

specific information about the precise ceramic forms from each site, or the dimensions and typology of architectural elements, is not given anywhere in the publication. With regard to the latter, there is more offered in the preliminary publication than here. For more detail on the ceramics it is necessary to refer to Silvia Polla's unpublished doctoral thesis (Polla 2006), which the reviewer is told is now in the very final stages of preparation for publication. One also learns from the introductory remarks that the olive and wine press elements are to be the subject of an in-depth study undertaken by Lanfranchi, Attoui and de Vos Raaijmakers, but it is not clear when or in what form this will appear. On a brighter note, a really commendable effort has been made to include in the gazetteer not just the inscriptions found on the survey, but also those previously known with their concordances, dating, and full Latin text. This now makes it possible to learn something of the broader archaeological nature of sites where previously only the text of inscriptions had been recorded. A list of unique names and cognomina found on these inscriptions are listed in alphabetical order towards the end of the volume (189–195), complete with their relevant site number for reference.

Universiteit Leiden, Holland

Matthew S. Hobson

Notes

1 Samir Aounallah also became a director from 2012 onwards.

2 The numerous related publications by De Vos and other members of the team of surveyors and specialists are too many to cite here, but the reader seeking more easy access to the significance of the survey results may wish to consult De Vos's chapter published in English in the recent book, *The Roman Agricultural Economy. Organization, Investment, and Production*, edited by Andrew Wilson and Alan Bowman (De Vos 2013).

3 While the number of sites included in the gazetteer has more than doubled, from 296 in the 2000 publication to 641, the number of sites with recorded occupation before the late Republican period has been more or less halved, and fewer sites suffer from the appearance of a sudden hiatus of activity between the Punic and Roman period as a result.

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I MOSAICI DI CIRENE DI ETÀ ELLENISTICA E ROMANA: UN SECOLO DI SCOPERTE. By Filippo Venturini. *Cirene "Atene d'Africa" 5, Monografie di Archeologia Libica 34. "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, Roma, 2013. ISBN 978-88-313-0697-5, pp. 280, 330 b&w figs, 10 colour pls. Price: € 210.00.*
doi:10.1017/lis.2014.14

This is undoubtedly an important book. It is also a fitting celebration of the 100th anniversary of archaeological research at Cyrene as it brings together, for the first time, the known mosaics from the site spanning the Hellenistic to Late Antique worlds. The author has already published important articles on aspects of the Roman mosaics of Cyrene (Venturini 2006; 2010) but now, with this book placed alongside other important publications such as Demetrios Michaelides' volume on the mosaics and marble floors from Berenice (Michaelides 1998), scholars will be able to assess the mosaics of Cyrenaica afresh. As Mario Luni rightly points out in his foreword, Venturini's book represents a major improvement in our knowledge and will have great value for future studies of Libyan mosaics, not least because it collects together the floors in a single, accessible place.

The value of this volume is immediately evident from assessing the contents of the catalogue. It contains 121 entries. Once fragments are excluded, this amounts to 108 pavements. Of these 74 have been published, 17 of which only cursorily, and 37 are unpublished. They date from the late fourth century BC, perhaps, to the middle of the fifth century AD and cover the entirety of the site from the Agora in the centre out to the sanctuaries of Apollo, Demeter and Zeus. It includes well-known Hellenistic mosaics, as discussed in detail by Ida Baldassarre in the 1970s (1970; 1976), the Roman mosaics from the Insula of Jason Magnus and the Late Antique mosaics from the House of Hesychius. In putting all this material together with previously unpublished pavements, the author is able to offer his own interpretation of this long production in its regional and Mediterranean contexts.

The structure of the book is clear: introductions, chronological discussion of mosaic production at Cyrene followed by a contextual analysis, the catalogue arranged by site area, and then the bibliography, lists and tables, and a repertoire of compositions and motifs. This amounts to about 115 pages of the book and represents significant academic endeavour, the fruits of the author's labours. Of course the 143 pages of illustrations should not be forgotten as they add further value to the output. They document the mosaics in photographs and contextualise them in plans. There are only ten colour pages, meaning that the majority are in black and white. Mosaics are by their nature difficult to photograph, but it is naturally disappointing when most are not given colour reproduction, many have no scale, and some are difficult to make out, largely due to poor documentation methods. Small matters, but crucial to their future study, whether academic analysis or conservation assessment.

The bulk of the author's excellent research is visible in the chapter on production which has as its spine the catalogue entries. The discussion of the mosaics is broken down by period: Hellenistic, Early Roman (first century BC to first century AD), High Roman Imperial (second

to third centuries AD) and Late Antique. Each section is further subdivided to give an account of the known chronology of the mosaics, the pavement typology and then sections on their composition and ornamentation, with particular concern for the various elements of the floors whether the adjusting borders, the frames or the central panels and the nature of their geometric or figurative decoration. In addition these subdivisions are used to investigate technical or decorative elements of importance or selected buildings or areas of the site that require closer examination. This diachronic analysis marshals not just the complex history of the site but also the enormous amount of comparative materials to very good effect.

The author's intention, in many cases, is to offer a precise chronology for these mosaics and to place them in their particular architectural context. This is done with close reference to the phasing of the buildings and also with recourse to comparisons with mosaics from the region and the wider Mediterranean. The focus on dating, however, does not mean that issues of function are not assessed or that the mosaics are not carefully located within an historical context. The work on the latter is particularly successful when discussing the High Imperial period and the relationship between figured motifs and political ideology as known from imperial imagery such as coinage. In addition, as the author broadens the scope the relationships between Cyrene and the rest of the Mediterranean are drawn into tight focus. This is where the analysis begins to show real possibilities to help us understand art as an indicator of social behaviour and communication or underlying economic interaction.

The author makes a strong case for Cyrene's, and Cyrenaica's, role in the development of tessellation during the Hellenistic period due to its place within a network of communication between Sicily, Punic North Africa and Egypt. This makes good sense of the very interesting series of third-century mosaic experiments found at Alexandria (Guimier-Sorbets 1998) and Euesperides (Wilson 2003; 2004), as well as the early, probably fourth-century, use of cut cubes in and around Carthage (Dunbabin 1994). The problem, however, remains one of secure dates. If, as the author proposes, the mosaic from the Temple of Apollo (Catalogue Number 77) dates from the late fourth century BC, or slightly later, and the *Casa del Mosaico Illusionistico* (Catalogue Numbers 1 and 2) from the mid third century, then we have some of the earliest tessellated pavements in the Mediterranean. These mosaics are not just tessellated but include *opus vermiculatum*, a refined mosaic technique used for virtuoso effect usually associated with the second century BC. This early date seems highly unlikely, therefore, and the floors are better placed in the late third or second centuries BC.

The stratigraphic evidence needs further clarification to ensure that we understand correctly this development. For the moment, dating is a huge hindrance to our knowledge of how, where and why tessellation was adopted at a time when complex, colourful and decorative pebble mosaics were the main flooring of choice in the eastern Mediterranean and the Punic world in the central Mediterranean was creating mortar floors, often called *signinum* in the scholarship, with cut stones to create simple patterns or figures. As the author identifies, Cyrenaica has an important role in this process, perhaps as one of a

series of points of experimentation, as indicated by the various types evident in Cyrene's 23 examples, but the precise connection to other sites, such as Alexandria and Carthage, Apollonia or Euesperides even, or the island of Sicily, will only be seen with high quality chronological data.

Where the author might have made more of such interactions is during the Roman period. The author brings to bear a panoply of comparanda for the pavements from Cyrene. Thanks to books like Rebecca Sweetman's on the mosaics of Crete (Sweetman 2013), one can position a site like Cyrene in its regional context in a way that previously was not possible. However, the relations with Egypt, in particular, might have been made more of, especially with the new data resulting from the French and Polish excavations at Alexandria. Furthermore it is sometimes difficult to tell what value the author places on the examples cited, especially when affinities are noted in terms of the decoration or layout of the pavement. The point is usually made about their utility for dating, but there is the underlying question of what these similarities mean, in particular for our understanding of the repertoire and the sort of technical or visual exchanges the author proposes for the Hellenistic period. This is achieved very successfully in the author's discussions of archaizing, the intentional use of an older technique, in this case a pavement of stone chips in a temple context, to evoke a venerable past.

There is a lot to engage with in this book, far more than this reviewer has space for here, and it marks an exciting progression in our understanding of the mosaics of Cyrene, of Libya more broadly and also the interaction of visual culture across the Mediterranean. With the materials grouped in this way, the author presents future students of these mosaics with the opportunity to engage with them chronologically, technically, aesthetically and contextually. For this, the author's work should be commended. One final thought, however. The value of catalogues like this one lies largely in their ability to document and interpret their subjects. Although mostly of high quality, there are a couple of elements that frustrate: the poor quality of some of the photographs and a few missing elements in the catalogue such as individual bibliographies or an evaluation of the pavements' quality, through a designation such as the number of tesserae per decimetre.

Minor shortcomings aside, there needs to be consideration about what a catalogue or corpus should look like in the twenty-first century and for whom it is intended. Opportunities to write a book of this type are few and far between, and therefore they need to be made the most of. For example, in Mario Luni's foreword he recalls the value of earlier conservation work, yet nowhere else does it seem to have been considered that this book might have real value to future conservators, who themselves might be academics, or academics who have an interest in conservation. Understanding our past is crucial, but it is also our responsibility to preserve it for the future. In many ways this book by its publication is an act of preservation, but with a few extra categories in the catalogue, recording the state of preservation when viewed by the author for example, or better photographic documentation with scales, a book like this could serve a number of purposes with ease. Such an ambition seems critical at a time

when Libya and Libyans are embarking on the hard task of conserving and managing their heritage. Good documentation should be at the core of this activity.

King's College London, UK

Will Wootton

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THE END OF THE PAGAN CITY: RELIGION, ECONOMY, AND URBANISM IN LATE ANTIQUE NORTH AFRICA. By Anna Leone. *Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013. ISBN 978-0-19-957092-8, pp. xxii + 319, 49 figures, 5 tables. Price: £70.00 (Hardcover).* doi:10.1017/lis.2014.13

This book details the results of Anna Leone's most recent research on Late Antique North Africa, based on her collection of published documentation at Durham,

Oxford and Rome, and on the analysis of archaeological evidence *in situ*. Various aspects of this new contribution draw from the author's previous monograph *Changing Townscapes in North Africa*,¹ updating and moving the discussion forward in order to focus the attention on the transition (dichotomy vs. overlap) between Paganism and Christianity. The volume comprises six chapters where different sets of data are analysed to answer the questions addressed, plus two appendices: a list of all known inscriptions which mention *flamines* and *sacerdotes* in North Africa from the fourth century onwards; and a discussion on the architectural evidence of Basilica I at Sabratha,² highlighting the main points of the research undertaken by the author at this site in 2010. The visit to Basilica II, originally planned as part of the fieldwork, had to be cancelled due to the start of the conflict in Libya.

The principal goal of the book is to provide an overview of the urban life of the North African cities in Late Antiquity from an archaeological perspective. As acknowledged by the author (3–4), this analysis has the advantage of presenting a complementary insight into a subject traditionally approached by looking mainly at written sources;³ on the other hand, the rather limited amount of archaeological data available represents the main obstacle. This is sadly not surprising for scholars working on North Africa: the excavations carried out in the colonial period (mostly by Italian and French missions) allowed little space for stratigraphic methodologies and for the recording of post-Roman phases, thus creating a gap in the material evidence preserved. Precisely because of this, the greatest merit of the book is the attempt to overcome these difficulties by putting together pieces of information from different contexts. Overall, it is an appreciable further step towards a better understanding of the history and archaeology of North Africa in Late Antiquity, particularly welcome given the small number of archaeological studies that try to present regional and inter-regional syntheses. Among these we should cite the work on Caesarea, extended to a broader North African level, carried out by T.W. Potter (1995); the contribution on Late Antique Mauretania Tingitana by N. Villaverde Vega (2001); and the collection of evidence of Christian buildings in Cyrenaica by J.B. Ward-Perkins and R.G. Goodchild (2003), edited by J. Reynolds for the Society for Libyan Studies.

Chapter 1 (1–26) sets the ground for the discussion presented in the following chapters, including a 'digression' on Augustine's work, and on the spread of Donatist and Circumcellion communities in North Africa. In terms of geographical frame, Leone chooses to narrow the analysis to the territory of Numidia and former Africa Proconsularis (Zeugitana, Byzacena, and Tripolitania). Understandably, this could not be consistent given the disparity of evidence available for the various regions, as well as for some sites rather than others. The time frame encompasses the early fourth to sixth centuries: from Constantine's edict of Milan (AD 313), passing through the establishment of the Vandal kingdom, and ending with the Byzantine reoccupation. Again, these periods could not be given equal weight in the text: for instance, the frustrating scarcity of archaeological data on Vandal North Africa makes it difficult to present a complete picture of this crucial phase.