



ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION of SMITH COLLEGE

Edith Wharton's Mediterranean: Retracing Her 1888 Voyage, aboard the Vanadis

June 22 – July 3, 2006

DETAILED PRELIMINARY ITINERARY

Friday, June 22, 2007

USA

Fly from the U.S. to Palermo, Sicily.

Saturday, June 23

PALERMO, Sicily, Italy

Upon arrival, transfer to the *Grand Hotel Villa Igiea Hilton*. Enjoy a welcome cocktail reception.

Sunday, June 24

PALERMO | MONREALE | PALERMO | EMBARK

"Very beautiful, however, were the pale gleams of sunshine on the mountains closing in the bay, and as we entered the port, we had a fine view of the city outstretched between the Conca d'Oro and the sea." Tour Palermo, and visit the 12th-century Cappella Palatina, the city's undisputed artistic masterpiece—"it is a tiny epitome of the mystery and splendor of St. Mark's," Edith Wharton wrote, "with the same peculiar dim golden light." Continue to the Church of San Giovanni, then travel to nearby Monreale to visit its famed Norman Cathedral and elegant Cloister—"the chief object of my pilgrimage," Wharton said. Embark on *Corinthian II* in Palermo. (B, D)

Monday, June 25

PORTO EMPEDOCLE | AGRIGENTO | PORTO EMPEDOCLE

Just as Wharton did, we take an excursion to nearby Agrigento, whose series of superb Doric temples are perhaps the most captivating of Sicily's Greek ruins. View the 6th-century B.C. Temple of Hercules; the remarkably preserved Temple

of Concord; and the Temple of Juno. Also visit the Archaeological Museum. (B, L, D)

Tuesday, June 26

SYRACUSE

Arrive at Syracuse, which once rivaled Athens as the most important city of the ancient world. Visit the spectacular 15,000-seat Greek theater. "It stands on a slope below Epipolae, looking over Ortygia, the bay, and the intervening stretch of olive and orange orchards; a far lovelier view than met the eyes of the Greek audiences who had the crowded house-roofs of Neapolis as a background to their stage." Continue to the elliptical Roman Amphitheater and the archaeological Museum. Also enjoy a walking tour of Syracuse's old town, situated on the island of Ortygia. (B, L, D)

Wednesday, June 27

AT SEA

While enjoying a day at sea, attend lectures by the accompanying guest lecturers and partake of the ship's amenities. (B, L, D)

Thursday, June 28

SANTORINI, Greece

"We were quite unprepared for the beauty of the approach...." *Corinthian II* cruises into the flooded volcanic crater that forms the great circular bay of Santorini. A morning excursion leads to the archaeological excavations at Akrotiri and the new Archaeological Museum. Enjoy free time in the afternoon to explore the town of Phira—"rearing its gray battlements above the scarlet cliff, whose side seemed to glow with the light of subterranean fires." (*Please note that the visit to Akrotiri is pending the re-opening of the site.) (B, L, D)

Friday, June 29

RHODES | LINDOS | RHODES

Arrive in Rhodes this morning and ascend Monte Smith, the site of the ancient acropolis of Hellenistic Rhodes. See the restored 2nd-century B.C. stadium, the theater, and the remains of temples dedicated to Zeus, Athena, and the Pythian Apollo. Continue to the ancient Doric city of Kameiros, whose extensive ruins include well-preserved Hellenistic houses. In Lindos, enjoy lunch; later, you may take a donkey ride up to the acropolis. (B, L, D)

Saturday, June 30

PATMOS

"The island of Patmos is one of the most beautiful in the Aegean—a long narrow range of mountains, so deeply indented with bays and fjords as to be almost cut in two by the sea." Our tour includes the 11th-century Monastery of the Revelation, a true "fortress of God" with enormous towers, domed roofs, belfries, and battlements. The monastery also contains priceless icons and manuscripts as well as fine embroideries and other objects. (B, L, D)

Sunday, July 1

IZMIR | EPHEBUS or SARDIS | IZMIR, Turkey

Arrive in Izmir—"her white houses outspread with cypress-covered hills"—and travel to the great ancient ruins of Ephesus, once the most important commercial city in Asia Minor. See the ancient theater and visit the imposing Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian, and the 6th-century Basilica of St. John. Or, travel to Sardis, an ancient city founded as early as 1200 B.C. and held at various times by Persians, Macedonians, and Romans. (B, L, D)

Monday, July 2

AT SEA | SAIL BY MOUNT ATHOS, Greece

Be certain to be on deck as *Corinthian II* cruises by Mount Athos, "a scene of exquisite beauty," site of a self-governing monastic community, off-limits to females (human or animal). "I can only compare the promontory of the Sacred Mountain to one of the wooded mountain-spurs on the Italian side of a Swiss pass, torn from its roots and plunged into the Mediterranean." (B, L, D)

Tuesday, July 3

PIRAEUS | DISEMBARK | ATHENS | USA

Disembark in Piraeus and transfer to the airport for return flights to the U.S. (B)

Continue retracing Edith Wharton's Mediterranean Cruise of the Vanadis as we sail from Athens to Venice in 2008.

Optional Post-Cruise Extension in Athens

July 3 – 5, 2007

The history of Western civilization is alive in the incomparable city of Athens, which received a massive facelift in preparation for the Olympics. Experience the ancient world firsthand with a tour of the Acropolis, the heart of ancient Athens. The ruins are majestic, especially the Parthenon, which is larger, more splendid, and infinitely more beautiful than it appears in any photograph. Also see the Erechtheion, or Portico of the Maidens; the Acropolis Museum that displays a superb collection of sculpture and artifacts; the Agora (ancient marketplace); and the National Archaeological Museum.

Rates (per person, double occupancy): \$925

Single Supplement: \$325

Included: Two nights at the *King George Hotel*, with breakfast daily; tours of Athens, as described; festive farewell dinner at a traditional taverna; group transfers from ship to hotel and from hotel to airport.