

Past and future: remembering the BIAA's history in 2016

William Lewis | BIAA & Cardiff University

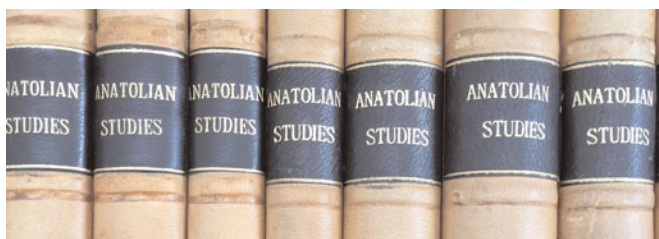
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As the British Institute at Ankara faces up to the challenges of the future, it seems natural to look back on the successes of the past. In the many decades since the early days of John Garstang and Seton Lloyd, the BIAA has transformed itself from a trailblazing base for archaeological excavations into a modern, multidisciplinary research institution which supports a vast and diverse array of projects. And as it approaches its 70th anniversary in 2018, the Institute has been working keenly on projects exploring and commemorating its history, a programme I was involved in as this past year's Research Scholar.

The BIAA's Research Scholarship serves a dual purpose. First, it supports pre-doctoral research, which typically leads into a PhD project. Second, the scholars also work on the Institute's in-house projects, whether looking forwards to the future – for example this year saw the creation of a UK-wide contact database of researchers specialising in Turkey and the wider region – or working on consolidating the BIAA's long and productive history. Previous years have seen extensive work on organising and digitising the BIAA's many archival resources; future scholars will continue this project while working on updating the library's categorisations and keywords.

During my time as Research Scholar, I used the Institute's archives to support work on two projects concerning the BIAA's heritage. The first of these is a short film documenting the BIAA's history, created by the Assistant Director, Leonidas Karakatsanis. The second is a major expansion of the BIAA website, focusing on past projects, appointments and the BIAA's long and interesting history in the region, again overseen by Leonidas. My own work as Research Scholar focused on finding background information and photographs for both projects – a difficult task given the sheer size of the BIAA's collections!

The Institute's own journal, *Anatolian Studies*, was the natural starting point. As well as being the major repository of the BIAA's research output since 1951, the older issues of *Anatolian Studies* have matured into rich historical documents in themselves. In addition to providing records of dates and office holders, the sometimes-personal introductory sections and always-heartfelt obituaries from the early years never failed to bring colour and pathos to the



The Edinburgh University Land Rover, used by Alan Hall and Michael Ballance, among others, for their epigraphic research in the 1950s

project. Furthermore, the broadening horizons of the BIAA become all the clearer when looking at these volumes. While once the Institute was comprised solely of archaeologists, now it is home to political scientists, specialists in cultural heritage management, historians, anthropologists, conservationists and experts in many other diverse fields, all while staying faithful to the original vision of the BIAA as one of the most active archaeological institutions in Turkey.

But while *Anatolian Studies* conveys the breadth of the BIAA's activities, the photographic archive displays its physical reach. There are more than 40,000 photos, slides and negatives, all originating from the Institute's innumerable research projects across Turkey. Almost 600 photos from the 20th century have already been made available online, and are accessible at <http://biaatr.org/>. By the end of the year, with the addition of a large part of the digitised archive, this number will reach 9,000. From the grainy sepia hues of the earliest digs in the late 1940s through to the latest digital photos of ongoing excavations, this collection serves not only to record the BIAA's extensive research on Anatolia but also the history of the institution and the researchers themselves.

The search for photographs to use in these projects turned out to be one of the most involved and engaging aspects of them. Everyone at the Institute was keen to volunteer their own photos and reminisce about old times and former colleagues, as were two former directors – David French and Hugh Elton – who visited Ankara during the summer. Credit must go to David in particular; his keen memory has been invaluable for finding and identifying photos from his long tenure in Ankara!

Both these projects have been very successful. The film commemorating the Institute's history was presented at the British Academy Soirée last May and the expanded sections of the website have already gone live. Both are available to be explored at <http://biaa.ac.uk> – I hope you can find the time to have a look!