

THE BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR LIBYAN
AND NORTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES

ANNUAL REVIEW

2024-25



BILNAS
BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR LIBYAN
& NORTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES

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ABOUT THE BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR LIBYAN AND NORTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES

The British Institute for Libyan and Northern African Studies (BILNAS) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which was established to take over the activities of an earlier charity, founded in 1969 as The Society for Libyan Studies, an unincorporated association. Its aims are to encourage and co-ordinate scholarship on Libya and Northern Africa and to foster relations between scholars in the region and those working outside the region. To this end, it seeks through its activities:

- to support and undertake research relating to the history, antiquities, culture, languages, literature, art, institutions, customs and natural history of Libya and Northern Africa;
- to organise and promote missions in the region for these purposes;
- to co-operate with other organisations sharing the same fields of interest;
- to arrange for the publication of research in these fields;
- to hold lectures and meetings, to publish an annual journal (*Libyan Studies*) and other publications which will enhance and promote public knowledge of all aspects of Libyan and Northern African culture and society.

BILNAS receives the major part of its funds from the British Academy, to be used 'to benefit the UK research endeavour'. It is therefore incumbent upon the Council to confirm that the grant payments from the British Academy have been applied in accordance with the agreement between the Academy and BILNAS, and the aims and objectives of BILNAS as stated in its rules and declared to the Charity Commission. Council confirms that, in respect of the accounts presented herewith, this is so.

The President is elected at the Annual General Meeting for a term of four years; the Director is elected for a period of three years, which may be extended to a maximum of five years; the Assistant Director, the Treasurer, the Head of Mission, the Honorary Collections Officer and the Editor of the BILNAS journal are elected annually and may be re-elected without limit; the remainder of the Council is composed of up to eight Ordinary Members who are elected annually and may be re-elected, subject to a maximum continuous period of service of four years. In proposing Ordinary Members for election, the Council seeks to secure as wide a range of skills within its fields of interest as possible. The Officers and Council, who constitute the trustees of the charity, confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Institute's aims and objectives and in planning future activities and setting the grant-making policy for the year.

The address of BILNAS is:

c/o The British Academy, 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH.

BILNAS maintains a website at <http://www.bilnas.org>.

The General Secretary may be contacted by email at gensec@bilnas.org

COUNCIL AND OFFICERS

The Officers and Council on 31 March 2025 were as follows:

Officers

President:	PROFESSOR NICHOLAS BARTON, BA, DEA, DPhil, FSA
Vice President:	PROFESSOR GRAEME BARKER, MA, PhD, CBE, FBA, FSA, FRGS
Director:	PROFESSOR ANNA LEONE, BA, PhD
Honorary Treasurer:	OLIVER KIMBERLEY, MA, ACA
Assistant Director:	NICHOLE SHELDRIK, BA, MA, DPhil
Head of Mission:	PAUL BENNETT, MBE, BA, Hon. D.Litt, FSA, MCIFA
Honorary Collections Officer:	VALERIA VITALE BA, MA, MA, PhD
Editor, Libyan Studies:	VICTORIA LEITCH, BA, MPhil, DPhil

Council:	PROFESSOR DAVID ATKINSON, BSc, PhD SALEM EL-MAIAR, MPhil, FRGS PROFESSOR HISHAM MATAR, FRSL BARBARA SPADARO, PhD
General Secretary:	PAULINE GRAHAM
Honorary Librarian:	DAWN WRIGHT, BA, DipLib
Publications Manager:	VICTORIA LEITCH, BA, MPhil, DPhil

Research Grants Committee

The Director
The Honorary Treasurer
The Assistant Director
The General Secretary
Editor of Libyan Studies – Publications Manager
PROFESSOR ALICE STEVENSON PhD, FSA (Committee Chair)
TIM REYNOLDS, BA, MA, PhD, FSA

Publications Committee

The Director
The Honorary Treasurer
The Assistant Director
The General Secretary
Editor of Libyan Studies – Publications Manager

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Since my last annual letter to you I am very pleased to report on a number of significant achievements by BILNAS and some of the organizational changes that have happened over the past 12 months. Amongst thriving successes this year have been the expansion of our outreach and engagement programmes allowing us to reach far bigger audiences and further our commitment to fostering international scholarly collaboration focused on Libya and Northern Africa. Special mention here should be made of the outstanding efforts of the Archive team in upgrading and improving access to our major archival holdings that are now publicly available through our website and the Archaeology Data Service.

To mark International Women's Day, we celebrated the achievements of two leading women in archaeology whose work in North Africa is preserved in our archive. The contributions of Dame Kathleen Kenyon and Lady Olwen Brogan were highlighted in a special exhibition of photographs and contemporary documents detailing their important studies at the Libyan sites of Sabratha and Ghirza respectively. It was also pleasing to see that BILNAS joined heritage institutions in celebrating the renaming of the University of Leicester's School of Archaeology and Ancient History in honour of Dame Kathleen Kenyon. Other related accomplishments this year have included the creation of interactive resources such as the StoryMap "Women Transcending Boundaries" which is attracting much outside interest and the organization of a number of engagement sessions with the Libyan community to improve cultural relevance of archive materials.

This year it was satisfying to see BILNAS was again able to stage a wide diversity of programmes including online lectures, workshops and book readings. A special commemorative event was held in honour of one of our illustrious former members Joyce Reynolds FBA FSA, the renowned classicist, who sadly passed away in 2022. One of my personal highlights this year was the Annual Lecture Meeting at the British Academy where we welcomed the multi-award winning author Hisham Matar, one of our Trustees, to speak about his much-heralded new book *My Friends*. It was a delightful evening which brought together many familiar faces and new friends to hear an inspirational reading and discussion of Hisham's compelling and wonderfully poignant account of three individuals forced into exile from Libya, how their friendships grew and how historical events intervened to change the course of their lives forever. The meeting was further enlivened by some delicious Libyan and Moroccan snacks served up by the Beit El Fezzani café and art gallery.

Amongst new developments at BILNAS our annual journal *Libyan Studies*, published in partnership with Cambridge University Press, is available free online to members but will not be printed in the immediate future. These changes have been partly forced on us by an increase in print costs but this is also part of a growing worldwide trend for journals to be published online only, to protect the environment. Membership benefits will now include a discount on CUP books and we will continue to offer discounted prices to members for all BILNAS publications. We hope these changes will prove popular with our membership and will encourage others to join our community.



Finally, this year we said goodbye to several valued members of staff. Our Director, Professor Corisande Fenwick stood down after completing her term of office. Her contribution has been immense, and we are enormously grateful to her for her calm stewardship, particularly in interacting with the British Academy, where she has kept our profile very high. We wish her all success in returning to her post full-time at University College London. Following her departure, we are delighted to welcome, Professor Anna Leone of Durham University, who has been appointed as Director initially for the next 3 years. We also had a change of Assistant Director: Dr Niccolò Mugnai was replaced in June 2024 by Dr Nichole Sheldrick. He is thanked for his commitment, attention to detail and excellent organisational skills. Another departure has been our long-serving general secretary Pauline Graham. Needless to say, she has been a constant and ever-reliable presence, and the President and Council owe a special debt of gratitude for her imperturbable nature and superb management skills. Fortunately, Dr Victoria Leitch, is well-versed in the running of the Institute and will be an excellent successor. We also bade farewell this year to Felicity Crowe who has done sterling work on the BILNAS archives. Her planned move to a post in Oxford allowed a smooth transition to our new BILNAS Archivist, Dr Anne Marie Williamson.

In closing, we have much to celebrate this year. We are particularly proud of our achievements that demonstrate BILNAS' continued commitment to enabling research, preserving cultural heritage, and encouraging international scholarly collaboration across Northern Africa. At the same time, despite our successes, we face ongoing financial challenges, such as funding our publications, managing rising IT costs, supporting in-person events, and maintaining our high-level video conferencing capabilities for webinars. In consequence, we would be enormously grateful for additional donations, creative fundraising suggestions and partnership opportunities. Your support is vital to our continued success. Together, we can ensure BILNAS' important work continues to thrive in the years ahead.



DIRECTOR'S LETTER

This marks my first official contribution as the new director of BILNAS, succeeding Corisande Fenwick. It is a great honour to take on this prestigious role, and I am deeply committed to advancing BILNAS' visibility, impact and research excellence. My vision for BILNAS is one of growth, innovation and strengthened collaboration – within our scholarly community, across international research networks and with all those who are passionate about this fascinating region.

In the past few months, I have devoted significant time to assessing the current situation and strategising for future events and initiatives. A major focus has been connecting with directors of other British International Research Institutes (BIRI) to foster new collaborative opportunities. One of our key priorities is the continued effort to make our valuable archives more publicly accessible through digitisation and shared events. Recently, our Archivist and Collections Manager participated in various online discussions, helping to promote best practices and raise awareness of our archival resources. Additionally, in partnership with other BIRI institutions, we have developed a joint archive project mapping women's history, which is set to launch soon. In a further initiative to enhance interdisciplinary research, we have collectively applied to the British Academy to fund new joint projects.

Maintaining high-quality research remains at the core of BILNAS' mission. Over recent months, we have funded several new research projects and fellowships through our well-established grants programme, ensuring continued engagement with North African and Libyan studies while attracting emerging scholars. We have awarded a total of £41,623 across multiple grant categories: two Postdoctoral Writing Fellowships (£8,000 each) to Danielle McLean and Anna Walas; four Research Grants ranging from £3,000-£9,000 to scholars studying ceramics, volcanic chronology, and archaeological sites; three Celia Hensman grants (£1,000 each) supporting language training and archival research.

Our book collection continues to flourish, with the recent publication of a volume on Tripolitania and additional titles in preparation, soon to be announced. Our journal, *Libyan Studies*, receives high-quality submissions and serves as an essential platform for scholarly debate on the region.

We have hosted a series of public events focusing on history and archaeology, including a round-table discussion on David Mattingly's recent book, as well as a discussion in Arabic about the archive collection and what it meant to members of the Arabic-speaking community. Our annual lecture, a reading by Hisham Matar of his latest novel, demonstrates our new inclusive approach and our commitment to engaging with many different aspects of the historical and cultural heritage Libyan and the wider Northern African region.

As we shape the future of BILNAS, we also recognise key challenges that lie ahead. Transitioning to open-access publications is a necessary step to ensure wider accessibility and sustained academic quality, but also imperative for wider reach and academic excellence, despite financial hurdles.



To boost our visibility and expand opportunities, it is essential to strengthen our media presence and foster greater public awareness of our initiatives. Looking ahead, we will focus strategically on outreach efforts through events, blogs, podcasts and social media platforms. These are not simply communication tools; we view them as crucial channels for securing new funding and fostering meaningful public engagement. They will play a key role in supporting our mission to promote Libyan and Northern African culture, heritage, history and traditions.

Our broader vision is to significantly expand our reach. We plan to offer more opportunities for conferences and public events, diversifying activities and deepening connections with those interested in Northern African and Libyan studies. Additionally, we are exploring mentoring programmes to support young scholars working in the region and enhancing our fellowship and grants portfolio. The continued success of BILNAS depends on the collective efforts of our members and the active participation of our growing community.

To ensure BILNAS' long-term impact, we must be proactive in raising our profile, securing resources and maintaining the highest standards in research. I look forward to working closely with colleagues, collaborators and supporters as we build a stronger, more dynamic institute for the years ahead.



OBITUARY

John Hayes (21 May 1938 to 27 February 2024)

John Riley

John Hayes, who died last February aged 85, has left an indelible mark on Mediterranean and North African archaeology. With his thick mop of unruly hair, ready laugh, and characteristic stance – arched back, head upright with his knuckles on his hips – John Hayes was a much respected, ubiquitous and welcome figure on excavations throughout the Mediterranean region and beyond, whether publishing their pottery, advising specialists or contributing at conferences and always encouraging young researchers.

His lasting achievement was to rein in and bring to order the bewildering and assorted jumble of Roman red slipped fine wares found on all sites throughout the Mediterranean region and beyond. He created a fundamental new reference tool for classifying and dating these wares to enable wider chronological contexts to underpin research into ancient communication and trade patterns.

His seminal work *Late Roman Pottery*, published by the British School at Rome in 1972, provided for the first time for the period 1st–7th centuries AD a comprehensive, chronologically arranged type series classification of these wares from both East and West. His basic typology, which brought to the fore the importance and ubiquity of Tunisian manufactured African Red Slip Ware, has remained robust despite major advances in the field in the ensuing 50 years or so.

He went on to publish, in 1985, a major typology of late Hellenistic and Roman sigillata from the Eastern Mediterranean ('Sigillata Orientale', as part of the *Enciclopedia Dell'arte Antica*, Rome).

He spent the rest of his life developing and expanding on this fundamental research both geographically and chronologically.

His open, helpful and sharing nature and personal availability saw him continually and spontaneously reporting news, and providing updates on unpublished findings and parallels from his extensive ongoing travels throughout the Mediterranean. In this way, he was able to "pollenate" burgeoning archaeological projects, accelerating a uniform, confident identification in the field, and appreciation of the role of ancient pottery for excavators and academics alike.

Libya

The Society for Libyan Studies (now BILNAS) excavations at Berenice-Benghazi benefited very early on from a typical John Hayes personal visit, instigated by the Society's highly supportive founder, Prof Donald Strong in Autumn 1971.

John was no stranger to Eastern Libya – he had published with remarkable rapidity the Archaic Greek and Roman pottery from Prof John Boardman's 1963–1965 Excavations at Tocra.

When he flew into Benghazi from Athens a rescue excavation was underway at Roman Berenice with a handful of young archaeologists (including me) fending off a bulldozer and many lorries erasing the site.



John Hayes at the American School at Athens.

John Hayes was a Godsend – he quickly identified a wide range of fine pottery wares from both West and East Mediterranean. He then collected together a working type series template for us, advised us how to recognise and date them in the field, established provisional chronologies for the site and left us with copies of proofs of his forthcoming book *Late Roman Pottery*.

John's arrival, his generosity and sharing gave the excavation the orientation and date fixes it so urgently needed, and John continued to be supportive and helpful to us over the next few years.

We were among the first to experience the levels of relief, knowledge and confidence brought by John in such a fashion and, over the following 45 years or so, to very many other excavators and specialists across all regions of the Mediterranean.

Recognition

John did achieve recognition, although more internationally than at home. He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1975, and became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

His greatest accolade came in 1990, when at the relatively young age of 52, he was awarded the Archaeological Institute of America's annual Gold Medal for Distinguished Archaeological Achievement, its highest honour.

But perhaps his most important and lasting recognition and accolade is in the hearts of the subsequent generations of pottery specialists who benefited from his generosity and advice.



RESEARCH GRANTS

For the financial year 2024-25, BILNAS awarded two Postdoctoral Writing Fellowships, four Research Grants and three Celia Hensman grants for a total of £41,623 to UK-based scholars at different career stages for projects in Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria. These projects are at the heart of our mission to enable, in particular young, scholars to push out the boundaries of research but also to engage with our members through articles and public presentations. Danielle McLean and Emma Horn have published in the latest issue of *Libyan Studies*, volume 55; and Anna Walas presented her work at a very lively and well received BILNAS online lecture on 20 March 2025. It is rewarding to be able to show our members the benefits of some of these research grants so quickly, and we look forward to sharing more of their research with you in the near future, with events, articles and social media updates.

POSTDOCTORAL WRITING FELLOWSHIPS

Danielle McLean (University of Oxford): £8000

New chronological constraints for archaeological records in NW Africa established using widespread volcanic ash layers

We have located numerous microscopic volcanic ash (cryptotephra) layers preserved within key Palaeolithic sites in NW Africa. This writing fellowship produced a high-impact paper demonstrating that these offer a powerful method of linking and dating the rich archaeological sequences. The paper outlines the stratigraphic context of the newly identified cryptotephra and their unique geochemical fingerprints. The geochemistry (major and trace elements) permit the distal ash to be correlated to specific eruptions in the North Atlantic (e.g., Azores, Canary Islands). Using newly obtained and published ¹⁴C dates for the eruptions, updated Bayesian age-models for the archaeological sequences are generated, facilitating new insights into the timing and onset of early human behaviours. Moreover, the co-located ash layers also identified in the offshore marine cores (ODP 958B), allow precise comparisons of these cultural transitions and past climate variability, which we can discuss for the first time.

Anna Walas (University of Nottingham): £8000

From archive to press: Writing Bu Njem

Owing to exceptional preservation, architectural detail, graffiti and ostraca, the Roman military base at Bu Njem is one of the best-preserved examples anywhere within the empire. The site was excavated in the 1960s-70s, before key intellectual approaches to frontiers and Roman Africa developed and was never fully published.

The monograph, as a first comprehensive treatment of Bu Njem provides a timely contribution, filling a gap in the regional picture, offering a comparative for sites in Algeria and challenges traditional inward-looking agendas in the studies of Roman frontier sites. The completed research arises from a PhD chapter of

The outline of the Roman military base and the surrounding extramural town at Bu Njem, Libya. BILNAS research has focused on updating interpretations of the site and a fuller consideration of the role of the settlement.



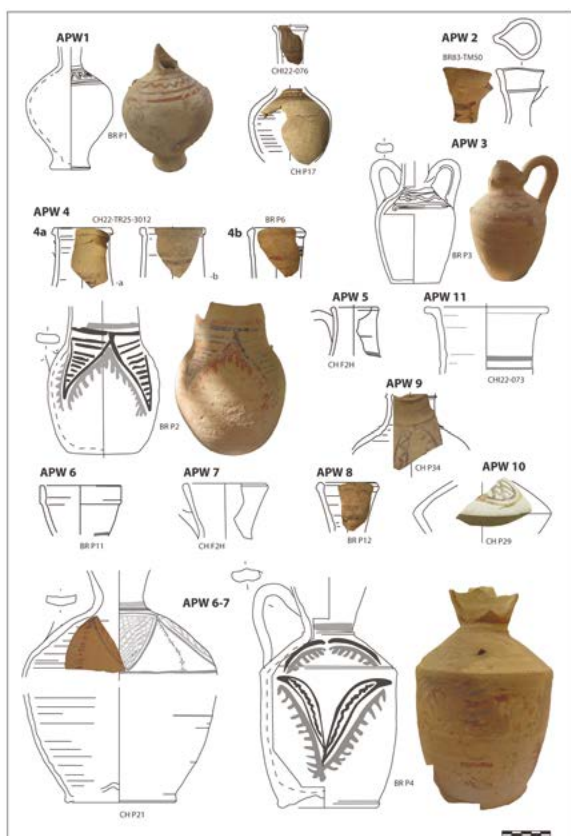
my PhD thesis and research arising from two BLINAS travel grants (2018 and 2022). The research and analysis for the proposed sections of the book to be written up during the fellowship were completed at different points in time between 2013 and 2023. At the time of writing, this grant has helped me get to the final stage of the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship competition.

SMALL AND LARGE RESEARCH GRANTS

**Veronica Occari (University College London):
£5095**

Painted Ceramics in Tunisia; Tracing Local Production, Regional and Interregional Exchange in Late Antique North Africa.

The nature and scale of regional and interregional trade through the proxy of ceramics in Late Antique North Africa been the subject of much debate amongst archaeologists and economic historians. This issue has been mainly approached through the study of the distribution of ceramic fineware such as the ARS, or amphorae, with far less attention devoted to the production and circulation of other categories of common ceramics. A distinctive type of painted common ceramics dated between the end of the 5th and the 7th century has been found at multiple North African sites, but these have never been studied at any depth. This project will conduct the first interdisciplinary study of



*Typology of African Painted Wares (closed types).
Drawing by Heike Möller.*

a group of recently excavated painted ceramics from the Medjerda Valley (Tunisia) in order to understand their production technology, provenance and distribution and thus to contribute to wider discussions on local, regional and interregional networks in Late Antique North Africa.

Viva Sacco (University College London): £9000

The Islamic glaze revolution in Sicily and Ifrīqiya: a microscopic approach

The appearance of glazed tablewares in the late 9th century in the production and consumption of pottery in Sicily and Ifrīqiya, revolutionised artisanal practices. This project will employ four types of high-resolution scientific analysis in order to characterize the raw materials and recipes of the ceramic fabric and glazes of the tablewares produced and circulating in Sicily and Ifrīqiya (modern Tunisia, eastern Algeria and western Libya) from the late 9th to the 11th century. In particular petrography and INAA, for the analysis of fabrics, SEM-EDS and LA-ICP-MS, for the characterisation of the glazes will be performed. The aim is to identify the provenance of the pottery, and the similarities and differences in the fabrics and glaze recipes in Sicilian and Ifrīqiyān local productions, and through this to contribute to the understanding of the technological transfer and the circulation of artisans in the medieval Mediterranean.



SEM-EDS analysis of a Palermitan glazed ware sample.

Emma Louise Horn (University of Oxford): £3000

Refining the eruption chronology of Tenerife (Canary Islands) as a tool for understanding cultural evolution in early Africans in NW Africa

Volcanic ash (tephra) layers have been previously identified within the Palaeolithic sequences at archaeological sites in NW Africa dating back over 140,000 years. The application of tephra analysis can also be extended to even older cave sequences in Morocco and correlated with tephra in marine core ODP 958 (a record extending back as far 320,000 years). Accurately constraining and tying together these sequences is vital to understanding the timing and climatic background in the evolution of Homo sapiens in NW Africa. New tephra results from the off-shore marine records show a high proportion of the volcanic layers are sourced from westerly volcanoes in the Azores and Canary Islands. However, the chronology of the Canary eruptions, particularly in the period concerned (300–150,000 years), is complex and glass chemical datasets are incomplete. This work is essential for constructing a robust age model for the marine core sequences and linking the different tephra layers. The overall project aims to identify both the number of discrete Canary Island eruptions and the geochemical signatures associated with each eruption.

View of Mount Teide, Tenerife. The CAVES Oxford Tephrochronology Team (Prof. Victoria Smith, Dr Emma Horn and Dr Danielle McLean) were joined by Dr Richard Brown (Durham University) for a week to sample Tenerife pyroclastic deposits in the caldera wall and along the coast of the island.



CELIA HENSMAN AWARDS

Joseph McMullen (University of Bangor): £1000

Arabic beginners course

The award was used to fund a five-week intensive beginners Arabic course at the Center Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia, including a stay with a host family. This is in connection with a PhD which examines the impact of Libyan and Somalian government policy on the rise of Islamic extremism in these respective countries.

Michele Pajero (The London School of Economics): £1000

Algiers: archival research and language training

This award will help with research for a PhD project about Fascist Rule and Oppression in North Africa. This requires extensive archival research, including visits to Algeria, at the National Archives and National Library in Algiers.

Sara Green (University of Oxford): £1000

Archive visits

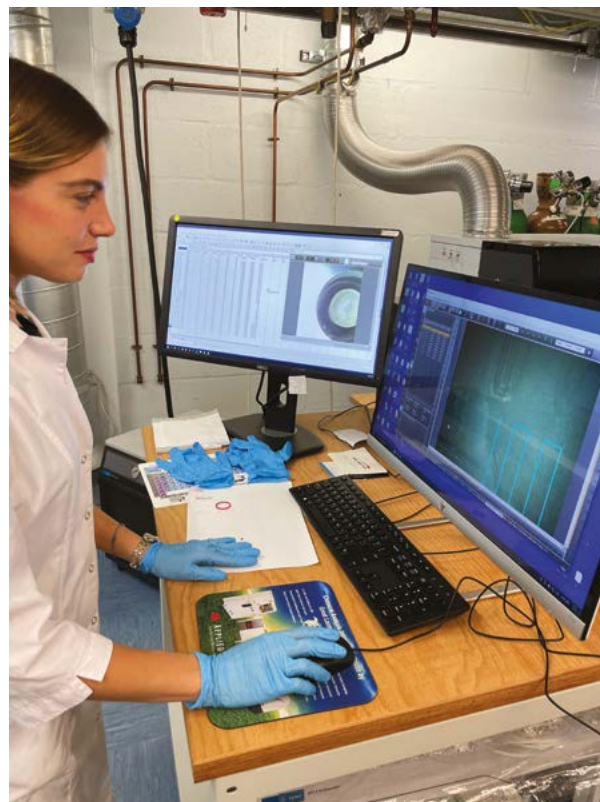
Study trips to archives in Algiers, Constantine and Oran in Algeria are being used to investigate the role of solidarity with Palestine in Algeria and France (1962–1982), and how postcolonial ethnoreligious identities were influenced by the displacement and dispossession of Palestinians.



BILNAS-AFFILIATED PROJECTS

BULLA REGIA

This Tunisian-British flagship project sponsored by BILNAS and directed by Prof. Corisande Fenwick (UCL) and Dr Moheddine Chaouali (INP) aims to reconstruct the urban development of Bulla Regia from its Numidian origins to its abandonment in the Middle Ages and to understand the diet, nutrition, health, lifestyle, origins and mobility of its late antique inhabitants through excavations and bioarchaeological analyses. We have now completed the excavations of a newly discovered church and cemetery and are in the process of writing up the results into a monograph which will be published by BILNAS. In the past year, we have made considerable progress on the scientific analysis of the finds and human bone from the church and cemetery and were very happy to receive a grant from BILNAS for the 2025-2026 year to support a radiocarbon dating programme and completion of the ceramic work. Working with colleagues from the Deutsche Archäologisches Institut-Berlin, we have also been analysing materials (ceramics, glass and metal) from the neighbouring site of Chintou (ancient Simitthus) in the Wolfson Archaeological Laboratories at UCL and published this year the first paper on medieval glazed ceramics in the Medjerda Valley as well as a major article on the neglected, but important, late antique African Painted Wares which will appear in the next volume of *Libyan Studies*.



Dr Veronica Occari analysing ceramics from Bulla Regia in the Wolfson Archaeological Laboratories, UCL (Bulla Regia Archaeological Project).

OASIS CIVILISATION PROJECT

Investigating the Saharan oases in the Wadi Draa, Morocco, the AHRC-funded Oasis Civilisation Project is now reaching its end. In 2024 the project completed excavation at a series of Iron Age and Medieval sites near the westward turn of the Draa towards the Atlantic (effectively at the limits of the oasis development). Work is progressing on analysis of excavated materials and on the final production of a series of volumes that will establish a new benchmark of knowledge for this part of the western Sahara.

GLOCAL: THE GLOBAL COUNCIL FOR ANTHROPOLOGICAL LINGUISTICS

At the end of 2024 BILNAS was approached to be an affiliate member of GLOCAL. Their aims are to address a multiplicity of concerns on language and culture in and for a set of Global regions, including Northern Africa. They carry out projects, events and research. They are based at the School of Oriental and African Studies. We look forward to discussing projects of mutual interest in the future.



EVENTS

During 2024-25 BILNAS has hosted a diverse series of online and in-person events, including lectures, workshops, and book readings, covering a rich variety of topics across the humanities and social sciences. Our online lectures featured topics ranging from the Roman-period military site of Bu Njem (Libya) to the contemporary second-hand garment industry in Tunisia. We hosted an online workshop on the inscriptions of Libya in honour of the late Joyce Reynolds, and held an in-person round-table event to discuss David Mattingly's newest book, *Between Sahara and Sea*. Our Archivist and Honorary Collections Officer continued their work this year to raise awareness of the BILNAS Archive and engage with members of the Libyan community using archival materials across two online engagement events in April and July 2024. Our Annual Lecture was held in November 2024 at the British Academy, where we were delighted to have BILNAS Trustee and renowned author Hisham Matar give us a reading from his recent novel *My Friends* and answer questions about the book.

A group of tourists in the theatre at Lepcis Magna (photo BILNAS Archive, Roland C. Shaw Papers, D8/1/23).



15 April 2024 (Online)

[Felicity Crowe \(BILNAS Archivist – University of Leicester\)](#), [Valeria Vitale \(BILNAS Honorary Collections Officer – University of Sheffield\)](#), [Reem Furjani \(Scene for Culture and Heritage\)](#)

[Perceptions of built heritage in the BILNAS Archive \(Arabic Session\)](#)

This online event was one of a series that began last year, which were funded by a grant from The National Archives (TNA), and used digitized photographs to engage people in Libya and the Libyan diaspora community with the BILNAS Archive. In this session, participants engaged with and commented on photographs focusing on built heritage. The session was organised by our previous BILNAS Archivist Felicity Crowe and our Honorary Collections Officer Valeria Vitale, and Libyan heritage expert Reem Furjani, who led the session in Arabic. A session on the same topic had been held previously in English, and the aim was to broaden the community network we are building around the archival resources and reach new audiences by offering it again in Arabic.



A mobile vendor displays second-hand headwear on a house wall in central Tunis (photo Katharina Grüneisl, Sidi Bahri, Tunis, 2023).

16 April 2024 (Online)

Katharina Grüneisl (Research Fellow – University of Nottingham)

Contested urban fabrics: making markets with second-hand garments in Tunis

The focus of this talk was the making of markets at the back end of the global clothing value chain. Choosing the vantage point of Tunisia, North Africa's largest current importer and re-exporter of European and North American used garments, Grüneisl's research asks how such transnational surplus circulations become contested fabrics of market-making. Cast-out in their origin countries as excess matter, imported used garments must be actively re-incorporated into the market through contingent processes of valuation. Life histories of used clothes traders and encounters with diverse actors who participate in valuation work with imported used clothing in Tunisia's capital city Tunis elucidate how the urban market becomes delimited as an evolving sphere of circulation, valuation, and exchange. This talk demonstrated how the making and re-making of such market boundaries has transformed the urban fabric of Tunis past and present. Market-making is thus analysed as a situated process of urban order-making and spatial co-production, providing new perspectives on the contested processes through which markets remake contemporary cities.

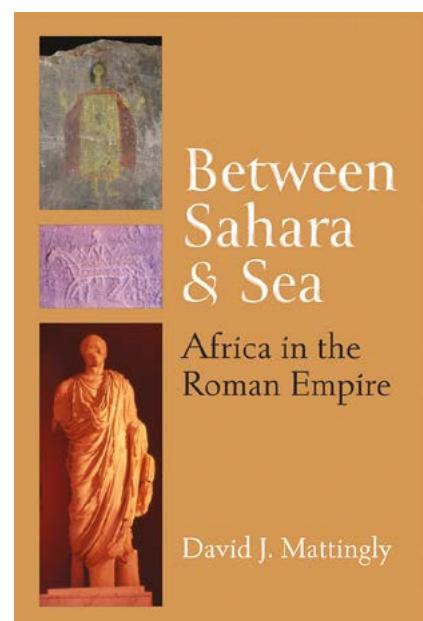
The cover of the book, Between Sahara and Sea: Africa in the Roman Empire.

4 June 2024 (UCL Institute of Archaeology, London)

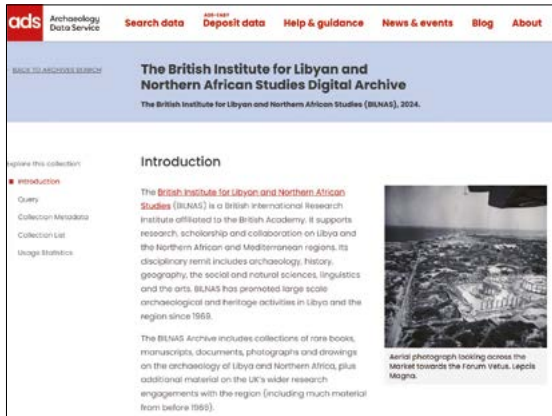
David Mattingly (University of Leicester), Josephine Quinn (University of Oxford), Eva Mol (University of York), and Corisande Fenwick (UCL)

Round Table Event for Between Sahara and Sea: Africa in the Roman Empire, a new book by David Mattingly

Published in late 2023, David Mattingly's latest volume, *Between Sahara and Sea: Africa in the Roman Empire* offers a refreshing, ground-breaking study that challenges orthodox views and proposes a new framework for understanding North Africa under the Roman Empire (first century BCE – third century CE). Focusing in particular on local contributions to the making of this region, the book charts a new path towards a bottom-up investigation of North African archae-



ology through a careful analysis of the material cultures of urban, rural, and military communities. This round table event, held in-person at UCL's Institute of Archaeology, gave the author and leading scholars Josephine Quinn (University of Oxford), Eva Mol (University of York), and Corisande Fenwick (UCL), an opportunity to reflect on the themes covered by the book and its broader archaeological and historical implications.



BILNAS' digital archive on the Archaeology Data Service website.

ate BILNAS-related online resources from the perspective of Libyan users. Participants from different backgrounds, including archivists, archaeologists, architects, and artists were invited to take part. During the session, participants were given an introduction to the online BILNAS Archive catalogue, our digital archive hosted by the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), and NAHAN. The purpose of the discussion was to gather more information on how familiar people were with these resources, if they find them easy to use, and if they perceive them as useful. The first took place in English and the second in Arabic, in order to increase participation, accessibility, and engagement from Libyan participants.

8 July 2024 (Online – English) and 16 July 2024 (Online – Arabic)

Felicity Crowe (BILNAS Archivist – University of Leicester), Valeria Vitale (BILNAS Honorary Collections Officer – University of Sheffield), Reem Furbani (Scene for Culture and Heritage) User Experience and Engagement BILNAS Archive (Arabic Session)

These two workshops were the final engagement events in the series supported by The National Archives (TNA). These events were primarily discussion events, to evalu-

24 September 2024 (Online)

Catherine Dobias-Lalou (Bourgogne), Caroline Barron (Durham University), Alessandra Giovenco (British School at Rome)

Recent Work on Inscriptions in Libya: Celebrating the Legacy of Joyce Reynolds

One of the founding members of BILNAS (then the Society for Libyan Studies), Joyce Reynolds' impact on the study of the archaeology, epigraphy, and history of Libya was immense. In memory of Joyce and in celebration of her life and work, this event

Joyce Reynolds at Cyrene.



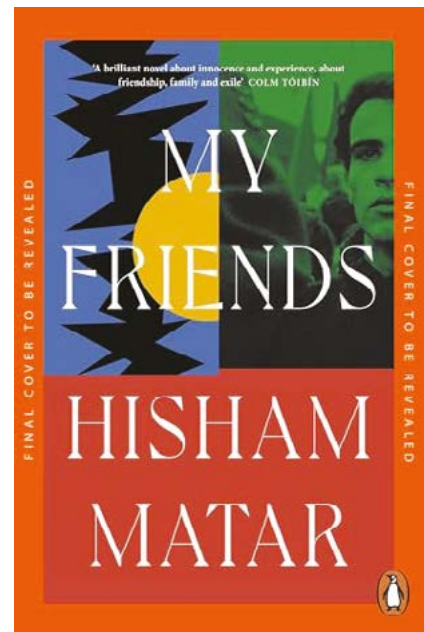
featured an introduction by Catherine Dobias-Lalou (Bourgogne), followed by two short talks. In the first talk, Caroline Barron (Durham University) discussed 'Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania: Past, Present and Future', exploring the past and ongoing work on this important resource. The second talk, by Alessandra Giovenco (British School at Rome), 'Memories of Libya and the BSR', explored material relating to Libya which is held in the BSR Archive and the importance of these collections.

7 November 2024 (British Academy, London)

Hisham Matar (BILNAS Trustee – Author – Professor of Professional Practice in English and Asian and Middle Eastern Cultures – Barnard College, Columbia University)

My Friends

Our 2024 Annual Lecture was held in November at the British Academy, where world-renowned author and BILNAS Trustee Hisham Matar gave a reading from his latest novel, *My Friends*. The novel, which was long-listed for the prestigious Booker Prize in 2024, explores the lives and friendship of three Libyan men living in political exile, and the emotional homeland that friendship can provide. The author answered questions about his inspiration for the book and his writing process, and was followed by a reception featuring traditional Libyan food.



My Friends book cover.

20 March 2024 (Online)

Anna Walas (Honorary Fellow – University of Leicester)

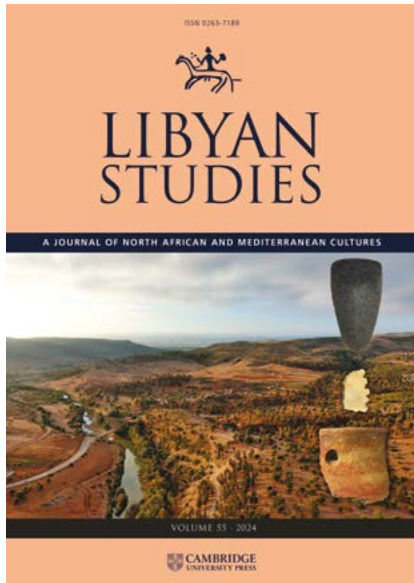
Excavating Archives: New Perspectives on the Roman Military Base at Bu Njem, Libya

Anna Walas was awarded one of BILNAS' post-doctoral writing fellowships for 2024 to support work on her monograph on the Roman military base at Bu Njem, Libya. Bu Njem has a long history of European exploration, and her research fills the gap in the regional picture of its history and challenges traditional inward-looking agendas in studies of Roman frontier sites. Walas' lecture provided an overview of this fascinating Roman-period site in Libya, incorporating previously unpublished archival photos from the early 20th century and suggesting a new approach to the material, provoking a lively discussion with audience members.

An Italian colonial soldier taking notes on the freshly excavated inscription IRT914 at Bu Njem (unpublished photo, G.B. Costa, 1930s).



PUBLICATIONS 2024-25



LIBYAN STUDIES JOURNAL

The journal, produced in partnership with Cambridge University Press is edited by Dr Victoria Leitch. CUP unfortunately encountered a cybersecurity incident in early June 2024, and though they took immediate action to contain it and limit its impact, this inevitably caused delays of several months due to necessary security shut-downs. For this reason, members did not receive their printed copies or the full online version until March 2025, for which BILNAS sincerely apologises.

The production issues did not however detract from the quality of this year's contributions. We were particularly pleased to see the impact of our grant scheme with two awardees publishing articles: the first concerning recent excavations at the prehistoric site of Oued Beht, Khémisset, Morocco; the second a project to use volcanic ash to synchronise and date archaeological and climate records in Northwest Africa. Our Book Reviews Editor, Niccolò Mugnai organised seven very full and informative reviews that will surely tempt readers into the book shop. The geographical reach of our articles, from Morocco to Tunisia and Libya and the island of Malta shows the breadth of our research community, and we hope that this encourages collaborations and discussions that cross borders and cultures.

BOOKS

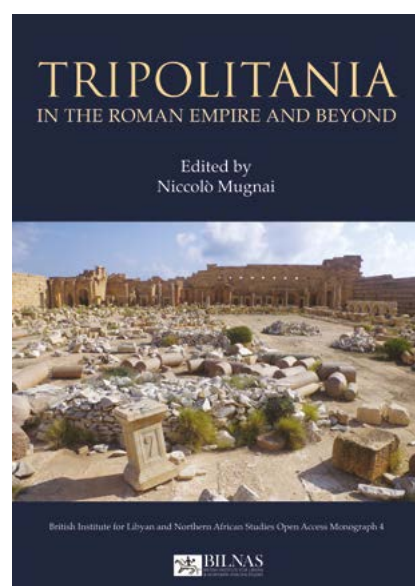
2024 was a challenging year for our book printing and distribution process. All our books were transferred to a new warehouse by our distributor, Pen and Sword, due to the previous one going into administration. Some members may have felt the impact of this as orders were slow for several months as the books were restocked and inventoried. Almost immediately after, our printer, Printforce, went into administration, so we had to look for a new printer, not only to print new titles, but to maintain the print-on-demand service that we use for the majority of our books now. We are now printing with CPI, one of the UK's largest leading printers, with a direct link to Pen and Sword. We hope that this new arrangement will be more secure than the previous one.

The majority of BILNAS titles are sold in the UK but we also get some sales in the EU and the US. Sales from the UK to the EU have been hit by Brexit-related import VAT and customs clearance charges. These vary according to the courier and destination and BILNAS are unable to advise on the value of these charges in advance. This has obviously had an impact on our EU sales and we hope that the situation will be more favourable in future. Sales in the US are helped by the fact that we print our books directly in the US, on a print-on-demand basis, meaning that we are also sheltered from tariffs.

The price of storing books and the reluctance of distributors to keep large stocks meant we recently had excess stock. Paul Bennett and Pauline Graham arranged for a shipment of books to be sent to Libya, where it is hoped they will be sent to libraries and universities.

In amongst all these production issues, we did manage to publish a new Open Access monograph at the end of 2024, *Tripolitania in the Roman Empire and Beyond*, edited by Niccolò Mugnai. This new volume provides up-to-date research by an international team of scholars who tackle important topics such as the urban development, artistic works, rural settlement, culture, religion, and the role of the military on the frontiers of this North African region. Spanning the Roman and later phases through to the early Islamic era, the chapters offer an accessible account of key aspects of Tripolitania's archaeology. To celebrate the publication, a roundtable webinar was organised on 13 May 2025, with a group of scholars who discuss their contributions to this volume. The lively discussion focused on new directions and potential future developments of research, highlighting the richness of Tripolitania's archaeological and cultural heritage.

Members may have noticed that in the last few years we have not published more than one book per year. This is not due to a lack of submissions, but due to the limits of the publications budget. Most of the work is done in-house to save costs but even with the small subventions that some authors offer through their institutions, we are unable to increase our production levels. We will be actively seeking outside funds and grants in future in order to publish the many volumes of important studies and excavations that are directly linked to BILNAS and which are much awaited by the research community.



OPEN ACCESS

BILNAS is working to a position where we can claim to be fully Open Access with our monograph publications. Funding Open Access books remains a challenge but we are committed to this goal and making our research publications accessible to all.

Libyan Studies, published with Cambridge University Press, has been a hybrid Open Access journal since 2016. This mix of subscribers only plus Open Access articles has been a successful model so far, and this year we published 50% of our articles Open Access.

Don't forget that our Open Access books are available not only on the BILNAS website, but also on high-profile sites such as JSTOR, OAPEN, BiblioLabs, MUSEOpen, and Unglue.it.



LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES



Above: Locating Stack 69!

Left: The Africa section at SOAS.



THE BILNAS LIBRARY AT SOAS

Dawn Wright (Honorary Librarian)

The BILNAS Library is held within the Africa Collection at the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. During the summer of 2024 the entire Africa Collection was moved to a new prominent position on Level D. This move has given greater visibility to the Africa Collection and has created extra space within the collection to allow for growth.

As part of the move the BILNAS Library has also relocated stacks and can now be found at stack 69 on Level D. A total of twelve new titles have been added to the BILNAS library's collection over the past year.

BILNAS members are entitled to a Letter of Introduction which enables them to consult the Institute's holdings and to have full borrowing rights. Further details can be found at: <https://www.bilnas.org/resources/library/>

You can search the SOAS library catalogue (which also lists the holdings of the BILNAS Library) at: <https://soas.on.worldcat.org/discovery>

THE BILNAS ARCHIVE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

Valeria Vitale (Honorary Collections Officer), Anne-Marie Williamson (BILNAS archivist)

Farewell to Felicity Crowe, Welcome Dr Anne Marie Williamson

Under the capable leadership of Felicity Crowe, our former Archivist, the Archive successfully settled into its new home on the main University of Leicester campus – a move that has made it significantly more accessible to both researchers and students. While Felicity was the archivist, she organised the mentorship of five student interns from the University of Leicester. These students contributed to the identification of archaeologists and workers featured in photographs from the archive, gaining

valuable hands-on experience in archival research. Felicity also co-led four highly successful engagement events for the Libyan community, in collaboration with Dr Valeria Vitale (Honorary Collections Officer) and Reem Furjani. These workshops were generously supported by funding from The National Archives and received excellent feedback from attendees. We are deeply grateful for Felicity's dedication and impact, and we wish her every success in her new role at the Griffith Institute Archive.

In August, we welcomed [Dr Anne Marie Williamson](#) as the new BILNAS Archivist. Anne Marie brings a wealth of experience, having previously worked at the University of Nottingham as a Teaching Associate, at The National Archives as a Regional Investigator, and at Cotesbach Educational Trust. Her expertise has already made a significant impact, as reflected in this update on key archive initiatives.

DIGITISATION OF BILNAS ARCHIVES – ONGOING PROGRESS AND MILESTONES

We are pleased to report continued progress in the digitisation of key archival collections.

Sabratha Excavations Collection – Now Live

The first fully digitised collection from the BILNAS Archive is now publicly available through the [Archaeology Data Service \(ADS\)](#). This collection focuses on the excavations at Sabratha, a key Punic and Roman trading port on the Libyan Coast. This collection recently featured on the [ADS News and Events webpage](#), generating renewed research interest.

Ghirza Survey Collection – Coming Soon

The second digitised collection, documenting the extensive survey of Ghirza, has been deposited with the ADS and is expected to go live by the end of May 2025. Directed by Olwen Brogan and David J. Smith in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities of Tripolitania, this detailed survey and selective excavation took place between 1955 and 1957 and offers rare insight into one of the best-preserved Romano-Libyan settlements.



Rosette from unidentified tomb, from the David J. Smith Papers on Tocra, Ghirza and other locations.
© BILNAS Archive: D1/11/1/9/4/33.

Upcoming Digitisation Projects

Thanks to generous funding from the British Academy, digitisation is now underway – via Max Communications – on two additional, historically significant collections:

- [BILNAS/D11: Donald M. Bailey and David Whitehouse Papers \(Ajdabiya\)](#) – documenting archaeological excavations at the early Islamic site of Ajdabiya, alongside Donald Bailey’s work on lamps at Sidi Khrebish.
- [BILNAS/D54: UNESCO Libyan Valleys Survey](#) – a ground-breaking survey exploring the long-term relationships between settlement, land use and environment on the desert margins. Led by Barri Jones, Graeme Barker and David Gilbertson, the survey culminated in the publication of *Farming the Desert* vols I and II, edited by Graeme Barker and David Mattingly.

To support the long-term sustainability and accessibility of digital assets, Anne Marie is currently participating in The National Archives’ Digital Peer Mentorship Programme. Through this initiative, she is developing a comprehensive Digital Preservation Strategy for the BILNAS Archive, ensuring the sustainability, security, and usability of both born-digital and digitised collections.

ENGAGING STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS THROUGH THE BILNAS ARCHIVE

Engaging Communities: Libyan Heritage Events

As part of our ongoing commitment to inclusive engagement and improved access, former Archivist Felicity Crowe, in collaboration with Dr Valeria Vitale (Honorary Collections Officer) and Reem Furjani, co-led a series of four highly successful public engagement sessions with members of the Libyan community, both local and diasporic. Generously funded by The National Archives, these events received excellent feedback from participants.

The sessions were designed to help improve the accuracy and cultural relevance of catalogue entries relating to Libyan heritage, and to raise awareness of the Archive and its digital resources among Libyan researchers and the wider public. Through the use of digital technologies, the team explored innovative methods for engaging communities with their heritage as represented in the BILNAS Archive.

Each session focused on a key theme relating to Libyan culture and heritage:

- Libyan Traditional Clothing and Textiles
- Places, Buildings, and Monuments
- Libyan Archaeologists and Archaeology
- Accessibility, Categories, and User Journeys

These small-scale, participatory sessions exemplify our efforts to promote inclusive, user-centred approaches to archival engagement, while deepening connections between the Archive and the communities it represents.

International Researcher Visits

The archive continues to attract researchers pursuing innovative projects. Recent visitors include:

- [Dr Pauline Cuzel](#) (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Fellow), visited in March to explore John Riley's correspondence regarding the Michigan Excavations at Carthage. Her work contributes to a critical study of 953 inscriptions from the Carthage Necropolis.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND ADVANCING PRACTICE

In February, Anne Marie co-presented at the [Virtual Islamic Art and History Seminar](#), showcasing the innovative uses of Linked Open Data to connect Islamic heritage collections across the BIRI network. In August, she will present at the [Archives & Records Association Conference 2025](#), focusing on the creation of person-centred metadata and its transformative impact on archival discovery and access.

ENHANCING VISIBILITY AND CELEBRATING LEGACIES

BILNAS Archive Catalogue on Archives Hub

The archive catalogue's integration into the [Archives Hub](#) platform has greatly expanded its reach, making it discoverable to a broader research community. In March, the BILNAS Archive was featured in the platform's [monthly spotlight](#), showcasing the contributions of women archaeologists whose records are preserved in the BILNAS Archive.

Celebrating Kathleen Kenyon

To mark the official renaming of the University of Leicester's [Kathleen Kenyon Building](#), Anne Marie collaborated with MA student ambassadors to create an exhibition celebrating Kenyon's legacy, drawing from BILNAS archival materials documenting Kenyon's work in Sabratha.



*Dr Pauline Cuzel
in the BILNAS
Archive, Alexander
von Humboldt
Foundation Fellow.*



*Kathleen Kenyon
in the basilica,
Sabratha.
© BILNAS Archive:
D5/12/7/8*

*Celebration of
Heritage event
at the University
of Leicester.*



Women Transcending Boundaries' StoryMap

Continuing this focus on women in archaeology, the BILNAS archive contributed to the *Women Transcending Boundaries* interactive StoryMap, an online storytelling platform, developed as part of a broader BIRI initiative. This interactive resource is expected to go live online soon.

March 2025 Heritage Celebrations

On the 22 March, BILNAS was honoured to join other heritage organisations in a [Celebration of heritage](#). Thank you to everyone who stopped by our display, engaged with our Archivist, and shared in our passion for the archaeology, history and culture of Libya and Northern Africa.

The past eight months have been a period of dynamic growth and renewed focus for the BILNAS Archive. With new digitisation projects underway, expanded digital preservation efforts, and deeper engagement with both emerging and established researchers, the archive is increasingly positioned as a vital resource for the international research community.



DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIP

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

The British Institute for Libyan and Northern African Studies receives a grant in aid from the British Academy as well as subscription income from its members. However, to maintain a full research grant and publications programme, the Institute needs to supplement its income. We therefore welcome enquiries about opportunities to sponsor BILNAS and our official activities and events.

If you are a company or organisation with a presence in Libya or Northern Africa or interests in the heritage, culture and scholarship of the region, the Institute would be delighted to hear from you to discuss opportunities to support our lectures, seminars, book launches, and other special events or to support research in North Africa.

CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

As a UK Registered Charity we welcome individual and corporate donations, bequests and legacies. If you wish to make a donation, please contact the General Secretary or check out the information on our website.

Thank you. We value your support.



THE YEAR IN FIGURES

MEMBERS 165, OF WHOM 40 ARE FROM OVERSEAS:

Australia	Israel	Sweden
Austria	Italy	Switzerland
Cyprus	Japan	Turkey
France	Libya	USA
Germany	Malta	

263 OPEN ACCESS BOOK DOWNLOADS FROM 32 COUNTRIES:

Afghanistan	Finland	New Zealand
Algeria	France	Poland
Armenia	Germany	Portugal
Australia	Greece	Slovenia
Austria	Hungary	Spain
Brazil	Iraq	Saudi Arabia
Bulgaria	Israel	Tunisia
Canada	Italy	Turkey
Czech Republic	Libya	United Kingdom
Denmark	Morocco	USA
Estonia	Netherlands	

TWITTER

1,753 followers

FACEBOOK

3,430 followers

YOUTUBE

304 subscribers

19,385 views

WEBSITE

7,200 unique visitors (40% decrease compared to 2023-24)

65,800 page views (120% increase compared to 2023-24)

Percentage of website views in each country (top 5 countries):

1. USA 22%
2. UK 21%
3. China 7%
4. Libya 6%
5. Germany 5%

FINANCIAL REPORT

BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR LIBYAN AND NORTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	2024-25	2023-24
	£	£
INCOME		
British Academy Grant	162,893	149,869
Business Development Fund Grant	16,253	16,253
Subscriptions	4,780	5,230
Journal sales	1,107	2,600
Book sales and postage	1,448	1,984
Bank interest	655	697
Donations/gift aid	10,500	18,000
Miscellaneous	4,850	1,419
TOTAL INCOME	202,486	196,052
EXPENDITURE		
Research grants	53,101	89,431
Library/Research collections	95,030	85,086
Archive: cataloguing and conservation	31,800	74,058
Archive digitisation	63,230	11,028
Communications and outreach	8,940	12,745
Events	4,740	5,086
Publicity and outreach	1,125	1,945
Website maintenance/development	1,025	5,214
Lecture/meeting expenses	2,050	500
Publications	23,990	22,758
Storage/despatch of books	1,179	113
Print-on-demand costs	863	499
Publications Manager	17,633	17,633
Journal production	1,005	2,760
Production of monographs/Silphium books	1,500	986
Special projects	1,114	0
Other costs (Adobe, ISBN, small equipment)	696	767

Establishment	19,542	20,006
Bank charges	129	102
General Secretary's remuneration	12,300	12,275
Insurance	477	476
Office expenses	636	653
Accountancy	6,000	6,000
Donation	0	500
Travel	219	166
UK	219	166
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>200,822</u>	<u>230,192</u>
DEFICIT / SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	<u>1,664</u>	<u>-34,140</u>

BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR LIBYAN AND NORTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
ASSETS		
Virgin Money Account	71,465	70,810
NatWest Current Account	11,315	2,424
Total Cash	82,780	73,234
Debtors	1,000	11,302
Stock of publications, valued at cost	8,624	8,624
Total Assets	<u>92,404</u>	<u>93,160</u>
LIABILITIES		
Creditors due within one year	5,020	3,150
Accrued income	796	352
Grants allocated but not yet paid out	-	4,734
Total Current Liabilities	<u>5,816</u>	<u>8,236</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>86,588</u>	<u>84,924</u>
<i>Represented by:</i>		
General Fund	35,648	33,984
Stock Fund	8,624	8,624
Publications Fund	42,316	42,316
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>86,588</u>	<u>84,924</u>

NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	2024-25	2023-24
	£	£
General Fund brought forward	33,984	68,124
Stock Fund brought forward	8,624	9,728
Publications Fund brought forward	42,316	42,316
Total funds at start of year	84,924	120,168
Deficit/surplus for the year	1,664	-34,140
Movement in stock	-	-1,104
TOTAL FUNDS	86,588	84,924

Legal structure: Charitable Incorporated Organisation

This financial report is in respect of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) called 'The British Institute for Libyan and Northern African Studies' which was registered by the Charity Commission for England and Wales on 20 June 2023 as charity number 1203646. On 1 April 2024 this CIO took over all of the assets, liabilities and activities of an older charity, number 259262, called 'British Institute for Libyan and Northern African Studies' and the two entities agreed to merge.

Comparative numbers

This is the first year of operations for the CIO. It did not carry out any activities during the period 20 June 2023 to 31 March 2024 and had neither assets nor liabilities at 31 March 2024. The comparative numbers shown in the Statement of Activities under the heading 2023-24 are in respect of the year ended 31 March 2024 for the older charity number 259262. The comparative numbers shown in the Balance Sheet, under the heading 2024, set out the financial position at 31 March 2024 of the older charity number 259262. The assets and liabilities shown at 31 March 2024 are the ones transferred to the new charity number 1203646 immediately after the 31 March 2024 financial year end.

Items affecting the 2023-24 comparative numbers

Shortly before 31 March 2024 the Institute had committed to spend £4,734 of funding received from the British Academy but the receiving institution was unable to raise an invoice for this amount until shortly after 1 April 2024. In view of the proximity to the year end the amount was included in the expenditure for the 2023-24 year and treated as a liability within the balance sheet.

At 31 March 2023 the Institute had received grant funding of £40,000 from the British Academy which had not been awarded. This sum was awarded and paid out during the 2023-24 year. Without this timing difference, with the receipt of funds in one year and distribution of them in the following year, the Institute would have shown a surplus for the year of £5,860 in the 2023-24 financial year.

Reserves policy

The Institute has few financial commitments which cannot be terminated at short notice, since it has no direct employees and does not own or rent premises; it has not therefore been considered necessary to retain a reserve for potential winding-up costs.

The Institute has historically set aside funds for publications arising (usually several years later) from fieldwork that it has supported. These are shown as a Publications Reserve, with the intention that they may be used to support (any) publication costs, but not new fieldwork.

Book collection

The Society held 971 items in its books collection, which is housed in the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies ('SOAS') University of London.

The Society did not have an active acquisition policy for its book collection during the year under review; it received volumes by gift and by exchange and works sent for review were generally also added to the collection.

Oliver Kimberley *Chartered Accountant, Honorary Treasurer*

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE COUNCIL OF THE BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR LIBYAN AND NORTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES

Charity number 1203646 registered in England & Wales

I report to the Council on my examination of the accounts of the British Institute for Libyan and Northern African Studies ('the Institute') for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Institute you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Society's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5) (b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Institute as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Colm Walls *Chartered Management Accountant, Honorary Independent Examiner*
36 Lancet Lane, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9SA

MEMBERSHIP

To join BILNAS, sign up on the website <https://www.bilnas.org/membership/how-to-join/> or contact the General Secretary gensec@bilnas.org

Membership is open to all and runs from April to April. Key benefits of joining our community include:

- Online access to *Libyan Studies*, BILNAS's annual journal, current and past issues
- The opportunity to purchase BILNAS publications at significantly discounted prices
- Attendance at BILNAS events, meetings, lectures and the Annual General Meeting
- Access to the BILNAS Library through free annual membership of the SOAS Library
- Access to the BILNAS Archive (University of Leicester)

CONTACT

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London SW1Y 5AH
gensec@bilnas.org

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 <https://x.com/LibyanStudies>

www.bilnas.org

