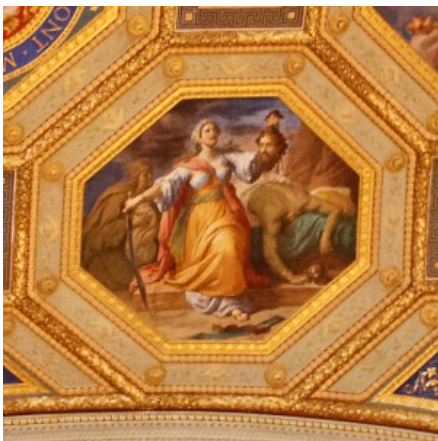


Not what I expected at the Vatican!



This caught me totally off-guard; rarely do you find any museum displaying a real-life mummy with body intact. To see something like this at The Vatican is amazing in so many ways!

Does someone want to explain why it is that one of the most-impressive collections of art from the Egyptian through Roman time period is to be found at the Vatican? I expected to see something along the lines of the history of the Church since Christ, and certainly, there was some of that... well, the Vatican Art Museum is so large, there's a LOT of that. Yet it's overshadowed by artifacts painfully displayed in context from, best way to say it would be "that which came before." In no way are the cultures slighted and in fact the references to known historical fact and mythology are presented in such a way that the various it seems factual there were multiple Greek gods.



Game of Thrones has nothing on the Vatican Museum's ceiling. Women are on equal footing with men in this gory scene.

You could, and should, spend hours inside the museum. What you will find is a stunning human experience, not religious (unless archeology is your religion). You are left wondering... why. Why does the Vatican have such magnificent artwork from the Egyptian and Roman eras? Perhaps the answer is obvious; it's the time of the Old Testament. Yet that's not the story told. Can you tell this wasn't what I expected to see?

Later Becky and I wandered through St Peter's Square which might have been impressive if not for the ever-present scaffolding we've come across here, there, & everywhere. Historical monuments rarely look like they do on TV or in the movies; by their nature they're in a constant cycle of decay and renovation.



Becky tells me this depicts a theater mask, not an actual beheading.

Not much time for more; need to get some sleep. This was a very long day, starting with a wake-up at 5:50am in Athens so we could make our flight to Rome. Not so sure about Europe being on pins & needles over terrorism threats; we entered and left Greece without anybody paying attention to our passports other than the gate agent as we got on the plane, and entering Italy, we just picked up our bags and walked out of the airport. Which means, sadly, no passport stamps from either Greece or Italy. That seems very strange to me.

Yes, we did spend some time in the Sistine Chapel as well. I think it should come earlier in the visit, not at the end, as there's so much going on that it's hard to take in without literally feeling dizzy. If you had just followed the signs for the Sistine Chappel and skipped the rest, it might be a very different story. Maybe there's a point to going to the Louvre to see only the Mona Lisa too? But you'd be missing so much. The Vatican has all that artwork for a reason. I'm just clueless as to what that reason is. Something to find out.

Tomorrow we do the usual "When in Rome" stuff, the most-important of which will obviously be a visit to The Coliseum and what is supposed to be the best Gelato stop in town. Film at 11.