

GEOFFREY DUNN 2001

2001 has been a busy year. Not only have four articles appeared in print this year, I have five more forthcoming, six being considered by journals and another ten papers in preparation. Just recently I have signed with Routledge to produce a volume of translations with introduction on Tertullian in their Early Church Fathers series.



Hard at Work in Ravenna

This year I attended the xxx incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana from the 3rd to the 5th of May at the Augustinianum in Rome. I presented a full-length paper entitled "The Carthaginian Synod of 251: Cyprian's Model of Pastoral Ministry." It should appear in the *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* series next year. It is part of my Australian Research Council project on Cyprian as letter-writer and pastoral carer.

I also attended the annual North American Patristic Society's conference at Loyola University in Chicago from the 24th to 26th of May. I presented a paper entitled "Cyprian and His Collegae: Patronage and the Episcopal Synod of 252." It is the second in a series of papers devoted to Cyprian's relationship with other bishops. This conference is an important gathering in the field of patristics, which was demonstrated by having so many members of our Centre attend.

I was to attend the Canadian Society for Patristic Studies conference at Laval University in Quebec from the 27 to 29 May and present a paper entitled "Censuimus: Cyprian and the Episcopal Synod of 253." However I had to let the others go on without me as I was laid low with illness and had to spend some extra time in Chicago under medical supervision before flying back to Brisbane.

While in Italy I had the opportunity to visit Aquileia at the invitation of the Pontifical Liturgical Institute at Sant'Anselmo in Rome. I joined a number of students and architects on this visit. Aquileia, in the far northeast of the country, once the Adriatic coast, was a major urban centre in Late Antiquity. The mosaic floor from the fourth century in the Patriarchal basilica is justly famous. Aquileia possesses not only some spectacular Christian remains, but some significant Roman ones as well.



Interior View from entrance of Patriarchal Basilica at Aquileia

Coming back to Rome from Aquileia enabled me to have a few days in Venice. I visited a Canaletto exhibition and saw the major tourist sites, all of which reminded me that the European cultural heritage is not limited to the second and third centuries. Being at St. Mark's Basilica on the feast day of St. Mark (also ANZAC Day) was timely.



The old Roman port of Aquileia



How do those documentary reporters get the whole place to themselves?

I also had the opportunity a week or two later to visit Ravenna and explore the sixth-century Byzantine mosaics in the famous basilicas. They are truly magnificent. After the crowds of Venice, Ravenna was almost peaceful in contrast and I took full advantage of the opportunity to examine and discuss these pieces of artistic evidence at leisure. I could almost get interested in this modern art!



One of my best photos! The ceiling of the Arian baptistry in Ravenna



My tour guide & fellow Cairns priest looking for San' Apollinare Nuovo.
"Barry, I think it's behind you!"

Of course, Ravenna is so close to Florence that it would have been inexcusable not to visit, if only for a few days. Unfortunately, I think about a million other people had the same idea. Even though the Renaissance dominates the city, I found something of early Christianity in the remains of the original cathedral under the present Duomo.



I'm looking for a room with a view!



A peaceful day in Firenze

The rest of my time in Rome was divided into four activities. I was in libraries getting my hands on as much research material that is not available in Australia as I could. I continued on from last year looking at the archaeological remains of classical Rome. I spent some time visiting Christian sites, particularly those connected with the Mariology project being undertaken by the Centre. I found Santa Maria in Trastevere to be one of the nicest Christian basilicas I have visited. It also had in its apse a thirteenth-century mosaic of the visitation by the magi.



The apse mosaics of Santa Maria in Trastevere

This connected well with my last activity in Rome - catacomb visiting. After lengthy negotiations with the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology, I visited the catacombs of San Sebastiano, San Callisto, Domitilla, Santi Petri e Marcellino, Priscilla and Santa Agnese, some of which or some parts of which are not open to the public. My interest is in the frescoes of the visitation by the magi. These particular images have not been the subject of a systematic investigation. I am very grateful to Dr. Giuliani for her assistance.



Catacomb of San Callisto

I presented some of my preliminary research results at the Words and Pictures conference sponsored by this Centre (together with the Brisbane Mediaeval and Renaissance Group) at the McAuley Campus of Australian Catholic University on the 7th and 8th of July. I do hope to conduct more catacomb research in Rome next year. There are not many experiences that compare with being a couple of floors below ground in the dark and dank cemetery corridors.

I am very grateful to the University and to the Bishop of Cairns for their financial assistance in meeting my travel expenses again this year. I am sure the quality of my research output will be sufficient testimony to the value of this experience.