

## ***Greetings from Algiers***

*It's Friday March 3 and we are sailing south across the Mediterranean for our next shore excursion in Algiers, Algeria.*

*We have been sailing since last Sunday (February 28) and have made stops in Valetta, Tunis and Cagliari with Algiers and Valencia to follow before the cruise ends in Barcelona.*

*Before sailing we spent three nights in Rome where we saw a number of the famous sites in the Eternal City—the Colosseum, the Forum, the Spanish Steps, many churches, and, of course, we tossed a coin into the Trevi Fountain to assure a return to Rome.*



*We boarded the Viking Sea at Civitavecchia (the port for Rome) on Sunday afternoon and had a full day at sea before arriving in Valetta, Malta on Tuesday morning.*

*We are traveling with Jay and Gord, friends from Massachusetts, so we have good companions for meals as well as on the shore visits.*



*While on the island of Malta, we saw the magnificent fortifications around the capital Valletta and took a three hour bus trip to other parts of the country where we saw the former capital (Mdina) as well as some of the beautiful coastline.*



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Mdina



*From Malta we sailed overnight to North Africa and the city of Tunis. Here we took another city tour by bus and visited the ancient Phoenician/Roman city of Carthage. In Tunis we were*



*able to stroll through the narrow streets of the Casbah and see some of the major civic buildings. We were also in the main public square at the time thousands of teachers were staging a protest!*



*Tunisia is 97% Muslim so we saw a lot of mosques, many with very ornate exteriors and one that was enormous—the third largest in the country. There were also some very pretty areas around one of the many harbors of Tunis and beautiful civic buildings.*



**Tunis**



**Ancient Carthage**



*Ancient Carthage is a huge archeological site that certainly deserves more than the 20 minutes we were able to spend there.*

*One final note on Tunis: our tour buses drove in convoys with police escort front*



*and rear and most of the cross streets were blocked by additional police and military personnel so that we didn't have to stop at every red light. Clearly the events of the recent past here have heightened the security precautions taken by the government.*

*From Tunis we sailed north again to the south end of the island of Sardinia. Although a part of Italy, Sardinia enjoys a good deal of autonomy and has its own language. We docked at the port of Cagliari and had some spectacular views of this hillside town. The main purpose of the stop, however, was to visit the Ruins of Barumini, a settlement dating back at least 3500 years. We were able to walk through the settlement and could clearly see the outline of the homes and civic buildings of this ancient society, which is believed to have come here from Phoenicia (The Lebanon). It was a fascinating tour which included a difficult walk through a large central tower, for those brave enough to try. The entire settlement was built from basalt rock that had been dragged here from a quarry about 4 miles away, making it a feat comparable to Stonehenge or even the pyramids. We also saw a distinct similarity in style with that of Scara Brae on Orkney.*



**Barumini**







## *Cagliari*

*Now (Friday) we have just docked in Algiers where we will shortly take a bus tour of the city. Once again we are told that we will have full police escort and, indeed, no-one is allowed off the ship unless on an organized Viking tour. In addition we are told that Algeria has been off the tourist map for decades so infrastructure could be a little less Western than most places we visit.*

*More later*

*Bob and Molly*