

<b>Institution:</b> University College London		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 29 Classics		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Freud and Antiquity: Shaping Understanding for Museums, Museum Visitors, Psychoanalysts and Creative Artists		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2008-2016		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Miriam Leonard	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor of Greek Literature and its Reception	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2007-present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2017-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Miriam Leonard's research on the importance of antiquity for Sigmund Freud led her to devise and curate a major exhibition in 2019 on Freud and Egypt at the Freud Museum in London in collaboration with the Petrie Museum at UCL. The exhibition was viewed by 7,980 with an extended reach of 200,000 across 25 countries via online media. Through the exhibition and associated events her research has had impact on: museums, initiating the inaugural collaboration between the Freud Museum London and the Petrie Museum, and attracting new audiences to both institutions; museum visitors, by enhancing their understanding of the impact of antiquity on the greatest thinkers of modernity; and also on professional psychoanalysts attending a symposium organised by Leonard; and creative artists. The exhibition inspired a new play by the award-winning playwright Michael Eaton and poems and short stories in the literary magazine <i>Pericles at Play</i> (readership 13,986).</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Miriam Leonard's research focuses on the influence of antiquity on some of the greatest thinkers of modernity. She has shown in articles and her two most recent monographs (2012 and 2015) how many of the most powerful ideas that we associate with modern times emerge out of a dialogue with antiquity.</p> <p>Leonard's work on Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, and his interest in antiquity (<b>R1</b>) has shown how Freud exhibited a complex understanding of ancient cultures in which the Greco-Roman world competed with other ancient societies to inspire his writings about the history of the human psyche (<b>R1</b>). Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' neo-classical painting of Oedipus' encounter with the Sphinx famously hung over Freud's couch in his consulting room. As Leonard's work argues, while nobody doubts the significance of the figure of Oedipus to the development of Freud's thought, the presence of the Sphinx in this picture raises a series of questions about Freud's interests which have not been as extensively explored until now (<b>R1</b>, <b>R2</b>). The representation of the Sphinx testifies to Freud's broader fascination with ancient Egyptian culture, which played an increasingly prominent role in Freud's writings and also manifests itself in his collection of antiquities. While the Sphinx is bypassed in his elaboration of the Oedipus Complex, figures from Egyptian mythology come to occupy important positions in Freud's analyses. In his psychobiography of Leonardo da Vinci, for instance, the Egyptian goddess Mut, who Freud associates both with the mother but also with androgyny, turns out to hold the key to the artist's sexual and creative identity (<b>R3</b>). Significantly, Egypt takes centre stage in Freud's final work, <i>Moses and Monotheism</i> (1939), where he makes the scandalous claim that Moses was not a Jew but an Egyptian. Leonard's research argues that Freud's interest in the crossover of "non-European" and "European" cultures in the founding of Judaism testifies to his openness and his frustration with the nationalist and racist theories that had become increasingly prevalent during the 1930s (<b>R4</b>).</p> <p>Freud was developing his thinking about the archaeology of the mind in tandem with important developments in professional archaeology and Egyptology. The first UK Professor of Egyptology, Flinders Petrie, was an almost exact contemporary of Sigmund Freud and is generally considered to be one of the founding figures of modern archaeology. Leonard (<b>R4</b>) has shown how archaeology, as a newly established discipline, provided Freud with one of his most productive metaphors for exploring the psyche by comparing the different layers of consciousness to the strata of an archeological dig. Leonard shows how the prominence of</p>		

Egypt in the development of 19<sup>th</sup>-century archaeology explains why Egyptian artifacts form the largest part of Freud's antiquities collection.

By exploring Freud's conflicted relationship to Greece and Egypt, Leonard demonstrates more widely the extent to which modern thought has been developed in dialogue with antiquity. But her work (**R3**, **R4**, **R5**), also argues that we need to move beyond Eurocentrism to understand antiquity in its full complexity: it is not just Greece and Rome which continue to influence the development of contemporary thought but a whole series of ancient cultures which have given rise to a plural modernity. Even a quintessential European intellectual like Freud was fascinated by the ancient non-European roots of modern culture.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- R1.** M. Leonard, *Tragic Modernities* (Harvard University Press, 2015) (Chapter 4 is devoted to Freud and Oedipus). Peer reviewed. Sample Review from *Choice*: "[An] excellent book. [...], [Leonard] convincingly argues that Greek tragedy has, and must continue to have, an essential role in contemporary culture. The book is a work of love and a dedicated, thorough reading of tragedy - a rare accomplishment."
- R2.** M. Leonard, 'Tragedy and Modernity' in H. M. Roisman (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Greek Tragedy* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).
- R3.** M. Leonard, 'Freud and the Biography of Antiquity' in R. Fletcher and J. Hanink (Eds.), *Creative lives in classical antiquity: poets, artists and biography* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 305-326. Essay in edited collection. Peer reviewed.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316670651.013>
- R4.** M. Leonard, 'History and Theory: *Moses and Monotheism* and the Historiography of the Repressed' in L. Hardwick and C. Stray (Eds.), *A companion to classical receptions* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 207-218. Essay in edited collection. Peer reviewed.
- R5.** M. Leonard, *Socrates and the Jews: Hellenism and Hebraism from Moses Mendelssohn to Sigmund Freud* (University of Chicago Press, 2012) (paperback 2013, translated into Korean 2014). Peer reviewed. Submitted to REF 2014. Sample review: "Socrates and the Jews is a triumph of critical scholarship. No one who reads this study will ever again be able to think of the category 'Greek' - that prototype and anti-type of modernity - without simultaneously calling to mind its inextricable but neglected congener, 'Jew.'"

#### Grants received in support of R1-R5:

- Stanford Humanities Fellowship "Greeks, Jews and the Enlightenment" (2007-8, USD70,000), leading to (**R4**) and (**R5**).
- Leverhulme Research Fellowship "Tragedy and Modernity" (2011-12, GBP30,000), leading to (**R1**) and (**R2**)
- Philip Leverhulme Prize (awarded in 2012, taken from 2013-15, GBP70,000), leading to (**R1**) and (**R3**)

The Philip Leverhulme Prize committee wrote: "Miriam Leonard is a powerful and original voice in the field of classical reception studies. Intellectually imaginative, sensitive and critical, she speaks across disciplines; her internationally-significant work lies at the intersection of Classics and History of Ideas in modern Europe. [...] Her work illustrates [...] the enduring power of the classical texts to provide a way of speaking about contemporary societies."

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Sigmund Freud is one of the most influential and well-known thinkers of the last century; however the complexity of the impact of antiquity on his thought is less well understood. Leonard's research underpinned her exhibition at the Freud Museum (London), *Between Oedipus and the Sphinx: Freud and Egypt*, 7 August 2019 - 27 October 2019, which combined objects from the Freud's collections with items from the Petrie Museum, London. The exhibition and related activities including a public engagement programme and commissioned cultural works brought a new understanding of Freud to museums, audiences and visitors as well as to psychoanalysts and creative writers and artists.

### Enhancing knowledge of museum collections and building relationships between institutions

In 2017 Leonard devised an exhibition on Freud's relationship to Egypt. Leonard's knowledge of the two collections provided a bridge between the Freud Museum and Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology and initiated their collaboration. Inspired by Leonard's research (R1-R5), *Between Oedipus and the Sphinx* explored Freud's enduring fascination with Egypt evident both in his writings and in his collection of antiquities. Leonard was sole curator of the exhibition, which displayed objects from the Freud Museum's collection alongside objects from the Petrie, such as representations of the pharaoh, Akhenaten, and his queen, Nefertiti. Leonard chose the objects, wrote the object labels and panel descriptions and wrote and edited the catalogue. She was also responsible for the display and layout of the exhibition. Leonard's research on Freud's last work *Moses and Monotheism* (R4, R5) and its discussion of Akhenaten and the origins of Judaism prompted her to make its ideas the centre piece of the exhibition. Freud's last work was brought to life by the objects from the Petrie collection excavated at the site of Akhenaten's kingdom. Many visitors commented on the novelty of this approach ("a very surprising idea", "didn't know about it at all") and named it the highlight of the exhibition (A).

Leonard's expertise thus enhanced the Freud and Petrie Museums' knowledge of their collections and assisted the Freud Museum in meeting strategic aims. The Director of the Freud Museum writes: "Miriam Leonard was an exemplary external Curator. Her rigorous research underlay the creation and development of the exhibition, in a way that would not have been possible using only the Museum's internal resources, and considerably deepened the Museum's own understanding about Freud and Egypt," and describes how "with Miriam's expert help, the exhibition integrated objects from the Freud Museum collection and the Petrie Museum with the themes of the exhibition to create an attractive and coherent public display that exemplified our aim of increasing public engagement with the Freud Museum's collections and legacy, as well as with those of the Petrie Museum" (B). The Curator at the Petrie explains that "it was greatly beneficial to work with Miriam and explore how we could use the collection in different ways, to engage different audiences. I am especially interested in the Petrie Museum's Amarna collection, and so I learned a great deal about how we can use this collection to explore related issues beyond Egyptian archaeology" (C). The Director of the Freud Museum explains that the "collaboration between the two museums allowed us to do joint marketing and reach each other's audiences in ways not previously possible" (B). The raised awareness of the Petrie Museum by visitors to the Freud exhibition is clearly apparent in the evaluation: 93% of those surveyed said that they had previously been unaware of the Petrie Museum and 58% planned to visit it in the future (B). The Curator at the Petrie notes that "It was a highlight for the Petrie Museum to have loaned objects from this collection to the Freud Museum, and also for these objects to have been included in the exhibition catalogue [...] an ideal way for us to share aspects of the collection and its history to a wider readership" (C). At the Petrie, visitors to the event *Egyptomania in the Time of Freud* commented "will visit Freud Museum for first time after this" and the visitor surveys at the Freud confirm this (A, D).

### Raising public awareness of Freud's use of Egypt

The exhibition and associated activities raised awareness of Freud's use of Egypt for visitors to the Freud and Petrie Museums, as well as for a wide audience who encountered the exhibition via reviews in the media. Due to its popularity, the original exhibition run from 7 August to 12 October 2019 was extended by a further two weeks until 27 October. The exhibition received 7,980 visitors (4,504 adults, 2,983 seniors/students and 583 in groups). This figure was 9% higher than visitor numbers during the same period in 2017. These included international visitors (60%), school groups (mainly UK-based, aged 16+) and industry professionals (psychoanalysis, psychiatry, psychology) (A). The exhibition trailer on the Museum website has had 1,750 views, a 75% increase on their previous exhibition trailer (1000). Visitor surveys found that 82% said that the exhibition changed their understanding of the influence of archaeology and ancient Egypt on Freud's thinking and that they were interested in the description panels written by Leonard, which drew directly on her research (R1-R5). For visitors the influence of archaeology and ancient Egypt on Freud's thinking was "new to me" and "enlightening". The exhibition enhanced their understanding: 'Learned about the depths at which Egypt intrigued Freud'. They

were intellectually stimulated, commenting that they “have more questions now because [it’s] a totally new idea [to me] to link his theories to antiquity” and were surprised by Freud’s argument that Moses was not a Jew but an Egyptian (R4) (A).

Press coverage of the exhibition extended its reach to over 200,000 people across more than 25 countries. The exhibition catalogue (which sold 300 copies) is referred to extensively in the press coverage. It included essays by Leonard (drawing on outputs R1, R3 and R5) and Anna Garnett, the curator of the Petrie Museum, and explored the cultural and personal background to Freud’s fascination with Egypt. The exhibition was named a Royal Academy Museum ‘exhibition of the month’ and received extended positive reviews in *Apollo Magazine* (144,000 page views per month in 25 countries), *The Spectator*, *The Times of Israel* (over 5 million unique users per month, review shared 225 times), and *World Archaeology*. *The Spectator* called it an “intriguing exhibition” while *Apollo Magazine* commented that “a particular strength of the exhibition is its decision to place artefacts from the collection of Flinders Petrie, the British Egyptologist and pioneer of ‘scientific archaeology’, alongside those of his more famous contemporary” (E). Leonard was interviewed about the exhibition by London Live TV in August 2019 (477 views on Twitter) and the Associated Press in October 2019 (660 views on their YouTube AP Archive channel). Leonard also wrote a post for the Institute of Classical Studies Blog about the exhibition (8000 viewers).

Leonard led a series of events at both museums that ran alongside the exhibition. These included guided tours by Leonard (20 participants), a day course (19 participants) and a symposium at the Freud Museum (40 participants). The day course, devised by Leonard, was co-taught with Dr Daniel Orrells of Kings College London and raised awareness of Freud’s fascination with Greece and Egypt. The day was structured around Leonard’s published research on Freud. Session 1 on Egyptomania drew on (R1) and (R5), Session 2 on Egypt and Sexuality drew on (R3) and the final session on Moses and Monotheism drew on (R4) and (R5). This “spell-binding” course (as one participant described it), enabled participants to engage directly and in detail with Leonard’s research. Participants appreciated the “deep explanations” and called it a “very stimulating and revelatory experience” and an “informative seminar that opens up the discussion between psychoanalysis and the reception of ancient Egypt”. A quarter of those who provided feedback requested further reading, demonstrating how the course had provoked and sustained intellectual engagement with Freud’s use of Egypt. The participants came from the UK, Australia, Sweden and Poland and were a mixture of psychoanalysts, students and interested members of the public (F). The course fee of GBP65 per person helped to raise funds for the Museum’s archival, research and educational work.

In September 2019, a public event was held at the Petrie Museum on the subject of Egyptomania in the Time of Freud in tandem with the Freud Museum exhibition. There were 120 participants at this paid-entry event, which sold out. 71% of visitors said they came to “learn something new” and 93% had no previous relationship to UCL. They appreciated the “unexpected intellectual stimulation” and called the “content [...] consistently brilliant” (D). The event attracted new audiences to the museums: surveys showed that 35% were making their first visit to the Petrie and they “Loved the object[s] will come back to see more” (D). In conversation with the Egyptologist J. J. Johnston, Leonard talked about how her research (R1, R3, and R5) gave rise to the exhibition. Leonard also worked in collaboration with the artist Sal Pittman who produced a video montage inspired by the themes of the exhibition, which was shown at the Late and demonstrated, as Anna Garnett puts it, “how artistic intervention could be used to bring the museum space, and the collection, to life” (C).

### **Inspiring and enriching creative practitioners’ works**

The exhibition led to the creation of a new play and other artistic outputs. During the planning for the exhibition, Leonard and the Deputy Director of the Freud Museum approached the award-winning dramatist Michael Eaton to write a play based on a fictional encounter between Freud and Flinders Petrie. Eaton read Miriam Leonard’s outputs (R1, R5) and had extensive discussions with her about Freud and Petrie’s competing visions of archaeology, ancient cultures and the history of the psyche. His play *Fragments: When Sigmund Freud Did Not Meet Flinders Petrie* was first performed at the Egyptomania event at the Petrie Museum and was published by Shoestring Press in November 2020 in Eaton’s collection *Based on a True Story: Real Made-Up Men*. There was also a staged reading at the symposium held at Freud Museum

accompanied by Sal Pittman's projections. Eaton writes of being "thankful" for "meeting with Prof. Leonard and the subsequent opportunities that arose to express my thoughts in dialogic form" because "working with Prof. Leonard and reading her research provided me with the impetus to develop a new play and opportunities to perform this to diverse audiences in unusual spaces" (G). The exhibition was also the inspiration for a special edition of the magazine *Pericles at Play* (readership 13,986 in 71 countries). The editor of *Pericles at Play* writes: "The exhibition was hugely evocative, and the research involved unique and new [and] led to the creation of several wonderful and unique pieces of art and brand new translations that would otherwise not have been conceived" (H). The edition included 2 poems, 4 short stories and 6 new translations directly drawing on the ideas in the exhibition. Of these translations, the "five Greek works would likely not have been translated for years if at all were it not for Miriam Leonard's exhibition" (H).

#### **Enhancing psychoanalysts' professional understanding**

The exhibition also shaped psychoanalysts' understanding of Freud both in terms of his psychoanalytic theory and technique. A symposium linked to the exhibition was organised by Leonard at the Freud Museum on 12 October 2019, attended by 40 participants who were primarily psychoanalysts and students of psychoanalysis. The symposium provided analysts with an opportunity to enhance their understanding of how Freud's relationship to antiquity influenced the development of psychoanalysis. A leading analyst and Founder of the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research, commented: "The Conference made great progress in advancing the questions of the relation of theory and technique, and was of great benefit to clinical work. Several papers developed the problem of translating an old tradition into the language of a newer version of the world. This has immediate consequence for the question of how the representations that a child forms of its relations with others in early childhood are translated into its subsequent views of the world" (I).

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- A. Freud Museum Observation data and report
- B. Testimonial of the Director of the Freud Museum London and Exhibition Evaluation
- C. Testimonial of The Curator, Petrie Museum
- D. Petrie Late Report and Survey Responses
- E. Media coverage of 'Between Oedipus and the Sphinx: Freud and Egypt'
- F. Feedback forms from Freud Day Course
- G. Testimonial of Michael Eaton, playwright.
- H. Testimonial from the Editor, *Pericles at Play: A Literary Classical Receptions Journal*
- I. Email from Analyst and founder of the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research.