



THE FRIENDS
OF APHRODISIAS
TRUST

10 November 2012

Dear Member,

As with every newsletter for the last nineteen years, this is being sent with **sincerest** thanks for your unflinching loyalty to the Trust, which simply could not function without you. The difference this time is that some of you will be receiving news by e-mail and, I hope, have the chance to respond 'on line'.

Thanks to great generosity of Friends, this year we were able to make our most important contribution yet towards the work of the British members of the team working at Aphrodisias; and we also made a major contribution towards the publication of Bert Smith's new work on the Marble Reliefs from the Julio-Claudian Sebasteion. Publication is scheduled for spring 2013 and we hope to celebrate by holding a Friends' party in the Ashmolean Museum's Cast Gallery.

2012 was another good year at Aphrodisias, despite a tricky relationship with the Turkish Ministry. Highlights included archaeobotanical discoveries in and around the pool in the South Agora and the excavation of two over-life-size statues on the Tetrapylon Street. Full justice to the achievements of the season will be done when we return to the Art Workers' Guild at 6 Queen Square, Bloomsbury, at 6.30pm on **Thursday 28 February 2013** to hear the Director, Professor R.R.R. Smith, deliver the Nineteenth Kenan Erim Memorial Lecture. As usual there will be a contribution from Trevor Proudfoot, Director of the Cliveden Conservation Workshop, who is central to the work to conserve the Hadrianic Baths.

A Place of Palms

Those of us who were fortunate enough to have attended the generous evening offered to the Friends of Aphrodisias by the Turkish Ambassador and Mrs Emel Çeviköz on 21 February this year heard Andrew Wilson, Professor of the Archaeology of the Roman Empire at Oxford University, introduce us to the South Agora Project, giving us the first results of his work on it. The project has been made possible through the generosity of a Headley Trust grant to the Friends and gifts from Mrs Mica Ertegun and Baron Lorne von Thyssen.

Honorary President: His Excellency The Turkish Ambassador

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Trust Secretary: Mrs Alev Karagülle

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The goals of the project are to complete over a period of four years the excavation of the unique 170m-long pool and organize the area as an archaeological park (see photo to right). At the same time, the scientific aims are to examine the complex system and phasing of the pool, as well as to test the theory that the South Agora was neither a gymnasium nor a conventional agora but similar to a public park, designed for pleasure and well-ordered leisure, containing the palm grove mentioned in an inscription on the Agora Gate, which stands at the end of the complex.



The first part of the work this season was major site clearance. The blocks of the complete entablature of the north stoa (Portico of Tiberius), lying where they fell at the end of antiquity, were numbered and drawn *in situ* and then lifted out by crane and arranged inside the stoa (see photo left).

Two trenches were dug from where earlier excavation had stopped in 1989, so that the phasing of the silt layers and their different faunal remains, from the Roman period to the present, could be investigated and the various phases of the monumental ring drain around the pool studied. Within the pool, a fragment of a Corinthian marble pilaster with a figure of Eros was the only find.

But, outside the pool itself, beds for plants and trees were identified containing organic matter which provided evidence that there were palm trees – *Phoenix theophrasti* or Cretan Date Palms – in the vicinity. This gives what the experts describe as ‘preliminary confirmation’ that the South Agora was indeed ‘the Place of Palms’ mentioned in the Agora Gate inscription (so they may soon have to stop calling it the ‘South Agora’).

Hadrianic Baths

The Aphrodisias Hadrianic Baths, considered the finest Roman bathing complex in Asia Minor, lie in the centre of the city overlooking the South Agora (see photo right). They were excavated in 1904–1905 and again in the 1960s, exposing a series of five vast barrel-vaulted halls. Five years ago the whole building – hot rooms, sweating rooms, service areas and a colonnaded open space on its east side but no cold room – was choked in vegetation and in urgent need of repair and documentation.



2012 was the third year of the major six-year campaign aiming to arrest the decay of this sophisticated installation and to hold its remains in a sustainable condition so that it can be opened for tourists as a kind of open-air Museum for the Art and Culture of Ancient Bathing. While Thomas Kaefer and Gerhard Paul – the Austrian architects known for their rebuilding – *anastylosis* – of both the Tetracylon and the Sebasteion, began an *anastylosis* of parts of the colossal columnar order of the Baths’ forecourt, the top of the great wall of limestone blocks between Rooms 5 & 6 inside was scaffolded, stabilized and reinforced.

Trevor Proudfoot, with his Cliveden colleagues and their team of skilled local workmen, continued the painstaking restoration of the shattered cut-marble floors and surviving wall revetments in all the rooms so far cleared and most especially of the cut-marble lining of the circular pool in the large hot room known as Room 12. The collapsing floor of Room 12 first had to be supported with a network of adjustable steel supports. During this work, 59 new fragments of late antique ‘inscribed and painted’ wall revetment, two mentioning the same man, one Anatolios, were found in the other hot room, Room 5.



Hadrianic Baths, Room 5: left, restoration work in progress and, above, painted revetment mentioning one Anatolios.

The Theatre

The major conservation, restoration and *anastylosis* work undertaken in the Theatre, on the *diazoma* and upper seating, and on the architecture of the Doric *logeion*, or raised stage, was funded by us: as Bert Smith acknowledged, a case of ‘Without Which Not’, as funding from the J.M. Kaplan Fund, which paid for restoration of the northern half of the Doric colonnade, had finished.

The southern part of the colonnade (see photos below) was dismantled and the elements taken to the workshop. The old fixings and rusting ferrous steel dowels were removed from stylobate blocks, columns, capitals, architrave-friezes and cornices; the old dowels were replaced with lighter stainless steel armatures. In re-erecting the architecture, the positions of two columns, six capitals and all the cornice blocks had to be changed, correcting errors made when restoration work was first done in the 1980s.



An unexpected emergency was caused by the upper seating area in the auditorium of the theatre having collapsed in the winter onto the *diazoma*. To stabilize the area, blocks of the surviving retaining wall needed to be secured and sections of new stone wall needed to be built to hold back the collapsing upper seating (see photo to right).



The Tetrapylon Street

In addition to those aspects of the work in which we, the Friends, were involved, the multi-year excavation to uncover the city's main thoroughfare, running from the Tetrapylon to the Sebasteion, went ahead (see photo to left). The project will improve visitor circulation, by opening up a new route linking some of the principal attractions of the site. Its scientific aim is to provide detailed archaeological evidence for Aphrodisias's post-antique life and later occupation.

Aiming to connect earlier trenches and create a continuous stretch of street of more than 35m, three new trenches were opened this season. The northernmost revealed a clear and well-preserved collapse caused by a major conflagration at the end of antiquity: late antique columns, column bases and capitals found in their fall-positions, together with mixed deposits of tile, burned wood, broken glass and mosaic fragments – much as in earlier years.

It was in the southeastern trench nearest the Sebasteion that the foundations of a 'kind of platform' were unexpectedly discovered embedded into the debris: worked stones packed beneath and courses of brick carefully laid on top of two headless, over-life-size marble statues placed at right angles to each other, one face up, the other face down (see photo to right).

The 'face-up' figure is a large, late antique *togatus* of the fifth century AD, wearing senatorial costume and boots. It has a stolid four-square posture, a thick chest and an unusually fat belly: probably representing a governor or other high-ranking office-holder in the imperial administration!



The 'face-down' high-quality himation figure which is shown on the cover of this year's Brochure dates from the high imperial period – c. AD 200 – its body turned in a dynamic 'rhetorical' posture. A precise and unusual detail is the scroll in its left hand: individual rolled turns of the papyrus engraved carefully on its visible upper end.

As if all the foregoing was not enough (and apologies for the length of this letter) there was much work on the City Wall and in the Stadium, as well as a new project to investigate, study and publish the late antique spolia-building known as Gaudin's Fountain; meanwhile, cleaning and cutting of vegetation in most parts of the city centre occupied ten workers for six continuous weeks. No wonder that Bert's 'team' is as large as it is (see photo below) and it is supplemented by a substantial local workforce from the surrounding villages.



Friends' Events 2012

On 21 February Professor Andrew Wilson lectured at the Turkish Embassy Residence on *Water Nymphs and a Place of Palms, the Hadrianic Baths and South Agora at Aphrodisias* (see above). We are most grateful to Their Excellencies the Ambassador and Mrs Emel Çeviköz for their generous entertainment of the Friends.

The Annual Lecture on 1 March 2012 was a sell-out. Held for the first time in the Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, Bloomsbury, we are grateful to Mrs Elspeth Denniston, the Guild Steward, for welcoming us so warmly and agreeing to our holding our lecture next year in this beautiful building.

On 8 March twelve of us visited Sir John Soane's Museum, where Tim Knox, the Director, welcomed us; as well as touring the museum, we had a talk on Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress* and were shown the new Library.

Our new Trustee, Dick Wilkinson, nobly volunteered to lead a Friends' visit to southwest Turkey in September. A party of nine, complete with guide and driver, visited a total of nine major sites in addition to Aphrodisias itself; they evidently enjoyed the trip, in near-ideal late summer weather.

Friends' Events 2013

The Annual Lecture will be held in the Art Workers' Guild on **Thursday 28 February 2013 at 6.30pm**. Please put it firmly in your 2013 diary. Every paid-up Friend is entitled to one ticket for the lecture: as the Art Workers' Guild accommodates only 100, *please* say if you want yours. 'Extras' can be accommodated if there is room.

Details of the other events for 2013 will be issued by the New Year. They will include another offer from Dick Wilkinson to take a party of Friends to Turkey in the autumn – including Aphrodisias but covering major sites not visited this year.

As usual, a big thank you goes to Bert Smith and Trevor Proudfoot for their continued close involvement with the Friends, as to Andrew Wilson for his lecture; to Gina Coulthard for her indispensable administrative assistance throughout the year; to Craig Encer who is helping with a web site; to Lokum of 95 Walton Street who provided us with a treat of delights in the Turkish Embassy, 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 Theatre, South Agora and Hadrianic Baths, and towards the publication of Bert Smith's important new work.

Patricia Daunt

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