

## 2003 CRETE TO CORFU

For everyone who says I have traveled everywhere, I excitedly report, 'This itinerary is all Greek for me.' I have never been to any of these places.

Wednesday/Thursday, May 21/22, 2003. Delta used to fly Atlanta/Athens non-stop. No more! I caught a plane to JFK. My seatmate, a young petroleum engineer of Palestinian background, was on his way to Amsterdam and Prague. We played Trivia Pursuit on the in-seat TV.

In the Business Elite waiting lounge at JFK, I met Don and Joan Fried. They live in Greenwich Village in New York City. They too, are taking the cruise on the Callisto as well as the three-day extension in Corfu. We all boarded Delta's nonstop to Athens. The flight was long enough for me to get a fair amount of sleep. Met by a wheelchair in Athens I was whipped through immigration and over to Olympic Airways for the forty-five minute flight to Herakleion.

Abercrombie and Kent met the four of us when we arrived about 2:00 PM. Lois and Jack Martin joined us. We drove 50 minutes to the very elegant Elounda Beach Hotel. Scotti and I have an enormous suite, complete with sauna and Jacuzzi. We even have our own treadmill! So high tech! So many buttons! I've figured out some of them but am awaiting Scotti to help me figure out the enormous TV. I'd ask for help but I already have had them down here twice to show me how to operate the door!

At the health center, I had a great massage but could not get a hair appointment until tomorrow. Then I came back and soaked in the Jacuzzi. I enjoyed a snack from the complimentary fruit in the room, followed by a nap and waited for Scotti who was due about eight.

Scotti finally arrived but neither of us felt like eating anything else, so it was early to bed.

Friday, May 23. A lovely sunny cool day. After trying the sumptuous breakfast buffet we explored more of our hotel. We found a small boutique area and a small chapel. Though our "campus" is much larger, I am saving my energy.

We rented a car and drove the coast road to Moclos. There we had lunch at a taverna with a view of its tiny harbor. The small town overlooks an island where the ruins of a Minoan settlement can be seen. When it began to rain intermittently, we started back, making a slight false turn into a cement quarry. En route to our resort, we stopped to see another Minoan ruin, Gournia. A great number of these ruins exist all over the island. Then we headed into the hills to Krista, a pretty, but touristy town.

Crete, a rugged mountainous island, ranks as the fifth largest in the Mediterranean. The highways are good but they cut through rocky dry terrain. On these grow olive groves, producing one of the island's main exports. In antiquity cypress wooded the island, but the trees have long since been chopped down. When we finally got back to the Elounda Beach, I was ready for a nap but Scotti went out to do some more exploring. That evening we had dinner at a restaurant overlooking the sea, where we had a wonderful fish buffet. Scotti had two langoustes! Then we tried to exercise off our meal by walking out to the point where the hotel has a bar.

Saturday, May 24. Bags out at 8:00, At 8:30, we and the Frieds plus Jamie and Rich Detweiler, an attractive couple from Del Mar, CA, were cozily tucked into a van. By the time we added Irene our guide and the driver, we really sat elbow to elbow! We took the mountain road back to Herakleion, an attractive alternate to the modern highway by which we arrived. Beautiful views and a few small villages marked our route. Irene pointed out many of the flowers along the way. A snow-capped mountain shone in the distance, bearing the original name of Lefka Ori or White Mountain.

In Herakleion we went to the Palace of Knossos, the most important archeological ruin on the island. It dates from 1900 BC. In 1700 BC, it was destroyed by earthquake but it was rebuilt. Hundreds of rooms created a labyrinth, giving rise to the legend of the Minotaur. Half man, half beast, he ate the people who got lost in the maze.

The final disaster occurred about 1500-1400 BC, probably related to the volcanic explosion which rocked nearby Santorini /Thira. The Minoan civilization declined after that date. It was replaced by the Mycenaean civilization whose center of power was on the mainland of Greece.

Sir Arthur Evans excavated Knossos in the early 1900s and partially reconstructed it. Archeologists sometimes question his interpretation. The fact remains it was an elaborate and huge palace where the ruler was considered both an emperor of the island as well as a judge and religious figure. Unfortunately very little written record in the Minoan script has been deciphered. Many bus tours had converged at the site but Irena had expertly dodged them.

We then continued to the wonderful Herakleion museum. Here I viewed many antiquities which I recalled from books I had read. I liked the bullheads and horns, symbol of the Minotaur at Knossos. I also enjoyed some of the gold jewelry; huge urns, signet seals and so forth were on display.

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At last we were taken to the Callisto, a wonderful small ship, our home for the week. The ship built in 1969 was completely renovated two years ago. Crown moldings and wood give her a classic look and Abercrombie and Kent have thought of every detail for our comfort, from a free bar to e-mail availability.

Callisto, a very beautiful nymph, was admired by Zeus. He disguised himself as her friend, the goddess Artemis, and seduced her. Later the real Artemis rejected her and she ran away into the woods to have her son. Jealous Hera, Zeus' wife, learned of her husband's treachery, and decided to punish Callisto. She turned her into a bear. When Callisto's son became 17, he tried to kill the bear, not knowing she was his mother. Zeus sent her to the heaven to protect her, where she became Ursa Major, the Big Dipper, destined to never set below the northern horizon.

Back again to the Callisto, Anna Marda, our tour guide, Dr Stephen Law, our classicist guest lecturer from Oklahoma State, Laura Naughton, our cruise director, and David Leyton, our versatile concierge (he does everything from tending bar to humorous commentary) all introduced themselves. After a delicious lunch, where we met Gloria and Paul Stuart (She is a travel writer, he a lawyer/photographer), we went to our cabin to unpack. At 4:30 we were called to the lounge for tea and lifeboat drill. Here we met Arthur and Judy Bach, from New York City, who arrived with the Callisto from Athens and Louis Leblanc, an investment banker, with his pretty wife, Sophie Boucher from Montreal, Canada. There is another mother and daughter, May Gruber and Mimi Abramovitz. Scotti found out she is 91, so I feel like a mere child. There are 16 guests and a crew of 20!

After cocktails we had a welcome dinner hosted by our attractive captain, George Aliferis. He seems like the man in the movie *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. Everything is Greek. "Panic comes from Pan meaning everything, nic means gone wrong".

We tied up for the night at Rethemnos. After dinner we went ashore with the Frieds to walk around. Found a sightseeing trolley that took us all around, even to the Venetian Fortress that commands the harbor. We would have liked it better if the trolley had no roof, so we could have looked up at the old buildings. However, it felt a lot better than walking.

Sunday, May 25. Entered Souda Bay where there is an American Naval Base. During the Iraqi War some 500 vessels passed through here with supplies and troops. Our goal is nearby Chania, which is an old Venetian Port with a lighthouse that looks like a minaret. Anna led us on a walk through the old town with its narrow streets. Overhanging balconies provided the residents with ways to socialize. The city streets were immaculate. We stopped to visit the Etz Hayyim Synagogue, the oldest Jewish presence on the island and perhaps, after Rhodes, the oldest one in Greece. The Jewish presence on Crete dates from not long after the conquest by Alexander the Great. This building dates from the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century. It's charismatic rabbi, Nicholas Hannan-Stravoulakis, told us how the last Jews on the island were rounded up by the Nazis and put on a ship which was sunk by a British submarine while taking them to the mainland, all aboard perishing. If they hadn't died then, they would have been sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. 94% of the Jews in Greece died at the hands of the Nazis. The building fell into ruin and this man began a one-man project to restore it. The synagogue is sensitive to the multi-ethnic and religious needs of our times and its doors are open to Christians, Moslems and Jews all having a common background to Abraham. Nicholas Hannan-Stravoulakis is also responsible for having started the Jewish museum in Athens.

We then came upon a military display before the old cathedral for this week marks the battle of Crete in 1941 when the Nazi's conquered the island.

The tour was getting out of hand with so many unusual happenings, so Anna led us around the harbor to a Taverna for lunch. So many hors d'oeuvres, tahini, dolmas, etc; and then when we had stuffed ourselves, out came the main course. I had lamb.

Back onboard we sailed for Kastelli on the western end of the island for an overnight.

Monday, May 26. KITHERA. As Steve told us during his lecture, this is the legendary birthplace of Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love. He had a number of slides of famous paintings of Aphrodite.

We arrived at the tiny harbor of Kapsali just before lunch. A strong breeze was blowing and the Captain had to approach the dock from the windward side. He realized his problem and tried to back off before he wiped out a cutter already moored there, but the wind carried the ship onto a reef, and the Callisto rested at a 30-degree angle!

We were offloaded onto a local glass bottom boat and taken to shore, perhaps 100 feet away. Anna took us to a local taverna, The Magician, where we had an impromptu and delicious lunch going to the kitchen to select what was there. Someone said they had to send out to the other tavernas for more aubergine. Meanwhile we watched while several smaller boats pulled our lovely ship off the reef and brought her to the dock.

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A bus arrived and we left the small port city of Kampali and drove up into the hills to Chora, the main town, which has a population of 400. We walked down through the town stopping to admire the capers growing wild (is this an epiphyte?) on one shop wall. Passing the townsquare we continued down toward the fortress, built by the Venetians. It was going to climb up to the fort. Knowing I also had to climb back up to the bus, I decided to skip this part of the tour and headed back. I did some window-shopping and in one shop found a gold ring I liked. Not having enough cash I had to go to an ATM. Then the proprietress also wanted to sell me some matching earrings but I could not face another trip to the ATM. Resting on a bench by the bus, Scotti appeared and I told her about the earrings. She said she would go get some more money for me. Then I discovered I had lost my ATM card! We both hurried back to the bank and luckily a man was there with my card! So I cashed some more money and went and bought the earrings. The proprietress was so excited. I guess I made her week, if not her month. I am so glad to have a souvenir of Kithera to commemorate my first shipwreck!

We drove off that mountain and up another to see the small monastery of Agio Ioannis, built on a cliff around a cave that had housed a hermit. When the bus stopped we were left to climb up the rest of the way. I was in sandals and the path was alive with thistles I had to walk very carefully. Scotti flagged down a jeep that took me part way but then I was again on foot. The path got to be a steep and worn flight of stairs. I realized I wasn't going to make it. May, Joan and I waited while the rest went on up. Scotti got some great pictures so I could see what I missed!

Back at the port, Anna treated us to ice cream and we re-boarded our ship. During cocktails we got the bad news. We had damaged our propeller and rudder and could not continue. After dinner we met in the lounge to hear our options. It is Memorial Day in the States so it is a wonder A & K could talk to anyone. They propose we tour more of the island tomorrow, then take a bus to a ferry to the Peloponnesus and spend the night in a hotel, continuing on to Sparta and Mistra a day later. Then we would drive to Corinth where they have found another small ship and we would continue with the cruise to Corfu.

Well! That didn't suit a few people and they harangued a long time over whether A & K would give compensation, whether they could go directly to Athens by plane, and so forth. They didn't need any more input from me so I finally left and went to bed.

Tuesday, May 27, 2003. We were still hearing options but the best guess was that we would take a tour of the island, then fly to Athens and stay at the Grande Bretagne. This seemed to please most everyone so we set out across the island to Aluemonas, a small picturesque fishing village and ate in a taverna called the Savior. The proprietor had all sorts of fresh fish in ice chests and Scotti and I shared a huge Langouste. Steve was the brave one who took an ugly crayfish from the same chest for his meal. I had a taste later and it was okay, but not as good as our sweet langouste! I don't believe anyone went for a swim and soon we were in the bus going back to Kithera's tiny airport. We caught the only plane leaving. It was an under-the-wing prop. In Athens we, and our mountain of luggage, were transferred to the newly refurbished Grande Bretagne. It brought back memories of my stays here in 1955 and 1963. The hotel has been closed for a number of years and the bar will have to reestablish itself as THE meeting place in Athens. We had a luxurious room overlooking the inside courtyard so we were insulated from the incessant motorbike noises of Athens. A delicious dinner with lots of wine (really too much) and we went to bed.

Wednesday, May 28. Declining the tour to the Acropolis, I bought my head a much-needed shampoo. Then Scotti and I walked a bit in the Plaka buying small souvenirs. We left the GB at 12:30 and went to the Dionysus Restaurant with a great view of the Parthenon. It was obviously catering to bus tours and the food was not as good as the view!

Then we drove an hour and a half along the coast to Cape Sunion, with its temple to Poseidon. I well remember the day back in 1963 when I last came here with my parents, sister and brother-in-law and husband. It was a spectacular day and we went on to Lavrion where we picked up an iron ingot for son, Evans. Then on to Marathon where our wonderful guide stood on the tell and described the battle so clearly you could see the Persians coming and the Athenian ambush they faced. The runner who carried the news of the victory to Athens dropped dead after running the 26 miles.

It was pleasant today, though it was hot and we had a haze. May and I sat in the refreshment area working a crossword (actually May did the lion's share of the puzzle) while the others climbed to investigate the temple.

And finally we came to the harbor to search for our new ship. The first thing we saw was a huge battleship and Sophie remarked that on that ship we could blast any reef out of existence. The Aegean Princess at first sight looked great. It was after-all a miracle that A & K found any ship for us at all. A catamaran, she lacked a "pointy end" but her lounge seemed okay. Then we found out she was a boxcar on a barge! The architect found his

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inspiration from the inter-island ferries in Greece. Our stateroom made us realize we had really come down in the world. Two beds, so low we were almost on the floor, two chairs, and no table. The décor gave us a ceiling that looked as if it was made out of cement blocks, bright blue walls that so clashed with the maroon spreads that David had had them all turned over to show their lavender undersides. David had tried hard, bringing aboard armloads of flowers, filling ice buckets and pitchers with them. We have a small bouquet on the nightstand. He even provided an apple to represent the fruit baskets we had on the Callisto. Maria, the general factotum, needed some suggestions, such as turning down the beds. "Aren't they just going to get into them!" For chocolates on the pillow he found Mars Bars and a European sort of M & M. Maria also said the towels were changed once a week. David enlightened her that on this cruise they would be changed twice a day! Our suitcases are tastefully standing in the corners. The closet door needs to be locked at all times or it interferes with the door to the hall. The bathroom was very tiny and when we were told that the marine plumbing would not support anything in the toilets except what we had eaten, there were a number of bad jokes made about having to put the paper in the step-can. Each new discovery was worse than the one before. Imagine what the crew must have thought of us!

But the crew served a wonderful buffet dinner (we have a crew of 11). The best part of the evening was to stand on deck while we came through the Corinth Canal. Dug by the French, right after they dug the Suez, this is a major canal for Greece saving a long trip around the Peloponnese. There were stars overhead and lights along the narrow waterway. It took about an hour to come through. Then we went to bed while the ship continued on to Patra.

I don't think many people slept well. It sounded like the engine was right under my bed and the vibrations did not give a comfortable massage. Actually we were the lucky ones. The people in the odd numbered cabins had flooding in their bathrooms (even though they were careful of the tissue),

A & K has done the best they can but we all feel we should get some compensation. Desmond Patrick-Smith, the managing director of A & K's European operations has come aboard to meet us, but the decision on compensation will have to come from the home office. For a luxury cruise, this left a lot to be desired. The Detweilers and Martins are continuing on to Venice, and 18 more people are supposed to join the ship in Corfu. They hope the Callisto will have been repaired and will meet us there.

Thursday, May 29, 2003. OLYMPIA, a halcyon day. There were seven wonders of the ancient world: The Pyramid of Cheops, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Mausoleum of King Mauselos at Bodrum, the Temple of Diana at Ephesos, The Colosos of Rhodes, the Lighthouse of Alexandria, and the Statue of Zeus at Olympia. Of course, most don't exist anymore, but I have been lucky to have seen the site of all but one, the lighthouse, which was washed into the sea. They are slowly reclaiming parts of it so perhaps someday I may see that as well. But today we went to Olympia to see where the statue of Zeus, had been, the wonder being that he was shown as a benevolent god.

What a wonderful site. And a beautiful day to see it. We bused from Patra, an hour and a half. This is where the Olympic Games were held once every four years in honor of Zeus. All cities were supposed to suspend their wars and differences for the games. A Holy Truce that Anna hopes the games next year in Athens will reinstate. Cities that did not honor the truce were excluded from future games and even from the Oracle at Delphi. The first recorded games were in 776 BC. But the games started to decline in interest after the classic age. The Roman's, under Nero, tried to revive them, but when the Byzantines arrived, they closed the sanctuary for good in 394 AD. Earthquakes destroyed the site in 521 and 551 AD and flooding from the nearby rivers covered everything with an overburden of mud. The site was lost but the first archaeologists who came in the early nineteenth century were lucky to hit the Temple of Zeus on their first excavation. Since there was no town closer than 30 miles, the stones had not been quarried for other purposes, and all were where they had fallen. It also may be that the stone that was used was poor porous limestone not good for construction. In 1877 German archeologists started to uncover the site.

Anna started the tour at the gymnasium where the athletes were required to train. Shaded porticos provided shelter from the hot sun of July and August. Judges selected the best athletes for the games.

Nearby under an old church, archaeologists found the workshop of the sculptor Phidias, identified by a mug with his name on it.

We approached the temple from the west or backside. It was about the same size as the Parthenon. One of its huge columns is being reassembled. All around are pieces of other columns that fell in the earthquakes. The bronze and ivory statue (over a wooden core) of Zeus must have been magnificent, a forty foot high figure seated on an ebony throne facing the sunrise. "To see the statue is to know Zeus" as Pausanias said. The statue was later carried to Byzantium where it was destroyed in a fire.

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The olive wreaths came from a particular tree and were placed on a table to be awarded at the end of the games. Anna feels the games have become too professional today, with paid athletes and medals awarded after each competition.

The Greeks used sun-dried bricks for their buildings that have not lasted. When we saw bricks the Romans had fired them.

The winners were allowed to erect statues of their patron gods and, if a man won in four Olympiads, he could erect a statue of himself. Only the pedestals for these statues remain, as the bronze could be recycled for other uses. Anna showed how the pieces of the pillars were held together with iron pins.

Forty thousand athletes came to the games. Actually about 100,000 people came if you counted the trainers, spectators and their servants. There was a large hotel with 80 rooms where some could stay but most had to camp out.

An arch has been reconstructed at the entrance to the stadium, proving the Greeks had the arch before the Romans. There were no seats except for the judges; the spectators sat on the slopes on each side. The games lasted for five days and the athletes performed naked. Married women were not allowed to attend since they belonged to their husbands, but unmarried women could come. This stadium is 192.2 meters long. Measurements differed from place to place since there was no uniform standard. A group of children had a race and then three of our own number ran a couple of lengths.

Women also had their own games in honor of Hera, whose temple is near the stadium. In front of Hera's temple is the altar where the Olympic flame was lit to begin the games.

There was a hippodrome for the chariot races but it has not been excavated. The owner of the chariot, not the driver, was considered the winner.

Philip of Macedon presented a circular temple, which his son, Alexander the Great, finished. The foundations stand out for only here has the stone been cleaned and is pure white. An unfinished patrician house was nearby, supposedly the house of the Emperor Nero, who died during its construction.

Back aboard Callisto, Steve gave an entertaining lecture on the Odyssey. Greece collapsed after the Bronze Age. About 1200 BC a series of catastrophes hit the Mediterranean. Pirates abounded. Odysseus was known as the "sacker of cities". Control of the Hellespont and Dardanelles probably were a large cause of the Trojan War. Homer lived 500 years after the War but his descriptions have been proven accurate, attesting to the accuracy of the oral traditions.

We steamed all night to get to Cephalonia. Perhaps I am getting used to the engine for I slept much better.

Friday, May 29. CEPHALONIA. We docked at Sami and drove the twisty mountainous road to Assos. Assos is a very picturesque village on a bay of clear water and many boats moored along the edge of the harbor, it reminds one of Porto Fino in Italy. This is not a touristy island and there were few shops, but we did have lunch at a lovely taverna, where it was obvious the proprietress enjoyed her food as much as we did. It is a lovely green island from the large amount of rainfall it has each year.

After lunch we went to nearby Ithaca, the legendary home of Odysseus. We stopped for a time in a small secluded bay for a swim and then continued on to the capital, Vathy, a fiord-like harbor. Odysseus' palace is thought to have been on the other side of the island where archeologists are searching for it. A cave near Vathy is being excavated and is thought to be the hiding place of Odysseus' treasure that he brought here from Corfu. There is not even a ferry to Ithaca so the island has no touristy shops (and the few we found were closed as it was time for the afternoon siesta).

David's last lecture was the story of the end of the Odyssey. Since there is no way to darken the lounge on the Aegean Princess he could not show his slides, but his story of the Odyssey was very humorous. We are all Greeks. Western Civilization comes from the Greek. The ultimate goal in life is to be happy.

We had our farewell dinner and everyone dressed up a bit.

Another night of steaming took us to Corfu, where we docked about 2:00 AM.

Saturday, May 30. The end of our cruise. Desmond tells us that A & K has offered a free cruise on Callisto next year and that seems more than reasonable. Each couple has been given a copy of the Odyssey.

When we left our poor crippled Callisto; our Captain had given each of us a copy of a Greek poem, which seems fitting to repeat at this point.

ITHAKA by Constaninos Cavafis, Greek Poet.

As you set out for Ithaca

Hope your road is a long one,

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Full of adventure, full of discovery.  
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,  
Angry Poseidon – don't be afraid of them:  
You'll never find things like that on your way  
As long as you keep your thoughts raised high,  
As long as a rare excitement  
Stirs your spirit and your body.  
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,  
Wild Poseidon- you won't encounter them  
unless you bring them along inside your soul,  
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.  
Hope your road is a long one.  
May there be many summer mornings when,  
With what pleasure, what joy,  
You enter harbours you're seeing for the first time:  
May you stop at Phoenician trading stations  
To buy fine things,  
Mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,  
Sensual perfume of every kind –  
As many sensual perfumes as you can;  
And may you visit many Egyptian cities.  
To learn and go on learning from their scholars.  
Keep Ithaka always in your mind.  
Arriving there is what you're destined for.  
But don't hurry the journey at all.  
Better if it lasts for years, so you're old by the time you reach the island,  
Wealthy with all you've gained on the way,  
And expecting Ithaka to make you rich,  
Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.  
Without her you wouldn't have set out.  
She has nothing left to give you now.  
And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.  
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,  
You'll have understood by them what these Ithakas mean.

We had a city tour with the Martins and Detweilers, again crowded into a mini van. However, Mahine, our redheaded guide sat in the middle so we could all hear her.

Our first stop was the magnificent Achilleion Palace built by the Austrian Empress Elizabeth in 1890-91 for a summer palace. She had married Frans Josef, even though he had been betrothed to her sister. Frans Josef was unfaithful to her. Her final tragedy was to be murdered by an anarchist in 1898.

The neo-classical building overlooks the water and is highly embellished with statuary commissioned by the Empress. We toured the lovely garden presided over by an 11 meter high bronze statue of Achilles for whom the palace is named. This was placed here by the palace's subsequent owner, King William the second of Germany. The original marble statue was moved at that time to a position closer to the house and it shows the Greek trying to remove the arrow from his "Achilles" heel. A large terrace with statuary depicting the Muses and Three Graces, among others, is still used for official functions.

Only six rooms on the first floor are open to the public as a museum, but very little original furniture is here: Elizabeth's having been sent back to Austria after her death. There were busloads of tourists from the Radisson Seven Seas in the harbor so we left after giving the rooms a cursory look. The Radisson also has a damaged propeller!

Next we were taken to a promontory where we could see small Mouse Island, now a monastery, and, at the end of a causeway that forms a lake in Corfu Town, the small monastery of Kanoni. It was suggested we could climb down to look at it, but I suggested we drive down to save the walk back up. One Russian Orthodox priest and his family take care of the small church that contains an icon said to have caused miracles. Many gifts are around it to show thanks for the successful healings that have happened.

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We drove back to Corfu Town and were shown the old Venetian Fortress. The Turks never captured Corfu, because a unique moat cut the fortress off from the mainland. Crossing the enormous esplanade, one of the biggest in Europe, we passed countless tavernas as we entered the streets of the old city. Narrow streets lined with shops led us to the Church of St Spirito, the patron saint of the island. Its red dome is an Italian feature, and the exterior is very simple. But inside it is quite elaborate. Normally the public is not allowed beyond the ivory and marble screen with icons separating the sanctuary from the nave. However, the mummified body of the saint rests in a silver casket and the public is allowed to visit. Inside the silver casket is a glass one so that four times a year the relics can be paraded through the city for all to see. This saint is also considered to have caused miracles. He saved the island from a famine in 1450, saved the island from the plague twice, and in 1713, saved the island from being captured by the Turks. He was born on Cyprus in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and his remains were brought to this church.

We dropped the Martins and Detweilers off at their hotel where they have day rooms until the repaired Callisto arrives. It was such a nice group to travel with and we were sorry to say goodbye.

Our beach hotel is the Dassia Chandris Hotel and we have rooms on the fifth floor with a spectacular view of Dassia Bay. We are about 10 miles from Corfu town. The hotel has spacious beach and grounds where the guests can do everything from Volleyball to water skiing. The hotel caters to groups, but they are English groups, not the noisy American kind. We had lunch at the hotel's taverna and then went to our room and slept all afternoon. We are tired. Most nights we haven't gotten to bed until midnight and were up at seven or eight. If we had been on the Callisto we might have had an afternoon nap but the Aegean Princess was so noisy it would have been hard to sleep.

Went out and walked the small town's main street and selected a restaurant. Much as I like Greek food, I ordered a hamburger. It was delicious.

Sunday June 1, 2003. Slept until ten getting down to breakfast just before it closed. We had had hopes of going to Albania today and it is lucky that was impossible for we both needed a day off. I spent the day catching up this journal, reading and sleeping. Scotti went parasailing as well. For a late lunch we found a restaurant with Corfu specialties. I had veal cooked with garlic. Scotti had a special lamb stew cooked in a small pot. Then I went back to the room and slept some more. I bought a gold ring in the hotel jewelry store that has Olympic athletes on it. We had a late dinner and then went to a taverna where they advertised Greek dancing, but it was deader than a doorknob. We returned to the hotel and, lo and behold, found Greek dancing there. Scotti got up and danced with them.

Monday, June 2. Rented a car and headed for Paliokastritsa on the other side of the island. There was a pretty bay (but not as pretty as Dassia Bay) and we went up to see the Monastery of the Holy Virgin on a promontory above the town. Lavishly decorated with icons on the iconostasis or marble screen secluding the sanctuary. One icon was very old dating from 1494 and was painted on an ox skin. One of the most impressive icons showed the Virgin Mary shedding tears as she held her martyred son in her arms. People give silver oil lamps when their prayers have been answered and they are lit "everyday" according to a guide whose talk we overheard. Scotti and I doubted this for there were so many of them.

We drove up into the hills to Lakones for the view of the area. Then we went further up into the mountains finding one typical town, Chorepiskopoi, and other little villages untouched by tourists and acres of olive groves. We also managed to get thoroughly lost, so when we found the road to Corfu Town we took it.

In town we went for a horse and buggy ride, but the driver was noticeably cool when he found we were Americans. No one has been nasty to us, but only once did we see our flag anywhere, even when the flags of many nations were flying in front of hotels and so forth. Anna, our guide, said, "We like the American people, but not their government". The Iraq War has lost us what few friends we ever had.

We did wander through the old town, collecting a few last souvenirs, and pictures.

Back at the Chandris, we thought to eat at the hotel, but all they had were table d'hote meals for the tour groups. So we went once again out on the street and found a lovely taverna for our last meal. Then back to the hotel to pack.

Tuesday, June 3. And so our Odyssey ended. We were up at 5:30 for a taxi ride to the airport. Scotti is going home via Berlin and Frankfurt on A & K's air. I flew to Athens to connect with the Delta flight to New York. Saw Don and Joan, and Louis and Sophie in the business class lounge. Don reported that the Callisto didn't get to Corfu until late at night!

## 2003 CRETE TO CORFU

My seatmate to New York was a young man who arranges the travel for the New York Yankees. He had come to Athens for a short vacation but hadn't seen much. I showed him my slide show of Scotti's pictures. Had a wheelchair to clear customs in New York, which was lucky since there were long lines that the wheelchair pusher skillfully avoided. From JFK to Atlanta my seatmate was a Delta stewardess who had just come in from Istanbul and was trying to get home to Columbus. She was of Turkish extraction and agrees with me that the Iraq War was really about oil. She also commented the US has no experience colonizing and that the British should be doing the job. I didn't know people thought we were "colonizing". Another reason people dislike us is the weakness of the American dollar. Last fall when I was in Europe, the dollar was about equal to the Euro. Now the Euro is soaring and even hit 1.2 to 1 while we were there. With the dollar so weak, Europeans can't sell their goods to us. And there are not many American tourists with the Euro so high.

A last word about the wonderful Greek cats: With long legs and thin faces they look as if they are direct descendents of Egyptian cats. We saw many cats on the islands. But my favorite cat was the little gray one who met me with delight when I got home!