

## Waiting Day –



*We visited Methoni Castle on the day waiting, and got locked inside!*

It is frustrating to wait, but we have no option. The wind is blowing hard from the north and the R/V Philia can not cross from Crete to the Peloponnese. Last night she moored in Kissamos-Kastelli, the western-most mooring on Crete. Today she crossed the channel, but was diverted into the Aegean Sea by a Search and Rescue mission and is now stuck behind the southeastern headland of the Peloponnese by high seas. It will be 48 hours in transit if she can not make it to Pylos by noon on Thursday. The weather forecast shows the winds dropping a bit today, but as of now they are still blowing hard from the northwest. Of course, I want “dead calm” for the mooring recovery. I’m not too hopeful.

So today I did a bit of bird watching before breakfast. After breakfast I visited with Elias Markopoulos, the senior engineer at NESTOR. I then called the shipping company in Athens to be sure that all of the customs documents were in order. After that, I read my email. Meanwhile, Eric checked our gear, to be sure that everything was in working order, especially the CTD and the deck box for the acoustic releases. We didn’t have much to do except wait.

*The Video Distrometer is used to measure the raindrop sizes as the drops pass through the optical beams of the instrument.*

I wanted to thank the locals in Finikounda for their assistance in the project. The rain gauge network had been set up at various local houses and the video distrometer had been placed behind the Elena Restaurant. I had a write-up of the experiment and a jar of homemade Jeffrey Jam to share with the owners of the restaurant. We got to Finikounda about



11:30 and sat down with Nikos, the co-owner of the restaurant. He was running the restaurant by himself, and got very busy as customers began to arrive for lunch. We waited a while, decided to have lunch there, but communication wasn't effective and we were not served. Eventually, we thanked Nikos and drove to Methoni, the radar site.



*A locked gate at Methoni castle*

Methoni has a ruined castle that I had missed exploring on each of my previous visits to Methoni. We went into the castle a few minutes before its closing time of 3 pm. I noted this to Eric, but he said not to worry; they can always chase us out. There were a few other tourists around, and a local woman gathering wild herbs. And so we walked quickly to the seaward gate of the castle, very briefly exploring some of the ruined buildings in the walled city area. How had the castle been ruined? Later Elias Markopoulos said that when he had been a boy, it was not ruined, but rather was one of the best preserved castles in southern Europe. It had served as a German headquarters during the German occupation of Greece in WWII. As they retreated, the Germans had blown the castle up to protect secrets. War destroys – too bad. The last tourists were drifting back to the gate, and so was the local woman with the herbs. The attendant met us at the entrance of the long passage leading to the shoreward gate of the castle. He was dangling the gate keys in his hand, and snidely told us that the castle had closed 25 minutes ago. “Did we know this fact?” We replied that we were leaving. What he didn't say was that he had already locked the gate, and that he would take his time returning to let us out. When we got to the gate a moment later, we discovered that two women were also locked inside – the local woman with the herbs and a tourist with her husband on the outside of the gate. The husband went to find another key. No luck, but another local woman said that there was a ladder nearby, somewhere inside (on our side). However, there was some clear air above the gate and so Eric and I decided to climb over the gate without aid of the ladder. We escaped, although I nearly got hung up by my binoculars. The two trapped women didn't accept our offer to help them over the gate. We don't know how long they waited for the attendant to return.