

## RESEARCH PAPER

## PUBLICISING PETRIE: Financing Fieldwork in British Mandate Palestine (1926–1938)

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The cost of archaeological fieldwork has always been high, even for someone as notoriously parsimonious as Flinders Petrie. Money was constantly needed to finance his excavations, bring objects back to England and organize publication of the results. Over the course of his career Petrie developed a range of fundraising strategies, including setting up the British School of Archaeology in Egypt to coordinate efforts. Moving his base of operations to British Mandate Palestine brought a whole new series of challenges, not the least being how to generate public interest in this new endeavour. This paper will explore the various methods by which funds were generated to support Petrie's research, including use of newspaper and radio coverage, public lectures and exhibitions, merchandising and appeals to the generosity of individual patrons. It will also consider how the purposes of fundraising developed over time, and ways in which we can measure the success of the tactics used.

## Introduction

*'It seems absurd to say that England cannot afford £30,000 a year for half a dozen expeditions in Palestine, when we look at the immense waste going on in all classes of society'* (Flinders Petrie speaking at the Victoria Institute, *The Advertiser* 1929: 10).

Flinders Petrie is renowned as one of the most successful archaeologists of his day. In a career lasting more than sixty years, he engaged with a broad sweep of human history across both Egypt and Palestine, published over a hundred books (Uphill 1972), filled museums around the world with his discoveries and gained immense public attention and notoriety along the way. He is renowned for an intense focus and passion for the past, to the exclusion of more frivolous past times; Petrie never seems to have taken a holiday that did not involve learning something new. It is fortunate that he was able to find in his wife Hilda a woman not only willing to share in his enthusiasms, but also able to match him in dedication and hard work. She became the foundation for his future success, taking on much of the administrative and promotional activities needed to keep Petrie's projects afloat; together they became a force to be reckoned with in the archaeological world (Figure 1).

Despite receiving recognition for this success within his own lifetime, Petrie and Hilda's work was often overshadowed by the constant pressure of fundraising. Money was needed to carry out fieldwork, bring objects back to England and finance publication of their results. Over time additional needs developed, such as raising



**Figure 1:** Sir Flinders Petrie and Lady Hilda Petrie stand in front of an old truck used to tour Syria in 1934 (courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptology, UCL)

scholarships to allow poorer students to participate in excavations, taking measures to improve the health of their Palestinian workers, and perhaps the biggest challenge of all, finding support for a London museum of Palestinian antiquities. Yet the sources of funding for archaeologists of this era were limited. Petrie did not have the capacity to fund his projects himself, and he never managed to secure complete funding from a single source, either private or institutional. In his address to the Victoria Institute, quoted above, we get a sense of the problem constantly before him: how to make archaeology a priority amongst those on whose generosity it depended.

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This paper will explore the different ways in which Petrie attempted to raise financial support for his work. The first section will focus on the overall funding model that was established early in Petrie's career, with support being achieved through the patronage of individual sponsors and subscribers, which came to be mediated via committees such as the Egypt Exploration Fund in what might be described as an early example of crowd funding. Petrie subsequently took control of the mediation process by establishing the British School of Archaeology in Egypt (hereafter BSAE), an organisation which he was able to dominate and which went on to support him for the rest of his career. When changes to Egyptian antiquities law threatened the viability of this *modus operandi*, the School responded by moving its sphere of operations from Egypt to British Mandate Palestine. The remainder of this paper will examine the different promotional strategies this move entailed, before focusing on the specific tools and methods used to generate funds in the latter part of Petrie's career. These included the use of the press, public lectures and exhibitions to promote Petrie's work; innovative forms of appeals for funds; targeted merchandising; attempts to extend patronage through provision of scholarships, and special fundraising events and projects. Finally, we will consider the means by which we can measure the success of these different strategies, comparing gains and losses against the broader pattern of Petrie's public engagement and fieldwork activities.

### Developing Sources of Income

After initially financing his own research, Petrie was able to run his field projects through the support of organisations such as the Egypt Exploration Fund and Palestine Exploration Fund, and the generosity of private sponsors such as Amelia Edwards, H. Martyn Kennard and Jesse Haworth (Drower 1995: 71, 80, 127–8, 156–7). His appointment to University College as the Edwards Professor of Egyptology gave Petrie some measure of personal financial security, and a platform from which to launch the Egypt Research Account as a fundraising body to help students participate in his projects. In 1905 this was developed into the British School of Archaeology in Egypt, which became the focus of all his subsequent fundraising efforts (Drower 1995: 211, 295–6).

The original remit of the BSAE was to finance 'original work' in Egypt, while continuing to support students in the field (BSAE 1905: 5, 7). Although there were no restrictions on who might be funded in this way, there was a clear intent that Petrie was to be a major beneficiary. Part of the agreement was that the director of the BSAE would be the Professor of Egyptology at University College London, providing that he was actively digging or teaching in Egypt (BSAE 1905: 10). This guaranteed that Petrie would have a leading role in managing the School, so long as he remained in post and archaeologically active. Petrie would hereafter have a major say in deciding whose projects were suited for future BSAE funding, with funds being awarded either to his own projects, or to those led by for-

mer students of his, such as Margaret Murray, Guy Brunton, Gertrude Caton-Thompson and Reginald Engelbach.

The BSAE was run out of University College, with Petrie officiating as the Honorary director, his wife Hilda as honorary secretary, and a small Executive Committee. In 1926, the year Petrie began working in Palestine, this included his university colleague Margaret Murray; Tessa Wheeler, the wife of Mortimer Wheeler; the Egyptologist Ernest Gardner and anthropologist Emslie Horniman, son of the founder of London's Horniman Museum. General members of the committee included figures such the curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Henry Balfour, and fellow archaeologists F. LL. Griffith, George Reisner, Percy Newberry, Robert Mond, Grace Crowfoot and Leonard Woolley. Its patrons were the Viscount Allenby, famous for his military campaigns in the Levant during the first World War, and Baron Lloyd of Dolobran, a conservative politician who had served briefly as the High Commissioner to Egypt in the earlier 1920s (BSAE 1926: 1). From this we can see that Petrie had been able to gain considerable support from within his own academic community, while no doubt hoping to attract the attention of deeper-pocketed sponsors through his choice of patronage.

One key element to the operation of the BSAE was the expectation that excavation would produce quantities of portable antiquities that could be taken out of Egypt and distributed amongst their supporters, in return for 'grants' to cover coming expenses. This practice had been initially instigated by the Egypt Exploration Fund on a small scale, but soon became institutionalised as an accepted part of the process of excavation in Egypt (Stevenson 2013; Stevenson forthcoming). The expectation was that the recipients of this opportunity would be public museums, who would either contribute to fieldwork directly, or have interested members of the public contribute on their behalf (BSAE 1905: 8). The size of the contribution would determine the quality and quantity of finds received.

*'Any Museum contributing to the work receives a share of antiquities, and any persons in a neighbourhood desiring antiquities in their museum, can increase their contributions or enlist new ones ... and have a claim on the Antiquities found, in proportion to the amount received from the locality'* (BSAE 1909: 3).

Despite a clear emphasis on *public* museums in the BSAE literature from this and later periods, there are hints that this condition could be waived when it suited:

*'Antiquities not claimed by the Egyptian Government shall be divided entirely among public museums, excepting large numbers of similar objects which may be given to the subscribers'* (BSAE 1905: 8–9).

It is not clear to what extent these so-called duplicate objects were distributed amongst BSAE subscribers, but it is to be suspected that a number of objects have disappeared from public notice in this way. For those artefacts



**Figure 2:** A regional newspaper in North Eastern Tasmania reports on the Petries' movements (*The Examiner* 1934: 6).

which remained in the public domain, the end result of this practice was that material excavated by Petrie and his contemporaries became widely dispersed around the globe, with both British and International Museums taking advantage of this arrangement. The extensive networks that developed from this process also led to an increase in international publicity for Petrie's work (Figure 2).

### Changing the Agenda: the Transition from Egypt to Palestine

After several years of successful fundraising, the BSAE found itself facing a dilemma. Following in the wake of the publicity caused by the discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamen and a growing nationalism in Egyptian government, changes were being proposed to Egyptian antiquities law (Drower 1995: 355–6). Egypt was no longer going to watch while scores of its antiquities were sent abroad to fill the museums of Europe and America; future object divisions were to be more strictly controlled, and would favour Egyptian interests over those of foreign excavators. Like many of their colleagues, the members of the BSAE committee were alarmed at the prospect of less generous object divisions in the future, which could cause the collapse of their funding model, and so began to look for alternative spheres of operation. The first sign of this came in 1923, when Petrie made unsuccessful attempts to secure concessions to dig at Jerusalem and Byblos (Drower 1995: 357). Then in 1926, another Petrie protégé, Ernest Mackay, headed a BSAE funded project in Bahrain, a one-off expedition that received strangely little attention despite being well outside the remit of the School - or perhaps because of this (Mackay et al. 1929). By the end of

this year, a desire to change direction had become fixed, and the decision was made to permanently shift the focus of the School from Egypt to Palestine (Drower 1995: 363). As with so many of their projects, the driving force behind this decision seems to have been Petrie himself. Operations in Egypt – where Petrie had not been for the last two years - were wound down; the last BSAE funded project there was an expedition to record tomb paintings at Qau in late 1927 (BSAE 1928: 5).

Petrie chose Palestine as his new field of work because of its close links with Egyptian culture, but perhaps also because he felt the British-run Department of Antiquities there would provide him with favourable object divisions of the kind he had become accustomed to. This was a key issue to future fundraising, as his annual exhibitions in London did much to raise the profile of his work, while object sales to museums generated crucial income. The success of both strategies depended on the quantity and quality of finds available.

The difficulty, of course, was how to market this change of direction to his supporters. It was the British School of Archaeology in *Egypt*, after all, and while selling Egypt had only become easier on the wave of post-Tutankhamen euphoria, the antiquities of Palestine did not hold the same sort of glamour. What Petrie needed was a hook, something that would draw people into caring about this region and its past. He achieved this in two ways. The first was a brilliant piece of spin: Palestine was no longer Palestine, it was '*Egypt over the border*' and simply a '*branch of Egyptian civilisation*' (Petrie 1926: 15; 1927a: 96). Here Petrie's many years of experience could be brought to bear on Egypt's nearest neighbour to the north; here he could explore new filters to help him understand Egypt and its world. The second hook reached for a different audience: those fascinated by biblical history and eager to find material proof of the biblical past. Here was the land of the Old Testament, ripe for exploration, with archaeology promising to bring the written word to life. These two aspects would continue to appear, side by side, throughout the remainder of Petrie's publicity and research in the 1920s and 1930s.

It is difficult to know to what extent Petrie followed his own myth making, but throughout the many popular and academic pieces written about his Palestinian excavations reference is constantly made to biblical figures and settings. His wife Hilda was particularly successful at this type of marketing, publishing a popular book that put their archaeological discoveries firmly within the framework of biblical history (H. Petrie 1933a). Her newspaper articles are sprinkled with phrases designed to personalise the past; Petrie 'hopes to find the headquarters of [King] David's bodyguard, with perhaps the military dispatches' (H. Petrie 1929: 12), or has discovered 'the tombs of the Lords of the Philistines such as made sport of Samson at Gaza' (H. Petrie 1930a: 10). Her headline for the latter article, 'The Bible as a Guide to Buried Treasure', suggests that the need to gain attention sometimes overrode more academic concerns. Yet it would seem that this biblical landscape was of enduring interest to both Petrie

and his wife, as such references also appear throughout their private correspondence (e.g.: Drower 2004: 221, 223–4, 227, 233).

This biblical thread was not confined to one-liners, but sometimes operated on a more fundamental level that influenced how this material was presented and perceived. Petrie identified every Palestinian tell site he excavated with cities mentioned in The Bible, which enabled him to draw on Old Testament references when interpreting his finds. Near the beginning of his career he had identified Tell el-Hesi as ancient Lachish, attempting to link its stratigraphy to its biblical history (Matthers 1989: 58). Towards its end, he pronounced Tell Jemmeh to be biblical Gerar, Tell Fara to be Beth Pelet, and Tell el-'Ajjul to be ancient Gaza (Petrie 1927a: 2; 1928a: 1; 1930b: 2; 1931a: 33). In each and every case it would appear that these attributions were wrong, with Petrie's desire to locate his sites in an historical landscape leading to a misreading of the textual evidence (Van Beek 1993: 667; Yisraeli 1993: 441; Tufnell 1993: 49). At the same time, the practice had made his sites eminently more marketable, and perhaps that was the point.

Over time, it would appear that the biblical aspects of Petrie's fieldwork gained dominance over Egypt in terms of a publicity hook, and it certainly became more significant in terms of financial support. This may be reflected by some of the reports that accompanied the news of Petrie's death in Jerusalem in 1942, where his Egyptological credentials were ignored in favour of headlines such as 'Sir Flinders Petrie Proved Bible is Right' (and Found a Nightclub of 1212 BC) (*Evening Standard* 1942, 5), and 'He Proved Bible True by Digging in Ruins' (*Daily Sketch* 1942, 6).

### Fundraising Techniques

Successful fundraising depends heavily on being able to reach the target audience, and for an organisation like the BSAE to grow this meant not only preaching to the converted, but also generating new converts to the cause. The following sections will explore the different techniques used to raise the profile of Petrie's research and create the necessary support. One thing that should be stressed from the outset was that one of the biggest weapons in the Petrie publicity arsenal was Hilda Petrie herself (Figures 1–2). Margaret Murray once said that Hilda 'had a charm of words which could make the dullest subject entrancingly interesting' (Murray 1956: 13), and it was that talent for bringing the past to light, combined with determination and a strong work ethic that made her such a formidable supporter. Letters appealing for support were hand written, a personal touch that was extremely effective. The success of her writing and lecturing was also partly due to her ability to find the human face of the past, populating it with figures that her audiences could relate to, such as the 'Lady of 2000 BC' who lost her gold pendant 'in a muddy street of Ajjul' (H. Petrie 1930b: 283).

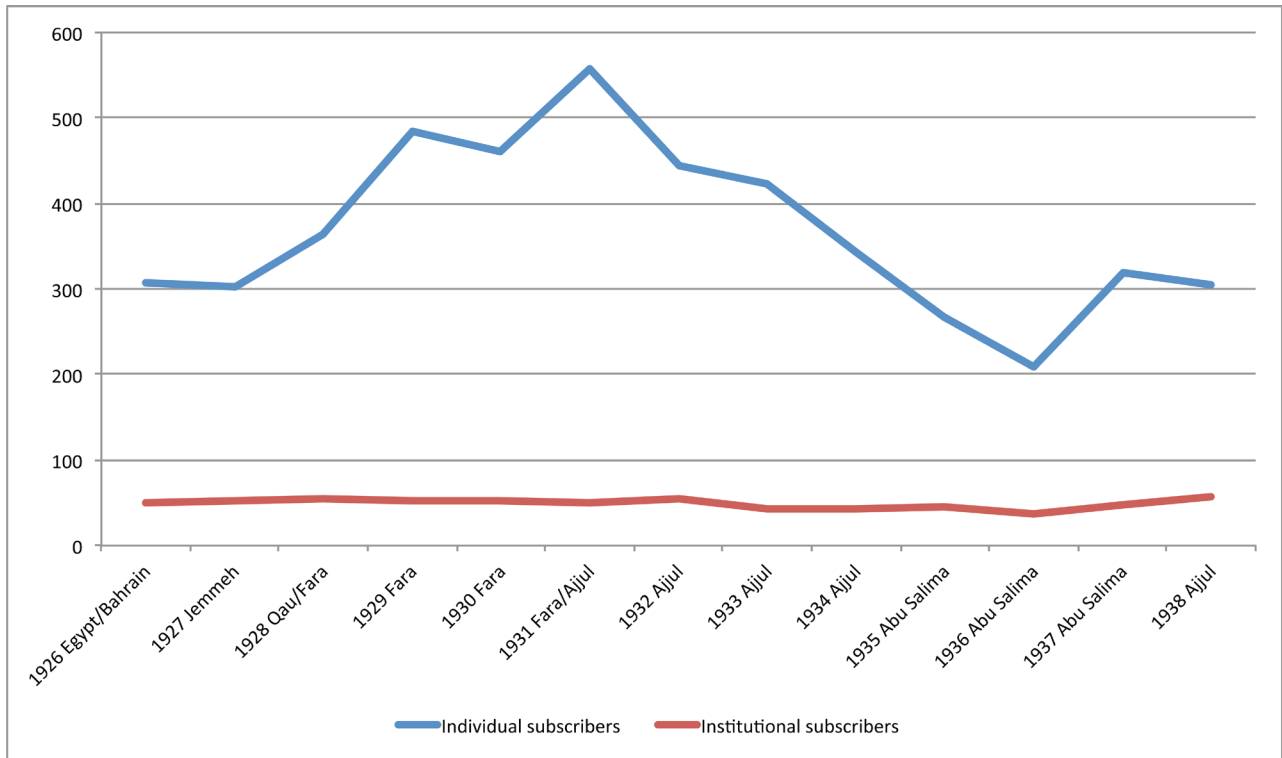
Hilda's efforts were particularly concentrated in Petrie's early seasons in Mandate Palestine, as she sacrificed the excitement of field excavation for fundraising duties in

England (Drower 1995: 371, 375). This was a crucial time for Petrie's work, with the loyalty of his supporters being tested by the move from Egypt into Palestine, and a review of the accounts after the first field season at Tell Jemmeh may well have weighed the balance in favour of Hilda remaining at home. Her efforts were rewarded, and the late 1920s and early 1930s saw a steady rise in the number of BSAE supporters (**Figure 3**). On one occasion, we are told that a lecture given by Lady Petrie so impressed members of the World's Evangelical Alliance that they engaged in their own fundraising on the Petries' behalf, presenting them both with a cheque for £233 11s 6d at a special reception in their honour (*The Times* 1929: 13; BSAE 1929: 10).

The Petries followed a publicity schedule tailored to suit the patterns of fieldwork and publication. It began late in the year with a letter being written to the editor of *The Times* to announce the coming excavation plans of the BSAE over the winter. Petrie and his staff would then set off for fieldwork abroad during November or December, and if remaining behind, Hilda would drum up interest through a series of public lectures in their absence. At least one letter was posted to *The Times* from abroad to update their supporters on progress in the field, usually sometime in February or March, with Petrie returning to England a month or two later. As work then began to prepare their annual exhibition of finds, further letters would be sent to *The Times* and the *Illustrated London News* to report on the latest discoveries and announce the coming exhibition. The project also exploited the comparatively new medium of radio, with Hilda broadcasting talks on national radio in 1929 and 1930 (*The Manchester Guardian* 1929b; *The Times* 1930b).

In May or June Petrie offered three free lectures on his new fieldwork to promote the exhibition. These were supplemented by a series of additional lectures for which a door charge was made; one lecture notice gave the entry rates as 1/2, 2/4 or 3/6 (*The Bath Chronicle and Herald* 1929a: 6). In addition to Hilda's talks throughout the year, between 1930 and 1933 special guest lectures were also offered during the summer by luminaries such as Leonard Woolley, discoverer of Ur, Howard Carter of Tutankhamen fame, and the biblical scholar Abraham Yahuda (*The Times* 1930c: 9; 1931: 17; 1932: 12; BSAE 1930: 9; 1931: 8; 1932: 11). In 1934, Margaret Murray further added to lecture income with talks in Ealing and Manchester (BSAE 1934: 11). This lecture programme proved very successful and raised considerable sums - over £500 in the course of six years (see Figure 8). Lectures were well publicised in local newspapers before the event, and often subsequently reviewed.

The publicity machine was therefore well oiled by the time Petrie's exhibition opened in July. The impact of this event was twofold. On the one hand, it provided supporters with something tangible that they could feel a part of, while giving museum curators an opportunity to shop for material to add to their own collections. The following months would consequently see a number of object distributions taking place throughout the country, in return



**Figure 3:** Individual versus institutional BSAE subscribers in Europe and Palestine (1926–1938). The labels on the horizontal axis mark sponsored excavations within that accounting year.

of course for ‘donations’ to the BSAE funds. Hilda’s visiting lectures, which continued through the year, also did a great deal to develop and cement relationships with regional museums and societies. One important supporter was the Manchester Museum, a relationship that Hilda nurtured by appearing in their annual lecture programme every October (*The Manchester Guardian* 1928b; 1929a; 1930; 1931; 1932; 1933c). The final phase of operations took place during October, when the BSAE held their Annual General Meeting, followed by a lecture to the members by Petrie himself. Then fieldwork would begin all over again. This routine continued until the Petries emigrated permanently to Jerusalem in 1934 (Drower 1995: 401).

### The Value of Advertising

Almost everything that Petrie put into print included a call for financial support, from newspaper articles about their latest discoveries, to catalogues and pamphlets distributed at their exhibitions and via the BSAE, their journal *Ancient Egypt*, popular books and the annual BSAE reports (e.g.: Petrie 1932a: 8; 1932b: 25, 1932c: 32; H. Petrie 1930b: 284; 1933a: appendix; BSAE 1927: 6; 1931b: 12, 15; 1931c; see **Figure 4**).

While the general call for funds remains somewhat similar throughout this period, stressing the School’s complete reliance on public support, there are some innovations. From 1929 we see a bequest form appearing in the annual report, in the hope that members would remember the BSAE in their wills. This appears to have had only limited impact; only one bequest is ever listed in the accounts. This came from the Venerable Archdeacon Potter, a modest subscriber of the School since its Egypt

days, who bequeathed the substantial amount of £106 5s 4d when his will was finalised in 1933 (BSAE 1933: 12).

A new type of appeal was launched in 1931, with a full page advertisement in the annual report outlining the cost of employing specific workers and the benevolent work undertaken by the dig to improve worker health (BSAE 1931a: 6; Petrie 1932d: 64; BSAE 1933: 6; **Figure 5**). This had been necessitated by a difficult first season at Tell el-‘Ajjul, when malaria delayed the start of excavations and put many of their workforce into hospital (Drower 1995: 380). It had been hoped that the local authorities in Palestine would defray the cost of improving drainage in the area (Petrie, 1931b: 1; **Figure 6**), but when that help failed to materialise, the BSAE sought to recoup costs from their subscribers instead. The intent here appears to have been to broaden the philanthropic appeal of their work by stressing its charitable outcomes over the archaeological benefits.

### Packaging the Past

Newspaper accounts, lectures, exhibitions, and publications such as site reports and the BSAE journal all served to feed the public information about what had been happening in the field. However Petrie and his supporters also sought to find ways to provide a more tangible link to their work through the merchandising of related objects and ephemera.

Petrie was not above selling antiquities to raise funds, and during the winter of 1928–9, pieces of Coptic textile that he had bought in Egypt back in the 1880s were mounted onto card for sale to BSAE members (Drower 1995: 374). This was not an uncommon practice at the



Figure 4: 1931 publicity flyer promoting the latest results from Tell el-'Ajjul with an appeal for further support (courtesy of the UCL Institute of Archaeology Collections)

HOSPITALS A NECESSITY,  
ARCHAEOLOGY A HOBBY,  
we hear on all sides.

Please therefore help us to cope with our heavy hospital bill (£75) for workmen who excavated our palaces of Gaza.

Also we dug a canal 2½ miles long, at a cost of £100, to free the place from malaria.

After 4,000 years' abandonment it is again a promised land.

Help us to meet these charges for health of workers, and improvement of district.

GAZA PALACE AND TEMPLE

To keep a boy or girl			
digging for a week	...	...	6 0
for a month	...	...	1 5 0
for the season	...	...	7 10 0
To keep a workman			
digging for a week	...	...	10 0
for a month	...	...	2 5 0
for the season	...	...	12 0 0

Will you not dig by proxy and help to make these discoveries?

Figure 5: Full page advertisement calling for financial support from the BSAE annual report (BSAE, 1931, 6).

time, with Mortimer Wheeler promoting the sale of small antiquities as a legitimate means of raising cash and institutions such as the Cyprus Museum selling pottery to the public (Wheeler 1943: 3; Tufnell 1930). Petrie's sale of his textile fragments was not listed in the BSAE annual reports and so the actual profits from this scheme are unknown.

Modern merchandising was created by producing a general interest volume, *A Vision of the Ages* (Petrie 1932b) in an attractive green cover with blue lotus motif, and promoting it amongst a series of items as being 'suitable for gifts' (BSAE, 1932: 14). Other items on this list included white vellum blotters and bookmarks embossed with gilt images of the jewellery recently discovered at Tell el-'Ajjul. The following year, members were also given the opportunity to buy 'photographs of Flinders Petrie in camp' for 6 pence apiece (BSAE 1933: 7), a rare exploitation of the cult of personality that had attached itself to the great man.

Another brief attempt to popularise Petrie's work came with the sale of stereoscopic images from the Tell Fara excavations. These images had been captured by a visitor to the site, Richard St Barbe Baker, who also produced a short promotional film on the excavations, which he subsequently showed at lectures in England and America (Baker 1956: 78–80; Drower 1995: 373; Western Daily Press 1929: 6; Christian Science Monitor 1932: 4).

These images were advertised for sale on the back of the exhibition catalogues for 1930, 1931 and 1932.

*'CAMERASCOPE and thirty-six pictures. This is the latest and most direct way of seeing excavation in progress. An after-tea amusement, and instructive. The camerascope is as compact as a cigarette case, and can be used for sets of other countries'* (BSAE 1931b:14)



**Figure 6:** Workers hired by Petrie dig out a drainage canal near Tell el-'Ajjul (courtesy of the UCL Institute of Archaeology Collections)

36 images were offered – falling into the expected format of 3 sets of 12 images, as was typical for stereoscopic sales at this time in general. The set was sold for 14 shillings; this would be equivalent to around £23 in modern money (The National Archives 2012; these and subsequent equivalency figures are based on 2005 values). These images were a mix of archaeological site views and digging shots, most of which contained people doing things – rather different from the more academic photographs Petrie preferred for his publications, where the features were the focus and people included only for scale. The exotic, foreign nature of the setting was emphasised by a good proportion of scenes featuring local Bedouin, while the captions were a mix of Egyptian and biblical references, such as ‘The wall of pharaoh Shishak’, ‘Tomb of Tutankhamen’s time’, ‘In the city of Rameses’, ‘Tracing defence of shepherd kings’ or ‘A modern Delilah at Shishak’s wall’.

It is not always clear who was the force behind this type of merchandising, but such experiments seem to have been restricted to the early part of the 1930s, when publicity for Petrie’s work was at an its peak. Later years saw the ‘gift ideas’ reduced to a short list of books focusing on the biblical context of this work, with no further signs of the more interesting ephemera. As far as the sale of antiquities to private individuals was concerned, this was undoubtedly a good thing.

### Funding the Future

Another way in which the Petrie’s tried to generate large sums of cash for fieldwork was through the instigation of special scholarships designed to support students in the field. It was proposed to name these after their donors, perhaps in the hope of single large sums being given to support them long-term (BSAE 1928: 8). These comprised the Gertrude Bell scholarship, founded in 1929, the Biblical Research Scholarship, founded in 1930 and a bursary for Ancient Zoology, founded in 1931 (BSAE 1931b: 15).

One benefactor for this scheme was Charles Wakefield, founder of the company that became Castrol Oil, and famous as the man who financed Amy Johnson’s record flights to Australia (Corley 2004; Highham 2004). In 1933 he was persuaded to donate £300 for the Biblical Research Scholarship, temporarily renamed ‘The Wakefield Scholarship’ in his honour. This paid for the salary of Noel Wheeler during the following season at Tell el-'Ajjul (H. Petrie 1933b: 1; BSAE 1934: 11). Wakefield received a two-page letter of thanks in reply, and the promise of some of the *Ancient Gaza* volumes (H. Petrie 1933b). It is difficult to judge the success of this scholarship drive, as the annual subscription list does not specify when money has been given for a particular purpose, and a promise to include scholarship donors’ names in the pages of their journal *Ancient Egypt* never materialised (Petrie 1928b:

67); our knowledge of actual donors is therefore limited to surviving correspondence.

### Petrie's Half Centenary: Special Cause to Celebrate

Fundraising needs a focus, and while there was an ongoing interest in the new discoveries being made each year, it was much easier to engender support when a specific cause was at hand. This was provided in 1930 when Petrie reached a milestone in his long and distinguished career: it was now fifty years since he first began work as an Egyptologist. This was seized upon as a great marketing angle, and publicity materials began to make reference to raising money for a special fund for the 'Half-century Celebration of Flinders Petrie's Researches' (BSAE 1930: 4; 1931b: 12; Petrie 1930a: 64; *The Times* 1930a: 12; 1930c: 9). Others assisted in the work; thus we see Winifred Compton of the Manchester Museum, publishing a call for donations in *The Manchester Guardian*, a week before Hilda was due to go up there for her annual lecture (Crompton 1930: 13).

The major fundraising event for this year was a special matinee, held in Petrie's honour, and titled 'a Vision of the Ages', a title he later borrowed for one of his popular books (Petrie 1932b). It raised a considerable sum in support of the excavations and an organisation called 'Friends of the Poor' (Drower 1995: 377). The sum of £895 16s 10d - half the total achieved - was added to the BSAE accounts for that year. This one event snowballed off the back of Hilda's overall fundraising campaign to make 1930 the most successful year yet, and one in which income would finally outstretch expenditure by over a thousand pounds (**Figure 9, Tables 1 & 2**).

### A London Museum of Palestinian Archaeology

The majority of fundraising was aimed at allowing Petrie to continue his research, whether collecting data in the field or making it publically available through a gruelling

schedule of academic publications at home. Yet from the outset of his Palestinian excavations Petrie had another, equally pressing concern: what was to be the ultimate fate of all the new objects being brought back to England? While artefact distributions were being made to various museums worldwide, a core collection was being built up, season by season, and going into storage at University College. This Palestinian material did not fall into the brief of the existing Museum of Egyptian Archaeology (proof perhaps that the 'Egypt over the Border' argument had only convinced some people); the Palestine Exploration Fund had insufficient room, and none of the major museums would engage take on this collection and keep it intact, as Petrie insisted (Drower 1995: 369–370; Ucko 1998: 395). So from 1927, we see Petrie attempting to solve the problem by calling for the creation of a new museum of Palestinian antiquities in London (Petrie 1927b: 64; 1927c: 10).

This plea was to be repeated many times over the next few years (*The Manchester Guardian* 1928a: 15; *The Bath Chronicle and Herald* 1929b: 14; *The Times* 1930a: 12). As seen in the case of the hoped-for student scholarships, the only real solution to this dilemma lay in the hands of the generosity of their supporters, as such a museum could not be created out of core funds. An existing BSAE subscriber, Mrs Mary Woodgate Wharrie, eventually met Petrie's hopes in the most spectacular fashion. She appears to have first become a member in 1930, for the standard subscription rate of a guinea, and then made a donation of £25 the following year (BSAE 1930: 9; 1931: 12). She does not appear on their lists again, but instead entered into negotiations for a gift of £10,000 to be made over to Petrie in order to create his new Palestinian Museum (Drower 1995: 379–380). This was to be by far the largest and most significant single donation ever offered to Petrie, equivalent in value to around £370,000 today (The National Archives 2012). The initial gift was later added to, making a final total of £15,000 (*The Times* 1937b: 10). In

Year	Subscriptions/donations	Lectures and special events	Publication sales	Interest on investments	Other (tax refunds etc.)	Total
1926	£1056 15s 6d	0	£445 13s 10d	£583 10s 1d	£4 1s 6d	£2090 0s 11d
1927	£1024 15s 4d	0	£432 1s 3d	£512 12s 11d	£434 11s 7d	£2404 1s 1d
1928	£1592 7d 6d	0	£466 13s 4d	£451 18s 2d	0	£2510 19s 0d
1929	£3003 8s 1d	£76 10s 3d	£448 9s 6d	£381 0s 9d	£309 1s 10d	£4218 10s 5d
1930	£4753 7s 4d	£246 13s 10d	£407 1s 8d	£389 19s 10d	0	£5797 2s 8d
1931	£3288 8s 9d	£75 13s 0d	£555 8s 9d	£381 4s 8d	0	£4300 15s 2d
1932	£2108 17s 9s	£61 15s 11d	£335 12s 7d	£365 6s 2d	£170 8s 7d	£3042 1s 0d
1933	£2970 12s 5d	£44 17s 0d	£297 15s 6d	£286 13s 1d	£104 3s 5d	£3704 1s 5d
1934	£2059 4s 10d	£11 0s 0d	£458 14s 6d	£345 1s 0d	£91 12s 10d	£2966 13s 2d
1935	£884 19s 6d	0	£374 16s 9d	£309 17s 10d	£49 13s 3d	£1619 7s 4d
1936	£613 13s 0d	0	£241 16s 0d	£280 19s 8d	£12 12s 5d	£1149 1s 1d
1937	£1032 1s 6d	0	£115 6s 3d	£278 10s 5d	0	£1425 18s 2d
1938	£811 11s 7d	0	£240 4s 1d	£271 12s 7d	£4 11s 5d	£1327 19s 8d

**Table 1:** A breakdown of BSAE income between 1926 and 1938



Year	Project	Field costs	Publication costs	Office & banking costs	Totals
1926	Egypt (Fayum, Qeneh/Qau), Bahrain	£2448 10s 5d	£625 6s 0d	£267 7s 0d	£3341 3s 5d
1927	Tell Jemmeh	£3120 12s 6d	£1187 1s 8d	£333 8s 5d	£4641 2s 7d
1928	Egypt (Qau), Tell Fara	£2250 3s 0d	£1628 18s 1d	£306 25s 9d	£4185 6s 10d
1929	Tell Fara	£3427 7s 11d	£885 4s 1d	£421 7s 8d	£4733 19s 8d
1930	Tell Fara	£2818 11s 9d	£1299 10s 5d	£357 6s 11d	£4475 9s 1d
1931	Tell Fara, Tell el-'Ajjul	£4003 7s 9d	£542 2s 2d	£1123 3s 0d	£5668 12s 11d
1932	Tell el-'Ajjul	£3239 13s 9d	£975 19s 0d	£468 12s 6d	£4684 5s 3d
1933	Tell el-'Ajjul	£2426 19s 3d	£698 0s 6d	£423 13s 9d	£3548 13s 6d
1934	Tell el-'Ajjul	£2290 1s 4d	£660 4s 0d	£340 2s 3d	£3290 7s 7d
1935	Sinai (Tell Abu Salima)	£1113 4s 8d	£544 7s 8d	£312 8s 2d	£1970 0s 6d
1936	Sinai (Tell Abu Salima)	£1608 9s 1d	£291 16s 6d	£351 3s 9d	£2251 9s 4d
1937	Sinai (Tell Abu Salima)	£1487 4s 3d	£72 10s 9d	£291 13s 4d	£1851 8s 4d
1938	Tell el-'Ajjul	£2113 19s 7d	£634 0s 7d	£306 15s 2d	£3054 15s 4d

**Table 2:** BSAE expenditure between 1926 and 1938



**Figure 7:** Plaque commemorating Mrs Mary Woodgate Wharrie, whose generosity enabled the creation of the Institute of Archaeology in London (courtesy of the UCL Institute of Archaeology Collections).

the end, this money did not go directly to the BSAE, as a deal was struck to pass it and the responsibility for housing Petrie's Palestinian Collection on to Mortimer Wheeler (Drower *ibid*). This collection went on to become the centrepiece of Wheeler's new Institute of Archaeology in London, which finally opened its doors on 29th April 1937 (*The Times* 1937c: 10; Ucko 1998), two months after the Mrs Wharrie's death (*The Times* 1937a: 10). A plaque commemorating this donation was set up in the new Institute gallery, but no mention was made on it of the connection with Petrie and his work (Figure 7).

### Measuring Success

While the intent behind the Petrie publicity machine was clear, action does not necessarily lead to results. It remains to measure how successful these efforts actually were. This can be done through close study of the annual BSAE accounts. These list all the subscribers to the School for the last financial year, which ran from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> October, together with the amounts given. An accounting of income and expenditure is then provided. There are some limitations to this data, in that the records do not distinguish between subscription fees and

donations, or donations made outright and those made in exchange for antiquities. This aside, we can still compare the overall income achieved from different funding streams against expenditure on field costs, publication and general administration (see **Figure 9, Tables 1 & 2**). The following discussion utilises data from 1926, representing the financial year before fieldwork began in British Mandate Palestine, through to 1938, the final year of BSAE sponsored excavations.

The main sources of income were subscriptions, donations, lectures, special events, publication sales and the interest from existing investments; details are outlined in **Table 1**. The most successful years for the School were between 1929 and 1934, corresponding with their work at Tell Fara and Tell el-'Ajjul. There is a clear peak in 1930, when funding streams were at their most diverse and publicity had the special focus of raising money for Petrie's half-centenary celebrations. After that fundraising appears to become increasingly difficult; the causes of this will be discussed below.

These records make it possible to get a sense of changes in subscriber numbers over time, and to determine what proportion of these are institutions such as universities, museums and libraries, as opposed to individual supporters. As **Figure 3** shows, institutional support in Europe remained fairly steady over the course of this period. In contrast, individual European subscriptions fluctuate considerably. After a small downturn at the beginning, there was a steady membership increase every year to a peak of 558 subscribers in 1931, then an equally steady decline for the next five years to an all-time low of only 209 individual members in 1936. After this, the numbers improve again, ending in 1938 with 305 contributors on record. When compared against the actual value of donations over the same period, we find a similar pattern, except that 1930 stands out as the most successful year in terms of funds raised, even though there were technically more supporters in 1931. This was because both the size of donations and number of large donations were at their greatest during the half-centenary celebrations when interest in the work of the School was at its height.

Even though BSAE records do not separate outright donations from more general subscriptions, it is possible to get a sense of how significant this funding stream was by close examination of the actual amounts raised per individual or organisation. Standard subscription rates can be easily identified: the usual rate was £1 1s per year (one guinea), rising to £2 2s when the annual publication was double its normal size. A smaller fee of 10/- gave membership privileges and subscription to the BSAE journal. These figures make regular subscribers easy to detect, while larger and more irregular amounts probably represent one-off donations or object purchases. Amounts of £20 and over can be seen as significant, and most probably reflect this sort of donation. To put this into context, in 1930, £20 would be equivalent to about £668 today, while £100 would be worth around £3342 (The National Archives, 2012). These donations provided an important part of the budget, supplying anything from 10 to 50% of the annual income (see **Fig-**

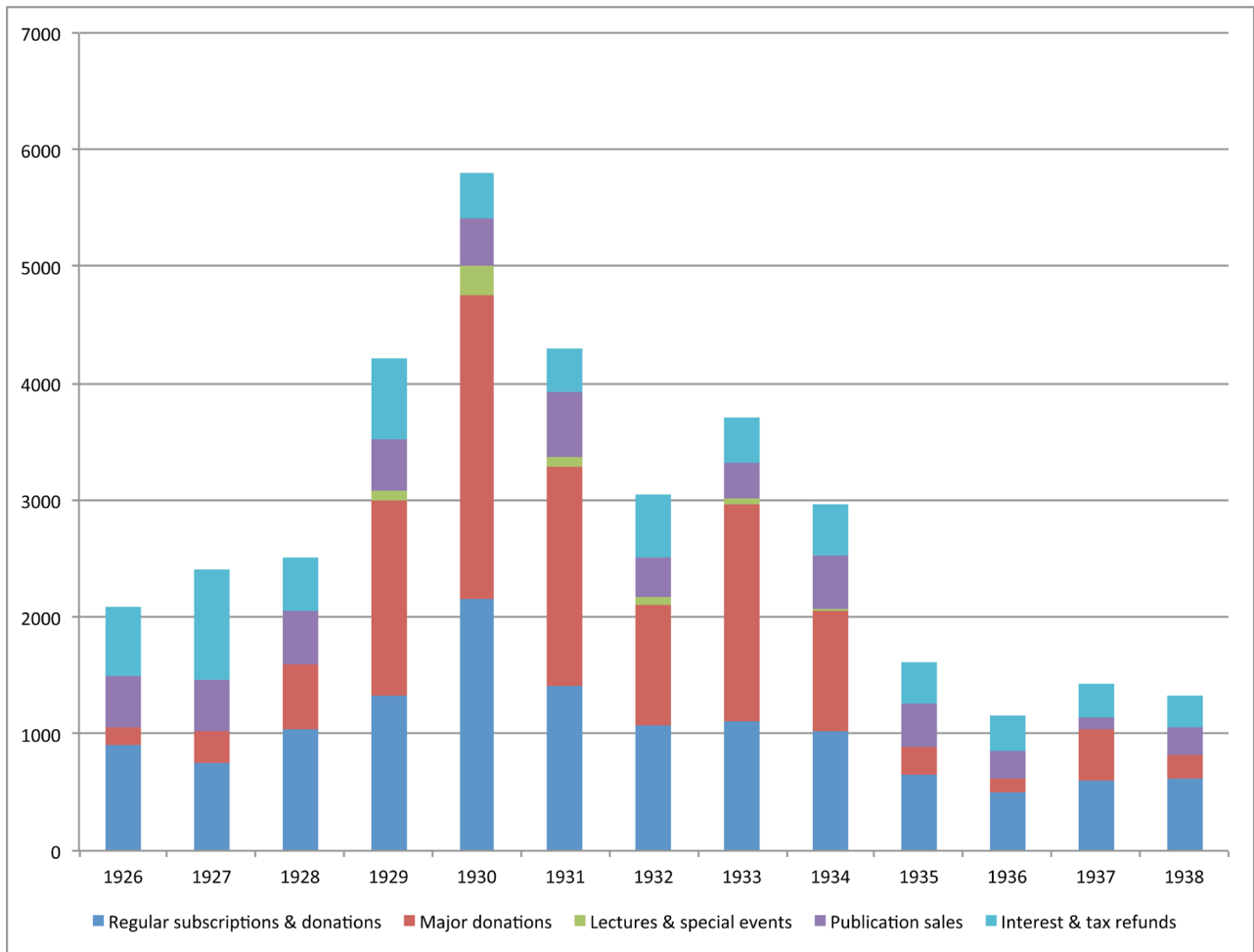
**ure 8**). Major donations of this type peaked in the period between 1929 and 1934.

After Mrs Wharrie, Sir Charles Marston was perhaps the most significant supporter of the School, providing their largest single donations between 1927–1930 and 1932–1935, with sums ranging from £100 to £1000. A small pool of generous patrons regularly appeared alongside Marston, including Robert Mond; Jesse Haworth's widow, who gave a steady £30 throughout this period; Henry Wellcome; and an anonymous but generous supporter known only as 'B.C.L.', who became the largest donor in the last two years of fieldwork. Others, such as Wilfred Hall, Percival David, Lord Leverhulme, Simon Marks and Edward Cadbury gave more sporadically and may have been responding to personal appeals from Lady Petrie. A single large donation received from New York University in 1931 was due to the intercession of the American Harris Dunscombe Colt (Petrie 1930c: 269), who was part of the Tell Fara and Tell el-'Ajjul field teams (1928–1931), and a BSAE committee member (1929–1931). Expectations that this contribution would be repeated the following season were never realised, perhaps because Colt moved his allegiance to the Lachish excavation project at that time (Petrie 1932c: 32; Drower 1995: 390). A summary of the ten most significant donors to the School is given in **Table 3**.

### Good Times, Bad Times: Why the Fortunes of the School Declined

At a public meeting of the BSAE in November 1906, Petrie commented, 'The labour of collecting with one hand while spending with the other, is indeed almost impossible' (BSAE, 1906: 7–8). His words, spoken at the beginning of the School's history, were to prove prophetic. Study of their accounts makes it clear that from the 1920s onwards expenditure on excavation and research consistently outstripped the income being generated (**Figure 9**). Over the next decade or so, the balance of the School's accounts would steadily decline, from £17625 0s 7d before work began in Palestine, to only £5046 0s 5d after their last excavation season (BSAE 1926: 11; 1938: 21). The only exceptions to this steady erosion of core funds occurred during 1930, the year of Petrie's half-centenary celebrations, and in 1933, after a reduction of field and publication costs. The scale of the work undertaken in Palestine was simply not sustainable. The only reason that it had been even possible was because of the reserves built up in the BSAE coffers in earlier years, when it was the habit to invest excess income in the purchase of bonds as a way of building up capital reserves.

So why were the accounts so often in arrears? There was clearly plenty of interest in archaeology in Palestine; the newspapers were happy to report on discoveries, with *The Daily Telegraph* even sending out a special correspondent to cover developments in the field (Petrie 1928c: 121), and in the period between 1927 and 1930 subscriptions and donations were steadily increasing. Yet in subsequent years, while media interest remained, it became increasingly difficult to raise funds, with members frequently being reported as being in arrears with their subscriptions (BSAE 1931: 5; 1932: 6; 1935–1936: 8–9; 1937: 7; 1938:



**Figure 8:** Relative proportions of different BSAE funding streams over time

Name	Largest single donation	Total donated	Total years of contributions
Wharrie, Mary Woodgate	£ 10,000	£ 15,000	4
Marston, Charles	£ 1,000	£3,808 3s 10d	10
B.C.L.	£ 200	£ 1,100	7
New York University	£927	£927	1
Mond, Robert	£200	£733 19s	6
W.L. (in Memoriam )	£250	£ 320	2
Wakefield, Charles Cheers	£ 300	£ 300	1
Wellcome, Henry Solomon	£ 105	£253 2s	5
Worlds Evangelical Alliance	£223 11s 6d	£223 11s 6d	1
Haworth, Marianne	£37 2s	£222 2s	7

**Table 3:** Top ten donors to the BSAE between 1926 and 1938

12). Membership dropped, year by year, so that by 1938, subscriber numbers were back to the level they had been at in 1926. Clearly all was not well with the philanthropic British public.

One obvious factor was the onset of the Great Depression, which by the early 1930s was beginning to have a noticeable impact on people’s financial capabilities. Petrie rather ruefully commented that *‘Our difficulties lie in the provision for such work by the public, who regard knowledge as the first thing to be sacrificed when scaling down the*

*claims of life’* (Petrie 1932e: 96). There may also have been an element of weariness after the big push of 1930, when donors caught up in the excitement of the half-century buzz gradually faded away. But perhaps most significant of all was the decision of the Petries to depart England and move permanently to Jerusalem. This was to prove disastrous for BSAE finances, as it took away the biggest weapons in their publicity arsenal: public events, such as lectures and the annual exhibition, and private persuasion of potential donors to contribute to the cause.



**Figure 9:** Graph comparing BSAE income against expenditure, 1926–1938

The problems actually began on the eve of Petrie's retirement, when he decided not to hold the 1933 annual exhibition (Drower 1995: 397), although some material was exhibited at the Anglo-Palestine Exhibition in Islington instead (*The Manchester Guardian* 1933a: 8; 1933b: 8). The following year only photographs were exhibited as the authorities in Jerusalem had not yet released the project's allocation of finds (*The Observer* 1934: 8; Petrie 1934: 15). This was to be the last of Petrie's London exhibitions and also marked the end of their numerous public lectures across England, as they made their final move abroad. Petrie was well aware of how dependent fundraising was on visibility, as he commented in a letter to Spurrell back in 1889: 'Out of sight out of mind, and I never expect to bulk so much in the public mind when silent [abroad] ... as when playing showman in London' (Petrie 1930c: 105). The consequences of this loss of visibility was that individual subscriber numbers declined, while the number of donors giving significant amounts also fell, from 21 in 1933, to 7 in 1934, then steadily down to a single major benefactor in 1938.

### The Consequences of Fame

By the end of his career, Petrie had achieved a high public profile for his work, as well as personal recognition in the form of his knighthood, several honorary degrees, a medal named after him, and a portrait painted by the renowned Philip de Lazslo (Drower 1995: 198, 218,

260, 358, 400). His actions were considered noteworthy enough for the media to report when he simply left or entered the country (e.g.: *The Times* 1934: 16). This level of social notoriety would certainly have been a boost to fundraising campaigns.

Yet fame could also have its disadvantages. Petrie was always at risk of being bothered in the field by site visitors, who expected him to take time off his work to show them around, as well as being approached by members of the public for his autograph. In a letter of January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1930, we find Hilda Petrie trying to turn this to her advantage, by supplying one such autograph to a man called Colville in the hope of some financial support.

*'He has consented to sign your card - he very often doesn't consent, so I send it to you herewith. I now want you to do something for him, in return. To make his arduous work on the borders of Egypt and Palestine known to those who care for historical research, or for throwing light on the Biblical times. If you could get any donations for us, small ones go to help his digging - we have hundreds of workmen - & large ones can form a scholarship of 1,000 dollars named after the donor. We have no grants.'* (History for Sale, 2012).

This appears to have worked, at least on a small scale, as a W.E. Colville appears as an American subscriber in the

1930 annual report (BSAE 1930: 10). Ironically, this letter has ended up being offered for sale by a dealer as an autograph in its own right (History for Sale 2012). Had Hilda's signature been considered a marketable commodity in 1930, funding would hardly have been a problem.

### Conclusions

One of the dangers of constantly trying to drum up support is that your audience will become tired of your cause and fade away. One of the great advantages of archaeological work, of course, is that the material on display and the discoveries made are constantly changing - particularly when every few years there was a new site to be explored. This enabled Petrie to keep the attention of his supporters through some of the potentially difficult period of the Depression. The reward for this support was entertainment: objects to view, public lectures to attend and books to absorb. There was also the feeling of being involved in the dig by proxy, with the satisfaction of having helped expand knowledge of ancient and biblical Palestine.

Unfortunately, while there was considerable support for Petrie's work, his ambitions both in terms of fieldwork and publication far outstripped his financial resources. Over the course of the 1920s and 1930s a widening gap developed between income and expenditure, which meant that Petrie was constantly drawing on core funds to maintain his work. This was clearly not sustainable in the long term, and had this been the pattern earlier in his career, he would have been forced to change his practices, either by running smaller scale projects with a reduced excavation budget or by reducing the quantity or quality of his publications. As it was, the consequences of over spending were never really felt, with Petrie's research ending with his death in 1942, before the coffers were exhausted. The BSAE, an organisation that had been created specifically to support his mission and which depended very heavily on Petrie's status and reputation for its success, did not long outlive him. On her return to England after the war, Hilda used the last of official reserves to ship the final series of objects to museums in the United Kingdom, Australia and the USA, publish three remaining volumes of her husband's work, and set up a University scholarship in his honour (Murray 1956: 13). The fundraising scramble was over; its legacy remains in the objects uncovered and the publications it helped create.

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