

Wednesday the 7th of July 2009

This day we moved further on with the train to Bari. From there we planned to continue to Matera.



Here we are on the train from Pescara to Bari



Here we are sitting, waiting for the train to Matera

It was a bit difficult to find where the train to Matera departed from, because there were many local lines going from Bari and they were run by different companies. We asked around and were at last sent to another building in the station area. Here Kjell in the confusion asked for 2 tickets to Bari. The lady in the window looked a bit bewildered 🤔 (we were of course in Bari) and sent him to the next window. There we could buy soda and chocolate. She certainly wanted to get rid of this senile old man.



The train to Matera is driven by a private company, Ferrovie Appulo Lucano. It went about once an hour and the duration was about 1½ hour from Bari to Matera.



The were a lot of olive trees along the track



Typical landscape in this area



When Kjell was about to lift the suitcases up on the shelf, the nail stuch in the suitcase an he almost tore off the whole nail and the blood gushed.



Here we are at Altamura. It later turned out that we should have gone off here and changed train, but nobody told us that.



Here we are in Gravina.
Train with graffiti.



The train didn't go further, so we had to get off there.



Here we are standing, wandering what to do next.



First, Doctor Anne Berit fixed Kjell's toe.



Then we entered the bar at the station and asked for Grappa. There was not more left, so we got some local liqueur.

We asked those who worked there if they would phone for a taxi for us, but then they just giggled, because there was no taxi in this little village. We asked if they would phone to Matera to order a taxi there. They did that, but the taxi there had finished for the evening.

They told us that the best thing to do was to take the train back to Altamura and change there for the train further to Matera.

We thought that we had to wait so long for this that we phoned to the hotel to inquire if they could bring us. There was a lady in the reception. She was alone at work, so she couldn't do that, but she arranged a transfer taxi for us.

While waiting for this, we asked about the name of the local liqueur. We told them that we liked it. Then we got the whole bottle as a gift.



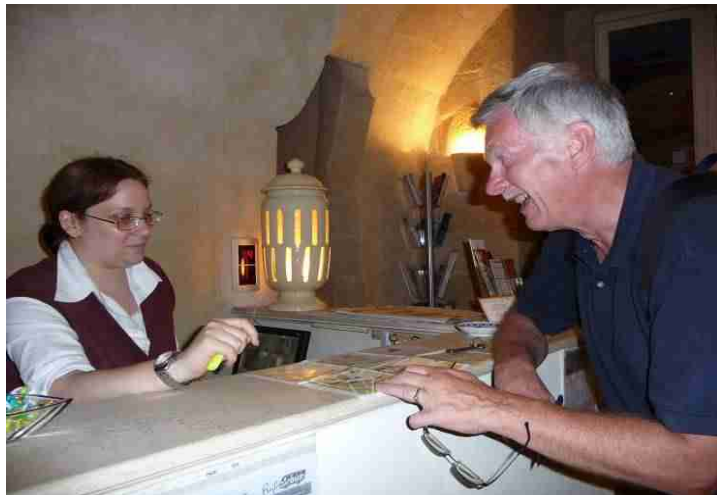
Here is the guy in the bar



Kjell is packing the bottle into the ruck-sack



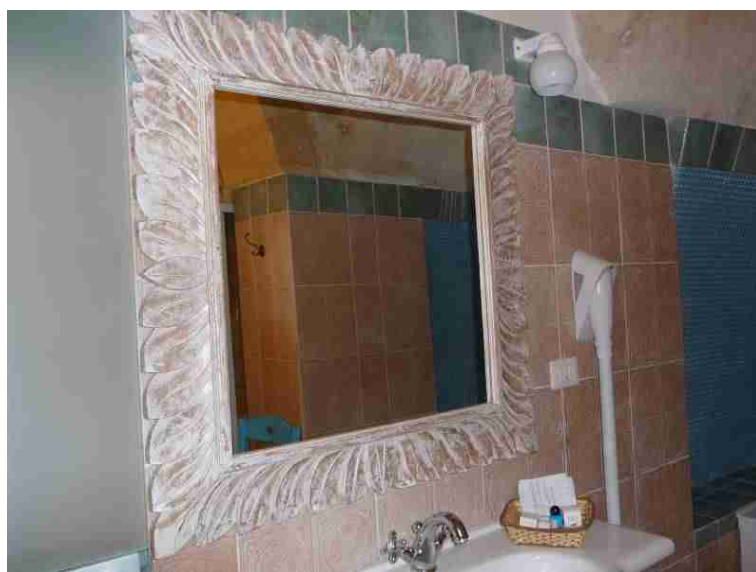
Kjell says thank you for the liqueur



Here we have reached the hotel. We got a map and she told us about the sights in the town. We also gave her the liqueur bottle in return for arranging the transfere taxi. She was happy about that, because it was her favourite liqueur.



Here are a couple of evening pictures taken from our terrace. The hotel was situated in the middle of the Sassi, so it was quite exceptional.



A couple of pictures from the bathroom



Having dinner at restaurant near the hotel



The view through the door the next morning



Matera's coat of arms



Matera is the capital in the province of Matera in the region of Basilicata and has about 60 000 inhabitants. The city lies across a small, narrow valley that has been eroded by the river Gravina, which flow through the city. The area around the city has been inhabited since the stone age, But the city itself was founded by the Romans around 200 AD. Matera is especially known for Sassi, the oldest part of the city that is carved out of the mountain. Sassi is on the UNESCO's world heritage list.

Sassi was a pre-historic settlement and it is believed that this was actually one of the first human settlements in Italy. Sassi consists of houses, which are carved out of the moutain stone, locally called «Tufo», which is abundant in Basilicata and Puglia. Many of these «houses» are in fact grottoes, and the streets in some parts of the Sassi are the roofs on other houses. The city grew on one of the sides of the gully that the the river Gravina has made.

The 21th of September 1943 the Materani resisted the German occupation as the first Italian city that opposed the Wehrmacht.

In the 1950s the Italian government forced the people to move from the Sassi to more modern areas in the city, but people continued to live here. Up to the 1980s the area was regarded as a poor part of the city. The present local administration has on the other hand become more tourism oriented and has made Sassi to a great tourist destination.

Sassi has a similar look as Jerusalem in the antiquity, and therefore the Sassi were the set of many films, among others *The Passion of the Christ* with Mel Gibson from 2004.



Having breakfast



The hotel was partly carved out of the mountain and there were not many straight walls and roofs



The hotel looked like this from the outside



Sightseeing in the old town Sassi



It is possible to go with a car in some streets



Here we can see one of the hills in the city with the church San Francesco d'Assisi on top. It is originally from the 1300th century, but has been extended and altered many times.



Here is another hill with the church San Agostino on top. This is a convent church, which was founded in 1592 by hermit monks, who incorporated it with the church Santa Maria delle Grazie, which was built by the Augustines over an old 1100 century church, which was dedicated St William. A terrible earthquake in 1734 laid it in ruins, but it was rebuilt.



Looking across the valley on to some ancient grottoes, which are still inhabited.



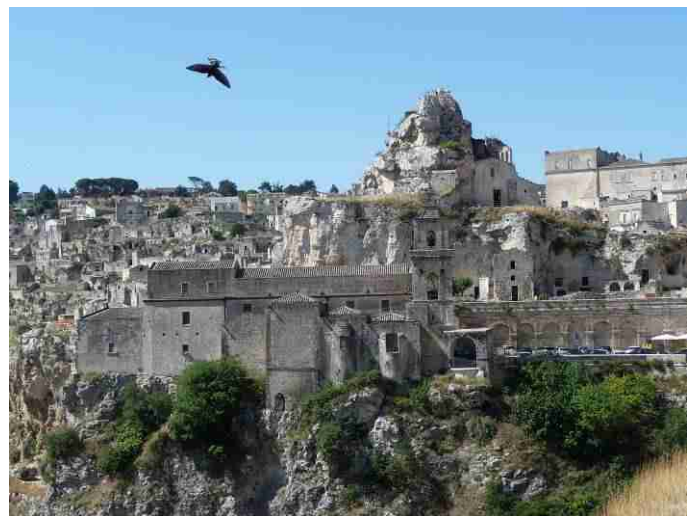
Looking further down the valley. The buildings on the top of the hill belong to the new part of the city



Kjell in the background, bying postcards.



This is the church San Pietro Caveoso



Here comes the dove of peace with palm leaves in her beak





A big cave house



There are not many straight lines here



The cat is having a good time



Looking back in direction of the most ancient caves



When we left the next day, we walked from the hotel and up to the new town, where we should catch the train. What we were not aware of was that we had to walk up some very long steep stairs. The bags became very heavy very quickly.
We just had to take a break on the top.



This is the girl who took pictures of us



On the way back to Bari with the train we can see that it is not only in Jæren that there are much stone