



THE FRIENDS
OF APHRODISIAS
TRUST

10 November 2010

Dear Member,

It's November, so time for the annual news from Aphrodisias, together with my **sincerest** thanks for your continued loyalty and open-handed support for the work of the British members of the Aphrodisias team.

Any of you who visited Aphrodisias this year will have noticed two changes in particular. Cars and buses are now left in a parking lot the far side of the main Geyre road and visitors not wishing to trudge to the site may take a colourful, if somewhat bizarre, tractor-drawn conveyance. Souvenirs and postcards are once again on sale!

More significantly, the Aphrodisias Museum has been renovated. The rearrangement, incorporating three major new pieces from the Izmir Museum – the most important of which is the Jewish Pillar – effectively balances and compliments the splendour of the 2009 extension built to house the spectacular reliefs from the Sebasteion and the Basilica's beautiful 'Blue Horse'. More than ever, Aphrodisias is now *vaut le voyage*.



Above: Trevor Proudfoot installing the Jewish Pillar. Left: the Sebasteion reliefs in the Sevgi Gönül Hall.

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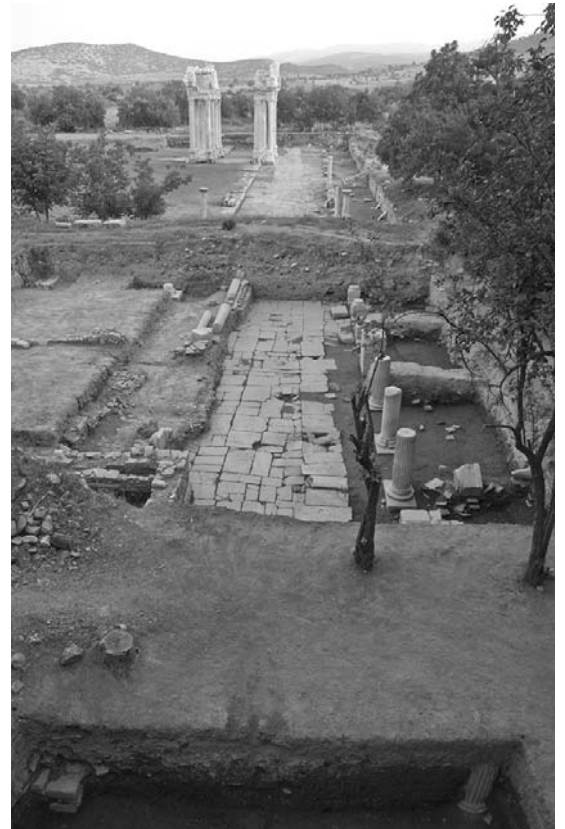
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Generally, 2010 at Aphrodisias was a year of consolidation and good results. You will, I hope, be able to hear all about it when the project's Director, Professor R.R.R. Smith, delivers the Trust's (and his) seventeenth annual Kenan Erim Memorial Lecture at the British Museum on 3 March 2011.

Last year I wrote of the importance of the new multi-year excavation – begun in 2008 – of the city's main north-south thoroughfare, running from the Tetrastyle to the Sebasteion (see photo right). The north end of the avenue, which passes to the east of the Tetrastyle, had already been exposed for about 50m in 1983–1986. The new excavations, aiming to improve visitor circulation, as well as providing detailed archaeological evidence for Aphrodisias's post-antique life and later occupation, began with four trenches immediately to the south. The most interesting find in 2008 was the late Roman 'Eros pilaster capital' of a peasant with a goat – featured on the cover of the 2009 Membership Leaflet.

The 2009 excavations continued in these same four trenches sifting through the modern, Ottoman, Byzantine and late Roman levels of occupation. Beneath the Ottoman road, following a different orientation and aligned with the paved Roman avenue, substantial rubble-walled chambers revealed upper ends of *in situ* columns of the late Roman street colonnade.

Five new trenches were opened this year, three of which investigated the Stoa to the east of the avenue. The building was found to have a chequer-patterned tiled floor of white marble and black slate.



The major finds in the street were a further four high-quality marble 'Eros pilaster capitals' – additional to the series, some of which can be seen in the Museum (see photo left). The most charming of this season's discoveries depicts a putto holding a small animal, probably a hare. The other three, found in the same

trench, are of a young hunter with *logobolon*, a striding putto and a young peasant with a lamb – featured on the cover of this year's Membership Leaflet.

The eastern part of the North Agora's South Stoa has been standing since antiquity; its colonnade, seen against a background of poplars, is a sight every visitor to Aphrodisias in modern times remembers. Thanks to a grant by a US foundation, to the 'matching' of which we contributed, the colonnade was surveyed and one seriously endangered column was stabilised. Scaffolding enabled the columns, capitals and entablature to be repaired and re-attached in their original positions and the whole colonnade cleaned by dry and wet methods to remove invasive plant growth. The wet method, a gentle saturation over a period of six weeks, found the black crust accrued over time could be gently brushed away without damage to the garlands and *erotes* decorating the frieze.



Above: the colonnade of the North Agora's South Stoa under scaffolding for repair work and cleaning. Fine water sprays were played over the blackened surface to soften the deposits of centuries of town and village smoke. Right: work to stabilise a seriously damaged column.



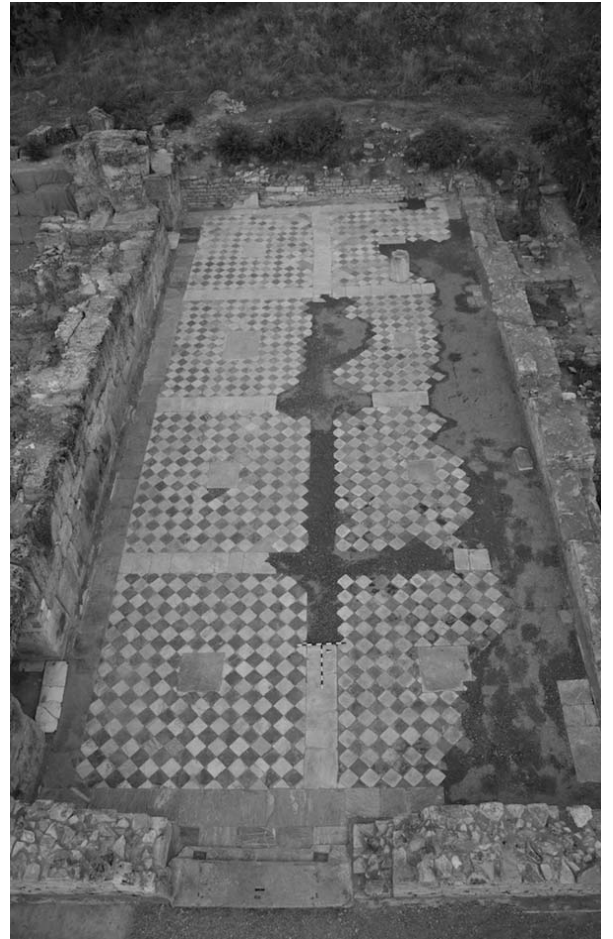
Three years ago, Aphrodisias's Hadrianic Baths were choked in brambles and in urgent need of repair and documentation. Over two seasons of preparation (2008–2009), the forecourt of the baths adjacent to the North Agora was thoroughly cleaned – enabling full recording of the positions of the great mass of blocks excavated in 1904–1905 to start this season (see photos below). The Tetrastyle Court and adjacent chamber were then chosen as case areas for trying out the different kinds of conservation work needed for the rest of the building.



By the end of the 2009 season, the necessary techniques had been developed and the rear chamber's badly damaged late antique floor and the marble-lined pool in the centre of the Tetrastyle Court both repaired. On the last day of the 2009 season, a dazzling white cast of the colossal torso of a god – perhaps Achilles – discovered there in 1967 and displayed in the museum, was erected on its original base beside the pool. With the help of a 'wash', 'Achilles' has now mellowed to the authentic colour of weathered marble.

2010 was the first full season of a six-year conservation project to restore the Baths enough to allow eventual visitor access along raised walk-ways. Your generosity enabled us to contribute a substantial amount needed to ‘match’ the first year of the grant from the World Monuments Fund which makes this project possible. The grant depended on matching from non-US sources; happily, the target was met and good progress was made this summer.

Work continued on the black and white floors behind the Tetrastyle Court which were stabilized and hardened sufficiently to permit public access (see photos below and right). Stabilization of the decorative pavement in the chamber westwards of the Tetrastyle Court was a challenging but necessary task, since it was spectacularly shattered by the falling in of the stone roof. One of three alternative methods devised by Trevor Proudfoot was to leave the paving *in situ* by injecting it with traditional Roman mortar to strengthen the screed beneath.



Left: prior to any treatment, a trial area of shattered marble floor is cleaned with a vacuum cleaner – a sieve prevents the marble from being removed in the process.



The part-reconstruction of the first century AD Aphrodisian Sebasteion, or 'Temple of the Emperors', nears completion under the supervision of the Austrian architects Thomas Kaefer and Gerhard Paul, who lectured to the Friends in the Turkish Embassy last year (see photo left).

This summer (and into autumn, when I was lucky enough to visit them and Trevor Proudfoot, still at work in September) they were busy on the third, Corinthian order, perched on scaffolding high above the pavement of the temple. The *anastylosis* of the South Building, complete with casting copies of some of the reliefs now in the new Sevgi Gönül Museum Hall, should be

completed next year and give visitors as astonishing an impression of the late Roman monument as they already have of the Tetrasyon gateway.

These were highlights of the past season to which we Friends contributed at least a measure of support. Beneath this iceberg tip, the usual work on sculpture documentation, epigraphic research and conservation went forward. Bert Smith will review it all for us on 3 March.

Friends' events

Once again, the Kenan Erim Memorial Lecture on 4 March 2010 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 seventeenth in the series (see below);

Some of us were lucky enough to have visited the Foundling Museum with Dr Alan Borg on 2 February 2010. Like the January lunch in Lincoln College with Bert Smith, it was an exceptional treat. We were introduced to the Hospital's rare collection of art and artefacts accumulated over the years since its foundation in 1741 by the Chairman of the Museum's Trustees who was none other than the founder of the Museum itself. We are extremely grateful to Dr Borg.

This year, the Friends' Events are all taking place in 2011.

The 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 3 March 2011. Please put it firmly in your 2011 diary. Every paid-up Friend is entitled to one ticket for the lecture. As the Museum always has more applications than tickets, *please* say if you want yours (see below).

On Tuesday 25 January 2011, Professor Smith has again most generously invited a small party of Friends to lunch with him in Lincoln College, Oxford, followed by a private tour of the Ashmolean Museum's renovated Cast Gallery. As Keeper of the Cast Gallery, there is no-one better qualified to bring this exciting gallery alive than Bert himself. If you would like to apply, please fill in the enclosed form and return it to me.

The Trust has a new President. His Excellency Mr Ünal Ceviköz, the new Turkish Ambassador, has kindly agreed to assume the office, as his predecessors over the past seventeen years have all done. All have been supportive and Ünal Bey already writes that he and Emel Hanım will attend the lecture on 3 March.

As usual, a very big thank you goes to Bert Smith and Trevor Proudfoot for their continued close involvement with the Friends; to Dr Rosanna Kwok, Head of Adult Programmes at the British Museum; to Gina Coulthard for her indispensable administrative assistance throughout the year; and to all of you who have supported the Trust so generously, not least enabling us to make a valuable contribution towards the projects in the Hadrianic Baths and on the North Agora's South Stoa.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Aant". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

PS: For as long as any of us can remember Membership dues have remained £20. In these stringent times, we have resisted pressure to raise them: £20 it is for 2011. But we too are now under financial pressure and donations additional to the membership dues, especially if gift-aided, are particularly welcome.