

2005 CRETE, LIBYA, TUNISIA LOST WORLDS

Sunday, October 30, 2005. Caught a plane to New York where I met Martha who came from Cincinnati. We then boarded the Delta flight to Athens.

Monday, October 31. I didn't sleep well on the plane and arrived in Athens somewhat the worse for wear. The Travel Dynamics Tour Manager, Fred DeSousa, met us. A full busload had arrived on our flight.

We were taken to the Athens Plaza Hotel for drinks and light refreshment. This was a delaying technique to give the ship time to clean up from the previous voyage. During the interval, Martha and I walked up the street so she could see the elegant Grande Bretagne Hotel, and cut through Syntagma (Constitution) Square before returning to wait for the bus.

At last we arrived at the port and found the M/Y Corinthian II awaiting us. She is a lovely ship, built in 1992 for a now defunct company, Renaissance Cruise Lines. She carries a crew of 64 to take care of 110 passengers. 290 feet long, she has the feel of an old fashioned ship with synthetic wood paneling and brass. Our cabin is very spacious with loads of closets and drawers to hold our belongings. There is a bed alcove plus a couch and chair seating area.

After the lifeboat drill, we unpacked and then went to the briefing where they explained how the ship worked. We have such luxuries as the ability to buy a 100-minute Internet access card. Another innovation is that each guest will have a radio receiver to pick up the guides broadcast talk. This means we don't have to all crowd around to hear and can spread out to take pictures without losing the guided tour.

There was some discussion of the fact that the Sea Cloud had been denied entrance into Libya. We are assured we will be okay for we all have individual visas. The Sea Cloud tried to get a group visa. They apparently got to Libya and were turned away.

Libya is not easy. My passport was gone for six weeks for it had to be sent to Canada. The United States only maintains an information office in Tripoli. Thus for a Libyan to get an American Visa, he must make two trips to Tunis, our nearest embassy. Tit for tat, the Libyan government doesn't issue visas in our country. We heard that one couple didn't get their passport back in time to make the trip! What a disappointment that must have been!

Then Peggy and Dick Kremenz walked in. My sister and I had not pre-planned it, but found some months ago that we had both booked this same cruise. I had not seen her for almost two years. They are long-time travelers with Travel Dynamics. This is my first time. They have a suite on one of the upper decks, complete with balcony. Martha and I are on the same deck where the gangway is. I like the lower location for there is not as much motion if the ship begins to roll. It is also very convenient. We are one deck up from the dining room, one deck down from the "club" or bar.

After the briefing I lay down for a nap. However it was only a short time before an announcement came that we should pick up our tour radios. I went up to the club only to find Martha had already taken care of this detail. Then I decided to buy an Internet card. This had to be done with cash so I went back to the cabin and got a \$50 bill out of the safe. They didn't have change, so I again returned to the cabin, only to discover I had left my key inside! Someone came and opened the door and I found the right change and finally got the access card. I seem to have a case of jet lag!

We had dinner with Peg and Dick although we shall not do it every night. They have other friends on the ship and we shall make our own. It is open seating to allow people to switch around. We caught up on all sorts of family news and were the last table to leave the dining room

I was more than ready for bed.

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Tuesday, November 1. We woke to a clouded sky as we were coming in to Heraklion. As the ship docked an announcement was made that warned us to be prepared for rain and fifty-degree weather. This trip wasn't supposed to be cold and I was not well prepared but Martha loaned me

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a turtleneck shirt.

Heraklion was named for Hercules and is the largest port on Crete as well as being one of the largest ports of Greece. It is a large city and our three buses drove a half hour before reaching the countryside and the ruins of Knossos.

The palace of Knossos was the famed site of the Labyrinth that held the monster Minotaur. The palace had over 1500 rooms so it was indeed a labyrinth. The word labyrinth comes from a Greek word, "lavis" which is the double headed ax used by the Minoans when they sacrificed a ceremonial bull. The Ax is a symbol for Knossos, as are also the bullhorns.

The Minoan language has never been deciphered so our knowledge of them comes largely from the frescos, which decorated the palace.

The Minoan civilization reaches back over 4000 years. A massive earthquake destroyed the palace about 1700 BC. Many feel that the massive eruption that created the crater on the island of Santorini caused the tidal wave that destroyed the palace. While the palace was rebuilt the Minoan civilization had declined and never recovered.

Sir Arthur Evans directed the excavation of the ruins starting in 1899 and he also reconstructed parts of it. Other archaeologists question some of his reconstructions but they do give the tourist some idea of the extent of the palace. It was built around an open courtyard. There were store rooms, a throne room with an alabaster throne, a grand staircase, toilets that could be flushed, elaborate drainage systems to funnel the rain water down to a nearby river now gone. There was even a primitive theater in an L shape of stairs. We could not view the royal apartments for the reconstructions are now under reconstruction!

After the fall of the Minoans, the Mycenaean's came from the southern part of Greece and later the Dorians, with their blue eyes, also came to settle on Crete.

We then went to the Archaeological Museum that holds some wonderful relics. The Snake Goddess is particularly interesting. The bull and lion head carvings are remarkable. The disk of Phaestos has a circular pattern of hieroglyphics that have never been deciphered.

Our guide, Georgia, pointed out that there are four Minoan palaces on Crete that have been excavated. There were also others and each had its own king. In fact King Minos may have been a whole dynasty instead of one man. The original King Minos was supposed to be the son of Zeus and Europa.

It was wonderful to come back to such a place only two years after the first visit for I saw and remember much more.

After lunch and a nap we had our first lecture with Dirk Vandewalle. A Belgian, he was educated at Columbia and is a professor at Dartmouth. Modern Libya is his specialty and he briefed us on the country today.

There are three distinct regions in the country for the Sahara Desert covers 90% of the land and carves up the country like a pie, almost reaching the Mediterranean in the center. The three sections are ethnically different ranging from the dark skinned Nubians, to the Arabs and Berbers. The Italians conquered Libya and were brutal to the natives. Because of geography and the different ethnic groups, the country has no national identity.

It is estimated that there are large untapped oil reserves under that big Saharan sand pile. Thus the United States and Great Britain are interested in resuming diplomatic relations.

The "shores of Tripoli" which we all know from the marine anthem happened as follows. During the time of President Jefferson, the US was developing as a sea power. Pirates would stop ships along the Libyan shore to try to extort money. The United States sent the frigate Philadelphia to try to stop the pirates but the ship ran aground off the shore of Tripoli. Two more US ships were sent to rescue it. They landed in Derna and the marines came overland to Tripoli to complete their mission.

Independent Libya was created in 1951 after the Battle of El Alamein when the Allied victory under Bernard Montgomery defeated the Desert Fox Rommel's Afrika Corps and ended the Italian period.

The US and British governments opened military bases in the country, their rent providing money for the authoritarian government. Qadhafi came to power in 1959 bringing his form of socialism to the country. About this same time the first oil discovery was made and the prosperity of the Libyan people increased.

Tonight was the Captain's welcome reception and we got to meet Captain Skog and his officers.

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Everyone was in his or her best attire. Martha recognized him. He was the captain of the World Explorer when we went to Antarctica in 1996. .

(Captain Peter Skog - Professional seaman sailing since 1963. Born in Finland, he is truly an international man, fluent English, Spanish, German and Swedish. Graduated from Nautical Academy in Malmo, Sweden. His first Antarctic experience dates back to 1974 when he sailed during the austral summer expeditions to the Antarctic Peninsula. To date, he has more than 100 Antarctic ice voyages to his credit and is widely recognized as one of the most skilful ice pilots in the business. Captain Skog has become a symbol of mankind's compelling desire to know, feel and understand what lies beyond the next horizon. He exhibits an intellectual passion for expedition cruising that permits the human mind to go from Arctic to Antarctic waters and to all points between.)

We had dinner with Kate Ortner and Chris Nordloh, two Cincinnatians, Peter and Honey Chapman from New Mexico and Sandra and Jack Waller from Amarillo, Texas. We had such a good time we were almost the last to leave the dining room.

We had been asked to sign up on our choice of three groups. The Wallers signed on for Group C and were somewhat dismayed that it would be the first group to leave in the morning. We were Group A, the last to leave, so we swapped with them. The groups are limited in size to fit into one of our launches.

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Wednesday, November 2. We steamed all night around the eastern end of Crete and early in the morning arrived at Kali Limenes that means "fair haven". This tight little harbor was too small for our ship so we anchored out and went ashore in three groups by launch

Our route led up through the craggy mountains. We passed through a couple of villages where our bus driver did a remarkable job rounding corners on roads that had been built for donkey carts. Our guide, Karin, remarked that we could not use double-decker buses here because they could not clear the balconies that no proper Cretan house can do without.

Finally we came to the Messara Valley. Messara means between the mountains. Once a swamp where houses had to be built on stilts it is now a fertile valley where vegetables are grown. Tomatoes, the main crop, are grown in hot houses. There are also olive groves. This area was

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once the grain magazine for the Romans.

Our first stop is Gortyn, an ancient Minoan city that was destroyed in the 9th century AD. In 59 AD St. Paul was captured and was being taken to Rome, but the ship was almost wrecked and they put into Kali Limenes. They later continued on to Rome but Paul left behind a young disciple named Titus. Paul corresponded with Titus who was converting the people to Christianity. Titus became the first Bishop of Crete.

When they started to excavate, only the upper part of a basilica was showing. It turned out to be the Church of Saint Titus. His relics were probably here but were removed to Venice by the Venetians. They have now been brought back to Crete and are in Heraklion. A lot of the marble from the church is still in Venice. The church has been rebuilt three times.

The church had an atrium where the people waited before passing into the church itself. The church probably had a dome over the nave. Services are still held here twice a year on St. Titus day, August 25, and on Easter Monday.

There are ancient olive trees in an old agora. Nearby is a Roman Odeon, which dates from the first century AD.

On a wall is the famous Gortyn Law Code, the oldest code of law in Europe. It dates from 450 BC. The writing, in ancient Greek, reads from right to left and then from left to right. The letters even reverse depending on which way you are reading. The reason the code has survived is because the area became a millpond and the writing was under water. When it was discovered, the archaeologists disassembled it, numbered each piece, and then reassembled it on a protected wall.

Some of the code seems very modern. Women retained the ownership of their dowry if they were widowed or divorced. There were four classes: two of the aristocracy and two of the slaves. If an aristocratic woman married a slave man, their children became free. There was no death penalty. This was all very advanced for classical times. Laws carved in stone!

Gortyn is also the legendary place where Zeus, disguised as a bull, met and frolicked with Europa. They made love under a plane tree and had three sons. There is an old plane tree nearby and people who want to have a son come here to take a leaf from the tree.

From Gortyn we went on the Phaestos, a Minoan palace on a hill with a breathtaking view. This was the seat of King Rhadamanthus, the brother of King Minos. The palace is not as large as Heraklion, and has had very little restoration. Italian archaeologists excavated the site.

This palace differs from Heraklion for it has many open squares. It is similar in that it has many storerooms with huge storage jars, plumbing and a primitive theater that overlooked the altar where sacrifices were made. To me it was very interesting to see it in unreconstructed shape so I could envision what the archaeologists had to work with.

We were the first group to leave the dock and the last to return. They told us they had given Karin the first bus because she usually takes the longest. She was certainly a thorough guide but moved her group slowly. She also rambled a bit. The problem was we had to wait a half hour while the launch took the "last group" back to the ship. There wasn't much to see or do so we sat in a taverna and Martha treated us to a chocolate bar.

We finally got back to the ship for lunch and a much needed nap.

Richard Brilliant, our art historian gave a lecture in the late afternoon. Perhaps it was because many of his slides were reversed, or perhaps it was the maps that were hard to decipher, but I found it hard to keep my attention on it.

He did give us some history of Cyrene and Apollonia. Cyrene was a Greek colony founded about 630 BC. In early times, they collected and traded a plant called sylphium, which had medicinal properties for the Greeks and Romans. No one seems to know what diseases were helped or even what the plant looked like, but it made Cyrene a wealthy town. Cyrene thrived high in the mountains. Apollonia was its seaport. However, sylphium became extinct. Then a massive earthquake in the fourth century CE toppled the buildings and monuments and the city was abandoned.

Had dinner with Sheila Gallagher, a lawyer from Anchorage, Alaska, and John and Robin Prescott, who have a home in New York City, but a summer place in western Maine.

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Thursday, November 3. The officials came aboard and cleared the ship! We went ashore in Derna Libya. We had a security escort for the hour-long drive to Cyrene. It is the law that a security force must accompany tour buses. They wore blue camouflage uniforms, which were anything but camouflaged!

For a long time we drove the coastal road. It was mostly a desert but occasionally we saw fields that had been cleared of rocks and irrigated with water from the desalination plant. There were occasional herds of goats or sheep, but little sign of people living there. There were scattered bushes of some sort but hardly a tree. Even the shore seemed inhospitable with its lack of beaches. This is the beginning of the rainy season and we were treated to a brief shower. Mohammed, our guide, told us that in the rainy season there are wildflowers that grow here. There is obviously no anti-litter law, but some of this brings recycling to a high degree, since fences are made of whatever is handy. We saw old bedsprings, crates, oil drums and so forth joined together to keep the sheep and goats in their fields. The occasional houses were sand colored and almost invisible in the landscape.

Finally we turned up into the mountains and came to the ancient city of Cyrene. Founded by Greek colonists who came from Thera (Santorini in 631 BC, this city is magnificent. The Italians have done a fine job of excavating it.

We started in a huge gymnasium, which the Greeks built. The Romans turned it into a forum. Then we stepped onto the Cordus Maximus, the main avenue. The city is a planned city laid out as a grid. We passed a small odeum where musical performances were held. The guide said it might have been a place where the government met! We then turned into a larger theater, which to my eyes looked like a Greek theater, but the guide called the odeum. Actually we are pleased with our guide. He is understandable and seems to know his subject for the most part.

We then came to the palatial house of Jason Magnus, a priest of the Temple of Apollo. I was appalled to find myself walking on the old mosaic floors. Mohammed told us not to worry that there were many more mosaic floors. Admittedly the floor was not unusual, little more than geometric designs. One floor depicting the four seasons was housed in a building into which we could only look. The triclinium, where people reclined on three couches to eat, had an elegant mosaic floor of different colors of marble. It was beautiful and needed to be protected. I did not enjoy walking on it.

We spied a theater across the valley being excavated by the University of Pennsylvania. They were denied a visa to return this year. Mohamed told us there is much here that has never been excavated. He also told about the festival of Demeter done by naked women. Any man who peeked was castrated.

We passed a wall of Caryatids, depicting Hermes and Hercules, speed and strength, and entered the agora. This huge arena had many temples. In its heyday it also had many statues.

The imposing one in front of us was of a ship carrying a Nike or victory goddess. The ships prow was carved like two crocodiles. This was to commemorate the Battle of Samothrace. Nearby was an archaic tomb thought to be the tomb of Peter, mentioned by Pindar.

There were the ruins of numerous temples but the one I liked best was a circular one dedicated to Demeter. Sacrifices were made here and you could see the troughs that drained away the blood. There were four headless marble statues, two of which depicted Persephone and Demeter but they were not originally in this temple.

Returning to the bus we went on to the huge Temple of Zeus. Italians from the University of Urbino did the excavation. Eight columns wide and seventeen columns long, about half of the temple is reconstructed. It is bigger than the Parthenon. We walked around admiring it and found two shivering puppies in a corner of the building. We had been promised high seventies weather but I still felt comfortable in my sweater.

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Next stop was the museum that is small but full of beautiful statuary. Many of the best statues have been removed to the museum in Tripoli. However, there are some wonderful ones here. There was a lovely one of The Three Graces. One sarcophagus was the kind you could buy in the market. It had two reclining figures on its cover. The female one did not have a head. The male head was an unfinished blob. The real head would have been carved after the death. Mohammed speculated that the wife had died and her head had been carved but lost, the husband was probably buried elsewhere. It was a great museum.

We started down the hill and could view from above the acropolis with its complex dedicated to Apollo. It looked very much like Delphi and may have been patterned after it. It even had an oracle. I don't know if the stop was planned but Mohammed did make a "fifteen" minute stop that lasted more than a half hour. Thus we got to see the Fountain of Apollo. Ancients had tunneled into the mountain and found a gushing spring, which even two thousand years later was producing water at a good rate.

We were the last to arrive at our lunch stop and someone from another group commented they had already been there for an hour. We told them the groups had been staggered so as not to all arrive for lunch at the same time. The Al Manara Hotel advertised itself as being four stars! It was, without doubt the nicest building around, being several stories high with a view of the Mediterranean. There was even a garden across from the entrance. The hotel had arranged a buffet of local dishes. Timid tourists also found spaghetti and meatballs and roast chicken. I found it all delicious.

Apollonia, the port city for Cyrene was also destroyed by earthquake and some of it is still under water. Recently they have found two Greek ships complete with amphorae and some statues of Hermes. The modern city is called Susa, which means, "Rescue".

Along the shore the English have excavated some Byzantine churches. The first had lovely Corinthian capitals. The second had Coptic markings carved in its columns showing the Egyptian influence. Mohammed also implied this might at one time have been a synagogue since some of the columns were much less ornate and many Jews lived in Apollonia for a time.

There was a palace of 83 rooms where the Governor lived. The first governor came from Lebanon to rule the Pentapolis of five cities: Cyrene, Apollonia, Barca, Tauchira and Hesperides.

We continued our walk past the largest of the three churches. It was probably the cathedral of the Pentapolis.

Last stop was at the theater, which was enlarged by Emperor Domitian. It was carved into the shore so the spectators could see the sea beyond the stage.

It was a somewhat difficult walk back down to the road where our buses waited for us but the mile long walk along the shore had been well worth it. What a wonderful day! I had known about Cyrene, but had not realized the ruins were so extensive.

We had dinner with Anita Linsell, an Englishwoman with the group and Sam and Sharon Brown. John Frick the cruise director joined us. He told us that Travel Dynamics also now operates the small ship, Calisto that I enjoyed in Greece two years ago. Travel Dynamics' largest market is to Alumni Groups and organizations like the Smithsonian.

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Friday, November 4. A day at sea! At last we have a time to catch up. I went and had my hair done before the second of Dirk's lectures on Libya. This one told of Qadafi's form of Islamic socialism. He came to power in 1959 after a corrupt monarchy had been toppled by revolution. In his "Green Book" he tells us that no man should work for another, or own more than one house and so forth. Since this attitude reduced business to nothing, almost 70% of the population works for the government. Many stay at home all day doing nothing. For some time the only place to shop was at the government stores, which might or might not have what you were looking for. The situation is somewhat better now as partnerships can be formed. This also explains the trash that is everywhere. It would be demeaning to hire someone to pick it up.

Of course oil is the source of our problems with Libya. Rents from the US and Britain provided money to support the country for many years. When it was found that the regime was supporting terror our government did not like it and placed an embargo on Libya. Libya retaliated with a series of terrorist attacks, the most famous one being the Lockerbie disaster. Libya has now promised to pay restitution for Lockerbie so the oil politics have been worked out. We are now friends with Qadafi, who Reagan called the "mad dog of the Middle East", although we still only have a liaison office in Tripoli.

We had lunch on deck with Eleanor Brilliant and Eleanor Lord and Margaret Wheeler. The second two are from Great Barrington, Mass. Margaret runs a picture framing business and gallery. Eleanor Brilliant is the wife of our lecturer and she is a professor at Rutgers. Her interests are largely about women's rights.

Richard Brilliant gave his second lecture about Leptis Magnus. This was much better than the first. He had some great slides and only some jammed the machine. Apparently the ship does not have a carousel projector. Most lecturers today use Power Point but Richard is uncomputerized. (Along that same thought, I have been surprised at how many on board are still using their SLR cameras!)

Leptis Magna was a Phoenician City, with roots that go back to 500 BCE. It became part of Rome about 23 BC. The first African born Roman Emperor, Septimus Severus, (145-211 AD) was born in Leptis Magna, but he spent most of his time in Rome and died in Britain. He commissioned many monuments and buildings in Leptis Magna extolling his reign. Septimus Severus and his wife, Julia Domna, had five sons. Caracalla, Geta, Alexander, Marcus and one other whose name I did not catch. The oldest son, Caracalla, killed his brother Geta in 211 AD while the mother looked stoically on. The aristocracy was not supposed to display emotions. Some of Richard's slides show art works where Geta was erased after his death. At its height Leptis Magna rivaled Rome in size.

The Severan dynasty ended in 235 AD and Leptis Magna went into a decline. By the fifth or sixth century vandals had invaded and then the Byzantines held the city for a time. A Berber tribe invaded in 523 AD and the city was abandoned and reclaimed by the desert. Because of its blanket of sand, much of Leptis Magna survived and today you can see an entire Roman City.

Richard also talked about how the Romans let light into their buildings through the use of clerestory windows.

Had dinner with Peg and Dick.

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Saturday, November 5, 2005. Woke to a grey day with sprinkles of rain but by the time we came into the dock at Khoms it had stopped and we were promised 80-degree sunny weather for the day. Khoms is a fishing port and the staging area for tours to Leptis Magna.

The ship was speedily cleared and we climbed onto bus 3. Fred was the host and we have had such good luck with him before. We were not so lucky with our guide, Moufta. He is an engineer but earns more money as a guide. He told us that English is Libya's common language, but his own English was very hard to understand. He did not have the vocabulary to give a tour.

Our first stop was a lovely Byzantine Villa on the coast, the Villa Sileen. There are 20 rooms in the villa and the floors are beautiful mosaics. In the finer depictions, the tesserae are sometimes only about 1/8 inch square. There were modern carpets to walk on but with all 100 of us there together many had to step on those beautiful floors to navigate. I wonder why we all had to come at once? I hate to think what will happen when the big cruise ships start making this a port of call.

The villa was also equipped with a Roman bath. The frescos and mosaics had mostly been removed to the museum in Tripoli.

With a little repair the villa would be a wonderful house in which to live.

We then went on the coliseum near the sea. Nero built this amphitheater in 56 AD and 20,000 people could watch the gladiators fight. If they wanted more gory entertainment they could watch the prisoners who had to fight the lions and dogs. Moufta estimated that 5000 people had died here.

Between the coliseum and the sea was the hippodrome where chariot races were held. It was 450 meters long. 15,000 spectators could view the races.

We returned to the ship for lunch. My arthritis was giving me problems and I elected to skip lunch and stretch out on the bed for an hour. Martha kindly brought me some ice tea and salami to go with my granola bar lunch.

We returned to the site for a walk through this wonderful city. The Phoenicians founded the city because of its many trees and water source from the Lepta watercourse. The Romans enlarged and embellished it with many buildings. This city is unique in that it was sealed like a time capsule in the sand. Rome, however, was built upon and changed from its classic appearance, with only a part now viewable.

We started at the wonderful arch of Septimus Severna built in 203 AD. Richard had told us a lot about the arch. He actually has published a book about it. The arch is covered with sculptures showing the exploits of the Severan family, even Caracalla and Geta are holding hands! There are three steps leading up to the arch so no chariots could pass under it. The limestone carvings came from a quarry 14 kilometers away.

We then walked to the left toward the Palestra, which is a large courtyard where athletic games were held. Across from it are the Bath's of Hadrian. They must have been spectacular when the mosaics, marble walls and frescos were still in place. A large pool was surrounded with columns of marble from Greece and Italy. A unique green one came from Aswan in Egypt. We walked into the frigidarium, the tepidarium and finally the laconica, a sauna and sweat room. Fires heated water to the appropriate degree and pipes took it to the proper rooms. Ladies had a special section on one side. It was one of the best-preserved baths I have ever seen.

We next came to the forica: public toilets, similar to the ones at Ephesus. Here men could sit on the various seats and discuss the events of the day. A stream ran beneath the marble seats to carry away the waste. An open courtyard provided fresh air.

The Nymphaeum was built by Geta to provide a public water source to the city. There would have been lovely fountains. These would have been in better shape, but the Italian archaeologists uncovered them in the 1930s. Three floods, the last in 1988, toppled the arched roof.

The Byzantine Emperor Justinian built a church. We walked in through the old graveyard.

Nearby was the "New" Forum, a huge colonnaded courtyard. Two tall marble columns had carvings depicting the labors of Hercules. There were numerous temples, the best-preserved being the one dedicated to Hercules.

At one end was a basilica that was originally a law court. In the paving various game boards were carved.

Outside we passed under the Byzantine Gate. It was a simple arch with no decoration. We

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walked out to see the old harbor, long since dry, where trees are now growing. There are the remains of an old light tower. An effort is being made to clear the harbor and see if it will flood again.

Moufta told how Napoleon and others had carried off relics from Leptis Magna. More looting happened during World War II.

Returning to the city we passed a small Serapis Temple built about 182 AD at the time of Marcus Aurelius.

The Phoenician fish market was particularly interesting. There were bronze measurements to show how long was a foot or how much was a yard, to help the merchants and buyers establish a standard. The market was built about 89 BC. One carving showed a Phoenician boat on one side and Roman one on the other.

There were marble table legs adorned with dolphins and a phoenix that dated from 1000 BC.

We headed back to the Septimus Severan gate, stopping to view the lovely restored theater. It dates from the first century. Tiberius built the orchestra wall. Moufta clapped his hands to try and show the acoustics. The stage is no longer safe but was used until recently for performances.

It was a wonderful day but I was more than happy to be back on the ship where I could take a shower and change my clothes. It is unfortunate that Moufta is so hard to understand. His vocabulary is also limited.

We had dinner with the Chapins and Susan Cochoran and Elena Kingsland. Elena has spent time in Senegal and Mali and I enjoyed learning more about those countries.

We were supposed to stay at the dock until 11:00 at night, but our Captain learned another ship was on its way to Tripoli. We sailed at seven to get to our dock about midnight. Good thinking Captain!

<http://www.wunderground.com/global/stations/62012.html>

<http://www.roman-emperors.org/nero.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septimus_Severus

http://www.jasminjahal.com/articles/01_01_Goddess_Isis.html

<http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/baths.html>

<http://www.alnpete.co.uk/lepcis/plans/arch.html>

<http://ic.ucsc.edu/~langdale/arth134/glossary.htm>

http://archpropplan.auckland.ac.nz/virtualtour/hadrians_bath/hadrians_bath.html

<http://rubens.anu.edu.au/htdocs/surveys/mediterrarch/slides.xmosaic/bysite/display00160.html>

<http://www.ku.edu/kansas/medieval/108/lectures/justinian.html>

Sunday, November 6. Awoke in Tripoli, a large container port and the capitol of Libya. We planned to dodge Moufta, but others thought of it before us. Every bus was full but number 3. We were a small group of only about 15. We were taken to the Jamahiriya Museum, which is housed in an old Spanish fort.

The exhibits are arranged chronologically. I sprinted ahead and caught up with Salaam's group. His English is very clear and he adds a personal touch to his tour. With the radios, it is easy to tune in whatever guide you wish.

The Cyrene gallery and the Leptis Magna gallery were spectacular with the original statues from the two sites. A wonderful sculpture of the Three Graces is here. I thought the one in the Cyrene museum was great but the real one was more impressive. Some of the statues from Leptis Magna were enormous. My interest was less in the Moslem period exhibits but there were some dioramas that showed native life.

After the museum we were taken on a city tour. I have never been much of a fan of these and Moufta's dialogue was pretty bad. "Here you see a petrol station". "This is a garden". "That is a Chevrolet car." "The sea is calm." Poor man he is trying hard but just doesn't have it.

We then stopped at the Arch of Marcus Aurelius built in 164 AD. It sits in a hollow for the city of Tripoli has been built up for almost 2000 years and the road level is now about 12 feet above the base of the arch. The arch has four faces. Zeus and Minerva are depicted on one facade. This was not a triumphal arch but at the intersection of two streets. The center was not raised and chariots could pass through.

Nearby was a treasure of a mosque. The Gurgi Mosque was built in 1833. We took off our shoes and entered its small-carpeted interior. Lovely ceramic tiles cover the walls and around the

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mihrab and podium, there are marble inlays and cutouts reminiscent of the Taj Mahal. In an adjoining room you could see the tomb of Gurgi who built the mosque.

Moufta told how the Moslems pray five times a day and even demonstrated how they touch their heads to the ground.

Nearby was a small shop where I bought a silver Tuareg ring.

We returned to the ship for lunch and set out again about 3:00 for the Medina. This was a catacomb of small shops in the usual oriental bazaar manner. There were lots of jewelry stores. People in this part of the world put their money in gold because it is a more stable place than the local money. There were many elaborate pieces. I did find a chain I liked, reminiscent of the one I bought in Aleppo. Alas, the shop was closed. We walked around a bit and came back and it was still closed. Too bad! Martha found a caftan she liked but the shopkeeper wanted \$45 for it and it wasn't worth anything like that. Martha offered him \$15 but he wouldn't start to dicker.

We met a tourist from the Delpin Renaissance, a large cruise ship in port. I forgot to ask him about what sort of visa he had. We have heard of two ships that were turned away, one carrying a tour from the Metropolitan Museum.

I came back on the 5:00 o'clock bus while Martha stayed to wander around.

Before dinner the Deputy Chief of the US Liaison Office, Ethan Goldrich, gave a talk. We had an embassy in Tripoli until 1980, but it was attacked and evacuated. Terror attacks further strained relations. We imposed sanctions. In the late 1990s Libya started making moves of reconciliation. They turned over to us two men who had been involved in the Pan-Am disaster. They have now promised restitution to the families of those who were lost. They are abandoning their weapons of mass destruction. Libya still has to denounce terrorist organizations. Therefore we have started lifting sanctions and in 2004 sent the first diplomats here. They are preparing for the embassy that has still to be sent. One of the problems is that the old embassy building is not in an area where it can be protected from terrorists. They will have to find another site.

Sat with Jerry and Helen Tepper at dinner. He has taken a lot of the same tours that I have.

After dinner there was a folklore presentation. The ladies were all presented with necklaces. The band consisted of two drummers and one man who carried a unique bagpipe with horns used to distribute the sounds. The dancing seemed a bit synthetic since it consisted mostly of getting individual passengers to get up and shimmy. I left early.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tripoli>

<http://www.khadijateri.com/tripoli.html>

<http://www.libyaonline.com/libya/cities/tripoli.php>

<http://www.ibiblio.org/maritime/photolibary/thumbnails.php?album=359>

<http://reference.allrefer.com/encyclopedia/T/Tuareg.html>

<http://www.desertstore.com/For-Sale-Directory/Caftan-Kaftan-Jalabiya.html>

Monday, November 7. We anchored off Zuwara. The water was shallow so we could not enter the small harbor. We had to go in by launch. Because of the swell, boarding the launch was very treacherous and the crew held on to us as we climbed the pitching gangway.

The harbor was full of rusty old ships and trash. This port is known for its seafood. There was also a refinery here.

All over Libya we have seen lots of trash, plastic bags, bottles and so forth. Here it was the worst. Trash lined the road all the way to Sabratha. No one owns the roadway and so no one takes care of it.

Our guide Mamood did very well considering that he did not have a radio. We are so spoiled with our radio tours where we can wander off from the group and still hear what was being said. However, his delivery was clear and loud enough to hear from a short distance away.

Sabratha has roots that go back to the 7th century BC. It was a Phoenician city, became Roman, and was overrun by vandals. It suffered greatly in the earthquake of 365. The city went into decline but was rebuilt on a smaller scale by the Byzantines. It survived until about 700 AD but as the desert encroached it was abandoned.

We walked in on the main corda. The Roman avenues, which run north and south, are called corda.

Our first stop was at the temple to the God Bas. The Italian archaeologists reconstructed a sandstone spire, 22 meters high, decorated with lions. The lions were supposed to protect the

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pregnant ladies.

The south temple, dedicated to an unknown god had fluted columns in the Phoenician style. The floor was marble slabs or marble parquet.

The Antoine Temple was erected 166-169 AD in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Most of us climbed up on its raised main platform for the view of the town. Aside from the scattered columns that have been reconstructed, most of the site remains destroyed.

Sabratha was mostly dependent on rainwater until Emperor Flavius Tullius built a fountain about 200 AD. It is a much smaller fountain than the one in Leptis Magna.

We came to the Basilica, which was built to be a law court. The Byzantines turned it into a church. Nearby are the cemetery and a baptistery.

The large forum was built of limestone. The three temples at one end were dedicated to Jupiter and Juno and their child Minerva.

There is a Hellenistic Serapis Temple reflecting the ties the city had with Egypt. Serapis was the god of medicine.

The huge Basilica of Justinian overlooks the sea. It was built in 527 AD. There is much variety in the columns to show that this was a multi-cultural city. We are promised a look at its mosaic floors when we reach the museum.

We passed an ancient olive press. A rounded stone tub was covered with weights and a camel turned the press to extract a pulp. This was put in nearby vats and mixed with water so the oil would come to the top. The oil was refined several times before it was pure.

Nearby was the bath with a latrine area as at Leptis Magna. A headless statue of Venus overlooked the bath.

The slaves in Sabratha were pygmies because they were considered more docile than Negroes. They also were able to work in the desert atmosphere.

The houses all had cisterns. There was a huge and deep one near the baths.

The theater dates from the end of the second century. It can hold 3000 people. It was reconstructed by the Italians in 1934 and stands three stories tall. It dominates the site. Acting took place on the stage. Mimes operated in the second floor galleries. There would have been statuary as well. There is a grand statue of a dolphin near one entrance. The orchestra was decorated with many carvings. Peg and Dick, with Martha and me, elected to have our family picture taken at this lovely site.

We ended at the museum, which is normally closed on Monday, but they found a key and we were able to view the magnificent mosaic floor that had been in the Justinian Basilica. Part of it was mounted on the walls surrounding the central part. This was the tree of life with flying birds representing the release of the spirits. We have seen so many mosaics on this trip and it is obvious that oriental rugs take their inspiration from them. Some of the work is so fine it looks as if it were petit point.

Another gallery was opened for us. In it was a huge head of Jove (Jupiter) from the time of Caracalla. The statue I liked best was of Apollo playing his lyre and attracting animals.

We drove the half hour back to the port and were happy to be back on board where showers awaited us.

Had dinner with Sheila Gallagher, Pat Draper who is from Sun Valley, Sissy Wheeler and Lucia Heyworth.

We have used up one whole Internet card and have started another. 100 minutes goes in a hurry!

<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/libya.html>

<http://www.caravanserai-tours.com/sabratha.htm>

http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=31&id_site=184

<http://www.crystalinks.com/romegods.html>

Tuesday, November 5. We tried to dock at Sousse, Tunisia, but the slot was too small. We left the harbor and anchored while they found a place we could be put. Thus the tour started late. The harbor is very colorful with five pirate galleons waiting to take you on an excursion. Gaily painted, one even had Elvis Presley on the sail.

There were two options this morning. Peg and Dick to Kaiouan, one of Tunisia's holiest sites. Martha and I took the second option, which was to go to El Djem.

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Sousse is known for its seafood. One big difference from Libya is that Tunisia is not a third world country. It has been a republic for eighteen years. The president is elected every five years. There is a House of Representatives similar to ours. There is also a second chamber of counselors who are experts and advisors.

Yesterday was the anniversary of independence and there were red banners decorating the town. The houses are the same cement stucco buildings but here in Tunisia, they are done with style. Colored trim and fancier balconies, attest to the prosperity of the individuals. Tunisia was a French protectorate so French is spoken everywhere. However, we also found English spoken. It is all such a contrast to Libya!

Driving south we passed olive groves and plantations of prickly pear cactus. Tunisia is third in the world in olive oil production after Spain and Greece. We even saw a few donkeys, but mostly it was sheep and goats.

There is a motorway to El Djem, which was founded by the Phoenicians as a market town. Its origins date to the 5th century BC. Its ancient name is Thydrus. The Phoenicians came from Lebanon to settle at Carthage. They controlled most of North Africa and even parts of Spain. They were a threat to Rome. Hannibal led an army across the Alps and tried to conquer Rome. He conquered much of Italy but never took Rome itself. Meanwhile a Roman General came and attacked Carthage. Hannibal was called home to defend the city. Carthage fell and the Romans took over the area. By 230 AD one third of the Roman Senate was of African descent and Septimus Severan, whom we met in Libya, was emperor. After his death, Maximus, his successor tried to raise the taxes and there was an uprising by a man named Gordian. The Gordians reigned until the vandals came. They stayed 100 years, and then the Byzantines stayed 100 years. The Berber people named the town El Djem, which means refuge.

We drove about an hour to reach the city where a huge coliseum dominates the skyline. The medina wall is extant. A medina without a capital refers to the old part of a city. Medina with a capital M is the city near Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

Construction of El Djem's coliseum started in 230 AD under the reign of Alexander Severan. He was killed shortly before it was finished. This is the third largest Roman coliseum and the largest in Africa. Carthage had a bigger one, but it was destroyed.

The one at El Djem was patterned after the one in Rome, but there are differences. The sandstone used to build it is yellow in color making the building seem to glow. It is also in a remarkable state of preservation.

A ticket to the coliseum was one tessera. One side of the amphitheater was lost during a bombardment in the 17th century, but you can still see the marble seats where the dignitaries sat. Ordinary people sat in higher galleries while slaves sat in the highest bleachers. Canvas awnings protected the lower levels but the slaves sat out in the open.

Saif, our guide took us down a dark stairway to the lower level where the wild beasts were kept. They were not fed to make them more ferocious when they were set loose in the arena. The fiercest beasts were kept in deep pits.

There were many classes of gladiators. One fought the wild animals. One class used swords and scimitars. Another carried round shields and daggers. One also had tridents, helmets and nets. The bad part about being a gladiator was that if you won a match you were then pitted against another. Thus you fought until you lost, and losing meant death. "We who are about to die salute you".

We were given time to walk around and photograph. The columns are interesting in that their capitals are not acanthus leaves but palm leaves.

After a short time to shop we went on to the archaeological museum. Inside were some of the most extraordinary mosaics. They all came from houses in the town. They make me think of oriental rugs. You can almost see the texture in the carpet. Some of the artwork is very delicate. Unfortunately the names of the artists who created them are lost. Adjoining the museum was the Villa Africanus, named for a mosaic picturing an African woman. The villa was moved here from elsewhere. It had descriptions in all the rooms describing how the mosaics were made.

I was interested in how they moved the mosaics from their original places. A cloth is glued to the mosaic. Then the mosaic is pried up. Larger ones were cut into meter and a half squares. The squares were placed in a wooden template and the cloth was removed. The template was then ready to be mortared into its new location.

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Mosaics were almost always in floors, but the museum has mounted some on the wall. In a house the floor was continually swabbed with water. The mosaics are very beautiful when they are in water.

We had a tourist lunch at the Club Kasar El Djem and then headed back to Sousse where we reconnected with the group that had gone to Kaiouan. Each group seemed to be very happy with their choice.

We were given a chance to shop at the medina before returning to the ship. Martha bought a lovely green caftan. I bought a small box with a sewing kit that I think will make a good pillbox to carry in my purse. I also found some Tunisian pottery bowls to take home for gifts.

<http://www.tourismtunisia.com/togo/sousse/sousse.html>

<http://www.tourismtunisia.com/togo/kairouan/kairouan.html>

http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=31&id_site=38

<http://www.tunisiaonline.com/>

http://www.desertusa.com/magoct97/oct_pa/du_prkpear.html

<http://www.livius.org/ha-hd/hannibal/hannibal.html>

<http://www.roman-empire.net/articles/article-016.html>

<http://ablemedia.com/ctcweb/consortium/gladiators.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Olympus/3296/gladiators.htm>

<http://ah.bfn.org/a/DCTNRY/a/acan.html>

Thursday, November 9. We came into the harbor at La Goulette, the port for Tunis, the capital of Tunisia. I was here twenty-five years ago on one of the worse tours I ever took and remembered little except how bad the tour manager was!

We left the bus before nine in an effort to get to the Bardo Museum before the other tours. Two other cruise ships are here. One is Le Ponant that Mary and I took from Malta to Marseilles. The other was the Regatta of the Oceana Line. We were the second group to go in. Our guide led us to the second floor to avoid them, but soon other groups came and it was very crowded everywhere. There were some wonderful mosaics.

However the exhibit I liked the best was of the "flying dwarfs", four small beguiling bronze figures that were found on a Greek ship from the second century BC. It has recently been discovered with a cargo of columns. Furniture was also found that has been restored.

The Bardo is a wonderful museum with the best from all over Tunisia. However, I feel as if I have seen enough mosaics to last a lifetime.

We went from the museum to the medina of Tunis. This is a covered souk reminiscent of the one in Istanbul. We were led in past the gold jewelry stores to a rug merchant. From his roof you had an overall view of the medina and could look down into one lovely mosque courtyard.

Of course we had to have the usual rug show. By the time they offered the mint tea, I was ready to go. On the way out we found a lovely old Berber Kelim Rug. Kelim rugs have geometric designs and are woven like a tapestry with no pile. I wanted to give it to Martha even though she doesn't know where she will put it. Then I found I was without credit card and had to borrow hers. Very embarrassing.

We were then led to the Essaraya Restaurant in the medina. The room was atmospheric with tiled walls and a glass dome ceiling, but the food did not appeal to me. It was a plate of assorted tidbits, followed by lamb and couscous. Desert was an almond pudding.

The sad part was that after the hour and a half long meal there was no time to shop the enticing shops.

We then went to Carthage. Dido came from Lebanon in 814 BC and founded Carthage on a hill. The Phoenicians were traders who dominated the Mediterranean. When Rome became a power, the two cultures clashed. Hannibal, who was born in Carthage, set out to conquer Rome. He crossed the Alps on elephants and conquered many cities in what is now Italy, but he never was able to take Rome. Meanwhile, Cato, a clever Roman general attacked Carthage and Hannibal had to come home to defend the city. Carthage fell to the Romans and they destroyed the city and salted the fields.

Later the Romans rebuilt the city so today very little remains.

Our last stop was Sidi Bou Said a picturesque village where all the houses are painted blue and white. The main street is lined with tourist shops. Martha found a lovely Tuareg pendant in an

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antique silver shop. I managed to avoid all the anxious shopkeepers until the end. "It doesn't cost anything to look".

I was almost back to the bus when a vendor produced a silver filigree necklace with bracelet and earrings to match. I asked him what it cost and he said \$75. Pretending to be shocked I offered \$25. That was my mistake for once you start a dicker you must continue to the end. He finally came down to \$30. That was when I realized I only had \$19 in my pocket! And no credit card! I let him count the money and even let him peek in my pouch to see there was no more. I hoped he would settle for it. He decided I should borrow the missing \$11 from one of the other people on the tour and started accosting them to ask them to loan me some money. I was so embarrassed! Finally Eleanor Brilliant came by and she kindly loaned me the missing money.

I climbed on the bus and unwrapped my tissue paper covered prize and found I was missing one earring. I went back to the salesman and told him I had lost it. "No problem," he said and presented me with another earring at no charge. Now I know I paid far too much! Ah well, it was still fun to dicker and think I had gotten him down to a fair price!

We had dinner with Peg and Dick. It has been such fun to travel with them since I see them so seldom.

<http://lexicorient.com/tunisia/goulette.htm>

<http://www.tourismtunisia.com/togo/tunis/tunis.html>

<http://lexicorient.com/tunisia/tunis15.htm>

<http://i-cias.com/cgi-bin/eo-direct.pl?couscous.htm>

<http://www.tourismtunisia.com/togo/carthage/carthage.html>

<http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/Dido.html>

http://www.geocities.com/~kashalinka/cato_bio.html

<http://www.tourismtunisia.com/togo/sidibousaid/sidibou.html>

Thursday, November 10. The last day. I had breakfast with Bob and Toni Strasser. She does enameling and makes her own jewelry. She showed some articles that had pictures of some of her art. Some of her pendants are like impressionist paintings. I hope she will let me buy one set of earrings but she wants to wear it tonight. She has an annual show in Boston and I would like to attend it some day.

In the morning Richard Brilliant gave his best lecture of the cruise. He talked about mosaics and how the borders related to the picture within. The artisans of Libya and Tunisia were well known and their mosaics can be seen all around the Mediterranean.

Had lunch on deck. John, Fred and Steve, the tour managers had space at their table so we joined them. Steve knows Jacqueline, the program director on the Katharina von Bora. He lives in Prague.

Then I went to call on Peg and Dick. I had not seen their suite. They have a balcony, but no more space than we have. We have no balcony but our living room is much bigger than theirs.

Then we had an entertaining slide show from John to review the trip. He had one funny slide where he had turned Fred and Steve into mosaics.

I came back to the cabin to start the packing process and found an invitation taped to the door to join the Captain's table tonight. Then we went to a question and answer program with Dirk.

We docked in Palermo about 7:00

Captain Skog had his farewell reception and then we were escorted to his table. My place card put me on the Captain's right and Martha sat on his left. The others at the table were Dean Corbitt, Fred Penn, Pat Draper, and Eleanor & Richard Brilliant. I had not met Dean and Fred. Dean is in advertising and Fred is a financial consultant. They are both from Texas. It was a lively table with lots of wine ending with sherry. After the Captain left we took the sherry bottle over to Peg and Dick's table and closed the dining room!

Friday, November 11. And so the cruise came to an end. Apparently I had not arranged for a transfer to the Excelsior Palace Hotel. We asked for a cab. There was a man nearby who said he would take us to the hotel for 15 euro. We climbed into his car. Around the entrance from the hotel he stopped and asked to be paid. It seems we had an illegal cab. Once we had surreptitiously paid him, he drove up to the front of the hotel.

Our hotel is an old palace. Our room won't be ready until 1:00. No one spoke much English so

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we went out to the cab rank to try and find an English Speaking driver. Stefan announced he spoke a little and would give us a tour for 120 euro.

The Phoenicians founded Palermo in the 8th century BC. They called it Ziz. The Carthaginians followed the Phoenicians. In 276 BC the city fell to the Greeks who renamed it Panormos meaning "all port". Panormus was part of the Byzantine Empire until 831, when it fell to the Moors. Palermo became one of the Muslim world's great cities, surpassed only by Baghdad. The Normans conquered the city in 1071. Palermo flourished as the wealthiest city in Europe, being the place where west met east.

Our first stop was the famous catacombs. These were unique. Started by Capuchin Monks in the 16th century, the first monk was buried in 1599. Many other people soon asked to be interred here.

Being placed in cells called "strainers", the bodies desiccated. Once the body was dried it was placed in a niche, either horizontal or vertical. You can still make out the clothes the people wore. The relics are in every state from skeletons to bodies where the features can still be made out.

The bodies are arranged in corridors. One was for men, one for women, one for children and one for professionals, doctors, lawyers and other dignitaries.

One little girl, Rosalia Lombardo died 85 years ago but her body looks as perfect as the day she died. Dr Solafia, a Palermitan doctor took his secret of embalming with him when he died. It is only known that the method included injections of chemicals and nothing else. The guidebook says that burials stopped in 1881 but the little girl clearly died in 1920. Suffice it to say no one is being buried there today.

It was all a bit macabre. Two teenage boys had paid the 1.5 euro entrance fee to gawk and giggle at the bodies. Martha fixed them with an evil eye and they curtailed their behavior.

We then drove up to Montreale to view the spectacular cathedral. It was commissioned by the Norman king, William the second in 1166. As early as 1176 one hundred Benedictine monks were in residence. By the time William died in 1189, the cathedral was almost completed. It is magnificent combining features from Byzantine, Arab and Norman architecture. Two huge statues guard the entrance of the cathedral. Since my Italian is very sketchy I can only say they looked modern and were possibly of William the second and his queen. Inside was magnificent. Wonderful gold mosaics covered the walls depicting the stories from the Old Testament.

The traffic was very bad. Stefan said he needed four eyes to drive, two in front, two in back. I only had two eyes; both closed much of the time so I couldn't see the near crashes as he aggressively drove through town. He stopped at the post office so Martha could change some money. She got 1.20 much better than I got last summer. The official rate is 1.17.

Then we were dropped at the archaeological museum. We opted to walk down a narrow alley toward the opera house and found the Resterante la Traviata. We were the only people in it. I ordered a risotto dish with shrimp Martha had a fettuccine and we washed both down with a glass of wine.

We walked on to admire the opera house but decided not to take the guided tour.

The tragedy was that when we got back to the Archaeological museum it was closing for a two-hour siesta. We got out the map and decided to walk to the nearby Santa Cita Church. It was a bit complicated to find it, but just as we did, it too closed for two hours. So we didn't see its baroque interior shown in our guidebook.

I was getting tired but we walked some more, and then some more, and at last found a cab rank. The metered ride back to the Excelsior was about 5 euros, proving we were really fleeced on the ride from the dock.

So our day in Palermo was not the greatest. People had told me that there wasn't much to see. The city itself is somewhat drab. Much was bombed during World War 11 and the new construction is not very distinctive.

Our room was ready when we got back to the hotel. I lay down on the bed and slept for almost 3 hours. We had dinner in the elegant dining room of the hotel. The walls were covered with silver damask and the chandeliers and sconces were all of Venetian glass. I had a delicious appetizer of artichokes and shrimp. This was followed by calamari. We walked round the hotel afterward looking for the ice-cream store but it was closed.

<http://www.bookings.it/hotel/it/excelsiorpalacehotel.html?aid=304310>

http://www.travelplan.it/palermo_guide.htm

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http://www.regione.sicilia.it/turismo/web_turismo/uk/localita/PA/homepage.html

<http://members.tripod.com/~Motomom/index-3.html>

http://sights.seindal.dk/sight/637_Duomo_di_Monreale.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_II_of_England

http://www.regione.sicilia.it/TURISMO/Web_turismo/uk/localita/PA/palermo/fotografie/chiese/santacita.html

Saturday, November 11. After our wake-up call at 4:30 AM we checked out of the hotel. Stefan was waiting for us and we got to the airport with no traffic. Martha had been changed to an earlier flight so she will make her connection to Frankfurt. I was plunked into a very uncomfortable wheelchair to wait my 7:30 flight to Rome. As soon as the pusher was out of sight I changed to a chair in the waiting room. In New York when I tried to get out of the chair I was told it was against the rules and it probably is here but I have done it and I am glad. They came back and made me get back in the chair but made no comment.

I got to Rome and found Princess Cruises had just dumped some 2000 people at the airport. I had been waitlisted for 8 months for an upgrade with Delta that never came through. Now I saw why! They gave me a coach seat. I told them I was really upset for my feet and ankles swell if I can't get them elevated. The lady said she'd see what she could do. After a bit she came back with a new boarding pass and said I would be sitting next to the Captain! Not the jump seat I hope! But no, I actually was given a seat in the curtained off area where the crew sleeps. So I slept with the Captain, all three of them! The seat was one of the reclining ones but only coach service came with it. I had a most unappetizing meal and had to buy my drink, but at least my feet were up. It was a bit like being in isolation. All dark and curtained. I slept most of the way home. I got the seat because I am now gold medallion. It pays to fly Delta.

I got to know the crew. One of the stewardesses teased me and said, "You just sleep with anybody!"

<http://www.princess.com/index.html>