

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, have arisen. It is these inter-relationships contained within the field of cultural heritage that this Strategic Research Initiative sets out to examine in the Turkish context.

Archaeological- and eco-tourism in Pisidia

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Public archaeology and the promotion and management of cultural heritage represent important new approaches to the understanding and appreciation of Turkey's rich historic and archaeological past. The British Institute at Ankara is at the forefront of these developments and, since 2013, has been conducting one of the pioneer cultural heritage management programmes in Turkey. The programme concentrates on two sites – Aspendos and Pisidia – and is mainly funded by the Headley Trust and the Institute. The projects at both sites aim to create a 'road map' that will lay out guidelines for the implementation of an archaeological heritage management plan. The road maps will focus on the documentation and preservation of archaeological sites and the potential, with local collaboration, for sustainable socio-economic benefits.

The Aspendos and Pisidia projects have been developed separately, and the first phase of work was dedicated to the preparation of a sustainable development plan for the cultural and natural heritage of Aspendos and its surroundings, in collaboration with Hacettepe University, Ankara. This plan is now being put into action (see the next article, pages 34–35). The second phase consists of the creation of a regional cultural heritage plan for the ancient area of Pisidia, located in the Taurus mountain range to the north of the Pamphylian plain.

Destination Pisidia!

Pisidia is the ancient name of the region in southern Turkey that lies within the boundaries of the modern provinces of Antalya, Isparta and Burdur. This highland region stretches north of the coastal plain of Antalya and includes lakes

Burdur, Eğirdir and Beyşehir. Although Pisidia is extremely rich in terms of its archaeological heritage, it is little known and almost entirely unvisited.

This cultural heritage management project focuses on the ancient cities of southern Pisidia, most of which have been investigated by archaeologists affiliated with the British Institute at Ankara over the past three decades. These include Pednelissos, Melli, Sia, Ariassos, Cremna, Adada, Selge, Kapıkaya and Döşeme Boğazı. Despite its proximity to Antalya, one of the main tourism hubs of Turkey, this 20,000km² area does not attract or cater for visitors.

The city sites, hidden amongst the stunning forests of Pisidia, offer a unique and sublime experience to the occasional visitor. Considerable damage and deterioration have been noted at many of these Pisidian cities since initial investigations by Institute-affiliated archaeologists. Much of the destruction is due to illicit digging, but neglect is also a cause, and neither problem can be addressed by laws and regulations alone. Successful intervention has to involve the local communities in the protection of their heritage.

Thus this project for the development of archaeological- and eco-tourism in the ancient region of Pisidia aims to promote both the cultural and the natural heritage of the region for visitors, and especially for those who enjoy an off-the-beaten-track experience. Additionally, the project aims to implement a sustainable management plan which will enable local communities to offer suitable visitor facilities based on the ethos of eco-tourism. It is neither anticipated nor intended that Pisidia will become a mass-tourist destination within the foreseeable future; it could, however, become a 'green destination', so long as sensible strategies are introduced. As such, the region has the potential to become a model for other similar areas in Turkey.

The British Institute at Ankara has been trying to raise funds for the implementation of this project. The Pisidia Appeal has been one of the initiatives towards this goal (www.biaa.ac.uk/donate/pisidia-appeal; and see the advert on the inside back cover of this magazine). With contributions from supporters of the Institute based in the UK, Turkey and across the world, the project can continue to produce tangible results which will touch the lives of both the local communities living in the vicinity of the sites and those travellers who would come to explore this beautiful region.

The elements of the project that have been developed in order to promote Pisidia as a destination are formulated under two headings: those directed at visitors and those involving local communities.

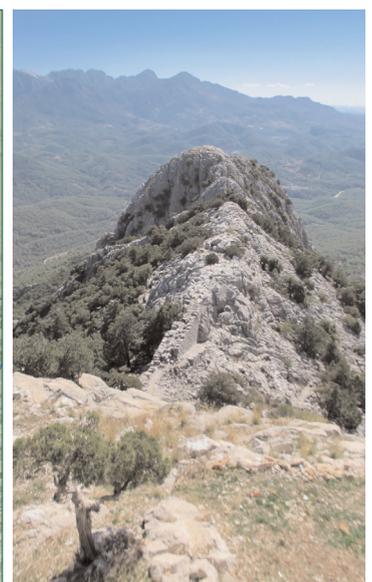
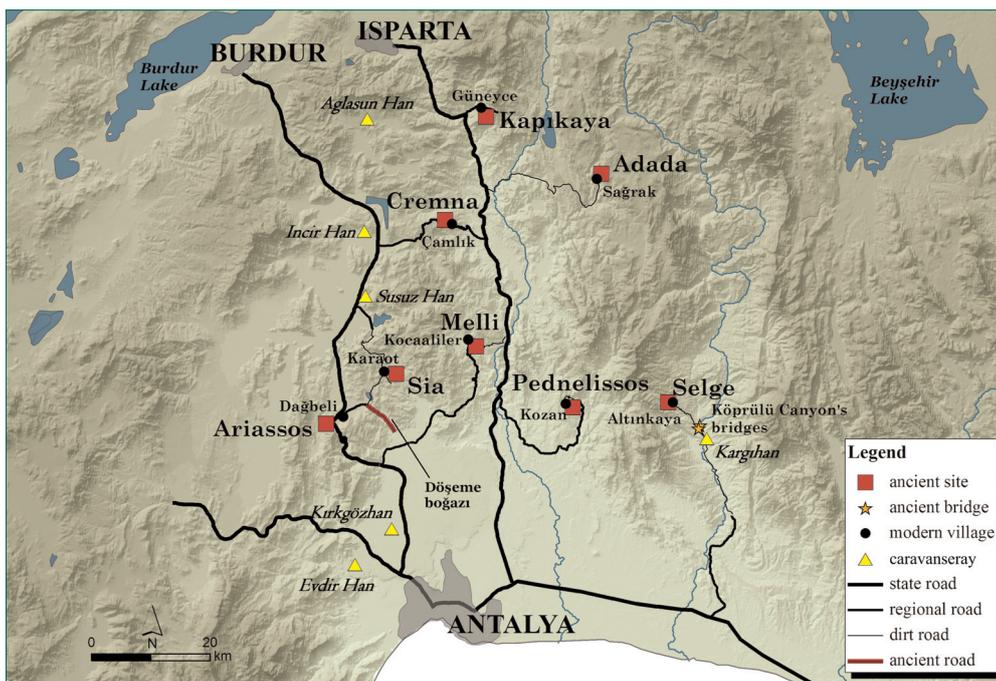
The elements of the project targeted at visitors involve the development of outreach facilities; these include the construction of very light infrastructure around the sites and making information about them available to potential visitors. Pisidian sites are valuable not only because of their archaeological importance, but also for the landscape in which they are located. There are already some paths that connect the sites to each other, some of which are remnants of ancient roads, and the ultimate aim is to create walking routes in Pisidia. This can be done by identifying viable routes and installing informative signage along them in order to orientate hikers and mountain bikers. GPS points that identify archaeological or natural points of interest can be shared via corresponding websites, apps for smartphones and printed maps in a guidebook.

One element of the project to promote Pisidia as a destination – ‘(un)known Pisidia’ – aims to evaluate the archaeological sites within their landscape, to produce

brochures and a website, and to use new technologies for the presentation of sites. For instance, stable solar-powered observation binoculars with Oculus Rift technology can be placed on site to display virtual three-dimensional reconstructions of monuments.

The second element of the project aims to raise local awareness about archaeological heritage and promote the Pisidia project in general. This will include bringing locals and archaeologists together for information sharing about the findings of surveys and excavations along with providing technical assistance for the conversion of a few houses to B&Bs; there are some traditional stone houses in the region which might be potential accommodation units. Additionally, capacity building in terms of developing organic farming and eco-tourism is another component of this part of the project. Lastly, the creation of an intangible heritage inventory of the region is planned. The inventory will include local cuisine, festivals, music, living traditions, etc., in order to promote these characteristics of contemporary life in the region.

To enable the realisation of the projects detailed above, we have started contacting government offices. Three informative meetings have been undertaken with Burdur Museum, Isparta Museum and the Regional Conservation Council. We are also preparing for exploratory trekking trips with Ümit Işın, a professional tour guide and an archaeologist with whom we will collaborate for the creation of paths and routes around and between the sites. Therefore, we plan to be in the Taurus mountains towards the end of this year and will share our findings via our website (www.culturalheritageturkey.com), and we look forward to the development of mobile apps and the publication of a guidebook in 2016!



Map of ancient Pisidia (produced by Michele Massa) and view of Pednelissos in Pisidia