



Libya Antiqua Magazine presentation

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Back in 1964, Antonino Di Vita, recent successor to Ernesto Vergara Caffarelli as Adviser of Tripolitania antiquities, Richard Goodchild, at the time Controller of Cyrenaica Antiquities, and Aissa el-Aswed, Archaeological Inspector of the Directorate-General of Antiquities, Museums and Historical Archives decided to launch a Journal that took the place of the *Reports and Monographs of the Department of Antiquities in Tripolitania* (of which only four issues had been released between 1948 and 1958¹; fig. 1). They were aware of the need to provide Libya and its extraordinary antiquities with the visibility and importance they deserved, by offering “a periodical publication containing studies and reports regarding the prehistoric, classical and Islamic archaeology of Libya”.

The founders called on all the well-known archaeologists working in the country to collaborate on the journal's first issue, binding them together with the experiences of those who had worked there before the second world war and had contributed greatly to the knowledge of Libya's heritage.

The subjects of the articles ranged from prehistory to the Islamic archaeology. In addition to the Archaeological News of all the country's provinces, news that in spite of their brevity offered very significant data the research conducted in those years, and by ample summaries in Arabic for each of the articles, thus making current research in Libya accessible to all.

The first volume which was issued in 1964 (fig. 2) was followed by the subsequent ones until Volume XV-XVI, 1978-79 (published later, in 1987).

*This presentation was held at the opening of the XXI International Study Conference on Roman Africa, “Latin epigraphy in North Africa: novelties, re-readings, new syntheses”, Tunis 6-9 December 2018.

¹ R.G. Goodchild, *The Roman roads and milestones of Tripolitania (Discoveries and researches in 1947)*, Reports and Monographs 1, 1948; Reports and Monographs 2, 1949; E. Rossi, *Le iscrizioni arabe e turche del Museo di Tripoli (Libia)*, Reports and Monographs 3, 1953; S. Aurigemma, *Un sepolcreto punico-romano sotto il “Forte della vite” o “Forte Nord-Ovest” in Tripoli (Libia)*, Reports and Monographs 4, 1958.

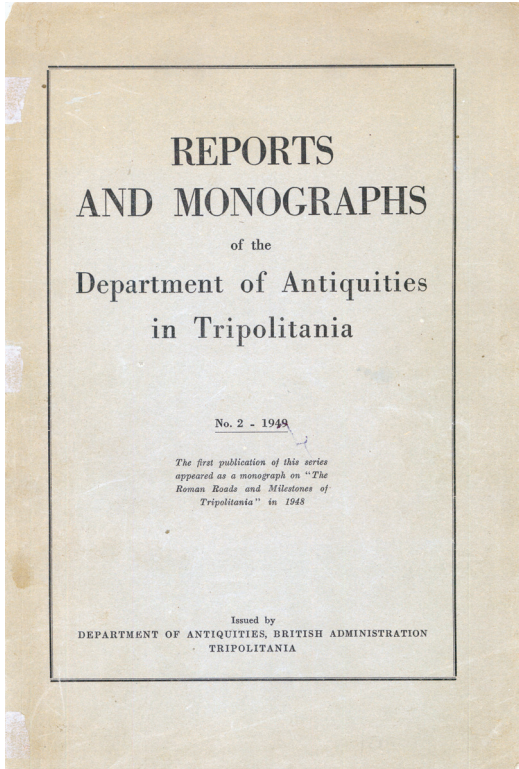


Fig. 1.

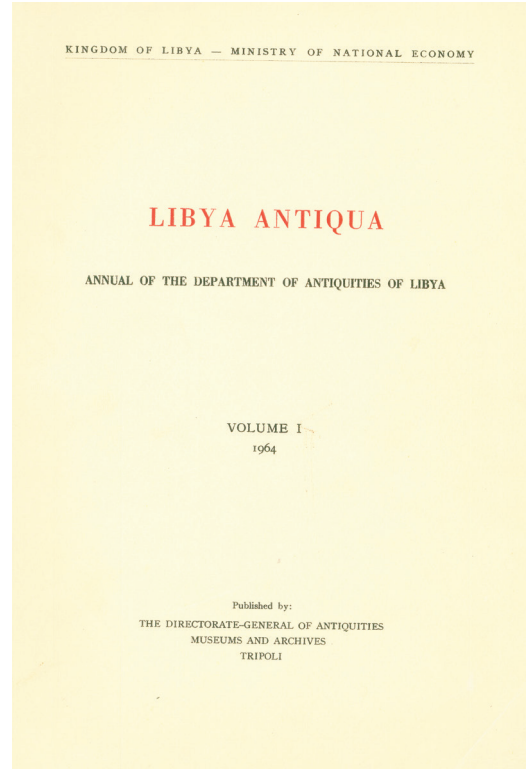


Fig. 2.

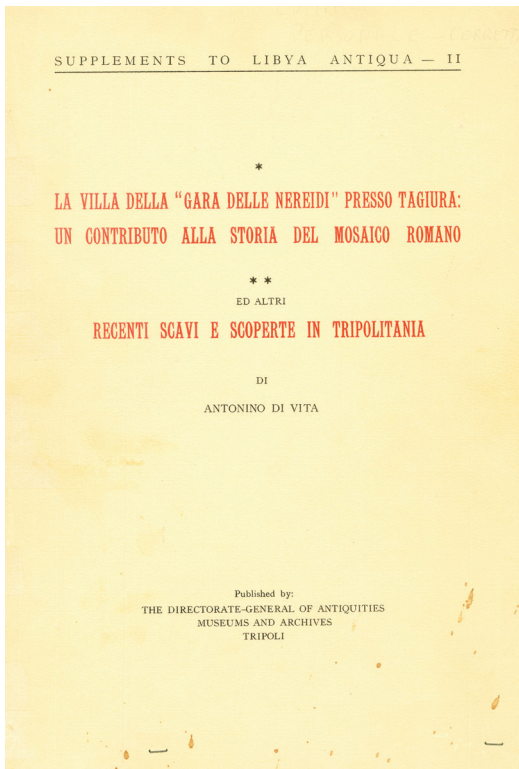


Fig. 3.

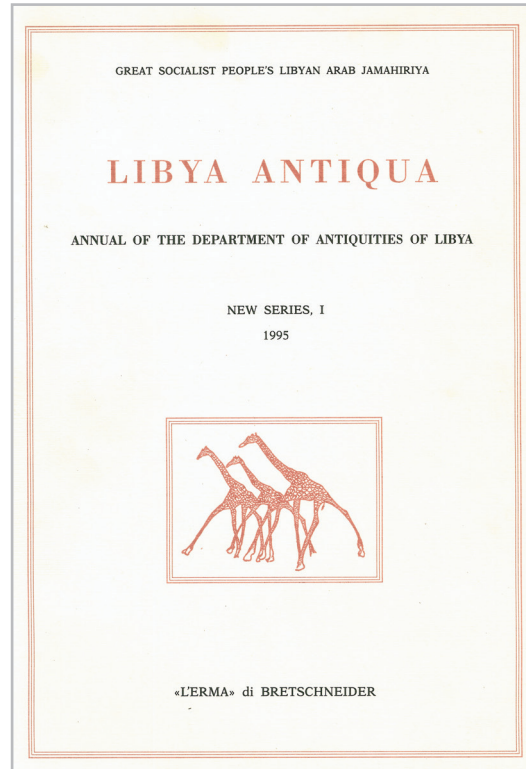


Fig. 4.

In addition to several supplements dedicated for large archeological researches² (fig. 3).

It is worth mentioning that anyone interested in Libyan antiquities can find important studies by the greatest scholars of the Libyan world and more generally of the Maghreb, from those of the first generation to the next.

Leafing through the pages of the numerous volumes one can retrace the history of archaeology in Libya, the scientific itineraries of those scholars who have contributed most to reconstructing the complex picture of those cultures that had followed one another in the area, and at the same time, via the *News* one can trace a picture (albeit incomplete) of the difficult politics involved in safeguarding the antiquities of Libya.

Despite the importance of this Magazine, throughout its 50 years of existence, the Journal has experienced many ups and downs periods of discontinuity after the volumes appearing in the first twenty years of its existence. It became irregular (or rather remained stationary for several years).

After the Department's repeated attempts to print the Journal in Libya, and due to the particularity of its subjects which many of them include inscriptions of old languages these need special technical possibilities in 1993 "L'Erma di Bretschneider" of Rome was entrusted with the publication of the new series (n.s. I-IV, 1995-1998), (fig. 4) edited by G. Di Vita Evrard, L. Musso and M. Turjman, which also offered a place for much research undertaken by the new generations of archaeologists. Unfortunately, this too was interrupted after publication 4 volumes during the years 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998.

Due to the insist of the Department of antiquities to resume this Magazine, Prof. Di Vita one of the three founders of this Magazine made great efforts to revive it again; he attempted to resolve the age-old problem of funds for publication (a frequent cause of interruptions), and found in Editor Fabrizio Serra - our actual Editor - an attentive and willing partner when he managed in 2007 to arrange an agreement between the named editing house and the Department of Antiquities which was crowned by publication in 2010 the fifth volume of the new series. However, after this single volume series, Di Vita's death in 2011 led to yet another period of suspension.

Today publication has finally been resumed, following a call of 2015 by the Department of Antiquities to both Libyan archaeologists and all foreign missions of seven Countries which are working in Libya till now, so they could present their accounts of research carried out in the country from 2010 until 2014. All have joined in this effort aimed not only at the scientific community to raise awareness of the country's immense cultural heritage, but also the competent international organizations to encourage interest in its preservation, especially at this critical time of political uncertainty in Libya.

So now we are showing the 6 volumes that are edited in only three years from 2016 to 2018 (fig. 5) for equalize the lost years, edited by Abdul Rachman Yaklef, Mohamed Faraj, Mustafa Turjman, Nicola Bonacasa and Maria Antonietta Rizzo, of more than 1400 pages,

² F. Sattin, G. Gusmano, *La cosiddetta "mummia" infantile dell'Acacus* (I, s.d.); A. Di Vita, *La villa della "Gara delle Nereidi" presso Tagiura: un contributo alla storia del mosaico romano, ed altri recenti scavi e scoperte in Tripolitania* (II, 1966); S. Aurigemma, *L'arco quadrifronte di Marco Aurelio e di Lucio Vero a Tripoli* (III, 1970); R. G. Goodchild, J. G. Pedley, D. White, *Apollonia, the port of Cyrene. Excavations by the University of Michigan 1965-1967* (IV, 1976); *Excavations at Sidi Khrebish, Benghazi (Berenice)* (V, 1-4): A. Lloyd, R. Reece, J.M. Reynolds, F. B. Sear, P. M. Kenrick, *Buildings. Coins, Inscriptions, Architectural Decoration* (V, 1, 1977); G. Barker, A. Bonanno, J. A. Riley, *Amphoras and Plain Wares* (V, 2, 1985); P. M. Kenrick, *The Fine Pottery* (V, 3, part 1, 1985); D. Bailey, *The Lamps* (V, 3, part 2, 1985); D. Michaelides, *The mosaics and marble floors* (V, 4, part 1, 1998); J. P. McAleer, *A catalogue of sculpture from Apollonia*, (VI, 1979); R. Marichal, *Les ostraca de Bu Njem* (VII, 1992); K. U. Mahler, *Die Architekturdekoration der frühen Kaiserzeit in Lepcis Magna* (VIII, 2006).

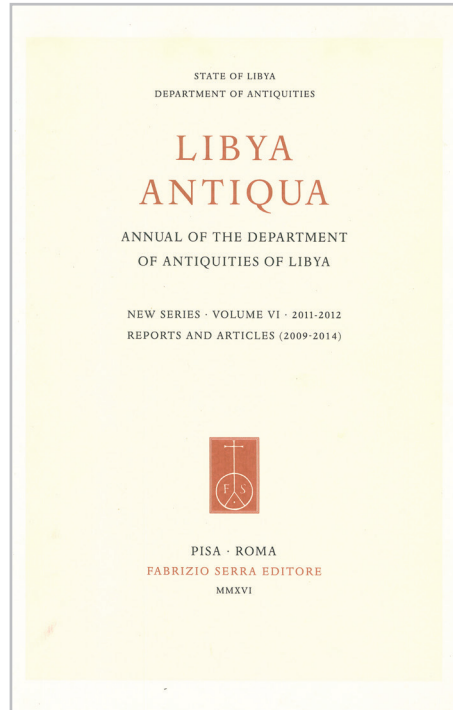


Fig. 5.

with hundreds of photos and drawings, with the reports of all mission working in Libya (from Italy, France, Great Britain, Germany, United States of America, Poland and Japan) which show all of their excavations, restorations and researches from 2010 to 2014, during difficult years of political instability of the Country, in all of the most important areas and monuments of Libyan archaeological heritage, from Prehistoric to Islamic Period, giving all relevant scientific world institutions a complete view of the recent studies and researches.

We are confident that the new generations of Libyan and foreign archaeologists they trained will be able to continue the work of research, restoration, preservation and enhancement of an extraordinary cultural heritage belonging in primis to the Libyans, but also to the whole of humanity, while their scientific contributions ensure the continuity of the journal *Libya Antiqua*, which has had such great importance in the history of the archaeology of Libya .

We hope by the resumption of this magazine all parities share in its regular issuance to fulfill its function in awareness and protection of the Libyan heritage.

Briefly below we list the contributions which were published during the last three years and the programmed studies in the coming years belong to the archaeological research in Libya:

- University of Macerata is working in Sabratha (painted tombs and Sidret el Balik sacred funerary area), and Leptis (Curia, Amphitheater, Serapis Temple, Magna Mater temple, Via Colonnata and the Circus), digitalization of archives.
- University of Munich is working on the site of Gheriat el Garbia and limes.
- French archaeological Mission, in Cyrenaica (Latroun thermes and Christian Basilica; Apollonia and Harbor thermes in Leptis). Epigraphic researches.
- British archaeological Missions through the Society for Libyan Studies: Libyan Sahara, Benghazi and Gebel Akdar - Prehistoric researches.

- Department of Antiquities of Libya: Tripoli Archaeological plan of the Old city; some sites of Cyrenaica, Tripoli necropolis; Cyrenaica and safeguard, Buch Kamash necropolis, Sabratha necropolis; Sirte necropolis.
- University of Roma 3: surveys on Leptis territory, restoration on Villa Silin, works on Tripolitania museums, digitalization of archive.
- University of Urbino: Cyrene new temples and sanctuary of Demeter.
- University of Warsaw: Ptolemais palaces and houses.
- Italian Mission of Tempio Flavio: Flavian temple reconstructions in 3D also studied some remains of Aghlabid time remains (9th-10th Centuries AD).
- University of Catania: Leptis Magna, Basilica of Trajan and decumanus quarter.
- University of Napoli 2: Cyrene, sanctuary of Apollo, theater, Mausolea.
- University of Chieti: Surveys in Cyrenaic territory; necropolis of Cyrene.
- University of Roma Sapienza: prehistoric researches in Massak and Acacus.
- Libyan-Italian joint mission: prehistoric researches in Gebel Gharbi.
- Centro Internazionale Studi di architettura: oasi e città di Ghat.
- German Institute Berlin. Ptolemais: ancient walls and necropolis.
- Soprintendenza del Mare of Sicily: Cyrenaica, submarines researches.
- University of Messina: Leptis houses.
- University of Palermo: Sabratha, Serapis temple, thermes; Cyrene, Zeus temple restoration.

Obituaries. Many of the old protagonists of Libyan archaeology have left us in recent years. While their memory will remain both example and witness to the scientific and human endeavors, they lavished for so many years on the Libya they loved.

All of us harbor the awareness that only by passing on knowledge of the past to future generations we can help create a future of peace and prosperity for Libya.

Finally I would like to conclude the importance of this Annual in the following points:

- Opened a wide window for the Department of Antiquities on the outside world.
- *Libya Antiqua* through its march published serious studies and researches with creative scientific visions concerning the archeological heritage the thing makes the scholars recalculate their studies and visions not regarding the history of Libya but also in the Mediterranean regions.
- *Libya Antiqua* opened new research archeological fields in front of the archaeologists.
- *Libya Antiqua* makes the archaeological heritage in Libya is known worldwide.

