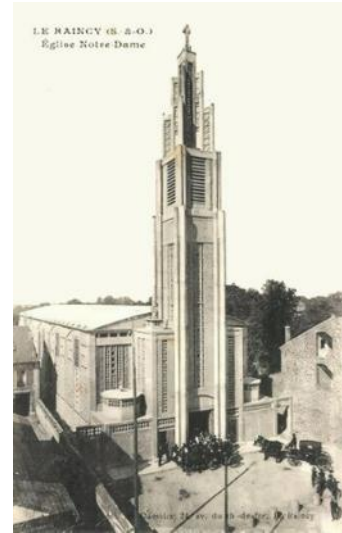


This year I had the opportunity to visit some new (to me) areas of France. The first, a short trip to Le Havre, has an interesting coincidence. Friends had said that St Joseph’s Church was particularly spectacular. As soon as I saw it, it looked familiar. I realized it was the same architect, Auguste Perret, and stained-glass artist, Marguerite Huré, as did Notre Dame du Raincy, whose centenary celebration I had attended in June. In the early 1900’s Le Raincy, located 10 miles east of Paris, had grown quite quickly to about 10,000 population and needed a proper parish church but there was not much budget available. The priest found the young architect who felt he could create the church, which had a very tight site, using new experimental (in 1922) precast panel technology and in 13 months the church was built. In addition to affordability, it also had the advantages of speed of construction, and lightweight supporting members on a boggy site. Perret envisioned vertical stained-glass panels and enlisted Huré who had opened her own atelier in 1920.



So, imagine my surprise when I turned the corner in Le Havre and saw St Joseph’s, larger and grander of course.

The center of Le Havre was completely destroyed by bombing in September of 1944, so at the end of the war, the city was faced with the exact same challenges – the need for speed and economy in



rebuilding. They turned to Perret, now twenty years further into his career with other notable successes including Théâtre des Champs Élysées in Paris. The result after twenty years of rebuilding under the direction of Perret’s firm of 100 architects, is a very functional, harmonious core to the city. I enjoyed walking it as well as admiring

other more recent installations by notable architects including Oscar Niemeyer's Le Volcan cultural center and Jean Nouvel's sports complex at the docks.



There are also a variety of sculptures and in 2005 UNESCO named the city a World Heritage Site.

Back to the church. Although Notre Dame du Raincy has a significant tower, Perret envisioned the Le Havre tower as a beacon for the city and it dominates the skyline as a "lighthouse in the heart of the city".



In the intervening years, Huré had introduced abstraction into French religious glass making, especially using color in place of images. She was Perret's choice to implement his vision which includes 12,768 mouth-blown colored glass panels in seven colors. The design concentrates most of the light in the tower, signifying spiritual elevation, and the panels are in 3 symbolic shapes of triangle (Holy Trinity), square (Earth) and vertical rectangle (man's aspiration to the spiritual). As with Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, certain colors predominate on each façade, each with its own symbolism. (Thank you to Manu's Normandie Lovers blog for this detailed information.) I also found the original cinema-style seating fascinating.

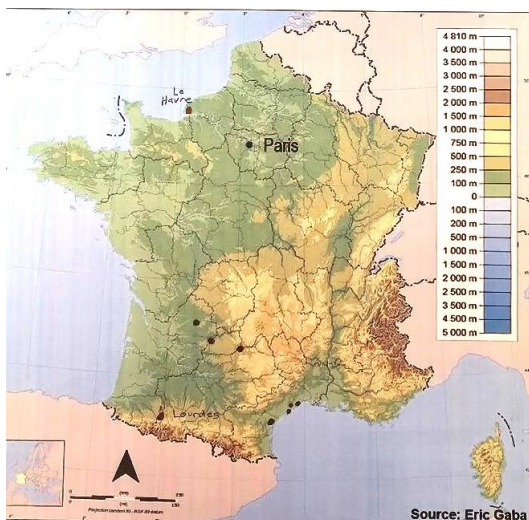


The cornerstone was laid in 1951 and the church was completed in 1957. Unfortunately, Perret, who had become a teacher and mentor to the Swiss architect Le Corbusier, died in 1954 and so never saw it completed.

By the 1960's deterioration was noticed in Notre Dame du Raincy due to an excess of lime and water and I could see some evidence of the same in some of the Le Havre buildings. Renovation has proceeded since the 1990's in Le Raincy as fund raising has permitted. The church receives a lot of visitors, especially from Japan, where outside Tokyo there is a smaller version built on the campus of the Tokyo Women's Christian University by another architect.



Although my visits did not occur chronologically from north to south, it seems easiest to follow that geography in this story, although the Roman history began in the south and moved north.



In October four of us embarked on a ten-day road trip in the Dordogne in south-central France. It is an area with beautiful scenery, especially river valleys, hilltop castles, and several towns designated by France as "Plus Beaux Villages". In addition to its fame for duck and foie gras, it is also laced with cliffs, pre-historic caves and famous gardens. This tourism map of the Vallée de la Dordogne gives a taste of the attractions available.

We based for three nights each in a different subregion. The most northern of these was Périgueux where we encountered both Roman history at Vesunna and Troglodyte and early Christian history in Brantôme. Périgueux was founded about 16 BC in the province of Aquitaine and it became the capital of what is, roughly, today's Dordogne. The office of tourism produces an excellent map with three self-guided walks of the city.



The Vesunna Museum, opened in 2003, is built on the remains of a richly decorated Roman home discovered in 1959. The museum includes a scale model of the town which at its peak in the second century AD already had an amphitheater to seat 18,000 (financed by the Pompeii family), the temple, the Forum and public baths. The tower in the adjacent park was dedicated to Vesunna, the protective mother of antique Périgueux. By the 4<sup>th</sup>



century an economic downturn required reducing the central city size. Outer areas were dismantled to build a

wall, part of which remains today facing the museum. It is about this time that Christianity was spreading throughout the region.



In the house there was a floor heating system as well as baskets for carrying heat to other rooms depending on activities. There would have been private baths in a house such as this, but public thermal baths in the town were open to all social classes and served not only for bathing and relaxing but for meetings and discussion, much as the hammam does today. Remnants of



the murals on the walls remain. The dining room would have looked like this and dates the house to about 40 AD.

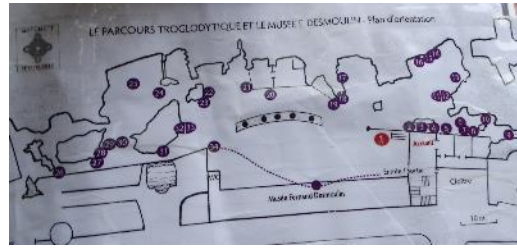
The Cathedral of Saint Front (the first Bishop of Périgueux in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> C) is a highlight. Its architecture is highly unusual, with five domes characteristic of a Byzantine style cathedral, laid out in the form of a Greek Cross. It is reminiscent of Saint Mark's in Venice. The first chapel was on this site in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> C and an abbey was consecrated in 1047. Burned in 1120, the Roman cloister on the south side and part of the church as well as the 12<sup>th</sup> C bell tower remain. Renovated from 1852 to 1895 by the architect Paul Abadie (who later designed the Sacré Coeur in Paris), the chandeliers he designed hung in Notre Dame in Paris in 1853 in honor of Napoleon III's wedding. The cathedral is an important stage on the routes of Santiago de Compostela.



In the 9<sup>th</sup> C in nearby Brantôme (nicknamed The Venice of the Périgord) Benedictine monks settled in Troglodyte caves.



The monks created bas-reliefs of their religious stories. The Last Judgement and Crucifixion are still visible.



They gradually expanded outward until the grand abbey was created.



Today it houses the Mairie, the library and clubs and associations. In summer four rooms are open to visitors, but we were at least able to tour the caves. The bell tower dates from the 11<sup>th</sup> C and parts of the cloister escaped the 19<sup>th</sup> C restoration.

The central town is an island in the river Dronne. Jean-Luc “Noe” and his son Luc-Arnaud “Nano” provide a 40-minute witty history lesson aboard his self-built electric-powered “La Perle Noire”. We viewed beach and picnic areas, tombs and more caves. The river was diverted to create the island town.



Things were mostly closed on a Tuesday after tourist season, but we found a quirky English tea-room for lunch. Sanglier boar sausages are a delicacy in this area.



Rain was predicted for our entire trip and was, indeed, persistent for much of the driving, limiting our viewing of the scenery! Fortunately, most of our intended touring locations were indoors. Sarlat-la-Canéda was the exception, but I had enough rain-free walking time to capture the flavor of it. The town developed around a Benedictine abbey first mentioned in 1081. As modern history largely passed it by, it is one of the best-preserved towns of the 14<sup>th</sup> C in France.



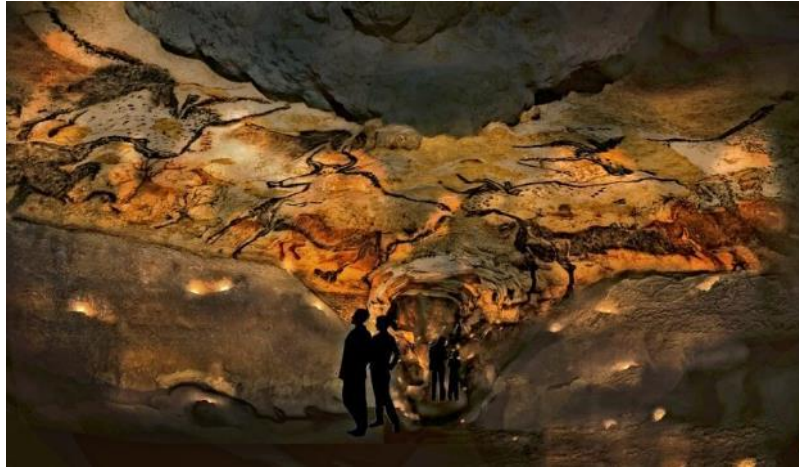
André Malraux, Minister of Culture from 1960 to 1969 was key to this and many other historic preservations. The Medieval center is almost completely car-free and our rented house was at its perimeter next to a lovely tower. I realized that a contributing factor to the



atmosphere of the whole area is the warm, yellowish stone from which most things are built.

The first of our Sarlat-area visits was Lascaux IV, which is a meticulous reproduction of the caves. I learned a lot from our English-speaking tour guide. For example, I didn't realize that Cro-Magnon humans (40,000 to 20,000 years ago) were larger than us, but with the same general physique. They were hunter-gatherers who followed their prey. Lascaux was discovered by four boys in 1940 and was open to the public from 1948 to 1962 when it was

realized the damage occurring from human intrusion. The paintings are found in multiple layers and archeologists cannot pin a period to them. In that era, winter lasted about nine months, and temperatures were minus 20 C. They did not live in the caves but rather in protected areas of overhangs. The floor was at an elevation to only permit crawling. Given this, the painters must have been similar to Michaelangelo on his back creating the Sistine Chapel.



There is no photography during the tour, so my photos are from the museum after the tour.

Reindeer was the staple of life for food, fat for light and skins for warmth.

However, it was primarily horses that were painted. The paintings had perspective, were anatomically correct (hooves)

and almost always were painted headed towards the exit.



These two bison were easy to recognize and among the hundreds of figures there is only one human and it has a bird head.



After lunch in Montigue we observed the dwellings built into and onto the cliffs of Les Eyzies.



The National Museum of Pre-History is located there and near its entry, overlooking the village, is the statue L'Homme Primitif by Paul Dardé inaugurated in 1931.



We also visited the Cabanes de Breuil, a village of mostly round stone houses. Their origin is unknown, but the Benedictines of Sarlot used them as rural habitations up to the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> C and they then served as artisan workshops in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> C.



They now are part of the the owners' 30-acre farm where they grow their vegetables and have a wide variety of poultry



and sheep.

There is one hut that is set up as a demonstration of the construction and also the ruin of arches of perhaps Roman times.



Our next Sarlat area visit was the Milandes which was Josephine 1968. In the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, the de Caumont, built the chateau we for his wife. He created terraces and gardens leading down to the Dordogne river.

Chateau and Gardens of Les Baker's home from 1937 to Lord of Castelnaud, Francois see as a wedding present

The castle was designed in French Renaissance style, all towers and turrets, it's very romantic. The Périgord had been ravaged because of the fighting against the English in the 100 years' war, and the family abandoned their castle fortress in Castlenaud across the river.



The current gardens were created in the early 20<sup>th</sup> C and joined many others in the Périgord region registered as historic monuments. Alas, our schedule did not permit a visit to any others.



An unusual feature of a visit to Les Milandes is the collection of raptors and the 45-minute demonstration that is provided. On the day of our visit, all four falconers were women! I was surprised to see owls among the trained birds.



The exhibit in fourteen rooms follows Josephine's life from childhood through superstar performer, WW II resistance fighter, campaigner against racism, and motherhood.



From 1953, she and her husband Jo Bouillon adopted twelve children of ten nationalities and multiple races. During her years at Les Milandes she developed the village into a tourist complex with a hotel, restaurant, cabaret and wax museum providing extensive employment. She also invested in running water and electricity for the area. Later in life she tragically could no longer support the property and lost it to her creditors in 1968. The museum is a homage to Baker.

Fortunately, in 2001 Henri and Claude de la Barre and their daughter Angélique acquired the ruined property and have painstakingly restored it. Some before and after photos show what has been accomplished.



Unfortunately, no photography is permitted inside so here are stock photos of some of the exhibits.



The chapel was recently opened in 2022.

Josephine Baker entered France's Hall of Fame, The Pantheon, on November 30, 2021, only the fifth woman so honored.

Figeac, another medieval town, and our furthest east base in this part of France, is in the department of the Lot (yet another river) but located on the C el e river. From here we would visit the cave at Peche Merle and the hillside town and Basilica of Rocamadour. I previously wrote about nearby Cahors, also in the Lot, in 2018.

The architecture is different, with sandstone figuring prominently. As it was market day, we spent the morning exploring all the goodies from food to hard goods, then had a terrific lunch at Le Boutaric off Place Champollion.



The market spreads throughout almost the entire old center of town. And there is a circulating navette.



We toured the Champollion Museum located in the Egyptologist's birth home.

Officially named Writings of the World, the exhibits trace the history of written language beginning 5300 years ago. With a strong focus on the deciphering of Egyptian hieroglyphics,

there are also exhibits tracing the history of written language in China, the Indian subcontinent and Africa.



Adjacent to the museum there is a monumental reproduction of the Rosetta Stone carved in black granite from Zimbabwe by the American conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth, inaugurated in April 1991.



Peche Merle cave is probably older than Lascaux, carbon dating verifies paintings at least 29,000 years ago.

No photography of course, but at least you are in the original environment. This display shows the variety of animals depicted, which includes horses, bison, ibex, many types of deer, a few mammoths and aurochs (a prehistoric cow), consumed (reindeer), and which lived in the caves.

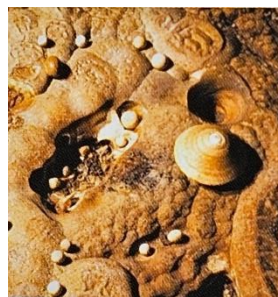
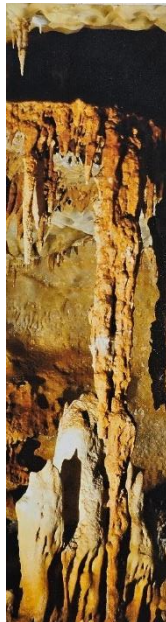
As at Lascaux, many areas had been painted over multiple times. Highlights of human hands and a footprint (size 34, probably a child) in the floor keep reminding one of the humanity involved!



of stalagmite formations as

Some of the earliest used a spitting technique. low distance between the

Three teenagers discovered what is now known as the prehistoric entrance had been sealed during the last ice age 12,000 years ago, but bones found of many animal types show that it had been previously accessible. For preservation the tour



The temperature in the cave is 12.5 C and there are areas well as a deposit of "pearls".

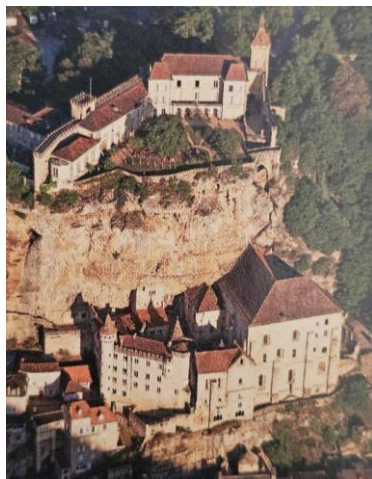
paintings are of red dots and As at Lascaux there was a floor and the painted areas.

the cave in 1922 having crawled 130 meters into Hall of Paintings. Visits began in 1926. The

time is limited to 43 minutes, French is the language of the tour and groups are kept small. However, there is an English translation available of the entire tour. The spotted horses are perhaps the most famous of Pech Merle's paintings and include six (male) handprints. Elsewhere there is a handprint believed to be female. The charcoal used in this woolly mammoth drawing permitted the carbon dating.



Rocamadour is a small cliff-top village with a complex of religious buildings, accessed by pilgrims via the 216-step Grand Escalier staircase. It includes the Chapel Notre-Dame, with its Black Madonna statue, and the



Romanesque-Gothic Basilica of St-Sauveur. It is known for its local cheese and is also a stop on the Route de Compostela. Here is a map showing the several Routes de Compostela in France.



Fortunately, you can park at an upper parking area and take a funicular and elevator down and up to the church and Medieval town! The chateau at the top-most level is only open for special events.



We arrived just before the conclusion of mass and so were able to enjoy the music of the final hymn as well as the carillon that followed.

Continuing south, one of my trips included visiting towns between Montpellier and Perpignan, neither of which I have yet visited. I was based in Pézenas, where a friend is living. Along the coast, Sète, once an island, owes its existence to King Louis XIV and Paul Requet's canal built to link the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, now known as the Canal du Midi. With never a wall or a palace, Sète was created as a seaport in 1666.



Today it is a passenger and cargo port with multiple waterways supporting the different uses as can be seen in the views from the top of Mont St-Clair.

Adjacent towns include Frontignan famous for Muscat wine, Balarus-les-Bains famous for thermal baths since ancient times, and Bouzigues and Loysian on the Etang de Thau lagoon, a major center for shellfish farms. Other basins support cruise ships and pleasure boats.



The cross on top of the hill, erected in 1932, is visible for miles around. The area had been a haven for pirates since the Middle Ages as well as a place for prayer. There is also an almost hidden memorial to Algerian teachers who devoted their lives to France from 1820 to 1962.

From friends who had raved about Sète, I had pictured a quaint fishing village, not a thriving multifaceted port city! Having said that, returning for a longer visit, delving into the various subareas will make sense. There is also 12 km of sandy beach fronting the Med. As I love being on the water, I was delighted to see that there was a navette for a 40-minute boat ride to the

town of Meze, from which we could get a bus back to Pézenas. We had come by train from Agde.



The first occupation of the Pézenas area dates back to the 7<sup>th</sup> C BC. A large town) Agde was town. In Pline boasted about the quality of Piscenae has never been found. until 990 AD when the Viscount of to his daughter, but it took another city walls emerged. The area where the drapers (cloth sellers) of of Pisa, Genoa, Mallorca and Catalonia. From the start of the 16<sup>th</sup> C, due to the influence of the Montmorency family, Pézenas became the political capital of Languedoc with the Parliament seated in Toulouse. Their chateau was located on the top of the hill and was destroyed following Montmorency's revolt against the King. Today's walls and entry were rebuilt in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> C.



In the middle 1600's the town welcomed Molière, exiled from the court, who produced many of his plays there. So, it is no wonder that when walking the town many of the most notable buildings date from the 17<sup>th</sup> C.

This must be one of the best documented, tourist-welcoming towns I have visited in France. The tourist office has extensive information including a self-guided walking tour, coordinated signage and promotion of the huge number of galleries, artisan workshops, and writers in residence. There are at least 38 local associations enabling participation in everything from martial arts to Middle Ages story telling. And since 2013 the footprints of artists, actors, and singers performing at the Pézenas Theater or during various festivals can be seen along the main street of Cours Jean Jaures, the location of the original city moat.

I found a more contemporary native son of Pézenas, Louis Paulhan (1883-1963), absolutely fascinating. There is an extensive series of panels along Cours Jean Jaures detailing his ambitions, exploits and accomplishments, especially as an aviation pioneer. These included mechanic on the experimental dirigible City of Paris for 47 flights in 1907 and winning the race for a flight from



Manchester to London with a maximum of two stops – he made only one - in 1910 in his biplane made of wood and paper.



A series of sculptures, Les Lapidaires de Boby, in honor of songwriter and comedian Bobby Lapointe are spread around town and sponsored by the Center of Local Contemporary Art.

There are many features on the facades of the buildings. Half-reliefs, sculpted of human or other faces, fleur-de-lys indicating an aristocrat's home, and the Star of David.



Although King Charles VI had expelled Jews from France in 1394, they remained a vital part of the Pézenas community. This was the entry to the Jewish Quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> C.

Ironwork in the form of door knockers, balconies and railings appeared from the late 17<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> C.





This statue of Saint Roch dates from 1511.

This building in Pézenas (l'hotel de Boudoul) is most often used to describe the elements that were typical of the buildings of this era.



The ground floor would often have large double doors accessing artisan workshop and commerce and a second actual "front door" which accessed the stair to the upper floors and on which were located the decorative elements. Many buildings had a courtyard behind that might be overlooked by exterior "galleries".

Back to the street façade. Both the rez-de chaussée (ground floor) and an upper partial floor (attic) below the roof (which often had a decorative and functional overhang) had small openings called batardes.

Some interior ceilings are of all wood, a type I have not seen before except in grand palaces. Called "a la francaise" this is the type ceiling in the main living area of a friend's apartment in a building built by the successors to the Knights Templar in 1511.

Today's Collegiale de Saint Jean was originally the Knights Templar chapel which was then granted by the Knights Hospitaliers around 1312 to replace the parish church that was located outside the city fortifications. In 1733 the tower collapsed so the reconstruction, in a Tuscan style, dates from 1746.



I am such a street art fan that it was notably absent, except for one small area.



These must be the most unpretentious entry doors to a luxury B & B, Hotel de Vigniamont, I have ever seen!



Not everything is from the 16<sup>th</sup> C however. This tiny art deco building houses the local pétanque club.



A notable feature as we traveled through this area were the beautiful street trees, whose bark seems a somewhat paler version of our plane trees in Paris.



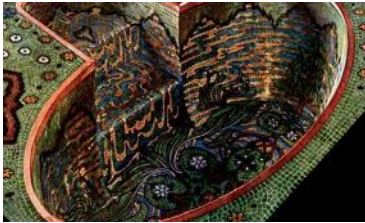
As Agde is the closest train station, that is where I arrived from Paris. We took the opportunity to tour Chateau Laurens which had recently opened in June after a 15 million Euro 10-year restoration financed by all levels of government. This is the largest restoration project undertaken in the region of Occitania and can only be visited by a guided tour.

The chateau was built from 1898 to 1900 by the collector Emmanuel Laurens on a 12-hectare family-owned parcel on Belle Isle where the Herault river meets the Canal du Midi. He had inherited a large sum which he invested in this show place as well as in his travels from which individual rooms are themed such as the Moorish entry, Japanese hall, and Italian patio.





He fully embraced the Art Nouveau style of the period in his choice of architect, artists and artisans. The bathroom is one example of the lavish décor as is his office.



The laboratory is reminiscent of some Gaudi shapes.

Some of the original furnishings have also been re-acquired.



Having consumed all his wealth, he sold the property at viager in 1938 but didn't die until

1959. The property fell into ruins and was acquired by the city in 1994.



The music lounge was built for his opera-singing wife with a dome to highlight her voice. It was in a condition beyond

restoration and so the team of Ida Tursic and Wilfred Mille were selected to create a new version.



The furthest south I wandered on this part of my travels was to the city of Narbonne. Here we have the first Roman colony outside Italy, Narbo Martius, settled by 2000 Italian citizens in 118 BC. It was on the Via Domitia from Italy which continued onwards connecting to Spain. Remnants of Via Domitia were discovered in 1997 adjacent to the Cathedral and Palace Museum.

In the Narbo Via museum, opened in 2020, a video illustrates how a waterway was dug through the marshy delta of the Aude River to access the area for commerce.



A map recreates what a typical Roman city looked like while other exhibits illustrate daily life and ceremonies as well as death rites. There are some beautiful typical wall and floor decorations from a wealthy Roman urban home of the era.



Two related sites include

l'Horreum, a 1<sup>st</sup> C BC underground Roman granary in the center of town, and Amphoralis which overlooks pottery workshops from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> C AD further north close to the Canal du Midi.



After absorbing all the exhibits, I felt as immersed in history as on my visits to the Terra Cotta warriors in China and Jerash and the mosaics of Madaba in Jordan.



However, the principal impetus for the museum is its display of over 1000 funerary stone building blocks dating back to this era. The lapidary wall separates the public galleries from the private restoration spaces but allows glimpses into that work.

Mausoleums were built at the entries to Roman cities from the 1<sup>st</sup> C BC to 2<sup>nd</sup> C AD. Subsequently, fragments of them were used to build successive city walls, houses and churches. When the ramparts were demolished from 1868 to 1884 the most beautiful blocks were stored in Our Lady of Lamourguiera church.

The Narbonne of today centers around the Canal de la Robine connecting the Mediterranean to the Canal du Midi for boaters enjoying leisurely river travel in France. One morning I watched



some boats navigate the locks leading onwards to a short segment of the river Aude and then a short connecting canal to Canal du Midi.

We stayed on a boat,



The Fellowship, which was fun for a couple of nights.

The Middle Ages Archbishop complex is considered the second most important in France after Avignon. The Saint Just and Saint Peter Cathedral began



construction in 1272 of northern Gothic style. Its many buttresses and gargoyles (doing their job during a heavy rainstorm) bely the relatively small size of the



interior because it was never completed.

We were fortunate to be there on the very lively market day (Thursday and Sunday mornings). Of the several bridges crossing the canal, you are not that conscious that you are on the Pont du Marchands because it is inhabited on both sides. It once had seven arches and was on the path of the Via Domita.



Even if you are not there on a market day, Les Halles, typical of French covered markets, contains a wealth of ingredients as well as a wide variety of dining options which stay open until 3 pm after the vendors close between 1 and 2 pm.



We took the tourist train to get an overview of the city from which we saw some impressive



architecture including this façade on the House of the Three Nurturers. The city also makes it very easy to get around with two free circulating bus routes one of which passes Narbo Via on its way to

the beach.

Further Roman routes departed from here, the Via Aquitania to the Atlantic via Toulouse and Bordeaux as well as to the final destination in this story, Lourdes.

My daughter Leanne visited in September, timed to enjoy Journées de Patrimoine events in Paris. Then we went to Lourdes, a pilgrimage for her, and by taking an early train down and a late train back (5 hours TGV from Paris) we were able in two nights to fulfill both sacred and touristic objectives. Lourdes receives ~ 5 million visitors per year and its ~189 hotels are second in number in France only to Paris!



This particular week poignantly focused on many cancer pilgrims.

With only 15,000 inhabitants today, it existed in prehistory, and there was a Roman road to it from Narbonne. The chateau fort that overlooks Lourdes dates from Roman times, however what remains today date from the 11<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> C (foundations), 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> C (the tower) and 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> C. It houses a museum about the art and folk traditions of the Pyrenees.



Muslims briefly controlled the area in the mid-8<sup>th</sup> C.

During the 100 Years' Wars it was periodically held by the English, and in 1858 it was a quiet modest town with a population of 4000.

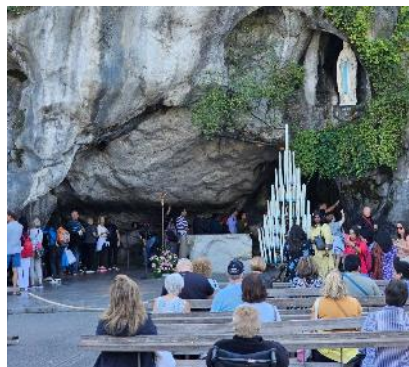
Then 14-year-old shepherdess Bernadette Soubirous had multiple visions of the Virgin Mary in and near the Grotto of

Massabielle, at that time remote from the town.

Bernadette's story of church denial, persecution and ultimate canonization is well documented. By 1859 after a total of 18 sightings, thousands of pilgrims were visiting and the Statue of Our Lady of Lourdes was erected in 1864 after Pope Pius IX declared the visions authentic and veneration of Mary as Our Lady of Lourdes was authorized.



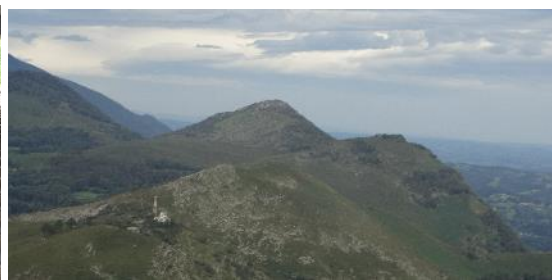
The underground spring was declared to have miraculous qualities.



We stayed about 200 meters from the entrance to the Sanctuary and its campus which facilitated participation in religious rites at various times of the day and evening, according to which language was on offer.

The river Gave de Pau bisects the town, three nearby hills are at 3000' elevation and these are overlooked by peaks of about 10,000'.

So, we took the funicular up to Pic du Jer with its magnificent views. It is the jumping off point for the numerous cycling and hiking trails in the region. I realized that I had never really been in the Pyrenees before!



We also visited Petit Lourdes, a model of the village with its water wheel mills and where Bernadette lived as it existed in 1858.



Lourdes has some beautiful architecture dating from various periods of its modern history.



We discovered that the musical, Bernadette de Lourdes, following her life story (created from original documents), was playing only four performances in Paris just before Leanne left. We were able to attend the final performance at Le Dome at Porte de Versailles. It



was very moving when the audience of 4000 people waved their cellphone flashlights in time with the staging of Lourdes' nightly candlelight procession.

