LEGACY DATA: USING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

Legacy data present an immensely rich and varied body of largely unstudied information that allows present-day scientists and researchers further understanding of Turkey and the Black Sea region. The British Institute at Ankara's own historical collections, including paper and photographic archives as well as archaeological collections, offer insights into the evolution of the topic or material under study as well as information about assets now lost. The Institute owns collections of squeezes and ceramic sherds as well as large photographic collections and archives that offer excellent study material for scholars in many disciplines, including archaeologists, historians, anthropologists and specialists in epigraphy and ethnology. This strategic research initiative aims to promote interdisciplinary academic research that relates to legacy data concentrating on Turkey and the Black Sea region. Work on the Institute's collections will be an important focus, as will research on other legacy data available in Turkey and the Black Sea region.

The Institute's digital repository: work in progress

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Work on preparations for the creation of the Institute's digital repository have continued throughout 2020. Since the previous report was published in last year's *Heritage Turkey*, the repository's Assistant Manager, Gonca Özger, and I have made assessments of both the physical and digital collections and have continued the preparation of guidelines and policy documents for the digital repository. For the historical collections, it is difficult to determine the metadata. Information and communication technologies are changing rapidly, and it is challenging to adapt to new technologies and transform the old systems and databases into up-to-date ones. Nonetheless, the digital repository staff are working on the datasets and applying international metadata standards in order to update them. Another aspect of the ongoing work is the linking of the data of the Institute's collections with those of related datasets and the use of controlled vocabularies to define the data. Data verification is proving to be extremely time consuming because the archivist not only needs to check all the available information, but also to conduct further research in order to improve and expand it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected cultural heritage organisations greatly and forced institutions to transform their interactions and adopt digital means of communication. Thus the Institute started working online and using a digital platform to share documents. Given that the BIAA has existed for more than 70 years, files and folders generated over the course of this time needed to be organised on the digital platform in order to increase efficiency and performance. The availability of the platform has been a great benefit, and has allowed us to work online with interns and volunteers during the pandemic.

Gonca Özger started work on 16 March 2020 as the repository's Assistant Manager, and, due to COVID-19, that had to be done online rather than in person. She has since prepared assessment reports for the photographic, squeeze, bone and botanical collections. She has also worked on the international standards to be applied to the datasets of the collections and digitised old documents for the digital repository. The Research Scholar, Joshua Britton, has helped to organise the digital files for remote working and has focused on entering keywords for the photographic collection. Interns and volunteers Luciarita Nunziata, Orhun Uğur, Münevver Erdoğan, Elif Nur Hamamcı, Sarka Velharticka, Muhammed Ali Akman and Tolga Karakoç have all worked for the digital repository office and library, and have helped to organise the physical archives. During the pandemic, some of the interns have continued to work with the digital collections online. They have also prepared reports on the squeeze archive, continued keyword entry, reassessed the Alan Hall archive and worked on georeferencing locations related to the collection materials. Georeferencing is vital for locating the collection data, and the Digital Repository Office is checking international resources (such as the *Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names* and *Pleiades*, a community-built gazetteer of ancient places) to find toponyms and match locations with coordinates. It is also continuing work on setting up the digital infrastructure for the repository system and it is hoped to have the first phase ready in the early part of 2021.

The British Institute at Ankara is affected by the current pandemic just like other GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) institutions. Working experiences have been altered, and researchers have required more extensive and more frequent online access to collections all over the world. Open-access online collections have become more important than ever before. Throughout the pandemic, international institutions, universities and NGOs, such as UNESCO and the International Federation of Library Associations, have been preparing guidelines and arranging events and conferences on how to handle and organise both physical and digital collections, on cataloguing and on increasing access rates. The Digital Repository Assistant Manager and I have both attended webinars and online conferences in order to learn about the latest developments that will enable us to create and expand the Institute's network.

The BIAA is also involved in the SEADDA Project, a community of archaeologists and digital specialists working together to secure the future of archaeological data across Europe and beyond (https://www.seadda.eu/). Whilst face-to-face meetings were cancelled due to COVID-19, network activities have continued, and, as the Digital Repository Manager, I have attended online working-group and steering-committee meetings. I was the co-chair of Working Group 3 (Preservation and Dissemination Best Practice) and am now co-chair of Working Group 2 (Planning for Archiving).

Furthermore, the Digital Repository Office has translated the compact guide *Guidelines to FAIRify Data Management and Make Data Reusable* (*Veri Yönetimi ve Verinin Yeniden Kullanımı İçin FAIR Prensipleri Rehberi*) into Turkish (https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3937149). Open-access and FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) principles are useful for academics and repositories as a means to protect digital cultural heritage and increase access rates.

I have also participated in several training programmes over the past year, including an online course offered by the Digital Preservation Coalition ('Novice to Know-How: Online Digital Preservation Training') and the 'Methods of Digital Scholarship' course in Cologne, Germany, from 4 to

Intern Elif Nur Hamamcı working on the catalogue of duplicates for the BIAA library.

7 February 2020, thanks to a grant from COST Action, where I learnt about new digital methods for digital research. I also attended the 'Intangible Cultural Heritage Online Summer School' (29 June to 5 July), organised by the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO and the Institute for Intangible Cultural Heritage, as a discussant.

In October I spoke about national policies and directives relating to digital archaeology in Turkey at an online roundtable session ('Current Status and the Future of Digital Archaeology') of the Greek Chapter of the CAA (Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology), an international organisation bringing together archaeologists, mathematicians and computer scientists. Finally, to coincide with International Museum Day on 18 May, I moderated an online panel discussing 'The Pandemic and the Future of Museums Online'.

By participating in such events, not only do the staff of the Digital Repository Office receive further professional training and engage with colleagues worldwide, but also the visibility of the Institute's extensive and invaluable collections continues to be expanded.

Gonca Özger working – in COVID-safe attire – on the Alan Hall collections and archives.

Orhun Uğur explaining the keyword entry system for the library and photographic catalogues.