

CULTURAL HERITAGE, SOCIETY & ECONOMY

The promotion, management and regulation of cultural heritage is a complex process involving many different agents and stakeholders on local, national and international levels. It is a critical element of public policy involving a diverse range of actors such as international organisations, governmental ministries and agencies, political parties, private organisations, museums and local communities. How cultural heritage is produced and consumed, interpreted and understood can have profound impacts on structuring social and economic interaction and decision-making. Likewise, it influences the formation of social values and ideas as well as notions of common identity and history. It also affects economic and infrastructural development across a range of different levels. Cultural heritage management and its importance has only become an issue recently in Turkey and is now rapidly developing. As a result, a whole range of new issues and problems for which solutions have to be found within Turkey, but also on a much wider scale, has risen. It is these inter-relationships that are contained within the field of cultural heritage that this Strategic Research Initiative sets out to examine in the Turkish context.

The BIAA's cultural heritage management project

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This joint project of the British Institute at Ankara (BIAA) and the Archaeology Department of Hacettepe University builds on the results of the Aspendos Archaeological Project and the Pisidia Survey Project, and began in January 2013 (www.kulturelmirasyonetimi.com/en). It has been generously supported by the Headley Trust as well as the BIAA. The project involves both theoretical and practical aspects, and concerns two case studies: Aspendos and Pisidia. The first phase is dedicated to the preparation of a site management plan for Aspendos and its surroundings, followed by the creation of a regional cultural heritage management plan for Pisidia, an ancient region located in the Taurus mountains to the north of the Pamphylian plain.

Aspendos

In September 2013, Veli Köse of Hacettepe University was granted the official excavation permit for the site of Aspendos. During the first excavation season (July to August 2014), cultural heritage management was one of the project's priorities. A team of researchers collected a substantial amount of both qualitative and quantitative data for the people-centred approach to cultural heritage that the project is trying to emphasise by interviewing visitors, on the one hand, and local inhabitants, on the other. Hakan Tarhan (Boğaziçi University) undertook on-site interviews as part of the visitor survey programme. He interviewed 300 international and Turkish visitors and 50 professional tour guides, while I (as the BIAA Cultural Heritage Management Fellow) conducted in-depth visitor interviews at the site with a smaller group of visitors. Güldem Büyüksaraç (Istanbul

University) conducted interviews with the local community in order to understand their attachment to the site and their perceptions related to the presence of an archaeological team. These interviews have revealed interesting insights that will help the team to understand the various ways in which visitors and local people interpret the site and shed light on the experience of an archaeological site visit.

The excavation house was often visited by local youngsters; the building has a large garden and was formerly the primary school – the usual playground for the neighbourhood children. They enjoyed the presence of the archaeological team and each day there were young visitors with different demands and creative ideas. An educational workshop is being planned for the local children in order to give them an idea of how archaeologists work.



Our young visitors at the excavation house.

Following the excavation season, meetings took place at the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism regarding a 'landscaping project' and an application for UNESCO World Heritage Listing for Aspendos. The landscaping project is based on plans that have been prepared in the light of the data collected during the 2014 season. It will be implemented by the Ministry from the end of 2014 onwards and involves the creation of various walking routes for visitors and the placement of information boards around the site. The second phase of the landscaping project will concentrate on the use of the Eurymedon (Köprüçay) river, which is very close to Aspendos, within the concept of eco-tourism. Preliminary investigations were undertaken for this purpose during the recent season.

All the necessary documents for the application to add Aspendos to the UNESCO World Heritage List have been submitted to the Ministry. The official application will be made by the Ministry in February 2015.

A website for visitors to Aspendos is being prepared: www.aspendosgezi.com and www.touraspendos.com.

Pisidia

Pisidia is the ancient name of the region in southern Turkey that lies within the boundaries of modern Antalya, Isparta and Burdur. This highland region stretches north from the gulf of Antalya as far as the Burdur, Eğirdir and Beyşehir lakes. It contains many archaeological sites, including Cremna, Ariassos, Sia, Pednelissos, Selge, Melli, Adada, Kapıkaya, Sagalassos and Termessos. These sites, which are hidden amongst the beautiful forests of Pisidia, offer a unique and quasi-poetic experience to their rare visitors.

Various scholars affiliated with the BIAA have conducted research in many of these Pisidian cities for almost 30 years. Over the course of this time, they have witnessed worsening conditions at most of these sites due to illicit digging and neglect. In an attempt to seek solutions to these problems, in 2013 the BIAA launched a project (Regional cultural heritage management of the Pisidia region) which aims to construct a theoretical framework, and set a standard, for cultural heritage management in the region.

A further project (The development of archaeological and eco-tourism in the ancient Pisidia region) aims to promote the cultural and natural heritage of the region for those visitors who enjoy off-the-beaten-track experiences and to implement a sustainable management plan which will enable the local communities to offer proper visitor facilities within the concept of eco-tourism.

The deliverables of the project can be defined within three categories. The first relates to local people and involves educating locals about the archaeological remains, raising awareness about the consequences of illicit digging and promoting conservation. Local families living along defined tourist routes will be encouraged to use their houses as b&bs. Local knowledge of the region's fauna, flora, traditions and



The Eurymedon (Köprüçay) river, close to Aspendos.

cuisine will be gathered in order to create an intangible heritage inventory of the region. Sales of locally-produced food and crafts to both visitors and online buyers will be fostered. The desired outcome is to encourage young people to remain in their home towns by helping them create sustainable economic activities.

The second category relates to the archaeological sites themselves. The aim is to create walking routes and to place information panels at selected sites. This aspect will be developed further by building on the accumulated scientific expertise of both past scholarship and the continuing cultural heritage management project which will conduct an anthropological survey in order to reveal the local peoples' attitudes and attachments to the sites. The desired outcome is to create a local awareness about the cultural heritage of the region and attract 'sensitive' visitors, such as trekkers, who enjoy both archaeological heritage and nature.

The final category focuses on visitors and outreach. The overall aim is to promote the area as a destination for visitors looking for an off-the-beaten-track experience. Brochures will be produced and websites and social media will be used. Ultimately, a visitor centre will be built at one of the sites. The desired outcomes are to reach potential visitors (both Turkish and international) and foster local involvement in the conservation of archaeological heritage through its economic exploitation in a controlled manner.

Earlier this year, I made a first reconnaissance trip to the sites in Pisidia with Umit Işın, who is an archaeologist and professional tour guide specialising in archaeological and ecological tours in the region. Preliminary investigation of local perceptions/attitudes towards archaeology was undertaken during this first visit. Further and in-depth research is planned for 2014–2015. A second visit to the region will be made shortly, during which Stephen Mitchell and Lutgarde Vandeput will be interviewed at the sites where they have worked for many years. These interviews will be filmed and published on the project's website; the launch of the Pisidia cultural heritage management web-site is imminent: www.pisidiagezi.com and www.pisidiatour.com.

Public archaeology workshop

The last, but not least, element of the BIAA's project on cultural heritage management is its public archaeology workshop. The workshop, titled 'Public archaeology: theoretical considerations and current practice in Turkey', was organised by the BIAA in partnership with Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations and was sponsored by the Headley Trust. The workshop took place in late October 2014 at the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, Istanbul. It was triggered by questions about the relationship of archaeology with contemporary society. The workshop dealt with current issues in public archaeology and cultural heritage management from two perspectives: the changing people-based perception and understanding of archaeological heritage; and the new context created by the rapid growth of the tourism industry.

The workshop brought together international scholars in order to exchange ideas on the theoretical and practical aspects of public archaeology. The organisers placed particular emphasis on ensuring the participation of a full range of practitioners, such as Turkish museum workers, representatives from the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, site managers and archaeologists. Participation from the UK, which has a longstanding tradition of cultural heritage management (institutionalised in such organisations as English Heritage and the National Trust), was ensured in order to enhance the intellectual exchange about the ways in which Turkey's rich archaeological heritage can be presented to the wider public.



Sia in Pisidia.

Prototyping new technologies for public presentation at Çatalhöyük

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The Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük has long been used innovatively to interpret the archaeological record for public audiences. The site has a 50+ year history of producing a range of creative outputs for local and international dissemination, including everything from illustration, photography, film, comics and fine art interventions, to museum displays and other temporary exhibitions. The exceptional nature of Çatalhöyük's stratigraphy, its remarkable wall paintings and sculptural art, its egalitarian social organisation and urbanised terrain (characterised by continuous house clusters in streetless neighbourhoods) make it the perfect fodder for public presentation.

In recognition of its one-of-a-kind stature, Çatalhöyük was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2012. This led to a swell of demands upon the site, including an increase in expectant tourists seeking resonant experiences both before, during and after their visits. Between 2010 and 2013, visitor numbers rose from 15,000 to over 20,000 at Çatalhöyük. Although such an increase is not inconsistent with larger tourism trends since 2002, it has been accompanied by a profound change in visitor demographic. Internationals are now coming to the site in increasingly equal numbers to locals. Whole new audiences have begun to present themselves, with a massive increase in Japanese tourists: from just 26 in 2011 to nearly 3,000 in 2013. And other groups are arriving in higher numbers too (for example a near 70% increase in Americans between 2011 and 2013).

These shifts offer an important opportunity to engage new and larger groups of people through meaningful forms of site interpretation. Çatalhöyük, however, is a difficult site to explain to visitors. To the untrained eye, the archaeology here is partial, seemingly poorly-preserved, fairly uniform in colour, with features that can be hard to differentiate. Visitors must stay on a fixed path, cannot venture inside excavated buildings and cannot look at authentic artefactual assemblages (because they are usually immediately removed for processing and conservation, and then transferred to the Konya Archaeological Museum). This means the most distinguishable aspects of the site are inaccessible to visitors, sometimes leaving them confused, disoriented or otherwise uninformed.

For the past three years, Angeliki Chrysanthi (University of Southampton) and students from the University of York and Ege University have been studying visitor flow, dwelling time and viewing patterns as they tour Çatalhöyük. By providing consenting visitors with digital point-and-shoot cameras and portable GPS units, and comparing the resulting data with observational records that we have been collecting since 2009, we have been able to confirm several tourist trends.