

**Carthage** was a city of major importance more than two thousand years ago. It was founded in what is now northern Tunisia by the Phoenicians from Tyre about 800 B.C. as a hub of their great sailing network around the Mediterranean Sea. Biblically they were Canaanites. The city was eventually destroyed by 146 BC by the Roman Empire, a rising power center to the north. It was destroyed again by the



Arabs in 698 AD. We visited its ruins on 30 June 2023 accompanied by an expert guide. For illustrations I will use both my own photographs and copies of satellite imagery from Google Earth to show layouts.



Remains of Roman Coliseum



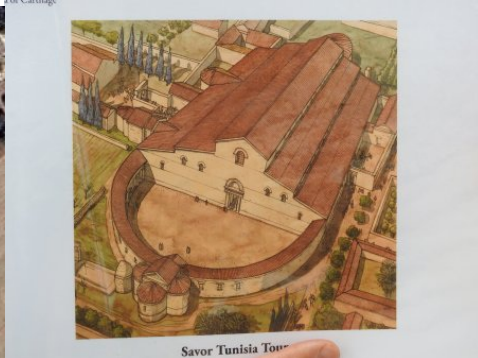
We entered the ruins from the northeast



Center tunnel

The Roman Coliseum had a flat arena with tunnels beneath for the movement of animals and people. There were manually operated “elevators” for raising them to the arena floor for the exhibitions. Most of Arabs. Before that, including times of Roman persecution of Christians,

the stone work was repurposed by the parts of the tunnel system were used for a church. The chi-rho (XP, first letters in Greek word for Christ) and alpha-omega symbols began to be used on Roman coins during the time of Constantine the Great and continued under subsequent rulers. A marble plaque commemorates the martyrdom of the woman Felicitie here.



Ruins (left) of large Carthage church, sketch above in reversed orientation.

One of the great Christian councils happened here in 397 AD to list the books that should be included in the Bible. Subsequent councils were important in describing the true faith in Jesus and various church practices and sacraments.

At the southwest corner of the site is

a deep circular structure used for baptisms after a long period of instruction in the faith. Those being baptized would descend one set of stairs to the bottom of a deep pit to be baptized. They would then climb the other stairs to the surface, symbolizing rising to a new life.



Entrance to baptism chamber.



Descending.



Circular rim of baptism pool.



Exit stairs and door (locked gate).

During World War II there was a major campaign in North Africa, particularly in Tunisia. This was an important location for entry of the forces into southern Europe via Sicily and Italy. Americans who lost their lives there are buried in a well-groomed cemetery in the Carthage area. In addition to the graves, there are mosaic murals on the walls showing maps of troop, ship, and aircraft movements across the area. One wall has a list of soldiers buried in the cemetery. (My father served in France and Germany and his brother served in Italy.)



Vertical view of American cemetery.



Next we visited the ruins of a huge system of cisterns for storing water brought to Carthage by aqueducts.



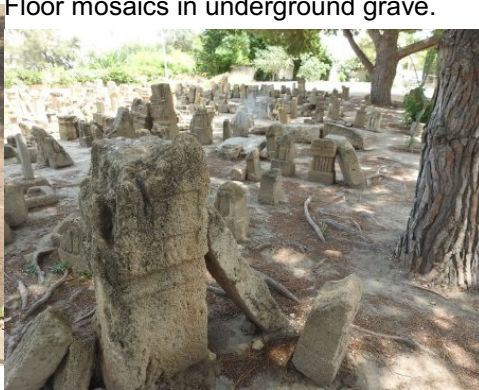
On our way to the Roman baths we passed through an ancient cemetery. There were numerous small boxes for the bodies of children sacrificed by fire to the Canaanite god Molech.

Interior of a cistern for water.

Viewing the aquaduct.



Floor mosaics in underground grave.



Caskets and grave stones of children.

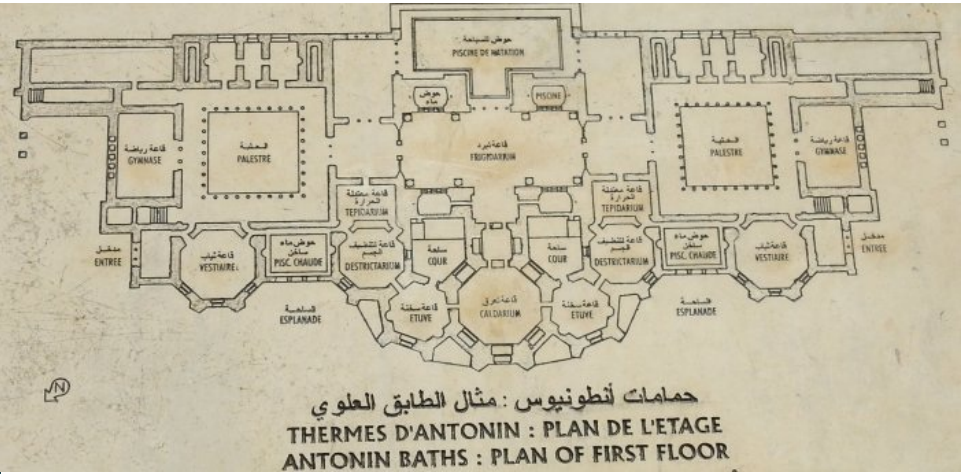
More Canaanite grave markers.



The Phoenicians carved a safe harbor into the shoreline at Carthage.



View of Phoenician harbor from bus window.



The Romans built a multi-level system of baths for the public.



On floor of baths.



Roman inscriptions and decorations.



Granite column imported from Egypt.



Water passageway.



Central column base for roof support.



Bath entrance display, image of Roman emperor Antoninus Pius.

Much important history happened in this Carthage area of northern Tunisia.

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