

Battiscombe Gunn Egyptian Section records

0081

Finding aid prepared by Jody Rodgers.

Last updated on March 01, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

5/26/2016

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives
Creator	Gunn, Battiscombe G., 1883-1950
Title	Battiscombe Gunn Egyptian Section records
Call number	0081
Date [inclusive]	1931-1934
Extent	0.1 linear foot
Language	English
Abstract	Gunn moved to the University of Pennsylvania Museum in 1931 as curator of the Egyptian section. His time there was short. In 1934, Gunn was given an honorary M.A. degree from the University of Oxford, opening the way for an appointment as Professor of Egyptology there, a position he held until his death in 1950. The Battiscombe Gunn Egyptian Section records consist of one folder of correspondence dating from 1931 to 1934.

Biography/History

Battiscombe G. Gunn, born in London in 1883, was the son of liberal parents George Gunn and Julia Alice Philip. Both sides of the family were known for their non-conformist thinking. His father served on the London Stock Exchange and hoped that Battiscombe would follow in his footsteps. Battiscombe was educated at liberal public schools, Bedales, Westminster and All Hallows School, Hariton. He demonstrated a facility for languages from an early age and by age fourteen was reading hieroglyphics

and interested in Egypt. His family sent him to Wiesbaden, Germany for private tutoring but he returned at age eighteen due to a change in the family's finances.

Following the completion of his school program, Gunn tried banking and engineering as careers but found them disappointing. From 1908 to 1911 he served as secretary to Arthur Wing Pinero, an actor and dramatist. While this job suited him better, Gunn left for Paris in 1911 to work as a journalist for the Continental Daily Mail.

Battiscombe dabbled in the occult and in the new field of psychoanalysis as he tried to find his way to a career.

Gunn visited Egypt for the first time in 1913, working as epigrapher for Flinders Petrie at Harageh. A second season was interrupted by World War I. By 1921, Gunn was back in Egypt, a member of the team of Thomas Eric Peet and Leonard Woolley excavating at Amarna. Following this excavation, Gunn was named a member of the staff of the Service des Antiquities for the Egyptian government. In 1928, he became assistant curator of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

Gunn moved to the University of Pennsylvania Museum in 1931 as curator of the Egyptian section. His time here was short. In 1934, Gunn was given an honorary M.A. degree from the University of Oxford, opening the way for an appointment as Professor of Egyptology there; a position he held until his death in 1950.

Battiscombe Gunn's skills in translation contributed to Agatha Christie's novel *Death Comes as the End*, set in Thebes. Christie included a series of letters that Gunn translated as a part of her story.

Scope and Contents

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Administrative Information

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Controlled Access Headings

Form/Genre(s)

- Correspondence

Geographic Name(s)

- Egypt

Personal Name(s)

- Flinders-Petrie, W.M., Sir, 1853-1942
- Gunn, Battiscombe G., 1883-1950
- Pinero, Arthur Wing, 1855-1934
- Woolley, C. Leonard, Sir, 1880-1960

Correspondence

Collection Inventory

Correspondence.

Box

1931-1934.

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