

**Academic Travel Itinerary  
Maltese Islands and Tunis  
Fall Semester 2002  
Co-Leaders: Professor Bava and Assistant Dean Starcher**

**MALTA**

<u>Mon.</u>	14.10.02	Depart Milan Linate Arrive Rome Fiumicino	AZ 2011	07:45 08:50
<u>Mon.</u>	14.10.02	Depart Rome Fiumicino Arrive Malta	AZ 886	10:20 11:40
<u>Mon.-Fri.</u>	14-18.10.02	Malta City Hotel- TBA		
<u>Sat.</u>	19.10.02	Depart Malta Arrive Rome Fiumicino	AZ 887	12:30 14:00

Visits to historic venues such as megalithic temples, palaces and cathedrals will provide a unique backdrop to an island found in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea. The first inhabitants of Malta are thought to have arrived from Sicily around the year 5,000 BC, to be followed by megalithic temple builders some one thousand years later- the same race who erected the Islands' unique megalithic temples between 3,600 BC and 2,500 BC.

Bronze Age settlers moved in when this civilization collapsed. The Phoenicians, on the other hand, found Malta's harbors ideal for their trading activities, and set up shop on the Islands around the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. Their descendants, the Carthaginians and Imperial Rome soon clashed, and in 218 BC, Rome took the Maltese Islands under its wing.

In 60 AD, St. Paul, who was shipwrecked off Malta, introduced Christianity to its inhabitants. Byzantine and Arab rule took the Islands through the first millennium, and in 1091, the Normans occupied them in the name of Christianity. The year 1530 witnessed the arrival of the noble Knights of St. John, who were to join the Maltese in enacting the most well-known event in Maltese history, the Great Siege of 1565, which saw them resist a massive Ottoman attack on the Islands.

Napoleon subsequently occupied Malta in 1798, but the brief French era came to an end when the Maltese, together with British naval forces, ousted his troops from the Islands. British rule in Malta, the vestiges of which are still very evident -Malta's second official language is English- came to an end in 1964, when the Islands gained their independence, subsequently becoming a Republic in 1974. The Islands' history and heritage inspire a variety of themes. One can go back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century by re-enacting the investiture of a Knight of St. John, or re-live moments from the Napoleonic era.

The Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Arabs, Normans, Knights of St. John, the French, and the British all left a historical legacy in the Maltese Islands. There is so much to discover.

## TUNIS

<u>Sat.</u>	19.10.02	Depart Rome Fiumicino AZ 864	21:15
		Arrive Tunis	21:30
		Check-In Hotel Club Venus	
<u>Sun.</u>	20.10.02	Excursion Tunis-Carthage-Sidi Bou Said- Muse du Bardo 1 journee incl. Guide/Entrees/Dejeuner dans un Restaurant typique Retour al Hotel Venus vers 17:30/LPD	
<u>Mon.-Wed.</u>	21-23.10.02	3 jours/2 nuits- Itineraire Standard: Excursion en 4 x 4 (6 pax/voiture) Sahara Explorer base PC 1 jour- Hammamet, El Jem, Sfax, Gabes, Matmata, Zaafrane 2 jour- Douz, Chott el Jerid, Nefta, Tozeur 3 jour- Tozeur, Oasis de montagnes: Chebika, Tamerza, Gafsa, Kairouan, Hammamet Return to Hotel Club Venus	
<u>Thu.</u>	24.10.02	Hotel Club Venus	
<u>Fri.</u>	25.10.02	Hotel Club Venus	
<u>Sat.</u>	26.10.02	Depart Tunis	AZ 863
		Arrive Rome Fiumicino	12:10
			14:30
<u>Sat.</u>	26.10.02	Depart Rome Fiumicino AZ 2080	16:00
		Arrive Milan Linate	17:05

Tunis, ancient city whose past is linked to an even more ancient civilization, hub of political affairs, seat of the Arab League, is not just a city in expansion with its new quarters girdled by access routes and served by modern transport facilities such as the Tunis Metro. Tunis has become a major financial center and an important international rendezvous, as reflected by its splendid conference and leisure facilities.

Tunis is an ever changing city, but the fever which animates its streets in no way affects its spirit. If you follow the Avenue Habib Bourguiba, an agreeable "promenade" lined with exotic plants, enlivened by the chirping of thousands of birds and scented by the florists' stalls, you can cross the city and get the feel of the spirit and soul of the place through its architecture: from the "novecento" baroque of apartment and office buildings to the rococo façade of the Municipal Theater and the splendidly arrogant futuristic creations of more modern architects. In the immediate vicinity of the city center you will find museums, exhibition halls and art galleries which reflect the intensity of cultural life in Tunis.

It was from Kairouan that Tarak Ibn Ziad's conquest of Spain started. With its medina and its ramparts painstakingly restored, its numerous mosques, zaouias (mausoleums), other monuments and sites, Kairouan is a town of obvious historical and religious interest. However, it is also a craft center and the current inhabitants have shown themselves to be worthy inheritors of the rich legacy left by the city's founders, preserving traditions and style which are

original and authentic. One of the best examples of this is the well-known Kairouan carpet which is famous all over the world.

The countryside near the Coral Coast abounds with little villages which are equally tempting for the traveler, because of their customs and traditions as well as their location. Most of them became prosperous after the important Andalusian immigration that occurred during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The coasts of Carthage are where the environment is truly held sacred. The forests of pine trees and mimosa form a natural setting for a style of architecture which respects nature in all its honesty. From the traces of Carthaginian culture at the Antoine hot springs, to the Roman villas at the amphitheater and the archaeological museum, the park extends from the hillside to the coastline, providing visitors with the opportunity to stroll through lush surroundings, and the spirit can absorb the perfumed scents of the ages.

You come across some strange and sometimes mysterious buildings in the Great South. These are the castles of the desert known as KSARS, which can be divided, according to where they are found, as plain ksars or mountain ksars. How they are built identifies them as being Arab or Berber ksars. In the Tunisian south, you don't have to travel far before you are right in the middle of the Sahara. The panorama spread out before you fills the lungs and the ears with an immensity which doesn't oppress or weigh you down, but somehow attracts you. In the vastness, the silence is absolute and the immensity of it all calls you.