

Editor's Introduction

By Anna Leone¹

Issue 50 of *Libyan Studies* marks the 50th anniversary of the Society for Libyan Studies. This is also my last issue as Editor. I would like to thank the Society for this great opportunity and Victoria Leitch, the executive editor, for her work and support over the last few issues.

This has been an interesting period for the Society, and the Journal, which has gone through a phase of transition. A special link between the UK and Libya exists, and has done so since the period of the protectorate after the Second World War. These links remain strong and have always been at the heart of the activities of the Society. However, the Society (and *Libyan Studies*) has now widened its geographical scope to include the broader North African and Sub-Saharan region – in archaeology, history, geography, the natural sciences and linguistics.

This volume is divided into two sections, the first celebrating projects directly sponsored by the Society and the second looking at new directions and other research projects connected to the Society's interests. We begin with the long-term excavations of the Society at Haa Fteah (Barker), Euesperides (Zimi), and in the Libyan desert and pre-desert (Mattingly), demonstrating the Society's commitments to ancient history and archaeology. The paper by Kelly discusses the role of the Society in more recent history, while Philip Kenrick and Andrew Goudie consider tourism and exploration in Libya. Turning to more recent endeavours, Hobson describes the EAMENA project (Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa) focusing on Libya and Tunisia and new methods for recording endangered heritage; and Mattingly et al. present a view on the Moroccan oasis and its landscape. The focus then

shifts to the Society's archives and the process of cataloguing and digitising them (Leitch et al.; Roueché and Haroun Abdelhamed) to increase their impact and usefulness to future scholars. The paper by Ray and Nikolaus demonstrates the use of the archives, in a project funded through the Society's grant system; and Abdrbba summarises his PhD research on water supply in Cyrenaica, as an example of the Society's support of early career scholars.

The second part focuses on different regions and periods. The content of the papers varies from new fieldwork in Cyrenaica in the prehistoric periods to work done in the necropolis of Cyrene. Menozzi looks at issues of the definition of the buffer zone of Cyrene, one of the key elements for the protection of this magnificent UNESCO site; with more details on the Western Necropolis by Di Valerio. Punic and Roman period Libya is explored through historical evidence and inscriptions in Elmayer's paper. Merrills then examines the text by Corippus about North Africa and considers it in a historical perspective. The final paper on the National museum at Algiers, its conditions and security, opens up a major issue related to collections preserved in museums, their maintenance and preservation.

This 50th volume offers a unique set of new data and analysis, and provides important tools for dealing with modern issues of archival management and the preservation of cultural heritage. The papers reflect the continuing importance of the work of the Society for Libyan Studies, its past glories and its capacity to change and renew, always maintaining its function promoting studies and collaborations in Libya, and now, the wider region of North Africa.

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