



THE FRIENDS
OF APHRODISIAS
TRUST

30 October 2007

Dear Member,

Another good season at Aphrodisias and a very good year for the Friends! Thanks to your extraordinary generosity, the Trust is, in the fourteenth year since its re-founding, achieving great things. Once again we have funded a major part of the work carried out this season by Trevor Proudfoot's Cliveden Conservation Workshop and we are making a major contribution from Aphrodisias to the Ashmolean Museum's Cast Gallery. As for work at the site itself, first comment on the season, from 4 July to 20 August 2007, by Professor Bert Smith, co-Director of the work at Aphrodisias, was 'full steam ahead on all fronts: excavation, conservation, restoration, documentation, architectural recording and even research'. A few highlights which appeal particularly to me, focused on the Sebasteion, are mentioned below. Bert will doubtless put them in a proper perspective when he lectures to us on 6 March.

The second century AD Aphrodisian Sebasteion, a grand, three-storey temple complex dedicated to Aphrodite and the Julio-Claudian emperors, was decorated with a remarkable series of life-sized figured marble reliefs representing scenes from Greek mythology and Roman Imperial history. When the complex was excavated by Professor Kenan Erim in 1979-81, seventy of these reliefs came to light, all unique in content and preservation, as well as being of outstanding beauty. They were found broken, most into ten to twenty fragments. The initial restoration work was less than perfect and, by 2000, the repairs were coming to pieces and the reliefs were in urgent need of treatment.

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Registered Charity Number 293148

20 Ripplevale Grove, London N1 1HU
Telephone: 020 7607 1612

The definitive restoration and proper presentation of these precious and fragile treasures has been the task of Trevor Proudfoot and his team. This summer, the last twenty had their ferrous pins of the 1970s and 1980s removed and were meticulously re-assembled with new stainless steel dowels and lime-mortar fills. All seventy are now ready for public display in a new Museum Hall designed exclusively for them through the sponsorship of the Istanbul Friends of Aphrodisias. The Hall, attached to the north side of the Museum, will be open by mid-May. Ten years ago I wrote in this newsletter... *at Aphrodisias a big new project is in hand, to conserve and display in a large new museum the seventy reliefs from the Sebasteion.* 'Extension', rather than 'new museum', but none the worse for that. And there was an unexpected bonus: a large satyr head wearing a pine wreath was found during clearance of the site.

During this year's study for a database of more than 150 unattached fragments from the 1979-81 excavation of the Sebasteion complex, six important new pieces came to light: part of the beard of the Cyclops in the Polyphemos relief; the right arm of the Muse in the relief of Apollo with Bird; the wrist of the emperor in the relief showing Claudius ruler of land and sea; the right hand of Claudius striking down Britannia; the right foot of Zeus. Perhaps the most significant was the head of the dancing nymph in the Drunken Dionysos panel. Wherever possible, the pieces were re-united to the appropriate reliefs.



Rivaling the new museum project for pride of place in 2007 achievements is the anastylosis (the archaeologists' term for reconstruction) of the east end of the three-storeyed South Building of the Sebasteion. Thomas Kaefer and Gerhard Paul, the distinguished Austrian architects known to many Friends who have visited Aphrodisias over the years, have made spectacular progress in re-erecting enough of the building, on the façade of which five reliefs are mounted, to show just how grand the whole complex must have been. The original reliefs will be seen in the Museum; Trevor and his team made casts in artificial stone, as they did replicas of any missing column bases and capitals, to bring alive the second century temple complex.

Those who follow the annual reports of the research team will note with approval that conservation was again an integral part of this season's campaign. Major work continued on the mosaic and opus sectile floors in the Atrium House, as well as work on the sunken court in the North Agora and the street paving in front of the Tetrapylon.

Five new third century AD sarcophagi with lids came to light. Of the five, four are garlanded, one with two late Severan portrait busts belonging to Apollonios Klaudianos; it was made for himself, his wife and his daughter. A particularly unusual inscribed garland sarcophagus with Dionysian masks was found some kilometres to the southeast of Aphrodisias; it belonged to 'Aurelia Apphia' who had it made for her use alone

Notable amongst the many scientific investigations taken forward this year was sophisticated marble sampling to establish the exact provenance of the best Aphrodisian sculptures, to be compared and collated with similar Aphrodisian connected sculptures found in Italy.

Friends' events

As usual, the annual Kenan Erim Memorial Lecture, on 1 March 2007, was a sell-out. We are very grateful to the Learning and Audiences Department at The British Museum for being our hosts and for offering to have us back for the fourteenth in the series (see below).

Fourteen lucky Friends had been at The British Museum the previous December for a riveting introduction by Dr Andrew Meadows, Curator of Greek Coins, to the collection of Carian coins, which includes examples from Aphrodisias – it was a great privilege to be locked into his Department's study room and handle examples of its priceless collection. I am more than grateful to Andy for giving us so much of his precious time on the eve of his departure for New York.

Bert Smith's magnificent new book on Roman portrait statuary at Aphrodisias was 'launched' with a party at the Marylebone High Street Branch of Daunt Books in November. Christopher Miles, founder member of the Friends who worked closely with Kenan Erim, got things off to a splendid start by showing the 50-minute film-that-never-was, *Aphrodisias, City of Aphrodite*, he shot at Aphrodisias in 1985, with John Julius Norwich (currently a Friends' Trustee) as narrator. Christopher has generously agreed to have 50 DVD copies made of the film, which is highly instructive, as well as amusing. Let me know if you would like a copy at £15 – proceeds to the Trust.



Aphrodisias 2007. Moulding and casting of the Sebasteion reliefs by the Cliveden Conservation Workshop team

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 6 March 2008**. Please put it firmly in your 2008 diary. Every paid up Friend is entitled to a ticket for the lecture. As the Museum always has more applicants than tickets, *please* let me know if you do not want a ticket or if, having been sent one, for whatever reason, you are then unable to come

This year, the Friends' events are all taking place in 2008, details of which I will be sending out in early January.

The Trust has a new President. His Excellency Yiğit Alpoğan, the new Turkish Ambassador, who arrived during the summer, has kindly agreed to assume office, as his predecessors over the past fourteen years have all done. All have been supportive and Yiğit Bey already writes that he will attend the lecture on 6 March.

Finally, the Friends' new project

You doubtless know that major refurbishment is underway at the Ashmolean Museum. Bert Smith, as Lincoln Professor of Classical Archaeology and Art at Oxford, is ex-officio Director of the Museum's Cast Gallery. His ambition was that, when it reopens in its new refurbished state in 2009, a major gap in the collection of some 800 plaster casts of Classical sculpture intensively used by students should be filled. That gap is the virtually complete lack of work from Roman Asia Minor. It is to be filled by casts of four of the life-size reliefs – two of emperors from the second storey and two of gods and heroes from the first (including Claudius conquering Britannia) – from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias. It is a major and expensive (upwards of £50,000) challenge: complex and very skilled work, as well as material and transport costs. Thanks entirely to the great generosity of Trusts connected with Friends, added to our own resources, we are meeting all costs. There will, I trust, be a party for us in Oxford in 2009!

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 2007 Lecture. Please do not fail to let me know on the form if you want yours. If you want an extra ticket, 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 Christopher Miles and James Daunt for their involvement on 22 November; and to Gina Coulthard, of the British Institute at Ankara, for her invaluable administrative assistance throughout the year; and to all of you who have supported the Trust so generously, not least in enabling us to realize Bert's ambition for the Ashmolean's Cast Gallery.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Daunt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'P'.

Patricia Daunt