



from Linda's desk

Dear Fellow Travelers,

Our second newsletter comes as we prepare for our 2010 season, which will mark my 35th year in business. I often think about the early years when exploring new destinations brought me to places like Sicily, India, Turkey, Tunisia, China and Burma, now mainstays of our program. I continue to enjoy exploring new destinations and personally visiting the sites on our new itineraries. My staff, most of whom have been with me from 11 to 25 years, are a huge part of our success as are the lasting associations I have had with our counterparts abroad. All of us here feel that we are part of a vast international family. I am particularly proud of the long relationships we have developed with our clients, many of whom have been traveling with us practically from the start. I am honored by your loyalty and trust and promise to continue to work hard to produce the very best tours possible.

Everyone here is excited about the tours coming up. Happily they are already booking well. We have worked very closely with our partners abroad in order to offer lower rates in 2010 without cutting the quality of our hotels, meals and tour services. I have just reviewed the menus for our Spain tour and can promise tour members that you are in for a gastronomical treat. As many of you know Spanish cuisine now rivals France and Italy. Remember that when checking out our 2010 Pilgrim's Road to Santiago de Compostela led by our amazing Ori Soltes.

In April I traveled to Saudi Arabia in order to plan our new tour. As a single woman traveling around the country with only a local guide, I had many unique experiences. I am sure there were a few raised eyebrows, but I always felt welcome and comfortable in my abaya. I explored the famous Nabataean sites, amazing expanses of rock art around Hail and beautiful old buildings in Jeddah. I also met with several archaeologists who generously shared information about their work and Saudi archaeology in general. Two fine archaeologists, David Graff and Steven Sidebotham, the only American team excavating in Saudi Arabia, have agreed to lead our tours. I look forward to returning in March with our first group.

I believe 2010 will continue to be a wonderful time to travel. Sites are still less crowded and our groups are often smaller. As for me, I am still as excited about coming to work in the morning as I was 35 years ago and am looking forward to developing many more new destinations. I hope that you will help us celebrate this milestone by joining one of our terrific tours.

See you on tour,

Linda

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

ON THE ROAD IN SHANXI

China's sacred Landscapes

by Professor Robert Thorp



Going on the road in Shanxi to track down "ancient architecture" last spring was one of the high points of thirty years of travel to the Middle Kingdom. Shanxi claims to be the "treasure house of ancient architecture" and just so. About 70% of the "ancient buildings" (those before the thirteenth century) are located here. Since all major buildings prior to modern times were timber-frame construction – susceptible to rot, lightning, earthquakes, high winds, and all kinds of human destruction – preservation is extremely rare in most parts of China.

Remote and pious Shanxi has the virtue of preserving this heritage. UNESCO has recognized this by two of its World Heritage designations: the walled Ming city of Pingyao, and just this spring, Mount Wutai, a center for Buddhist pilgrims since the Middle Ages.

We explored several dozen sites from the 8th through 15th centuries. Our week in Shanxi began with the two great temples of Datong: Huayan Si with its newly restored Mahavira Hall (1062/1140), the largest building to survive from these ancient times, and Shanhua Si, where an ensemble of four buildings from the 11th and 12th centuries still stands. A day driving into the countryside brought us to the one and only ancient wooden pagoda, an imperial Liao commission of 1056 towering 67 meters over the decidedly low-rise county seat of Yingxian. On Mount Wutai, we joined pilgrims from all over China and Tibet visiting temples sacred to Manjusri, the Great Bodhisattva of Wisdom. We spent a day investigating two (of only four) timber halls from the Tang: Nanchan Si (782) and Foguang Si (857). Another day was spent walking the alleys inside the walls of Pingyao, a pre-modern town complete with its magistrate's yamen, the Confucian (1165) and City God temples, as well as its historic "banks" and hostels. In Taiyuan, we saw the finest hall to survive from Northern Song, the Holy Mother Hall at Jin Ci (11th century).

Seeing these sites was much more for me than checking off items on my Lifetime List. It was as close as I will ever come to experiencing life in medieval China. And not as an intellectual exercise but in three-dimensions and real time. Having spent a career trying to imagine the past from holes in the ground and broken pots, what a thrill to step over a threshold and bow to the gods and Buddhas on the altar in an environment they have inhabited since the Tang or Song!

Bob Thorp will be leading "China's Sacred Landscapes" again in May 2010.

SCHOLARS

STEVE SIDEBOTHAM

University of Delaware



This winter we resumed excavations in Egypt at Berenike, an important Ptolemaic-Roman (3rd c. BC-6th c. AD) port and conduit for commercial-cultural contacts between Mediterranean basin and the Red Sea-Indian Ocean littorals. Written texts, coins, pottery, beads, botanical remains, etc. attest lively contacts along this ancient maritime silk route with the Near East, Southern Arabia, Ethiopia/Eritrea, India and Sri Lanka. A bead made in

Java suggests contacts even further afield.

In the summer our consortium of US universities and the Saudi Ministry of Tourism continued excavations at Jurash and investigated surrounding areas where we found ancient pre-Islamic South Arabian graffiti and rock art and a Bronze Age cemetery. For an overview of my work in Egypt see: S.E. Sidebotham, M. Hense and H.M. Nouwens, *The Red Land. The Illustrated Archaeology of Egypt's Eastern Desert*.

TOUR MANAGER

FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOURS TO ARCHAEOLOGIST

Carol Schneider

After a career in television production, I prepared to escort an Archaeological Tour of Western Turkey, led by Prof. Gregory McMahon. I certainly was not expecting a life-changing experience. I was immediately awed by the excavations at Gordion and the Hittite capital at Bogazköy, and by the time we reached the Assyrian trading colony at Kültepe, I was smitten – both by Turkey and the science of archaeology. I was also devastated that, at age 40-plus, I seemed to have missed my life's true calling.

To my amazement, Prof. McMahon encouraged me to pursue my newfound passion and so, I began by auditing classes in archaeology and Mesopotamian history at Columbia University. Four years later, Prof. McMahon invited me to join a team of archaeologists excavating at Cadir Höyük, a multi-period mound site isolated in Central Anatolian. I have since spent the past 11 summers as a trench supervisor, excavating the Byzantine sections of the site and now teaching undergraduate students the basics of field archaeology.

Our days are long. Work begins at 5:30am, digging on the mound until 1:30pm, punctuated only by a breakfast break at 9:00am. After lunch and a rest, lab hours commence for the students and I begin my other tasks of dig house and grant management, followed by pottery drawing and work on my field notes. At suppertime the team catches up on the day's accomplishments and plans for tomorrow. The weeks spent in our tiny village are all-too-brief but infinitely rewarding, fulfilling and gratifying. I still love escorting Archaeological Tours to far-flung sites across the world but now view the remains of ancient civilizations through the eyes of an archaeologist.



GUIDES

ALBERT ANTHONY

South India



“Having a footing on the cultural heritage of this great nation at a young age, it was always my ambition to be

a cultural ambassador of India. This profession provides me with the opportunity to uphold and to propagate the greatest mantra of my motherland i.e. ‘let all beings on earth live in equal happiness’ Aum Shanthi.”

Albert Antony was born in Cochin and received his BA in Indian history from Mahatma Gandhi University. During his school years Albert was a drummer in a rock band but his passion for travel started at a very young age with journeys focused on Hindu ashrams and wild life reserves. Finally in 1984, he set out on a year long bicycle tour to discover India and his nation's great multifaceted heritage.

Albert is also the founder of Greens Nature Club, dedicated to planting, nurturing and conserving endangered indigenous trees. His club has planted and conserved more than 50 trees in the Fort Cochin heritage zone. His lifetime project is converting a huge neglected field into a tree park.

As a self described “tree hugger” Albert didn't want to cut down trees for the construction of his home, so he bought a few old traditional houses from different parts of Cochin, dismantled them, and reconstructed them into a beautiful and unique home for his wife, Jasmine, and two teenage sons.

In 1989, Albert became a regional guide and since then has escorted groups with a specific interest in history, religion, temples, yoga, flora & fauna, birds, butterflies, etc. He has guided our tours for over 10 years.

Dear Travelers:

Of late, attention-grabbing headlines in the arts-related media have been lamenting how museums are either cutting back or cancelling special exhibition programming because of the economic meltdown. Such doom-and-gloom forecasting would seem to ignore the existence of the following very worthwhile archaeological tours related exhibitions. Enjoy!

Cheers,
Dr. Bob (Bianchi)

ABROAD

JAMES COOK AND THE EXPLORATION OF THE PACIFIC

28 August, 2009 – 28 February, 2010

Bonn, Germany, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland

British navigator and explorer James Cook led his international team of scientists on three epoch-making expeditions into the uncharted world of the South Pacific. Now more than 550 items, related to those journeys, have been reunited for the first time in over two hundred years. Many of these items are of inestimable value in terms of world heritage because comparable objects have all but disappeared from their source cultures. Their presence in this exhibition enables enlightened individuals either to assert or to re-discover the respective identities of those Pacific cultures and, significantly, to place those perspectives gained into the context of today's globalized world.

MOCTEZUMA—AZTEC RULER

London, The British Museum

24 September – 24 January, 2010

This major exhibition explores Aztec civilization by focusing attention on Moctezuma II (1502-1520), its last elected ruler whose power was unrivaled until the devastating arrival of strangers—Cortés and his Spanish

fleet. The legacy of that tumultuous event and the semi-mythical status of Moctezuma II are assessed through the presentation of some of the most imposing stone sculptures, rare gold and turquoise objects created during his reign.

CLOSER TO HOME

POWER OF EXPRESSION: CHARACTER HEADS BY MESSERSCHMIDT

29 September – 31 January, 2010

Los Angeles, The Getty Museum

Denied a position in the Academy, he became a recluse and created a series of grimacing heads, based, it is surmised, on ancient Egyptian portraits of the Late Period. Each of these heads is suggested to relate sympathetically to a different part of the body so that by imitating the facial expression forces might be exerted on other parts of the body. His interest in such sympathies was influenced by Messmer who met Thomas Jefferson in Paris in order to explore the applicability of his methods to America's wounded Revolutionaries. Rumor has it that many of Messerschmidt's Character Heads ended up in America, some of which, it is surmised, may still be found in curio shops in Manhattan?

TIPI OF THE GREAT PLAINS

18 September – 10 January, 2010

Brooklyn, The Brooklyn Museum of Art

This exhibition focuses on the tipi, that quintessential icon of the Plains people, by innovatively exploring how this little studied architectural form was the primary means by which Plains people organized their lives, families, and communities. The tipi served as well as an essential architectural form for celebratory and ceremonial occasions. Three furnished tipis, one of which can be entered, and approximately 150 objects contribute to a better understanding of this often under-appreciated architectural icon.

ARTS OF ANCIENT VIETNAM: FROM RIVER PLAIN TO OPEN SEA

13 September – 3 January, 2010

Houston, Museum of Fine Arts, Audrey Jones Beck Building

Organized by this museum and Asia Society, New York, this is the first-ever exhibition in the States to address in depth the historical, geographic, and cultural contexts of the art of pre-colonial Viet Nam. The show features over 100 objects, several on rare loan from some of that nation's leading museums, and many never before seen outside of that country, dating from the first millennium BC through the 17th century. The exhibition focuses on Viet Nam as a central trading hub documenting mercantile interaction not only with India, as one might expect, but also with ancient Rome in the remote West.

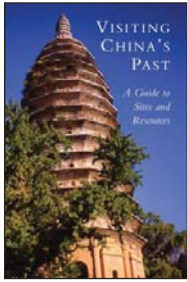
THE SECRETS OF TOMB 10A: EGYPT 2000 BC

18 October, 2009 – 16 May, 2010

Boston Museum of Fine Arts

The exhibition examines concepts of the afterlife in the Middle Kingdom (2040-1640 BC) through objects found in the remarkable tomb of a local governor and his wife. It offers insight into the era in which the couple lived by viewing sculptures, jewelry, furniture and other objects representing high officials of this period.

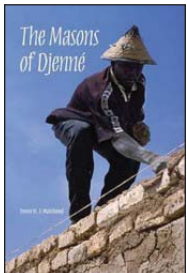
Hot off the press...



**VISITING CHINA'S PAST
A Guide to Sites and
Resources,**

by Robert L. Thorp
Paperback price: \$24.95
ISBN: 978-1-891640-33-9

In twenty-four short essays, Professor Robert Thorp takes the reader on a guided tour of some of China's most important archaeological discoveries of the last century. These sites start with the "cave home" of Peking Man near Beijing and conclude with the tomb of the Wanli emperor in the Ming valley. Almost all are listed on the national register of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, and five are also on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The archaeological monuments of major capitals from the Bronze Age and imperial eras are introduced, as are spectacular tombs and rich Buddhist sites that have done so much to revise our understanding of China's past.



**THE MASONS OF
DJENNÉ**

**by Trevor H. J.
Marchand**
Paperback price: \$29.95
Indiana U. Press 2009

Djenné, a thriving settlement for more than two millennia, is renowned for its mud-brick architecture, monumental mosque, and merchant-traders' houses. *The Masons of Djenné* follows Trevor Marchand after he signs on as a builder's apprentice and takes readers on his journey from raw laborer to skilled craftsman. He explores the professional associations of masons, their social networks, training regimes, and changing fortunes. With his fellow builders, he produces mud bricks, constructs walls and ceilings and sculpts rooftop crenellations using specialized tools. Marchand describes the raising of a mud-brick house and explores the technical, social, and magical processes involved in making buildings.

AND DON'T FORGET—SEE HISTORY OUR WAY!

BURMA IN-DEPTH

January 9 – 30
Led by Professor Jeffrey Riegel, University of Sydney, Australia

SOUTHERN INDIA

January 11 – February 4
Led by Professor Cathleen Cummings, University of Alabama

SPLENDORS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

January 29 – February 17
November 5 – 24
Led by Professor Lanny Bell, Brown University

GUATEMALA WITH COPAN

February 27 – March 13
Led by Professor William Saturno, Boston University

THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

March 6 – 23
Led by Professor David Graf, University of Miami
December 11 – 28
Led by Professor Steven Sidebotham, Delaware University

SYRIA & JORDAN

March 26 – April 13
Led by Dr. Joseph Greene, Semitic Museum, Harvard University
October 8 – 26
Led by Professor Clemens Reichel, University of Toronto

MALTA, SARDINIA & CORSICA

May 5 – 22
Led by Professor Robert Stieglitz, Rutgers University

CHINA'S SACRED LANDSCAPES

May 9 – 29
Led by Professor Robert Thorp, Washington University

SPAIN: THE PILGRIM'S ROAD TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

May 14 – 26
Led by Professor Ori Soltes, Georgetown University

CLASSICAL GREECE

May 16 – 31
Led by Professor Gerald Schaus, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

WESTERN TURKEY

May 23 – June 12
Led by Professor Kenneth Harl, Tulane University

SCOTLAND

June 13 – 27
Led by Dr. Mattanyah Zohar, Archaeologist

PERU

June 18 – July 4
Led by Professor John Rick, Stanford University

INDONESIA

July 30 – August 18
August 27 – September 15
Led by Professor Richard Cooler, Northern Illinois University

BHUTAN & LADAKH

September 1 – 20
Led by Professor Gregory Hillis, University of California

MINOAN-MYCENAEAN CRETE REVEALED

September 2 – 15
Led by Professor Robert Stieglitz, Rutgers University

CENTRAL ASIA

September 14 – 30
Led by Professor Philip Kohl, Wellesley College

CHINA: ALONG THE SILK ROAD

September 14 – October 6
Led by Professor Robert Thorp, Washington University

HIDDEN TREASURES OF EASTERN TURKEY

September 17 – October 6
Led by Professor Antonio Sagona, University of Melbourne, Australia

BULGARIA

September 21 – October 6
Led by Dr. Mattanyah Zohar, Archaeologist

MOROCCO

September 24 – October 8
Led by Professor Ronald Messier, Middle Tennessee State University

SICILY & SOUTHERN ITALY

October 2 – 17
Led by Dr. Robert Bianchi, Art Historian

JAPAN

October 14 – 29
Led by Professor Robert Thorp, Washington University

THE SPENDORS OF ANCIENT EGYPT IN TWO WEEKS

October 17 – 30
Led by Professor Lanny Bell, Brown University

ISRAEL

October 27 – November 12
Led by Dr. Mattanyah Zohar, Archaeologist

ANCIENT TREASURES OF NUBIA & SUDAN

November 3 – 20
Led by Dr. Robert Bianchi, Egyptologist

NORTHERN INDIA

December 26, 2010 – January 15, 2011
Led by Professor Daniel White, University of North Carolina

MALI

December 27, 2010 – January 10, 2011
Led by Professor Trevor Marchand, SOAS, University of London

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...AND SEE HISTORY OUR WAY.

