

## DATA PAPER

# Selected Correspondence from the Papers of Thomas Pettigrew (1791-1865), Surgeon and Antiquary

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The papers of the nineteenth century antiquary and surgeon Thomas Pettigrew are of considerable interest in the histories of science, medicine and archaeology. The letters presented here were received by Pettigrew between 1817 and 1859, and form part of the Pettigrew Papers held at Yale University. They were transcribed during research into Pettigrew's life and work, focusing in particular on his contributions to archaeology and Egyptology, and are presented in the form of texts. They are likely to be of interest and use to scholars of early nineteenth century intellectual history, and historians of archaeology in particular.

**Keywords:** British Archaeological Association, History of Archaeology, History of Medicine, Thomas Pettigrew

### Funding statement

Leverhulme Trust, Early Career Research Fellowship, 6/SRF/2009/0290.

### Context

#### Spatial Coverage

UK (54 00 N, 2 00 W) and Holland (52 30 N, 5 45 E)

#### Temporal Coverage

1817AD-1859AD

### Methods

#### Steps

The dataset was collected by transcribing original letters from the period 1817-59 into an MS Word document. The letters form part of the Pettigrew Papers held by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, which has created a detailed catalogue of the collection.<sup>1</sup>

#### Sampling Strategy

Given the extent of the archive, letters were selected for transcription based on a number of factors. These included their relevance to my primary research project; the fame or prominence of the correspondent; and the inherent interest of the content. The letters presented in this dataset form part of the larger corpus of letters transcribed in whole or part, and have been chosen for archiving based on their likely interest and re-use potential for other researchers.

#### Quality Control

The letters included in this dataset were initially skim-read to ascertain their interest and relevance to my project. Those that were selected were read in full before being transcribed onto a computer. Finally they were checked

through to make sure that details such as dates and names had been correctly copied.

#### Constraints

The entire collection of Pettigrew papers extends to thousands of letters, many of them of little interest, and many that are difficult or impossible to read. For this reason the dataset that has been selected constitutes a small sub-section of the whole collection.

### Dataset Description

#### Object Name

pettigrew\_letters\_gm.docx / .txt

#### Data Type

Primary data

#### Format Names and Versions

Microsoft Word (Word for Mac 2011, v 14.2.0); Plain text

#### Creation Dates

10/2010 to 08/2011.

#### Dataset Creators

Gabriel Moshenska

#### Repository Location

UCL Discovery:

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/data.1335350291>

#### Publication Date

10 May 2012

**Language**

English

**License**

CC-BY

**Reuse Potential**

Thomas Pettigrew had a particularly large and interesting circle of friends and colleagues ranging from prominent surgeons and physicians of his era including John Coakley Lettsom and Sir Astley Cooper; scientists such as Michael Faraday; and writers and artists including George Cruikshank and Charles Dickens. He was a founding member of the British Archaeological Association and an active antiquarian best-known for his public autopsies of Egyptian mummies for which he earned the sobriquet 'Mummy' Pettigrew. Alongside a career in medicine he was honorary librarian to Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex, and published extensively on subjects including archaeology, biography, Egyptology and the history of medicine.

Given the breadth of his interests, activities and connections the life of Thomas Pettigrew is likely to be of interest to anyone working on early nineteenth century British intellectual history. A short biographical study of Pettigrew was published in 1931<sup>2</sup> and a recent study in the

history of medicine noted that 'He is a figure who merits a major study'.<sup>3</sup> Other papers relating to Pettigrew's life are held at the British Library and the Wellcome Library and have contributed to my wider project.<sup>4</sup>

**Acknowledgements**

My thanks to the librarians at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library for their assistance during my research visits.

**References**

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2. **Dawson, W R** 1931 *Memoir of Thomas Joseph Pettigrew F.R.C.S., F.R.S., F.S.A. (1791-1865)*. New York: Medical Life Press.
3. **Lawrence, C** and **Macdonald, F A** 2003 *Sambrook Court: the Letters of J.C. Lettsom at the Medical Society of London: Occasional Paper 3*. London: Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine (University College London).
4. **Moshenska, G** 2011 Diagnosing Sir John Gardner Wilkinson: a footnote to the history of Egyptology. *Antiquity* 85(328).

**How to cite this article:** Moshenska, G 2012 Selected Correspondence from the Papers of Thomas Pettigrew (1791-1865), Surgeon and Antiquary. *Journal of Open Archaeology Data* 1:e9, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/4f913ca0cbb89>

**Published:** 10 May 2012

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