

EXCLUSIVE
JAGUAR PHOTOS

AFRICA GOES
HIGH-TECH

EXPLORING THE
NEW SILK ROAD

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

The Real JESUS

What Archaeology
Reveals About His Life

DECEMBER 2017

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KINGDOM OF THE JAGUAR

In Central and South American jungles the elusive cats hold sway as apex predators – and as gods.

*By Chip Brown
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On the Cover For this "Head of Christ" that Rembrandt painted in the late 1640s, art historians think it's likely that he worked from a live model, perhaps a young Jew from the artist's Amsterdam neighborhood.
Photo: Bridgeman Images

Corrections and Clarifications
Go to natgeo.com/corrections.

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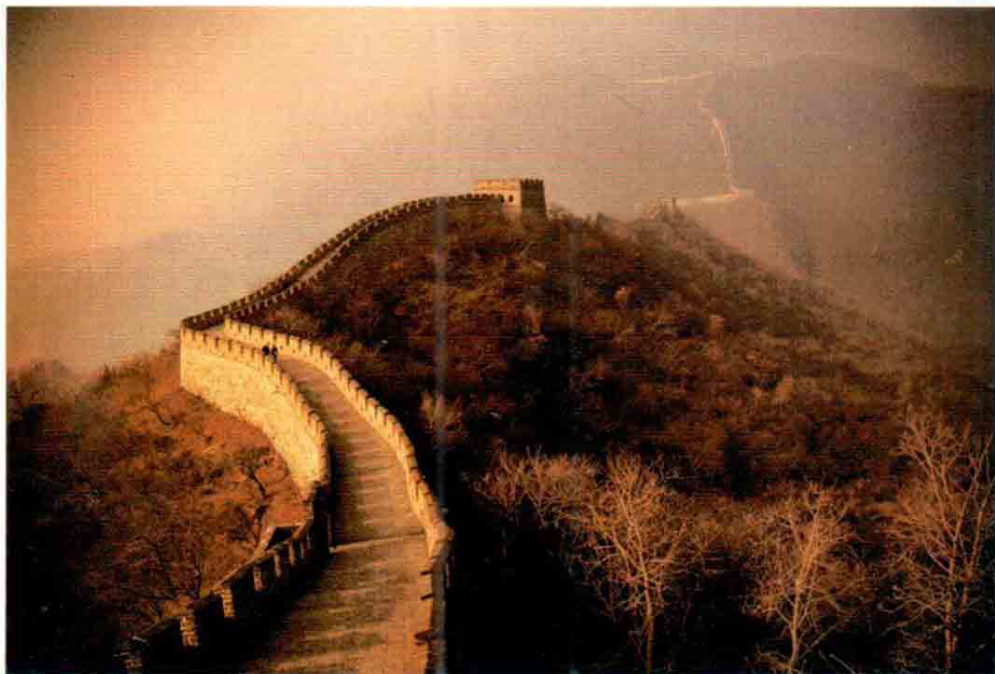
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Storm victims rebound by putting their homes on a better – taller – footing.

Story and Photographs by Ira Wagner

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BOOKS

SCENES FROM A 'VISUAL ATLAS'

Combine state-of-the-art cartographic technology with incomparable photography, and the result is the second edition of National Geographic's *Visual Atlas of the World*. Completely updated, this 416-page book includes 200-plus maps and more than 400 new photos, from satellite imagery to scenes of UNESCO World Heritage sites such as the Great Wall of China (left). An authoritative reference, it's available wherever books are sold and at shopng.com/books.

NAT GEO WILD

'BIG CAT WEEK': SEE CHEETAHS, JAGUARS

Filmmaker Bob Poole visits the world's fastest animal on its Kenyan home turf for *Man Among Cheetahs*. Two formidable predators face off in *Jaguar vs. Croc*. Watch these programs and more during Nat Geo WILD's Big Cat Week starting December 10.

TELEVISION

WARRIORS ON 'THE LONG ROAD HOME'

A platoon that was ambushed in the Iraq War, and its leaders, are the focus of *The Long Road Home* (right), a scripted series based on journalist Martha Raddatz's book of the same name. It premieres November 7 at 9/8c on National Geographic.



BOOKS

WALK 'IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS'

A lushly illustrated account of the life and times of Jesus of Nazareth, the second edition of *In the Footsteps of Jesus* takes readers to places and events that changed the world. Available wherever books are sold and at shopng.com/books.

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THE SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF JESUS

This month's cover story, "The Search for the Real Jesus," does what people have been doing for nearly 2,000 years: It seeks new truths about the epochal figure known as Jesus of Nazareth.

He has been called, among other things, a religious reformer, a social revolutionary, and an apocalyptic prophet. The same variety of views can be seen in depictions of his likeness—artworks that often say more about the time and place in which they were created than the individual they sought to capture.

We wanted just the right person to tell this complex story, and we found her in our own newsroom—Kristin Romey, a self-described archaeologist turned journalist who's made some 20 trips to the Middle East. Romey, who writes about paleontology and archaeology for *nationalgeographic.com* and this magazine, is committed to the work that our founders bequeathed to us: producing journalism that's honest and fair, grounded in evidence and science.

I think our story about Jesus—brought to life with the incomparable illustrations of Fernando Baptista and the photography of Simon Norfolk—achieves that goal. I hope you'll agree.

Romey told me that this assignment was different from many others she has done for us. "Most archaeological sites are cursed with a sense of romantic sterility, all crumbling ruins and stories about the great events that once took place there," she said. "They may be alive with curious visitors, yet their relevance feels as distant to modern life as far-flung stars."

But on this assignment, the ancient sites Romey visited felt very much alive. She gave an example: "I was standing in the remains of a first-century synagogue on the southern shore of the Sea of Galilee, discussing its excavation with one of the archaeologists who made the



discovery in 2009. She explained its construction sequence, how it was dated, and its context within the larger town. Then she said proudly, 'And my teenage sons had their bar mitzvahs here!'

That's the duality that Romey found: sites that are monuments of archaeological significance as well as vibrant centers of pilgrimage and faith. How gratifying, in this season of goodwill, to see the scientific and the spiritual coexist.

Thank you for reading *National Geographic*.

Susan Goldberg

Susan Goldberg, Editor in Chief

This icon of the Madonna and Child, called "Eleftherotria," or "the Liberator," hangs in the Greek Orthodox prayer hall in Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre.