

## Cultural heritage management in southwestern Asia

### Minor: on track!

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Since the beginning of 2013, the British Institute at Ankara has invested in a large-scale heritage management project which has received mosaic-funding from a wide range of private donors, charities and funds; the Headley Trust, in particular, has been a notable sponsor. The project has been developed and managed by Işılai Gürsu, the Institute's cultural heritage management postdoctoral fellow, who has done – and continues to do – a fabulous job. As already reported in previous editions of *Heritage Turkey*, the project has concentrated, on the one hand, on the well-known and well-visited ancient city of Aspendos in the Pamphylian plain and, on the other, on the region of Pisidia, with its many ancient cities tucked away on the high slopes of the Taurus mountains.

In autumn 2016 and spring 2017, the project team mapped out walking and cycling tracks around the archaeological site of Aspendos. These are part of the second phase of the landscaping project and fit within the principles of eco-tourism. The routes allow natural assets to be highlighted, such as the beautiful Eurymedon river (Köprülü çay). Present-day villages, with their old, picturesque stone houses built on and including ancient elements, are also included on the routes, thus offering opportunities for local communities to benefit from visitors using the paths. Last but not least, the Aspendos aqueduct, ancient stone quarries and other archaeological remains, such as monumental tombs and the architectural remains of ancient farmsteads feature along the tracks. The Aspendos excavation project has now taken on the responsibility of the tracks and will work with the Antalya Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Assets (Koruma Kurulu) to implement improvements.

Most energy and attention, however, has been spent finalising the trekking route through the Pisidian Taurus mountains. Most of the track, linking nine individual routes,

amounting to a total length of ca 350km and connecting 12 archaeological sites, had already been established over the course of the last few years (see, also, previous article), but a few missing 'links' were required, and these were created through short, intensive visits during 2017. All the GPS points of different values (archaeological sites, campsites, accommodation, viewpoints, water sources, etc.) were carefully controlled and readied to upload to the application that will be available once the route 'goes live'. The app and the accompanying guidebook should allow visitors to the trail to navigate their way without problems; we deliberately opted for minimal interference on the ground.

In addition, Işılai took several people connected to the BIAA to walk some of the most spectacular stretches of the heritage route (see cover photo). They also starred in a promotional film for the trail shot by a professional film crew! The film is available at the BIAA YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8i7JTwt0kw>. Further Pisidia Heritage Trail content is available on the YouTube channel. Several videos feature Stephen Mitchell and me talking about the archaeological sites and placing the remains in context. You can find these videos, which bring the stones to life, on the web by searching for 'Pisidia Heritage Trail'.

Much other work aimed at bringing the stones to life is under way. Specifically, content is being created for the 3D virtual-reality application noted above. Based on the detailed knowledge of the archaeological sites accumulated through many years of survey conducted in the region, mostly under the auspices of the BIAA, real-time 3D images and videos are being created by Simon Young and his team at Lithodomos VR (<https://lithodomosvr.com/>). The app will be available for downloading and the guidebook will contain special glasses to be used in conjunction with smartphones. At specific spots on several archaeological sites along the trail, these glasses will allow visitors to enjoy the same views as those seen by our ancient ancestors. As a taster, the image below brings to life the agora of Pednelissos, provided you have your glasses on!

