



Bringing Carthage Home: the Excavations of Nathan Davis, 1856-1859 (University of British Columbia Studies in the Ancient World)

J. Freed

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by Joann Freed

Adorning the north-west staircase in the British Museum is a group of brightly coloured figured mosaic pavements. Most were excavated for the Museum between 1856 and 1859 at Carthage, in what is now Tunisia, by a dilettante called Nathan Davis; the work was funded by the Foreign Office of the British Government. This book recounts for the first time the extraordinary story behind this pioneering enterprise, and the political and cultural rivalry between representatives of the colonial powers as they asserted their rights to explore the buried remains of one of the ancient world's greatest cities. The account is based on unpublished documentary material as well as what can be gleaned from published sources, including Davis' own discursive and chaotic account of his work, *Carthage and her Remains* (1861) - a book published exactly 150 years ago this year. *Bringing Carthage Home* places Davis's discoveries both in their wider archaeological context and in their topographical setting, locating for the first time on the ground the places where Davis sunk his trenches. The result is an important and original contribution to our knowledge of the history of archaeology, the topography of Carthage, the study of North African mosaics and the story of social and political intrigue in mid-nineteenth-century Tunisia.

Joann Freed is Professor Emerita in the Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo (Ontario), Canada, where she taught between 1989 and her retirement in 2009. Apart from the early archaeology of Carthage, her main research interests concern Roman pottery and amphorae and the evidence they provide for economics and trade in the ancient Mediterranean. The author of many papers on these subjects in books, conference proceedings and academic journals, she has also co-written (with A. M. McCann), *Deep Water Archaeology: a Late Roman Ship from Carthage and an Ancient Roman Trade Route near Skerki Bank off Northwest Sicily* (1994), and (with S. Stevens and M. Garrison), *A Cemetery of Vandalic Date at Carthage* (2009).

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