

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | TUESDAY, 14 MAY 2013

Ancient Delphi

We awoke this morning to the gorgeous view outside our van. Camping Delphi is certainly in an amazing spot. We both snapped merrily on our cameras as the light changed on the landscape below. After a quick breakfast we hurried off to visit the site of ancient Delphi.

The guide book says "...of all the archaeological sites in Greece, it is the one with the most potent spirit of place". It certainly has a wonderful location. It is built on the slopes of Mt Parnossos, with almost perpendicular rock walls behind and overlooking a valley that seemed to slope on for miles. The valley below was covered in cypress and olive trees and ended in a vista of steep sided mountains. One very interesting fact is that no modern "contraptions" such as power lines are allowed to impinge on the view. Well done to the Greeks. This might have something to do with Delphi being World Heritage listed.

If we read it correctly, the main aim of the place was to worship Apollo. The remains of the 4th century BC temple, is one of the dominating structures. The pillars that remain provide a great idea of its huge size. It is easy to see how the base was built with huge, beautifully hewn blocks of rock one on top of the other. Looking at little intricate things, like how the rock was shaped to fit into some niche, is to me, one



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Life's History Lesson

One of the things that I think about when strolling through ancient ruins is how grand these places must have been in their prime. I can only imagine how much power and wealth were involved in building these marvelous monuments. But at what cost?

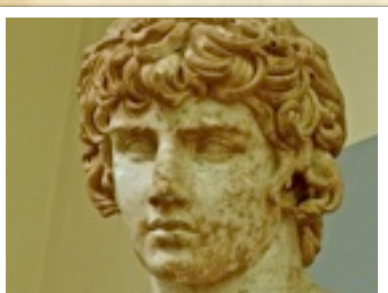
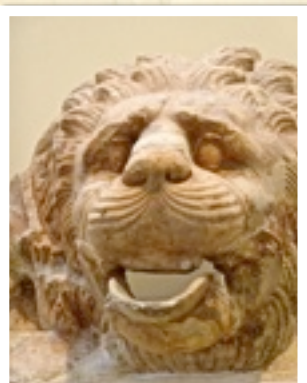
How difficult must it have been to haul so many thousands of tons of rocks up to these dramatic heights to construct a dream. Or build your dream over the top of an earlier one.

Over time dreams fade or are destroyed and those imposing structures become a jumble of rocks strewn higgledy piggledy all over the place. We imagine the grandeur of ancient buildings and the culture of the people who built their dream, but it is also interesting to see that many ruins cannot be reconstructed because the local population has recycled many of the components of the structures.

Locals have their dreams too.



MUSEUM SNAPS



Driving from Delphi along the Corinthian Gulf was very enjoyable.

of the most interesting things about sites like this.

The weather was playing its part and we enjoyed the walk up to the top to observe the semi circular theatre from above. We could just imagine watching performances from one of the seats. Apparently plays are still performed here every four years. We continued on up to the stadium - an athletics track surrounded by rows of stone seating. Unfortunately, due to the danger from falling rocks we could not check out the etched stone starting blocks at the end of the field. One very loud Italian man was giving the attendant a bad time about not being able to enter the area.

Before going to the museum, we decided to go back to the van for a quick relax and a bit of sustenance - a great advantage of traveling via motorhome.

We spent an enjoyable hour in the museum being amazed by the statues and small items that have been saved for the world to admire. One of Heather's favorites was a small metal dog's head - it looked very much like a whippet. It is surprising that so much of the statutory survives.

By just after midday, we were off to our next destination - the Peloponnese.

Emperor Nero started a canal in AD 67 and it was finally finished by a French company in the mid 19th century. This canal cuts the Peloponnese off from the mainland - it is now considered to be an island.

We aimed to spend our last few days in Greece here.

You might notice that we were not intending to visit Athens. We don't really like huge cities and we felt we had seen enough historic sites similar to the Acropolis.

The road from Delphi to the north coast of the Peloponnese hugged the coast line and proved to be a very enjoyable trip. From our cliff side position we could see little villages nestled in the many coves. We wanted to stop and wander around at least one of them, but locating the road leading in to them proved difficult.

Eventually we crossed over the strait separating the mainland and the Peloponnese. The bridge was huge and we continued on the toll road on the other side to speed our progress a little. Tolls here in Greece are so darn expensive and it is hard to get off them when you want to.

Anyway we ended up at one of the spots picked out by Patricia. It was interesting because we did not know what we were heading towards. We just entered the co-ordinates and got delivered to this lovely isolated spot on the foreshore. We passed through lots of little side alleys and narrow streets to get here. Our prime waterfront "site" has a water tap (and public shower to wash off the salt water). We even have a convenient rubbish skip next to us. Well done Patricia.

At 7 pm we decided to go for a bike ride - something we have not done for ages. Young mothers with prams strolling along, 2 young boys playing on the water's edge unsupervised, a monk and a nun (in black) walking and chatting, 3 young macho men having a race on their hotted up 50cc scooters, someone singing along with loud music, dogs barking and people sitting on their balconies peering at two foreign "dorks on storks" riding by.

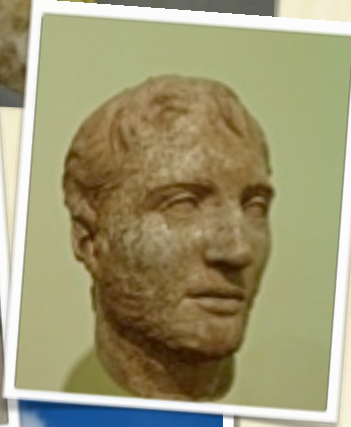
There were giggles as we passed.

Shorts are not the fashion here in Greek seaside villages. Did we care?





PHOTOS





CAMP DELPHI

THE VIEW FROM OUR MOTORHOME TO THE VALLEY BELOW WITH THE VILLAGE IN THE FOREGROUND, THE SEA AND MOUNTAINS IN THE BACKGROUND AND THE THOUSANDS OF OLIVE TREES IN BETWEEN WOULD RATE AS ONE OF THE BEST WE HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED. WE KEPT LOOKING AT IT TILL THE SUN WENT DOWN AND OPENED THE BLINDS AS SOON AS THE SUN CAME UP.



REGROWTH

I MARVEL HOW QUICKLY NATURE CONSUMES OLD RUINS. WEEDS AND SHRUBS AND TREES SEEM TO SPROUT IN THE SMALLEST OF CRACKS IN THE HARDEST OF ROCK.

IT MAKES ME WONDER HOW RAPIDLY OUR CURRENT FLIMSY BUILDINGS WOULD DETERIORATE.

FREE CAMPING

ON ONE SIDE OF US IS THE BEACH. WE CAN HEAR THE WAVES LAPPING ON THE SANDY SHORE. THE VIEW ACROSS THE CORINTHIAN GULF TO THE OTHER SIDE IS ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL. BEACH HOUSES ARE ON THE OTHER SIDE. I WONDER HOW MUCH PEOPLE PAY TO STAY IN ONE OF THESE HOUSES?

