

GEOFFREY DUNN 2000

I attended the "XXIX Incontro di Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana" held at the Pontifical Patristics Institute, the Augustinianum, in Rome from the 4th to the 6th May, 2000, at which I presented a paper entitled "Peter and Paul in Rome: The North African Perspective." This paper has now been submitted for publication with *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum*.

I managed to spend three weeks in Rome in total. This was my first visit to the eternal city and so as a long-time student of Roman imperial history I was quite looking forward to being there. It certainly was not a disappointment.



Off to Present my Paper



I wish I was there now!

When I was not at the conference or in the libraries at the Augustinianum or the Pontifical Liturgical Institute, San'Anselmo, where I was staying, I was out and about conducting visual archaeological research (sightseeing as tourists would say). However, I was doing more than sightseeing, for I wanted to be able to take photographs of some of the significant public remains in Rome (amphitheatres, circuses, theatres, baths, fora, etc.) in order to be able to make a comparison with the same structures as found in Carthage.



I could get a job as a tour guide!



Easter Sunday Crowd

My travels around the city took me not only to many of the sites of the imperial city but to some more specifically Christian ones as well. I was particularly interested in the more ancient of Rome's Christian buildings: Santa Sabina, San Clemente, the Basilica of John and Paul, and the catacombs of Domitilla. In Ostia I had the chance to see not only more public buildings like the restored theatre, but the Christian church there as well. It was also the town in which St. Monica died and so I was particularly keen to go not only to Ostia but to the Augustinian church in Rome in which her remains are kept.



My

great discovery!

I also found the small oratory dedicated to St. John in Oil, the literary evidence for which is found in Tertullian and was a feature of my paper to the Augustinianum.

From the 8th to the 10th May I was in London. A quick tour of the book stores helped locate some volumes that are not that easy to find in Australia. I also had a chance to see the North African room of the British Museum and spend some research time in the British Library.



From the 10th to the 21st May I was in Tunis. Here I was able to meet Dr. Abdelmajid Ennabli, Conservator of the Site of Carthage and Director of the Carthage Museum, and Dr. Liliane Ennabli, a specialist in Christian archaeology in Carthage. I discussed with them my interests in Carthage, particularly in how an attention to the topography and physical environment of a city helps in providing a fresh perspective from which to read the literary evidence of Christian authors like Tertullian and Cyprian. Madame Ennabli presented me with a couple of volumes of her publications to encourage my research. I am most grateful for her generosity because these are difficult volumes to track down in Australia. I also had the opportunity of spending several days in the Museum's small but excellent library, the existence of which I was unaware before my travels. There is a concentration of African and French journals which, not only are they extremely difficult to obtain in Australia, were the possession of the White Fathers who excavated Carthage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of these journals have pencil margin notes written by these archaeologists nearly a hundred years ago. I met Dr. Jeremy Rossiter, University of Alberta, who is excavation director of Bir el Djebbane, a Roman baths and Christian cemetery site. I was able to have a preliminary inspection of many of the sites in Carthage. The results of my visit are contained in a lengthy paper I am finishing entitled, "The Landscape of Pre-Constantinian Christian Carthage," which I hope to submit for publication in the very near future.



Domus el Karita, Carthage

I had the opportunity to visit the amphitheatre which may be the one (I believe it is based on new archaeological findings) in which Perpetua and Felicitas were martyred in 203. I could also visit the site of the basilica which most scholars now agree to identify with the one built where they were buried. In fact I felt quite proud being able to find this site given that it is not signed and has been completely neglected for some time. I could also inspect the remains of the basilica of St. Monica where it is believed Cyprian was buried.



Amphitheatre at Carthage

As well, I managed to see the harbours, the theatre, the baths, the forum complex on the Byrsa hill, where the Carthage Museum is now located. I could not find the circus which, although excavated in the 1970s has disappeared again in the face of the demand for housing.



Theatre

at Carthage

I also visited the Bardo Museum in Tunis itself, which houses a tremendous collection of Roman mosaics. On top of it all I got to meet some of the locals and be introduced to post-colonial Tunisian culture in a secular Arab country.





Baths at Carthage

While in Tunisia I was interviewed on the 14th by David Busch for his programme on ABC Radio about Australians abroad. I had the opportunity to discuss with him my research work and my impressions of the country.



Byrsa Hill at Carthage

From the 25th to the 27th May, after a few days re-acquainting myself with western ways in London, I attended the annual meeting of the North American Patristics Society at Loyola University, Chicago. Here I

was able to meet with a number of international scholars, many of whom I had met in 1999 either at Oxford or at the Sydney Prayer and Spirituality Conference which our centre hosts. In particular I was able to meet some of the scholars who have specialised on Christianity in Roman North Africa. I was grateful for the recognition graciously extended to me by Dr. William Tabbernee of Phillips Theological Seminary who cited one of my articles in his paper in front of the assembled specialists on North African Christianity.

The six weeks was a very productive and fruitful experience for me that has contributed greatly to my ongoing ARC Large Grant project.