

## TRAVEL JOURNAL

### EGYPT TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE TOUR

March 19 – 31, 2006

Cynthia Bradford

#### **03/19/06 (Sunday)**

It was snowing in Marlborough this morning. We had a 1:00pm flight on Delta from Boston to New York JFK and then a nonstop flight on Egypt Air at 6:30pm from JFK to Cairo. I saw the Empire State building in the distance as we taxied to the terminal after landing at JFK. Egypt Air provided everyone with cute little sleeping socks and an eye mask for the overnight flight.

#### **03/20/06 (Monday)**

Arrival in Cairo around 12:30pm local time. Transfer to Le Meridien hotel, Giza by bus. The pyramids are 5 minutes away and visible from the hotel. We settle in and have a short nap after the 10-hour flight from JFK. Egypt Air was a very good airline for food and service.

We take a taxi from the hotel to see the pyramids at dusk and end up taking a long camel ride through the back streets and alleys of Cairo on the way to the pyramids! We survived but it was a little scary at the time, and of course not what we thought we were bargaining for. (We thought the taxi driver was going to take us for a quick look at the pyramids and then take us right back to the hotel. Clearly we are having some language and culture issues on our first day.) The back streets are so narrow that only one very small car can fit through at one time – or one camel and some people on foot. But the view of the pyramids in the dark under the stars with no one else around but us and our guides was awesome. They were doing the pyramid light show at the time in the distance – we will see this from a different perspective tomorrow. We also heard the call to prayer around Cairo as we stood on the Giza plateau. An excellent camel experience, much different than the expected commercial tourist thing you see on TV. My camel was named Moses 2000. David forgot the name of his beast.

The taxi driver is from the hotel and will take us to the Cairo museum tomorrow morning.

P.S. Everyone here drives like total lunatics.

#### **03/21/06 (Tuesday)**

This morning the hotel driver, whose nickname is Tut, took us to the Egyptian museum in downtown Cairo. He told us some interesting things along the way about building codes (so many dwellings are unfinished because generations of a family live together and each new generation builds a little more), the attitudes of Egyptians on a variety of things, and his other job (a farm with goats that he wants to expand to cows). The

museum was great – amazing to see things only seen before in books. The gold mask and coffins and other tomb goods of King Tut were particularly impressive – also the Narmer palette, some of the colossal statues, and a room about kings in Tanis.

After lunch we had a quick swim in the pool with the pyramids in the background, and then we met a guide named Abdul who also works for the hotel who took us on a camel ride to the pyramids. We touched the pyramid stones! David took some great photos. It was only us and the two guides at the pyramids which was incredible and something we could not have hoped to arrange in advance. Then we watched the sunset in the desert and rode the camels back to their home in the village. Two days in a row on camels for several hours at a time gives new meaning to the phrase “walk like an Egyptian”.

After dinner we prepared our gear for tomorrow, the first day as part of the group tour. We will do the pyramids and the Sphinx in the morning and the site of Saqqara in the afternoon and also the ancient city of Memphis.

### **03/22/06 (Wednesday)**

We spent the morning on the Giza plateau walking around the three pyramids, the solar boat of Cheops, and the Sphinx. Our tour guides are Mona and Osama. Mona knows a lot about herb lore in addition to all things Egyptological. Osama calls out “Ramses” when he wants our bus group to gather and pay attention. The pyramids are amazing! We had to wear special cloth shoe covers in the solar boat museum.

Lunch at the Alezba restaurant on the road to Saqqara ([www.alezbavillage.com](http://www.alezbavillage.com), Marioteya Road, Sakkara). An Egyptian buffet with strolling musicians and people offering camel and horse rides – all for baksheesh of course. David wanted to buy the little stuffed camel that said “I love you” in English but I wouldn’t let him. ☺

Then we visited the site of the ancient city of Memphis and saw a colossal statue of Ramses II on its side along with some other statues in a temple site. We drove a short distance further to Saqqara and saw the Step Pyramid of Djoser – designed by the architect Imhotep – along with the Bent Pyramid in the distance and close by some lesser and failed pyramids from later dynasties. We saw some guys taking pictures of a dog and David told them the dog would ask for baksheesh! We are getting a little better at fending off the constant ploys for getting baksheesh except at times of our own choosing.

Tonight we ate dinner on the outside patio by the pool. The pyramids were occasionally visible when the light show illuminated them. Then we packed up and checked out of the hotel because we have a 1:15am wake-up call for the 5:00am flight to Luxor. As we were packing David’s iPod died – this is very bad for our photo backup plan.

### **03/23/06 (Thursday)**

Got up at 1:15am for the 5:00am flight to Luxor. A bit brutal. The Cairo airport experience was notable. We passed through more than one security point but no one ever asked to see photo ID on any of us. Also the TravelQuest reps passed out the

boarding passes once we were at the airport and there was some sort of confusion so many of us in the group had boarding passes belonging to other people. Airport security had no issue with this either!

We arrived in Luxor at 6:00am and went straight from the airport to Karnak (this was a sudden schedule change so that we would be at Karnak during the cooler morning hours). We got to spend several hours at Karnak, part of it wandering around on our own. The place is huge. The famous things like the hypostyle hall and the two obelisks of Hatshepsut were great but there were also lots of other cool things – and quite a few places where the paint colors were still intact. Once again David took lots of photos and I shot video. Unfortunately Bessie did not get to see Karnak – she overslept in the suitcase – David said she had too much milk the night before.

We then were bused over to our Nile cruise ship, the M/S Salacia, which was docked alongside the Corniche (the main road) in Luxor. We settled into our cabin - #106 on the Nile water line which is ideal in our opinion – had lunch, and then rested a little until 4:00pm when we walked across the street to tour the Luxor Temple. This site is smaller than Karnak but still very cool and was actually part of the Karnak complex in antiquity, connected by a 1.5-mile road. The Luxor Temple is built in two parts, one for Ramses II and one for the god Amun. Bessie was happy to visit here and to be in a couple of photos. It was very hot even at 5:00pm in the shady parts of the temple so we were glad they had us do Karnak early this morning instead, as there was no shade there.

Tomorrow will be an early start again (4:45am wake-up call – we get to sleep in an extra 3.5 hours from today!) to go to the Valley of the Kings and the mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut before it gets too hot.

P.S. David's iPod came back to life this afternoon which is good but we can't help but be a little nervous about its reliability as a photo backup system – and we have taken many photos already! The cruise ship is comfortable but small and old (keys in the door and sand buckets in the hallway for fire control). We will start to cruise the Nile tomorrow afternoon.

### **03/24/06 (Friday)**

We left at 5:45am to tour the West Bank of Luxor. First we went to the Valley of the Kings and saw the tombs of Ramses IV, Ramses III, Tutankhamun, and Merenptah. The tomb wall paintings are astounding. They do not let you take photos or video inside the tombs. It was incredibly hot even so early in the morning. We then went to the mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Deir el Bahiri. A part of that was a chapel dedicated to the goddess Hathor (she is depicted in the form of a cow so Bessie liked that a lot). Then we went to the Valley of the Queens and saw the tomb of a son of Ramses II. This tomb had some beautiful wall paintings of the goddess Isis. Then we briefly saw the two colossi of Memnon before riding back to the ship and starting the cruise south up the Nile.

At each site you have to run a gauntlet of vendors selling all sorts of things that “they made themselves” but then you see identical stuff at the next site! We made one purchase at the Valley of the Kings, a set of four small figurines, after bargaining the guy down 50% from the initial asking price in about 30 seconds.

It's hard to describe how beautiful some of the tomb paintings are – stars on the blue ceilings, snakes with and without feet, the flying eye, some of the colors look so fresh even after thousands of years, everything from tiny little symbols to wall-size figures of gods and kings. Our guide Osama told us lots of interesting stuff again today and cued us to look for certain special things before we went into each tomb. He asked David to email him some of our photos for a presentation that he is putting together for the youth group in his church.

As we ate lunch we started the cruise south up the Nile – hard to believe we are really doing this. A fun lunch with Walter and Joan (we had met them earlier) and a new couple named Craig and Krista. Walt got busted this morning trying to take a picture inside King Tut's tomb and he and Joan apparently had to argue quite extensively with the guards to get their camera back. (It turns out this was probably why the tomb was completely empty when David and I first walked in, because everyone was busy with Walt!) Walt and Joan are from Arizona, he is a physician and she is a biochemist, and Craig and Krista are from Oklahoma, he is a minister and she is a dentist.

One weird thing today was that when we got back to the bus after the Valley of the Queens, two of the other guys in the group had not only taken our seats even though our bag of figurine souvenirs was there, but they had also taken our bottle of water that we had left there to stay cool in the bus. David said to me later that he thinks stealing water in the desert is a killing offense. And there was a cooler of water bottles on the bus for people!

Today's afternoon and evening are for relaxing and catching up on some sleep.

### **03/25/06 (Saturday)**

This morning we went to the temple of Horus in Edfu. This temple was built by the Greeks but is very Egyptian in style. The itinerary had said we would go to this temple by horse-drawn carriage – and there were a lot of those on the streets – but we ended up going by bus for whatever reason. A little disappointing but no big deal, and certainly it was a cooler and faster journey in the bus. The temple had lots of well-preserved wall carvings and two large statues of Horus in particular. There was also a Nilometer – you could see the river flowing by through the small square opening, I have always wondered what a Nilometer actually looked like – and there was an intact boat used in the procession of the god's statue. Osama was his usual excellent self with narration and pointing out items of special note. He has a wonderful collection of Egyptian t-shirts!

Then we cruised south a little more on our way to Kom Ombo. We took some photos and video of the passing landscape from the top deck after lunch. We are a little late arriving at Kom Ombo so in the meantime David is having a quick nap and I had

afternoon tea in the lounge with a man named Tony who is from England – a most appropriate companion for afternoon tea – his wife was napping too! The boat is starting to slow down so I think we're almost at Kom Ombo.

The temple at Kom Ombo was very interesting – unlike many sites that are specific to one god, this one was a dual temple for Hathor the cow goddess and Sobek the crocodile god. There were also many interesting wall carvings about medicine in ancient times – David's Dad would have enjoyed this I think. And there was a lovely sunset over the river as we toured the temple.

Unfortunately David had started to feel unwell and he got much worse very suddenly – some stomach malaise but primarily a high fever (102+ F) that we could not get under control even after hours of Tylenol and cool towels – there is no ice of course and no bathtub in the ship's cabin for cooling – and no drug store while cruising the Nile during the night. Osama helped greatly by conveying to the front desk in Arabic our urgent need for something to control the fever and he gave us some of his own pills for stomach control. One of the ship's crew went to the pharmacy in Aswan as soon as we docked at midnight for fever control medication (there was nothing on board) and that took effect shortly thereafter. We had to bail on the 4:00am wake-up call for the flight to tour Abu Simbel – although a number of people had to do this – it seems that sudden illness is rampant throughout the tour group. This is disappointing but the important thing is that David's fever started to abate after many scary hours.

### **03/26/06 (Sunday)**

We slept all morning after being awake for most of the night. David's temperature is back to normal but we decided to skip the 1:30pm tour of the temple of Isis at Philae – it is now the hottest part of the day – and try to go later this afternoon on the felucca ride on the Nile and tea at a nearby hotel.

The sail in a felucca was very lovely and peaceful. We saw an interesting carving and statue niche on a large boulder that was apparently a boundary indication of the Egyptian empire in ancient times. Then we had tea on the terrace of the Old Cataract Hotel in Aswan and watched the sunset. The hotel used to be the palace of Farouk, the last king of Egypt in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There were pretty flowers all over the grounds and live music (no baksheesh needed!) while we had tea in beautiful etched crystal glasses.

David's stomach is still sick and now I am starting to feel bad too. We ate almost no dinner. This was a pity from my perspective as they were doing a special seafood buffet. I overheard a fellow passenger in the lobby who is a doctor (not Walt) say that the CDC website indicates that almost all visitors to Egypt get stomach sick no matter how careful they are about hand washing and food choices – and I was glad to hear him say that the drug the health center gave us (Ciprofloxacin) is the best treatment both before and during illness. Still, we both had a very uncomfortable night. We are very disappointed to have missed both Abu Simbel and the temple of Isis today but there was no choice.

### **03/27/06 (Monday)**

Another brutal 4:00am wake-up call today for the 7:00am flight from Aswan to Cairo. The Aswan airport security was as cursory as that in Cairo and we once again had boarding passes that were not in our own names. We are both still sick, as are many others in our group. We decided to skip today's scheduled visits to old Cairo and the Cairo museum and joined the group on the "sick bus" going straight from the Cairo airport back to Le Meridien hotel. We had to wait in the hotel lobby for a few hours for the rooms to be prepared since we arrived so early in the day. The Cairo traffic outside is still an unending cacophony of beeping horns! Both Luxor and Aswan were quite different – wild drivers but not nearly as many on the streets at one time. We are feeling a little better this afternoon but are very glad to be hanging out quietly in the hotel room rather than doing tour things.

We watched some Omar Sharif movies on TV (today is his birthday) and opted for nibbling at room service for dinner. It rained this evening!! Quite a lot of water and wind lashing at the hotel windows. Very bizarre in the desert.

### **03/28/06 (Tuesday)**

This morning we are going by bus to Marsa Matrouh on the Mediterranean coast in the western Sahara (by the way, the guide Mona said that you do not say "Sahara Desert" because Sahara means desert in Arabic). We will stay for two nights at the Beau Site hotel in Marsa Matrouh – the solar eclipse will be tomorrow. We will visit the World War II site of El Alamein today on the way to Marsa Matrouh.

The Cairo traffic was its usual adventure – it took us over an hour to go the first few kilometers. The road through the desert was interesting. It took about 3.5 hours to get to El Alamein. The desert is fairly bleak but there was no shortage of billboards on the first stretch until we made the turn west. An odd thing is that there would be several billboards in a row advertising the same product and often with identical displays. After the turn west to a different road the billboards were replaced by numerous mixed herds of sheep and goats. We toured the war museum at El Alamein and saw lots of old vehicles on display outside. There was also a cemetery down the road for the British and the Australians – the Germans and Italians were interred at a different location. David took lots of pictures at the museum. Then we drove a little further west and had lunch at a resort on the sea – that place had a gorgeous indoor swimming pool with rock formations. After that it was another two hours or so west on the bus to our hotel at Marsa Matrouh. We arrived at dark so there wasn't a chance to walk along the seashore today but our room view is great overlooking the water. They have a large desert tent with oriental rugs on the floor set up on the beach for our meals. The hotel is a summer resort that has opened up especially in the off season for our group.

### **03/29/06 (Wednesday)**

Eclipse day!

We left the hotel at 5:30am for a 2.5-hour bus ride west to the town of Saloum – this is just a short distance from the Libyan border. The town is lovely, right on the seashore.

We drove up a winding mountain road to a plateau. Lots of security and literally thousands of people here to view the eclipse. We have special badges to wear for the day. We got to our designated area around 8:30am. It was cold and foggy (not at all like the hot sand that we had envisioned!). We got nicely set up with Walt, Joan, Craig, and Krista. David snagged some chairs from under a tarp (and then it seemed like everyone else followed his lead) and Walt snagged a large round table so we are quite comfortable. Our large sheet of mylar was a great hit – lots of people cut pieces for themselves. Right across the street from our parking lot location is a viewing stand and two large elaborate tents. President Mubarak and Prince Charles are rumored to be arriving in the next few minutes. A press guy said that they will park and emerge just yards away from us. The partial eclipse phase will start in about 30 minutes. A helicopter is arriving. More later.

So it turns out that Mubarak, his wife, their son, and the son's fiancée showed up but Charles and Camilla did not. We did not see them or get pictures. They arrived so close to totality that we were all set up for that.

The eclipse was magnificent!! The totality phase goes by so quickly. Many people who had seen a total eclipse before said that this was one of the most beautiful ever. David is very happy that his photos look quite good on initial scan. The total eclipse is such an emotional experience. The 360-degree sudden sunset on the horizon just before totality was very cool. No one saw shadow bands. A native guy hung around us for much of the day – he seemed very fascinated by the views through the solar glasses and the telescopes. Some of the other locals never even looked up during totality. One guy right in front of us was talking on his cell phone! Krista had a special birthday bottle of wine from Lichtenstein that she shared with the other five of us in celebration after totality was over. We got sunburned during the wait afterwards for the buses to pick us up because everything was in a security lockdown for a long time until the political types left the area.

There was a celebration dinner in the tent back at the hotel. Walt and Joan were a riot on the dance floor.

We are scheduled to leave at 6:30am tomorrow for the long bus ride back to Cairo. It will be our last full day in Egypt.

Also we walked on the beach and I put my feet in the Mediterranean Sea before dinner. Some people went for a swim but I thought it was a little cool for that.

### **03/30/06 (Thursday)**

Today is our last full day in Egypt. We will travel from Marsa Matrouh to Cairo this morning, and then have the afternoon free before a 6:00pm group farewell dinner.

We arrived back in Cairo around 1:00pm. One amusing thing on the way back was that the driver took a wrong turn as we approached Cairo (he thought we were going to the other Le Meridien hotel that is downtown) – he was all the way at the top of a long

curved exit ramp and he backed the bus down the entire length of the exit ramp! A police car passed us and didn't have any problem with what we were doing. He just honked in the usual fashion to let us know he was there. Osama said the wrong turn would have added an extra hour to the drive.

Back at the hotel we reserved space for the 7:30pm light and sound show at the pyramids and then we went to lunch with Dave and Jessica at the Mena House hotel, which was a 15-minute walk away. We survived crossing the street on foot but it was a close thing! Dave is a science writer for Sky & Telescope magazine and Jessica is a postdoctoral researcher at MIT. The Mena House hotel is amazingly beautiful. I ate koshari, a very popular Egyptian dish of lentils, pasta, tomatoes, and onions. On the walk back David and I stopped at Funky Brothers and bought some nice Egyptian cotton products. Then we swam in the pool one last time. The pyramid light and sound show was great fun. Afterwards we heard some guy ask his friend if that was the real Sphinx! And his friend talked about when he saw King Tut's tomb in Fort Lauderdale! Where do these people come from?!

Forget to say earlier that Bessie watched the sunrise over the Mediterranean Sea while sitting on the beach before we left Marsa Matrouh this morning.

We had to skip the group farewell dinner to do the pyramid show but it was well worth it.

### **03/31/06 (Friday)**

Left the hotel at 7:00am for the 10:00am flight from Cairo to JFK in New York. It was a mob scene at the airport. Nothing but middle seats left for the 12-hour flight by the time it was our turn at the counter so we upgraded to first class. This is great! We are seated in row 1 with tons of leg room, private TV screens at each seat, very cute Horus slippers, more great local music on the audio channel, and no one either behind us or across the aisle. We got to chill in the first class lounge before boarding – Egypt Air boards first class last rather than first which is also a nice touch. They really seem to be a very classy operation in general.

So right now we are in the first hour of the flight, arrival at JFK will be around 3:00pm local time (10:00pm Cairo time!) and then we will connect to a Delta flight to Boston after a few hours of layover and fun in customs and immigration.

Egypt Air displays screens that show flight progress on a map and stats about speed, distance, and time along with a screen that shows a view of the world through the cockpit window – very cool.

Did I mention how much we are enjoying the journey in first class?!

The breakfast service was amazing. Individual linen tablecloths and napkins and S&P shakers and enough food for at least two meals and all delicious. I have taken pictures out the window of Crete and Greece and Italy should be in view soon.

The lunch service was equally impressive except for the sushi appetizer course.

I took some photos of southern Italy but then there was a lot of cloud cover until Ireland, when I got a few more shots. We were too far away from Iceland and Greenland for photos, and once again too high above the clouds over Canada and Boston for any pictures.

Immigration and customs at JFK were a breeze but the airport itself is very user-unfriendly. After taking the air train to switch from the international terminal to the domestic Delta terminal, we had to wheel the luggage cart forever up steep inclines and in the street against traffic because the sidewalks are too narrow for the luggage carts!

Forget to mention one other good thing about Egypt Air – they do not chatter constantly over the PA system – just the basic info on takeoff and landing, which is great – and of course it is all in Arabic first and then in English for the infidels.

We arrived home at 10:00pm Boston time (5:00am Cairo time) – 24 hours from morning alarm clock to final arrival home. Robert, Ramses, and Isis were very happy to welcome us home. All was well. They had a great time sniffing the exotic smells of the luggage. We are exhausted from the journey but the trip itself was fantastic.

### **A few supplemental thoughts:**

David asked me to write that the hustle always starts with “Hello. How are you? Welcome to Egypt.” Answer any of this at your own risk.

Baksheesh as a custom of the country is okay, but breaking all the toilet paper dispensers in 100% of the public restrooms in order to extort money for miniscule portions of toilet paper is rather outrageous, in my humble opinion.

I swear there is a nationwide conspiracy to never give change in small bills, making the whole baksheesh issue even more of a challenge. Vendors resist giving change and when forced to it will round the price (usually to your disadvantage but sometimes even to their own) in order to avoid giving 1 and 5 pound notes. Even the hotel bank refused to provide small bills during currency exchange when asked specifically to do so. Very weird.

For some reason all the small Nile water craft use oars that are thin at both ends and the people seem to work very hard to row. Why did they never develop the kind of oar shape that you see elsewhere? I never did get around to asking Osama about this.

By the end of the tour we were both craving something salty – the can of Pringles that we found on the last day was heaven. There is no shortage of available sweet things to eat in the country but almost nothing in the way of salty snacks. Also there was a strange thing about the salt and pepper shakers on tables in public eating areas.

Sometimes the shaker with the single hole would be the salt and sometimes it would be the pepper.

The hotel rooms had green arrows on the ceiling pointing the way to Mecca for the prayers five times a day. The call to prayer from the mosques is linked to sunrise and sunset so varies each day and from city to city.

Horses look small from the back of a camel.

The fresh orange juice, the cucumbers, and the white bean salad were especially delicious. The fresh-baked pita bread was also great, very different than what is available in grocery stores here. The Saqqara beer was good, as was the Omar Khayyam "Obelisk" red wine.

Both adults and children along the road would smile and wave at our passing bus all the time – which was very heartwarming and something that you would never see happen in this country.

There are almost no public trash cans in Egypt. The natives just throw all trash on the ground. I watched a family of four at the eclipse site unwrap candy bars and let the wrappers fall to the ground without giving it a second thought. The guide Mona told us that most Egyptians are fastidious about keeping their homes clean but they do not care about the condition of things outside the home. All of the streets and even the more remote parts of the desert are literally strewn with trash. Another cultural disconnect.

Everyone smokes everywhere! The men of course – you do not see any women smoking in public, but do they also smoke in private? Another question I meant to ask Osama but didn't get around to articulating.

So many of the women on the street – even those with small babies – look so old and tired. There are many varieties and styles of veiling. Some veils extend over the shoulders and down to the waist while others barely cover the skull, some styles are wrapped while others are pinned or draped, and there are many types of fabrics and colors. Much of this type of veiling is apparently more fashion than religion. Osama said that it is only the all black veiling that is strictly religious in nature and the donning of black in public by women is a sign of respect in the Muslim faith.

The green parts of the land are amazingly green but only 5% of the entire country is arable land. To see this in reality was quite different than reading the statistic in a book.

We loved the hibiscus tea, which is served cold. I will try to find a recipe although I don't think hibiscus grows happily in the New England climate.

There were lots of mixed herds of sheep and goats in the western desert as well as the occasional herd of camels. I saw a very cute baby camel in one of the herds but missed the photo opportunity from the moving bus unfortunately. One group of camels was

crossing the road and came very close to getting hit by our bus driver. In Egypt the drivers beep their horns a lot but rarely slow down for either humans or animals in the road. A man actually glanced off our vehicle in the taxi on the way to the Cairo museum and neither the driver nor the pedestrian seemed to even notice – in fact, the pedestrian actually smiled at the driver as he backed away and jockeyed for a better street crossing position!

A bus of Japanese tourists joined us at several of the sites and on the internal Egypt flights. They were a little strange. Many of them were dressed to the teeth – layers of formal clothes and high heels on some of the women in the desert! A lot of them wore face masks, I guess against the dust, and they were quite a sight to watch moving around.

I found it very odd to be in a country where there was absolutely no way to get a handle on either the spoken or the written word. This was also our first real experience in a third-world country. A few of the places that we have been to in the Caribbean would qualify as third-world but this journey was quite different than a cruise shore excursion or the comfort of a dive resort.

The total solar eclipse occurred on the penultimate day of our tour. Prior to that, our guide Osama kept referring to the eclipse (somewhat skeptically) as “the phenomenon”. He was puzzled by how we had all traveled such a great distance to see something that was only a couple of hours long, and then a few days into the tour when he found out that the totality phase (the whole point as far as we were all concerned) lasted less than four minutes, he definitely thought we were all crazy. But he understood completely once he experienced a total solar eclipse for himself. He was in fact fairly embarrassed afterwards and once he admitted to our bus group how awesome the total eclipse really was, he then laughingly said he did not want to discuss it any further!