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Writing on the centenary of the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1965, D. R. Howell chose to speak of our history in two phases. The first phrase, according to Howell, was from our foundation in 1865 until the Great War. It was in this period that ‘a great part of the groundwork of Palestinian exploration had been achieved and the techniques of archaeology had been improved, notably by Flinders Petrie’s demonstration of the importance of pottery in relation to the stratigraphy of a site.’¹ Howell was no doubt correct that the Fund’s first phase was, in so many ways, a time of massive advances in knowledge of the history of the Levant and progress in the field of archaeology.

The changing circumstances of the world in the first twenty years of the twentieth century—driven largely by events in Europe—transformed the Palestine Exploration Fund’s role in Palestine. On the one hand, expeditions from other countries in Palestine increased in frequency and size so that the Fund needed to situate its work alongside these other projects. On the other hand, the Great War transformed the political landscape in which all archaeology and historical research was occurring. Thus, in 1965, D. R. Howell could reflect on the period from 1915 onwards as the ‘second phase of British archaeology in Palestine’² and, as a result, the second phase of the Palestine Exploration Fund’s existence.

The second phase saw quickly advancing technology change the nature of archaeology, drive the professionalization of the field, and sharply increase the cost of field work. The Fund, as a result, was able to fund much less field work on its own and needed to collaborate with other institutions, both British and foreign. Among those, it is worth pausing to recognize the creation of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem in 1919. The Fund offers its congratulations to our friends at the British School as they celebrate their centennial this year.

And yet, the most important event in this time period for the Fund did not occur in Palestine, but London. It was 1921 when Walter Morrison, Treasurer of the Fund from 1868 to 1919, gifted Hinde Street to the Fund. Morrison’s generosity has enabled our ongoing existence and work in so many ways to this point that it is impossible to measure its import to the Fund.

When he wrote in 1965, Howell could already note how the second phase of the Fund’s existence was shaped prominently by political events—a worldwide depression, another world war, and the political and military events in the Middle East from 1947 onwards. One wonders if Howell could have conceived of what further changes would come before the 1960s ended, or conceive of what would occur in the subsequent 50 years. Technology has become an ever increasing and rapidly advancing feature of archaeology; politics have never ceased to shape the work of the Fund; research is more international now than ever before; costs have not abated, and there is no likelihood they will in the foreseeable future; collaboration among governments, institutions, and scholars has become ever more central to undertaking exploration in Palestine successfully.

¹ *World of the Bible: Centenary Exhibition of the Palestine Exploration Fund in Co-operation with the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem* (London: PEF, 1965), 17.

² *World of the Bible*, 18.

Now, in 2019, the Palestine Exploration Fund embarks on what I believe will be its third phase of existence. There will be no sharp caesura from what has proceeded this new phase, but I have little doubt things will be different from now on for the Fund. Walter Morrison's gift of 1921 keeps giving: the sale of the Hinde Street property has enabled the Fund's move to Greenwich, to a modern facility that is fitted out with the best 21st century technology for holding and preserving our collection, providing researchers access to it, and allowing us to exhibit portions of it to a broad public audience for the first time in decades.

One feature of our third phase, therefore, will be hospitality. Perhaps as you are reading this, the Fund will begin welcoming to its premises in Greenwich what I hope will be an ever expanding and diversifying range of scholars, students, school groups, and interested members of the wider public to our new home. Once inside, these diverse groups will have a phenomenal opportunity to engage directly with our collection and archives—the product of our first and second phases as a Fund.

Another feature of this new phase will not be so new at all: collaboration with partners around the world and in an even wider range of disciplines will continue to be key for the Fund. The economic and political challenges of doing world class research are real, and for most they feel like they are growing each and every year. The Fund, along with its counterparts across the globe, will need to find ways to collaborate successfully with an increasingly diverse range of partners in order to advance our knowledge of Palestine. As Chair, I am committed to seeing the Fund play its full part in a diverse ecosystem of scholars, academic institutions, national and international funding bodies, governments, museums, and others beside. In some cases, we will lead, in some cases we will follow others; in all cases, we will engage and collaborate with partners that enable us to achieve the same aim we have had since 1865: to increase knowledge and understanding of the archaeology, history, and culture of the Levant among both scholars and the wider public.

Closing his reflections on the second phase of the Fund, Howell wrote that the 'very existence [of the Fund] has helped to sustain organized research and exploration, as well as maintaining the goodwill and interest of the general public, thus providing a direct link between them and the archaeologists.'³ Perhaps the Palestine Exploration Fund is entering a new phase, but Howell's words remain as relevant today as they did in 1965. Whenever and however the third phase of the Fund's work comes to a close, I sincerely hope that the same can and will be said about it then.

C. A. Strine

³ *World of the Bible*, 20.