



Ceramic vessels from the excavations of John Garstang at Esna, Hawick Museum, Live Borders © Phil Wilkinson

# Ancient Egyptian Collections in Scottish Museums Scotland South

# Scottish Ancient Egyptian Collections Review

## Dumfries Museum, Dumfries and Galloway Council

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### Location of Collections

#### *In storage*

Dumfries Museum and Camera Obscura  
The Observatory  
Rotchell Road  
Dumfries  
DG2 7SW

### Size of Collections

>160 Objects

(Please note: 57 are glass fragments)

### Published Information

Online Collections:    <https://www.dgculture.co.uk/collections/>

Selection of objects included in <http://www.futuremuseum.co.uk/collections.aspx>

### Collection Highlights

- Two wooden shabtis of King Seti I (c.1294–1279 BC).
- Painted wooden Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figure (c.747-525 BC).
- Several fragments of inscribed linen and cartonnage, formerly Dr James Grant *Bey* Collection, including one piece of linen with traces of the cartouche of King Ramesses II.
- Terracotta figure of the god Bes dressed in Roman military attire (c.100 AD).

### Collection Overview

The Egyptian collections of Dumfries Museum descend from the Grierson Museum, Thornhill. Opened in the mid-1800s by Dr Thomas Boyle Grierson (1818–1889), following receipt of a grant from the Duke of Buccleuch, Grierson's museum covered a vast number of topics, reflecting what some have called his 'unusual' character and his desire to assist with the education of local people. His collection was built up over some time and included objects from his father's collection.

The collections were donated to Grierson by friends, acquaintances and correspondents, with others paying for their medical treatment with objects. At its height, the museum contained over 4,000 catalogued specimens and more than 3,000 books. Following Grierson's death in 1889, the museum began to stagnate, and it was eventually dispersed in 1965. This dispersal focused on the retention of local material in the area, however, and

some Egyptian objects and other material from the ancient world were retained for teaching purposes. Thirty-eight objects in the Dumfries Museum collections are attributed to Grierson. Of the Grierson objects, a mummified human head is the most highly documented. From details in the first catalogue of the collection (1843), it can be established that the group was collected by a Dr John Milligan in Thebes and was presented to Dr Grierson's Museum in 1874.

Over half of the Dumfries Museum collection is known as the Hannah collection. This group was donated by the descendant of John Leslie Comrie (c.1880–1963), an agriculturalist and surveyor who worked for Le Société Anonyme du Béhéra, a French agricultural and trading company based in Cairo. Comrie's post (1907) was advertised as cotton farm management, though he arrived at the site east of Alexandria to find that it was apparently uncultivated land. He surveyed the area personally and employed Egyptian workers to dig ditches for irrigation and drainage. Due to his interest in archaeology, he requested that any objects found should be preserved, likely resulting in a financial reward for the individual. He was involved in an expedition to the Valley of the Queens in 1911, though no records of this have been located at this time. He continued to collect small objects during his time in Egypt. Before Comrie retired to Scotland in 1947 he donated some of the larger objects in his collection to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Following his death in 1963, a portion of his collection was donated to the museum as a marker of his friendship with the curator Alfred Edgar Truckell MBE (1919–2007). The objects include a large number of glass fragments, modern productions such as shabtis and scarabs, and some ceramics.

Grierson also purchased several fragments of inscribed linen and cartonnage, formerly in the Dr James Grant *Bey* Collection, including one piece of linen with traces of the cartouche of King Ramesses II.

Also of interest are a collection of five 19th century pipe bowls in red Assiut ware, transferred to Dumfries Museum by the Royal Scottish Museum (now National Museums Scotland) in the 1960s.

### Known Donors and Sites Represented

#### Sites

<i>Site</i>	<i>Excavator/season</i>	<i>No of Objects</i>	<i>Objects</i>
Delta		>80	
Thebes		>1	Mummified human remains

#### Donors

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>No of Objects</i>	<i>Objects</i>
British Museum	Institution	7	Amulets, shabti

Royal Scottish Museum	Institution	6	19th century pipe bowls and coffee mill/grinder
Dr James Grant <i>Bey</i> (1840–1896)  [Former collection]	Medical	5	Linen, cartonnage
Dr Thomas Boyle Grierson (1818–1889)  <i>Please note: As the founder and owner of the earlier museum, not all objects attributed to Grierson can be confirmed as his personal donation.</i>	Medical  Museum founder	38	Shabtis, beads, amulets, stone vessels, funerary figure; modern productions
John Leslie Comrie (c.1880–1963)  Donated by Kathleen Hannah née Comrie (1914– )  “Hannah Collection”	Business  (Agricultural / surveyor)	77	Ceramic, glass, modern productions
Dr John Milligan (Hayfield)	Medical	2	Mummified human remains

### Object Types

Ceramics; glass; funerary figure; faience; figurines; shabtis; mummified human remains; cartonnage; linen; scarabs; amulets; coins; cosmetics; casts; modern productions; stone vessels; beads

**Key Object Images**

**Two wooden shabtis of King Seti I (c.1294–1279 BC)**



**Painted wooden Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figure (c.747–525 BC)**



**Terracotta figure of the god Bes, dressed in Roman military attire (c.100 AD)**



# Scottish Ancient Egyptian Collections Review

## Hawick Museum, Live Borders

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### Location of Collections

#### *In storage/ On display*

Hawick Museum  
Wilton Lodge Park  
Hawick  
TD9 7JL

### Size of Collections

>50 objects

### Published Information

Online collections: Not currently available online

### Collection Highlights

- 38 examples of pottery (c.1985–1550 BC) excavated in Esna by John Garstang and distributed to the Hawick Archaeological Society.
- Painted stone stela of an unknown couple standing before the god Re-Horakhty, Abydos (25th Dynasty c.664–525 BC).
- Mummified head of a male (c. 332 BC – 150 AD).

### Collection Overview

The collection was formed by the Hawick Archaeological Society. Following their foundation in 1856, the Society began to actively acquire objects from across the world to display in their museum. These collections were displayed at Wilton Lodge, their current location, in 1910 at which point the Society's active collecting of Egyptian material ceased.

Around half of the collection is formed of ceramic vessels from the excavations of John Garstang (1876–1956) (University of Liverpool) at Esna in 1906. These were sent to Hawick Museum following negotiations with Garstang after he wrote a letter to *The Times* in 1904 offering selections of pottery to interested educational institutions. Though the correspondence between the parties post-dated the advertisement, arrangements were facilitated by Garstang. Provenance information was lost over the course of the 20th century and was re-identified in 2006 as part of a Museums Association and British Museum 'Effective Collections Scheme'. During the 2019/20 review, connections between the ceramics in Hawick and the burial contexts were researched and shared for the *Discovering Ancient Egypt* (2019) touring exhibition.

A number of objects in the collection do not have a full provenance, with some modern productions also included. Archival material suggests that several donations were made by members of the military.

## Known Donors and Sites Represented

### Sites

<i>Site</i>	<i>Excavator/season</i>	<i>No of objects</i>	<i>Objects</i>
Abydos		1	Stela
Esna	University of Liverpool John Garstang (1906)	>8	ceramics
Thebes		3?	Mummified human remains, ceramics, modern productions
Bahariya or Faiyum		>8	Modern productions, faience

### Donors

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>No of Objects</i>	<i>Objects</i>
John Garstang (1876–1956)	Archaeology	38	Ceramics
Dr Murray and Miss E J Murray (Newcastleton)	Medical		
Captain Smith (Newcastleton)	Military		
W J S	Military		

### Object types

Ceramic; shabti; stela; amulet; statuette; modern production; mummified human remains



**Examples of pottery excavated in Esna (c.1985–1550 BC)**



**Painted stone stela, Abydos (25th Dynasty c.664–525 BC)**

