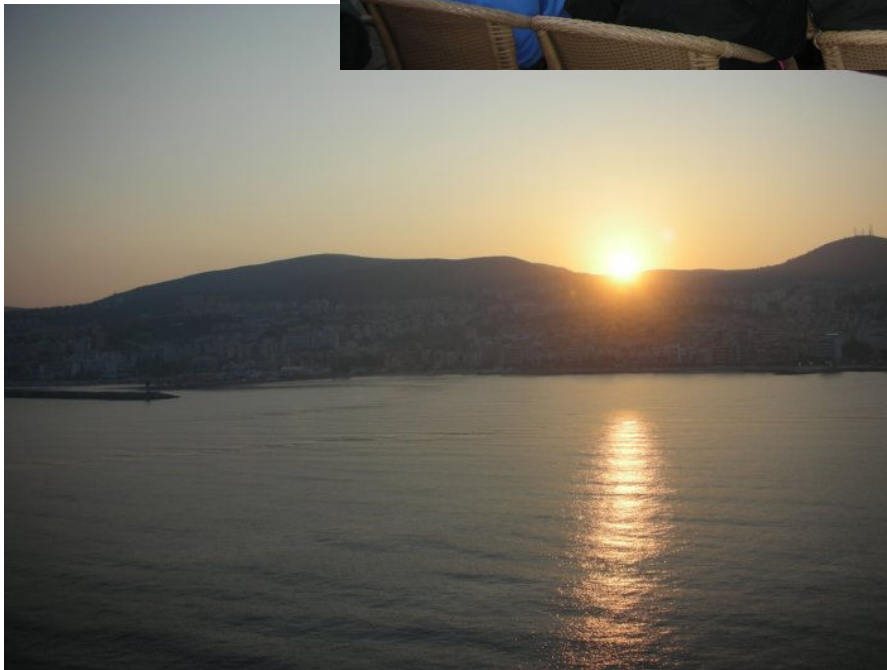


4/8/07 Day 83 – Ephesus and Kusadasi, Turkey - Sunday, 8 April, 2007: We arrived in the port of Kusadasi, Turkey about 7am. This was Easter Sunday and there was an ecumenical sunrise church service on Deck 8 at the rear of the ship.



We were docked near the center of Kusadasi, Turkey in a very convenient location next to the cruise terminal. Here are some views of the harbor from the Amsterdam.

Pigeon Island, shown on the right, lies south of the dock area and is the site of a small fort that has been restored and now serves as a restaurant. It was easy walking distance from the ship.



On top of this hill in Kusadasi, shown on the left, is a statue of Brawla Ataturk who is credited with the founding of Turkey in 1923. We always wondered where the country name of Turkey came from and now we presume it was extracted from Ataturk.

The cruise ship Sky Wonder was at the other side of the dock from the Amsterdam.



The ruins of Ephesus are located about 10 miles away on the other side of these low hills shown below that are north of the port city of Kusadasi.



The focus of our visit to this port was the ancient city of Ephesus where Paul preached to early Christians. We took a bus to Ephesus. Ephesus was built in a valley that gently slopes upward from what was once the waterfront of a thriving port. Silt from the surrounding hills has

long ago filled the harbor so now the ancient city is a mile or more from the Aegean Sea. The tour bus took us to the top end of the Ephesus excavations and we got out. While the tour guide was getting our entrance tickets we did what tourists always do, shop the local outdoor market!



We passed through the turnstiles into the ruins of Ephesus and this was our first view. The city was established as a trading port and religious center about 3000 years ago and was the home of some of the first Christians 2000 years ago when Paul visited there.

A beautifully preserved mosaic tile floor was on display in what must have been the home of a wealthy person.





Our guide, Tam, with a sense of humor asked if anyone needed a toilet break before showing us this line of ancient toilets. In front of the toilets there used to be a large basin of water for washing of the hands.

Here is a front view of the fine marble toilets.



We were most impressed with the view of the library at Ephesus shown on the left.

Barbara couldn't wait to whip out her Oak Ridge Library card and get a picture in front of this famous library.



Further down the hill is located the famous amphitheater of Ephesus. The sun was shining in from the East so it was difficult to get a good exposure but our view of it is shown on the right.

The red poppies were blooming and in the sunlight they added a special sparkle to the scenery around us.



Near the amphitheater we passed through the exit turnstiles and into the souvenir shopping area. This time there was only one camel offered for riding.



On the way back to Kusadasi on the bus our guide, Tam, gave us some chamber of commerce type information. First of all he pointed out the fine view of the Aegean Sea offered all along the coast line in the Kusadasi area. This view below is typical.

Next he said that hotel rates in the area were very reasonable. A five star hotel like "The Charisma Hotel" rents rooms for \$65 - \$70 USD per night. Five bedroom homes by the water sell for about \$200,000 USD. The winter population of Kusadasi is about 20,000 people and in the summer the population rises to about 400,000 people. In spite of this last statistic, Tam claimed that the main income of the area is not tourism but rather cotton textile production and marketing. Tam claimed to be an expert in Turkish carpets and his main job was in a museum developing the carpet display. As a final part of the tour he took us to a carpet store called Harem in the city of Kusadasi across the street from where the Amsterdam was docked.

At the Harem store we were treated to traditional tea and wine drinks while the sales manager described the process a lady was going through to create a fine Turkish carpet.



He then proceeded to show us all the different kinds of Turkish carpets in cotton, wool and silk.



Our Holland America Escort for the tour was Yuri from the musical group, Black Tie, that had been performing on the Amsterdam. We found ourselves sitting next to this very funny and talented Australian during the carpet presentation. The Black Tie group will be leaving the Amsterdam in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

There was no obligation to purchase but since we had picked up a little carpet expertise in prior ports and had intended to buy a Turkish carpet we decided to inquire about a purchase. In addition, the Harem store was endorsed by the Holland America Line which added a little to our confidence in the store. After looking at about 20 carpets we decided to buy the carpet shown on the right and another similar one.



The owner of the store was brought in for the final negotiations which involved an elaborate story

about this being the first sale of the day and he would take a loss on it in order to make the sale and bring him more business later in the day (sob, sob). We took the plunge and bought the carpets which were rolled up and put into complementary rolling suitcases.



We exited the store with our purchases in their individual suitcases and said our goodbyes outside to Tam.





We took our carpets back to our cabin. After lunch we walked over to Pigeon Island to check out the island fortress (On the right) and restaurant (below).



At dinner we had a visit from the Easter Bunny to liven up the evening.



The desserts this evening had a special Easter flair.

The ship got underway about 6pm and left Kusadasi harbor. Tomorrow we visit Athens and check out the Acropolis.