The earliest portions of Palestine history have been discovered through archaeological finds and excavations throughout the land. Canaanite pottery is especially helpful when dating specific areas and cities, to specific times throughout history. Egypt’s presence was well established in the region, and Egyptian artifacts from multiple ages have been found in Palestine. An example of using pottery for dating would be, for instance; if a certain type of pottery found in Canaan was also found in Egypt, and if that type of pottery in Egypt dated to the reign of Seti I, then that would date the

The Palestine Exploration Fund is a British society, founded in 1865 and is still functioning. Often simply known as the PEF, its initial object was to carry out surveys of the topography and ethnography of Ottoman Palestine with a remit that fell somewhere between an expeditionary survey and military intelligence gathering.[1] Consequently, it had a complex relationship with Corps of Royal Engineers,[2] and its members sent back reports on the need to salvage and modernise the. Even to a casual traveller in the Holy Land the Bible becomes, in its form, and therefore to some extent in its substance, a new book. Each year the Palestine Exploration Fund offers grants for travel and research related to topics connected with its founding aims. Archaeology is the study of human activity in the past, primarily through the recovery and analysis of the material culture and environmental data that they have left behind, which includes artifacts, architecture, biofacts and cultural landscapes. His painstaking recording and study of artefacts, both in Egypt and later in Palestine, laid down many of the ideas behind modern archaeological recording; he remarked that "I believe the true line of research lies in the noting and comparison of the smallest details." Petrie developed the system of dating layers based on pottery and ceramic findings, which revolutionized the chronological basis of Egyptology.

Abstract

Most modern histories of Palestinian archaeology claim that the earliest work of any real archaeological significance was that conducted by the Palestine Exploration Fund in the 1860s or even that by Flinders Petrie at Tell el-Hesi in 1890. Although they generally date the advent of archaeology in Palestine to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the discussion of the research which took place prior to the 1860s is confined to published sources and, moreover, retains a superficiality which allows little or no appreciation of the archaeological merit deserved by, at least, some individuals. The mention of travellers visiting Palestine prior to the turn of the eighteenth century is rare and, when it occurs, scant.

The published texts written by individual British travellers visiting Palestine between c.1670 and 1825, as well as their manuscript journals, letters and site plans, provide the primary data on which the present study is based. The abundance of this material made it necessary to be selective. Thus, the core of the thesis is composed of a detailed examination of the commentaries made by individual travellers on a few key sites. From this an evaluation of the methodology applied by these individuals in interpreting the archaeological remains and an objective analysis of their standards of research is derived.

In studying the various reports and associated texts it became apparent that, for each individual traveller, one or more main motives inspiring their travels in Palestine could be discerned. The writer considered it would be both interesting and of academic value to establish whether motive and standard of research bore any correlation. Thus, each traveller is allocated to a particular group based upon the motive/s identified and the final analysis shows that the most significant archaeological research was in fact carried out by those travellers for whom the opportunity to conduct such research constituted a prime motive for their travels in Palestine.

The greatest value of the present study is that it clearly demonstrates that intelligent archaeological research was conducted by early British travellers visiting Palestine between c.1670 and 1825 and that this research produced some significant original results.

Keywords
Palestinian archaeological expeditions; archaeologists from Great Britain; Palestinian antiquities; Palestine

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