

## OBITUARIES

was in part because of the modesty, sensitivity and integrity he brought to his professional relations. He had a tremendously strong sense of the importance of doing the right thing by his collaborators, his colleagues in the UK and abroad, his authors, his field teams, the students he taught at Sheffield and Oxford, and the family of which he was so proud. Burly and saturnine, he alternated between studied gloom and sparkling fun, between caution about his own archaeological achievements and generosity in his judgement of and support for other scholars. He set standards of professionalism few archaeologists emulate; his fieldwork has given us new understanding of ordinary life in towns and villages and farms throughout the ancient world; and in his caring for the profession of archaeology, and how it should be done to the highest standards, he had a profound influence on the careers of scores of archaeologists in Britain and abroad fortunate enough to be touched by his wisdom and wit.

The Society extends its deepest sympathy to John's children and to his wife, Vicki, herself a Sidi Khrebish veteran and long-serving editorial assistant for the Society's publications.

*Graeme Barker and David Mattingly*

### **OBITUARY: Professor Geraint Dyfed Barri Jones**

The sudden death on 16th July of Barri Jones at the age of 63 represents another tragic loss to the Society for Libyan Studies and more generally to Libyan archaeology. His involvement with Libyan archaeology dates back to the late 1960s, when he assisted Charles Daniels in Fezzan and then undertook his own excavations at Tocra and Euesperides. Subsequently, he co-directed the UNESCO Libyan Valleys Project from 1979–1989 and played an important role in bringing the archive of materials from John Ward-Perkins' work on the Severan forum and basilica complex to press. He served on Council on several occasions (1972–76, 1978–83, 1988–1992), Executive Committee (1980–83), on the Richard Goodchild memorial committee (1970–76) and was Chairman from 1983 to 1988.



*Barri Jones*

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His Libyan interests were but part of a very broad-based portfolio of activities and it is no exaggeration to say that British archaeology has lost one of its most influential figures. His contributions to Roman archaeology, especially in Britain, Libya, Italy and Spain, earned him an international reputation and a Chair at an early age. He was a key member of a pressure group which secured the transition of archaeology in Britain during the 1970s from an essentially amateur pursuit into a highly professional and regionally distributed service. Many of his students were inspired by him to seek careers in archaeology and are well represented in the present generation of academic and professional archaeologists. He was also one of the great popularisers of modern archaeology, devoting huge amounts of his time to addressing a variety of non-academic audiences. He leaves an enduring and imposing legacy in all these areas.

Barri studied Greats at Jesus College, Oxford in the late 1950s, but found himself increasingly drawn into Roman archaeology. He became a Lecturer at Manchester University in 1964 and Professor at the same institution in 1971, remaining there for the rest of his career. He had a prodigious appetite for fieldwork, excelling in problem-oriented excavations that challenged academic orthodoxy. Throughout his career, British fieldwork was a central concern, especially the Roman period (typified by *An Atlas of Roman Britain*, 1990). He developed excellent skills as an aerial photographer, and made pioneering surveys in Wales, Cumbria and in Scotland, often following up his discoveries with carefully targeted trial excavations. The results transformed our knowledge of archaeological sites in these frontier regions.

Barri had a lifelong commitment to raising the profile of archaeology as a profession and for putting heritage on the political agenda. He was one of a group of archaeologists who created the political conditions for the emergence of a professional archaeological service in large parts of the country. In the late 1960s the regional organisation of archaeology was still largely based on amateur Societies, with a small and under-funded central service within the Department of the Environment. As a founder member and Secretary of Rescue, the charitable trust set up to campaign for legislation to safeguard the archaeological heritage, he was instrumental in securing the transition of British archaeology to a highly professional and statutory regional service (as documented in detail in his book, *Past Imperfect. The story of Rescue archaeology*, 1984). He practised what he preached in the North-West, through a series of Rescue excavations (published as *Roman Manchester* in 1974 and *Roman Lancaster* in 1988), which demonstrated that real archaeological potential lurked beneath unpromising Victorian slum clearance.

His involvement in archaeology abroad took him first to Italy, where he was involved in the South Etruria Survey being co-ordinated by John Ward-Perkins at the British School at Rome. He was also employed in 1963–64 as a Post-Doctoral researcher on the Apulia project, bringing to publication a remarkable aerial survey carried out in southern Italy by John Bradford (*Neolithic Apulia*, 1987). His contacts with Ward-Perkins and Charles Daniels at the British School at Rome were soon to bring him to Libya, which became a major focus of his work in the late 1960s, with survey at a number of Cyrenaican coastal cities (*Libya Antiqua* 8 (1974), 53–67; *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 64–79) and excavations at Tocra and Euesperides (see articles in *Libyan Studies* 14, 109–21; Barker, Lloyd and Reynolds, *Cyrenaica in Antiquity*, 27–45). He was actually working at Euesperides when the 1969 Revolution occurred and it was typical of his character that he would not let even so major an upheaval completely interrupt his work. When, in a moment of heightened tension, a soldier threatened one of his students with a gun, Barri characteristically stepped between them and defused the situation with a glance and a few calm but authoritative words.

Another significant area of his research in the 1960s and 1970s was Roman mining,

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which he pursued in both Spain (at the Rio Tinto complex of ancient mines and at the Roman gold mines at Las Medulas) and in Britain, where *inter alia* his identification of sophisticated hydraulic mining techniques at the site of Dolaucothi in South Wales necessitated a reappraisal of the nature of Roman mining interest in Britain.

From 1979 to 1989 he returned to Libya to co-direct the major UNESCO project exploring the technology of Roman period farming in the Libyan pre-desert, with the results published in more than 30 articles (many in *Libyan Studies* from vol. 10 to 22) and the acclaimed two-volume final report (*Farming the Desert. The UNESCO Libyan Valleys Survey*, 1996). With Graeme Barker his co-director, Barri brought together an impressive interdisciplinary team, but the logistic and technical problems of carrying out fieldwork deep in the desert were formidable and it is largely to his credit that the seasons ran as smoothly as they did. Denied the chance to bring his conventional air photographic skills to bear, he had a remarkable kite-based camera system devised, of which he and Shitewe Mohammed (now Controller at Lepcis Magna) became the acknowledged masters. Although he gives praise to Shaik Kilani's navigational skills (see the following notice), he had a terrific eye for topography himself and better than anyone on the British team could be relied upon to know precisely where he was and in which direction the camp lay! When we got both our vehicles stuck in a flash flood in the 1979 season and had to walk 30 km back to camp overnight, it was Barri to whom we turned as our guide.

During the 1980s and early 1990s Barri was involved in two other big Libyan initiatives. Having studied for his Ph.D. under Barri at Manchester, Dr Abdullah Shaiboub returned to Libya in the early 1980s to take over the Presidency of the Department of Antiquities, with a brief to create a new national museum with UNESCO involvement in the Turkish Castle in Tripoli. Not surprisingly, Barri was also called on to lend his expertise in this enterprise, which opened to great acclaim in 1988. The other project followed John Ward-Perkins' death in 1980 and the transfer of his Libyan papers to the Society. Barri helped co-ordinate and edit the publication of John's important work at the great coastal city of Lepcis Magna (*The Severan Buildings of Lepcis Magna*, 1993).

A key part of Barri's legacy concerns the number of people he inspired to be archaeologists or to take a deeper interest in the subject. A long succession of graduates and doctoral students from Manchester (myself included) has found employment in professional archaeology and in University posts. Similarly, many who worked with him in the field found their lives changed as a result. Wherever he carried out fieldwork he developed networks of firm friendships and this is equally true of the esteem in which he is held in Libya. He was a great populariser of archaeology, always seeking to broaden its appeal and interest in society at large. From 1979 to 1988 he edited a national archaeological magazine, initially known as *Popular Archaeology*, later as *Archaeology Today*, and after its closure he continued to work for another glossy magazine *Minerva*. Archaeology as a whole was the gainer from these unselfish efforts.

Honours and representative responsibility regularly came his way. He was elected F.S.A. in 1966 and senior Balsdon Fellow at the British School of Rome in 1980–81. He served on the major national archaeological bodies, as for instance, the Ancient Monuments Advisory Committee for English Heritage, the Royal Commission (Wales), The Council for British Archaeology (of which he was Vice-President). He sat on numerous other heritage and archaeology committees, and on the academic Councils of the British School at Rome and the Society for Promotion of Roman Studies. Several times he was invited to act as a Cultural Heritage Consultant for UNESCO.

It is fair to say that Barri did not live life the easy way, indeed he seemed to shun the safe option. All these commitments, and his own restless drive, meant that he was often juggling too many balls in the air, and occasionally balls were dropped. In truth he was

a better starter than a finisher (though that may seem a harsh verdict on a man who published 10 books and well over 100 articles), and he too readily made promises that were impossible to keep when there were only 26 hours in his day. But whilst he might sometimes disappoint and infuriate by his lateness, absence, or sins of omission, when he was around he was always charming and sparkling company, giving purpose and direction to many people's lives. He was always generous with his knowledge and with his data, helping many of his students and collaborators get a start in their publishing careers. Above all, he made life exciting and unpredictable, leaving a rich stock of stories and unforgettable memories for all who worked closely with him. He lacked any shred of malice and was always deeply interested in others, and excelled in making them see a potential in themselves they had not suspected. At the same time he was guarded about his own private life, which was not always easy or happy (he was twice married and twice divorced). His archaeological preoccupations and his willingness to subsidise his work from his own pocket did not sit easily with family life, though he was in truth a devoted father and always talked of his children with pride. Yet in his last months he seemed to have found a new equilibrium: a new partner and impending retirement had rejuvenated him. When I saw him last at a meeting in Paris three weeks before his death, he was full of optimism and plans and looked in excellent health. Even his other great passion in life, Welsh Rugby Union, was on the up again. How ironic and tragic then that he should be snatched away from us by a sudden heart attack as he reached the summit of one of his beloved Welsh mountains.

*David Mattingly*

## **OBITUARY: Shaik Kilani Baba**

The death of Shaik al-Haj Kilani Baba in December 1998, probably approaching his hundredth birthday (he was unsure of his exact date of birth), marks the end of an era for the Libyan pre-desert. Shaik Kilani Baba was chief of the Cabila Manassala bedouin tribe based around Ghirza and over a 50-year period he was a loyal and much loved friend of archaeologists working in the area. By local reputation and in the practical experience of many whom he helped as guide, he knew the geography of the pre-desert area better than anyone. When drought affected the grazing of Syrta and the Sofeggin/ZemZem wadi basins, he had been known to lead his flocks as far afield as Algeria. He worked with Olwen Brogan and David Smith at Ghirza in the 1950s (and features in several photographs in their book, *Ghirza*, pl. 9b, 11a), and he was a lynchpin of the Anglo-Libyan UNESCO Libyan Valleys team (see *Farming the Desert* vol 1, fig. 12.7). In the early years we would have been completely lost without his guidance, though the senior members of the British team were required to develop and show advanced knowledge of the supremely difficult topography to gain his full acceptance. Even in the later seasons when satellite images and tarmac roads were creating a new framework of spatial reference points, his knowledge of desert lore and survival instincts continued to serve us all well.

There is a host of wonderful stories to remember him by. He had a habit of singing continuously while we drove across the desert, only faltering if he was not sure where we were, which was virtually never. In celebratory mood, on more than one occasion he discharged his rifle through the roof of the tent in which he and our Libyan colleagues slept. Once when he was clearing out a catchment channel leading into one of his tribe's isolated water cisterns, we saw a horned viper strike at him. Even at 80 years plus, his reflexes were up to the challenge and the snake lost the encounter. On another occasion,