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Tripolitania

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Tripolitania

Vincent Prange & Ton Dietz

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Introduction

Postage stamps and related objects are miniature communication tools, and they tell a story about cultural and political identities and about artistic forms of identity expressions. They are part of the world's material heritage, and part of history. Ever more of this postal heritage becomes available online, published by stamp collectors' organizations, auction houses, commercial stamp shops, online catalogues, and individual collectors. Virtually collecting postage stamps and postal history has recently become a possibility. These working papers about Africa are examples of what can be done. But they are work-in-progress! Everyone who would like to contribute, by sending corrections, additions, and new area studies can do so by sending an email message to the APH editors: Ton Dietz (dietzaj@asc.leidenuniv.nl) and Jan Jansen. You are welcome!

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Illustrations cover page:

Cape of Good Hope postage stamp 1853:

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/7c/Cape Triangular Postage Stamp.jpg/400px-Cape Triangular Postage Stamp.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/7c/Cape_Triangular_Postage_Stamp.jpg/400px-Cape_Triangular_Postage_Stamp.jpg)

Egypt postage stamp 1914:

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4b/Post Stamp Egypt.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4b/Post_Stamp_Egypt.jpg)

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Organization of this APH paper: we follow a chronological order, and for each series of postage stamps we start with the collection of Vincent Prange, followed by additional illustrations that could be found.

S = Sassone Catalogo Specializzato dei Francobolli d'Italia e dei Paesi Italiani, Tripolitania, pp. 1097-1108, and 1120-1121.

Y = Yvert et Tellier Catalogue Classiques du Monde, 2015

M = Michel Katalog Nord- und Ostafrika, 2005

For the General Issues for the Italian Colonies: see APH 56

For Italian Libya: see APH 57

For Cyrenaica: see APH 58

For Fezzan and Ghadames: see APH 60

1 Introduction

Gerben van Gelder's website:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20180606005831/http://www.stampworldhistory.com/stamps-issuing-entities#> (adjusted)



Italian Tripolitania is located in northern Africa in current Libya. In the 19th century the future Italian Tripolitania was part of the Ottoman vilayet or province of Tripolitania, that also included the Cyrenaica and Fezzan regions. Italy, in the 19th century, had commercial interests in Ottoman Tripolitania and by the late 19th century Italy wanted to take possession of Ottoman Tripolitania. In 1911, Italy declared war on Turkey. Italy was victorious and in 1912 the Turks, by way of the treaty of Lausanne, agreed to withdraw from Tripolitania – de jure Ottoman Tripolitania was ceded to Italy in 1923.

Establishing Italian rule

The Italians, after 1912, divided their Libyan possessions in three parts. In the coastal region the colonies of Italian Tripolitania and Italian Cyrenaica were established, each with a governor. The southern possessions – the Fezzan and Kufra regions – were administered by the military as the Military Territory of Southern Libya. These possessions together were referred to both as 'Italian North Africa' and 'Italian Libya'.

Having gained control only over the coastal regions in 1912, Italy next set out to bring all of Ottoman Tripolitania under its control – an effort in which it would only partly succeed. In 1915, Italy joined the Allies in WWI and the troops from Libya were withdrawn to be

deployed in the European theaters of war. Local leaders reasserted their authority over most of Libya. Between 1915 and 1919, Italian control was, de facto, limited to a number of coastal towns. After WWI, the Italians set out to reestablish their authority in Libya. Initially, they did so by signing agreements with the local leaders granting self-government. In Italian Tripolitania an agreement was signed with the Tripolitanian Republic that had proclaimed its independence in 1919.

Things took a very different turn when, in 1922, Benito Mussolini came to power in Italy. Mussolini launched the 'Riconquista'. The Italians abrogated all prior agreements and, through military force, asserted their authority in Libya. Libya was successively brought under effective Italian rule – Italian Tripolitania between 1922 and 1928. The existence of Italian Tripolitania as a separate colony came to an end when, in 1934, the colonies of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were joined to form what is now officially called the Colony of Italian Libya.

The population of Tripolitania is of Berber, Arab and Turkish origin and is almost fully Arabized. The culture is akin to that of the Maghreb – the western part of the Arab world that stretches from Morocco across Algeria and Tunisia to Tripolitania. As such, the population of Tripolitania is distinct from the population in Cyrenaica that is more oriented to the Mashreq – the eastern Arab world stretching from Cyrenaica to the Middle East – and the sparsely populated southern part of Libya. Politically, Tripolitania presents a fragmented picture with several rivaling local leaders – one of the reasons why Tripolitania was the first of the Libyan regions to be brought under effective Italian rule.

British administration



In WWII, Libya would develop into a major theater of war. Fortunes changed between 1940 and 1943 but events eventually lead to Allied victory and the eviction of Italy from Libya in 1943. The British and the French divided Libya into three occupation zones under military administration: the British administering Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, the French administering Fezzan & Ghadames. The British in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica set up separate administrations reflecting the different demands in local and international politics. Through the 1947 peace treaty, Italy formally ceded its Libyan possessions. From 1949 onwards, the United Nations played an active part in Libyan history. A resolution was passed in 1949 stating that Libya should gain independence as a unified country before 1952. In 1950, civil administration was established and in 1951 Libya gained independence as the Kingdom of Libya.

Postal history Italian Tripolitania



1926 – An allegory of Peace substituting the sword for the spade. A design issued in all Italian colonies initiated by the Colonial Institute.

In Ottoman Tripolitania the stamps of the Ottoman Empire were used. Italy opened an office abroad in Tripoli in 1869 using general issues for Italian offices abroad from 1874 onwards, and the general issues for the Italian offices in the Levant from 1908 onwards. Stamps were issued for specific use in the Tripoli office in 1909.

Italy issued stamps for its possessions in Libya in 1912. Stamps issued in the name of Italian Libya have been valid throughout Italian Libya from 1912 until 1943. From 1923 onwards, stamps were issued for both Italian Tripolitania and Italian Cyrenaica, concurrent with the general issues for Italian Libya. These are almost exclusively commemoratives – both overprints on Italian stamps and issues of designs common to all Italian colonies. The stamps of Italian Tripolitania are, from 1934, superseded by the issues for Italian Libya.

From 1927 until 1939, sets were issued yearly at the occasion of the Tripoli trade fairs. These can be recognized by the inscription 'Fiera Campionara Tripoli'. Some of these issues have the additional inscription of 'Poste Italiane' – the 1927-1931 issues, and 'Poste coloniali' – the 1931-1934 issues. The 1936, 1937 and 1939 issues have the additional inscription 'Libia'. The 1935 and 1938 issues have no further inscription.

British administration

After the occupation of Libya by the Allies, stamps were issued by the British and French military administrations. In the British zones, from 1943 to 1948, the issues for the Middle East Forces were used – stamps of Britain overprinted 'M.E.F.'. In 1948, stamps were issued with an overprint reading 'B.M.A. Tripolitania' for use in both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Further overprints were issued in 1950. The overprint now reads 'B.A. Tripolitania' reflecting the change to civil administration. The 'B.A.' issues were valid only in Tripolitania. Cyrenaica, where by then the emirate of Cyrenaica had been established, issued its own stamps.

From 1951, the stamps of the British administration were superseded by the issues of independent Libya.

Also see: <https://stamps.org/news/c/collecting-insights/cat/stamps-in-history/post/this-day-in-stamp-history-stamps-of-tripolitania>

PRIOR TO 1922 :

Also see : APH 57 Italian Libya



<https://images.soleryllach.com/1/25/69/1256911q.jpg> : "TRIPOLITANIA. 1912. Picture post card from Homs of the Turkish Artillery Division bearing Italy 5 cent green (Yvert 76) tied HOMS TRIPOLITANIA datestamp (Tchil 134) with military cachet NAVE OSPEDALE MILITARE/REGINA D'ITALIA in violet addressed to Paris. A spectacular item of military mail ».

COLLECTION VINCENT PRANGE:



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 1. Also see Libya APH 57.

2 Italian colony: separate stamps for Tripolitania

2.1 1922: Mazzini (not issued)

S: P1-P3: 25c, 40c, 80c.



<https://www.cherrystoneauctions.com/auction/thumb.asp?auction=201606&filename=1101%2Ejpg>

2.2 1923: Propaganda Fide

S:1-4: 20c, 30c, 50c, 1L, (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 2 lower part

2.3 1923: Marcia su Roma

S5-10: 10c, 30c, 50c, 1L, 2L, 5L (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 2 upper part

2.4 1924: Manzoni

S11-16: 10c, 15c, 30c, 50c, 1L, 5L. (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 3 upper part

2.5 1925: Ano Santo

S17-22: 20c+10c, 30c+15c, 50c+25c, 60c+30c, 1L+50c, 5L+2.50L (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 3 lower part

2.6 1924: Segnatasse per Vaglia

S Segnatasse per Vaglia 1-6 : 20c, 40c, 50c, 1L, 2L, 3L (with varieties).

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Cirenaica, p. 17, lower part

2.7 1925: Giubileo del Re

S23-27: 60c, 1L in Perf 11, 1L in perf 13 ½, 1,25L in Perf 11, 1.25L in perf 13 ½ (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 4 upper part

2.8 1926: San Francesco

S28-32: 20c, 40c, 60c, 1.25L, 5L+2.50L (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 4 upper central part

2.9 1926: Segnatasse per Vaglia

S Segnatasse per Vaglia 7-9: 20c, 40c, 50c, with larger overprint compared to the 1924 stamps.

2.10 1926: Pro Istituto Coloniale Italiano

S33-38: 5c+5c, 10c+5c, 20c+5c, 40c+5c, 60c+5c, 1L+5c (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 4 lower central part

2.11 1927: Milizia I

S39-42: 40c+20c, 60c+30c, 1.25L+60c, 5L+2.50L (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Cirenaica, p. 4 lower part

2.12 1927: Volta

S43-45: 20c, 50c, 1.25L (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 5 upper part, including a postcard with postmark Tripoli 15 Nov 1927.

2.13 1928: Pro Società Africana d'Italia

S46-49: 20c+5c, 30c+5c, 50c+10c, 1.25L+20c (with variety)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 5 central part

2.14 1929: Milizia II

S50-53: 30c+10c, 50c+20c, 1.25L+50c, 5L+2L, and Proofs for a series that was never issued (Saggi): P6-P9: 30c+10c, 50c+20c, 1.25L+50c, 5L+2L (with variety).

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 5 lower part

2.15 1929: Montecassino

S54-60: 20c, 25c, 50c+10c, 75c+15c, 1.25L+25c, 5L+1L, 10L+2L

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 6 lower part

2.16 1930: Nozze del Principe Umberto / Royal marriage

S61-63: 20c, 50c+10c, 1.25L+25c

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 6 upper part

2.17 1930: Ferrucci

S64-68: 20c, 25c, 50c, 1.25L, 5L+2L., and Posta Aerea A1-A3: 50c, 1L, 5L+2L

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 6 central part

2.18 1930: Milizia III

S69-72: 30c+10c, 50c+10c, 1.25L+30c, 5L+1.50L.

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 9 upper part

2.19 1930: Pro Istituto Agricolo Coloniale Italiano

S73-77: 50c+20c, 1.25L+20c, 1.75L+20c, 2.55L+50c, 5L+1L., and Posta Aerea S A17-A21: 50c, 80c, 1L, 2L, 5L+2L. (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange





Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 8 , including a letter sent to Firenze, Italy, 31 12 1931, with postmark Tripoli.

2.20 1930: Virgilio

S78-86: 15c, 20c, 25c, 30c, 50c, 75c, 1.25L, 5L+1.50L, 10L+2.50L., and Posta Aerea A4-A7: 50c, 1L, 7.70L+1.30L, 9L+2L (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 7, including a postcard to Prague, 16.2.1931, probably from Tripoli

2.21 1930: Posta Aerea

S PA 8 : 50c (with variety)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 18 lower part

2.22 1931: San Antonio

S87-93: 20c, 25c, 30c, 50c, 75c, 1.25L, 5L+2.50L (with variety)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 9 lower part

2.23 1931: Recapito Autorizzato

S RA 1: 10c (two types, and variety)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 18 upper part

Between 1932 and 1934 Tripolitania also used stamps of the General Issues for the Italian Colonies (see APH 56).

2.24 1931/1932: Posta Aerea Soggetti africani

S9-16: 50c, 60c, 75c, 80c, 1L, 1.20L, 1.50L, 5L.

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 19, including a registered airmail letter to Roma, with postmark Tripoli d'Africa, 21.3.1931.



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 20. Registered airmail letter to Brazil, via Germany (with Luftschiff Graf Zeppelin), postmark Posta Aerea Tripoli d'Africa 26 6 1933. Also with a stamp from the general issues of the Italian colonies.



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 18 central part

2.25 1933: Posta Aerea Crociera Zeppelin

S PA 22-27: 3L, 5L, 10L, 12L, 15L, 20L. (with varieties)

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 12, including a registered airmail letter to Lima, Peru, with postmark Tripoli 23 5 1933.

2.26 1933: Posta Aerea: Crociera Balbo

S PA 28-29: 19,75L, 44.75L

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 13, including a registered, express airmail letter to Reykjavik, Iceland, with postmark Tripoli 9 6 1933.

2.27 1934: Posta Aerea, and Servizio Aereo: Primo Volo diretto Roma-Buenos Aires

S PA 30-33: 2L:5L, 3L:5L, 5L, 10L: 5L

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 14, including a registered airmail letter to Buenos Aires, Argentina, with postmark Tripoli d'Africa 22 1 1934.

2.28 1934: Circuito delle Oasi

S PA 34-38: 50c, 75c, 5L+1L, 10L+2L, 25L+3L, and Espressi aerei PA 39-40: 2.25L, 4.50L+1L

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 15, including airmail letter to Switzerland ,
 postmark Tripoli 14 5 1934.

2.29 1934: 2° Mostra internazionale d'Arte Coloniale a Napoli

S94-99: 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, 60c, 1.25L, and Posta Aerea A41-A46: 25c, 50c, 75c, 80c, 1L, 2L

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 10



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 11 lower part



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 11 upper part ; letter to Rome, with postmark Tripoli Posta Aerea Speciale, 8.11.1934.

2.30 1934: Posta Aerea: Volo Roma-Mogadiscio

S PA 47-56 : 25c+10c, 50c+10c, 75c+15c, 80c+15c, 1L+20c, 2L+20c, 3L+25c, 5L+25c, 10L+30c, 25L+2L, and Servizio Aerea 1: 25L+2L.

Collection Vincent Prange



Collection Vincent Prange, Tripolitania, p. 16, including a registered airmail letter to Agedabia (in Libya), with postmark Tripoli Idroscalo, 19 12 1934



<https://images.soleryllach.com/1/56/88/1568822q.jpg> : "TRIPOLITANIA. 1934 (6-XI). TRIPOLI a MOGADISCIO. Circulada con sello de Tripolitania de 25 + 2 Liras verde. Marca del vuelo ROMA-MOGADISCIO, al dorso tránsito de Trobuk y llegada. Sa.GP 88".

3 British Military Occupation: M.E.F, 1943-1948

S Colonie-Occ Stranieri M.E.F.

See: Cyrenaica, APH 58

3.1 1942: postage due series

S Segnatasse: 1-5: ½ p, (1p), 2p, 3p, (1s), used in Tripolitania from 21 June 1943 onwards and until 30 June 1948

See: Cyrenaica, APH 58

3.2 1943: regular series

S 6-16: 1p, 2p, 2 ½ p, 3p, 5p, 6p, 9p, 1s, 2/6, 5s, 10s, used in Tripolitania from 21 June 1943 onwards and until 30 June 1948

See: Cyrenaica, APH 58

4 British Military Occupation: B.M.A. Tripolitania, 1948-1949

4.1 1948: regular series

S Colonie-Occ Straniere Tripolitania: 1-13: 1m: ½p, 2m:1p, 3m:1½p, 4m:2p, 5m: 2½p, 6m:3p, 10m:5p, 12m:6p, 18m:9p, 24m:1s, 60m:2/6, 120m:5s, 240m:10s (with varieties)



<https://i.ebayimg.com/images/g/SJkAAOSwkARdwKN9/s-l1600.jpg>

4.2 1948: Segnatasse / Postage due

S Colonie-Occ Straniere Tripolitania, Segnatasse: 1-5: 1m: ½p, 2m:1p, 4m:2p, 6m:3p, 24m:1s (with varieties)



<https://i.ebayimg.com/images/g/eZIAOSw7M1jxYFK/s-l1200.webp>

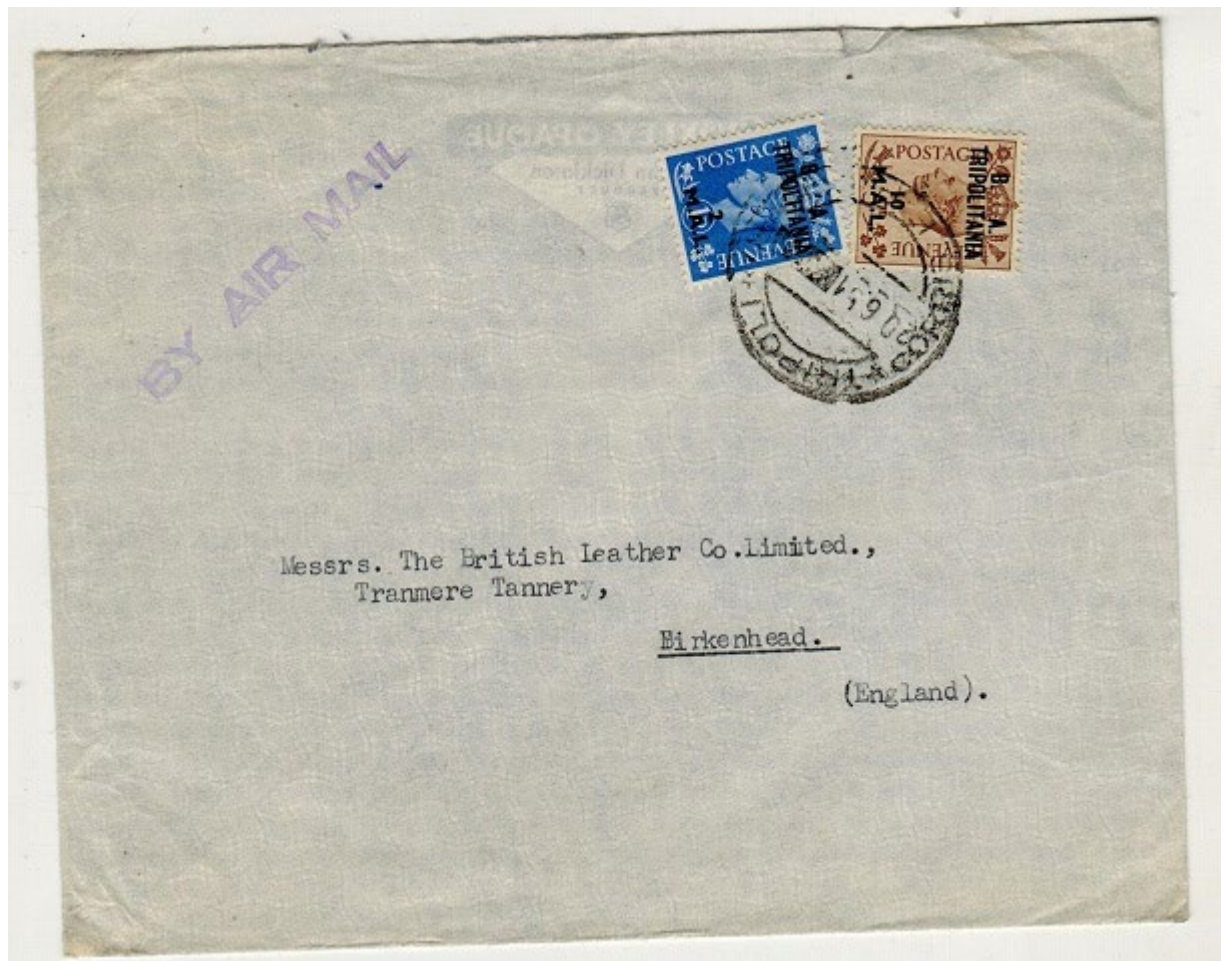
5 British Military Occupation: B.A. Tripolitania: 1950-1951

5.1 1950: Regular series

S Colonie-Occ Straniere Tripolitania: 14-26: 1m: ½p, 2m:1p, 3m:1½p, 4m:2p, 5m: 2½p, 6m:3p, 10m:5p, 12m:6p, 18m:9p, 24m:1s, 60m:2/6, 120m:5s, 240m:10s



<https://i.ebayimg.com/images/g/enYAAOSwAUtjaoM~/s-l1600.jpg>



<https://stevedrewett.com/images/13090.jpg>

1951: Regular series, new values

S Colonie-Occ Straniere Tripolitania: 27-34: 1m: ½p, 2m:1p, 3m:1½p, 4m:2p, 5m: 2½p, 60m:2/6, 120m:5s, 240m:10s



https://thumbs.worthpoint.com/zoom/images1/360/0515/28/british-occupation-kg-vi-1951_360_02c864c63e1c900f07e439ed9e2b35cc.jpg

5.2 1950: Segnatasse / Postage due

S Colonie-Occ Straniere Tripolitania, Segnatasse: 6-10: 1m: ½p, 2m:1p, 4m:2p, 6m:3p, 24m:1s (with varieties)



<https://i.ebayimg.com/images/g/jr8AAOSw5G9dwKOg/s-l1600.jpg>

For fiscal stamps during the period of British occupation: see:

<https://www.revrevd.com/libya-british-occupation.html>

In December 1951 Tripolitania, together with Cyrenaica and Fezzan became part of Independent Libya, the Kingdom of Libya, that lasted until 1969.