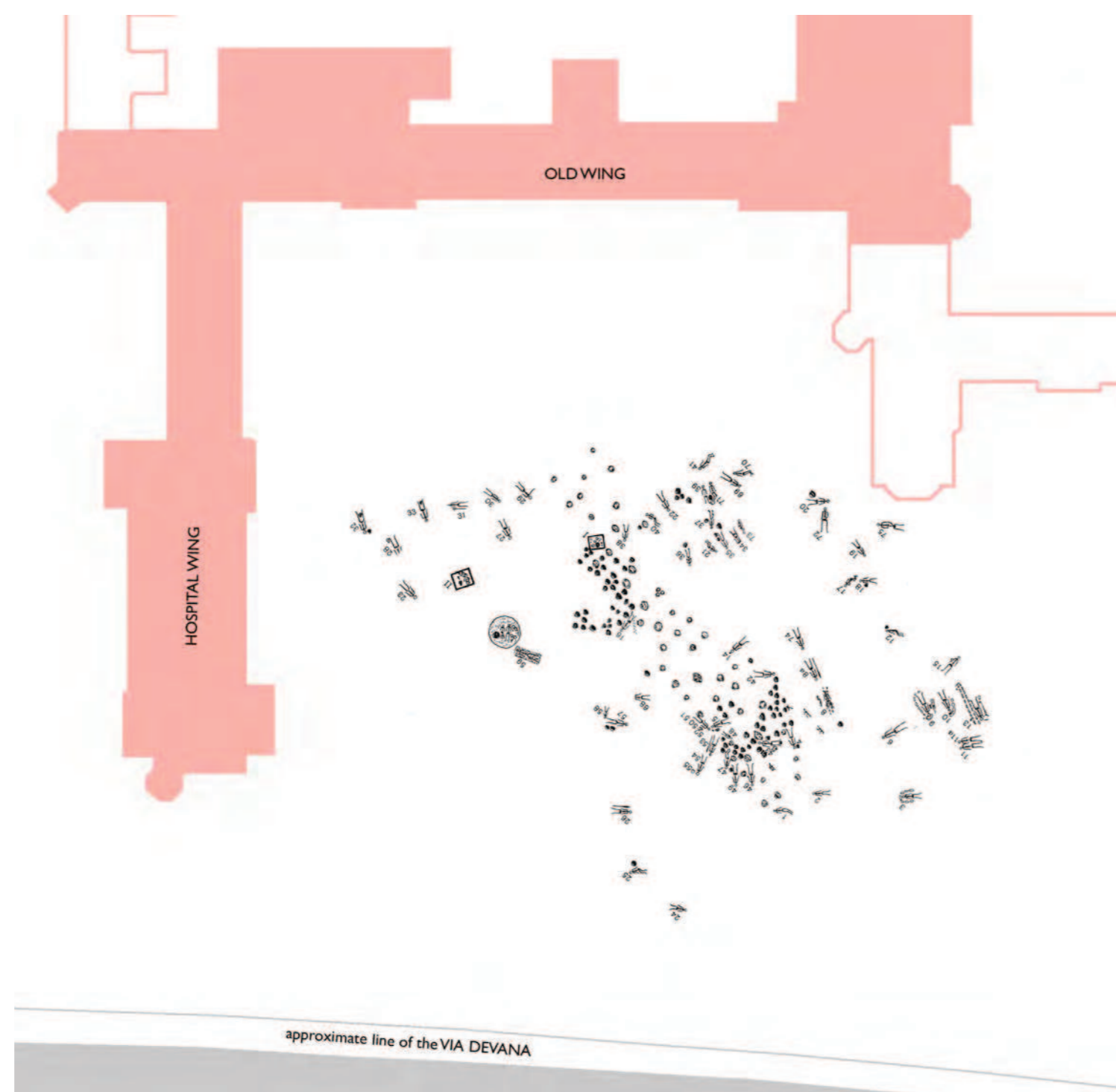




anglo-saxon finds

The history of the Lawrence Room collections begins in 1881 with the discovery of a large Anglo-Saxon cemetery on the College site by workmen preparing ground for tennis courts. An excavation began in March under the guidance of Francis Jenkinson, a Fellow of Trinity and Lecturer in Classics. When it ended six months later, more than 70 skeletons had been discovered, along with well over 100 cinerary urns filled with cremation ash and the burnt fragments of personal possessions.

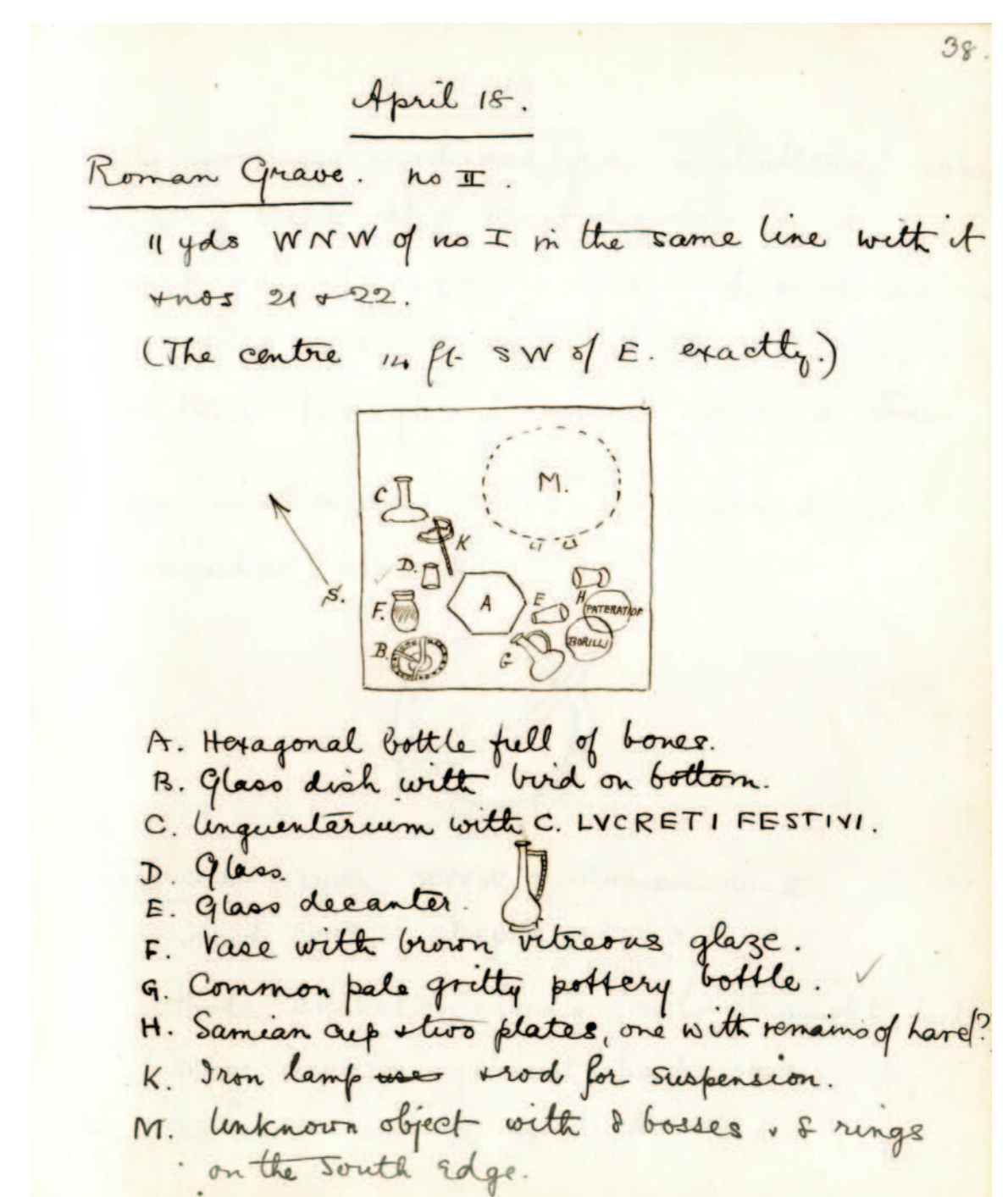
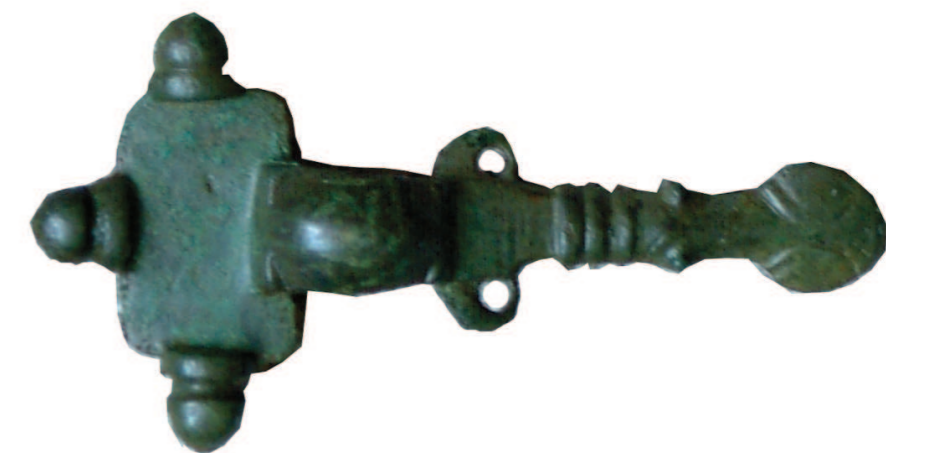


More of the cemetery was unearthed in 1886, when the foundations for the Tower Wing were being laid, by Baron von Hügel, the Curator of the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. Undoubtedly more yet remains to be found.

The urns and other material found on the site date it to roughly the fifth and sixth centuries AD. The graves were orderly and their contents included domestic utensils – tweezers, needles, pots for food and cooking – and personal items like ivory combs and bronze brooches (*fibulae*). Skeletons of young and old of both sexes, none showing signs of violent death, support the conclusion that this cemetery belongs to an agricultural, perhaps quite isolated, settlement nearby.

The simultaneous discovery of two, rich second-century Roman graves indicates that the site may have been occupied almost continuously from the Roman into the Anglo-Saxon period. The presence of some Roman material in the Anglo-Saxon graves also suggests that the Romano-British population here had contact with its successors.

Most of the material from the two excavations has long been held in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (now the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology). Some was returned during Alison Roberts' reorganisation of the Lawrence Room in 1961; other items, including the handsome stone lion and other Roman material found by Jenkinson, only came home in 2008, when they could be safely housed in the fine new cabinets funded by generous donation to the recent appeal.



IMAGES

in the text:

Jenkinson's plan of his 1881 excavations, overlaid on a plan of the College to approximately the same scale. The original plan had neither scale nor an indication of the position of the excavations relative to the buildings in place by 1881. This reconstruction is based on an abstract grid described in Jenkinson's dig diary plus the few dimensions that he gives relating some grave positions to that grid.

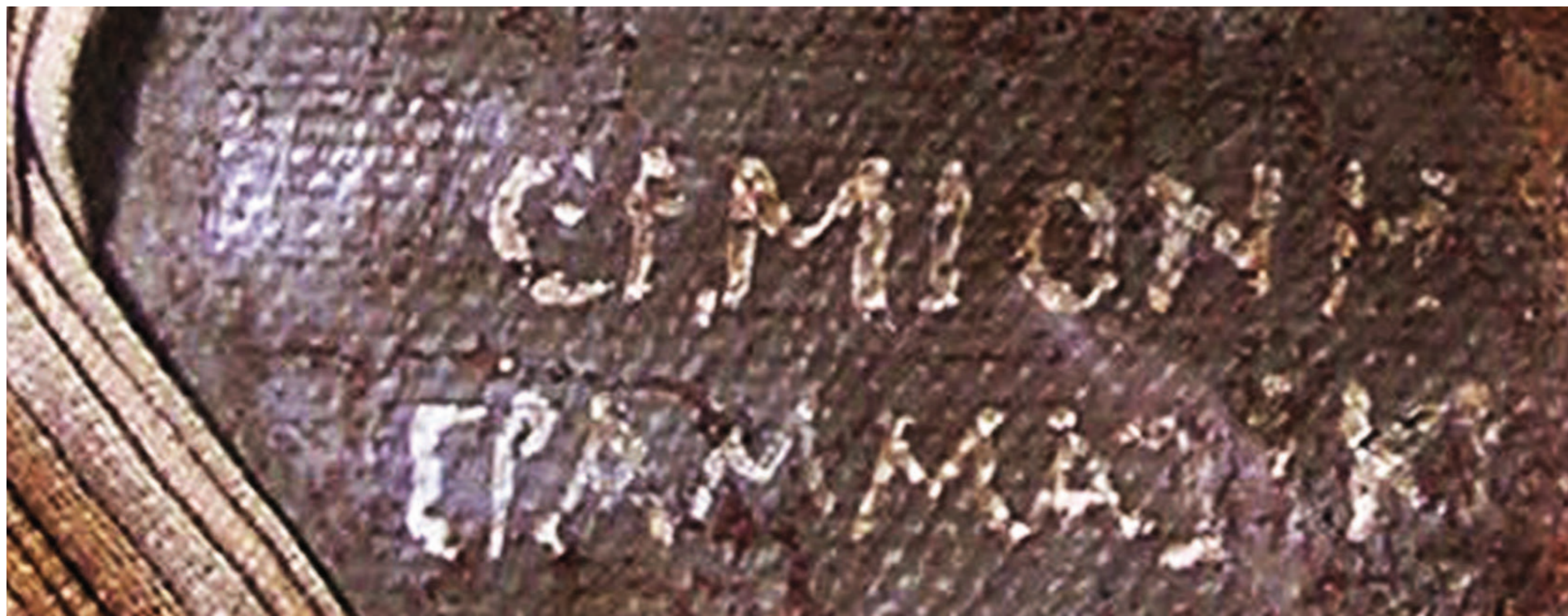
above, from the top:

One of the finest Anglo-Saxon pots excavated by Jenkinson; a bronze fibula; page 38 of the Jenkinson excavation diary, describing Roman grave no. II; a watercolour of the head of the Roman Lion, painted for Jenkinson in 1882 by Lilian Gaul when she was only 16. She came up to Girton five years later.



hermione

The Roman portrait mummy known as Hermione is one of the Lawrence Room's most well-loved treasures. She dates from the first century AD and was discovered in the Roman cemetery at Hawara, south west of Cairo, by the pioneering archaeologist William Flinders Petrie on 4 January 1911. Like many of his finds, she was set aside to be given to financial contributors to the excavations.

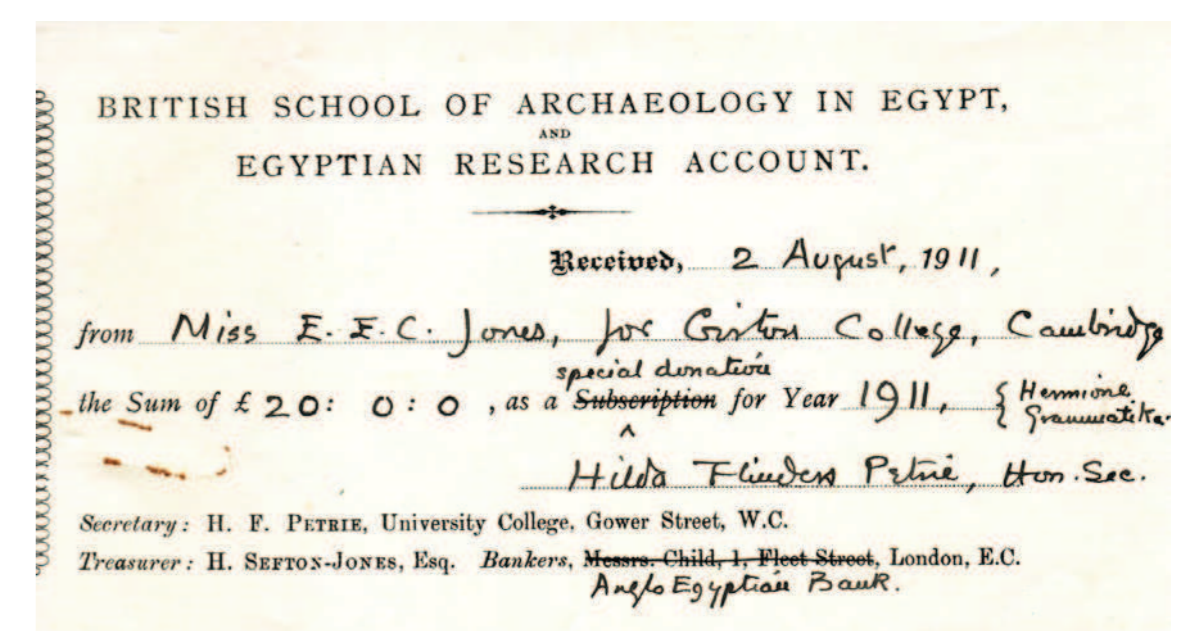


While the beauty of her portrait and the intricate pattern of her linen wrappings make the mummy remarkable, it is the inscription that makes her unique. *Hermionê Grammatikê* – which can be translated as either 'Hermione the language teacher' or 'Hermione the literary lady' – marks her out as a young woman distinguished for learning, and thus truly exceptional in the Julio-Claudian age.

Because of the inscription, Flinders Petrie and his wife Hilda were keen that this special mummy should go to a women's college. By July 1911 plans were afoot to gather enough funds to ensure that Hermione came to Girton. Less than a month later, the considerable sum of £20 had been raised as a special donation to the Petrie excavations, with an extra £5 10s for a case, and possession of the mummy was assured.

X-rays, and a CAT-scan conducted under the auspices of the British Museum, have since revealed that the mummy is of a slender-boned young woman between the ages of 18 and 25, just as her portrait promises. The good state of her teeth supports the impression given by both the portrait and the inscription that she was from a wealthy family. Such a match between portrait and mummy does not always occur.

Apart from visits to the British Museum for tests, and for display in their *Ancient Faces* exhibition of mummy portraits from Roman Egypt in 1997, Hermione has remained in Cambridge. Many Girton Classicists remember her silent presence during language supervisions held with Miss Duke in the Lawrence Room in the post-war years. Now housed in a custom-made case, and resting on a new support cushion, the mummy remains a central part of the Lawrence Room collections, precious not only intrinsically but also for what she reveals about the traditions of learning and community in the College.



IMAGES

in the text:

A detail of the Greek inscription on the mummy portrait of Hermione.

above, from the top:

A full length image of the mummy; Lady Petrie's receipt for Girton's contribution to the excavation fund that secured the mummy for the College; the original portrait painting compared with the computer image from the British Museum, built up by superimposing the detail of the portrait on an image derived from scans of Hermione's skull.



growth of the collections

Even before the acquisition of Hermione, the Girton collections were growing and branching off from their Anglo-Saxon roots. In 1896, Henrietta Müller gave the College an exquisite New Kingdom stela, later to be studied by Sarah Clackson (née Quinn), whose cataloguing work on the Egyptian material is invaluable. This stela formed the basis of the Egyptian section of the Lawrence Room that Hermione was soon to join. The foundations for the Classical section were laid in 1902, when a former student, Evelyn Saumarez, donated to the College her father's enviable collection of Tanagra figurines, collected during his service as Secretary to the British Legation in Athens in the early 1870s.

Our Tanagra figurines – small, mould-cast terracotta statues of humans, animals and birds – date to the fourth and third centuries BC. They are so called because figurines of this kind were first found in number when Hellenistic tombs in a large cemetery near Tanagra in Boeotia yielded thousands of such statuettes. Girton's impressive Tanagras, which have graced a number of exhibitions since their arrival in College, show clearly why the elegant beauty of these figurines made them desirable collectible items in the late nineteenth century.



The Classical collection founded on these figurines soon grew, with further donations of Tanagras and other finds, including a significant amount of pottery and sherds, from across the ancient world. Notable donors were Margaret Meyer, Ethelwyn Pearson and Alice Carthew, who gave the College its Mycenaean antiquities, including an impressive Cycladic figurine from Melos.

The growth of the Egyptian holdings matched that of the Classical material. A significant bequest by Gwendolen Crewdson, whose varied career at Girton had included posts as Librarian, Registrar and Junior Bursar, after she graduated in Natural Sciences in 1898, brought the fruits of her lifelong interest in Egyptology to the College. Some of the objects in this fine and varied collection were passed down from her uncle Alfred Waterhouse, the College's architect. All were meticulously recorded in lists that have been fundamental to the development of the Lawrence Room's new, comprehensive and scholarly electronic catalogue.



IMAGES

in the text:

Five of the Tanagra figurines.

above, from the top:

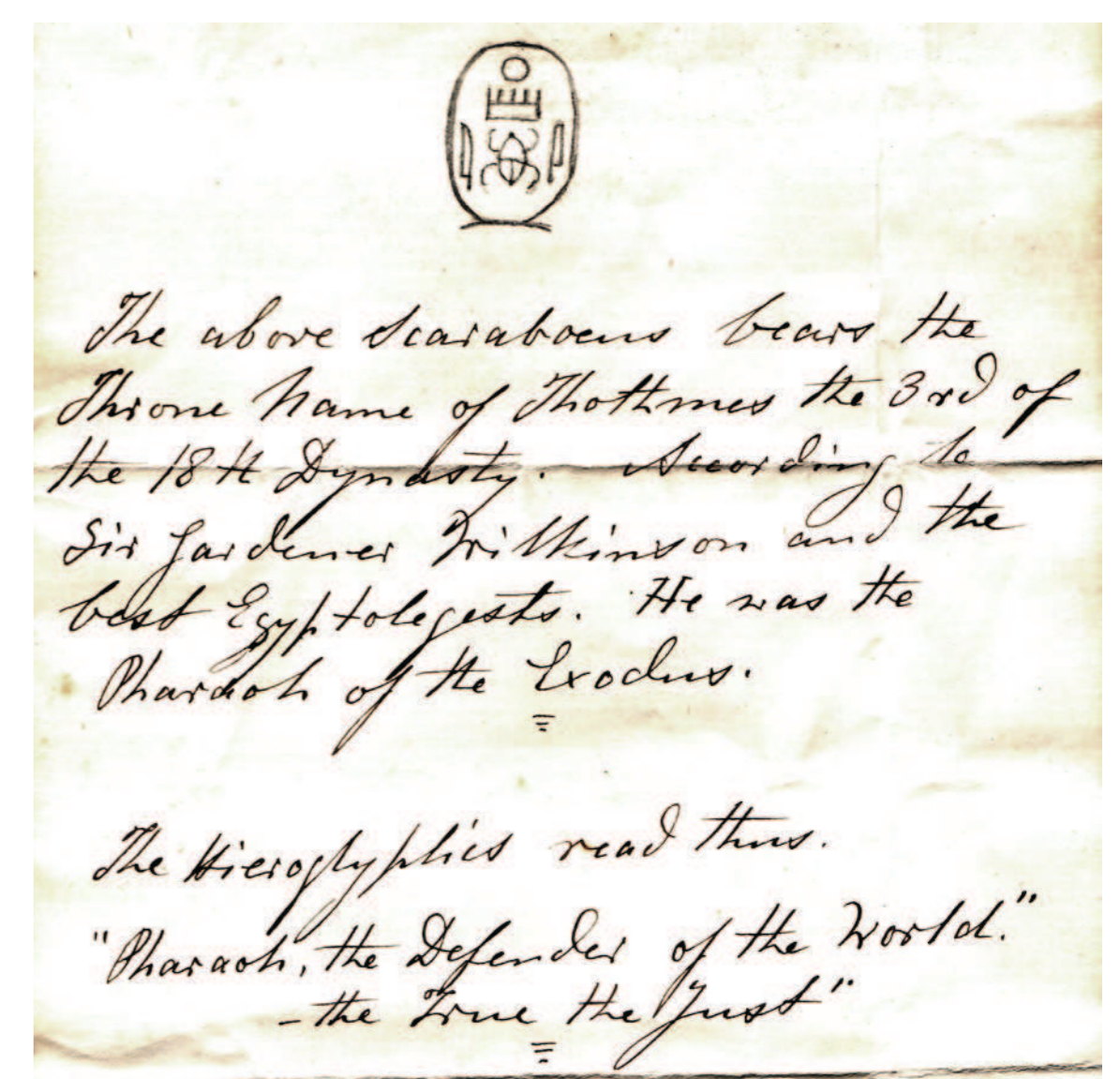
Sarah Quinn's analytical drawing of the images and hieroglyphs on the New Kingdom stela; figures of a dog (with bird and biscuit) and a goat from the Tanagra collection; the Cycladic figurine; a group of exceptional beads from the Crewdson collection, fashioned to resemble grains of wheat.



provenance & authenticity

Every piece in the Lawrence Room has a place in larger stories about both the College's history and the ancient society from which it comes. Material in the College archives offers fascinating insight into these tales. There are gaps, of course, in the detailed provenance of many items in the collections. But even partial provenances are illuminating. Documents from the papers of Alfred Waterhouse senior, a Liverpoolian importer of cotton from the West Indies and the father of the College's architect, offer an example.

Waterhouse owned a range of items discovered in Egypt, some of which have reached Girton via his great-niece, Gwendolen Crewdson. One of the items that Girton owns is a small scarab of Thutmose III, who is a candidate for the hotly contested role of Pharaoh in the book of Exodus. It was a special gift, presented to Waterhouse in August 1866 by Alice Lieder of Cairo, wife of a German missionary and herself an Egyptologist, who forms another link in the chain of women scholars whose diverse interests are so well reflected in the Lawrence Room collections.



Alice Lieder also wrote a catalogue of Waterhouse's collection, which mentions other items in the Lawrence Room collections, including a mummified baby crocodile. Paying for the mummification of a crocodile was thought to bring the favour of the god of fertility and water, Sobek. The Lawrence Room now holds four of these small mummies. One of these, a suspiciously regular package, is likely to be an ancient fake, suggesting that the supply of such mummies did not meet demand, even though crocodiles were raised in temple lakes specifically for the purpose.

This is not the only ancient or modern forgery in the Lawrence Room collections. Two red-figure vases were declared to be *bad imitations*, [which] *should be destroyed as soon as possible* by a visiting expert from Queen's College in 1934, and since they are no longer among the collections we assume that they were disposed of as suggested. Other forgeries survive among the Tanagra figurines, giving mute evidence of the unscrupulous methods taken to meet the high demand for these items in the modern world by forgers and by dealers, who pieced together broken bits and pieces of different figurines to make new wholes.



IMAGES

in the text:

The obverse and reverse of the 'Exodus' scarab with (right) an enlargement of Alice Lieder's drawing of the reverse.

above, from the top:

A mummified crocodile (right) with an ancient forgery of a crocodile mummy (left); part of Alice Lieder's letter to Alfred Waterhouse recording and interpreting her gift to him of the 'Exodus' scarab; two Tanagra figurines that are probably composites.



lawrence room history

In the early years of the College, Barbara Bodichon wrote that the Anglo-Saxon finds from the Girton site should go to a 'College Museum'. It was not until 1934 that a room was dedicated to the display of the Anglo-Saxon and many other antiquities that, by then, had been donated to the College.

Until then, the College collections were focused in and around the Library and the need for a museum was pressing. The death of Amy Lawrence, a Girtonian natural scientist, in May 1934 proved the catalyst to meet that need, when her sisters and friends decided to establish the museum that has since been known as the Lawrence Room in her memory. A subscription of £250 covered the cost of a new case for Hermione as well as beautifully-made oak cases for the other artefacts.

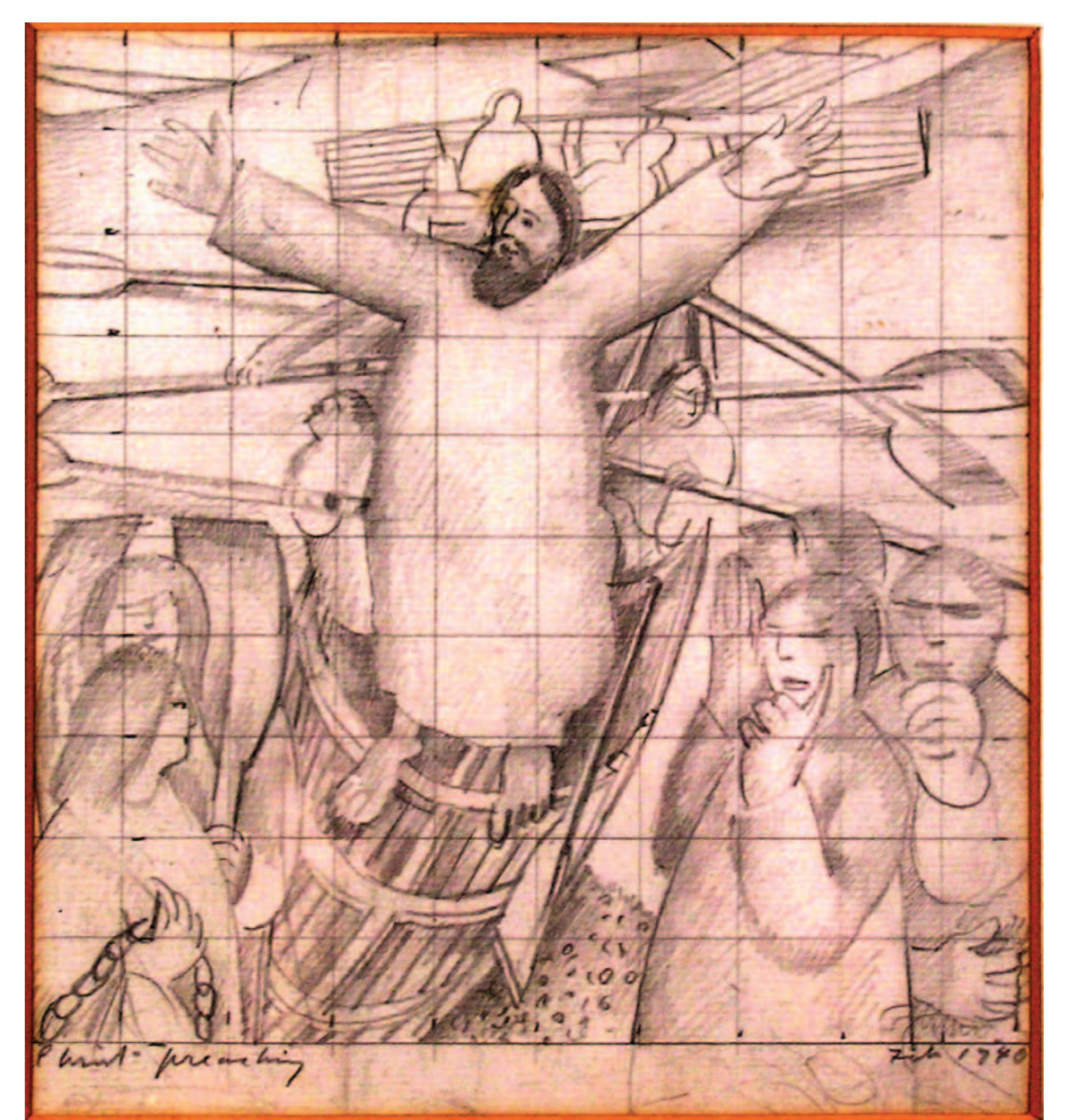


Members of the College and outside specialists volunteered their expertise: Mildred Hartley arranged the Tanagra figurines, Maureen O'Reilly worked with the Anglo-Saxon pots, and Margaret Murray came from University College London to display and catalogue the Egyptian material. For the first time, academic principles dictated the display of the College's collections, and valuable first steps towards a complete and rigorous catalogue were made. However, the Lawrence Room then, as now, was not wholly devoted to the display of antiquities, also offering space to paintings, furniture and artefacts collected from across the world, which reflect the wide interests of members and supporters of the College.



Since then, the Lawrence Room display has been refurbished a number of times. The return of the artefacts from storage at the end of WWII brought about the first re-arrangement of the display in 1946. Alison Roberts undertook a more significant re-working of the display on aesthetic as well as academic principles in the summer of 1961. A major overhaul of the room followed a flood in 1991 that thankfully did not damage any of the artefacts beyond conservation. Two new cabinets as well as flexible museum lighting, re-glazed windows and air-conditioning ensured a modern and stable environment for the collections.

A significant amount of the collections, however, remained in storage until the retirement of Dorothy Thompson in 2006, when the Lawrence Room appeal was launched, in part as a memorial to Alison Duke, who died in the previous year.



IMAGES

in the text:

The panel in the Lawrence Room, showing the dedication to Amy Lawrence; an Amazon from the Chinese Ming dynasty, one of the other works of art in the room.

above, from the top:

The Roman lion and some Anglo-Saxon pots above the chimney breast in the original Old Wing entrance to the College; Gwendolen Crewdson, then Junior Bursar, standing outside that entrance in Emily Davies Court; Christ Preaching by Stanley Spencer.