

# The Pisidia Heritage Trail guidebook

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It took a long time for this guidebook to take its final shape. I first visited Pisidia with professional tour guide and archaeologist Ümit Işın in 2013, so we can even call it a decade. In the spring of 2015, I dared to ask Ümit whether we could connect these archaeological sites by walking from each to the next. In October of the same year, we found ourselves at the beginning of a three-year, periodical fieldwork project that marked the trail Ümit now describes in detail in the guidebook.

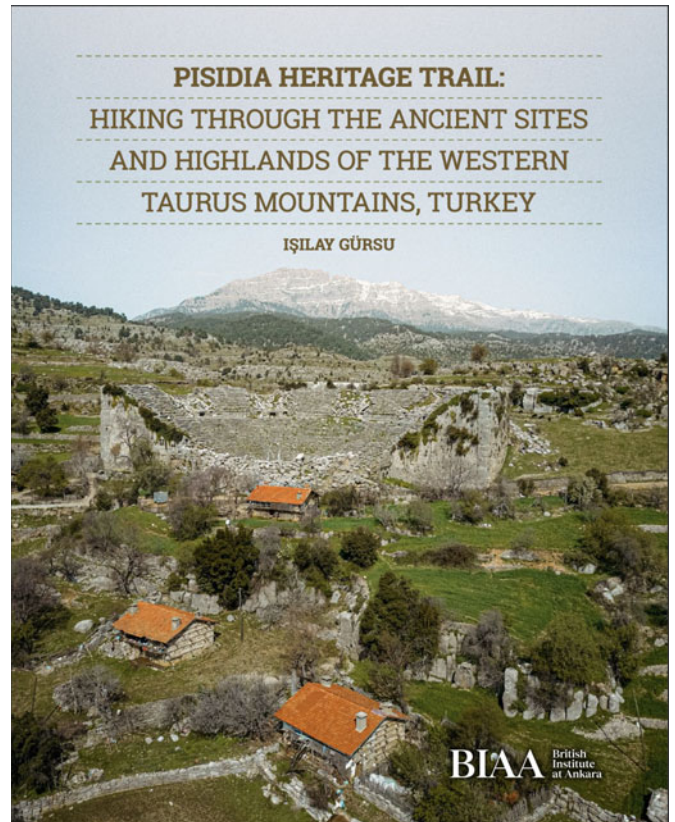
My orientation skills are not very sharp, even in urban contexts. Most of the Pisidian archaeological sites are located far from the blessed coverage of mobile maps. If it was not for Michele Massa and Ümit Işın, we would not have gotten very far in identifying the routes in this rural landscape along the western Taurus Mountains. Michele created the beautiful maps of the trail and meticulously recorded the points of interest, while keeping the whole project on course.

The broader our perspectives became in presenting this landscape, the more attention we paid to smaller things. With the contributions of İsmail Gökhan Deniz, the plants that we had come to label ‘pretty little flowers’ now had names and stories. The section of the book about the plants along the route was written by Gökhan, who also took the photographs. The plants were chosen because they were either endemic to the region or were used in the local diet, for medicinal purposes, or in other ways by the communities.

The guidebook was possible thanks to the contributions of various distinguished experts. It builds on the results of decades of archeological research by the BIAA, especially Lutgarde Vandeput and Stephen Mitchell. Their meticulous records were used to create 3D reconstructions of monuments from sites like Ariassos, Sia, Pednelissos, Döşemeboğazı, Melli, Cremna and Selge. The book is accompanied by the Pisidia Heritage Trail mobile app, developed by Lithodomos VR and free for download on iOS and Android. The print version of the book comes with a pair of mini-VR glasses, making it quite exceptional in its mission to ‘bring archaeology to life’.

Far from the hustle of big cities, the archaeological sites in Pisidia leave their visitors with a sense of deep admiration. Shaped by thousands of years of human activity, this unique landscape now faces various threats, including development projects such as dams and new roads, widespread mining that hollows out mountains, and the pandemic-like spread of illicit digging. The land, along with its communities and cultural heritage, is disappearing at an alarming pace. One way to stand firm against these threats is to foster public awareness about this ancient landscape and its disappearing communities. This is the *raison d'être* of this book.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the sponsors of this work. The Headley Trust was a generous



sponsor of the BIAA’s cultural heritage management project between 2013 and 2017, and it was due to their support as well as that of other institutions including the Aurelius Charitable Trust, the Stevenson Family Charitable Trust, the Leche Trust, the Robert Kiln Charitable Trust and the Society of Dilettanti Charitable Trust that this work was completed. I wish also to thank Reeder, a pioneering Turkish technological company, for their significant and timely contribution of procuring and donating the mini-VR glasses.

The first time I walked in Pisidia with the purpose of creating this book was on 15 October 2015 with Ümit, Michele, Kazım and Melike. The book was printed on 15 October 2022. It has been a seven-year journey, and I am grateful to everyone who walked alongside me.

## Announcements

You can order a copy of the *Pisidia Heritage Trail* guidebook, in English or Turkish via the BIAA’s website: <https://doi.org/10.18866/BIAA/e-18>. Both e-pub and print versions are available. And as part of the BIAA’s 75th anniversary programme, we are inviting our readers to check out a five-day Pisidia Heritage Trail tour (9–13 May 2023) offered by the Equinox Travel and endorsed by the BIAA: <https://biaa.ac.uk/pisidia-heritage-trail-tour>.