

From the Director, Lutgarde Vandeput

Ankara, November 2016

doi:10.18866/biaa2016.018

Dear members,

Reading through the past ten years of my ‘letters from the Director’ in the Institute’s magazine, I realise that these have brought a lot of ups and downs to your attention and mentioned quite a few smaller and larger issues that the BIAA has struggled with. Unfortunately, I am afraid that 2016 stands out as a year in which problems have taken on larger dimensions; it has been a year in which the Institute has been caught up in the large-scale turmoil reigning throughout Turkey and the wider region. Ankara has experienced several terrorist attacks and the authorities have thwarted many more. In July, the BIAA lived through the failed coup attempt and is now experiencing the consequences of this action on a wide swathe of the Turkish population. Needless to say, such events have had and are still having an impact on everybody at the Institute’s premises here in Ankara. Perhaps the strangest feeling is that people in Turkey continue their daily lives as if nothing much has changed. However, this image of ‘normality’ is shattered as soon as one switches on a news report on the radio or television or opens a newspaper.

The BIAA, along with the other overseas schools and institutes sponsored by the British Academy, has also had a difficult year for other reasons: the funding situation and the terms and conditions linked to the grant for the current financial year (2016–2017) and the next three years remained unclear for a very long time. As I write, we still do not have a signed-off agreement on our grant with the British Academy. Some things are certain, however: spending will be tied to extremely strict rules and we will spend a lot of time reporting to the British Academy. The grant has also been reduced in comparison to last financial year. Combined with challenging currency exchange rates, this amounts to reduction in real terms of ca 15% compared to our grant for 2015–2016.

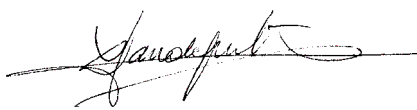
Despite these circumstances, the Institute has been very active over the past year. Several events, such as lectures, panels and workshops, have taken place in Ankara and London. You can browse through these on the totally updated BIAA website. This huge job was realised thanks to the Assistant Director, Leonidas Karakatsanis, with the help of the 2016 Research Scholar, William Lewis. Two BIAA Postdoctoral Fellows have been appointed for 2016–2017, and they started their research in September. Ender Peker holds a PhD from the University of Reading and is working on climate-responsive urban living environments. While at the Institute, he will focus his research on the city of Rize on the Black Sea coast. John McManus holds a PhD in social and cultural anthropology from the University of Oxford and is working on football as an identity-building element of Turkish popular culture, both in Turkey and beyond, as well as on the role of sport in the integration of Syrian refugees.

Thanks to a new grant from the Headley Trust, Işlay Gürsu is continuing her research as part of the BIAA cultural heritage management and public archaeology projects in Aspendos and Pisidia. Daniel-Joseph McArthur-Seal, as the Postdoctoral Fellow of the BIAA programme ‘Turkey and Britain 1914–1952: From Enemies to Allies’, is currently organising the project’s second workshop. A report on the first one features in this edition of *Heritage Turkey*.

The previous two paragraphs have drawn attention to a few members of the community based here at the Institute in Ankara. You can see most of us in the photo below, taken at a small lunch party, organised by Gülgün and Leo, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of my directorship. The party was lovely!

But the BIAA is all about research, of course, and I hope that reading about the projects that have taken place in 2016 in the following pages will show you that the Institute is very much alive and active across a wide variety of disciplines!

With best wishes from Ankara,



Lutgarde Vandeput

