

The Amorium Excavations Project

September 2007 Newsletter

During the recent excavation season at Amorium the senior management team developed a serious drinking problem – most especially at lunchtime when many glasses were drained and cries of “have another” and “one for the road” could be frequently heard. The very dry and hot conditions this summer go a long way to explaining how Chris Lightfoot and Eric Ivison succumbed so easily to ‘ayranholism’, but the fact that our stalwart *chef de cuisine* Kazim produced such refreshing, chilled beverages also contributed to the sorry state of affairs. However, despite this addiction and the lesser danger of turning into a ‘çayoholic’ on every trip to Emirdağ, Chris and Eric, ably assisted by Jane Foley, led the team on another very successful campaign at the site.

The fresh country air, the wholesome diet (including the newly-established routine of ‘Kazim’s Curry Night’ every Sunday), and plenty of exercise – Eric was seen wielding a pickaxe on at least one occasion, Ned Schoolman filled in with a wheel barrow when he was not taking photos, and Chris tried to impress the workmen by helping to move doorstones at the Dig House – meant that we all remained fit and healthy, and some even lost a few pounds during the season. Now, if only we could recover from the withdrawal symptoms caused by not having our daily ‘fix’ of *ayran*...



Nikos Tsivikis shows his colours



Danny Abuhatsira perched precariously on a pier in the Lower City Church

There were several new additions to the team this year, and each contributed enormously – but none more so than Şirin Bayram, who took over from her sister Yıldız as General Assistant at the Dig House. Yıldız meanwhile performed the duties of accountant and provisions’ buyer. Her tiring work in Emirdağ everyday was largely unseen and unacknowledged but was essential to the smooth running of the season’s work – she provided the daily supply of fresh yoghurt to meet our never-ending craving for *ayran*. Three new stone conservators, Rian Kanduth, Ray Klemchuck, and Simon Cottle, provided Jane with much willing support and carried out numerous tasks both at the Church and at the Dig House. In mentioning the stone team one cannot, of course, forget the other Bayram sister, Seher, now an old hand on the team and one that has become an experienced and competent conservator. Two new students, Zuhale Demirel and Nurhak İnce, came from 18 March University Çanakkale this year and quickly became valued members of the team; we hope to see them back at Amorium in 2008. In addition, our archaeozoologist Vicky Ioannidou, who spent the summer adding to her ‘home team’ as it were, kindly sent us two graduate students, Derya Silibolatlaz and Emine Sökmen, to work on the animal bone and soil/seed samples respectively. They made good progress during the season and will continue to study their material in Ankara during the winter. Special mention should also be made of our two youngest members, Beate Böhlendorf-Arslan’s two daughters, Elisa and Anika. They coped very well with the extremely high temperatures that were experienced this year, although other team members were discouraged from following their lead in enjoying alfresco bathing in the Dig House compound.

It has not been possible in this brief newsletter to refer to all of the other team members, although their contributions were no less valuable and appreciated. We thank all those that helped make the 2007 season so successful and look forward with great eagerness to another great year at Amorium in 2008.

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