

Introduction

Editors' Introduction

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2022 marks a historic year in the life of the journal, as the Society for Libyan Studies transformed into the British Institute for Libyan and Northern African Studies. The new name better reflects our status as one of the British Academy's International Research Institutes and certainly better describes the reach of the journal. *Libyan Studies* will not change its name however, as an internationally recognised journal with a long history, reputed for its work not only in Libya but also in the wider field of studies touching the Mediterranean coasts in contact with North Africa. Indeed, in this issue we visit not only Libya, but also Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Malta.

This issue is dedicated to Joyce Reynolds, one of our founder members, and the subject of our first obituary. Born in 1918, she studied Classics and spent much time in Libya, collecting and studying Roman inscriptions. Her work forms the basis of the online Inscriptions of Libya project, hosted by King's College London, in collaboration with BILNAS.

Part 1 deals with our research papers. We begin in Libya with Adel Othman El Mayer's new perspectives, and data, on the prehistoric engravings in the Al-Muqrinat Cave in the countryside of Cyrene. He also highlights the dangers faced by many of these open-air sights – caused by environment and human actions. An in-depth report by Carmine Catenacci, Patrizio Domenicucci, and Oliva Menozzi deals with the description and interpretation of a Mithraic relief – following a multidisciplinary approach that goes beyond pure description to question the iconographic, epigraphic and monumental meanings. This is followed by Luca Cherstich's study of a rock-cut tomb in Cyrene, with its unique Doric false peristyle. He explores the hybrid nature of this monument with its mix of local culture and Alexandrian influences.

In a different thematic, Anna Walas, as a result of research carried out with a grant from BILNAS, engages with the archival evidence from the Bu Njem excavations to look beyond the military fort at the extra-mural settlement and its connections with the garrison – in particular from a social and economic perspective. The article also demonstrates the importance of revisiting the archives – it is not always necessary to search for new data, sometimes documents hidden away offer important, unpublished materials, and the opportunity for new interpretations.

Inscriptions are the subject of the new data concerning three Roman milestones near Bani Walid in Tripolitania by Abdulhafid F. Elmayer and Benet Salway, important for what they tell us about the road system and the movement of troops, officials and goods in this pre-desert area west of Mizda in the third century AD. Hafed Abdouli and Muftah Ahmed have been studying toponymic changes at Gaphara/Minna villa Marci/Ras Cha'ra/Gasr Jafara (Tunisia) to unravel their meaning

and geographical implications. Skander Souissi expertly summarises the typological aspects of his monumental thesis work on mill stones, from querns to rotary millstones, mortars, rollers and olive press mills – in *Africa Proconsularis*. The evidence points to technological influences on other Mediterranean regions, as well as local types. The final article in Part 1, by Aurélien Montel, takes us to eleventh century Tripoli, looking at original written sources. He discusses the scholarly setting and the emergence of a historical narrative.

Part 2 is a themed section on *North African Architectures and Urban Spaces across the Roman, Late Antique, and Islamic Eras*, edited by Niccolò Mugnai. The five papers engage with select case studies over a broad chronological and geographic framework to highlight the role of the built environment as a socio-cultural phenomenon. They look at North African architectures and urban spaces through different lenses – from the buildings' construction process, to their function, significance, and visual impact. Authors apply a range of methodologies to tackle these questions: architectural, archaeological, anthropological, and historical analyses; 3D digital modelling and reconstructions; art historical and iconographic studies.

The first paper by Stefano Camporeale, Niccolò Mugnai, and Rossella Pansini takes us to ancient Sala (Chellah, Morocco), to explore the site's architectural and urban development from the Mauretanian to the Roman imperial period, ca. first century BC – second century AD. This study investigates the layout and function of local buildings and public spaces, how some of these were reshaped to respond to new ideas of monumentality, and how different architectural and decorative traditions overlapped within the evolving cityscape. The impact of imperial-style architecture and architectural ornament in North Africa is addressed by Johannes Lipps in his contribution, which looks at the use of marble for public constructions at the site of Meninx (Djerba, Tunisia) in the second century AD. Based on the results of recent field research, the paper points out the importance of the mobility of technologies, architectural concepts, building materials, and craftsmanship under Roman rule. Moving to the Roman colony of Thamugadi (Timgad, Algeria) in the Severan period, Nicolas Lamare engages with a theoretical framework that draws on the notion of collective memory to understand the experience of ancient spaces in antiquity. His analysis focuses on the city streets and public buildings along them, discussing how monuments and their inscriptions were staged to create a shared memory of these areas. Urban change and micro-regional patterns are examined in the paper co-authored by Corisande Fenwick, Andrew Dufton, Stefan Ardeleanu, Moheddine Chaouali, Heike Möller, Julia Pagels, and Philipp von Rummel, who deal with the evidence from the Central Medjerda Valley (Tunisia) from the Byzantine through to the medieval period, ca. fourth to eleventh century. Looking primarily at the sites of Bulla Regia and Chimtou, this study offers a wealth of new data

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on public constructions, religious buildings, and housing over a *longue durée* of occupation. The themed section is concluded by Jonathan Bloom's assessment of the visual discrepancies between the exterior and interior of early Islamic mosques in North Africa, with particular reference to Tunisia. The paper takes into careful account issues such as the nature of Islamic worship and the preference for certain building practices and features, which led to the creation of distinctive forms of religious architecture and ornamentation in the Maghreb.

To finish, our new Book Reviews Editor, Niccolò Mugnai, offers a wide choice of critiques. The first three reviews work in conjunction with the special section, looking mainly at architectural literature. David Cardona's *Roman Architecture in Malta*, is, according to Niccolò Mugnai, the first time that a scholar has fully engaged with this subject and presents an important dataset for the area and the topic. Rossella Pansini then examines

Nicolas Lamare's *Les fontaines monumentales en Afrique romaine*, which looks at the construction and role of these structures and offers particularly rich illustrative reference. *Il Foro di Sala 1. Il Capitolium* is the subject of Stefano Camporeale's research, and Giuseppe Mazzilli outlines its importance to studies of Romano-African temples. The emphasis is on the links between Rome and its peripheries in architectural terms. The next review is a collective work, in honour of Claude Lepelley, *L'automne de l'Afrique romaine*. Mohamed-Arbi Nsiri describes each of the articles that renew aspects of the study of late antiquity. Finally, we offer the response to Saul Kelly's review of *Flying over Zerzura: Italian Militaries in Search of the Unknown*. The author of this book, Roberto Chiarvetto, was keen to address the gaps outlined by the reviewer, and returning to his sources offers readers new data and analysis at the same time. We welcome all such responses in future.