John Rankin (1845-1928) was a Liverpool-based ship merchant who made his fortune working for his family company, Rankin, Gilmour & Co. He is also known to have been a prolific philanthropist who donated vast sums of money to a range of worthy causes, including the excavations of John Garstang in Egypt on behalf of the Liverpool Institute of Archaeology. As a result of his membership of Garstang's excavation committee, Rankin received a notable collection of objects from Garstang's Egyptian excavations as repayment for his donations. Rankin donated his collection of Egyptian objects, including those from Garstang's excavations, to several institutions including the Liverpool Institute of Archaeology (now the Garstang Museum of Archaeology) and World Museum Liverpool. Rankin and his family are known to have moved to the Lake District in 1903 where they became enthusiastically involved in many aspects of local life. This link is perhaps illustrated most clearly by the donation of at least 40 Egyptian objects to Kendal Museum in 1923, and of several Egyptian objects for the study collection of Sedbergh School, where Rankin was a governor. The background to Rankin's life will be presented in the context of a pioneering age of archaeology in the early 20th century, in particular his association with John Garstang, emphasising Rankin's legacy to the field of Egyptology.

Introduction

Several high-profile 19th and 20th century donors and supporters of Egyptian excavations have had their lives relatively well-documented, for instance, the notable example of Miss Amelia Edwards' relationship with the Egypt Exploration Fund.1 This is not always the case, however, and the story of one philanthropic individual associated with the excavations of John Garstang in Egypt, Mr. John Rankin, is only now being gradually revealed as one result of an MLA-funded Effective Collections project which investigated collections known to contain Garstang objects in North West museums, one of which was Kendal Museum (pl. X, 1).2 Rankin donated at least 40 Egyptian objects to Kendal