

Stephen Mitchell

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Stephen Mitchell passed away on 30 January 2024. Born into a family of intellectual distinction in May 1948, Stephen's upbringing was deeply rooted in academia in Oxford. His father, David Mitchell, lectured on philosophy at Worcester College, while his mother, Barbara, taught Latin at St Anne's College, both within the respected confines of Oxford University. He pursued his education entirely within Oxford, where he delved into *Literae Humaniores* (Classics and Ancient History) at St John's College between 1966 and 1970. This educational journey mirrored a longstanding tradition in English elite education, wherein classics served as the cornerstone of intellectual cultivation. Unlike some of his peers who explored various historical periods before settling on their chosen field of expertise, his passion for the history of ancient Anatolia ignited early on. Stephen first travelled to Türkiye in 1965 at the age of 17. We can only assume that it was this journey which marked the genesis of his academic odyssey. Stephen's scholarly interest in the history of Roman Asia Minor began to crystallise in 1970 when he embarked on his DPhil thesis, titled *The History and Archaeology of Galatia*, which he completed in 1974 under supervision of Ewen L. Bowie and Eric William Gray – eminent historians of the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds, respectively.

While working on his PhD, Stephen was also a Lecturer in Latin and Ancient History at Bristol University (1973–1974). Following the completion of a two-year Research Lectureship at Christ Church, Oxford (1975–1976), he moved to Swansea in 1976 as a Lecturer in Ancient History. For nearly 25 years, he dedicated himself to academia within the same department, becoming full professor in 1993.

Between 2002 and 2011, he held the position of Leverhulme Professor of Hellenistic Culture at Exeter, but then opted for early retirement, seeking new freedoms. This

way he could devote his energies entirely to academic pursuits. Relocating then with his wife, Matina, from Exeter first to Sheffield, the search for a different environment eventually led them to Germany in 2015, where they and their family had lived during an earlier research fellowship in Göttingen. Germany's rich tradition in *Altertumswissenschaften* provided an ideal environment for Stephen's scholarly efforts; the country likely also reflected their personal pro-European political convictions better.

The Pisidia Survey Project and early work

Stephen Mitchell's doctoral dissertation, which delved into the relatively understudied Roman province of Galatia, can be considered his first large-scale academic achievement. When T. Kaçar asked Stephen about his choice to focus on the Galatian province for a memoir interview upon the latter's retirement, he responded, 'I chose the region simply because when I started my PhD in 1970, the region had been neglected by historians and archaeologists for nearly half a century, presenting an opportunity for new work and new discoveries' (Kaçar 2011: 55, translated from Turkish by the author). *The History and Archaeology of Galatia* was rigorously researched and voluminous, based on data from epigraphic, numismatic and written sources, as well as a comprehensive archaeological survey of North Galatia. It covered a timespan from the Hellenistic era, which marked the arrival of the Galatians, to the arrival of Sassanid and Islamic armies. This thoroughness and superb understanding of different resources, as well as the ability to bring them together, characterised Stephen's work throughout his career. His interest in the history of Anatolia was broad and diverse – ranging from family gravestones and imperial coins, to the beliefs of ordinary people and olive production, and so much more – but with a growing emphasis on religious and cultural history.



Stephen Mitchell in Arykanda (photo by Elena Isayev)

A few years after Stephen took up his position at Swansea University, he turned his attention to another under-researched area in Türkiye, namely Pisidia (Mitchell, Vandeput 2013 for an overview and bibliography of the Pisidia Survey Project). This region, located in the Taurus Mountains to the north of the Pamphylian Plain, was largely overlooked by modern scholarship, also because its inhabitants in antiquity had been deemed ‘warlike and barbarian’ (Strabo, 12,7,2–3) in contemporary literary sources. This characterisation was generally equated with an absence of culture, which translated into a relative dearth of scholarly interest. Stephen decided that he had to see for himself, and in 1982 he applied to the Turkish authorities for permission to survey the remains of Pisidian Antioch, the most important colony of the region, founded by the emperor Augustus. In 1982 and 1983, together with his colleague and friend Marc Waelkens from Ghent University and later the Catholic University Leuven in Belgium, they completed a survey of the visible architectural remains at this important site.

Encouraged by the results in Pisidian Antioch, Stephen initiated the Pisidia Survey Project, and in 1985 he, as project director, applied for a permit to work in Sagalassos and Cremna in parallel. The fieldwork in Sagalassos (1985–1989) was largely led by Marc Waelkens, who subsequently started major excavations at the site. Stephen meanwhile led the fieldwork in Cremna (1985–1987), an urban site perched on a gently sloping mountain top, surrounded by breathtakingly beautiful mountains. Cremna too was a Roman colony, and this was reflected in the inscriptions on the site, which included rare examples of texts in Latin. The site always was special to Stephen, as can be read between the lines in the introduction of the survey results publication:

Working there was an unforgettable experience. Those who have been fortunate enough to take part in an excavation, or a large-scale archaeological field survey, will be familiar with the excitement and intensity that such projects can generate. ... direct contact with the remains of the distant past, especially on a site so remote from the modern world as that of Cremna, offers the professional archaeologist or student a form of satisfaction which can be guaranteed to banish to insignificance the temporary discomfort caused by primitive accommodation or by the other rigours of a field season (Mitchell 1995: xiii).

L. Vandeput had the privilege of being a member of Stephen’s fieldwork team, not in Cremna but elsewhere in Pisidia. He expected a lot, but in turn made sure that everyone felt appreciated for the work they contributed. He first and foremost saw the potential in each team member,

whether a student on their first fieldwork season or a senior colleague. Stephen also made sure to provide context to the tasks at hand, and stressed that isolated remains – from ceramic sherds to architecture, sculpture or inscriptions – could only really be understood in their context, a guideline he himself always followed in his academic work.

H. Brandt also took part in some Pisidian explorations and learned that Stephen was welcome everywhere in Türkiye, in remote Pisidian villages high in the mountains, as well as in Antalya and Burdur – not least because of his pretty good Turkish. As a colleague, Stephen was modest and generous in every respect; a teamplayer; always kind, helpful and thoughtful; never in a bad mood. In many cases he had the best ideas for reading or reconstructing a Latin or Greek inscription; he had a perfect understanding of ancient settlements, of urban structures and buildings, and he always had good ideas to offer. And – this is to be stressed – he was never was a know-all despite very often being right. He offered his astute insights and informed opinions, and made corrections wherever necessary, but always supportively, never triumphantly. This personal style could also be seen in many of the book reviews he wrote.

In addition to Pisidian Antioch, Cremna and Sagalassos, through 1996 Stephen and his team worked at the urban sites of Ariassos, Panemotheichos, Kaynar Kale (ancient Kodrula?) and Sia. The team also mapped the road station at the bottom of the Döşeme Boğazi, where the Via Sebaste reached the Pamphylian Plain.

With the survey, Stephen transformed knowledge on the urban sites of Pisidia. The region’s rich heritage – including monumental architecture from the Hellenistic period onwards, through Roman Imperial times and into Late Antiquity and early Christianity – allowed the study of Pisidian culture and its development. The survey showed that Pisidian urban settlements – although not as well known as those elsewhere in Anatolia, especially along the coast – nevertheless displayed comparable developments, with a decidedly Pisidian twist.

Apart from preliminary reports, Stephen wrote many interpretative papers on his results (see Mitchell, Vandeput 2013). Two monographs also appeared. The first one, *Cremna in Pisidia. An Ancient City in Peace and in War*, by Mitchell and several team members, appeared in 1995. In 1998, Stephen and Marc Waelkens published their results from Pisidian Antioch (Mitchell, Waelkens 1998).

When L. Vandeput led the fieldwork of the Pisidia Survey Project (1998–2012), Stephen remained interested in the area, and joined the team while working in Melli, a tiny ancient city; he published the inscriptions in 2003. Subsequently, the survey team moved to Pednelissos. H. Brandt rekindled his interest in the region and brought his colleague R. Behrwald (University of Bayreuth) to study

the inscriptions (Behrwald 2003; Behrwald, Brandt 2009). They could always rely on Stephen's advice. When the Pisidia Survey Project changed course and embarked on survey in the rural area around the ancient city of Pednelissos to better understand the relation between the urban and rural centres, Stephen again joined the team (2010) and savoured the opportunity to catch up with his old friend Sabri Aydal (†30 January 2016), Assistant Director at the archaeological museum in Antalya and long-term geographer of the Pisidia Survey Project. Stephen's continued interest in Pisidia is most clearly demonstrated in his magnificent monograph on the Via Sebaste and the settlements along it (Mitchell 2021), and by his efforts to introduce research on Cultural Heritage Management at the BIAA (see below).

International collaboration and network-building

By the second half of the 1980s, Stephen Mitchell was internationally considered a leading authority on Pisidia (and Anatolia in general), and this led to invitations by German colleagues and institutions. H. Brandt first came in contact with Stephen in 1988 when he started his habilitation project on the Anatolian regions of Pamphylia and Pisidia. Stephen was always willing to help and to give advice to a young German scholar. Brandt completed his Habilitation in 1991, which was published in 1992 as Volume 7 in a new German series, 'Asia Minor Studien'. This was edited by Forschungsstelle Asia Minor, at that time a new research institution affiliated with the Department of Ancient History of the University of Münster. The 'Forschungsstelle' has since established itself as one of the most important institutions in Germany focusing on research on Asia Minor. Throughout his academic career, Stephen maintained close relationships with this and other important institutions such as the 'Kommission für Epigraphik und Alte Geschichte' in Munich, and the University of Cologne, which publishes the *Inschriften griechischer Städte in Kleinasien*.

In March 1991 the Forschungsstelle organised a colloquium, 'Forschungen in Pisidien', and Stephen presented his contribution, 'Hellenismus in Pisidien', in German. The key findings, namely that Hellenistic Pisidia was not an uncivilised hinterland but was part of the broader development of polis-civilisation, remain valid. This was likely one of Stephen's first relevant points of contact *in rebus Anatolicis* with German colleagues, and overlapped with his cultivation of a 'German network'. He and his family spent 1990–1992 in Göttingen, where his scientific home was the Department of Ancient History. The University of Göttingen is also where he came into close contact with archaeologists Marianne Bergmann and Christof Boehringer. The stay had been made possible by a Research Readership from the British Academy and a

grant from the Gerda-Henkel-Foundation. In Göttingen Stephen was able to bring his first *opus magnum* to a successful end: *Anatolia. Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor* in two volumes, published in 1993. Preparatory work for this masterpiece had already been done at Princeton, where Stephen had been a member at the wonderful Institute for Advanced Study in 1983–1984. Stephen himself identified *Anatolia* as the benchmark publication of his earlier career.

In the following years Stephen received and accepted many invitations to give lectures, especially at German universities. With several German colleagues he established fruitful cooperation, and with some, solid, long-lasting friendships. One of these colleagues and friends was Walter Ameling, Professor of Ancient History at Jena (1996–2009) and Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Chair of Ancient History at the University of Cologne (2009–present). With Ameling, a specialist in epigraphy, religion, cult and Judaism, Stephen shared many scientific interests, and they maintained regular communication. One of Stephen's last publications was a contribution to the *Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Walter Ameling*, discussing Theos Hypsistos and Theosebeis, and defending his controversial argument

that the large number of monuments relating to this cult, most of which derive from sanctuaries across the Eastern Mediterranean, the Greek mainland and Asia Minor, Thrace and the eastern Balkans, and the Black Sea region, should be treated as evidence for a unified religious movement, namely the worship of a supreme deity who was distinguished from other gods and goddesses of the Greek-speaking world in several important respects (Mitchell 2023: 43).

While his star continued to rise on the international firmament of Ancient Anatolia-related scholarship, Stephen took up the position of Leverhulme Professor of Hellenistic Culture at the University of Exeter in 2002, which he held until 2011. Bringing his knowledge especially of Ancient Türkiye to the Department of Classics and Ancient History, he was instrumental in setting up the Centre for Hellenistic Culture and Society. In addition, he directed an ambitious research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) on 'Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire' that brought numerous scholars and lively debates to Exeter. Among them were the postdoctoral fellow Peter Van Nuffelen, now Professor at Ghent University, and doctoral student Anna Collar, now Associate Professor of archaeology at the University of Southampton. Their joint work with other scholars led to several publications, including *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Mitchell, Van Nuffelen 2010).

Stephen's research – incorporating history, epigraphy and archaeology, especially focused on Hellenistic, Roman and Late Antique Anatolia – made him one of the leading scholars of the ancient world. Apart from regional studies within Asia Minor he wrote works of much wider scope, including the ambitious sweeping historical survey of the Roman Empire from the accession of Diocletian in AD 284 to the death of Heraclius in 641 (2007; 2015), the third (expanded) edition of which was published in 2023 (Mitchell, Greatrex 2023). The Turkish Historical Society published the Turkish translation by T. Kaçar, and these too were reprinted twice in a short span (e.g. Mitchell, Kaçar 2017).

Stephen's commitment to and deep interest in a holistic approach to understanding ancient societies and their landscapes are manifest in his international initiatives and his leadership roles, not least in his capacity as one of the foremost epigraphers of our time. He served as President of the British Epigraphy Society (1999–2002), and later also of the Association Internationale d'Épigraphie Grecque et Latine (AIEGL, 2008–2012), a role that brought him such honours as being invited as an 'honorary Canadian' to events at the epigraphic conference in Berlin, just as he was finishing his term as AIEGL President.

His contributions to the study of ancient history, as well as to academic cooperation between Britain and Türkiye, have been widely recognised – from being elected Fellow of the British Academy in 2002 and serving for a while on its Council, to being elected honorary fellow of St John's College Oxford in 2018.

In addition, Stephen was long acknowledged internationally as a leading authority not only of Greek and Latin inscriptions, and the history and archaeology of Asia Minor, but also of religion, cult, Christianity, Judaism, paganism and church history in Roman and Early Byzantine times. His receipt in 2006 of an honorary doctorate from the Theology Department at Humboldt University in Berlin was emblematic of the broad reach of his work, bringing together people from diverse disciplines. One of the initiators of this honour was Cilliers Breytenbach, whom Stephen had been in communication with since the latter's (1996) work on Galatia. When Breytenbach founded a new Center for Early Christianity in Berlin in 2008, as part of the Berlin TOPOI cluster, Stephen became one of its leading members and a co-editor of the monograph series 'Early Christianity in Asia Minor' (ECAM).

Stephen and Matina moved from the UK to Berlin in 2015. There, he edited the ECAM-monograph *Early Christianity in Asia Minor and Cyprus* with church historian Philipp Pilhofer. The latest volume of this series comes from the pen of Stephen himself, a 700-page volume written during the Covid pandemic at his home

desk in Berlin (Mitchell 2023). Within it he set out to follow the non-Pauline tradition of the earliest Christian communities in Asia, relating them to their Jewish and pagan contexts. It is hard to believe that Stephen was able to write this impressive book when access to university libraries and to the Berlin Staatsbibliothek, as well as to other academic libraries, was restricted or even impossible.

In Berlin, Stephen could be met regularly in these academic libraries, especially in the library of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (BBAW), where the long-term epigraphic projects 'Inscriptiones Graecae' (IG) and 'Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum' (CIL) are located. In addition to Berlin, Münster and Cologne, Stephen was also involved in the epigraphic research of the Kommission für Epigraphik und Alte Geschichte des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, in Munich, which publishes one of the most prestigious German monograph series in Classics, the 'Vestigia'. Stephen and David French, former Director of the British Institute at Ankara (BIAA), worked together for many years to prepare a new edition of the Greek and Latin Inscriptions of ancient Ancyra. Their work resulted in two monumental volumes of the series (vols 62, 72). The first of the two volumes includes a new edition of the 'Res gestae divi Augusti', and both volumes were praised in the highest tones in many reviews (Mitchell, French 2012; 2019). David French sadly passed away in March 2017, but Stephen finished the second volume. For his wider commitment to the field of epigraphy and more specifically for his work with David French on the inscriptions of Ankara, Stephen was awarded the prestigious Gustave Schlumberger Prize by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in Paris in 2020.

Ongoing work in Türkiye

While Stephen Mitchell lived and worked mainly in the UK and Germany (and in the library of the BIAA), he contributed immensely to the scholarship of Turkish ancient history by taking part in projects led by Turkish academics. He was one of three co-authors of the book *Roman Ancyra (Roma Döneminde Ankyra)* with Kutalmış Görkay and Musa Kadioğlu from Ankara University. Stephen also took part in many colloquia organised by Turkish colleagues. T. Kaçar, for instance, invited him to Pamukkale University (Denizli) for an international colloquium on the history and archaeology of the Lycus Valley in Late Antiquity, where he presented a paper on how plagues diminished the size of cities in Late Antiquity, including Laodicea (Mitchell 2018).

Through the years, Stephen had many students from Türkiye. Among them was Turhan Kaçar (now chancellor of Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University), who in 1995, while searching for educational opportunities abroad, first

encountered his name in a review by David Barchard of Stephen's *Anatolia* in the *Turkish Daily News* (March 1995). Coincidentally, he had already applied to Swansea University, and not long thereafter he received a letter from Stephen inviting him to study under his supervision, and to become his first registered Turkish graduate student. This opportunity was exactly what Kaçar had been searching for. Their acquaintance began as a student-supervisor relationship during Kaçar's MA and doctoral studies – focused on the formation of early church councils up to the Second Ecumenical Council held in Roman Constantinople in 381 – at Swansea University (1995–2000), and evolved into a friendship.

By this time, Stephen had already received a few Turkish exchange students from Münster University; one of these was Eda Akyürek-Şahin, now professor of epigraphy at Akdeniz University in Antalya. Stephen's first Turkish full PhD student was Hatice Erdemir, now professor of ancient history at Celal Bayar University in Manisa. Hale Güney – now an ancient historian at the University of Warsaw – was one of his doctoral students at Exeter. Her thesis, which was finalised a year after Stephen's retirement, focused on the Resources and Economy of Roman Nicomedia. All of Stephen's Turkish students remained in contact with him, and he was always happy to hear about their achievements.

Colleague, teacher and mentor in the UK and beyond¹

Stephen was valued by more than just his Turkish students and colleagues. The Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter was particularly fortunate to have Stephen among them for a decade as a colleague, teacher, mentor and friend. For an ancient historian just starting out like E. Isayev, there could not have been a better role model for what it means to be a scholar and a human. Unknowingly, Stephen set a high bar to aspire to in the academic world and beyond it.

Not long after his arrival at Exeter Stephen became the Head of Department. He introduced innovative undergraduate and MA courses, and gave inspirational guidance to doctoral students and colleagues. He taught across all levels, whether Ancient Language in Action for first-year students, his special subjects of Hellenistic Culture and Late Antiquity for final-year undergraduates, or the particular favourite Roman and Hellenistic Asia Minor MA field course, which would bring a motley crew of students and staff to the ancient and current wonders of Türkiye. As a colleague

Stephen made one aware of the much larger world that one was a part of, and the opportunities and responsibilities that this brought with it. During this time, he was an elected committee member of the Council of University Classical Departments (2000–2004), which looks after the subject's interests nationally, and one could expect an email soliciting ideas about issues the department might want to raise nationally, ensuring everybody had a voice.

Martin Pitts, who in 2006 had just joined the department, noted,

Stephen was an exemplary Head of Department, understanding the needs of colleagues as scholars and campaigning tirelessly on our behalf. Despite these administrative demands, Stephen's intellectual curiosity, sharpness and generosity went undimmed, and he would often be encountered in research seminars, the library, and the senior common room chatting enthusiastically with colleagues about their ideas ... Stephen has left an indelible mark on many of us as individuals, but moreover on our departmental community, in his championing of early-career colleagues and postgraduates, and as a staunch advocate of democratic principles in academic life.

H. Brandt also learnt how popular and successful Stephen was as a teacher and academic advisor when he spent two semesters at Exeter to teach Stephen's courses while Stephen himself was on leave (2003–2004). During meetings, parties and some common office hours at Exeter, he witnessed Stephen among his British students and several international graduate students, doctoral students and postgraduates, among them several young scholars from Germany. They all wanted to work with and to learn from this excellent specialist in ancient Anatolia, who in the meantime also had become a respected expert on religion, cult, paganism and church history in Roman and Early Byzantine times.

Stephen never 'preached', just led by example, which meant supporting students and colleagues, whether by reading their applications, listening to their ideas – and being honest about his thoughts on their projects and ambitions – or showing up to celebrate achievements. Many have noted his impact on their lives:

Without exaggeration I can say that Stephen was one of the most important people in my academic career, opening new horizons, introducing me to the academic community in the UK and being an exemplum to us all. He represents the academic that I wish we all could be: intellectually brilliant, modest, soft-spoken but with clear convictions, and caring (Peter Van Nuffelen, Lieve Van Nuffelen-Van Hoof).

¹ Reflections by colleagues are taken from the public 'Remembrances of Stephen Mitchell', document, set up by the colleagues of the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WNhTxp8gG9Ux_8PYkhi9OYEQcKwxoVCVr0Zq6-enf_E/edit

In each of his multiple roles Stephen was a diplomat, while remaining unflinchingly true to his principles of equality and inclusivity, which on occasion meant having to defend them and to stand up for colleagues, especially in wider university circles. He helped many get through tough times, and often took on extra work as a result, which protected his colleagues, but no doubt had a detrimental effect on his own energies. His colleagues missed their defender when Stephen took early retirement, a personal decision that must have been difficult. As he stated in an email to the whole department on 22 March 2011,

Disengagement, after 38 years in the profession, is not easy, and I will certainly not be turning my back on scholarly activity, Exeter, or all the other things that have kept me motivated and absorbed, but it is time for me now to turn a corner and get a view of the landscape on either side, as well as the road ahead.

Stephen's trips to Türkiye's rich cultural landscape with students, colleagues and friends have become legendary. Many, in their remembrances of him, tell stories from those journeys with humour, wonder and gratitude for his unpretentious insights, wisdom and ways of being in the world that continue to be inspirational:

Reflecting on taking a group of students together on a field trip to eastern Türkiye and adventures at snow-covered Nemrut Dag: Stephen's commitment to all these experiences in their fullest was absolute – and would be followed by lively and often hilarious conversation. His comment, upon discovering that the fire altar at Nemrut now has a large H painted on it, that Antiochos I would definitely have flown a helicopter, still makes me smile (Anna Collar).

We will remember him for guiding us through the towns, museums and landscapes of Anatolia, for helping us and the doctoral students in Berlin to find our way into the study of Christian epitaphs within the later Roman Empire. His kindness, humility, and willingness to spend his time to improve the work of others, his generosity to share his knowledge and research results with others are an example to all of us. It was a privilege to be part of his life in Berlin and an honour to be his friends. As someone from our wider circle said, 'Stephen Mitchell war ein Mensch, wie ich mir einen Menschen vorstelle. Sein Tod ist wirklich ein sehr großer Verlust für alle, die je mit ihm zu tun hatten' (Cilliers Breytenbach, Patrick Hommel, Ulrich Hutter, Julien Ogereau, Philipp Pilhofer, Christiane Zimmermann, Maya Zürcher (geb. Prodanova)).

It was not only ancient Asia Minor that held a special place for Stephen in his work, but also contemporary Türkiye. He was a keen supporter of modern historical and international relationship projects related to Türkiye. At the University of Exeter he was a founding member and first director of Exeter Turkish Studies, which came into being through his many contacts in the region, and aimed to conduct world-class research on Turkish history and culture from its origins to modern times. He was keen to create opportunities for scholarly exchanges, hence investing great energies in facilitating the growth of programmes at the BIAA.

The British Institute at Ankara

The British Institute at Ankara (BIAA), then the 'British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara', was one of the institutions that funded Stephen's fieldwork in Pisidian Antioch. It was only natural to Stephen that he would get involved with a British institution that forms a focal point for British academic research in Türkiye in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Even before the BIAA funded him as a project director, Stephen had been involved in BIAA excavations. As a subproject of the larger Keban Dam Project under the aegis of Middle East Technical University in Ankara and the Turkish government, the Aşvan project was the BIAA's contribution to the rescue excavations in the area. It was directed by David H. French, then the institute's director. Immediately after graduating, Stephen led the excavations in the village of Aşvan between 1970 and 1972, and published the results (Mitchell 1980).

Stephen became a member of the BIAA in 1970 and remained involved throughout his life. He served as a member of the BIAA Council and the BIAA Research Committee, as BIAA Honorary Secretary (1996–1999, 2009–2014) and as BIAA Chair (2016–2021). He was elected Vice-President of the BIAA in December 2023. Stephen took his commitment to the institute seriously and was instrumental, for instance, in its thorough reorganisation in 1993. When the BIAA initiated the expansion of its geographical remit, it coordinated 'The British Academy Black Sea Initiative' (BABSİ), a three-year programme (2002–2005) of research in the Black Sea region funded by the British Academy. The programme aimed to lay the groundwork for longer-term development of study in the region, and Stephen put his shoulders behind the initiative and co-edited the proceedings of the final conference (Erkut, Mitchell 2006). The BIAA has continued to support research in the Black Sea Region.

Not only did Stephen support the geographical expansion of the BIAA's remit, he also fully endorsed the increased variety of disciplines supported by the institute. Together with L. Vandeput, he instigated research on

cultural heritage management and public archaeology at the BIAA, originally to try to reduce illicit digging in Pisidia and southwest Asia Minor. These disciplines greatly increased research activity at the BIAA research centre in Ankara, and led to the creation of an Assistant Directorship in cultural heritage management in 2022, a position currently held by Işıl Gürsu. She joined the BIAA as a postdoctoral fellow in 2013 and came up with the idea of a heritage trail (Gürsu 2022), which now links 12 archaeological sites and numerous contemporary villages that are dotted along it (<https://pisidiah heritage trail.com/en>). Stephen was involved in the project from beginning to end. Several other heritage management projects have followed, including SARAT (Safeguarding Archaeological Assets of Turkey).

In the same spirit, Stephen was there when the BIAA 2012–13 postdoctoral fellows Leonidas Karakatsanis (political science) and Emma Baysal (neolithic archaeology) organised a cross-disciplinary workshop (June 2013) to explore borders, boundaries and frontiers in Türkiye across time (Baysal, Karakatsanis 2017). He believed in encouraging interdisciplinarity. The workshop was the first of three events in the project ‘Divisions, Connections and Movements – Rethinking Regionality’, funded by the British Academy 2013–14 Strategic Development Programme. The large-scale interdisciplinary conference, ‘Roads and Routes in Anatolia: Pathways of Communication from Prehistory to Seljuk Times’ (Ankara, March 2014) was part of the same project. Stephen was a member of the scientific committee of the conference as well as co-editor of the related volume. He signed off on the volume’s manuscript days before he passed away (Vandeput, Mitchell, in press).

His contribution to the project ‘From Enemies to Allies: Britain and Turkey from 1914 to 1960’ (2016–2019) is well known. Indeed, with BIAA Vice-President Sir David Logan, Stephen put his shoulders behind this project too, and together they turned the first BIAA-led project on the history of the Turkish Republic into a success. In the last few years, the BIAA has reached out to disciplines beyond the Humanities and Social Sciences, with its projects on sustainable water management, for instance. This was another example of how important cross-disciplinary endeavours were to Stephen, and how they were part of his vision for the future of the institute. He was equally supportive of the idea of developing a digital repository at the BIAA. In a first phase, it is meant to digitise the institute’s own resources, with the aim of safeguarding them and making them available worldwide. Later, data from other projects can be incorporated.

The examples above illustrate that the BIAA has slowly evolved from a largely research-facilitating institution to a research-generating one that is supporting inter-

disciplinary projects and striving to secure a place in the digital age. Stephen was at the forefront of this process and supported it throughout. Similarly, he was actively involved in the slow process of change through which the British International Research Institutes (BIRI) are currently progressing, a process wherein collaboration between the individual institutes is of paramount importance, and which stands in sharp contrast to the situation ten years ago. The BIAA has lost a lifelong supporter and champion in Stephen Mitchell, who stood by the team in difficult times and helped steer it towards becoming an institute fit for the 21st century and beyond. His approach to the staff at the BIAA was the same as to his students and colleagues at his home institutions: supportive and encouraging, always with time to talk or for a discussion, and always ready to help.

Beyond the academy

Among these official recognitions his many forms of generosity may not always be visible. These include such acts as choosing to give away part of his library of classical textbooks and specialist literature to the University of Cluj in Romania. His generosity stretched well beyond the academy to colleagues, friends, family and people who were in difficult life circumstances. Especially in recent years, while in Berlin, Matina and Stephen’s home was often shared with those seeking asylum. Using his passion for languages he worked with refugee youth and helped them practise German, alongside being a mentor. Further afield, as a contributor to URAFIKI, a small UK charity that supports grassroots development in Western Kenya (<https://www.urafiki.org.uk/>), he visited the village of Yala. There, too, he brought his energy to idea-building, especially with the youth:

He directed a team of local volunteers to carry out a survey of community resources and needs which led to the development of an agricultural improvement programme covering hundreds of farmers. This has produced fantastic results both in terms of massively increased yields but also a more diversified and sustainable approach to farming. All this done with humility, generosity of spirit, kindness and a practical ‘can do’ attitude (Mari Davis on behalf of the Urafiki teams).

These life achievements in no way encapsulate all that Stephen was and what he brought to all who had the privilege of engaging with him. Those who had a chance to accompany him on study trips to Türkiye, where he and Matina took time to share their passion and knowledge, will know his ability to open before them new ways of understanding the world, ancient and contemporary. Stephen combined wisdom of judgement with humanity

and kindness. Many who have had a chance to enjoy a meal at Stephen and Matina's table will have experienced the warmth of their hospitality, the colourful storytelling, the scent of Matina's freshly baked bread and, if lucky, the taste of Stephen's mouthwatering slow-cooked roast alongside their garden vegetables.

He will be sadly missed by all those who knew him, especially those of us who had been so looking forward to

sharing new ideas with him, whether on a walk or around the table, and hearing about his latest adventures in the land and on the page. His dedication in his book *A History of the Later Roman Empire* (Mitchell, Greatrex 2023) recognises the potential and power of the youth in his life, his sons, and to students of any age: 'For Lawrence, Daniel, and Samuel Mitchell, and Polat Aydal, students of science, law, history, and business, shapers of an uncertain future.'

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