Archaeology of Race: Introduction

Half of history seems incredible to one who looks at all things through modern spectacles.

(Petrie, 1911: 122)

The contention of William Matthew Flinders Petrie from his book *Egypt and Israel,* quoted above, is the contention of this book. Petrie's point is a truism that verges on cliché. *Archaeology of Race* goes a step further than Petrie to argue that all of history, ancient and modern, is viewed through the spectacles of our present day concerns and assumptions. It is understanding this vision that is important. This does not make history pointless, but adds to our understanding of how the past is presented and used in scholarly and popular discourses. Understanding how different visions of the past are framed and observed is particularly pertinent when working with objects and archive material in a museum environment. Museum objects have a collection history and provenance. The people who collected them and their reasons for doing so become part of the museum in a manner that used to be rarely made public in galleries and exhibitions. In addition, archaeological and anthropological objects usually record people from different cultures and time periods to that of the museum that houses them. These objects have been in turn collected by different people also, usually, from different cultures and time periods to the one in which the objects were made and used. Chris Gosden, Frances Larson and Alison Petch ask the question 'What is a Museum?', in the introduction to their book on the people and the collections of the early history of the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford (Gosden, Larson with Petch, 2007). They contend that a museum is made up of the histories of the people behind the scenes of the collections and their agendas as much as the objects themselves.

A popular and articulate exponent of thinking about people and history through objects is Edmund de Waal's *The Hare with Amber Eyes. A Hidden Inheritance* (2010). In de Waal's work, 264 Japanese netsuke miniature

sculptures become characters themselves; tying together personal, familial and material biographies. Objects can be seen as transformative and active agents. They can take a role in collecting people as much as being collected:

> In one sense, of course, the objects in the Museum have been collected by people, but it is also possible to see that the people associated with the Museum have been collected by objects. [. . .] It is not just that objects illuminate the relationships that created the Museum, but that many of these connections were created through objects and because of them. (Gosden, Larson with Petch, 2007: 5).

Each chapter in *Archaeology of Race* begins either with an object or collection of objects in a museum or archive, usually in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology at University College London (UCL). The object acts as a way into understanding an aspect of racial science or eugenic thinking in ideas about archaeology and society. I often explore Petrie's description of an object and place that description in context. I am also looking at these objects myself and positioning myself in context as a museum professional, as well as part of an audience, working in the early twenty-first century, looking back one hundred years or more. The object considered remains, essentially, the same in terms of physical structure. However, its ancient and modern purposes are changed by different viewpoints, while my relationship to the object, Flinders Petrie and the museum has been transformed by considering the intellectual histories of these different antiquities, displays and photographs.

This book is a history of a certain way of looking at the past. It investigates a once wide-spread methodology that is uncomfortable, even distasteful, to contemporary museum professionals, archaeologists, historians and visitors to museums. Yet it is an important one and, as *Archaeology of Race* illustrates, is necessary for understanding how some collections of objects have been formed, presented and archived, as well as how many academic disciplines were established. 'Eugenic thinking' describes a form of intellectual inquiry that prioritizes ideas about racial difference and genetic inheritance; by genetic here I mean the traditional idea of 'bloodlines' or genealogy, rather than the modern scientific definition of genes as based on DNA. It considers the relationship between a gentleman scientist, Francis Galton, and a professional archaeologist, Flinders Petrie, at a time when disciplinary boundaries were not formed

and the distinction between amateur and professional was not absolute. The personal and professional relationship between these two distinguished men – they both received knighthoods – has not been fully considered before. I argue that Galton's support for Petrie assisted him enormously in his early years as an archaeologist and his ideas influenced Petrie until his death in 1942. In turn, Petrie was a prestigious advocate of Galton's anthropometic data gathering and racial science in understanding ancient Egypt and archaeological evidence, as well as a backer of Galton's eugenic vision in contemporary society. The relationship between these two men further illustrate the crossovers between anthropology, archaeology, sociology, statistics and biological sciences, while all these disciplines were being formed in universities. Galton and Petrie belonged to a network of different societies and institutions, such as the Anthropological Institute or the British Association for the Advancement of Science, through which practitioners in these fledgling disciplines met, presented evidence and took part in discussions. These disciplines were formed and related meetings took place against a background of British imperial expansion, political change and social upheaval in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Race is not a biological but a social construction. This does not negate the devastating consequences that this construction, and the perception that it was intricately linked to biological and related ethical differences, has had for people (Malik, 1996: 71). It is, therefore, vital to understand the way in which discourse around race and inheritance was formed, used and changed in archaeology and ideas about the ancient world. Throughout this book I use the term racist to describe the point of view in which a biological concept of race is systematically used to be the main determining factor in explaining the actions and characteristics of a person or group of people. This form of thinking considers race to determine 'the workings of society and politics, the course of history, the development of culture and civilization, even the nature of morality itself' (Biddiss, 1976: 245). This racism is often derogatory and 'racist' in the sense that we understand it today. *Archaeology of Race: The Eugenic Ideas of Francis Galton and Flinders Petrie* is the result of an exhibition *Typecast: Flinders Petrie and Francis Galton* that was held at the Petrie Museum during 2011; the centenary year of the death of Francis Galton. Natasha McEnroe was involved in the centenary programme and I am grateful for her thoughtful guidance last year and for providing the 'Foreword' to this book. The exhibition

and this book is informed by the research that I had been carrying out on the use of racial theory in ideas about classical sculpture, in particular, the ancient Greek body, for a number of years (Challis, 2010). *Archaeology of Race* is also influenced by my experience and critical reflections as a museum professional working on interpreting ancient civilizations through objects and collections for a variety of modern audiences. My experience of visitor responses in the museum as well as online reactions to *Typecast* and presenting related talks, including one on Youtube, means that I need to state clearly that to write about 'eugenic ideas' is not to condone them. Neither am I an advocate of either Petrie's or Galton's ideas about race; nor do I deny that eugenics had devastating consequences on people across the world during the twentieth century. This book occasionally refers to painful examples and atrocities within the legacy of eugenics, but it is mainly about the justification for and influence of 'eugenic thinking' among a relatively small group of intellectuals, not its practical consequences for thousands, even millions, of people.

The four races

An anti-racist educational initiative in France, called Nous Autres (or 'We'), uses an artistic rendition of the ancient Egyptian 'Four Races' from the Book of the Gates in the Tomb of Seti I (Dynasty 19, 1290–1279 BC) as one of the images on its publicity material. Hosted on the campaigning website of former footballer Lilian Thuram (www.thuram.org), the educational programme is designed to act alongside the recent exhibition on ideas about the 'other', the growth of racial science and 'human zoos' that was co-curated by Thuram at the Musee du quai Branly in Paris: *L'invention du sauvage: Exhibitions* (29 November 2011 to 3 June 2012). The use of this image could presuppose that the ancient Egyptians considered race in much the same way that people have comprehended it in the modern period (namely over the last two to three hundred years). The Egyptian depiction of other peoples – Libyan, Nubian and Asiatic alongside an Egyptian – is here used to celebrate the cultural diversity of different peoples while also stressing peoples' physical similarity. The division of the world into 'four races' based on physical difference that was related to climate and geography was enshrined in the modern period by Immanuel Kant in 1775 (Bindman, 2002: 158–9). Arguably the 'four races'

in Seti I's tomb fitted the philosophical, political and aesthetic world order of modern Europeans when it was discovered by Giovanni Bapttista Belzoni in 1817.

An illustration from the footrest found in the tomb of Tutankhamen that shows the profiles of different conquered peoples across the background image of a DNA Helix forms the 1994 paperback cover of Steve Jones' *The Language of the Genes. Biology, History and the Evolutionary Future* (1994). This cover nicely contrasts the popular modern image of genetic difference, the DNA helix, with that of an ancient one. In 1887, Petrie photographed one of the facial profiles of the 'four races' in Seti I's tomb as a means of identifying different races in Egypt and the ancient world at that time. Petrie took these photographs as part of his *Racial Photographs* project for a committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. The project was personally and professionally supported by Francis Galton and is detailed in Chapter 4. This book is not about how the ancient Egyptians did or did not define race, nor is it about what racial or ethnic group they were. The depiction of different groups of people in ancient Egypt have become iconic images of differing racial identities in the ancient world. Whether used to celebrate cultural diversity, or to forensically pinpoint physical differences based on an assumed racial hierarchy, or to contrast with modern scientific definitions of genes; different uses of ancient Egyptian images only tell us about the assumptions of the user and their social context.

The ethnic identity of the ancient Egyptians and their relationship to other cultures is a highly charged issue. Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic roots of classical civilization* (1987) unleashed a furious debate on the identity of ancient Egyptians, as well as the racist scholarship of orientalist and classical scholars during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Academics have pointed out the problems with Bernal's ideas, not least because race and racial ideas is a modern construction, and how they can feed alternative politically influenced constructions of the ancient world that are also based on biological models (Snowden, 1996; Bard, 1996). Bernal's work and reactions to it were situated in the 'culture wars' that took place in the United States, and elsewhere, in the 1980s and 1990s and contemporary political conditions still influence readings of it (Goff, 2005: 16). Bernal's study has had a limited influence on the understanding of 'the role of Classics in the modern West'; yet it could

assist in building a constructive scholarship that reassesses the influence of the discipline and associated areas and its relation to racial and imperial ideologies over the last two hundred years (von Binsbergen, 1997; Bradley, 2010: 17). The physical anthropologist S. O. Y. Keita has carried out useful and distinctive work that undermines the emphasis on biological constructions of race and ancient civilizations (Keita, 1992). What cannot be denied though is the fact that Egyptologists and Classicists have consistently treated ancient Egypt as distinct from the rest of Africa and, until recently, rarely tried to understand the 'complex reciprocities of ancient north-east Africa out of which Egyptian pre-history re-emerged' (van Wyck Smith, 2001: 81). Chapter 7 considers how Akhenaten and his family have been used as Afrocentric role models, as well as Petrie's ideas about the Pharaoh as a Semitic Messianic leader, and the problems with both readings. Race and identity in the ancient world was about more than skin colour and neither are skin colour or physical characteristics necessarily signs of genetic origins (Fluehr-Lobban and Rhodes, 2004: xxii–xxvi). The importance of understanding more about how ethnic and racial identities have been assigned to the ancient Egyptians is bound up in understanding racism and the colonial legacy over the last two hundred years.

Classical physiognomy

An exhibition in 2012 at the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen, *Europe Meets the World*, explored how the idea of Europe and European has been created since Classical Greece. The exhibition was timed to coincide with Denmark's presidency of the European Union (Christensen Grinder-Hansen, Kjeldbaek, Rasmussen, 2012). The probing questions the exhibition asked about Europe's relationship to Classical Greece, the rest of the world and the idea of borders (geographical, migration and financial) seemed particularly apt in the current context of the debt crisis in modern Greece, global economic melt-down and anxiety about migration and social welfare. A thread linking the different chronological sections together was the ancient Greek idea of a 'barbarian' and foreigner. While pointing out that the classical Greeks did not have the same idea of race and racial distinctions as those in the modern world, the exhibition showed how European cultural identities have been formed partly on distinctions around the 'other', that in the modern period has been

predicated around racial difference (Lape, 2010). The Greeks did not think of themselves so much as a race, but a nation and a buffer between Asian Persia and the rest of Europe (Bindman, 2002: 25). It was this idea that the art historian Johann Joachim Winckelman was following when writing on Greek beauty in sculpture and it being part of their intrinsic nature as a 'nation' (Bindman, 2002: 90–1). David Bindman has shown how many eighteenth-century writers on aesthetics defined beauty by racial type or features, often unwittingly leading to the creation of racial hierarchies that positioned the European face of the *Apollo Belvedere* at the top of a physical ideal and the 'negro' at the bottom (Bindman, 2002). The ideal of Greek sculpture, the perception of it as ethnically based and the adulation of ancient Greek culture more generally was part of later nineteenth-century efforts at social and cultural self-definition within Europe (Donohue, 2005: 100). Such self-definitions include, for example, the philosopher Georg Hegel praising the whiteness and purity of Greek sculpture or emphasizing that only 'true' history took place when certain 'advanced' political conditions (based on those in Europe) were present (Pluciennik, 2006: 3). There is no doubt that Romantic Classicism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries played a part in forming European national, cultural and racial self-definition.

In the 1770s and 1780s, the Swiss clergyman and poet Johann Casper Lavater rediscovered physiognomy, which was based on work by classical authors such as Aristotle, and created an anthology of facial types in silhouette that purported to show inward behaviours and emotions (Swain, 2007). Lavater reinforced the ideas that the skull and the face indicated hidden tendencies that could be measured, which heavily influenced nineteenth- and twentieth-century racial theory. These profiles were different to Winckelmann's Greek ideal and Lavater's anthology of facial types created a 'nexus of racial and visual typology' (Bindman, 2002: 123). Lavater was impressed by the idea of the 'facial angle' that had been created by the Dutch physician and anatomist Petrus Camper and used it to measure against his facial profiles (Meijer, 1999: 116). Camper's facial angle showed the profiles and angles of the forehead, brow, nose, mouth and chin of different faces, most notably comparing the face of the ancient Greek Apollo to that of a Black African. Camper's aim was to illustrate the similarity of the races as he was a monogenecist, that is, he believed that all races were part of one human species, and an anti-slave trade

campaigner. However, Camper's angle, as is shown in Chapter 1, was later used by racial scientists to illustrate difference and make parallels between Black Africans and great apes (Meijer, 1999: 139–44).

Camper's angle- or scale-reinforced Eurocentric ideals of beauty as presenting the face of the *Apollo Belvedere* as the universal ideal (Bindman, 2002: 209). Johann Friedrich Blumenbach had proposed five different types of humans in 1776 in *On the Genesis of the Native Varieties of Humans:* Caucasian, Mongol, Ethiopian, American and Malayan. Blumenbach based his studies on facial differences and skull measurements. He defined Caucasian as people west of the Caucasus mountains and based them on what he considered to be the most beautiful skull shape (and thus face) – the Circassian Georgian (Meijer, 1999: 169). In addition, he contended that the Jewish type could be recognized by their features and peculiar skull shape. Blumencah's influential idea was a forerunner of anti-Semitism as a scientific practice, as we shall see in Chapter 6 (Carcos, 2005: 47–8). By the time the anatomist Georges Cuvier reinterpreted Camper's angle, it was being used to determine cranium size for humans and animals. The cranial size was considered to reflect 'the development of internal faculties under self control' (Meijer, 1999: 175). Racial difference and hierarchy was considered to be based on scientific observations and analysis by the 1820s and 1830s, of which Dr Robert Knox, as we shall see in Chapter 1, considered himself to be playing an important part. It is into these traditions and history of creating a science of race that the eugenic thinking of Francis Galton and Flinders Petrie is positioned.

Reading and breeding the face

In the early nineteenth century, Franz Joseph Gall and his student Johann Gaspar Spurzheim became famous for applying the physiognomic principles of Lavater to reading inherent moral traits of the heads of individuals. Often crudely termed 'bump reading', the practice of phrenology had a sensationally successful and popular period in the 1810s to 1830s (Kemp and Wallace, 2000: 111). George Coombe and his brother Andrew, both physicians, established a leading phrenological society in Edinburgh. The involvement of George Coombe with the American skull collector and racial theorist Samuel Morton is briefly considered in Chapter 1. As a result of phrenology and its

physiognomic principles, casts of heads of notable individuals and death masks of criminals were collected. Such a collection exists as a sub-section of the Galton Collection at UCL; the Noel Collection of casts and busts dates from the early 1800s and was given to Francis Galton later in the century (Cowling, 1989: 286). Although, phrenology was scientifically derided by the end of the nineteenth century, collecting casts, skulls and head measurements of people was not. Old Melbourne Gaol Museum in Australia still displays plaster casts taken from executed prisoners, including that of Ned Kelly who was executed in 1880. The interest in the criminal face has been seen as the more 'extreme end of reading the signs' inherent in the face, but it was not the only form of reading the face (Wallace and Kemp, 2000: 122). The idea that characteristics that made people more susceptible to criminal behaviour could be read in the face was only part of the widespread use of physiognomy in the nineteenth century.

Physiognomy is reading the face and determining what peoples' facial features are and what these features say about their personality. It was common practice to refer to physiognomy throughout the nineteenth century, whether as a passing comment and can be widely seen in written works – particularly in 'setting up' characters in novels – and 'suggests a mode of perception which is peculiarly remote from our own' (Cowling, 1989: 9). (Yet, in many ways the idea that deviant behaviour can be read in the face and facial expression has never entirely evaporated, as any scan of stories about crime in newspapers demonstrates.) Art and literature of the period used facial and physical descriptions and it is today impossible for us to recover the same 'appreciation of their meaning' (Cowling, 1989: 5). This anthropological physiognomy was applied everywhere and was behind the creation of the enormous crowd scenes by painters, such as W. P. Frith for example, as we shall see in Chapters 2 and 3. At the same time as the idea that race could be scientifically identified, the importance and utility of reading the face was emphasized. Race was interwoven with social class and the term 'type' was 'loosely interchangeable with race, species, variety' all of which were given a physiognomic basis (Cowling, 1989: 184). The face could be seen or read as a series of signs that pointed from physical characteristics to combined moral, racial and intellectual traits.

It is these ideas – physiognomic, aesthetic ideals and European cultural self-definition – that founded the basis on which Francis Galton predicated

eugenics rather than anything in the ancient world, as we shall see in Chapters 2 and Chapter 3. Plato and Aristotle, among others, articulated practices that might be described as 'eugenic', or breeding and preserving the 'best type' of people, but Galton never mentions these classical antecedents (Galton, 1998). There have been various major studies of eugenics and its legacy in Europe and America and the influence of race science on physiognomic prejudices and supposed intelligence tests (Gould, 1981; Kevles, 1995). Racial science has too often been ignored or dismissed as 'pseudo scientific' and therefore unworthy of notice. Saul Dubow argues that:

> Moreover, to dismiss racial science as bogus is to suggest that it was somehow peripheral to mainstream investigation. This assumption is often misleading [. . .] eugenics can be seen in some respects as a forerunner of modern genetics – no matter that many of its key premises and unwarranted assumptions have since been shown to be misguided or reprehensible. It should also be remembered that many racial scientists were prominent intellectuals who occupied influential positions and generally conformed to the accepted standards of academic rigour of the day. (Dubow, 1995: 3)

In his study, Dubow illustrates the intellectual and practical impact of scientific racism on the peoples of South Africa and how this is linked to racial thinking and eugenic practices elsewhere. Both Robert Knox and Francis Galton developed their racist ideas while in southern Africa and clearly the diverse mixture of different peoples there influenced their thinking. Britain never enacted the programmes of sterilization that were carried out in some states of the United States, Australia, South Africa and European countries, including Norway, Denmark, Germany and Sweden, which, for example, sterilized about 60,000 young women deemed 'mentally defective' between 1935 and 1976 (Galton, 1998: 266). The success of the eugenics movement in Britain was more social than legislative and can be measured by the 'way in which eugenic ideas of decay, degeneration, struggle and selection pervaded social and cultural life in this [Edwardian and Interwar] period' (Stone, 2002: 100). It was a movement that Galton created and Petrie advocated.

Genetics, as Dubow points out, is in some ways a product of eugenic science, yet also different since it is based on the study of the formulation of genetic codes and the human genome. This is not to say that genetic medicine and practice is not controversial. It is one of the most ethically fraught areas

in science today, partly due to the legacy of eugenics and decisions around the transmission of disease within families and the stimulation of cells in molecular genetics for gene therapies (Galton and Galton, 1998). The study of environmental changes that have long-term biological consequences on individuals, families and communities is a fairly recent form of genetic study and has been termed epigenetics (Carey, 2011: 6–7). Gathering the statistical and environmental evidence for epigenetics, (not the cellular genetic evidence), has some precursors with the evidence that Karl Pearson and his assistants collected at the Eugenics Records Office during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as we shall see in Chapters 8 and 9. Interestingly the main popular book on the subject, Nessa Carey's *The Epigenetics Revolution,* makes no mention of Francis Galton, Karl Pearson or eugenics. The most accessible book on elucidating the differences, scientific and cultural, between genetics and eugenics as well as bringing the ethical dilemmas relatively up to date is still Steve Jones' *The Language of Genes* (1994). People still read faces, we do it all the time, but hopefully we apply less derogatory value judgements in our readings.

Exhibiting eugenic thinking

Eugenics and its legacy is a difficult subject to address. The decisions I made in curating *Typecast* during the 2011 Galton Centenary at UCL were influenced by approaches to 'challenging history' and guidance from within the museum and heritage sector (Kidd, 2011). In addition, as McEnroe mentions in the 'Foreword', I was assisted by a small team of librarians, academics and curators from within UCL. Ultimately I decided to eschew the constructivist approach I had intended to make to the exhibition – giving all or a variety of audiences a voice – as I realized there was a risk of repeating prejudice (Sandell, 2007: 78). A focus group participant pointed out that it was also unfair for me to ask others leading questions on eugenics while not putting my own views forward or admitting my own prejudices. I therefore decided to present my research and ideas in a more traditional academic manner, while making the step of identifying myself as curator. This identification was to try to make the point that mine was just one voice and many others were affected by the legacy that Galton's and Petrie's ideas had. The exhibition and events programme asked

leading questions about museum history and practice and about what people thought, with opportunities for feedback.

There have been other exhibitions on eugenics. *Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race* is a touring exhibition by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum about the application of eugenics and medical experimentation by the Nazis from 1933 to 1945. A 2005 exhibition in California, *Human Plants, Human Harvest: The Hidden History of California Eugenics,* directly addressed the sterilization of over 20,000 people in the US state and, though the State Governor apologized to the victims, the exhibition's message was downplayed by the political authorities (Brave and Sylva, 2007). McEnroe details in the 'Foreword' to this book that there was a feeling among the group of UCL staff that the Galton Centenary should both draw attention to the achievements of this extraordinary scientist as well as address his ideas in eugenics and racial science. There were two exhibitions at UCL. As well as *Typecast* in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, *An Enquiring Mind: Francis Galton 1822–1911* was on display in the Main Library at UCL. This was an overview of Galton the man and scientist. Alongside this exhibition were a series of talks, a 'stand-up' lecture by writer Dan Maier (at UCL and at the National Portrait Gallery) and we decided to publish the fragments of Galton's unpublished novel *The Eugenic College of Kantsaywhere*. In 1910 Galton had written this novel about a professor of statistics, I. Donoghue, who is stranded on an island on which eugenic living is practised and combines science fiction and Utopian fantasy in a manner not unlike H. G. Wells. He sent it to his publisher, who rejected it for publication, and shortly before his death Galton gave directions for it to be destroyed. His niece Millicent cut out offending passages – mainly the views on sexual relations – and it was feared that the novel could damage Galton's reputation. Publishing *Kantsaywhere* today raised very different concerns, not least that by publishing it we approved of eugenics and made content available that groups with racially prejudiced ideas could use to vindicate their opinions. We therefore asked writer and broadcaster Matthew Sweet to write an introduction positioning the novel in social and political context. Sweet described eugenics as one of the most 'toxic' words in the English language, but also drew attention to the long-term and overlooked implications of eugenics in British society (Sweet, 2011). The publication of Galton's novel was picked up online by so-called race realists, whose websites I shall not

flatter by listing, which further positioned it within the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literature of 'white crisis' (Bonnett, 2008: 18–19).

The decision to explore Galton and eugenic thinking through Galton's relationship with Petrie was not entirely new as it had been considered in studies by academics before (Silbermann, 1999; Sheppard, 2010). However, *Typecast* and this book is a more thorough exploration of Petrie's relationship with Galton. *Archaeology of Rac*e draws on the content in the exhibition to consider the position of race science in Britain; Galton's (and others') early thinking on inheritance and race improvement; how Petrie's relationship with Galton was formed; how it developed; the scientific and anthropological societies or networks to which they belonged; and the social context of the time, through reference to literary, artistic and political developments. It also investigates how race and face analysis informed the reading of archaeological evidence through examples of objects in the Petrie Museum. The approach taken by myself in this book, and my colleagues at UCL during the Galton Centenary, is that museum ethics is not about protecting institutions from contentious or damaging histories, but about embracing 'radical transparency' (Marstine, 2011: 14). This 'radical transparency' is equally applied when possible to practical museum processes; conversations between myself and museum colleagues (mainly with Stephen Quirke, the museum's curator) are occasionally referenced. This transparency is not radical but forms part of our, as I believe, responsibility to the different audiences that the Petrie Museum serves. The museum staff and UCL are responsible for the preservation of and access to a collection from a different culture and time period to that of twenty-first-century Britain. The way in which the collection was formed and the ideas surrounding that formation are important not just to the history of archaeology or museums, but to how all of us comprehend it today.

Egypt in museums

In recent years there have been a number of exhibitions addressing 'hidden histories' and contentious issues found in objects stored in museums and institutions. One of the most recent, at the time of writing this book (2012), was *L'invention du sauvage. Exhibitions* at the Musee du quai Branly in Paris. *L'Invention* considered how ideas of race and 'otherness', around physical

disability for example, were formed and the role of race science in this (Planchard, Boetsch and Snoep, 2011). The spectacle of looking at how people were looked at was saved from becoming like the 'freak shows' the exhibition problematized through various audio–visual interventions recording visitor comments, or giving alternative points of view. In one section, the gallery had mirrors surrounding the images of people being exhibited so that the observers were themselves being observed. *L'Invention* detailed how anthropological museums, medical collections and academic archives were built from the display of actual human beings in zoo-like conditions and the ethical legacy of this, as well as how attitudes to difference have been formed. *Archaeology of Race* refers, on the whole, to a small part of the collection of objects from ancient Egypt excavated or acquired by Flinders Petrie and now in the Petrie Museum. This study therefore touches upon a number of key issues involved in the display of archaeological objects and Egyptian antiquities. I have highlighted a few here rather than in the main text of the chapters.

The main issue where attitudes have dramatically changed in the last few decades is to the display of human remains. The passing of the Human Tissue Act in 2004 and the release of Guidance on the Care of Human Remains for museums by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2005 reflected changes around perceptions of human remains in museum, both within the museum profession and among visitors. The ethical treatment of human remains in museum collections has been highly important for decades, especially since first nation groups in Canada, America, Australia and New Zealand challenged the storage and display of their ancestors' remains in museums and other institutional collections across the world. Museums in Britain have made reparation of the remains of people, usually to their successors or kin, from indigenous groups. These usually relate to groups of people external to Britain and whose land may have been colonized or governed within the British Empire. A notable exception to this is the case of Charles Byrne, the so-called Irish giant, who is on display in the collections of the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons, London. The Royal College of Surgeons is also where the head of Flinders Petrie is stored, as we shall see in Chapter 10. Byrne's skeleton played a part in linking acromegaly with the pituitary gland and so understanding why 'gigantism' occurred. Byrne had been a performer who, apparently, did not want to continue being

exhibiting after his death in 1783 and is said to have asked to be buried at sea. The surgeon John Hunter managed to acquire Byrne's body and his skeleton is still on display today. Byrne's skeleton has clearly been beneficial to the cause of medical science, but its continuing benefit is now disputed and there have been calls for his body to be given the burial he, apparently, requested (Doyal and Muinzer, 2011).

The case of Charles Byrne is a complex one, not least due to the lack of documentation about what his actual request was. At first the same ethical issues do not appear to apply to archaeological collections yet, as Mary M. Brooks and Claire Rumsey point out, both the Human Tissue Act and the DCMS Guidance reference ancient human remains, albeit with less detail (Brooks and Rumsey, 2007: 346). Before this guidance was issued the Petrie Museum put on a touring exhibition, *Digging for Dreams* in 2001, in which visitors were asked and given a choice as to whether or not they wanted lift shrouds covering mummified, or desiccated, remains (Brooks and Rumsey, 2007: 350). Tiffany Jenkins has been extremely critical of this new approach to human remains in museums. Jenkins, with particular reference to an experimental approach to covering up Egyptian mummies in the Manchester Museum during 2008, argues that it is the case of museum professionals attempting to change public attitudes and address public concerns that, for the majority, are non-existent:

> This attempt to extend the problem to uncontested human remains is an example of how certain professionals in the museum sector continue to try and target human remains as an issue. However, there were important limits to their success in doing this. In this instance the lack of claims-making group to support their actions, strong professional and firm and publicized negative public reaction to the act of covering up the remains, halted their attempts to problematize these particular human remains. (Jenkins, 2011: 129)

In fact, much of the concern around displaying ancient Egyptian human remains has come from some Egyptologists, who have pointed for the need for greater respect for the bodies due to the importance the ancient Egyptians placed on the body and the religious practices involved in protecting the body from desecration (Alberti, Bienkowski and Chapman, 2009: 140–1). A workshop at the Petrie Museum on 'How do we display human remains with respect?' in 2011 heard that visitor feedback at the Petrie Museum and

the Grant Museum of Zoology, UCL, as well as in exhibitions at the Museum of London, seems to be fairly split about the display of human remains, but generally agree for the need for 'respect'.

The issue regarding human remains in this book is more to do with the nature of the collection of a particular of the body: skulls. Chapters 5 and 8 consider why skulls were removed from mummies or burials and how this related to eugenic thinking. Ann Fabian has written on the use of skulls by racial scientists in the United States during the nineteenth century and beyond (Fabian, 2010). Fabian's book usefully considers the reasons for skull collecting and the political implications of this practice, as well as the emotional and ethical consequences for the people involved. Petrie collected skulls for the Eugenics Record Office in order to add data from ancient 'races' to their records. This collection is no longer in UCL but has been used in recent studies on ancient disease, and so is clearly useful. However, the collection of these skulls, their previous and current use needs further research. The ethical dilemma, that was explored in *Typecast* and needs further work beyond this book, is around the intended use of the skulls at the time of collection and their value to science today more than the display of human remains in museums.

Part of the *Europe* exhibition in Copenhagen explored 'The white man's burden' and the idea that Europeans brought 'civilization' to the rest of the world, while colonizing territories in Africa, Asia and Latin America and controlling their natural resources. The Petrie Museum's history is bound up with Britain's colonial history, as is the case with many museums containing archaeological and/or anthropological objects. Flinders Petrie went to Egypt just before the British sent an army there, bombed Alexandria from their naval ships and established a 'Protectorate'. This book touches on the use of eugenic thinking in imperial assumptions and how the sense of the 'white man's right to rule' was established in scientific societies and disciplines. The hierarchy of races postulated in the eighteenth century translated into a 'right to rule' during the nineteenth century. Petrie himself had a great respect for many of his Egyptian workers and relied heavily on a number of individuals, such as Ali Jabri, whom we encounter in Chapter 3 (Quirke, 2010). However, Petrie believed that there were limits to what modern Egyptians could do intellectually, as we shall see in Chapter 8. Donald Reid has shown how the control of Egypt by France and Britain, both before and particularly after the British protectorate in 1882,

effectively stopped Egyptians from learning about their own heritage and being formerly trained as archaeologists and Egyptologists themselves (Reid, 2002: 172–212). In addition, Paul Sedra has critiqued both Petrie's *Social Life in Ancient Egypt* (1923) and *The Making of Egypt* (1939) and shown how these works were bound up in Petrie's imperial and racial ideals about 'head' and 'hand' workers (Sedra, 2004).

This book concentrates on Petrie's eugenic thinking as applied to archaeology and British society, but he was part of a scientific community that justified imperialism and, within colonized countries, the restriction of educational and other human rights on the grounds of racial science. At the time of writing this book, Egypt is on the brink of change after the 'Arab Spring' of 2011 and it is chastening to reflect on the role of Britain and Egyptology in the long history of repression in that country. Stephen Quirke argued in his inaugural lecture as Edwards Professor of Egyptian Archaeology, the latest successor to Petrie, that in order to properly judge objects from ancient Egypt, connection needs to be made to and with the right environment. He suggested that we [Egyptologists and other academics in the West] need to 'turn ourselves inside out' in order to get at the missing histories and names of people in Egypt, ancient and modern (Quirke, 2012). Museums that preserve ancient Egyptian objects need to reflect and be responsive to the multiple voices, visions and needs of Egypt itself.

A problem with examining the history of nineteenth-century personalities through exhibitions for contemporary audiences can be briefly summed up with the word 'ego'. Galton and Petrie clearly thought that they were near perfect examples of humanity. Their ideas about genealogy and kinship only further enhanced this point of view, as Chapter 2 and 3 illustrate. In many ways, both Petrie's eugenic manifesto *Janus* and Galton's eugenic novel *Kantsaywhere* are about them. The memoirs of the philologist A. H. Sayce, considered in Chapter 6, display a similar lack of modesty. Understanding this sense of ego is important for understanding Galton, Petrie and eugenic thinking. It is necessary to believe in yourself as belonging to the top of the social, racial and intellectual hierarchy if you advocate the 'right to rule' and the ability to direct peoples' behaviour. *Archaeology of Race* seeks to understand this way of thinking not to make either Petrie or Galton into villains (Sheppard, 2010: 29 and Afterword). This book points to a number of Galton's and Petrie's contemporaries that had parallel ideas about race and a recent study has similarly considered the work

of the Egyptologist James Henry Breasted (Ambridge, 2012). Although both Galton and Petrie lived into the twentieth century, their lives, work and ideas need to be considered within the context of the nineteenth-century obsession with 'great men' and heroes as exemplified with the work of Thomas Carlyle and the establishment of the National Portrait Gallery in 1856.

The end: 1911

There are references to the period and events beyond 1911. When eugenics and race science are considered, there is an immediate connection to the activities of the National Socialist government in Germany around 'race improvement' during the 1930s, followed by their persecution and genocide of Jews, Gypsies and other groups of people during World War Two. A review of *Typecast* in the magazine *Minerva* finished with reference to the role of eugenics in the Holocaust, though I did not reference World War Two or the Nazis at all in the exhibition (Beresford, 2011). My reason for not referencing the Holocaust was in order to focus on eugenics in Britain and not let the legacy of eugenic thinking and race science in British society be overshadowed by the crimes of the Nazis. In 1944, before the horrors of the Death Camps and other activities were widely known, Hannah Arendt pointed out that racism was not peculiarly German:

> If race-thinking were a German invention, as it is now sometimes asserted, then 'German thinking' (whatever that may be) was victorious in many parts of the spiritual world long before the Nazis started their ill fated attempt at world conquest. Hitlerism exercised its strong international and inter-European appeal during the 'thirties' because racism, although a state doctrine only in Germany, had been everywhere a powerful trend in public opinion. [. . .] Racism was neither a new nor a secret weapon, though never before had it been used with this thorough-going consistency. (Arendt, 1944: 36)

Arendt continued by tracing the roots of 'race-thinking' in the eighteenth century across other countries through to the 1940s. Studies of archaeologists, academics and Egyptologists have illustrated their complicity with the Nazi regime and involvement, or at least collusion, with atrocities (Arnold, 1990; Pringle, 2006; Meltzer, 2012; Schneider, 2012).

An object in the Galton Collection illustrates the link between the eugenic thinking advocated by Galton and Petrie and the programmes of the Third Reich. Dr Carole Reeves and myself supervised work by Masters' students Lucy Maxwell, Suzannah Musson, Sarah Stewart, Jessica Talarico and Emily Taylor on a hair colour and texture gauge, a Haarfarbentafel (Galt040) as part of a course in museum studies at UCL. They found that this object was likely to have been collected by Karl Pearson and bought from the German race scientist Eugen Fischer (Maxwell, Musson, Stewart, Talarico and Taylor, 2012). Fischer had established an institute of racial hygiene in Berlin in 1908 and in the same year went to southwest Africa, current day Namibia, where he studied the racial ancestry of a group of mixed-heritage people called the Basters. He later advocated for and carried out sterilization of some of these people. The Haarfarbentafel was one of the objects Fischer designed and had manufactured to help him determine the racial and hereditary characteristics of people. Fischer was later appointed Rector of the Frederick Wilhelm University of Berlin by Hitler in 1933, retiring in 1942, and carried out sterilizations of mixed-heritage people, as well as being linked to the Hadamar Clinic where the murder of the 'incurably sick' was carried out. The work of these Masters' students showed the importance of understanding the history, both intellectual and physical, of objects in collections, particularly around challenging areas of history. This study does not finish in 1911 to avoid the hideous consequences of eugenic thinking. On the contrary. The problem is that these consequences did not finish in 1945. Sterilizations and the impact of 'negative' eugenics continued into the 1970s as the 2011 inquiry on eugenics in the US State of North Carolina illustrated. In 2012, the compensation for victims of this process was shelved in the State, arguably illustrating the continuation of 'eugenic thinking', or, at the least, an inability to admit the horrific nature of its consequences (Severson, 2012).

The main area covered by *Archaeology of Race* finishes in 1911 with the death of Francis Galton. It is a good place to finish as it is shortly before the outbreak of World War One, after which Britain seems to enter a different historical landscape, both domestically and internationally. The eugenic movement within Britain and elsewhere also changes dramatically. In addition, the role of Egypt in the war and the increase of Egyptian nationalism and political demands for independence alter the situation there and this has an impact on

archaeological practice. Kate Sheppard takes the story of certain ideas within race science forward through an examination of diffusionism in the work of Petrie and his assistant Margaret Murray in the 'Afterword'. A further reason to finish this study in 1911 is due to a large blow to inherited political power in Britain. In 1911 the Terms of Parliament Act that legislated for the end of the power of the House of Lords, composed of bishops and hereditary peers, to block finance bills passed by the House of Commons, composed of elected representatives. The Act also allowed the Lords to vote against a bill passed by the Commons three successive times, but after that the bill became law anyway after its third rejection by the Lords and some of the legislation blocked by the Lords is detailed in Chapter 9. The death of Galton, the beginning of the end of hereditary political control, the ascendancy of Petrie as an archaeologist and his involvement in Edwardian politics is a good place to conclude *Archaeology of Race*.