that the protean nature of anthropology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century could, and did, accommodate many aspects of Egyptology (contra Champion 2003), and that those who were socialized in this environment looked beyond their specialist materials for broader, comparative frames of reference. Yet as the topography of disciplinary discourses shifted—from their gestation within the intellectual societies of London, to their institutionalization within museums and increasingly universities at the turn of the twentieth century, followed by professionalization in field practice from the 1920s onwards—these subjects became increasingly inward-looking. Ideas, people, and their relationships could easily take precedence within such a narrative. There is also, however, a strong material dimension to disciplinary engagement (Colla 2007), one that I would suggest was equally significant in how these subjects would define themselves within Oxford and in Britain more widely.

Before examining these developments, a note on the timeframe within which this account is set is in order. In any historical narrative the choice of temporal departure point is in some respects arbitrary. Commencing this account around 1860 can be justified on the basis of two observations, both germane to the emergence of the disciplinary identities under scrutiny here. First, the 1860s were the decade during which, in the wake of evolutionary discourse and the (contested) establishment of the “antiquity of man,” crucial shifts in the

intellectual clubs of London occurred. For example, among others, the Anthropological Society of London (later the Royal Anthropological Institute) was founded in 1863. It was also around this time that the term Egyptology (in the English language at least) was introduced (Champion 2003, 180).<sup>1</sup> Closing this narrative around 1960 may be warranted given the greater interaction between Egyptology and the social sciences that is often considered to have been initiated by the construction of the Aswan High Dam and the subsequent UNESCO rescue operations (Baines 2011, 575; Weeks 1979).

A brief word about the nature of disciplinarity may also be helpful. A useful departure point is provided by Messer-Davidow et al. (1993), who themselves borrow from Foucault's work on disciplinary practice. They (1993, 3) contend that disciplinarity can be understood as "the means by which ensembles of diverse parts are brought into particular types of knowledge relations with each other." This argument is informative not just for considering how specialist areas of study were articulated in relation to wider epistemologies, but also for illuminating how subjects constructed themselves internally. With regard to Egyptology, for example, while the study of ancient Egyptian scripts has long occupied the mainstay of its identity, this study's importance relative to other methods of elucidating Egypt's past has altered considerably. This shifting emphasis of disciplinary praxis is of particular concern in this paper.

### **UP THE NILE AND DOWN THE THAMES: 1860–1900**

An interest in anthropology as a broad category of intellectual inquiry into humankind is evident within the University of Oxford from the 1860s onward (Rivière 2007, 2). The University did not, however, possess a niche for the specific study of Egyptology (or indeed anthropology or archaeology), as Griffith found to his dismay on arriving at Queen's College

in 1879. What he did find, however, was the support and encouragement of Queen's Fellow, Reverend Archibald Sayce (Gardiner 1934, 72). Sayce was primarily an Assyriologist and philologist, but by the late 1870s he was turning his attention toward Egypt and wintered there annually, often assisting Flinders Petrie in his early excavations (Smith 1933, 70). Through this channel Griffith was provided with the opportunity to become involved in Petrie's fieldwork, and he quickly became an accomplished archaeologist, in addition to his exceptional philological talents. Petrie and Griffith remained close collaborators throughout their careers. Together with Sayce, Petrie appears to have been highly influential in shaping Griffith's disciplinary perspectives.

Petrie had first been drawn to Egypt in 1880 to survey the Great Pyramid (Drower 1985). By contrast, Sayce, like many prominent Victorian intellectuals, had been attracted to Egypt by Thomas Cook's conveniently packaged promise that the Nile was a waterway "for health and for pleasure" (Cook 1881, 5; cf. Reid 2003, 89–92). Cook's steamers also ferried other key luminaries of the period up the Nile, including Herbert Spencer, John Evans, Thomas Huxley, and General Pitt-Rivers. Their late nineteenth-century sojourns might be dismissed as mere leisure activities, yet each never missed the opportunity to investigate and pass comment upon central issues in comparative anthropological debate (Stevenson 2011). The forum for discussion of their observations was not the universities, but rather the intellectual societies of London, such as the Anthropological Institute. In these settings those within the emerging discipline of anthropology were all personally acquainted (Chapman 1989), and it is unsurprising that Sayce, for instance, should have socialized with the cultural evolutionist Herbert Spencer while in Egypt (Duncan 1908, 206), or that Petrie should first have met Pitt-Rivers in London (Stevenson 2012). Crucially, knowledge was not merely constructed in verbal presentations within the halls of these societies or conveyed in articles for their journals, but materialized in the objects that these men acquired (Evans 2007). In

this form, nineteenth-century anthropology could be characterized as being informed by an “epistemology of artefacts” (Henare 2005). It was this “material anthropology” (Gosden and Larson 2007, 121–46) that gave objects a primary role in Victorian constructions of knowledge about the world.

The activities of the commanding figure of General Pitt-Rivers epitomized this type of anthropology. On coming into his inheritance of the Rushmore Estate in 1880 one of the first things Pitt-Rivers did was book passage to Egypt, not because of a specific interest in Egyptology but because it was the perfect destination for a polymath such as himself. In particular, the trip allowed Pitt-Rivers to situate himself conceptually relative to a range of issues in the comparative development and evolution of culture, exemplified by his analysis of ancient Egyptian “boomerang[s]” (Pitt-Rivers 1883). Notably, the Paleolithic flints that Pitt-Rivers (1882) recovered in Egypt were embedded within the same Theban gravel into which ancient Egyptian New Kingdom tombs had been cut. This juxtaposition of prehistoric with historic evidence neatly encapsulates the dual significance that Egypt held at this point in Victorian discussions of the past: the country’s relation to the antiquity of man on the one hand, and to the origin and spread of civilization on the other. In terms of the latter, Egypt occupied a privileged position as “the land in which western culture first began to put forth its strong shoots” (Lane Fox 1875, 413). In practice, this view meant that the General, like many of his contemporaries, used Egyptian material as the departure point for several of his evolutionary series (e.g. Pitt-Rivers 1890). Similarly, his plans for a new museum positioned Egypt at the fulcrum between prehistory, as it was then understood, and “history,” as represented by civilization (Pitt-Rivers 1888). His own collecting concerned both archaeology and anthropology, but objects were acquired with the same end in mind: as evidence of the cultural age of the society that produced them, be that “primitive” or “civilized” (Gosden and Larson 2007, 93). Cross-cultural methods of this nature permitted

anthropologists to collapse spatial and temporal distance by bringing together objects for comparative study (Henare 2005, 215). Egyptology (including the study of language), could thus be comfortably accommodated within wider anthropological discourse.

The influence of a “material anthropology” and the cultural-evolutionary vernacular that echoed through the London institutions and informed Pitt-Rivers’ work is equally prevalent within Petrie’s own writing and typological practices. His establishment of a chronology for Predynastic Egypt (Petrie 1899), for instance, with its basis in the idea of evolutionary gradualism and degeneration, was indebted to the serial numismatics of John Evans (Schlanger 2010), the cultural evolutionism of Tylor (1871) and the arrangement of Pitt-Rivers’ own vast collection. This influence is also evident in Petrie’s fieldwork practice, which not only set out to take a “systematic” approach to Egyptian archaeology but was similarly oriented toward the retrieval of objects as the “material facts of history” (e.g. Petrie 1888, vii, and 1904, 48–49; Stevenson 2013a). This focus was reflected in the form of archaeological monograph that Petrie advocated, in which it was objects, not the ancient landscape, that were the principal concern. In British Egyptology and archaeology Petrie’s role is significant because of his commitment to training students by developing initiatives such as the British School of Archaeology in Egypt (BSAE). Through such field-mentoring a generation of Egyptologists and archaeologists were introduced to his view of a material anthropology, including most of Oxford’s early twentieth-century Egyptologists and papyrologists: Bernard Grenfell, Arthur Hunt, David Randall-MacIver, Arthur Mace, Aylward Manley Blackman and John Garstang (although cf. Sheppard this volume). Many, however, did not stay in Oxford for the remainder of their careers, limiting perhaps the institutionalization of this view.

Petrie’s work was far more geographically circumscribed than that of Pitt-Rivers, Evans, and Tylor, but he too remained committed to a broader anthropological agenda. Many

of his first papers appeared in the journals of the London societies that Pitt-Rivers frequented (see Uphill 1972) and, like Griffith, Petrie was convinced that Egyptology had a crucial role to play in the wider development of anthropology. Petrie was also instrumental in the establishment of the Anthropological Institute's publication, *Man*, as letters between Petrie and Oxford classical archaeologist John Myres demonstrate (cf. Petrie 1931, 164).<sup>2</sup> These missives also highlight Petrie's concern that the linguistic aspects of Egyptology could be too specialized and inward-looking, and he suggested that such concerns might not be best suited to inclusion within the remit of the new journal.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Sayce and Griffith were regular contributors, as were many of the most prominent early twentieth-century Egyptologists. Indeed, Griffith wrote to Myres warmly supporting Petrie's proposals.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Egyptologists were among the attendees of the annual British Association for the Advancement of Science Section H (anthropology), and several acted as its President, including Petrie, Sayce, and Percy Newberry. These institutions and publications gave a platform upon which Egyptology was promoted more widely and gave it a more substantial role in anthropological circles.

In summary, although Egyptology undoubtedly had a distinct identity within scholarly networks at the end of the nineteenth century, there simultaneously existed the view that specialist inquiry could only be properly appraised in relation to the wider study of mankind. Many prominent Oxford scholars who were working in Egypt were also firmly integrated within the London-based anthropological societies, contributing actively to their discussions and wide-ranging publications. A final snapshot may be seen in the fellowship list of the Anthropological Institute of 1900, which records 298 individual names. Among their number were Petrie and Sayce, together with Petrie's students and colleagues: Griffith, Mace, and Randall-MacIver, all of whom had first studied at Oxford.

## THE UNIVERSITY SETTING: 1901–1930

As the twentieth century commenced new opportunities for the study of anthropology, archaeology, and Egyptology began to emerge. At first glance the academic structures in which Egyptology now found itself might be considered a point of isolation from anthropology and archaeology as Griffith's position in 1901 was established within Oxford's Faculty of Oriental Languages. This appointment was only the second of its sort in the UK, following on from the creation of the Edwards Professorship of Egyptian Archaeology and Philology at University College London, held first by Flinders Petrie from 1892. However, despite its situation within a faculty that might privilege the study of ancient Egyptian languages, Griffith's inaugural lecture emphasized that both material and linguistic evidence were "of great and perhaps equal importance" (Griffith 1901, 4) to the study of Egyptology, and that the "broader the student lays his foundations of general training the better will be the superstructure" (Griffith 1901, 22). His 1902 entry for Egyptology in the tenth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* was equally broad in its scope, giving equal attention to archaeology, art, antiquities, and language.

Griffith's all-encompassing approach to the study of Egypt is also reflected in his first series of lectures, given in Michaelmas Term 1901, which were advertised as covering the "principles of hieroglyphic writing and its anthropological teachings" (*Oxford University Gazette*, 11 June 1901, 688). These lectures were followed in the subsequent term by four talks on "the tombs of Deir el-Gebrawi" (*Oxford University Gazette*, 28 January 1902, 300), and the *Gazette* advised that informal instruction in Egyptian archaeology would also be provided for interested students. The final term of that first academic year would then be devoted to the "antiquities and literature of Egypt." In the following years Griffith would continue to offer a range of perspectives on Egypt through instruction in language,

archaeology, and artifact studies in the Ashmolean Museum. Thus, despite Griffith's reputation as "the foremost philologist in the whole range of Egyptian texts in Britain" (Bierbrier 2012, 227), it was in fact a methodological breadth to the study of Egyptology that he propagated throughout his tenure as Reader and eventually Professor of Egyptology.

For those students who wished to specialize in Egyptian language, Griffith nevertheless still emphasized the importance of practical fieldwork and material engagement. A case in point is Aylward Manley Blackman who, following the completion of his BA Moderations in Classical Studies in 1904, had spent two years studying in the Faculty of Oriental Languages, focusing on Egyptian and Coptic. As Blackman's mentor, Griffith took an active role in advising the young scholar on his future and, when Petrie offered to tutor Blackman in the field, Griffith implored him not to let the opportunity slip.<sup>5</sup> Yet we should be cautious in attributing too much weight to Griffith's teaching, because it is not clear how many students he formally taught. Anecdotal evidence from Rosalind Moss (John Baines, pers. comm.) suggests that he had almost no pupils at all during this period and the Oxford BA in Egyptology was not introduced until after his death. Griffith's view of Egyptology, therefore, was one that was possibly not instilled in the next generation. This point in itself may go some way toward explaining why—in Oxford at least—Egyptology of the 1930s had very different emphases (see below).

Nevertheless, there were certainly attempts to incorporate Oxford's Egyptological specialist within broader degree structures at the University. Griffith's appointment was coincident with Oxford's establishment of Britain's first anthropology course. The subject was officially recognized in 1905 in the form of a graduate Diploma, the first examinations for which were in 1908 (Rivière 2007). From the outset the curriculum was broad, encompassing zoology, paleontology, ethnology, archaeology, sociology, and technology. The Diploma's teaching staff were equally varied. Indeed, notable among their large number

was the Reader in Egyptology (Rivière 2007, 48). This arrangement stayed in place until World War I, after which the list of contributors shrank (Rivière 2007, 50). Many of the first students were colonial administrators, and it was in this context that Griffith found himself contributing eight lectures on the “ethnology of Sudan” to the 1908 cohort from the Sudan Government Service (Tilley 1994, 314). It was also through the Anthropology Diploma course that Rosalind Moss became acquainted with Egyptology from 1917 onwards. With Griffith’s encouragement she was appointed in 1924 to the position of editor of *The Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Statues, Reliefs and Paintings*, an encyclopedic series of reference volumes whose compilation had been initiated by Griffith twenty years earlier (see e.g. Porter and Moss 1927). However, Moss also maintained her wider anthropological interests, publishing *The Life after Death in Oceania and the Malay Archipelago* a year later (Moss 1925).

The Pitt Rivers Museum also played a central role in this early program in anthropology. Its connection with Pitt-Rivers and Tylor ensured that classes there were framed by objects arranged according to the social evolutionary principles of the late Victorian era. Through these artifacts a complex whole of global culture was laid out according to sequences of “progress, degradation, survival, revival, [and] modification” (Tylor 1871, 16). This approach had a profound influence upon a number of students who attended the course, such as Aylward Blackman’s sister Winifred, whose ethnographic fieldwork (Blackman 1927) drew great acclaim from anthropologists and Egyptologists alike (see e.g. Gleichen 1928; Peet 1928). Winifred had been encouraged to read widely in anthropology by her brother and she first experienced life along the Nile when she accompanied him during his 1924 excavations at Meir (Stevenson 2013b). She viewed her work as an exercise in salvage anthropology and her mantra was that Egyptian customs were rapidly dying out. This argument was a common refrain in the early twentieth century (see

e.g. El Shakry 2007, 47–53, for further examples), and deemed particularly pressing for Egyptologists, as these customs were considered to be the last known “survivals” from ancient times (Seligman 1913; Wainwright 1919). The idea of survivals was itself an integral part of Tylor’s comparative anthropology, allowing Egyptology to accommodate twentieth-century material culture and ethnographic detail.

Other students not on the Diploma course, but who were enthralled by the Pitt Rivers displays during their time in Oxford, included Petrie’s students Randall-MacIver, Garstang, and Wainwright, all of whom made substantial donations of both ancient and modern Egyptian material to the Museum. Significantly, all remained committed to a broad anthropological agenda, expanded their interest to societies beyond Egypt, and also advocated forms of material anthropology (e.g. Randall-MacIver 1933; Wainwright 1938).

Thus in the early twentieth century there were concerted efforts to incorporate Egyptology within the wider remit of anthropological study. Nor was this interest one-sided. Many anthropologists engaged actively in Egyptological endeavors by making their own contributions through publication (e.g. Balfour 1897; Seligman 1916). Additionally, they were members of the committees of the BSAE and the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF), founded in 1882 to excavate for evidence of Biblical events in the Nile Delta (for which see Gange 2013). Among those who were members were Alfred C. Haddon, Baron A. von Hügel, and James G. Frazer (see any BSAE or EEF monograph for committee lists).

Passing mention should also be made of Egypt’s role in Elliot Smith’s work on diffusionism, for it is often presumed that it was this work that led to ancient Egypt having an important place in anthropological dialogue (e.g. Adams 1997, 26). Yet Elliot Smith’s ideas attracted severe criticism, not just from anthropologists, but also from Egyptologists (Crook 2012). Oxford scholars were particularly affronted because of Smith’s attacks on the anthropology of Tylor. Not too much credence should therefore be given to the importance of

diffusion in bringing ancient Egyptian culture to the attention of anthropologists or to its decreasing profile in the wake of critiques of such hyper-diffusionist theories. Rather, Egypt was already visible in anthropological circles in the early twentieth century and, as explored below, its subsequent fading from view may be attributed to fundamental changes in the nature of fieldwork and resulting shifts in knowledge relationships within universities.

### **SHIFTING FIELDS OF PRACTICE: 1931–1960**

When William Y. Adams (1997) surveyed the history of Egyptology and anthropology, he suggested that it was during the 1930s that the two subjects became detached. That date concurs with the evidence from Oxford, as it was during this decade that a combination of personal fortunes, disciplinary visions, and wider political developments conspired to curtail wider intellectual exchange between subjects and redefined their methodological priorities.

At Oxford this development was largely brought about by a new generation of academics. The anthropology Diploma, which for decades had been dominated by three men—Robert Ranulph Marett, Henry Balfour and Arthur Thompson—was to face its most severe critic: Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, who sought to promote his own vision for a “new” anthropology on his arrival in Oxford in 1936 (Mills 2007, 2008, 41–46). Balfour had insisted upon the close relationship between archaeology and anthropology, and upon retaining a broad curriculum. Radcliffe-Brown was staunchly against any such approach, berating the Diploma for being unwieldy, too general, and consequently useless. Instead he successfully advocated a diploma centered on the specialist study of “social anthropology”.

These changes were coincident with the death of Griffith in 1934. His successor was to be Eric Peet, who unfortunately passed away before his appointment commenced. Nevertheless, an inaugural lecture was delivered and, in comparison to Griffith’s 1901

proclamations, Peet's comments reflected a far narrower purview of Egyptology. Rather than addressing the subject's wider contribution to the study of humankind, as Griffith had attempted, Peet had more particularist concerns with ancient Egypt as his focus. In his inaugural lecture he sought to address the question as to how much was then known about the ancient Egyptians and what was left to discover. In contrast to Griffith (1901), Peet's answer was that "we are not very likely to learn very much more Egyptian history from excavation in Egypt itself." Rather, it was in the philological side of Egyptology "that there is most reason for hope" (Peet 1934, 11). Such a shift in emphasis may in part be attributed to the changing epistemological opportunities closely linked to political developments at the end of the British colonial era in Egypt. These changes included the more assertive role of the now (nominally) independent Egyptian authorities in restricting access to archaeological sites and objects following the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun (Colla 2007). For example, Petrie had been dismayed by such restrictions and had left for Palestine in the late 1920s, where he would live out the remainder of his life (Drower 1985). His departure marked the end of more than forty years of frantically paced excavations, through which had been accumulated an enormous material legacy. The "material facts of history" (Petrie 1888, vii) had been amassed, ordered, and distributed across the world, perhaps explaining why Peet had been of the opinion that there was little more to be done.

After Peet's untimely death, it was the linguist Battiscombe George Gunn who found himself leading the next generation of Oxford scholars as Professor of Egyptology from 1934 until 1950 (Bierbrier 2012, 232). One of his first students was Peter Shinnie, who decades later wrote of his experiences:

I went to Oxford in 1934 . . . but soon found that the text-bound study, which is what most British Egyptology was then, seemed too limiting . . . . My intention was still to

work in Egyptology but with a somewhat wider view of the nature of the subject than was held by my teacher Battiscombe Gunn, one of the great Egyptologists of the time. He did not consider the study of artefacts very necessary (Shinnie 1990, 221).

This quote may seem somewhat surprising given that Gunn's early career had been built around the care of artifacts through his curatorial positions in the Cairo Museum and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Yet Gunn's later neglect of material culture is reflective of the wider fundamental shift in the position of artifacts across many disciplines, and also of the development of fieldwork methodologies that began to give subjects their own unique set of evidence and methods (Gosden 1999, 33).

In anthropology, fieldwork had come to focus more on the generation of field notes for the production of new forms of ethnographic monograph, rather than the collection of objects. Anthropology thereby became progressively dematerialized and increasingly theoretical. Museums that had previously enjoyed elevated importance on account of epistemologies of artifacts began to decline as anthropology moved out of the "museum era" (Stocking 1995). Linguistic methodologies gained ground over the analysis of artifacts (Henare 2005, 211), and instead of sweeping comparative studies that collapsed space and time, more focused synchronic examinations of particular societies became the norm. In archaeology, earlier descriptive studies of objects, like those of Petrie, began to be replaced by a new emphasis upon site features and depositional sequences. This change is typified by Mortimer Wheeler's work, which from the 1920s and particularly from the 1930s onwards employed box grids, encouraging far greater attention to site formation histories (Trigger 2006, 294). As anthropology and archaeology both sought self-definition through specific fieldwork methodologies that were actively taught as part of the professionalization of the disciplines (particularly at the University of London's Institute of Archaeology, the London

School of Economics, and the University of Cambridge), British Egyptology faced more restricted opportunities for new fieldwork and so also generally looked inward toward its most uniquely distinguishing feature: the language and the texts that it studied.

Egyptology's philological emphasis remained strong into the 1950s, as is clear from the discussions concerning the future of the Oxford Professorship of Egyptology following Gunn's death in 1950. Alan Gardiner, the independently-wealthy Egyptologist who provided funds for the position, wrote to the University Council advising that there ought to be three teachers of Egyptology. He argued that one should handle Demotic and Coptic, another philology and archaeology of the Pharaonic period, and that the final teacher should deal with Egyptian archaeology. With regard to the latter Gardiner noted that it "seems hopeless at the present juncture to ask for or find a highly competent holder of such a post," perhaps a reference to the far more limited opportunities for excavation at that time (the BSAE was largely dormant and was formally discontinued in 1954), or that few students had been sufficiently trained in the study of artifacts. Gardiner concluded by observing that the Professor of Egyptology:

could to a considerable extent make up for the absence of a Reader in Egyptian archaeology, since, contrary to what is often supposed, any competent hieroglyphic scholar cannot fail to have a wide if not very detailed, knowledge of Egyptian archaeology.<sup>6</sup>

The implication was that archaeology did not require training, which was contrary to its increasing professionalization at this time and the rise in specialist courses elsewhere.

Further, it might be suggested that many were more confident in Egyptology's own particularist identity and that the discipline had become more isolated from developments in

other subjects. It may be the case, however, that Gardiner was simply keen to install the philologist Jaroslav Černý in the position (John Baines, pers. comm.), and that to Gardiner Černý was more preferable than the otherwise small pool of active field archaeologists at that time (for a contrasting view, see Glanville 1947, whose author was keen on field archaeology). Whatever the case, Černý arrived at Oxford in 1951 and remained in post for fourteen years, during which time (in 1961) the Institute of Archaeology at Oxford was founded. By the early 1960s, therefore, archaeology, anthropology, and Egyptology all had discrete spaces of activity within the University, independently setting their own individual agendas and courses.

## **CONCLUSION**

The history presented here is only a brief and partial one. Other threads of the wider intellectual tapestry remain to be woven in, such as the role of classics and papyrology. However, despite this caveat and the chapter's focus on Oxford, some generalizations can perhaps be gleaned.

British Egyptology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was composed of a small, close-knit community. The discipline was, however, originally situated within the much wider intellectual context of Victorian material anthropology. Many key British Egyptologists at this time sought to situate their specialism within this framework and took inspiration from it. As anthropology and Egyptology acquired institutional settings this epistemology of artifacts continued to inform disciplinary study, with the museum a site of learning, and fieldwork in Egypt focused on the recovery of objects. In the 1920s, however, the landscape across which research and learning was conducted began to change. As archaeology and anthropology both became more sharply defined in specific fieldwork

methodologies, sites for the development of Egyptology—in Britain at least—became more restricted, moving away from both excavation and museum collections. In surveying this century of Egyptological inquiry it is also clear that the ensemble of parts that comprised the subject were variously interleaved by different personalities, from Griffith’s methodological breadth to Gunn’s philological focus. In the ebb and flow of disciplinary practice, therefore, both conviction and chance played their respective roles, as continues to be the case today.

## NOTES

1. The term was first introduced to the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1862.
2. Myres Papers, University of Oxford Special Collections, Bodleian Library, MSS Myres 59 (Myres Papers), fol. 94–95. The letters date between 1896 and 1901.
3. Petrie to Myres, 29 December 1896, Myres Papers, fol. 103–104.
4. Griffith to Myres, 11 December 1896, Myres Papers, fol. 41–42.
5. Griffith to Blackman, 5 August 1905, Blackman Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of Liverpool Library, D84/1/22.
6. Gardiner to University of Oxford Council, 27 March 1950, University of Oxford Archives UR 6/ER/2, file 1.

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