MALTA/TUNISIA

A Study Tour of The Vergilian Society of America

June 27 to July 9, 2006

Directors: Dr. Karl Galinsky and Historian Mohamed Halouani

Tuesday June 27, 2006: Depart from London Gatwick to Malta BA6932, depart 07:15AM arrival at 11:30AM

Welcome at Malta airport. Transfer to hotel 4*. Malta provides a good and tranquil starting point for exploring some of main issues of this study tour, esp. the concept of "Romanization" and the interaction between natives, Phoenicians, Romans, early Christianity, and, in the case of Malta, Greeks. Malta (Melita in antiquity) and Gozo (Gaulos) are small and manageable. We will visit its archaeological sites, including some megalithic ones, and take our time for discussion. On this first day, we will focus on Malta's old capital, Mdina, the Roman villa/archaeological museum and catacombs at Rabat, and St. George's (aka Marsascirocco) and St. Paul's (he was shipwrecked on Malta) Bay. Dinner and overnight at your hotel.

Wednesday June 28, 2006: Gozo

We will visit Gozo, starting with its citadel dating back to Phoenician and Roman times and including the small antiquities museum (Casa Biondi). Further sites include the impressive Giants' Tower (a megalithic temple), and the remains of a lavish Roman villa on Ramla Bay, arguably the best bay on both islands.Dinner and overnight at your hotel.

Thursday June 29, 2006: Valletta/Tunis

Morning tour of Valletta, its fortifications and home to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem since 1532. Afternoon departure to Tunis on Air Malta 680, arrival at 4:20 P.M. Welcome by PromoTunisia staff at Tunis Carthage airport. Transfer to hotel Sidi Bou Said 4* (alt. Carthage Palace 5*), overlooking the Mediterranean. Walk to Sidi Bou Said, a village with immaculate white and blue houses, that has managed to preserve its charm and peacefulness. Check out the various art galleries and enjoy the superb view of the gulf of Tunis from one of Sidi Bou's traditional cafés. Orientation and dinner at the Sidi Bou Said hotel.

Friday June 30, 2006: Bardo Museum/Carthage/Sidi Bou Said

Morning visit to the Bardo Museum, one of the most unique museums in the world. Housed in one of the former Husseinite palaces, it comprises all the treasures of Tunisian history: from pre-historic times to the Punic civilization, the Roman era, Christian times, Muslim civilization and up to the twentieth century. It features the world's largest collection of Roman mosaics, which will be our focus.

Lunch at the Phoenix Carthage serving exquisite Mediterranean food. In the afternoon, we will continue to the UNESCO World Heritage Site City of Carthage, the oldest Phoenician settlement on the coast of North Africa, and its surviving monuments: the Antonine Baths, the Tophet (burial ground) at Salambo, the Odeon, the Punic military and commercial harbors, and the Archaeological Museum of Carthage. Dinner at leisure in any of Sidi Bou Said's restaurant.

Saturday July 1, 2006: Medina of Tunis

Visit the Medina of Tunis, the largest in North Africa (larger than Fez or Cairo) where we will stroll through the main monuments including Ottoman Palaces, centers of arts and traditions which illustrate the way of life and customs of nineteenth century Tunis, and the Zitouna mosque. Visit Dar Ben Abdallah, house of arts and traditions which illustrate the way of life and customs of the nineteenth century Tunis.

Lunch at leisure (we recommend restaurant Escheick serving authentic Tunisian--very typical, and visited by Tunisians only). After lunch, spend some time in the Medina and its Souks, colorful local markets to discover the exquisite craftsmanship of Tunisia's artisans and discover the traditions and cultural heritage of Tunisia in the various libraries and bookstores. Dinner at leisure in Tunis. Overnight sidi bou said 4*.

Sunday July 2, 2006: Oudhna/Zaghouan/Thuburbo Majus

Visit the site of Oudhna (Roman Uthina) and the acqueduct of Zaghouan. Continue to Thuburbo Majus, originally a Punic town, was elevated in status by Augustus, Hadrian, and Commodus. Excavation has been limited so the place has a kind of "original" feeling. Slowly you will find a forum, the amphitheater, temples and baths. Lunch in route.

Return to Sidi Bou Said. Dinner at hotel Sidi Bou Said.

Monday July 3, 2006: Bulla Regia/Chemtou/Le Kef

Morning departure to Bulla Regia, a site remarkable for its architecture and mosaics. About a quarter of the known city has been excavated. Here we will see above and below-ground Roman villas, underground fountains, and mosaics depicting scenes of the daily life of the wealthy landowners in Proconsular Africa. Continue to the marble querries of Chemtou (Roman Simithu) from where large amounts of marble were extracted to build ancient Rome.Lunch in route.

Continue to le Kef (Roman Sicca Veneria). Check in, dinner at brand new boutique hotel Dar Chennoufi.

Tuesday July 4, 2006: Le Kef/Haidra/Sbeitla

Visit of the old town at le Kef, then continue to the Roman site of Haidra and Sbeitla (ancient Sufetula), one of the best preserved Roman sites in Tunisia. Lunch in route. Dinner and overnight Hotel Sufetula 3*.

Wednesday July 5, 2006: Sbeitla/Makthar/Zama Minor/Dougga

Visit the site of Makthar, ancient Mactaris and Zama Minor (battle of Hannibal and Scipio). Lunch in route. Continue to Dougga. Dinner and overnight Thugga 2*.

Thursday July 6, 2006: Dougga/Kairouan

Morning walk to the site of Dougga, one of the best-preserved Roman cities in Africa. Listed in 1997 in the UNESCO World Heritage List, the town of Dougga, built on an elevated site overlooking a fertile plain, was inhabited from early on. Dougga was originally a Punic town, which allied with Rome against Carthage and as a result was granted some degree of independence. Dougga became an influential agricultural center, controlling important trade routes to the coast (Carthage). Dougga also had important marble quarries and fresh water supplies, which made it prosperous.

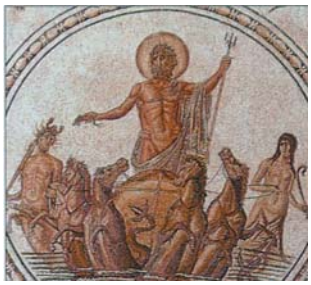
Romanization was profound. We will visit the Capitolium; temples including those of Pietas Augusta, Fortuna, and Liber Pater; various exemplars of refined domestic architecture like the elegant House of the Trifolium; and the Libyo-Punic tower mausoleum. Lunch in route.

Continue to Kairouan, the holy city of Tunisia with its impressive Islamic monuments some, dating to AD 670.

Check-in and dinner at your hotel (La Kasbah 5* lies at the heart of the holy city of Kairouan. This hotel, with a luxurious inside and a sober exterior, merges harmoniously into the Arab-Islamic architecture of the city of Kairouan).

Friday July 7, 2006: Kairouan/El Djem

Visit the ninth-century great mosque of Oqba ibn Nafi, an important reference point in Islam and Islamic architecture. Kairouan is the fourth holiest site in the Muslim religion (after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem). It is said that 7 pilgrimages to Kairouan equate one pilgrimage to Mecca.



Depart for El Djem's (Thysdrus) spectacular amphitheater that dates from the 230s A.D. With its capacity of 45,000 seats it ranks among the largest in the Roman empire. We will also visit the newly opened small museum and the excavations extending behind the museum where beautiful mosaics have been found. Lunch Le bonheur.

Return to Kairouan, dinner and overnight.

Saturday July 8, 2006: Sousse/Hammamet

Visit the Medina of Sousse, its ramparts, catacombs and its archaeological museum. Continue to the coastal city of Hammamet. Dinner and overnight in style Sofitel Saphyr 5*.

Sunday July 9, 2006: Departure for London Gatwick (BA 6849, departs 13:00, arrives LGW at 2:50PM)

Transfer to Tunis Carthage airport for departure to London.

Inclusions

MALTA
- Hotel 4* accommodations
- All breakfasts and dinners, lunch upon arrival
- All entrance fees in sites and monuments
- English-speaking Guide
- Minibus and boat transportation
- Transfers from and to airport
- Baggage handling/service fees, parking fees/highway fees

TUNISIA
- Hotel accommodations, in double room

  Sidi Bou Said 4*--4 nights (alt. Carthage Palace 5*), El Kef Dar Chennoufi-- 1 night, Sufutela Sbeitla 3*- 1 night, Thugga Dougga 2*- 1 night, Kasbah 5*--2 nights, Sofitel Hammamet 5* --1 night

- All breakfasts, lunches (as indicated in itinerary), and dinners (as indicated in itinerary)

- All entrance fees in sites and monuments

  Sidi Bou Said sites, Carthage monuments & sites
  All Medina monuments in Tunis (including Bardo Museum)
  All sites in Dougga, Bulla Regia, Chemtou, Thuburbo Majus, Oudhna, Mactaris, Haidra, Zama Minor
  All monuments in Kairouan (great mosque, Sidi Sahbi, Aghlabites basin)
  Sbeitla site and museum, all monuments in El Djem (amphitheatre, museum)
  All monuments in Sousse

- Tunisian English-speaking Tour Director Historian M. Halouani
- Mercedes bus comfort AC/heat with experienced driver for 11 days in Northern and Central Tunisia
- Transfers from and to airport
- Baggage handling/service fees, parking fees/highway fees, all tips except for PromoTunisia trip director and main driver.

AIRFARES

Round trip London-Malta/Tunis-London on British Airways
One way Malta-Tunis

TOTAL LAND and AIR 13 days/12 nights MALTA/TUNISIA per person in Double =$3,840

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT= $446

Additional charges for collective costs (group of 8 instead of 28)=$130

In addition, there will be an optional $300 tax-deductible contribution per person to the Vergilian Society