



Dear Far Horizons travelers,

When I was last in Iran, the suitcase of a member of the Far Horizons group did not arrive for almost a week. Several of us went in search of shirts and underwear for our fellow traveler. As we North Americans were walking from shop to shop, we began to acquire a crowd of curious people who would ask with smiles where we were from and could they help. When we said we were from the United States, the reply was always, "We love Americans" or "I have a brother in Chicago...do you live near him?" When we explained that we needed to find clothing for our group member, the people on the street helped us find the necessary items with excitement, warmth and laughter. They made us feel genuinely welcomed to their country.

We are often asked why we choose to go to countries like Iran, Syria, Jordan, Turkey at this time of world turmoil. Travel is an important means of breaking down cultural barriers and it is only when we are able to meet the average Iranian (or Syrian...or Jordanian...) on the street that we are able to gain a glimpse of the similarities between us rather than the differences. Interested in your own unique experience in Iran? Our next trip to Iran departs in May 2007 and is led by Dr. Holly Pittman.

Far Horizons specializes in trips with not only an archaeological emphasis but include local cultural events. For example, Orthodox churches throughout Ethiopia celebrate Easter with an unrivalled intensity and passion, and in April you will experience the colorful celebrations. During our trip to Bhutan, you can join the raucous crowds of Bhutanese as villages come to life with vivid color, a cacophony of music, and cheerful dancing as valley dwelling farmers and townsfolk come together to exorcise evil spirits and rejoice in seasonal changes. Our trip to Easter Island includes the annual festival known as "Tapati." This celebration embraces the Rapanui culture with exciting contests of strength and skill, grass skirted performers dancing to mesmerizing melodies of Polynesian music, and performances of *Kai kai* (cat's cradle), the creation of string figures accompanied by the hypnotic chant used to hand down the island's history from generation to generation.

Interested in viewing solar eclipses? We will have itineraries wrapped around several upcoming solar events - China's Silk Road in July/August 2008, eastern China in July 2009, and Easter Island in July 2010.

We encourage you to frequently visit our award-winning website - www.farhorizons.com - as trips change and new itineraries are constantly being added. The best way to keep abreast of new offerings is to receive our short weekly email newflashes. If you are not receiving them, please call or email us with your email address.

Happy traveling!

Mary Dell Lucas
Founding Director

Recent Discoveries in Peru

By Dr. Bill Sapp

The preservation of prehistoric cultural material on the coast of Peru is nothing short of phenomenal. Many artifacts survive because of the dry climate that might otherwise be lost. The desert environment acts to preserve baskets and textiles particularly well. Often, the climate dries burials to the point that skin and hair are preserved. Although called "mummies", natural processes preserve these burials rather than deliberate mummification.



The cover of May 2002 *National Geographic*.

At Huacarones, outside of Lima, noted Peruvian archaeologist Willy Cock, excavated some 2,500 burials from an Inka period cemetery. One of the recovered bodies still had a feathered cap in place. The fellow wearing the cap appeared on the May 2002 cover of *National Geographic*. Far Horizons tour groups visit Willy in his lab, where we are able to get a close up look cap, as well as some of the other remarkable artifacts recovered from Huacarones.

More recently, archaeologists unearthed a high status Moche female at the pyramid of Huaca El Brujo, on the North Coast. Lead archaeologist Régulo Franco believes that she was a ruler of the Moche polity that controlled the Chicama Valley some 1600 years ago. In 2004, Sr. Franco allowed the Far Horizons tour group to go behind the scenes and view some newly discovered polychrome mud friezes top of the pyramid. The Moche burial was recovered from the same area a few months later. You can read more about the burial in the June 2006 issue of *National Geographic*. You can read more about some of the mud friezes at El Brujo in a July 2004 *National Geographic* article titled "Temple of Doom." **Or you can visit El Brujo this coming summer with Far Horizons.**

The Wonders of Jordan

Gary Rollefson

The chasm is breath-taking: hundreds of feet deep and barely 20 feet wide in places, Petra's *siq* wends its way more than 2000 years back in time. At the end of the gorge, sculpted with flair and arrogance out of the living pink sandstone canyon wall, a 130 foot-high facade suddenly emerges, towering over the tombs of royalty that once controlled a trading empire so successful and tempting that Rome annexed the region to extend its dominion over its wealth and territory. Tombs dominated the entrances to Petra, while huge temples flanked the city of the living. Petra is virtually synonymous with the Royal Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

But Jordan has so much more to offer. There is a sophistication of culture at the end of the Stone Age that is astonishing, as wide-eyed statues look back at the viewer from nearly 11,000 years ago. In the north are the "cities of the Decapolis", cities that were vibrant parts of the Roman Empire. Emulating all the haughty superiority of urban centers of Rome, Amman (Philadelphia), Jerash (Gerasa), Umm Qais (Gedara), and Pella enjoyed such imperial rights as minting their own coinage and crafting their own laws; Jerash is the best preserved Roman city outside of the Italian peninsula. Closer to us in time are elaborate palaces in Amman from the early Islamic period (7th-8th centuries AD) that were residences of political rulers of the region, and mansions and fortresses in the eastern desert overlook limitless horizons crossed by caravan routes that were probably already a thousand years old or more.

The landscape of Jordan presents astounding vistas: from atop the Arab fortress of Qasr al-Rabadh, manned during the Crusader period, one has an endless view of the Jordan Valley

The Khmer

Michael D. Coe

The ancient Khmer city of Angkor has fascinated Westerners since its rediscovery in the mid-19th century. What is generally not appreciated is that the mighty Khmer Empire included not only Cambodia but almost all of northeastern Thailand. Some of the most impressive temples of the Classic Angkor period are found just north of the Cambodian-Thai border. Beautiful Phimai is one of these, connected in ancient times by a royal highway to the city of Angkor; another is Phnom Rung, built on an extinct volcano. Probably the most spectacularly situated temple site in Southeast Asia is Preah Vihear, perched on the edge of a mighty escarpment overlooking the Cambodian plain, but now reachable only from the Thai side of the border.

Recent archaeological discoveries have thrown great light on the nature of this great monsoon-forest civilization, so similar in many ways to that of the Classic Maya in far-off Central America. Thanks to advanced techniques like remote sensing, we can now understand what kind of a city Angkor was in its heyday, why its enormous reservoirs were necessary to it, why its beautiful temple complexes were built, and why the civilization ultimately collapsed. *Join Professor Coe on one of his trips to the Land of the Khmer.*

and the hills and mountains to the west. At the southern edge of the kingdom, a small Nabataean temple is almost invisible under a sheer 2000-foot cliff that looms majestically above it in the hulking red sandstone canyons of Wadi Rum. Here mysterious 6,000 year old paved stone shrines mark annual visits to this sacred area, and rock faces bear petroglyphs dating back 5,000 years; huge boulders carry Thamudic and Safaitic inscriptions marking visits to the area by traders and nomads from times before the Romans came to the region.

Nevertheless, Jordan has even more treasures: the genuine hospitality of the people of Jordan. The warm greetings and generous offers of tea refresh the soul. Exotic foods tantalize the tongue, and modern roads, hotels, and communications belie the feeling of entering an easier time and more relaxing rhythm of life. How can one not fall in love with a country whose symbol is the Bedouin coffee pot?

Join Dr. Gary Rollefson, discoverer of the renowned Ain Ghazal site, and travel to Jordan May 20 - June 2, 2007.

'R.A.C.E.' Now Performing in Amman

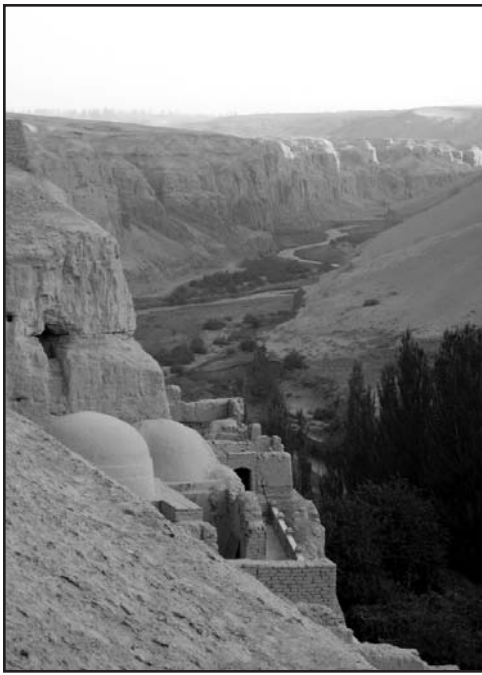


Throughout history, the ancient city of Jerash, located fifty minutes drive to the north of Amman, has witnessed the rise and fall of different civilizations, making it a must-see site for every tourist visiting Jordan.

As a living testimony to its majestic past, The Roman Army and Chariot Experience 'R.A.C.E.' stages regular performances at the hippodrome of Jerash, the Circus Gerasa. The show features 35 fully armed Roman legionaries showing battle formations and warfare techniques as well as gladiators' fighting it "to the death" and seven authentic lap races with Roman chariots.

The theater setting, with its roman architecture and acoustics in combination with advanced light and sound effects makes the show truly striking, and reaches its climax with a deafening cheering and shouting of the audience deciding on the fate of the losing gladiators.

For more information, please go to www.jerashchariots.com. And see the R.A.C.E. during Far Horizons tour to Jordan.



In August, I stepped out of my routine, out of the world I was familiar with, into a far more exotic and adventuresome one. I and twenty fellow travelers: 18 enterprising and remarkable individuals beguiled by Far Horizons' extensive itinerary, Askar our competent and delightful Uighur tour guide, and Ken Hammond, our engaging and passionate professor of Chinese history, embarked on a journey into Western China to follow and explore the Silk Road. First flying to Xi'an, we learned that no photograph or partial viewing of a few traveling pieces could prepare us for the sight of row upon row of the magnificent terra cotta warriors.

Daily, as we meandered further west, the group would observe and absorb its new surroundings, watching

The Silk Road in Western China

By Sara W. Barbieri, Tour Manager for the 2006 trip

children, women and men, going about the business of their lives. We felt a growing affection, and hoped for a growing understanding, of the cultures we encountered. We were eager to cross the boundaries of our own small lives to incorporate this new world. It was that rare sort of travel, we discovered, that brings you into the heart of a people. Dining in a lovely and simple home in the historic quarter of Kashgar, the family was warmly welcoming, the meal a traditional assortment of lamb kabobs and rice pullao, noodles, fruits, nuts, and tea. Though Askar interpreted while we and our host asked each other questions, I believe we all most enjoyed the universal language of laughter.

The markets in every town were a riot of color, smell, and sound, from the Hami melons to the ubiquitous *nan* (local flatbread) to the scarves, musical instruments, spices, and knives... Poplar-lined streets drew our eye; exquisitely detailed mosques were tucked here and there in every village. There was always another magical oasis to explore. In Turfan one late afternoon we went to Jiaohe, an ancient city and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Shortly upon arrival, we had the site to ourselves. We dined by the light of the setting sun atop the roof of one of the buildings while listening to local musicians play and partaking of an entire roast lamb feast. For a moment we were taken completely out of ourselves,

no longer onlookers but participants in this landscape. We fell in love with Lake Karaqul, the drive a spectacle at every turn from the river to the wild road, to the camels and the peaks surrounding us, drawing us forward. Lunch in a vineyard under a tangle of grapes entranced us, aware as we were of the desert encroaching, held at bay only by a fragile swath of green. At Subash in late afternoon light, observing the extensive ruins which had persisted against the odds on both sides of the river, made us catch our breath. And then there was the camel ride into the Taklamakan desert, a caravan of modern-day travelers transported back to another era, the ancient pagoda of Rawak emerging like an apparition from the undulating dunes. The sun glinted on the sifting sands and there was no sound save the occasional rustle of native grasses as the wind played through or the camels snacked.

To a person, we would have explored further, we would have crossed additional borders of every kind to continue our journey. Our appetites were merely whetted. And there is still so much more to reveal: the wonders of the Mogao Caves and their sublime frescoes, buying carpets in Kashgar as travelers have done for over a thousand years, donkey cart rides into Gochang, and in Beijing, a meal fit for the Emperor himself! *Join a Far Horizons group and travel China's Silk Road - August 7 - 27, 2007*

Philae Temple

By Patricia Remler

Thinking about Egypt, I am continually drawn to the monuments and the stories they tell. Philae Temple at Aswan has always been a favorite of mine. It was a cult center for the great mother goddess, Isis and was one of the last active temples in Egypt before Christianity took over in the first century AD. Perhaps because it was so far south, the temple wasn't closed when the new religion became popular, and graffiti tells us that in 5th century pious Nubian pilgrims traveled to Philae Temple to "honor the old gods."

The Temple of Isis at Philae was one of the most important religious centers in Egypt for over five hundred years. Situated on an island in the Nile, Philae must have seemed like a great green oasis among the boulders of the First Cataract to pilgrims approaching the temple.

Decorated with scenes of Isis and Hathor and the

Ptolemaic queens associated with the goddesses, Philae is one of the best preserved ancient temples in Egypt. The sad story of the death of Isis' husband Osiris, is retold in the "Lamentations of Isis" a series of rituals and prayers dedicated to Osiris. Philae temple complex remains a site of great beauty and tranquility today.

When the Aswan Dam was opened in 1902, the river flooded the island making the temple inaccessible for much of the year. In the 1960s when the new High Dam was built, the temples on the island were dismantled and the nearly 40,000 blocks were reassembled on a nearby island. The move and rebuilding of the temples was completed in 1980 and Philae Temple now stands 43 feet higher than before. *Join Patricia Remler and Bob Brier on one of Far Horizons trips to Egypt.*

Lycia: a crossroad of civilizations

Jennifer Tobin

The tiny kingdom of Lycia, today located in southwestern Turkey, comprises a chain of rocky coves backed by the magnificent upsweep of the Taurus Mountains. This impenetrable and inhospitable landscape allowed Lycia to stand aloof from major events occurring in the eastern Mediterranean during the first half of the first millennium BC, although the region was featured in the mythology of the Greeks to the west. Homer relates that Lycia was the home of Sarpedon, one of the greatest warriors of the Trojan War, and it was in Lycia that Bellerophon with the assistance of the winged horse, Pegasus, defeated the monstrous fire-breathing Chimera. In the year 546 BC, however, Lycia was wrenched from the dreamy world of myth and thrown into the harsh realities of war when the Persians invaded western Anatolia. Having already easily defeated the Greeks along the west coast, the Persian general Harpagus turned his sights on Lycia. But where the Greeks had given in to the Persians with hardly a fight, the Lycians were determined not to submit.

As the Greek historian Herodotus tells us, the men of the main city of Lycia, Xanthos, locked their women and children within the walls of their acropolis and set it on fire. Then they marched out to meet the Persian enemy. Greatly outnumbered, they died to a man.

The tragedy of this tale is somewhat leavened by the fact that during the subsequent centuries Lycia, as the western-most addition to the Persian Empire, thrived. The Persians left direct rule of Lycia in the hands of a local dynasty, which, mindful of its overlords, mimicked many aspects of Persian court life. Lycia also developed strong trade networks with their Greek neighbors and thus was exposed to Hellenic culture along with Greek goods. As a result, this once isolated backwater became a nexus where Greek, Persian and native Lycian art forms and lifestyles met and combined to create a truly unique and fascinating culture. The Lycians never lost their fierce love of freedom, however. In the first century BC they defended themselves bitterly against an invading army of Romans under Julius Caesar's assassin Brutus. They maintained their independence for another 150 years before becoming the last independent territory of the Mediterranean to come under Roman rule.

Today the spectacular ruins of such Lycian cities as Xanthos and neighboring Lymera present vivid testimony to this freedom-loving people and their sophisticated multi-cultural society.

Join Dr. Jennifer Tobin on *Greece & Turkey: Voyage Through History*, a sailing trip through the remote Dodecanese Islands of Greece and along the southern coast of Turkey.



Far Horizons' Donations at Work!

Funding by Far Horizons helped built a bathroom for the elementary school in San Jose de Moro in Peru. The facility was created using only local adobe and was built with the aid of the local PTA.

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