



THE FRIENDS
OF APHRODISIAS
TRUST

10 November 2009

Dear Member,

It is with some trepidation that I am entrusting this year's newsletter to Royal Mail. The postal strikes risk delaying this *thank you* for your continued loyal and open-handed support for the work of the British members of the Aphrodisias team – their and the Trustees' gratitude is none the less genuine if it reaches you late! Thanks to you, we have once again contributed considerable funds both for work at Aphrodisias and to Aphrodisias-related work at Oxford.

This year's extended season at Aphrodisias was again a very good one. You will, I hope, be able to come and hear all about it when the project's Director, Professor R.R.R. Smith, delivers the Trust's annual lecture at the

British Museum on 4 March 2010. Apart from much else, we shall learn from the horse's mouth the results of the first season of the major campaign pursued by Trevor Proudfoot in the Hadrianic Baths which went forward thanks to a very generous grant from the Linbury Trust, made via us.

The forecourt of the baths adjacent to the South Agora was thoroughly cleaned to enable full recording of the current positions of the great mass of blocks excavated in 1904–1905 (see photo left).



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The Tetrastyle Court and an adjacent chamber, excavated by Kenan Erim in 1966–1967, were chosen as test-case areas for trying out the different kinds of conservation work necessary for the rest of the building (right). The badly damaged late antique tiled floor was repaired: where broken or loose, the alternating white marble and grey schist tiles were taken up and re-laid; the borders were cleaned and stabilized with special mortars and stainless steel dowels and the loosely stacked *petit appareil* masonry wall tops, made by the earlier excavators, were taken down to expose the ancient ones, which were then raked, cleaned and capped with lime mortar.

Following the cleaning, pointing and repairing of the marble-lined pool in the centre of the Tetrastyle Court, a cast of the colossal torso of a naked male god or hero (perhaps Achilles), discovered there in 1967 and displayed in the museum, was erected on the original base (below).



The multi-year excavation of the north-south avenue running from the Tetrastyle to the Sebasteion, mentioned in last year's letter, was continued. It is the best-preserved street of the ancient city and the aim is to improve visitor circulation as well as providing detailed archaeological evidence for Aphrodisias's post-antique life and later occupation.

The north end of the avenue, which passes to the east of the Tetrastyle, was exposed for about 50m in 1983–1986. Last year four trenches were opened over a 21 x 21m area of an unexcavated portion immediately to the south from which the most interesting find was the late Roman marble 'Eros pilaster capital' of a peasant with a goat – featured on the cover of our last year's Membership Leaflet.



The 2009 excavation continued in these same four trenches (left). Sifting through the modern, Ottoman, Byzantine and late Roman levels of occupation; 45sq.m. of paved avenue were exposed, revealing late Roman cornice blocks, double-engaged columns, column bases, glass wall mosaics and more pilaster capitals from the ‘Eros pilaster capital’ series.

As in 2008, large numbers of Ottoman coins were found amongst the rubble of the Ottoman road. Beneath it, following a different orientation and aligned with the paved Roman avenue, substantial rubble-walled chambers (below, left) revealed upper ends of *in situ* columns of the late Roman street colonnade. Lower still and aligned to the west side of the avenue, amongst spolia forming a wall, the most significant find was a monumental lintel from the first century AD dedicated to Zeus Spaloxios and Zeus Patroos (below, right): a dedication made by one of the builders of the Sebasteion, a man called *Eusebes Philopatris* who says he was the priest of both gods. (As attested on coins of Aphrodisias and on an inscribed altar decorated with a Carian double axe from nearby Avdan, Spaloxios is a rare cult epithet and probably refers to a local Carian place name.)

Last year, a trench exposed six well-preserved elements of a pier and the arches it supported in the hitherto unexcavated area of the south hall of the Roman Civil Basilica. These monumental pieces, each weighing up to 8 tons, were part of a catastrophic collapse of one of the city’s largest buildings probably during the seventh century AD. Together with an exquisitely carved composite pilaster capital of bulls and lions, which must once have projected into the flanking archways, they were taken by crane into the project’s ‘Blue Depot’.

This year, another large trench was opened in order to investigate the space into which the colossal arched opening led. The trench revealed that the culminating space of the Basilica was an exedra-like chamber with a raised floor, entered from the east by a staircase onto the raised platform. Viewed from the north by citizens approaching through the south hall, this platform had the appearance of a raised podium supported in front by a series of high-quality orthostate blocks (next page, top left).





A detailed architectural drawing, similar to that found in the Basilica in 2008, was discovered engraved on the marble pavement in front of the podium (above). It is the profile of an entablature of a monumental arch, almost certainly that of the one immediately above it and over the entrance to the exedra space.

For Blue Horse specialists, it may be of interest to know that investigation of its base, still *in situ* at the north end of the Basilica (right), confirmed that it is a shallow, late antique addition. And a hitherto hidden inscription mentioning an *Andronikos* was discovered on the Troilos base which had been reused in late antiquity in building the north City Wall.



Those of us who were fortunate enough to have attended the breathtakingly generous evening offered to the Friends by the Turkish Ambassador and Mrs Alpogan in February, need no reminding of the story of the part-reconstruction of the first century AD Aphrodisian Sebasteion, or 'Temple of the Emperors', which was built and paid for by two Aphrodisian families to celebrate the close ties of Aphrodisias with Rome during the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

The Sebasteion complex consisted of a long processional avenue (90 x 14m) flanked by 12m-high three-storey buildings to the north and south and a raised temple at the east end. For their whole length, the north and south buildings carried some 200 marble reliefs in their upper storeys in an unusual combination of Greek and Roman subjects. The reliefs from the north building featured a series of personifications of *ethne* or 'peoples' brought

into the Roman empire by Augustus. In the south building, the reliefs juxtaposed emperors and gods with scenes from Greek mythology. The heroes of myth represent the past; the Roman emperors, on the same plane as the Olympian gods, represent the present. The 80 or so sculptures recovered during the 1979–1984 excavations can now be seen in the new Sevgi Gonul Museum Hall

Before a splendid Turkish dinner, Thomas Kaefer and Gerhard Paul described the project to re-erect part of the South Building, to give visitors a dramatic insight into how this magnificent monument looked in antiquity. They showed how they are painstakingly piecing together a three-storeyed section using only original architecture to support cast copies of the reliefs executed by Trevor Proudfoot. With two storeys and their reliefs now in place (below), the work is due to be completed in 2010.



The foregoing is a small selection from the reports on the 2009 season, which again involved not only excavation, site conservation and anastylosis but the usual important work on sculpture documentation, research, conservation and marble polychromy (below, left); epigraphic research; and repair of sarcophagi (below, right). At the tail-end of last season, Bert Smith had been heavily involved in preparation of the excellent exhibition of marble sculpture portraits from Aphrodisias held in Istanbul. More on all that at the lecture in March.



Friends' events

Once again, the Kenan Erim Memorial Lecture, on 5 March 2008, was a sell-out. We are extremely grateful to the Learning and Audiences Department at The British Museum for being our hosts and for offering to have us back for the sixteenth in the series (see below).

Next year's **Kenan Erim Memorial Lecture** will be delivered by Bert Smith, with a contribution from Trevor Proudfoot, in the Stevenson Lecture Theatre of the Clore Education Centre at the British Museum at **6.30pm on Thursday 4 March 2010**. Please put it firmly in your 2010 diary. Every paid-up Friend is entitled to one ticket for the lecture. As the Museum always has more applicants than tickets, *please* say if you want yours (see below).

This year, the Friends' Events are all taking place in 2010, details of which I will be sending out in early January, and will include a day out in Oxford to visit the New Ashmolean Museum with Bert Smith.

Finally, the Friends' projects at Oxford

This year we again sponsored Dr Julia Leneghan's visits to Oxford to work on the important new book Bert Smith is producing on the Sebasteion Reliefs. It is a companion to the magnificent publication Bert produced on Aphrodisian portrait statuary. Many of you will remember its launch party at the Marylebone High Street branch of Daunt Books in 2006.

Meanwhile, the New Ashmolean Museum at Oxford opened last week on time and with great fanfare. It was with particular pride that we saw 'our' cast of the Aphrodisian Old Fisherman taking pride of place in the main gallery.

The reopening of the refurbished Cast Gallery is expected next year. As you know, Bert Smith, as Lincoln Professor of Classical Archaeology and Art, is *ex officio* Director of the Cast Gallery. His ambition remains, in time for the reopening, to fill a major gap of examples from Roman Asia Minor in the collection of some 800 plaster casts of Classical sculpture intensively used by students with casts of four of the life-size reliefs from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias. Two of emperors will be from the second storey and two of gods and heroes from the first (including Claudius conquering Britannia). It is a major and expensive (upwards of £50,000) challenge: complex and very skilled work, plus material and transport costs which thanks largely to the great generosity of Trusts connected with Friends, we are financing. I anticipate a celebratory viewing for us in Oxford when the time comes.

Please continue to support the British work at Aphrodisias by completing and returning the enclosed membership form (even if you pay by bankers' order). If you are good enough to make a donation, however small, and you have not already signed a gift aid declaration for us, please complete that too. Membership includes a ticket for the 2010 Lecture. Please do not fail to let me know on the form if you want yours. If you want any extra tickets, let me know.

As usual, a very big thank you goes to Bert Smith and Trevor Proudfoot for their continued close involvement with the Friends; to our Honorary President and his wife, their Excellencies the Turkish Ambassador and Mrs Bernev Alpogan for their much-appreciated support and hospitality; to Thomas Kaefer and Gerhard Paul for their contributions to the Friends' event in London this February and to Gina Coulthard, Siobhan McKeown and Clare McCafferty, the new London Secretary of the British Institute at Ankara, for their indispensable administrative assistance throughout the year; and to all of you who have supported the Trust so generously, not least in enabling us to hope to realize Bert's ambition for the Ashmolean's Cast Gallery.

Yours sincerely,

