



Temple of Apollo

Temple of Apollo reopened

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ANKARA- A ceremony commemorating the completion of the restoration work on the Temple of Apollo's northwest corner was held Sunday.

Antalya Governor Saffet Arıkan Bedük said at the opening ceremony that after Istanbul, Antalya is Turkey's window to the world.

The restoration of the temple, built in the second century A.D. in the ancient city of Side, is the largest archaeological restoration project in Turkey to be undertaken by a solely Turkish team.

The restoration project, begun in 1977, has been sponsored by the International Friends of Side Association. Archaeologist Prof. Jale İnan has been responsible for the restoration since 1977.

As former chairperson of Istanbul University Classical Archeology Department and Side Excavations, İnan initiated a joint project with the Restoration Department of Istanbul Technical University Faculty of Architecture.

Almost 2,000 years ago, the Temple of Apollo was one of the glories of the ancient city of Side on the Byzantine Empire's Mediterranean coast. According to the ancient geographer Strabo, Side was founded by the inhabitants of Kyme, north of Smyrna.

Smyrna was established by Amazons in ancient times. The original date of the settlement of Side was around 650 B.C. Apollo, the god of youth, music, archery and healing,

was also the god of prophecy. Temples to Apollo were places where one could consult the oracles, shrines where they could put questions to the god and obtain answers. There were many ways in which the oracle might be made known and the questions answered.

The questioner might sleep overnight in the sacred place, waiting for a dream; or, after undergoing ritual purification, receive an answer while in a trance. A priest or, in the cult of Apollo more often a priestess, might enter a trance state to pass on the god's message which other priests or priestess would interpret for the questioner.

From 1983 to 1990, a small team has worked on the site for six to eight weeks each summer. During this time they have erected five columns with their capitals and architrave blocks. Contributions to the restoration have come from various quarters: the Ministry of Culture's approval made it possible; the Museums of Antalya and Side assisted in carrying out the work; the Istanbul University, the State Water Works, the Highways Department and Ferrekrom Facilities provided technical help; Bilfinger-Berger Co. lent technical instruments; Side Municipality, the German Archaeological Institute and Ciba Geigy provided technical assistance; and Mehmet Devres gave financial support.

However, the restoration is not complete. Further funding is needed for the Temple of Apollo to reach its full glory.

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi

Arşiv ve Dokümantasyon Merkezi

Jale İnan Arşivi



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