

Ankara, October 2023

Dear Members,

January 2023 marked 75 years since the British Institute at Ankara, then the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, was officially inaugurated. We had planned a year of celebratory events, but the disastrous earthquakes of February 2023 made ‘celebrating’ feel totally inappropriate, and the focus here in Ankara turned exclusively to the many victims of the disaster, as well as the survivors. Everyone knew people – family, friends or acquaintances – who did not make it, and we were and are all deeply saddened by the devastating scale of the disaster. Unfortunately, it seems the news agenda has now moved on, and the continuous struggle to clear the immense amount of debris, and to revitalise the area, is simply not discussed. Reports from eyewitnesses make it very clear that there still is a very long way to go.

While the BIAA was unable to directly raise funds for the victims, we did come up with a new ‘Emergency Response Facilitation Grants’ scheme to offer some help to academics from the earthquake zone. With additional funding from the Cultural Protection Fund (<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/cultural-protection-fund>), we were able to support eight academics from the region to come and work at the BIAA. The grant holders, from a variety of disciplines, were from Hatay Mustafa Kemal University (Antakya), Osmaniye Korkut Ata University, Gaziantep University and Adiyaman University. Having survived the devastating earthquakes, they especially appreciated the peace and quiet in the BIAA library, a place to focus on work. The BIAA staff were very happy to have them with us, as they were valuable additions to the small community here. Many have now returned to the earthquake area and are teaching online. Some commute between Ankara and their offices; some no longer have an office to go to. Please keep an eye on upcoming BIAA lectures (<https://biaa.ac.uk/our-events>) because several of our guests will present their work at a BIAA event in the coming months.

After a late start, we were able to mark the 75th anniversary of the Institute with a rich programme of events throughout the year, ranging from Pisidia Heritage Trail walks in the spring and autumn, to conferences, workshops and meetings drawing attention to the BIAA’s current work in heritage management and public archaeology, contemporary and Ottoman studies and archaeological research. You can read more about all our 75th anniversary events in the magazine.

Also this year, Daniel-Joseph McArthur-Seal’s tenure as Assistant Director of Ottoman and Contemporary Türkiye came to an end. We would like to thank him for all his work at the BIAA, especially the renewal of the website, his involvement in moving the BIAA’s collections from custom-made to internationally used systems and the introduction of a cloud-powered platform. We wish Daniel much success during his fellowship at the Scuola Superiore Meridionale in Naples. The incoming assistant director, Peter Cherry, is an expert in comparative literature. Peter already knows the BIAA well, since he was a postdoctoral fellow in 2017–2018. Having resolved some complicated visa and work permit requirements, Peter will join us in Ankara at the end of November. We look forward to welcoming him then!

The BA Mid-Career Fellowship of Işıl Gürsu, Assistant Director for Cultural Heritage Management, has been extended to the end of March 2024 to account for the time spent on earthquake-related work. We are grateful to the British Academy for this consideration. It also means that Hakan Tarhan, who is helping out with research during Işıl’s fellowship, can stay with us through to the end of March, as can Özlem Başdoğan, heritage management specialist, who is filling in on administrative tasks and assisting

with research for Işıl’s upcoming book. Both Hakan and Özlem are valued team members here at the BIAA.

I am pleased to report that Özlem Sarıtaş was offered an extension to her postdoctoral fellowship in recognition of her hard work in 2022–2023 and the interesting proposal she put forward for the coming academic year.

Equally positive is the news from digital archivist Orhun Uğur, who left the BIAA to take up an exciting position as Digital Repository Associate with the team of the AHRC Imagining Futures



Outgoing Assistant Director of Ottoman and Contemporary Türkiye, Daniel-Joseph MacArthur-Seal (left) and incoming assistant director, Peter Cherry.

Through Un/Archived Pasts project at Exeter (<https://imaginingfutures.world>). We are especially pleased about this because Imagining Futures has funded the BIAA via several grants.

Sadly, the BIAA had to say goodbye to Charlotte Jordan, BIAA Development and Communications Officer, who decided to concentrate on her position as Engagement Manager at the Egypt Exploration Society. We thank Charlotte for all her great work over the last four years, growing the BIAA's online presence, working on events, and much increasing the visibility of the BIAA. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Nora Straw, our new Development and Communications Assistant, who was selected from among an impressive number of applicants. Abby Robinson, Executive Editor of *Anatolian Studies* and *Heritage Türkiye*, has also stepped down from her role. Abby kindly 'jumped in' after Gina Coulthard's unexpected death and was instrumental in keeping the BIAA's annual publications on track. For that, we owe her our gratitude. Thankfully, Abby will remain involved in the editing of BIAA monographs.

The BIAA Digital Repository was launched in March with a lecture by Nurdan Atalan-Çayrezmez, BIAA Digital Repository Manager, who made setting the repository up seem deceptively easy. You can watch a video of the lecture, along with recordings of most other BIAA events, on the BIAA YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@theBIAAnkara>), or browse the digital repository via the BIAA website (<https://biaa.ac.uk/digital-repository>). Every day, new data are ingested, such as the results of Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) of tombstones of British people from the Feriköy Protestant Cemetery in Istanbul, a joint project with other international schools and institutes in Türkiye, led by Daniel-Joseph McArthur-Seal for the BIAA. RTI allows us to read the often badly weathered inscriptions of the 18th–19th century tombstones, facilitating better understanding of the lives of past expats in Istanbul.

In September, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Edward, visited Türkiye, and the BIAA was given the opportunity by the British Embassy and Consulate General to present some results from the project *Water in Istanbul: Rising to the Challenge?* (about which you can read more in this magazine). Together with staff from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, we were able to show the Duke an Ottoman water tower as well as the magnificent, newly restored Basilica Cistern (Yerebatan Sarayı). Ender Peker (Middle East Technical University, Ankara) and I represented the BIAA and the project.

I am afraid that I must also mention some sad BIAA-related news, in that we lost several long-term supporters of the Institute this year, namely BIAA Vice-President Sir Matthew Farrer, as well as Sir Timothy and Patricia Daunt. Sir Matthew mostly stayed in the background, but the BIAA could always count on him if needed. Sir Timothy was a former British Ambassador to Türkiye and supported the BIAA in a variety of ways, including by chairing the Research Committee, for many years. We will miss him and his wife Patricia, who was also a staunch supporter of the Institute, as well as of archaeology and heritage in Türkiye more widely.

The contents of the magazine will take you through the research projects co-funded by the BIAA and share the results of the BIAA's own projects. We hope that the contributions reflect the wide variety of work currently undertaken by BIAA-associated researchers and scholars from UK HEI who receive funding. Enjoy!



The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Edward, visits the restored Yerebatan Sarayı (Basilica Cistern) in Istanbul, with representatives of the BIAA (right), the British Consul General and representatives of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Lutgarde Vandeput'.

Lutgarde Vandeput, Director of the British Institute at Ankara