Aphrodisias in 2017
R.R.R. Smith | Oxford University
doi:10.18866/biaa2017.21

Aphrodisias continues to favour its investigators with remarkable archaeology: the two-month season in July and August 2017 saw rich finds and important results. Our team worked on a variety of monuments and projects – Stadium, Sebasteion, Temple of Aphrodite, Bronze Age material from the Theater Hill and restoration in the Basilica. The main focus however was on excavation in the Tetrapylon Street and the South Agora.

The excavation of the Tetrapylon Street is designed to investigate a key urban artery and bring new information about Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Aphrodisias. Work in 2017 was concentrated to the south of the Sebasteion’s Propylon, supervised by Ine Jacobs and funded by the Headley Trust, the Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation and the British Institute at Ankara. The specific aim in 2017 was to investigate further the post-Byzantine bath building discovered in 2016.

As exposed this year, the bathhouse consists of four rooms and a praefurnium on its eastern side: Room 1 is a water chamber or built water tank; Room 2 is a large hot room with a hypocaust floor; Room 3 is a smaller chamber to the southwest, possibly a tepid room; and to its east, Room 4, with benches on its western and northern walls (added later), was possibly a changing room (apodyterium). Room 1 has a circular opening in the middle of its floor, once closed probably by a metal plate, and was heated from below by the praefurnium. The hypocaust floor in Room 2, excavated this year, turned out to be of rather haphazard construction, supported by irregularly disposed pili. The bathhouse was probably first constructed, not in the mid Byzantine period (as supposed in 2016), but in the Seljuk period. It was adjusted and enlarged through Ottoman times. Finds in 2017 include remarkable fragments of moulded plaster decoration from the hot chamber, Room 2.

The South Agora at Aphrodisias is dominated by its pool (see photo above), partly excavated in the 1980s. Test trenches in 2012 revealed planting trenches for palm trees, and a five-year project – The Mica and Ahmet Ertegun South Agora Pool Project – was completed this year, 2017. The excavation of the pool was supervised by Allison Kidd, Ben Russell and Andrew Wilson, and generously funded by Mica Ertegun.

The excavation of the pool was completed as planned in August and brought a sharp light to bear on ancient and medieval life in the centre of the site. The complex known as the South Agora was a sumptuous public park laid out in the Tiberian period (AD 14–37) with a 170m-long ornamental pool at its centre surrounded by palm trees and marble colonnades. The pool was completely renovated in ca AD 500 and was kept functioning into the early seventh century. It was then gradually filled in on both sides, with successive layers of rubble and debris from the surrounding buildings.

Dense and important finds came from the lowest of these layers, close to the pool floor. The range is impressive: pottery, lamps, roof tiles, wooden planks, marble architecture, statuary, inscriptions, bronze coins, reliquary crosses, lead tablets, gold-glass ornaments and a variety of iron weapons. Among several high-quality finds of marble portrait statuary – an Aphrodisian speciality – two pieces are of special importance. A remarkably preserved bearded male portrait head (right), probably of a provincial...
The British Institute at Ankara (BIAA) supports, enables and encourages research in Turkey and the Black Sea region in a wide range of fields including archaeology, ancient and modern history, heritage management, social sciences and contemporary issues in public policy and political sciences. Founded in 1948, the BIAA was incorporated in the 1956 cultural agreement between the Republic of Turkey and the United Kingdom. The BIAA is one of the British International Research Institutes (BIRI). It has offices in Ankara and London, and a dedicated staff of experts from a wide variety of academic and cultural backgrounds.

The Institute's premises in Ankara are maintained by a small administrative and research staff, and provide a research centre for visiting scholars and students. The centre houses a library of over 65,000 volumes, research collections of botanical, faunal, epigraphic and pottery material, together with collections of maps, photographs and fieldwork archives, and a laboratory and computer services.

The Institute uses its financial, practical and administrative resources to conduct high-quality research. The overall focus of the research sponsored by the BIAA is on history, society and culture from prehistory to the present day, with particular attention to the ideas of Turkey as a crossroads, Turkey's interactions with the Black Sea region and its other neighbours, and Turkey as a distinctive creative and cultural hub in global and neighbourhood perspectives. The BIAA supports a number of projects grouped within its strategic research initiatives, which reflect current research concerns in the international and UK academic communities. These are: Cultural heritage, society and economy in Turkey; Migration, minorities and regional identities; Interconnections of peace and conflict: culture, politics and institutions in national, regional and international perspectives; Anglo-Turkish relations in the 20th century; Climate changes and the environment; Habitat and settlement in prehistoric, historic and contemporary perspectives; Legacy data: using the past for the future. The Institute also offers a range of grants, scholarships and fellowships to support undergraduate and post-doctoral research.

The BIAA is an organisation that welcomes new members. As its role in Turkey develops and extends to new disciplines, it hopes to attract the support of academics, students and others who have diverse interests in Turkey and the Black Sea region. The annual subscription (discounted for students and the unwaged) entitles members to: copies of the annual journal, Anatolian Studies, the annual magazine, Heritage Turkey, and newsletters; a 20% discount on BIAA monographs published by Oxbow Books and a 30% discount on books relating to Turkey published by I.B. Tauris; use of the Institute’s facilities in Ankara, including the hostel, research library of 65,000 volumes, laboratories, computer services and extensive research and archival collections; attend all BIAA lectures, events and receptions held in London or elsewhere in the UK; nominate candidates for and stand for election to the Institute’s Council; and discounts on Turkish holidays organised by travel firms closely associated with the BIAA. Membership including subscription to Anatolian Studies costs £50 per year (or £25 for students and unwaged).

To join the Institute, or for further information about its work, please contact us at biaa@britac.ac.uk | www.biaa.ac.uk

Council of Management 2017
Chairman Professor Stephen Mitchell
Honorary Secretary Shamina Farid
Honorary Treasurer Anthony Sheppard

Elected Members
Dr Orthon Anastasakis, Professor Jim Crow, Dr Katerina Delacoura, Dr Warren Dockter, Professor William Hale, Dr Tamar Hodos, Sir David Logan, Dr Bill Park, Professor Scott Redford, Jill Sindall
President Professor David Hawkins, Vice-Presidents Sir Timothy Daut, Sir Matthew Farrer, Sir David Logan
Honorary Vice-President His Excellency Mr Abdurrahman Bilgiç

Director Dr Lutgarde Vandeput

The British Institute at Ankara is an independent academic institution. It is committed to freedom of expression and has no governmental or party-political connections. As an institution devoted to the principle of academic freedom, research and activities sponsored by the BIAA may sometimes address issues which are politically sensitive. The BIAA accepts no responsibility for views expressed or conclusions reached in research and activities which it sponsors.

© British Institute at Ankara 2017.
A company limited by guarantee, registered in England No. 477436.
Registered Office: 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. Charity Commission Reference 313940.
Edited by Gina Coulthard.
ISSN 2057-889X.
Printed in the United Kingdom at Bell & Bain Ltd, Glasgow.

The front cover shows Ariassos on the Pisidia Heritage Trail (© Ekin Kazan): see page 12.

THE FUTURE OF THE BIAA DEPENDS INCREASINGLY ON THE SUPPORT OF THOSE WHO APPRECIATE OUR WORK. ONE WAY YOU CAN HELP SECURE THIS FUTURE IS BY LEAVING THE BIAA A LEGACY.

Legacies often enable people to consider larger gifts than might ever be possible during their lifetime. But regardless of size, all legacies are a simple, effective and generous way to support the Institute’s work. So please consider including a gift, small or large, in your Will, whether as a general donation or linked to a particular area of personal interest. Your generosity will help ensure that future generations are able to explore, understand and enjoy the treasures of Turkey and the Black Sea.

To discuss your possible interest in leaving a legacy to the BIAA please contact our office at office@biaa.ac.uk or by telephone on 00 44 020 7969 5794. Alternatively, you can visit the website at http://biaa.ac.uk/support-us/legacy. It can be an important way of taking action if you have already made – guidance is also available on the website.

Whatever your decision, thank you for taking time to consider our request.

Professor Stephen Mitchell
Chairman