

ABSTRACTS SELECTED

HERITAGE, (POST) CONFLICT AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

Paul BENNETT

Libyan Heritage: applying a positive spin.

Following the overthrow of Gadaffi by a popular uprising of the Libyan People, those of us who work in the Libyan heritage sector and have grown to love the country, its spectacular archaeological sites and wonderfully hospitable people, hoped that New Libya and Libyan Heritage could look forward to a bright and exciting future.

Terrible things are happening in the three provinces of this vast country, we hear about them regularly in the news and at the moment it is difficult to see how Libya will quickly or easily resolve many of the challenges that face her. For many years the regime considered that even the most important archaeological sites were of little value for the development of the Socialist State. Consequently the new Libyan State has inherited decayed and neglected archaeological sites and a Department of Archaeology - the curator and guardian of Libyan Heritage - that has been under resourced and largely ignored for over forty years. More significantly, Libyans have been told little about their heritage or of the great archaeological sites that populate a country the size of Europe.

For this presentation, I do not intend to focus on the problems and challenges that face Libya in this time of post-conflict transition but rather to highlight some of the on-going initiatives that are positive, constructive and seek to lay foundations for safeguarding the country's world class heritage assets for future generations to discover and to take pride in - and are not in the news.

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Paul Bennett is Director of Canterbury Archaeological Trust and Head of Mission for the Society for Libyan Studies. He is a professional archaeologist who has spent most of his working life in SE England, but since 1996 part of each year working in Libya.

Paul first worked in Libya in 1972-4 at Sidi Khrebish, Benghazi (Roman Berenike) and returned in 1996-99 to work at Euesperides, the first Benghazi, directing excavations there 2000-2008.

The Society for Libyan Studies is de facto the UK Mission to Libya. As Head of Mission, Paul assists UK academics to conduct research in Libya. He works closely with the Department of Antiquities and Libyan Universities and helps promising Libyan students to find work placements and post-graduate courses in the UK.

Paul also works as a consultant to the World Bank and has recently provided assistance to UNESCO, training Libyan Police and to British Army trainers working with the Libyan Army.