Dear Travelers,

When I was a young girl, I saw a picture in National Geographic of an exquisite church carved down into the living rock at Lalibela and I dreamed of visiting this site ever since. Last year, my good fortune took me to Ethiopia with our Far Horizons group. Perched on a high plateau in the Horn of Africa, this is surely one of the world’s most remote and mesmerizing countries. There are countless reasons to visit, but what has remained foremost in my memory are the warm and welcoming people, stunningly handsome in their traditional dress. Wherever we went, we foreigners were greeted with kind smiles, good-natured laughter, and friendly curiosity.

Ethiopia is one of the world's oldest Christian countries and to visit there during Orthodox Holy Week celebrations is particularly stirring. Centered in the ancient capital of Aksum, for three days excitement fills the air as priests covered in richly colored robes lead the faithful in prayers and hypnotic chants to God. A highlight of the festivities is the exuberant procession which cascades, seemingly spontaneously, from the doors of the 17th-century Church of St. Mary of Zion. The streets are suddenly transformed into a sea of white filled with women in their finely-woven cotton dresses decorated with colorful woven borders along with men in their draped snowy robes. And young people sing and sway as they promenade waving palm fronds. It is a lively and joyful event!

The extraordinary historical sites are equally as captivating... In Aksum, we strolled among a forest of colossal obelisks still standing upright, marking the status of the Aksumite royalty two thousand years ago. In Tiya, we wandered through the northernmost field of huge incised monoliths that stretch across southern Ethiopia, marking burials of fallen warriors. We saw the royal city of Gondar where magnificent 16th and 17th century fortified palaces dominate the landscape, and in Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile, we voyaged to islands where we observed monastery walls lavishly covered with wonderful 16th century paintings that offer a revealing look into medieval Ethiopia. We stepped back in time as we walked through city gates in the towering walls of the fortified trading town of Harar, where, in the evening, we watched the ‘Hyena Man’ as he fed these enormous wild beasts.

And as we traversed this great country, although new hotels and restaurants have been built, roads have been paved, and there is even internet connectivity in most areas, we rarely saw other tourists. Ethiopia is quickly being modernized. Don’t wait too long to see for yourself the wonders here! Travel with Far Horizons and Dr. Cinzia Perlingieri, an archaeologist who worked in Aksum for ten years, and experience this unique history.

Mary Dell Lucas
Founding Director
Far Horizons Archaeological and Cultural Trips, Inc.
By Barbara Rachko, 2012 participant

As soon as my friend Donna Tang and I walked through the airport terminal at Denpasar, Bali, I knew we were in for an adventure. We passed an exquisitely carved Hindu gate in the terminal and then a sign saying that anyone caught bringing illegal drugs into Bali would be punished by death (“That’s a bit harsh,” Dennis, a fellow Far Horizons traveler remarked). Jasmine flower leis were put over our heads (someone joked, “Exactly what we need after sleeping in our clothes!”) as we experienced a rush of fascinating sights, sounds, and smells. And we hadn’t even left the airport yet!

By the next day I had fallen in love with Bali. Our hotel was breathtaking, especially to a weary New Yorker who’d had it with bricks and cement. After a day relaxing, swimming, getting massages, and doing yoga (Eat, Pray, Love, anyone?), we began our education about Bali’s rich and complex culture. Our guide Budi, who, as I would later find out is a local celebrity, is an encyclopedia of all things Balinese. Over the following days we visited spectacular Hindu temples, were invited into private house compounds, saw dance and gamelan demonstrations at which we were the only guests, watched artisans at work in their studios, and otherwise went off the beaten track. For a place that is so popular with tourists, I felt like we were the only foreigners visiting.

As I write now, some months later, my favorite memories are of the once-every-fifty-years festival at Blahbatuh, standing with my feet in the Indian Ocean at Pura Tanah Lot, having lunch on a crater rim with an unforgettable view of Lake Batur, visiting a gamelan foundry, walking through ancient rice terraces at Jatiluwih while listening to the rush of irrigation water that is channeled down from volcanoes, and seeing a double ikat weaver’s workshop in Twnganan. I still chuckle when I think about our visit to Borobodour Temple in Java. Over and over I was asked by groups of children, who were visiting there on school field trips, if they could take my picture. Each time a solitary shy teenager would walk up to me with her camera, as though she wanted a photo of me alone. When I said yes, a group of twelve or more would suddenly materialize out of who knows where, giggling wildly as they ran up and surrounded me to be in the picture!
It’s always fun to see Egypt’s ancient monuments, but if you have a mission it can be even more fun. Just before leaving New York to guide a group on the “Undiscovered Egypt” tour I was reading Champollion’s diaries. About seven years after deciphering hieroglyphs, the still-young Champollion made his first trip to Egypt and kept detailed notes. One entry caught my interest; it was an inscription I saw on the walls of one of the tombs at Beni Hassan. A quarter of a century prior to Champollion’s visit, Napoleon’s army invaded Egypt in 1798 and were gone by 1801 – defeated by the British and the plague. Champollion spotted a graffito written by the French troops: “1800 3rd Regiment de Dragoons” and retraced it because it was fading and added “J.F.C. Rest 1828.” I had never heard about this inscription and thought it would be great if we could find this slice of archaeological history. The problem was, Champollion said it was in the tomb of “Roti” and there is no tomb of Roti.

This was still the early days of the decipherment of hieroglyphs and the phonics were still far from perfect. It was now a question of deducing Champollion’s error to determine which tomb he meant. I figure the name had to be a short one and quickly eliminated tombs belonging to officials with names like Khnumhotep and Djhutyhotep. The best bet was “Khety” since just one hieroglyph misinterpreted could account for “Roti.”

When our group docked at Beni Hassan, I explained the mission to the participants and as soon as we entered the tomb we fanned out like kids on a scavenger hunt. We found it inside a niche in a wall that once held a statue (photo of inscription above left). Happily we took our group picture in front of Khety’s tomb before exploring the other tombs.
I’m very excited about next spring’s tour of Crete and the Cycladic islands. I’m just back from my summer excavating in Greece, and am already looking forward to returning next spring. This trip will visit some of my favorite places in the Aegean: my first archaeological project (twenty years ago) was on Crete, and the tiny island of Despotiko is the most beautiful place I have ever worked. I am so excited to share these places with you! The trip’s “Isles of Myth” title captures perfectly the archaeological exploration of each island’s culture, rituals, and landscape that lies ahead.

It is an excellent time to visit the Greek isles. The famous site of Akrotiri on Santorini re-opened this year, after five years of work to preserve and protect the site. The ruins of this Bronze Age town were amazingly well preserved by a volcanic eruption, and nowhere else in the Aegean can you get such a vivid sense of ancient life, thanks in large part to the many beautiful wall paintings depicting the island’s natural world and religious rites.

Other famous sites like Delos and Knossos are also looking better than ever, with you! The trip’s “Isles of Myth” title captures perfectly the archaeological exploration of each island’s culture, rituals, and landscape that lies ahead.

2012 and Maya Astronomical and Calendric Science in the Yucatan

By Stanley Guenter

For the last few years the media has bombarded us with claims that the Maya prophesied the end of the world, or a shift in consciousness, or a galactic alignment corresponding to the end of a great cycle of the Maya calendar is going to occur on December 21, 2012. The truth is that there is no ancient Maya prophecy about 2012 at all and the Maya didn’t even have an indigenous term for “consciousness” (it does not appear in Mayan dictionaries), let alone make prophesies that the rest of the world was going to raise theirs on December 21st of this year. And as for the galactic alignment, this is a complete non-event, being nothing more than an optical illusion that happens not once every 26,000 years but a couple of times every year for the last decade or two.

Here are the facts. The large site of Coba, in northern Quintana Roo, is claimed by many to have a couple of references to 2012 on its monuments, but the truth is that these references are actually to the creation date of ancient Maya mythology, which corresponds to August 11, 3114 B.C. in our own calendar. While Coba does not have any references to 2012 the truth is even more exciting than the myths, because it is clear that Coba must have been one of the greatest centers of astronomical and calendric science in the Maya world. The two longest dates in the ancient Maya “Long Count” calendar are found here at Coba and they reveal that the scribes of this ancient city were dealing with calculations for their calendar that were beyond astronomical in size. The highest unit of time the Maya recorded on Coba Stela 1 is so large that it will not change over for more than 41 octillion years. That is 41 followed by 27 zeros, and is more than 3,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (3 quintillion) times as long as the entire history of the universe as revealed by modern astronomy!

What is most fascinating is that the ruler who had such unbelievably astronomical dates recorded on Coba’s monuments was actually a queen whose reign is only now being revealed. Lady K’awiil Ajaw ruled from 640 to 682 and she seems to have ruled over the golden age of Coba. Her portrait is found on four different monuments at the site, the same ones that contain these enormously long dates. My own study of these monuments has revealed that Lady K’awiil Ajaw was arguably the most powerful woman in ancient Maya history, ruling over the site during its expansion westwards (a 100 km long causeway extends from Coba west to Yaxuna, which was apparently conquered and incorporated into the Coba state in the 7th century). However, due to the poor preservation of Coba’s monuments her history and even her gender, were lost to history and are only now coming to light.

New finds like this help to reveal the fascinating history of the ancient Maya – a history that is far more interesting than the misinformation spread about the 2012 ‘end of the world’ movement.

Greek Isles of Myth

We will also venture to a number of more remote spots, like the marble quarries that supplied Cycladic sculptors, and some hilltop sites that were sacred throughout antiquity. I’m most excited about the day we’ll spend boating around Paros and its islets. We’ve arranged for a private tour of the Sanctuary of Apollo on the uninhabited island of Despotiko by Yannos Kourayos, who has directed excavations there since 2001. He will guide us through the Late Archaic complex where, this past season, the Despotiko team uncovered evidence for an earlier phase of the sanctuary. We’ll be among the first to see this new and exciting discovery.

Each site that we’ll visit has its own history, each island bears a unique beauty, and each community has maintained its own mythic traditions. I’m looking forward to sharing these sights and stories with you! Travel these islands May 18-31, 2013.

Bryan Burns
EUROPE & TURKEY

Glorious Greece
This 16-day journey through Greece explores both the celebrated and more remote remains of the many civilizations that have passed across this land. Spend three days in Athens, travel through the Peloponnesian Peninsula, and end in the North with spectacular Delphi.
May 12 - 25, 2013 with Professor Jennifer Tobin ............................................................... $8,995.00

Greek Isles of Myth: Crete, Santorini and the Cyclades
Explore the enchanting culture and rich history of the Greek Islands on this 14-day journey. Walk the grand halls of the Mycenaean center of Knossos. Visit the spectacular Minoan site of Akrotiri on Santorini. And embrace the culture of the Cycladic islands: Paros, Naxos, and Delos.
May 18 - 31, 2013 with Professor Bryan Burns ................................................................. $8,995.00

Ancient Rome and Southern Italy
Travel to Rome and explore the largest archaeological park in the world, a capital that was the center of the known world for centuries. Examine some of the chief elements of ancient Rome and its civilization at impressive monuments and museum before traveling south to the remarkable sites of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Paestum.
May 14 - 24, 2013 with Professor Garrett Fagan ................................................................. $8,795.00 + air

Eastern Turkey's Lost Kingdoms
From the mountains of eastern Anatolia, to the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, to the Cilician plain, through visiting temples, monasteries, and mosques, cities and castles, and the historic towns of the region, with only 13 others experience the history and culture of Eastern Turkey, truly a crossroad of civilizations.
May 18 - June 2, 2013 with Professors Jeremy and Maud McInerney ................................ $9,895.00

The Riches of Scotland
From the English border to the Orkney Islands, enjoy many of the historic and archaeological sites that few visitors manage to find - prehistoric stone circles and chambered tombs, glorious abbeys and cathedrals, and medieval castles.
August 3 - 18, 2013 ........................................................................................................... $8,495.00 + air

Turkish Treasures
With only eleven others enjoy private tours of three of the most important archaeological projects in the eastern Mediterranean - Hattusha, capital of the Hittite Empire; Troy, and Ephesus. Also visit five of nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and Sagalassos, Pergamum, Cappadocia, Assos, and much more.
September 7 - 22, 2013 ................................................................................................... $8,995.00

An Archaeological Pub Crawl of Great Britain
Explore prehistoric stone circles and chambered tombs, walk in the footsteps of Roman armies along Hadrian’s Wall, and savor the view from battlements of medieval castles in remote and beautiful areas of Britain - and rarely be far distant from a source of liquid replenishment.
September 16 - 28, 2013 with Dr. James Bruhn .............................................................. $7,995.00 + air

Greece & Turkey: A Voyage through History
The Greek Dodecanese Islands are scattered like tiny jewels through the azure waters of the Aegean Sea hugging the coast of Turkey. Travel with only eight others by Turkish wooden yacht to explore Kos, Nisyros, Tilos, Simi, Rhodes, and learn about the thousands of years of history along the way.
September 29 - October 12, 2013 ......................................................................................... $8,995.00

The Crusader Knights: Cyprus, Bodrum, Rhodes and Malta
After the fall of Jerusalem, the Knights of the Order of Saint John the Hospitaller sought refuge in the Kingdom of Cyprus, and then Rhodes. Two hundred years later, Suleiman’s forces drove the Knights from that island and they were then established on Malta where they fought pirates instead of the infidels.
October 6 - 20, 2013 with Professor John France ............................................................... $9,995.00

Sicily: Art and Archaeology
Circle this beautiful isle and learn about the rich history with visits to Agrigento, Villa Romana del Casale, Monreale, the fortified medieval village of Erice, the glorious temples at Selinunte, the perfect sanctuary at Segesta, the magnificent Norman Cathedral at Cefalù, and Taormina’s superb Roman amphitheater. All this and more!
May 31 - June 14, 2014 with Professors Jeremy and Maud McInerney ................................ $9,895.00

OCEANIA

Chile and Easter Island’s Tapati Festival
Explore Easter Island’s immense stone statues, perplexing petroglyphs, and vibrant cave paintings. The trip is timed to include the wonderful Tapati Festival, a time of revelry and feasts and of honoring the culture - both past and present. Also including are three days exploring Santiago, Chile and nearby coastal towns.
January 29 - February 9, 2013 with Dr. Sidsel Millerstrom ................................................... $7,995.00 + air

Bali
In Bali, spirituality, religion, tradition and art blend into a unique form of Hinduism that is found nowhere else. This special itinerary includes colorful ceremonies within richly decorated Temple complexes, visits to artisans, fascinating archaeological sites and three UNESCO World Heritage sites.
September 27 - October 12, 2013 with Professor Yorke Rowan .......................................... $9,995.00

THE MIDDLE EAST & ARABIA

The Grandeur of Petra, The Splendors of Jordan
Jordan has captivated travelers and conquerors alike with its beauty and mystery. View the celebrated mosaics of Madaba and prehistoric ‘Ain Ghazal where huge, unique statues were discovered. Finally, spend three days exploring the 2,500 year old Petra, full of amazing rock carved buildings.
March 10 - 23, 2013 with Professor Gary Rollefson ........................................................... $7,995.00

Iran: Empires of Everlasting Fire
Embrace the cultural diversity of Iran! Follow the path of the author of the first human rights charter, Cyrus the Great, and his powerful Achaemenid dynasty at sites like Pasargad and Persepolis. Travel to Isfahan, Shiraz, and other sites, and witness the way in which previous empires have left their indelible mark.
April 16 - May 2, 2013 with Professor Lloyd John Llewellyn-Jones .................................... $9,995.00

Israel: Journey through Antiquity
Travel with only 13 others along the paths of antiquity to Caesarea, Bet She’an, Bethlehem - names that reverberate with history. Experience six UNESCO World Heritage Sites – Acre, Mamshit, Be’er Shava, Tel Aviv’s White City, Megiddo, Bahal’i Gardens, and spend three full days in Jerusalem.
September 30 - October 14, 2013 with Professor Yorke Rowan ........................................... $9,995.00

Far Horizons Schedule of Trips
All Dates and Prices Subject to Change • Revised 9/5/12
Far Horizons Schedule of Trips
All Dates and Prices Subject to Change • Revised 9/5/12

EGYPT AND AFRICA

The Majesty of Egypt
Travel from Cairo to Luxor to Aswan to Abu Simbel, and experience awe-inspiring events as Far Horizons opens sites closed to the public - the richly-painted tombs of Seti I and Nefertari, the Red Pyramid and Sakkara’s Unas Temple, and the burial chamber of the Great Pyramid.
February 17 - March 2, 2013 with Professor Bob Brier and Patricia Remler .......................................................... $11,995.00

Undiscovered Egypt
Explore some of the most historically important, yet often unvisited, sites in Egypt: Tanis, Alexandria, Amarna (with a private tour led by the archaeologist working there), and recently opened tombs near Saqqara (closed to the public). The trip culminates with a cruise down the Nile aboard a traditional Egyptian sailing yacht.
November 2 - 15, 2013 with Professor Bob Brier and Patricia Remler .......................................................... $10,995.00

Ethiopia: The Wonders of the Horn of Africa
In its mountainous isolation Ethiopians developed a sophisticated culture based on a deep love of Christianity. Explore the fascinating remains of this culture, including the underground churches of Lalibela, join the colorful Easter celebrations in Axum, visit Gondar and Bahir Dar, and enjoy a boat ride on Lake Tana.
April 26 - May 12, 2013 with Dr. Cinzia Perlingieri .......................................................... $9,395.00

INDIA, ASIA and CHINA

South India: Temples and Traditions
Travel into an area of India which has managed to retain the essence of its mystique despite invasions both historical and modern. From Hampi to Karaikudi to Thanjore, the temples visited contain some of the greatest architectural and sculptural achievements in India.
January 3 - 20, 2013 with Dr. Pushkar Sohoni .......................................................... $9,995.00
January 11 - 28, 2014 with Professor Daad Ali .......................................................... $9,995.00

Angkor Wat and Laos
An exciting 17-day trip through historically-rich Cambodia and Laos that includes six full days at Angkor, and the bustling of Phnom Penh. In Laos, see Vat Phou, certainly one of the most spectacular of the Khmer cities, and the World Heritage city of Luang Prabang and the capital, Vientiane.
January 5 - 21, 2013 with Dr. Damian Evans .......................................................... $9,995.00
January 4 - 20, 2014 with Dr. Damian Evans .......................................................... $9,995.00

North India
Explore India with its copious smells of incense, cacophony of sounds, succulent cuisine and drinks, and wealth of ancient architecture. Visit ten UNESCO World Heritage Sites including the incomparable Taj Mahal, and Khajuraho with its beautifully decorated temples. Explore Varanasi, Agra, and Jaipur.
January 5 - 20, 2013 with Dr. Kristy Phillips .......................................................... $9,595.00

China: Along the Silk Road
See the renowned Mogao Caves’ ornate Buddhist cave paintings, explore one of the world’s oldest markets in Kashgar, learn about the Uighur culture, and travel through the Taklamakan Desert by camel to see the earliest Buddhist pagoda in Khotan. Visit Turpan, Kuqa and Urumqi and so much more.
October 12 - 28, 2013 with Dr. Suzanne Cahill .......................................................... $9,995.00

Central Asia: Following the Ancient Silk Road through Three Countries
Travel along the ageless Silk Road that for millennia was the link between the great civilizations of Europe and Asia. Follow in the footsteps of Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Marco Polo, and Tamerlane. Experience Merv, Khiva, Bukhara, Samarkand – names that reverberate with compelling history.
September 28 - October 18, 2013 with Professor John E. Woods .......................................................... $9,295.00

Sri Lanka
See the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic; Anuradhapura, one of the ancient capitals of Sri Lanka; the Royal Palace in Polonnaruwa; Fortified Galle; the sacred city of Kandy, and Dambulla Cave Temple – all UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
August 16 - September 3, 2013 with Professor Michael Coe .................................................. CALL

Myanmar
Explore the Land of the Golden Pagodas filled with exquisite temples. In Yangon, the Shwedagon Pagoda is covered with 30 tons of gold. In Bagan more than two thousand spires rise above the horizon. Spend two weeks enjoying not just the fascinating history but the hospitality of the Burmese people.
November 30 - December 15, 2013 with Dr. Charlotte Galloway .................................................. CALL

THE AMERICAS

Capital Cities of the Ancient Maya
Travel through Central America and Mexico’s Chiapas state to explore the capital cities of the ancient Maya. See Copan, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Quirigua, Tikal’s towering temples, Yaxchilán, the delicate paintings at Bonampak, and Palenque, arguably the most beautiful of the cities.
March 1 - 11, 2013 with Professor Peter Mathews .......................................................... $6,995.00

The Enduring Maya: Ancient Cities and Living Traditions
Visit Copan, Tikal, Takalik Abaj, and El Baul, and also experience the world of today’s living Maya. Today these highland people practice religious rituals based on ceremonies with roots in the realm of their forebears - the cigar-smoking deity called Maximón, at churches where the Maya presently worship, and at Quezameros (sacred shrines) where shamans come to worship in secret.
May 25 - June 6, 2013 with epigrapher Stanley Paul Guenter .......................................................... $8,795.00

Bolivia
The Pre-Columbian history of Bolivia has been shaped by two imperial empires – the Tiwanaku and the Inkas. This journey includes stunning archaeological sites - Tiwanaku, Inkallajta, Chiripa, and Lukurmata. And on Lake Titicaca, the sacred Island of the Sun where the Inka believed the sun, gods, and civilization were born.
June 4 - 19, 2013 with Professor John Janusek .......................................................... $8,295.00

Archaeo-Astronomy of Peru co-sponsored with UCLA Extension
Explore the remote coastal sites - Sipan, Nasca, El Brujo, ChanChan - and the seldom visited fortified citadel of Kuelap and Ravash, a funerary complex built into a cliff face. A highlight will be observing sunrise and sunset on Summer solstice at Chanquillo, the oldest solar observatory in the Americas.
June 8 - 23, 2013 with Dr. E.C. Krupp .......................................................... $7,995.00 + air

(800) 552-4575 • (415) 482-8400 • fax (415) 482-8495 • email: journey@farhorizons.com • web page: www.farhorizons.com
The known archaeological heritage of Jordan spans a minimum of a million years, from the earliest entry into the land from Africa by our ancestral species H. erectus until the end of the Ottoman Empire following World War I. I’ve been privileged to work in the earliest part of this time span, excavating sites that are around a half-million years old to my newest focus on settlements that date between 10,000-2,500 BC (Neolithic to Early Bronze Age).

Until recently, the most stunning results have come from my project at the Early Neolithic town of ‘Ain Ghazal (8,200-6,200 BC) on the northeastern outskirts of Jordan’s capital city of Amman. ‘Ain Ghazal produced the oldest statuary in the world, as well as documentation of an ancestral cult that involved burials beneath house floors and the recreation of faces on the skulls of ancestors using plaster.

Since then, my work has shifted to the investigation of the origins of the modern Bedouin lifestyle: the why, where, when, and how people moved into the arid parts of the Near East with sheep and goats as their principal source of sustenance. Work in Wadi Rum, in the far south of Jordan, has revealed rich ritual facets of nomadic groups in terms of buildings that served as shrines dating to about 5,000-3,400 BC or even earlier.

In the past few years, our new work has provided some astoundingly surprising results. In an area today that is characterized simply as an expanse of rocks, sand, and silt, we have discovered villages (!) of permanent houses occupied for months at a time during a period of at least 6,500-6,000 BC. This flies in the face of conventional wisdom: desert resources for groups relying on herding sheep and goats would have had to move constantly, every one to three weeks or so, exploiting ephemeral resources of water and pasturage for their flocks (and themselves). Clearly, conventional wisdom is wrong, and we have to entertain the idea that what we see as an inhospitable desert today was not the case more than 8,000 years ago. http://www.apaame.org/2012/08/guest-blog-gary-rollefson-and-eastern.html. Travel to Jordan with Professor Rollefson March 10-23, 2013

---

Dear Seth,

Today we fly to Laos, leaving behind our thrilling week of explorations – quasi Indiana Jones style – through the various jungle temples at Angkor Wat. Once arrived, we enjoy a serene meander down the Mekong River and eventually reach the ending point to board our bus for lunch. Today’s fare is at a truck stop of a restaurant, but most of our group agrees that the beef and vegetable stew we quickly devour is probably the best, most flavorful dish tasted so far...and certainly the most authentic.

The drive to Vat Phou takes us past rice paddies, shimmering with the afternoon sun’s reflection. We wave at the farmers who take a momentary respite from their work to wave back, happy to share a smile with us, the uncommon tourist. Colorfully painted pagodas dot the mountainous landscape and despite the bumpy detour through a nearby village, our journey today is one of the most peaceful in our trip thus far.

At Vat Phou, we make the trek up to the archaeological site, where ruins of this former Khmer temple complex still stand and where various countries claim restoration projects, perhaps attesting to its historical value. Those brave and not completely exhausted among us attempt to climb the frangipani-lined stone steps up to the sanctuary, which is now a pilgrimage site for Theravada Buddhists. Winded by the time I reach the top, a briefly pause to donate/purchase an incense stick and flower offering. Continuing inside, I pay my respects to the Buddha image resting inside and exit. I pick a spot at the edge of the cliff and peer down to the ruins below...It is sunset and hardly any people remain on site. Some subtle chanting begins from the locals who remain and I know that my time on site must come to an end. So I begin my descent back down the steps, picking up frangipani flowers along the way as my own souvenir of this magical, relaxing place. Already Laos has far exceeded my expectations.

---

Heather

http://www.farhorizons.com • 7
Indiana Jones was in Peru when he grabbed the golden statue, triggered a booby trap, and then outran a gigantic rolling stone sphere to escape the Temple of the Chachapoya Warriors. Despite the fantastic character of this opening for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, there really is Chachapoya territory with monumental stone temples in Peru’s Amazonian Andes. It is remote, and not many get there. Those who do go into the cloud forests to the end of the road for the ruins of Kuelap encounter one of the most extraordinary and yet least known ancient sites in the New World. It is a mountain summit fortress and ceremonial center with massive stone walls and the remains of at least 400 buildings. The site is immense and the setting is spectacular. Although modern archaeological work has occurred at Kuelap, little has been published on it. Most descriptions are superficial, and going there is the only way to know what it is really like. It is not, however, an easy destination. Few itineraries target a visit, but Far Horizons and U.C.L.A. Extension are offering you the chance to see it. We are going there.

Chankillo has made international news, but like Kuelap, it gets few visitors. It has the oldest known observatory in the New World, but most people are unfamiliar with it. This expedition is a chance to view it at work. “Reaching for the Skies in Ancient Peru” delivers us to Chankillo for both the June solstice sunrise and sunset because the place was thoughtfully designed to permit observation of both events. Dr. Ivan Ghezzi, one of the two investigators who discovered the astronomical dimensions of Chankillo and who is the foremost expert on the site, will be there with us and show how it all fits together.

We also go to the end of the road for Caral, the most ancestral ceremonial center of Peru, where people built pyramids before they fired pottery, more than four and a half millennia ago, and to Nazca for a look at giant enigmatic lines and figures that have become world famous—from the air and from the ground. Oriented by the sky, I’ll be exploring with you ancient and rarely visited wonders like Kuelap and Caral, and putting us at Chankillo on the solstice to experience in person what its builders intended it to do. Time and space felicitously conspire in “Reaching for the Skies in Ancient Peru” in an astronomical, archaeological, and cultural expedition unlikely to be duplicated anytime soon. *Travel with Dr. Krupp to Peru in June 2013.*