

THE LANDSCAPE OF STONEHENGE

By James Bruhn

Stonehenge is arguably one of the most iconic prehistoric monuments in the world; the stone circle is instantaneously recognizable. Yet Stonehenge sits at the heart of a rich and complex prehistoric landscape that is impossible to understand without appreciating this wider area. Contained within the environs surrounding Stonehenge are further henge monuments, such as the substantially large one at Durrington Walls and the enigmatic Woodhenge, both connected to Stonehenge by the River Avon and the prehistoric Avenue. To the north of Stonehenge is a large Neolithic Cursus monument that is 1.7 miles long and over 330ft wide. Surrounding Stonehenge are numerous groupings of Bronze Age barrows. While these monuments are still visible today this is only part of the picture. Recent research via geophysical survey has revealed further new sites and allowed us to better understand Stonehenge and the complex landscape that surrounds it.



**Travel with
Dr. James Bruhn
to England
August 15 – 27, 2020.**



Dear Adventurers,

Without a doubt, India is a fascinating and enticing destination. From ancient traditions and artistic heritage to magnificent temples and stunning landscapes, a trip to this enchanting land will shake your senses and warm your soul. India is also a place of remarkable diversity, which is why, in 2021, Far Horizons is offering tours to three culturally-unique regions.

Gujarat and Rajasthan, located on the western border of India, are rich in tribal arts, resplendent architecture, and ancient remains of many civilizations, from the Harappan culture that dates back more than 7,000 years, to the Mughals who ruled much of India from the 16th to the 19th century. Our 18-day journey here includes ten breathtaking UNESCO World Heritage sites.

On our **South India** trip, travel from Hampi and Chikmagalur and Karaikudi to Tanjore, to enter temples that are some of the greatest architectural and sculptural achievements in India. Float through Kerala's backwaters, walk through tea plantations, enjoy the exquisite local cuisine, and experience cultural rituals.

Eastern India is overflowing with memorable experiences that very few tourists see. Our unusual journey will take us from Bodh Gaya, to Patna, to the great city of Kolkata, to Bishnupur's Laterite Hindu temples, to the Buddhist Golden Triangle of the East, to the intricately carved Jain caves of Udayagiri and Khandagiri. Our exploration includes three UNESCO World Heritage Sites – Bodh Gaya dominated by the ancient brick Mahabodhi Temple where it is said that the Buddha attained enlightenment, Nalanda, the oldest Buddhist University, and Konark, dedicated to the Hindu Sun God Surya.

In 2021, we are reinstating several popular itineraries from previous years. Look for Professor Bill Cook's **Cathedrals of Tuscany and Umbria** and **Cathedrals of England** in the summer. Visit museums in three countries – Russia, Paris, London – with Dr. Jenny Rose to view the **Art of the Silk Road**. And Professor Thomas F. X. Noble of *The Great Courses* fame, will lead **Rome and Southern Italy**.

We have also created several new itineraries to entice you! **Archaeology of Greece** will travel from Thessaloniki to Aigai (Vergina) to Meteora to the Peloponnese Peninsula and will be led by *The Great Courses* lecturer, Professor Steven Tuck. Tours to **Iceland** and the **Himalayan Kingdoms: Bhutan & Sikkim** are in development, so make sure to check back with our office for these brochures.

I hope you will enjoy our latest newsletter – filled with engaging articles about these destinations and many more – and pass it along to friends. So many fascinating vacations, so little time.... *The world awaits you!*

Happy traveling,

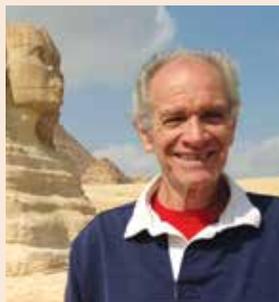
Mary Dell Lucas
Founding Director



Egypt in Russia, Copenhagen & Scotland Museums

By Bob Brier

I just wanted to let those going on the Russia/Scotland Egyptology trip know that we will have an extra bonus. On one of our free evenings in Scotland I will be giving a lecture



to the Scottish Archaeological Association, so we will have a chance to meet lots of like-minded people.

Also, something you might not be aware of – in 1860

a Scottish businessman, Alexander Rhind discovered an intact tomb in Luxor of a married couple of the Ptolemaic Period. There were two wonderful coffins, bilingual Books of the Dead, jewelry, etc. When Rhind died he gave most of the finds to the National Museum of Scotland. We should be able to see these finds. If you want to read about it, Rhind published a book, *Thebes its Tombs and Their Tenants* (1862) with great color illustrations.

Won't you join me to view outstanding collections of Egyptian art in five European cities? Enter the Hermitage and Peterhof Palace in St. Petersburg, and in Moscow, the Pushkin Museum. Visit three museums in Copenhagen, and enjoy private viewing of objects not on public display at the National Museum's Collections Centre in Edinburgh.



**Travel with
Dr. Bob Brier
on Egyptian Art in
Eight European Museums,
August 2 – 12, 2020.**

**In addition to Bob Brier,
see our tours led by
other renowned
Great Courses lecturers:**

- Thomas F. X. Noble,
- Malcolm David Eckel
- William R. Cook
- Steven L. Tuck
- Michael H. Fisher

EASTERN INDIA: Bodh Gaya

– The Awakening of the Buddha By M. David Eckel

About 2500 years ago, according to Buddhist tradition, a man sat under a tree at a place in India that is now known as Bodh Gaya. His name was Siddhartha Gautama. After great inner journeyings, Buddhists say, he woke up to the truth and solved the problem of suffering and rebirth. This event became the foundation of the tradition known as “Buddhism” that eventually spread and transformed the face



of Asia. Buddhist pilgrims continue to make the journey to Bodh Gaya to feel the power of his presence and meditate on the impact of his story. I am really excited to visit Bodh Gaya and the other great sites in eastern India. They say that the Buddha is still teaching the Mahayana on the Vulture Peak, if you just have the ears to hear him. I'll definitely visit my audiologist before I go.

As tourists, we may not travel with the same religious intensity or devotion, although some of us do, but this simple sight of a tree, a temple, and crowds of pilgrims, like so many of the sites in northern and eastern India, still has the power to move us. It is what draws us as travelers to contemplate the richness of Indian history, culture, and religion, to expand our horizons, and to think differently about the human condition. It is part of the magic of our experience on a Far Horizons journey.



**Travel with Dr. David Eckel
to Eastern India,
January 2 – 17, 2021.**

Philip of Macedon and the Royal Tombs of Aigai

By Steven Tuck

Royal tombs. Other than ‘Buried Treasure’ no other two words spark such excitement among both archaeologists and the public at large. We are fascinated by stories of the burials of famous rulers from the ancient world and searches continue for the tombs of – among many others – Alexander the Great, Cleopatra, Constantine the Great, Gilgamesh, Romulus and others. It is only in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt and the Macedonian Royal Tombs at Aigai (Vergina) that we actually have unlooted royal tombs that we can assign to specific rulers.

The most exciting discovery in the Macedonian tombs was in 1977 when Tomb II was excavated and found intact. The tomb contained unique and intriguing finds including a stunning gold wreath shaped like oak leaves, a gold casket

that contained cremated remains wrapped in purple fabric, and elaborate armor. As archaeologists studied the remains and grave goods they concluded that it was the undisturbed tomb of Philip II, father of Alexander the Great and King of Macedonia. The injuries on the body were consistent with those



described by historians for Phillip. And the armor included greaves, lower leg coverings, that were created for a man with a badly injured leg. These features and the amazingly high quality of the artifacts supported the conclusion that they had found the grave of Phillip II. All of these objects are on display now in the Museum of the Royal Tombs at Aigai.



**Travel with Dr. Steven Tuck
to Aigai on Archaeology of
Greece, May 20 – June 4, 2021.**

STUDY LEADER PROFILE

WHO IS CYNTHIA PACKERT?



Cynthia Packert received her MA and PhD from Harvard University in Fine Arts. She is presently the Christian A. Johnson Professor of Art History, at Middlebury College in Vermont. A scholar in South Asian art and architecture,

Dr. Packert spent a year based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India while researching the work of a Swaminarayan Hindu sect that is based there, and that has established a recognizable sectarian identity through its distinctive visual culture of elaborate temple arts and architecture. She was a Fulbright-Nehru Senior Scholar and recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, which supported her work while in India. These awards are a testament to her exceptional accomplishments as a scholar of Hindu visual culture, Professor Packert has been the author of many publications including *The Art of Loving Krishna: Ornamentation and Devotion* and *The Sculpture of Early Medieval Rajasthan*. Her publications focus on Indian iconography, art, and religious imagery, with a special emphasis on Gujarat and Rajasthan. Dr. Packert has been an invited speaker throughout the United States, India and Europe. Conversant in Hindi, she is an enthusiastic and passionate teacher who will enthrall, entertain, and educate you.



**Travel with Dr. Cynthia Packert
on India's Gujarat and Rajasthan,
January 8 – 25, 2021.**



UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF THE BURREN

By Enda O'Flaherty

The Burren on Ireland's west coast is familiar to most as the location of the renowned Cliffs of Moher, but this formidable rocky peninsula is marked with evidence of human settlement from as early as the late-Palaeolithic, through the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, and into the Medieval and Modern period. Described as a 'vast memorial to bygone cultures', The Burren, with 75 Neolithic wedge tombs and 500 ring forts, is one of the most fruitful archaeological landscapes in Western Europe.



Until recently, the earliest evidence for human settlement in Ireland comprised a number of scattered excavations dating to 9,000 – 5,500 BC. But The Burren has most recently re-written history books, pushing back the earliest date for settlement by at least 1,500 years. The scrutiny of a bear patella that lay secreted in a cardboard box at the National Museum of Ireland for nearly 100 years has revealed an unexpected discovery. Scientists have found evidence of butchering on the kneecap, and radiocarbon dating indicates that the bone is approximately 12,500 years old.

Although scholars have always suspected Paleolithic settlement in Ireland, until now there was no firm evidence to support this. This recent detection shows that The Burren still has many surprises to reveal.



**Travel with
Dr. Enda O'Flaherty
to Ireland,
June 12 – 27, 2020.**

Stones, Bones and Silk in Central Asia *By Jenny Rose*

In the decades since the break-up of the Soviet Republic, the part of Central Asia that encompasses Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan has yielded a wealth of archaeological remains that inform us about its original eastern-Iranian-speaking inhabitants, whose contribution to the culture of the trade routes between east and west was substantial. Precious stones of lapis lazuli and carnelian from Sogdiana (Uzbekistan/Tajikistan) were incorporated into the palace complex of Darius I at Susa (Iran) in the 5th century BC; the "golden peaches" of the Sogdian city of Samarkand were the topic of praise by Tang court poets in Xi'an (China), and Sogdian silk was wrapped around Christian relics in

European cathedrals.

Our Far Horizons tour will explore the ancient and modern history of this region and its peoples, beginning in Ashgabad, the capital of Turkmenistan, and ending in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. On the way, we will visit the site of the oldest agricultural production of white wheat, and the world's oldest Qur'an; we will see fortresses built by the Ancient Persians and later local Zoroastrian rulers, some of which were unearthed with colorful frescoes intact, and ossuaries containing the dried bones of their residents. In the region where Timur was born and is buried, we will see spectacular mosques, madressahs, and mausolea, and

witness variant forms of Turkmeni Islam in shrine architecture and devotional activity, as well as a flourishing Naqshbandi (Sufi) shrine. Time will be spent wandering around the old, largely reconstructed, but functioning "Silk Road" cities of both Khiva and Bukhara, visiting the 16th-century Jewish Quarter in the latter, which still has a small, but active community. In both of these ancient trading cities, we will find that bargaining for silk, woolen and other craftwork is an art in itself!



**Travel with Dr. Jennifer Rose
to Central Asia,
September 18 – October 5, 2020.**

Why Southern India?

The influence of the *Ramayana* epic of India, which boasts the most extensive and diverse story literatures in the world, appears at various sites on the Far Horizons journey through southern India. In Hampi, massive boulders appear to have been scattered across mountains. According to legend, a kingdom of monkeys had its capital there. In the *Ramayana* epic, Prince Rama was about to be crowned king of his realm when his father's youngest wife convinced him to crown her son instead and Rama was exiled to the forest. There his loyal wife Sita, who insisted on sharing the hardships of exile, was abducted by a 10-headed demon. To rescue her, Rama needed allies so he could mobilize an army to defeat the demon's forces. Traveling in a remote wilderness, Rama arrived in Hampi, where he slayed a pretender who had usurped the throne of the true king, Sugriva. Afterwards, Sugriva promised Rama his army of fighter monkeys. According to the myth, these gigantic primates don't use weapons in



Paula Richman has been studying India's ancient *Ramayana* epic for over 30 years. Michael Fisher is a widely-published scholar of India's history and *Great Courses* lecturer.

By Paula Richman and Michael Fisher

battle. Instead, they uproot huge stones, throw them at enemies, and crush them. When Rama saw those humongous boulders, he knew victory was possible. In the Vijayanagar Kingdom that we visit next, the ruling dynasty claimed descent from Rama's dynasty. We'll see the impressive Ramachandra Temple standing here that plays a major role in the imperial city of Vijayanagar. When we tour the Mattanchery palace near Cochin's harbor, we will view an unprecedented set of wall murals that portray the three wives of Rama's father giving physical birth to Rama and his four brothers (two of them twins). As we explore the many other temples, palaces, and holy sites in South India we will take note of the frequent links to the *Ramayana* story.



Travel with
**Drs. Paula Richman
& Michael Fisher**
to South India,
January 25 –
February 10, 2021.

Bulgaria's Ivanovo Rock-hewn Monastery

One of the most extraordinary archaeological sites in Bulgaria is the so-called Ivanovo Rock-hewn Monastery, dedicated to Saint Archangel Michael and dated to the Middle Ages. It consists of numerous monastic churches, chapels, cells, and other facilities cut into the soft limestone cliffs surrounding the Russenski Lom River. According to Medieval textual evidence, a prominent Bulgarian Orthodox monk and hermit named Joachim came to the river's canyon, followed by three of his disciples. They adapted a natural cave into a monastic dwelling and lived there for a time in prayer and devotion. Joachim became famous as a holy man and even the Bulgarian Tsar John Assen II visited him for spiritual advice, and then funded the construction of a large monastic establishment in gratitude. It was cut into the rocks in the early 13th century following an old Eastern Christian tradition founding Saint Archangel Michael Monastery. Later the abbot moved to the Bulgarian Capital city of Tarnovo and was elected as

a Patriarch of Bulgaria under the name Joachim I. After his death he was proclaimed a saint by the Orthodox Church.

The rock-hewn monastery near Ivanovo continued to grow and flourish in the course of late 13th and 14th century, supported by Bulgarian Tsars and their families. Some of the churches were decorated with high quality frescoes. They are particularly important for art history because several portraits of Bulgarian Tsars and other royals remain visible. Although the paintings are only partly preserved, they remain valuable pieces of Medieval Bulgarian culture.

The whole area of Russenski Lom is a natural park and in addition, the monastery features in the UNESCO World Heritage list. Currently not all of the sanctuaries are accessible



to visit. But the most important part of the complex, the church of the Holy Mother of God, is open to the public and will be seen on the Far Horizons tour of Bulgaria. Its extraordinary location – cut into a high rock – and the wonderful frescoes will be a highlight of our trip.



Travel with **Dr. Vassil Tenekadjiev**
to Bulgaria,
October 4 – 21, 2020.

FAR HORIZONS SCHEDULE AND BROCHURE REQUEST FORM

Below you will find a list of our upcoming tours. Which destinations are tempting you? Complete the contact section on back of this page, check the tours that interest you and return to our office by email, mail or fax. We also enjoy talking with you so give us a call at 1-800-552-4575 or 1-415-482-8400!

EUROPE & TURKEY

- Sicily: Art & Archaeology** with Professor Thomas F. X. Noble
May 22 – June 5, 2020
- Turkish Treasures** with Professor Charles Stewart
May 23 – June 8, 2020
- An Exploration of Wales & Roman England** with Dr. James Bruhn
June 1 – 15, 2020
- The Archaeology of Ireland** with Dr. Enda O'Flaherty
June 12 – 27, 2020
- The Riches of Scotland** with Dr. Brian Buchanan
July 10 – 24, 2020
- Egypt in Eight European Museums: St. Petersburg, Moscow, Copenhagen, Edinburgh & Glasgow**
with Professor Bob Brier and Art Historian Patricia Remler
August 2 – 12, 2020
- Georgia & Armenia** with Professor John France
August 7 – 24, 2020
- Archaeology & History of England** with Dr. James Bruhn
August 15 – 27, 2020
- Bulgaria: Land of History** with Dr. Vassil Tenekadjiev
October 4 – 21, 2020
- Cyprus, Rhodes & Malta: In the Path of the Crusader Knights** with Professor John France
April 11 – 26, 2021
- Lost Kingdoms of Eastern Turkey** with Dr. Jennifer Tobin
April 23 – May 8, 2021
- Churches of Italy: Tuscany & Umbria** with Professor Bill Cook
May 17 – 28, 2021
- Archaeology of Greece** with Professor Steven Tuck
May 20 – June 4, 2021
- Rome & Southern Italy** with Professor Thomas F. X. Noble
May 21 – 31, 2021
- Greek Isles of Myth** with Dr. Jennifer Tobin
June 5 – 18, 2021
- Cathedrals of England** with Professor Bill Cook
June 6 – 20, 2021
- The Baltics** with Professor John France
June 7 – 20, 2021
- Art & Archaeology of the Silk Road: St. Petersburg, Paris & London** with Professor Jennifer Rose
June 15 – 25, 2021
- In the Path of the Vikings: Denmark, Norway & Sweden** with Professors Julian Richards and Dawn Hadley
June 19 – July 4, 2021
- Iceland** with Dr. Elizabeth Ashman Rowe
August 6 – 15, 2021

THE MIDDLE EAST & ARABIA

- The Grandeur of Petra, The Splendors of Jordan** with Dr. Jennifer Tobin
March 6 – 19, 2021

EGYPT & AFRICA

- Ethiopia: The Wonders of the Horn of Africa** with Dr. Luisa Sernicola
September 23 – October 7, 2020
- Tunisia** with Dr. Jennifer Tobin
October 4 – 18, 2020
- Sudan: An Exploration of the Ancient Kush** with Dr. Timothy Kendall
February 2 – 16, 2021
- The Majesty of Egypt** with Professor Bob Brier and Art Historian Patricia Remler
February 28 – March 13, 2021 and October 10 – 23, 2021

FAR HORIZONS SCHEDULE AND BROCHURE REQUEST FORM

INDIA, ASIA AND CHINA

- Eastern India** with Professor Malcolm David Eckel
January 2 – 17, 2021
- Angkor Wat & Laos** with Dr. Damian Evans
January 6 – 22, 2021
- India's Gujarat & Rajasthan** with Professor Cynthia Packert
January 8 – 25, 2021
- South India: Temples & Traditions** with Professors Michael Fisher and Paula Richman
January 25 – February 10, 2021

OCEANIA

- Chile & Easter Island's Tapati Festival** with Dr. Sidsel Millerström
February 7 – 18, 2021

THE AMERICAS

- Central Mexico: The Toltec Heritage** with Dr. Stanley Guenter
May 23 – June 2, 2020 and April 10 – 20, 2021
- Peru: Inkas & their Ancestors** with Professor Clark Erickson
June 20 – July 5, 2020
- Guatemala: The Enduring Maya** with Dr. Stanley Guenter
October 21 – November 2, 2020
- Belize** with Dr. Stanley Guenter
January 9 – 17, 2021
- Capital Cities of the Ancient Maya** with Dr. Stanley Guenter
February 6 – 19, 2021
- Mexico's Yucatan: Off the Beaten Path** with Dr. Stanley Guenter
February 21 – March 3, 2021
- Guatemala & El Salvador: Lost Cities of the Ancient Maya** with Dr. Stanley Guenter
March 11 – 21, 2021
- Mexico's In the Path of the Olmecs** with Professor Karl Taube
March 20 – 28, 2021
- Bolivia** with Professor Andrew Roddick
May 1 – 16, 2021
- Peru: Hike the Inka Trail** with Dr. Kylie Quave
July 24 – August 6, 2021
- American Southwest** with Dr. Todd Bostwick
August/September 2021

Our mission is to design unusual itineraries to new destinations led by renowned scholars. This combined with our 85% return rate means that many of our tours fill quickly. The best way to remain updated is through Far Horizons email newsletters. Please return both sides of this form by one of the following methods:

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The First Tourists of Jordan

By Jennifer Tobin

Since the 19th century, European travelers have been paying visits to the region today known as Jordan, drawn by the rose-colored facades of Petra, the imposing Roman ruins at Gerash and the windswept vistas of the Wadi Rum. The earliest European “tourists” to visit this part of the world, however, would have had little interest in these ancient cities and sights. Beginning in the 4th century, pilgrims flocked to the area east of the Jordan River with the aim to visit sites mentioned in the Bible. One of these was a woman named Egeria, a nun who traveled all the way from Galicia in northwestern Spain.

In 384 she journeyed through today’s Jordan where she explored several sites that we will visit on Far Horizon’s *Grandeur of Petra, Splendors of Jordan* tour. Her account of her travels survives in the form of a letter, written in Latin, sent to her fellow nuns in her abbey back home, and preserved for us in a 12th century copy. Egeria describes, for example, her difficult ascent of Mount Nebo, the supposed site of Moses’ death, where the mountain was so steep she



had to dismount her donkey and climb on foot.

Over the following centuries other pilgrims visited Jordan, eager to explore the world of the Bible in person. In the 6th century, Madaba, a community located at the foot of Mount Nebo, developed means to accommodate this interest with the construction of a cathedral paved with a mosaic map of the Holy Land. Here, laid out in multi-colored stone cubes, was presented the

landscape of the Bible within the confines of one small room.

Egeria’s account and archaeological remains such as the Madaba Map provide a vivid picture of the ancient landscape of Jordan and the people and buildings that occupied it. They present a fascinating backdrop to our own modern travels of this venerable land.



Travel with Dr. Jennifer Tobin to Jordan, March 6 – 19, 2021.

Inka Stones

By Kylie Quave

Sometime in the 15th century, the Inka emperor Pachakuti ordered his people to build the city of Cusco and his royal retreats at Machu Picchu and Patallacta. But how were these monumental stone structures actually made? Traditional tales indicate that, without iron tools, the Inkas were able to build their enormous walls with boulders weighing up to 200 tons either through superhuman strength or through mind control alone. Or that whips moved the giant blocks into their position that today are so tight that you cannot even fit a knife blade between two stones. The reality is even more intriguing: the Inkas were able to convince tens of thousands of people to temporarily relocate their homes from far and wide to lend a hand for these ambitious construction projects. They built slick mud ramps and harnessed the manpower of many to accomplish the seemingly impossible in building places like Machu Picchu and other stone towns along the Inka Trail.

But the Inkas didn’t use just any old stones for these projects. Sources of

specific stones mattered. In fact, researchers have found andesite blocks dragged from Cusco to Ecuador by Inka workers. How did the Inka aristocracy convince their neighbors to contribute to these colossal building projects? Stones were sacred and still are today. When Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo was inaugurated at Machu Picchu in 2001 with music from wood panpipes and shell trumpets, it wasn’t surprising to the people of Cusco. Today, as in the past, Cusqueños feel deeply connected with the stone-built landscape of Machu Picchu. Along the Inka Trail, we will encounter carved stone outcrops, walls built of particular granites and diorites, impossible scales of construction; these stones speak volumes about how the Empire brought people together and marked their power and presence over the mountain landscape.



Walk Peru’s Inka Trail with Dr. Kylie Quave, July 24 – August 6, 2021.

Imagining Rajasthan through Bollywood Film

By Cynthia Packert

Rajasthan is the “land of kings” once ruled by a mosaic of Hindu Rajput lineages that defended their fortified territories and clan honor against outside invaders and one another. Famed by their fierce martial spirit, allegiance to various Hindu deities, and their opulent material splendor, Rajputs have long captured the imagination of both Indians and foreigners. Nowhere is this more evident than in Bollywood films, where the fantasy of Rajasthan is evoked in the blockbusters *Jodhaa Akbar* (2008) and *Padmaavat* (2018).

Padmaavat centers on the romantic myth of the early 14th century when a queen whose legendary beauty prompted the siege of Chittor Fort by a Muslim Delhi Sultanate ruler. Rather than be captured, Rani Padmavati led the palace women into a fiery mass self-immolation (*jauhar*), the ultimate act of Rajput female sacrifice. The film vividly captures the queen’s ferocious resolve as she channels her inner goddess to mobilize herself and her women in defense of the kingdom and Rajput honor.

Less dramatic, but equally focused on Rajput Hindu honor, *Jodhaa Akbar* focuses on the 16th century marriage alliance made between “Jodhaa,” a princess from the kingdom of Amber, and the Mughal ruler Akbar. Jodhaa is a fictional name and an equally fanciful persona credited with “taming” Akbar’s anti-Hindu inclinations (again not founded in fact) and making



him into a “good Muslim” based on the exemplary power of her Hindu devotion and her ravishing beauty.

Both films celebrate the trope of resolute Rajput moral and martial honor against foreign aggression by placing powerful Hindu Rajput women at the centers of their narratives. The legendary queens “Jodhaa” and “Padmavati” are mythical idealizations of all things Rajput: they are stunningly beautiful, physically strong, fiercely dedicated to their Hindu faith and morals, gorgeously attired, and are prepared to sacrifice everything, including themselves, to defend their Rajput heritage. Both exemplify the mythic glories of royal Rajasthan.



Travel with Dr. Cynthia Packert
on India’s Gujarat and Rajasthan,
January 8 – 25, 2021.

"You Can't Kick A Stone ...:

By Stanley Guenter

The Remarkable Ways to Uncover Archaeological Remains in Mexico"

Mexico is a country with an incredible amount of archaeological heritage and its pyramids are famous the world over. Some have been known for centuries while others have only been found and excavated in recent decades. Sometimes these discoveries have been made by intrepid explorers, other times they are uncovered by local farmers tilling their fields, and recently many finds have come about through scholars analyzing LIDAR computer laser scans. However, one site, Teopanzolco, within the modern city of Cuernavaca, has had its major pyramids revealed by two of the most remarkable methods of discovery in archaeology – revolutionary cannon fire in the early 20th century and a major earthquake a century later!

Cuernavaca was an important Precolumbian city, where the conquistador, Hernan Cortes, chose to construct his palace after conquering the Aztec Empire in the early 16th century. In 1910, the famous Mexican Revolution hero



Emiliano Zapata placed some of his cannons atop tall ‘hills’ on the outskirts of Cuernavaca in order to shell the government forces holed up in the center of the city. The cannon fire shook the mounds and the falling dirt revealed ancient remains below.

On September 19, 2017, central Mexico was struck by its worst earthquake in decades. Hundreds of people were killed and thousands injured due to collapsing buildings. While most archaeological sites saw only minor damage, this quake badly shook Teopanzolco. When archaeologists were clearing away the debris they



realized that an even earlier structure was buried beneath the main pyramid. Investigations are ongoing but evidence has revealed that at least part of this twin temple was dedicated to the Rain God Tlaloc.

In Mexico there is a saying that you can’t kick a stone without uncovering some artifact or ruin of an ancient civilization and that is never more true than at the site of Teopanzolco!



Travel with
Dr. Stanley Guenter,
to Central Mexico
and Teopanzolco
May 23 – June 2, 2020.