



ASA
CULTURAL TOURS

AUSTRALIANS STUDYING ABROAD

MAGAZINE

August 2015 Edition



TRAVEL TIPS

* A hiking stick is often a good idea even when travelling in Europe. Many cities have uneven ground (cobble stones) and lots of stairs without rails. A hiking stick allows you more stability.



* If silence is golden, then ear plugs are worth their weight in platinum. Being able to sleep in a noisy plane or hotel room is very valuable, not to be underestimated whilst travelling.

* Memorise a handful of words of the local language, and have the courage to use them! It's amazing how just a few words will go a long way; locals tend to warm to those who have made the effort to communicate with them in their own tongue.

* When leaving hotels for the day, ask the concierge to give you a card with directions back to the hotel in the local language.



As you move through the magazine, click on the icon for more about each article or tour

CONTENTS

Travel Tips	2
Côte d'Azur	3
When it comes to Art & Design, Chicago offers more than Frank Lloyd Wright	4 - 7
Theatres of Preaching: The Baroque Pulpit in the Southern Netherlands by John Weretka	8
Feature Hotel - St Martins Lane, London	9
Last Opportunity in 2015	10
Once upon a time cloves were worth more than their weight in gold	11
Tour Selection 2016	12
ASA Lectures series	13
Jordan Beyond Petra by Iain Shearer	14 - 17
Snapshot of a tour by the Group Leader	18 - 20
London's unusual museums	21



Côte d'Azur

Coastal charm, grand villas, beautiful gardens, mountain villages, great art and Michelin star restaurants.....



The South of France has a heady mix of Roman remains and Modernist masterpieces, beautiful beaches and unspoilt coves, exquisite restaurants and picturesque mountain villages.

With the 'discovery' of the Côte d'Azur in the 1920s a powerful myth was born. Promoted by the artists and writers the Riviera became a place of bohemian sophistication and belle-époque elegance, forever imbued with the glittering promise of Raoul Dufy's colour-saturated canvases of bathers, palm-fringed promenades and sailing boats, or the glamour of Scott Fitzgerald's brittle, beautiful socialites and despair-tinged decadence.

In the hills above this sparking coast are a number of medieval villages. Perched like hats atop verdant hills, these villages combine the allure of medieval architecture with panoramic views of the Riviera coast and surrounding mountains.

Most villages emerged during the 12th and 13th centuries when peasants living in the coastal towns fled inland to the hilltops where they could protect themselves from pirates and marauding armies. After a post war period of neglect, the perched villages gained new life when the residents renovated the crumbling town houses to serve as holiday residences. Most villages still have remnants of the medieval walls and cobbled streets. Artists and artisans made many of these villages their home. Today when visiting these villages you can enjoy wandering around the boutiques and galleries and visiting many art museums and artists' houses and studios.

Landscapes, Art & Gardens
of the Côte d'Azur,
Provence & the Cévennes
National Park

8 - 28 May 2016



When it comes to Art & Design, Chicago offers more than Frank Lloyd Wright

The Chicago Public Art Collection includes more than 700 works of art exhibited in over 150 municipal facilities around the city, such as police stations, libraries, and CTA stations. The Collection provides the citizens of Chicago with an improved public environment and enhances city buildings and spaces with quality works of art by professional artists.

Cloud Gate at Dawn is probably one of the most recognizable public works of art in Chicago. The sculpture is by Indian-born British artist Anish Kapoor and is the centerpiece of the AT&T Plaza in Millennium Park within the Loop community area of Chicago, Illinois, United States.

The sculpture is nicknamed "The Bean" because of its bean-like shape. Made up of 168 stainless steel plates welded together, its

highly polished exterior has no visible seams.

Chicago Picasso stands 50 feet tall and weighs over 160 tons. The Chicago Picasso in Daley Plaza is much more than just artwork to Chicagoans. The untitled Picasso sculpture that originally sparked controversy in the city has now become one of Chicago's most famous sculptures and beloved icons.

The Chicago Picasso was commissioned in 1963 by the architects of the Richard J. Daley Center to anchor the plaza on the east side of the building. Most public art in large cities at this time was calm and stoic, mainly depicting historical figures, but in the 1960s, architecture in American cities began to reflect the many cultural changes taking place throughout the country. The Daley Center's architects decided to commission the renowned Spanish artist, Pablo Picasso, to create a monumental sculpture for their plaza.

Crown Fountain in Millennium Park, designed by Spanish artist Jaume Plensa, is a major addition to the city's world-renowned public art collection.

The fountain consists of two 50-foot glass block towers at each end of a shallow reflecting pool. The towers project video images from a broad social spectrum of Chicago citizens, a reference to the traditional use of gargoyles in fountains, where faces of mythological beings were sculpted with open mouths to allow water, a symbol of life, to flow out.





Plensa adapted this practice by having faces of Chicago citizens projected on LED screens and having water flow through an outlet in the screen to give the illusion of water spouting from their mouths. The collection of faces, Plensa's tribute to Chicagoans, was taken from a cross-section of 1,000 residents.

The fountain's water features operate during the year between mid-spring and mid-fall, while the images remain on view year-round.

Chicago Cultural Center's Louis Comfort Tiffany art glass dome is the largest Tiffany glass dome in the world.

The magnificent translucent dome, 38 feet in diameter and made of Tiffany Favrite glass, is cut in the shape of fish scales. At the top of the dome are the signs of the zodiac. Now lighted electrically, it was originally illuminated by sunlight. At the base of the dome is a quotation from the British author Joseph Addison. The dome glass, lighting fixtures, wall sconces and chandeliers were made by the



Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company of New York. The supporting frame was constructed by the Chicago Ornamental Iron Company.

Crown Hall, home to the College of Architecture at IIT, is a modern masterpiece that Time magazine



(Article Images)

Chicago Bean or Cloud Gate at Dawn
Tiffany Dome, Chicago Cultural Centre
Picasso Sculpture

Crown Fountain at Millennium Park
SR Crown Hall, IIT, Chicago
Chicago Dail Tribune Building
Train Station at Illinois Institute of Technology
Marc Chagall's mosaic 'The Four Seasons'



calls "one of the world's most influential, inspiring and astonishing structures."

Designed by Miles in 1956, Crown Hall cohesively represents his architectural concepts and theories in their most complete and mature form. A National Historic Landmark, Crown Hall is a straightforward expression of construction and materiality, which allows the structure to transcend into art. Its refinement and innovation place it among the most distinguished buildings of its age and define its

importance in the history of architecture.

Chicago's Tribune, in 1922, hosted an international design competition for its new headquarters. The brief was to design "the most beautiful and distinctive office building in the world". The competition worked brilliantly for months as a publicity stunt, and the resulting entries reveal a unique turning point in American architectural history. The winner was a neo-Gothic design by

New York architects John Mead Howells and Raymond Hood, with buttresses near the top.

Chicago has the third busiest and second longest rail mass transit system in the country. It is known as the "L" for "elevated" because most of the system is on an elevated structure. The train station at the Illinois Institute of Technology uses curved steel beams to form a tube which muffles the noise of the "L" as it passes through the campus.



Underneath the tube is the McCormick Tribune Student Center designed by celebrated architect Rem Koolhaas.

Composed of thousands of inlaid chips in over 250 colors, Marc Chagall's mosaic artwork *The Four Seasons* portrays six scenes of Chicago. It features a vocabulary of images informed by the artist's Russian-Jewish heritage and found in his Surrealist paintings such as birds, fish, flowers, suns and pairs of lovers. Chagall maintained, "the seasons represent human life, both physical and spiritual, at its different ages." The design for this mosaic was created in Chagall's studio in France, transferred onto full-scale panels and installed in Chicago with the help of a skilled mosaicist.

Art & Architecture in the USA: Chicago, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington DC & 'Fallingwater'

5 – 23 May 2016

Limited Places

19 Days: Chicago (4 nights) • Boston (3 nights) • New York (6 nights) • Washington DC (4 nights) • Farmington (1 night)

Introducing:
Professor
Chris McAuliffe



Chris is a Professor of Art at ANU and an honorary fellow of the Australian Centre, University of Melbourne. He took a BA Hons and an MA at the University of Melbourne and a PhD at Harvard University (1997) with a dissertation on postmodern theory and the visual arts. Chris taught art history and theory at the University of Melbourne (1988-2000), including conducting three ASA tours of the New York art scene. In 2011-12 he was the Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser Visiting Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard University.

Theatres of Preaching: The Baroque Pulpit in the Southern Netherlands

by John Weretka



Visitors to the churches and cathedrals of Belgium cannot help but be struck by the wealth of Baroque sculpture that these buildings hold, often the equal of the sculpture one encounters in the churches of great centres such as Rome. Among the least appreciated of the works of sculpture in these churches are those things too easily dismissed as ‘church furnishing’ — communion rails, confessionals, pews for church wardens, pulpits. The pulpits of churches of the Counter-Reformation period in particular are often stunning and monumental works of art. They are complex objects, born out of a rich context of political and religious strife, and are the work of the most accomplished sculptors of the Low Countries.

The success of the Reformation in the Low Countries from the middle of the sixteenth century had shown church and government authorities how powerful an impact fervent preaching could make on the people. From the time of the re-Catholicising efforts of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, new churches lavishly fitted with sumptuous furnishings were built all over the Spanish Netherlands. Pulpits, one of the major sites from which the process of re-Catholicisation was launched, hold a particularly important place in these churches. Sculptors, designers and theologians worked together to create true ‘theatres of preaching’ in these pulpits, in which delight and meaning were combined in equal measure.....

To read the full article by John Weretka click here or visit our newsroom at www.asatours.com.au

Laurent Delvaux (1696-1778), Pulpit (Gent: Sint-Baafskerk) ((c) John Weretka, 2015)

Beyond Chocolate & Windmills: Cultural Treasures of the Low Countries

8 - 26 September 2016 *Limited room categories*

19 days in Belgium & The Netherlands -

Brussels (3 nights) • Mons (2 nights) • Bruges (3 nights) • Antwerp (4 nights) • Delft (2 nights) • Amsterdam (4 nights)

Feature Hotel

Location, Location, Location, Location....

ST MARTINS LANE, LONDON

Located in the bustling Theatre district in London's Covent Garden, St Martins Lane is a dramatic and daring evolution of English luxury. This boutique hotel retains all the youthful, unexpected charm of a London hideaway, at the very heart of the art-loving, energetic West End. St Martins Lane is truly a hidden gem – a newly renovated lobby welcomes guests into high-concept design with the sophistication of a modern museum and the joy of a carnival light show. The soaring theatrical space, a reinterpretation of Philippe Starck's original lobby, plays with colour, proportion, and movement in a way that energises every guest and inspires active self-expression for the duration of the stay.

Floor-to-ceiling windows at St Martins Lane pull the cityscape into each minimalist guest room, offering a dramatic perspective on the city below. The newly designed rooms by Tim Andreas of Banjo evoke a sense of spaciousness and luxury by using a mix of both naturally inspired and modern materials such as linen draperies, a pale leopard print carpet with white lacquer, and etched glass surfaces that shift in color as the guest moves around the room. The overall effect is an ethereal, yet sensuous experience.



Limited places remaining on 2015 tours



Paris: Art, Architecture & Design

15 - 23 September 2015

Limited room categories available



Venice: Jewel of the Adriatic

1 - 15 October 2015

Limited room categories available



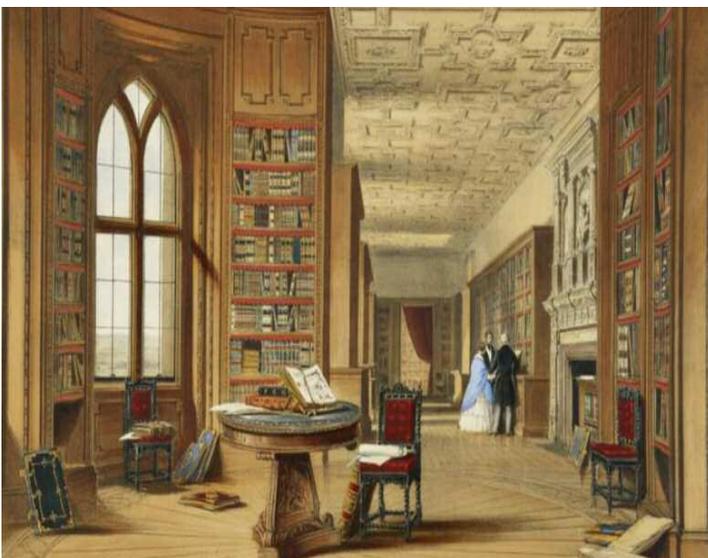
Temples, Monasteries and Tea Gardens: Sikkim, Darjeeling, Dharamsala and Beyond

8 - 24 November 2015 *Limited room categories available*

An exclusive tour through northern India's spectacular foothills, with renowned Himalayan specialist Dr Alex McKay – former lecturer at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

Alex will escort us through the extraordinarily varied cultures of this frontier between great mountains and crowded plains. With snow-capped Himalayan peaks as a backdrop (but no high altitudes included – maximum is Darjeeling at 2050m), we'll visit majestic Tibetan Buddhist monasteries including Rumtek in Sikkim and the Dalai Lama's own centre above Dharamsala, home to India's Tibetan community in exile.

A special feature of this tour is an evening's entertainment from the Tibetan Performing Arts group.



Great Libraries of England

5 - 20 October 2015 *Limited room categories available*

Libraries remain the world of dreams and the source as well as the repository of imagination. In this tour we will visit the great Libraries of England and view some of their treasures. Along the way we will learn how libraries grew from the preserve of the wealthy and the powerful to the democratic and commonplace.

Join Shane Carmody for unique, privileged access to England's great private libraries & visits to famous institutions including the Bodleian Library, Magdalene & Trinity Colleges, Lambeth Palace & Kew Gardens.

The tour ends in grand style with a visit to Windsor Castle, and a **very special private visit to the Royal Library.**



The Scents of Eden: Trade in the Spice Islands

Limited Places

29 November - 12 December 2015

with Em. Prof. Robert Clancy

14 Days: Makassar (1 night) • Ambon (1 night) & 11 nights cruising aboard the schooner Ombak Putih

This tour is limited to 20 participants

Cruise glittering seas on the traditional schooner Ombak Putih to beautiful islands that are inaccessible to most travellers.



Once upon a time.....

Cloves were worth more than their weight in gold.

The Indonesian archipelago of the Moluccas (or Maluku Islands), commonly referred to as the Spice Islands, lies on the equator north of Australia and west of New Guinea. Though there are hundreds of islands in the group (most are very small), only a handful figure prominently in the history of the European spice trade, including today's Ternate, Tidore, Moti, Makian, and Bacan. Until the 1700s, these rain forested, luxuriant, volcanic islands were the only or best sources of such spices as cloves, nutmeg, and mace.

Arab traders introduced cloves to Europeans around the fourth century but sought to keep their sources secret. Their monopoly was broken

by the Portuguese after Vasco da Gama's voyage to India around the Cape of Good Hope in 1497. The Portuguese strengthened their stranglehold on the spice trade during the sixteenth century, when they found the central locus of the spices to be these islands. One of the native traditions was to plant a clove tree when a child was born, linking the child symbolically to the life of the tree. When the Dutch took over control of the Moluccas in the seventeenth century, they eradicated the clove trees from all the islands except Ambon (and a few adjacent islands) in order to enforce the spice's scarcity, keeping prices high. As a result, cloves were worth more than their weight in gold. But, as one might expect, the Dutch tactic also

instilled hatred and fomented rebellion among the islanders. Gradually, the spice was cultivated in other places of the world, like Brazil, the West Indies, and Zanzibar, reducing prices and making the commodity more available.

However, the historical significance of these islands and the magnetic force of spices cannot be overstated. During the 16th and 17th centuries merchants around the world knew the name 'Ternate'. Not many knew exactly where it was, but all knew its name meant cloves, and cloves meant great riches.

Many nations sent ships sailing into these unknown waters in search of cloves and wealth.



A Selection of New Programs in 2016



Bulgaria & the Black Sea: Painted Towns, Byzantine Monasteries & Thracian Treasures

28 May - 10 June 2016

with Dr John Wreglesworth & archaeologist Dr Katya Melamed

Journey from Sofia over the forested Balkan Mountains to the historic maritime highway of the Black Sea, visiting Bulgaria's wealth of UNESCO World Heritage sites, from prehistoric villages to Thracian tombs, remote Byzantine monasteries and mighty fortresses.



A Journey through Minoan Crete, Mycenaean Greece & the Classical World

13 May - 2 June 2016

Limited room categories available

Join Em. Professor Frank Sear, a world expert on Roman architecture, and lecturer on Classical Archaeology, Latin and Greek, as we explore the cultures of Minoan Crete and Santorini, Mycenaean Greece, the archaic and classical Greek city states, especially Corinth and Athens and the sanctuaries of Olympia and Delphi.



Treasures of the Czech Republic: Castles, Towns & Gardens of Bohemia and Moravia

31 August - 16 September 2016

Join Dr Iva Rosario on an unforgettable tour of lovely small towns in Bohemia and Moravia, combined with an extended stay in Prague. Visit the Czech Republic in 2016 when the 700th anniversary of Emperor Charles IV (1316-78), king of Bohemia and the Holy Roman Empire, will be celebrated across the country.



ASA Lecture Series

Melbourne | Saturday, 8 August Sydney | Sunday, 9 August

Lecture 1 | 1.00 – 1.50pm Cherry Blossom & the Art of the Japanese Garden by John Patrick

Lecture 2 | 2.20 – 3.10pm English Houses and their Collections by Richard Heathcote

Lecture 3 | 3.20 – 4.10pm Northern USA: Gardens, Art & Fall Foliage by John Patrick

Melbourne | Saturday, 15 August Sydney | Sunday, 16 August

Lecture 1 | 1.00 – 1.50pm Crossroads of the Caucasus: Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia by Christopher Wood

Lecture 2 | 2.20 – 3.10pm Eastern Turkey: Beyond the Euphrates by Iain Shearer

Lecture 3 | 3.20 – 4.10pm Bulgaria: Painted Towns, Byzantine Monasteries & Thracian Treasures
by Christopher Wood

VENUES

Melbourne: Theatre, Lauriston Girls' School, 38 Huntingtower Road, Armadale.

Sydney : Webster Lecture Theatre, Veterinary Science Conference Centre, University of Sydney, NSW

Bookings Essential

RESERVATIONS: Please book online at www.asatours.com.au, or contact ASA on: (03) 9822 6899,
Freecall 1800 645755 (outside Melbourne Metro) or email: info@asatours.com.au



Perth | Scholars Lecture Series

These lectures are jointly presented by Friends of the Art Gallery of WA and ASA Cultural Tours.

Sunday 9 August - An Afternoon with Iain Shearer

Lecture 1 | 2.00 – 3.00pm Iran & Central Asia: Glory of the Silk Road

Lecture 2 | 3.30 – 4.30pm Eastern Turkey: Beyond the Euphrates, Seedbed of Human Civilisation

Tuesday 22 September - An Evening with Shane Carmody

Lecture | 6.30 – 7.30pm The Rise and Fall of the English Private Library

Sunday 15 November - An Afternoon with Susan Scollay

Lecture | 3.00 – 4.30pm Inside Great Collections of Europe: Carpets, Textiles & Design

Bookings Essential

Please book online - www.artgallery.wa.gov.au/join_us/friends-asa-events.asp, or
contact Friends of the Art Gallery of Western Australia Tel (08) 9492 6750 Email friends@artgallery.wa.gov.au

Cost: Please visit the Friends website

Venue: Central Institute of Technology Lecture Theatre, Building 1 (Entry off Museum Street) OR
AGWA Theatrette



Jordan beyond Petra

by Iain Shearer



Clockwise:
Petra,
Jerash,
Madaba Mosaic,

*It seems no work of Man's creative hand,
by labour wrought as wavering fancy planned;
But from the rock as if by magic grown,
eternal, silent, beautiful, alone!
Not virgin-white like that old Doric shrine,
where erst Athena held her rites divine;
Not saintly-grey, like many a minster fane,
that crowns the hill and consecrates the plain;
But rose-red as if the blush of dawn,
that first beheld them were not yet withdrawn;
The hues of youth upon a brow of woe,
which Man deemed old two thousand years ago,
Match me such marvel save in Eastern clime,
a rose-red city half as old as time.*

Petra by John William Burgon 1845

This famous poem won Burgon Oxford University's prestigious Newdigate Prize for Poetry in 1845. Extraordinarily, Burgon had never seen Petra, but like so many, was

entranced by the illustrations that circulated Europe after Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt reintroduced the city to western consciousness. Yet modern Jordan

is so much more than Petra, occupying lands that have been inhabited as long as humans have lived out of Africa. (Indeed, even Petra still has surprises to offer: recent archaeological work has revealed one of the earliest agricultural communities in the world at Beidha - dating back 13,000 years, to a time before pottery and the wheel.)

Such a density of human occupation, over such an impressive span of time, has endowed Jordan with spectacular architecture from all the civilisations of the Middle East that flourished during the last two and half millennia.

In the north of Jordan sit the beautiful ruins of great Jerash. Originally a city founded by Seleucid



Hellenistic Kings, successors to Alexander the Great, Jerash was incorporated into an expanding Roman Empire alongside nine Greek-speaking cities of the “Decapolis”, forming a buffer zone between Roman dominions, the Nabataean Arab kingdom to the south (including Petra), and Sassanian Persians to the east. Trajan’s conquest in the 2nd century AD subjugated all the Greek-speaking cities of the Middle East, a rebellious Jewish Kingdom, and the wealthy mercantile Nabataean state, with Jerash appointed capital of the phenomenally wealthy Roman province of Syria.

The prosperity of Jerash developed from international trade based on exploitation of the local agricultural base and from her status as a centre of Imperial Roman government. Emperor Hadrian resided in Jerash for a period and much construction was undertaken during his reign. Unlike Syrian Palmyra, or Petra, Jerash did not preserve her pre-Roman character - the city plan is exclusively Roman, making Jerash one of the finest extant examples of Roman urban planning. The city



boasts a triumphal arch dedicated to Hadrian’s visit in 129/130 AD, a large hippodrome, colonnaded cardo (main street), an almost unique colonnaded oval forum and grand temples dedicated to Zeus and Artemis.

Jordan is also rightly famous for her connections to early Christianity – for centuries pilgrims have been travelling to be baptised in the (now

gruesomely polluted) waters of the river for which the country is named. The conversion of the Greek-speaking eastern Roman empire to Christianity during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, led to the commemoration with monasteries and churches of many sites associated with the Bible by staunchly Christian Byzantines. Perhaps the most extraordinary of



these early Christian sites are the churches and monasteries of Madaba and Mount Nebo – reputedly the birthplace of Mary Magdalene and the spot from which Moses gazed upon the Holy Land. During the 20th century AD, Roman and Byzantine churches were unearthed, all of which were brightly decorated with fabulous mosaics. These churches often incorporate the architecture of earlier Roman palatial structures and one of these, the Hippolytus Hall, includes the vestibule of the Church of the Virgin, built above the hall of a 6th-century AD Madaba mansion. The most famous mosaic covers the floor of the Greek Orthodox Church of St George with an extraordinary 6th-century AD map of Palestine, depicting the holy city of Jerusalem at its centre. Comprising two million individual pieces of brightly-coloured local stone, the mosaic depicts hills and valleys, villages and towns, as far away as the Nile Delta. Behind Madaba rises Mount Nebo, with commanding views over the Dead Sea, Palestine and Israel. Mount Nebo is also known as Jabal Musa or ‘Moses’ Mountain’, because according to legend God granted Moses his dying wish to see the Promised Land by transporting him to the summit of Mount Nebo. In commemoration of this legend, a 4th-century AD chapel was erected at Sygha on Mount Nebo’s highest

crest, further extended during the 6th century AD. A later Byzantine monastery was constructed around the chapel and decorated with a series of detailed mosaic floors, including a vine of life and a cornucopia of animals.

As the Byzantines incorporated the architecture and culture of the pre-Christian Roman world, so the first Islamic dynasty of the Umayyads absorbed the heritage of the Greek-speaking Christian world. The power of this Islamic empire was initially based on the wealth of the predominately Christian and Greek-speaking cities of modern Syria and Jordan, propelling the armies of the Caliphate as far west as the shores of the Atlantic and as far east as the banks of the Indus. The great Umayyad princes took to the life of the Byzantine aristocrat with aplomb, abandoning Arab Bedouin tents for palace living. One of the finest examples of these desert palaces is at Qasr Amra, a small and enigmatic foundation consisting primarily of an audience hall and a series of hamams, or bathing rooms. Qasr Amra’s main hall is decorated with startling frescoes of hunting parties, women, and 8th-century AD aristocrats paying homage to the Umayyads, while astronomical and astrological designs decorate a dome in a hamam. Another Umayyad palace at Qasr Azraq was reconstructed in the 13th century AD

by the Ayyubid dynasty from stark, black basalt, to dominate the local oasis. This fortress was probably begun during the 2nd century BC by the Romans, reconstructed by the Umayyads as a desert palace, reconfigured by the Ayyubids and finally - and extraordinarily - used by T.E. Lawrence as his base of operations during the winter of 1917-18.

The Ayyubids, who reconstructed Qasr Azraq in the 13th century AD, are probably best known in the west for the founder of their dynasty: Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi, or Saladin. He and his descendants constructed fortifications across the landscape of modern Jordan to prevent the predations of Christian crusaders.

These Crusaders also left a substantial legacy, with the castle at Karak perhaps finest of all. Initially constructed by Pagan, the butler of Fulk of Jerusalem, during the 1140s AD to protect the eastern flanks of the Christian Kingdom of Outremer, Crac de Moabites (Karak in Moab) is one of the largest of all the crusader castles in the Middle East, rivaling Crac de Chevalier in Syria in size and completeness. Karak dominates the surrounding landscape and was expanded through the 12th and 13th centuries by local crusader ‘Lords of Oultrejordan’ (Lords of Transjordan.) Besieged by Saladin after the Battle of Hattin in 1187 AD, the castle held out for two long years before falling in 1189 AD. Further expanded by Mamluk Sultans in the 13th century BC, it was only during the 19th century that Karak finally lost its position as the dominant fortification in the region.

These few examples will hopefully give the reader a sense of the breadth and depth of history to be found within the borders of modern Jordan – a land with a deep past and bright future, beyond Petra.



**MINOANS TO
CRUSADERS:** 
A Voyage across the
Eastern Mediterranean
from Petra to Athens
13 March - 4 April 2016



Join Iain Shearer on an epic tour and cruise from Doha (Qatar) to Athens exploring the extraordinary interconnected histories of the Persian Gulf, Jordan, the Red Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean's coasts and islands. We study the intense trade in incense, spices, precious gems and glorious silks and textiles to the western termini of the epic transcontinental Silk Routes. Events in this region changed world history.

We begin this extraordinary tour with a special curator-hosted visit of the stunning new Islamic Museum in Doha. We journey through Jordan to Roman Jerash and unforgettable Petra. In Amman and at Jordan's atmospheric desert palaces we explore the culture of the Umayyad caliphate. At the American Centre for Oriental Research we examine the fascinating Petra scrolls and from the Dead Sea we explore Madaba's wonderful Early Christian mosaics and visit Mount Nebo, where Moses gazed upon the Promised Land.

We board our small cruise ship at Aqaba and cruise the Red Sea, passing through the Suez Canal to Cyprus, Rhodes, the Turkish coast, the Greek Islands of Santorini, Delos and Mykonos before landing at Athens. Our voyage takes us to ancient Kourion (Cyprus), the Graeco-Roman cities of Perge, Aspendos, Ephesus and Aphrodisias, Minoan Akrotiri on Santorini, Venetian and Hospitaller Rhodes, the wonderful Sanctuary of Apollo on Delos, and Athens' Acropolis. The vast history we trace will bring a deep understanding of this fascinating region, still so central to world events.

Snapshot of a tour by the Group Leader

Turkey Beyond the Euphrates, thoughts from Iain Shearer

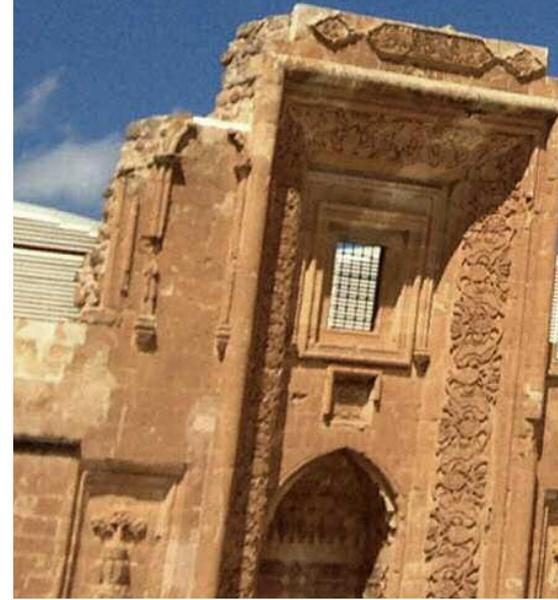
Having just returned from ASA's first study tour through Eastern Turkey for over a decade, I thought readers might be interested to know what delighted and surprised our group the most about this rarely visited part of Turkey - a very visited tourist destination.

Our itinerary covers a broad swathe of southern and eastern Turkey, from the Syrian border up to the Black Sea coast at Trabzon. We traverse a great variety of landscapes, from the hot and dusty Mesopotamian plains around Gaziantep, Urfa and Harran, through the green and fertile valleys of the Anti-Taurus mountains filled with wild flowers and buzzing beehives, to the surprisingly chilly heights of the formerly Armenian

highlands, then down into the humid heat of the Pontic plain.

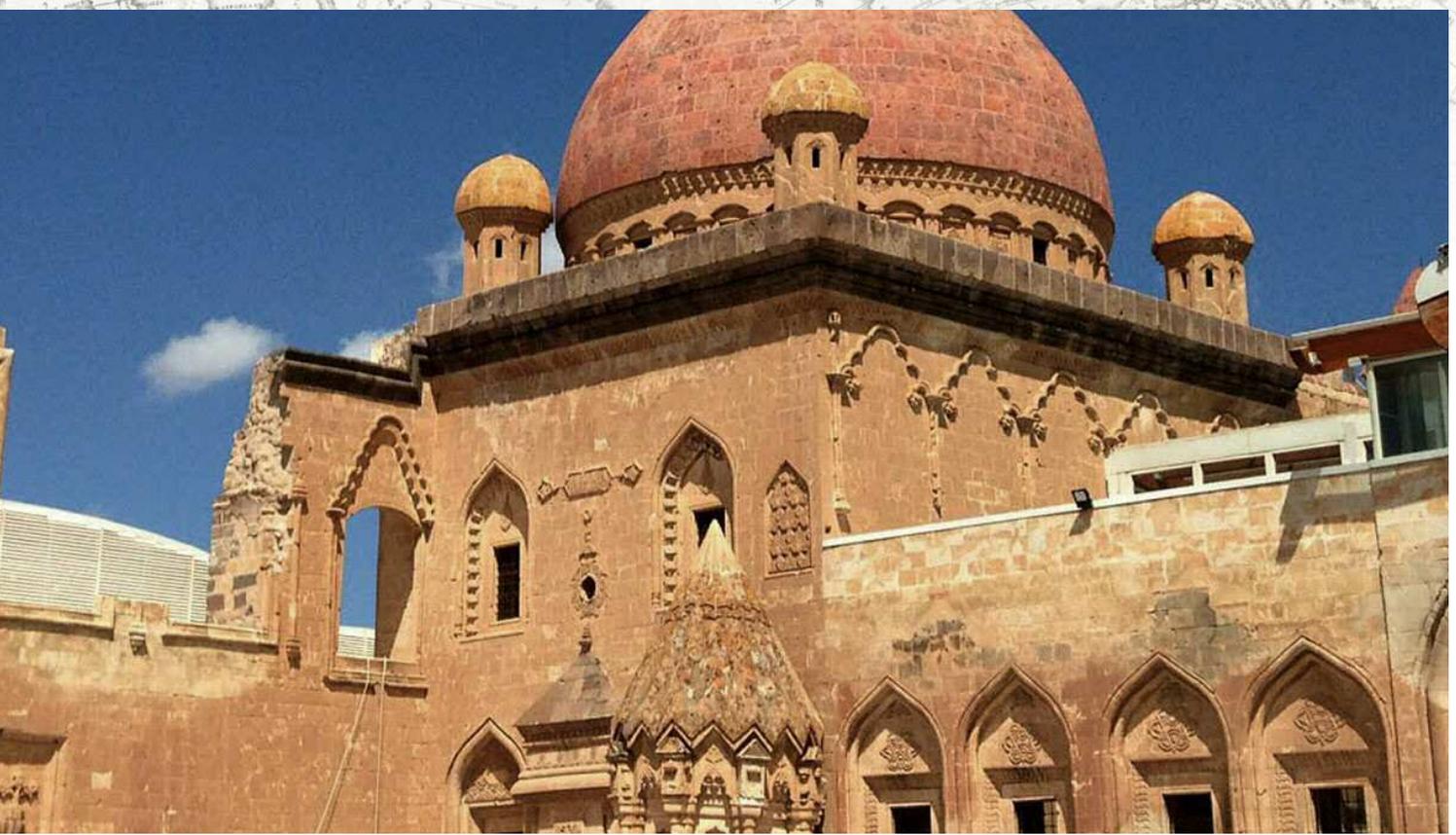
One of the most delightful elements of this tour was our timing. We planned this tour to depart in May rather than September - when consistently hotter weather across the itinerary can be guaranteed - to show the verdant green of the lands of the northern Fertile Crescent. We weren't disappointed. Wild irises and lupins dancing in breezes running over the hillsides around Lake Van and late spring blooms drowsing in the fields around Mardin and Midyat - a last gasp of colour before scorching summer sun burns everything to a blasted brown.

Alongside glorious and significant sites including Gobekli Tepe and



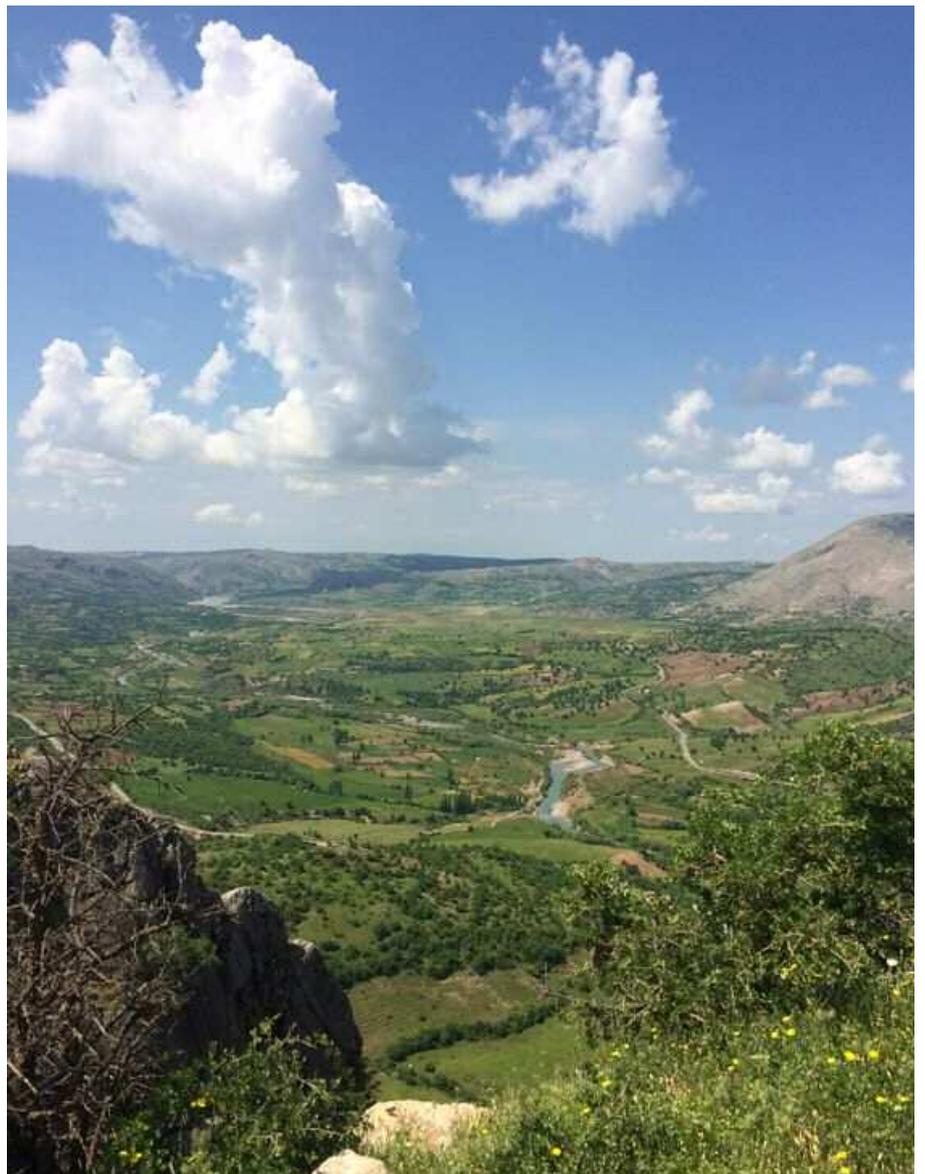
Nemrut Dag, the natural landscape also offered our travellers an insight into the historically wealthy and sophisticated lands of eastern Turkey - an area today more closely associated with the horrors of religious fanaticism, civil war and economic underdevelopment. Yet despite travelling within 10 miles of the Syrian border, there was little sense of insecurity, other than driving past neat and tidy refugee camps along fast and modern new highways. Turkey has taken in over a million Syrian and Iraqi refugees and even with this considerable pressure on local facilities there was little sense of the horrors unfolding across the border. Perhaps the most poignant reminder of current events was the sight that met us when gazing out across the Mesopotamian plain from the lovely, honey-coloured city of Mardin, perched on a natural ridge. The twinkling lights dancing on the Turkish plain simply stopped dead at the border with Syria. A more moving proof of the darkness that has fallen over the tragic country and her peoples could not be found. Similarly, a private conversation at the ancient Syriac monastery of Mor Gabriel between the group, an English speaking Oxford University trained Syriac layman, and a monk who had trained and lived in Canada offered couched and personal insight





into the troubled history of Christian peoples living in these lands for millennia and now but a tiny vestige of their once mighty cultures.

One of the most popular and visually satisfying elements of our tour was a boat ride across Lake Van to the recently restored 10th-century Armenian Church of the Holy Cross on Akdamar Island. This small and atmospheric site, on a rugged green and rocky island in the pellucid blue of alkali Lake Van, encapsulates the last two centuries of history in the region. It has gone from being a royal Armenian palace and monastery, to abandonment in the later 19th century, and destruction and vandalism at the hands of Turkish nationalists in the early 20th century. Akdamar was saved from total destruction in the mid-20th century by the intervention of one of Turkey's finest novelist, Yasar Kemal, who persuaded the army captain responsible for the demolition of the church, that the remains were the heritage of all citizens of Turkey, irrelevant of religious identity. The church was handed back in 2013 to the Armenian Patriarchate and while only open for Christian services on Easter Monday and Christmas, this shift, acknowledging the bloody and complex history in the region, is the first step towards some sort of





rapprochement between Turks, Armenians, Greeks and Syrians.

Eastern Turkey has seen so much history unfold across her crumpled and ancient landscape, bloodshed for millennia, warfare, states emerging and states collapsing, that casual observers could perhaps be forgiven for expecting a ravaged and inhospitable place – yet this tour proved this to be a total misconception, with friendly locals eager to talk to the few western visitors about their lives in a welcoming, verdant landscape of beautiful flowers, soaring eagles and ancient cities.

Comments from tour participants

Timothy wrote...

I can report this tour was a great success. Over the years you read stories of the Greeks and Romans, the Persians and Mongols, not to mention Abraham, the three wise men and Noah in this area.

You also read of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, Mesopotamia, the Silk Road, the cradle of civilization. All these places and peoples make the area a must visit destination.

To be able to visit with Iain Shearer and Susan Aykut on such a well organized, comfortable and safe tour was wonderful.

The ancient sites and the history reveal that this is not a region about facts but about people. School history was never like this!

Thank you, ASA

Lena wrote...

The tour was very well thought out, as I would expect from ASA.

The special care given by both tour leaders and the local guide made it all the more pleasant and do-able.



Julia wrote...

How privileged I was to be part of ASA's first trip to Eastern Turkey. Such an ancient land and so memorably beautiful, in parts little had changed over thousands of years and yet also the crucible for much of our own civilization.

We would still be stuck at 'GO' without Iain & Susan's seemingly inexhaustible knowledge of the region and all its history and complexities, and would still be clambering up and over mountains and through ravines without their humour and kindness and that of Arda our Turkish guide.

Turkey Beyond the Euphrates:

Discovering the Eastern Frontier

13 May - 1 June 2016 

20 DAYS Gaziantep (2 nights) • Karadut (1 night) • Sanliurfa 3 nights • Mardin (2 nights) • Midyat (1 night) • Van (4 nights) • Kars (2 nights) • Erzurum (2 nights) • Trabzon (1 night) • Istanbul (1 night)

Clockwise: Page 18-19 Top - Turkish Palace of Ishak Pasha Sarayi, Dogubeyazit, Left - Wild Orchids, Right - Valley near Apnea Above - Hasenkeyf on the banks of the Tigris Below - Mardin



London's unusual museums

London is home to many of the world's best museums and with such choice some of the smaller, lesser known museums are often overlooked. Below are some museums you may wish to consider when next in London.



LEIGHTON HOUSE MUSEUM, HOLLAND PARK

Its exterior may be unprepossessing, but Leighton House Museum's beautifully opulent interiors must rival the most lavish private houses in surrounding Kensington. The building was once the home and studio of the Victorian artist Lord Frederic Leighton and it remains a showcase for his spectacular artefacts. The central Arab Hall displays Leighton's dazzling collection of shimmering Islamic tiles, but other ornate rooms impress with antique furniture and tasteful contemporary art displays. If possible it's worth timing your visit to coincide with the free tours given at certain times on Wednesdays and Sundays.

FAN MUSEUM, GREENWICH

Greenwich's Fan Museum is the only museum in the world dedicated entirely to fans, a fact that may or may not surprise you. Housed in a Grade II-listed building that dates from the 18th century, the museum holds a collection of over 3,500 fans. Predominantly antique rather than modern, some of those on display date from 11th century. Lovers of fashion and design have good reason to return – temporary exhibitions change approximately every four months.



GEFFRYE MUSEUM, HACKNEY

Anyone with an interest in interiors or design will be charmed by the Geffrye Museum in Hoxton. Based in a series of connected 18th century almshouses, the museum shows typical middle-class living quarters in a succession of period rooms. Visitors start their journey in a traditional 17th century living space and gradually work their way up to the present day. Period gardens in the grounds repeat the process so there's even more to discover outdoors when weather permits.



HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY MUSEUM

The imposing, Grade I-listed Horse Guards in Whitehall makes an impressive setting for the Household Cavalry Museum. The Household Cavalry guards the Queen on ceremonial occasions and also forms an operational regiment that serves around the world; visitors to the museum can learn about its role in detail through interactive displays and can often see members of the cavalry tending to their duties and caring for their horses in the Horse Guards' 18th-century stables.



BANK OF ENGLAND MUSEUM, CITY OF LONDON

This museum traces the history of the Bank of England from its 1694 foundation to the present day, the museum includes displays of old banknotes and coins, antique furniture, historic pictures and glistening gold bars. Entry to the museum is free which, given how much financial pain everyone's already in, is just as well.



Images Left to Right:
 Top - Leighton House Islamic Room, - 1957
 Middle - Bank note,
 - 1960s Living room at the Geffrye Museum,
 Bottom - Fans at the Fan Museum
 - Household Guard and Horse



CALL +61(3) 9822 6899
EMAIL info@asatours.com.au

www.asatours.com.au

ABN 27 006 589 242

Stay in the Loop

ASA advises our community of special events via email. If you change your email address or know of any ASA friends who are missing out on these emails, please contact:
info@asatours.com.au

Visit our website

Full directory of tours
Day by day itineraries
Image gallery for each tour
Tour map
Group leader biographies
Coming lectures and events
Reading Room
And more....

ASA respects your privacy. If you would prefer not to receive email bulletins from ASA please contact info@asatours.com.au and we will remove you from our email list.