

## **Syracuse's Archeological Park – April 25, 2018 – Syracuse, Sicily, Italy**

By Tom Allin

Yesterday we checked into our hotel in Syracuse, unloaded the 4Runner to make room for cousins Anna and Edmund, drove to the Catania airport to pickup Anna and Edmund and then back to our hotel in Syracuse.

Oops, forgot on our way out of Noto on our way to Syracuse we stopped in Vendicare Nature Reserve for about an hour and a half of birding. This reserve has several lagoons, a wooded area, and a beach on the sea to walk about.



The interior of our hotel was much better than the exterior. The breakfast buffet was one of the best we have come across in our Italian travels – fresh eggs and one large cup of coffee after another.





I have to give credit to the Archeological Park. The park is a short walk from the street but first you have to cross the street, walk by all the tourist traps to buy your entrance ticket, and then back by all the tourist traps to the park entrance.



Two horticulturists – Nancy and Edmund -- inspecting a tree.





We made it into the park. The photograph shows Nancy, our guide, and Anna walking towards the 23m high grotto. In the background is the rock quarry used by Greeks, Romans, Spaniards and everyone else whom at one time or another ruled the city.



This is the grotto and is named Ear of Dionysius. You ask, "Why Ear of Dionysius"? Legend has it that after Dionysius conquered Syracuse he imprisoned about 7,000 citizens in this grotto. There was a small opening at the top of the grotto where Dionysius was supposed to have been able to listen to the prisoners. Voices are easily heard due to the almost perfect acoustics produced within the grotto. I will add that every teenager visiting the grotto has to yell out to test the acoustics.









Another view of the rock quarry.



This is a photograph of the Greek Theater. The theater was cut out of the rock in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and sat 15,000 people. When we visited the original rock theater was being transformed into a modern outdoor Greek Theater for Syracuse's summer festival.





If there be rock, there be burial sites or at least that is what I am beginning to think. The necropolis burial site cut directly into the rock to produce the burial chambers.



You won't see Nancy chiseling out a burial chamber for me when I am gone. I told her to just fry me up until I am ash.





A portion of the Roman amphitheater where the gladiators of old played.



We laughed about never being lost in Syracuse. The tall steeple is a church across the street from our hotel and you can see the steeple from almost anywhere in Syracuse.

