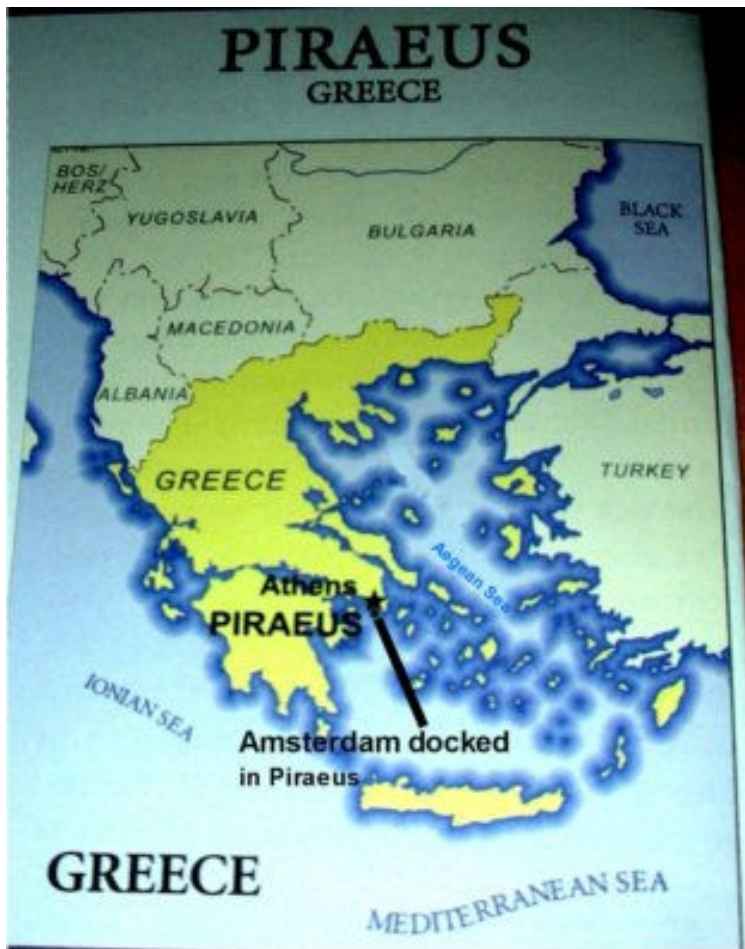
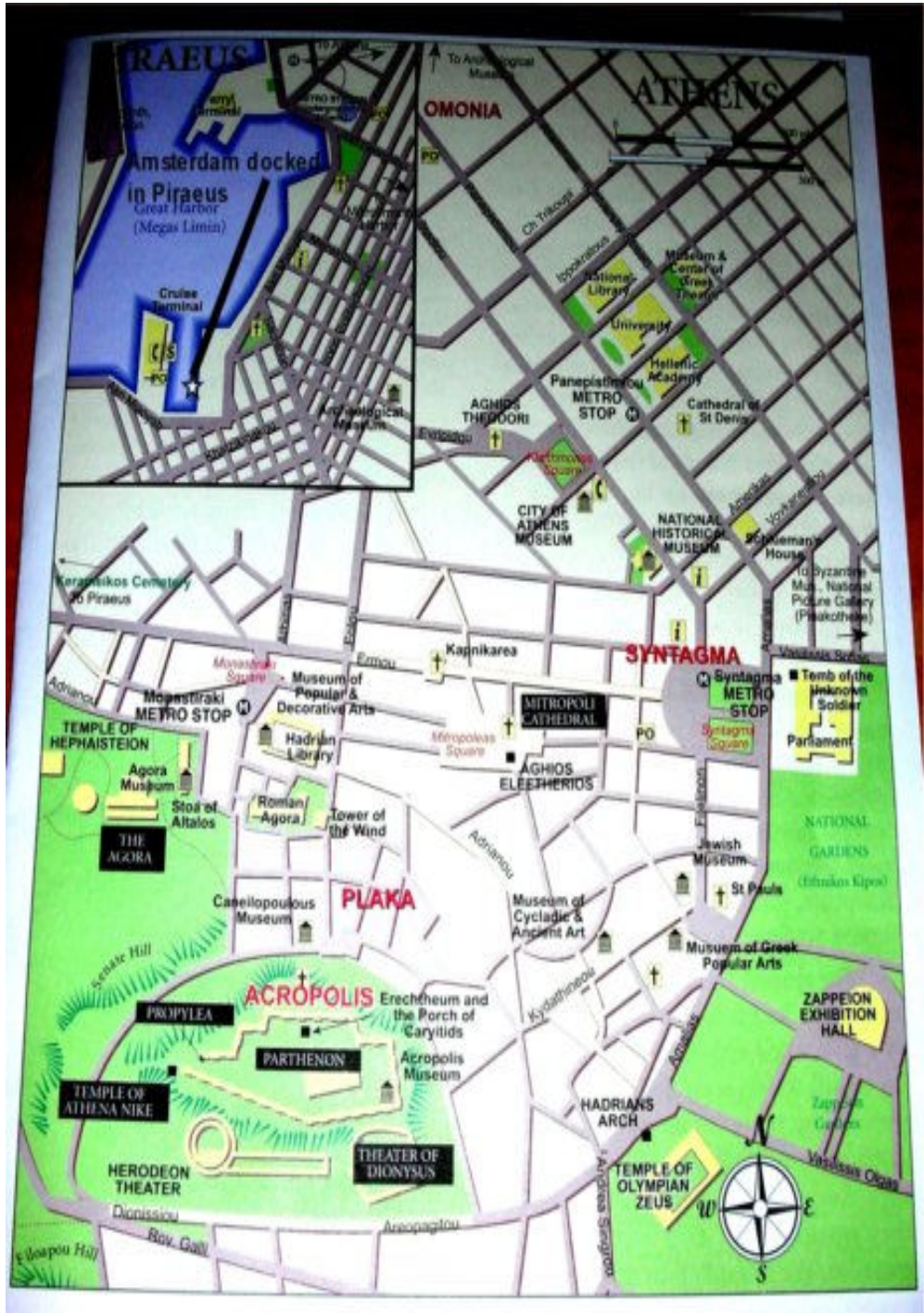


4/9/07 Day 84 – Athens and Piraeus, Greece - Monday, 9 April, 2007: We arrived in the port city of Piraeus, Greece about 7am. The weather was cool and sunny. Our location on the map is shown below.





Here are some views of the harbor from the Amsterdam.



Some large murals decorated buildings across the harbor from the Amsterdam.



Another cruise ship was docked near the Amsterdam.



The Amsterdam was docked near the cruise terminal and the business section of Piraeus.



Piraeus is a suburb of the city of Athens. Our main objective here was to see some of the sights of Athens and visit the ruins of the Acropolis. Our bus tour took us to Athens which is about ten miles away. Greece is a right hand traffic country like the US. We stopped at several of the main tourist sites before going to the Acropolis. The first stop was at the stadium where the first Olympic games of modern times were held in 1896.

We proceeded to the Parliament Building and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Greece changed from a dictator form of government to a parliament style government in 1974. The changing of the guard ceremony was carried out while we were there. We were able to photograph the soldier's traditional Greek uniforms and the high stepping march they employed.



We then made our way to the hill of the Acropolis which was the main focus of our visit to Athens. We left the bus at the base of the hill and our guide, Kelley, took us up the wide pathway that passed by several of the ancient buildings on the Acropolis.



The first of the ruins we saw was the Herodeion Theater which appeared to be ready for current open air stage productions. It was located near the bottom of the Acropolis hill.



According to our guide, Kelly, the crowds were less than typical because this was the Monday after Easter. However, thousands of people were on their way up the hill along with us on this sunny and cool morning.

The next building we encountered was the Temple of Athena Nike, shown on the right, near the top of the Acropolis.



We continued on up the hill and came to the summit where the Parthenon stood. The walk up the Acropolis was not difficult and without stopping for photographs would have taken only 15 or 20 minutes. Several people with canes made the trip with us. However, in wet weather the climb could be hazardous in several places where smooth limestone formed the pathway.





In spite of a significant amount of scaffolding around the pillars the Parthenon was a beautiful sight. We went to a raised viewing site and took several photos. The first photo was of Barbara with her Oak Ridge Library card at the Parthenon in Athens, Greece.

We were able to get one of the other tourists to take our picture.





These dogs of the Acropolis didn't let the crowd of tourists bother their rest period.

A close look at the marble resting on top of the Parthenon columns revealed many holes in the otherwise smooth surface.



The guide said that one of the ancient rulers had the shields of a defeated army attached to the marble all the way around the Parthenon. The holes were used in some fashion as part of the method used to hold the shields in place. The Parthenon originally had a wooden roof but after multiple wars and years of weather, none of the roof remains. In 1687 during one of the many wars, gun powder was stored in the Parthenon. The gunpowder was ignited and caused significant damage to the structure. Some of the current restoration work is aimed at repair of damage done by the gunpowder explosion.

We turned our eyes away from the Parthenon and along with hundreds of others walked toward the Propylea building. This building is near the Parthenon but at a slightly lower level.



We then walked back down the hill on the right hand side of the same route we used coming up. Sometimes there was a separate downhill path and sometimes we shared with the uphill traffic. The crowds were massive but orderly and polite so it was not difficult to negotiate our way down



against the upward flow of people. We did a little souvenir shopping at the bottom of the Acropolis hill while waiting for our bus. It was possible to get one last photograph of the beautiful Parthenon with the tourists lining the path around the building.

We made our way back to the Amsterdam in Piraeus. Near the cruise terminal we found an ATM machine that was working and got some Euro currency that we will need for the next few ports of call. Just before boarding the Amsterdam we got this photo that shows the heavy duty rope lines that are used to hold the ship next to pier when we are docked. The blue and red disks around the mooring lines are a rat guards.



When properly installed the rat guards keep rodents that live in the dock area from boarding the ship by way of the mooring lines. In modern dock areas, such as this, the rat population is hopefully low so risk of rodents boarding the ship is reduced relative to the "good old days".

In the evening on board the Amsterdam there was a Greek Folkloric show put on by some local dancers and musicians. We enjoyed the costumes and energetic dance routines.

The ship got underway about 11pm bound for Dubrovnik, Croatia.