

## APHRODISIAS. THE 1977 CAMPAIGN

Prof. Kenan ERİM

The 1977 campaign at Aphrodisias in Caria concentrated essentially on a programme of study and research involving various archaeological material recently unearthed, as well as on the organisation and installation of the Museum. Much progress was registered in all of these activities thanks to generous grants from the National Geographic Society, Matched by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and from the Charles E. Merrill Trust.

### The Museum

Since the Aphrodisias museum and its dependencies form a keystone of our study and research activities, emphasis was duly placed on work facilitating the completion of the exhibits and installations of the building (**Figs. 1 - 3**). The restoration of sculpture in the various museum halls and preparations for their display were given priority. Many intricate statuary items such as the Aphrodite cult - statue, the Diskophoros of Polykleitos, the Demos figure, the satyr with the infant Dionysos and the Achilles - Penthesilea group were restored by Mr. Reha Arıcan (**Figs. 4 - 6**). Unfortunately, limitation of government allocations and other funds prevented completion of installations and a formal inauguration. Efforts were not spared, however, to progress as much as possible and assist in all activities financed by the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums of the Ministry of Culture. Designs and drawings of display cases were completed and several meetings focusing on preparation of the Museum grounds, including landscaping problems, and selection of archaeological material to be exhibited there were arranged. The most crucial and controversial issues concerned the entrances and approaches to the Museum as well as the main accesses to the site. Their satisfactory solution will, in turn, play a major role in the protection and preservation of Aphrodisias and its vicinity as an exceptional archaeological zone. These and other points were much debated during conferences *in situ* or in Ankara with representatives of the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums. Fortunately, the notion of Aphrodisias as a complete archaeological unit featuring a museum and a number of unique monuments, its definition

and safeguard within a specific perimeter were sanctioned late in 1976 by a decision of the Turkish High Commission for Monuments (Anıtlar Yüksek Kurulu). Thanks to this action, it was possible to initiate in late summer expropriation measures for the remaining dilapidated houses of Geyre. Funds were provided by the Turkish authorities. It was also decided to salvage a few typical houses among the better preserved ones as testimonia of the more recent history of the site, as long as these did not stand over important ancient remains or obstruct future investigations. There remains much to be done in this context, however. Official visitors, including groups from the ministry of Tourism and Information, were welcomed on several occasions. The **urgent need** for an adequate protection of Aphrodisias and its vicinity from unsuitable tourist developments was, it is hoped, duly impressed on them.

### **Research and Study**

The arduous task of organisation of the vast epigraphic collections in the new museum storerooms was undertaken by Miss Joyce Reynolds and Mr. and Mrs. Mossman Roueche. On his side, Dr. Michael Crawford collected all smaller fragments of the Diocletianic Edicts and completed a plan for the disposition of the larger fragments. The material was sorted and arranged in the available sections in a way suitable enough to permit access and study. The assigned space unfortunately proved to be quite inadequate.

Miss Reynolds especially reexamined all new and old fragments of the Imperial letters of the Archive Wall of the theatre. The final manuscript of her study of these and related inscriptions, a book entitled **Aphrodisias and Rome**, will be hopefully turned over to the Cambridge University Press for publication in the course of next summer. Prior to her return to Aphrodisias, Miss Reynolds, with the assistance of Mrs. Roueche, completed most of the initial work on the transcriptions of all inscriptions found so far at Aphrodisias both before and during our excavations. New photography and readings of these transcriptions against the stones themselves were continued at Aphrodisias. Although much remains to be done, a comprehensive corpus of Aphrodisian inscriptions, besides those incorporated in the **Aphrodisias and Rome** volume, progressed rapidly and will form the second tome in our epigraphic series. A dossier featuring transcriptions and photographs of all Byzantine inscriptions, on the other hand, was also completed by the Roueches. Its manuscript should be ready in late 1978. A new, interesting item reassembled out of several odd fragments found over several years and included in this Byzantine corpus proved to be a funerary plaque ins-

cribed on two faces. it referred to an Aphrodisian of the sixth century named Athanasios who claimed to have «described many peoples and seen every race of men!»

Additional studies involving Byzantine material were also launched by Dr. Robin Corniack, who focused his attention on the frescoes of the theatre as well as those in the apse of the temple - basilica of Aphrodite. Simultaneously, Dr. Cormack undertook the examination of several building complexes, more particularly the «martyrion» church to the southwest of the Acropolis. These and other studies will form part of a **Byzantine Aphrodisias** volume.

Concomitant to their research activities, the expedition epigraphers carried out their usual programme of survey of the site and its vicinity to record inscriptions uncovered by chance over the winter and spring. A fragment of the original (i.e. Triumviral/Augustan) copy of the **senatus consultum de Aphrodisiensibus** known from the later copy in the theatre was discovered in the course of these activities.

### **Prehistoric Aphrodisias**

The systematic analysis of the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age material unearthed during the 1967 - 1970 excavations of the Pekmez mound, one of the two **höyüks** of the site, was successfully completed by Mrs. Martha S. Joukowsky and Professor Anna S. Benjamin. The computer study initiated in 1976 was extended to the ceramic finds of the early levels of this mound. Some 36,000 fragments were classified according to a type series which also included analysis of form/shape, ware - fabric, colour, inclusions, hardness, plastic and liquid decoration. Over 1,000 distinctive sherds were drawn and described by Miss Nina Joukowsky. With the assistance of Miss Sheila Ehlinger, analysis of the chipped stone industry, including a descriptive catalogue and drawings, was undertaken. Documentation of small finds such as idols, pyramidal spindle whorls, ceramic disks, whetstones, hammer and burnishing stones was completed. The stratigraphy of one of the Pekmez trenches was critically reexamined and a level by level description with detailed

plans and sections initiated. Mrs. Joukowsky also devoted herself to a comparative analysis of the Chalcolithic pottery from other southwestern Anatolian sites with the cooperation of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara. Her studies revealed that the prehistory of Aphrodisias developed earlier than hitherto presumed, i.e. from the late sixth millennium B.C. It also appeared that the traditionally accepted charac-

teristics of «one - settlement» Chalcolithic sites did not hold true for Aphrodisias whose early levels betrayed overlapping cultures as well as a continuous evolutionary development. Cultural contacts with Hacı-lar and Late Chalcolithic Beycesultan were reflected in the Pekmez ceramics, which also provided a link, so far not documented between these two important Anatolian sites. The character of the excavated portion of Pekmez indicated that the settlement here remained essentially unchanged during its evolution. Although pottery statistics betrayed the impact of new fashions, the greater percentage of the material demonstrated that its manufacturers remained essentially attached to a variety of ware - fabrics, as well as to traditional ceramic forms.

### **Balloon Photography**

Thanks to the indefatigable assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Julian Whittlesey and the cooperation of Professor Cevat Erder, his team and equipment from Middle East Technical University of Ankara, a balloon photography programme could be launched in late summer. Following close examination of the terrain, a careful strategy was planned and a number of excellent black - and - white and colour shots of the principal ruins was taken from different heights.

### **Excavations at the Basilica and the Agora Gate**

Sporadic investigations were undertaken to occupy workmen freed from duties in the Museum at appropriate times during the summer. These resumed work in two areas where digging had been initiated earlier but never completed. Both areas were Connected with the Portico of Tiberius of the Agora Complex and involved the large Roman basilica near the south - western corner of the Portico and the so - called Agora Gate at the eastern end of the same Portico.

Only the front portion of the large basilica, which is probably one of the longest in Anatolia, had been brought to light between 1970 and 1972 and produced many fragments of Diocletian's Maximum Prices and Currency Reform Edicts. The building appeared stretch southward beyond a length of 120 m. and featured Ionic colonnades separating its nave from its aisles and upper storeys over the aisles including engaged Corinthiantype columns (**Figs. 7- 9**). A few large (ca. 2.50 m. x 1 m) panels with relief decoration had been discovered in 1972 among the debris of this upper colonnade. They probably served as a parapet frieze or balustrade adorning the intercolumniations and displayed free. stylised flora! motifs as well as figures of dolphins and an Eros riding

a sea-horse. The 1977 excavations yielded a large number of new panels, again taken from the upper storey of the east aisle. Most of them featured figures and Mythological Scenes, though broken by their tall, many could be restored and provided important new evidence for the legendary origins of Aphrodisias. Several figures were identified with inscriptions: Semiramis of Babylon was portrayed on one panel officiating at an altar in the presence of Gordios, dressed in Roman military garb (Fig. 10). Her husband, Ninus, was shown in the guise of a Roman emperor, making an offering at an altar topped by an eagle and attended by another military figure by a second altar, perhaps Midas (Fig. 11). Pegasus held by Bellerophon, with Apollo and his tripod nearby, appeared on another panel (Fig. 12). Also recognisable, though not identified by inscriptions, were Meleager piercing the Calydonian boar (Fig. 13), and Silenus (?) framed by Curetes (?) and possibly Perseus among them (Fig. 14). Several incomplete fragments portrayed an eagle carrying off a hare (Fig. 15), Erotes (Figs. 16 - 17); a dwarf or pygmy (?) feeding a donkey (Fig. 18); an athlete crowning himself, a palm branch in his right hand (Fig. 19). More decorative but equally original were several panels featuring two Erotes holding widely swinging garlands (Fig. 20); flowers with masks and heads of satyrs in their center (Fig. 21); and many others adorned with imaginative stylised floral arrangements: spiral rosettes or corollas, ivy or vine shoots (Fig. 22). Especially noteworthy among these was a startling, asymmetrical bouquet of stylised acanthus leaves and flowers intermingled with snakes (Fig. 23).

The significance of these reliefs lies not only on the originality of their composition but also on the evidence they provide for the myths surrounding the foundation of Aphrodisias. Indeed, in his catalogue of ancient cities, Stephanus of Byzantium also lists Aphrodisias under «Nin6e», so-called, he adds, «after Ninus», the semi-legendary King of Assyria, himself named after the goddess Ishtar - Nina. Ninus was also the founder of Nineveh and the husband of Semiramis. The balustrade of the basilica, therefore, recorded these myths and legends, many of which are still in great part unknown to us. The presence of Gordios and Midas (?) is, for instance, difficult to explain. Other mythological scenes or figures may presumably also be connected with the foundation of the city. Whatever their interpretation may be, these myths apparently continued to be prevalent in the third century. Indeed, on stylistic grounds and the basis of other evidence, a third century date seems probable for the carving of these reliefs. Additional data are needed, however, for a full chronological evaluation, since the complete

length of the basilica remains to be excavated and its west aisle has hardly been touched. The latter must presumably have also included an upper storey similar to the east aisle.

A dry 1976 - 1977 made occasional excavations desirable in the usually flooded Agora Gate area, at the east end of the Portico of Ti-berius. Previous investigations had revealed here a complex building plan featuring a barrel - vaulted tunnel and a long north - south wall adjoining it (Fig. 24). The whole area was unfortunately marred by Byzantine transformations and beset by seeping ground water apparently released by the rupture of ancient conduits and a rise in the water table (Fig. 25). The lower level of the water last summer allowed pumping. A series of small trenches brought to light an unusual array of relief panels, as well as statuary and inscriptions of significance. All seemed to have fallen off or been incorporated into the long north - south wall as most items were recovered fallen in front of it. It is probably that such reuse took place in Byzantine times. The discovery of some fragments at these proximity further suggested a final collapse due to an earthquake. The direction of this collapse paralleled that of the destruction of the stage building of the theatre to the south of the Agora Gate. The battered condition of some panels, on the other hand, especially the Gigantomachy, betrayed intentional, man - made damage.

The subject matter of the reliefs varied and included scenes of Gigantomachy, Amazonomachy and Centauromachy, as well as other uncertain themes. Many displayed highly original compositions and presented unusually interesting iconographical problems. The Gigantomachy panels showed what may be Hades (?) attacking Giants with the assistance of a several - headed monster, perhaps Cerberus (Fig. 26); Hephaistos with his hammer throwing bolts or balls of fire at one frightened and another dead Giant (Fig. 27); two horsemen, perhaps Castor and Pollux, fighting two snake - legged sons of the Earth (Fig. 28); Selene with Eros in her chariot drawn by a team of oxen mauling another pair of Giants (Fig. 29). Fragments represented Herakles in an attacking posture and the elaborate chariot of Apollo whose griffins were jumping on a collapsing Giant (Fig. 30).

Four panels belonged to a spirited Amazonomachy (Figs. 31 - 32) while fights between Lapiths and Centaurs were the subjects of another group of three (Figs. 33 - 35). The most interesting of these was -certainly the one featuring music - making, drinking, feasting and sin-

ging young and old Centaurs. More enigmatic, but no less attractive, were two additional panels; one showed an animated contest pitting Dionysus and Pan against two mounted Amazons. It could perhaps refer to an episode in the adventures of the god in Phrygia after his return from India (Fig. 36). The subject of the second panel was a calmer, more pastoral scene including a draped female figure seated on a rocky ledge, two goats at her feet, a tree with a syrinx hanging on its branch to her left, while a shepherd-type male figure in a more-violent, half-kneeling motion occupied the right side with a large dog, and a grazing sheep nearby (Fig. 37).

The presence of these reliefs by the Agora Gate and their role there cannot be explained, as already noted. Though their dimensions and other details are roughly equivalent (ca. 2.70 m. x 1.10 m.), their styles and some details differ. It is unlikely that they were carved by the same sculptor. Nevertheless, stylistically, most can be dated in the second century. It is interesting to note that Paul Gaudin, the first excavator of Aphrodisias, discovered several fragmentary Gigantomachy panels of similar size (now in Istanbul) that are certainly connected with the new panels. They had been reused in a structure to the southeast of the Acropolis which Gaudin labelled «gymnasium».

Innumerable additional sculpture fragments were recovered from the Agora Gate. Many half-bases with relief figures of Erotes and Melpomene on their faces (Figs. 38 - 40) and well-preserved garlands and masks-frieze blocks were included among them (Figs. 41 - 43) as well as an overlifesize headless, seated male statue of the poet-philosopher type (Fig. 44). A number of inscribed bases were also found incorporated into the long north-south wall or fallen before it, such as bases for statues of the emperor Nerva (Fig. 45) and of Marcus Lepidus. More-unusual epigraphic items proved to be a dedication to Aphrodite as **prometor** by Trajan with an additional inscription on its side referring to a restoration of statues of Cyclops apparently damaged by an earthquake, and a long epigram of Byzantine (fifth or sixth century) date concerning a governor named Anthemius.

### Miscellanea

Two other accidental epigraphic finds made at other locations require mention. One fragment was part of a late Republican civic decree in honour of a citizen whose name is unfortunately missing, who supported Aphrodisias in wars and supplied it with food at a time of shortage. Another round base extracted from the stage-blocking wall of

Byzantine date in the theatre was inscribed with a dedication to an emperor, Flavius Claudius... whose name was subsequently erased and replaced by that of Theodosius. The earlier name was quite probably that of Julian. The Governor who put up the statue, Antonius Tatianus, is known from another base found earlier in the same wall and dedicated to Valens. An interesting detail mentioned in the new inscription concerned the activities of Tatianus. Indeed, it is stressed that he built

«all the work of the **tetrastoon**, from the foundations up.» The **tetrastoon** in question can only be the nearby four - porticoed «piazza» which was excavated in recent years behind the stage building of the theatre. This information satisfactorily supports the fourth century (post - Constantinian) date suggested for the «piazza» ever since the beginning of its excavation.

Finally, two important discoveries of sculpture made by chance at the end of the campaign in late November must also be recorded. Both pertained to the Zoilos frieze, a monument of great significance for the history and the sculpture of Aphrodisias. Seven handsome panels of this frieze honouring Zoilos, a freedman of Octavian and great benefactor of the city, were found in earlier investigations and portrayed a number of allegorical figures surrounding Zoilos. One of the new fragments showed the upper body of a draped, frontal female figure, identified as MNHMN (Memory) by an inscription and flanked by a male profile portrait head in low relief to the upper left (Fig. 46). The lower portion of a nude male figure seated on a sphinx - decorated stool was featured on the second fragment (Fig. 47). This new evidence further emphasized the importance of the building which this frieze decorated. It must have been an honourific or commemorative monument of size, rather than a tomb. Therefore, discovery of additional fragments must be anticipated in future operations in the area where the new fragments were found.

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Güray Yasa and Orhan Atvur were also delegated by the General Directorate to help us in our innumerable problems connected with the Museum. Finally, Mr. M. Ali Düğenci again took charge of final photographic recording through the courtesy of the **Türk Tarih Kurumu** and Professor Ekrem Akurgal.

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