



## Intrepid Adventures in the Desert – collection newly online

Imagine trekking through the desert in Egypt, towards [St Catherine's Monastery in Sinai](#). It's 35°C, you're riding a camel... and as it's 1892, you're wearing – like any other Edwardian lady – boots, a corset, and a very large hat!



'Mrs Gibson 1892 on camel'. With permission of Westminster College, Cambridge.

Our [Sisters of Sinai](#), the benefactresses of the College, made no fewer than nine trips to Egypt, Greece, and the Holy Land between 1868 and 1906; and just like more modern tourists, they took plenty of photographs of their travels.

Following a project to digitise our collection of their travel photographs, high-quality digital images have just been [made available via the Digital Library at CUL](#). There are almost 300

photographs of landscapes and people taken by the Sisters on their visits to sites of Biblical interest – mountains and monasteries, tombs and temples – across Egypt, including Sinai and the Nitrian Desert, and also to Jerusalem, modern-day Syria and Jordan, and Greece. And they show the people the Sisters travelled with – academics, cooks, monks at St Catherine's – and provide fascinating glimpses into what travelling in Middle East was like for intrepid ladies in the 1890s.



St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai; and a temple in Egypt. Reproduced with permission of Westminster College, Cambridge.

The originals are lantern slides, which the Sisters used to illustrate their books and talks - just over 3 inches square, they are two pieces of glass sandwiching a photographic image. As well as the travel photographs, Westminster also holds a further collection of over 250 lantern slide images, and 22 albums, of the Sisters' photographs of manuscripts.

[View the whole collection online here.](#)

Helen Weller, Archivist  
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