

The Pisidia Heritage Trail guidebook

Işıl Gürsu | British Institute at Ankara

Since its inception in 2013, the British Institute at Ankara's cultural heritage management initiative has evolved into a range of projects at various scales. One of these projects has focused on the ancient region of Pisidia. Located in the western part of the magnificent Taurus mountains, which separate the Mediterranean coastline from the Anatolian plateau, Pisidia today covers the north of Antalya, Burdur and Isparta. As I have reported in previous editions of *Heritage Turkey*, this project has resulted in the creation of the Pisidia Heritage Trail (PHT), a long-distance trekking trail that is more than 350km long and connects 12 archaeological sites. The trail has been waymarked with tailor-made marks in the form of red-painted Pisidian shields.

After a three-year hiatus due to commitments to other cultural heritage projects and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, at the start of next year another major element of the PHT will be completed: a dedicated guidebook describing the trail and its surroundings. The guidebook will be published by the British Institute at Ankara (BIAA) in early 2022, in both English and Turkish, and will be available for purchase through the Institute's website. Please keep following the BIAA's social media channels for further updates.

The guidebook is written in an interpretive style and targets a general audience. It is concerned not only with the archaeology of the region, but also with its flora and with stories from its recent past, its current residents and their relationship with the ruins, as well as their expectations of the archaeological assets. The book includes dedicated chapters on eight archaeological sites. Each contains information about the site, its history and its surviving monuments, as well as the living heritage around the site. A route description, detailing the part of the trail around the archaeological site presented in the chapter as well as the flora along this section of the trail, follows. The route descriptions within the guidebook have been written by Ümit Işın, an archaeologist and professional tour guide. Another contributor to the book is Gökhan Deniz from Akdeniz University, who is the author of the sections on the plants of the region. Gökhan has collected, photographed and written about a selection of endemic plants as well as those that have a local use.

In order to create a visual image of how the ancient Pisidian cities looked, we have partnered with Lithomodos VR to launch the Pisidia Heritage Trail Mobile App, which contains 3D reconstructions of some selected monuments as well as accompanying explanatory texts. The app, available free of charge on Android and iOS systems, offers 360° views that show the buildings in their original landscapes. Just search 'Pisidia Heritage Trail' via Google Play or the App Store and download it to your mobile device. You can



A Pisidian shield waymark along the trail, around Sia.

then go on a journey to the ancient sites in Pisidia either through your device screen or by linking your device to the VR glasses that will come with the guidebook.

The final fieldwork linked to the PHT project was realised in October when I visited the sites mentioned in the guidebook with Lutgarde Vandeput and Ümit Işın; we were briefly joined by Melike Gül. The purpose of the trip was to proof read the draft guidebook in situ, in Pisidia, and to try all the viewpoints listed in the Pisidia Heritage Trail app. When used on site, the mobile app offers a whole new visitor experience by presenting an 80–85% accurate reconstruction of how the remaining ruins of a particular monument looked in the past. These reconstructions have been made possible thanks to the years of meticulous archaeological fieldwork in Pisidia led by Lutgarde Vandeput and Stephen Mitchell.

Thus the guidebook aims to create a sense of 'being there', in ancient Pisidia almost 2,000 years ago. Obviously, it is not possible to know for certain what the inhabitants of the region saw, heard or smelt in antiquity. Nonetheless, the 3D reconstructions of the visible remains, a text written in an interpretive style enriched with the results of botanical and ethnographic studies and a waymarked trail offering the opportunity to explore the region fully have a common goal: to establish a timeless relationship between the people of the past and those interested in the region today.

Announcement: public archaeology volume

The edited volume *Public Archaeology: Theoretical Considerations and Current Practices*, published as a BIAA monograph in 2019, has been translated into Turkish as an open-access electronic publication. It can be downloaded from the BIAA's website: <https://doi.org/10.18866/BIAA/e-16>.