

A SEMINAR JOURNEY WITH PAUL SKORPEN

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Şanlıurfa · Göbekli Tepe · Harran

THEOSIS – INSTITUTE FOR TRAVEL AND SEMINARS

AN INVITATION

There are places that make you quiet

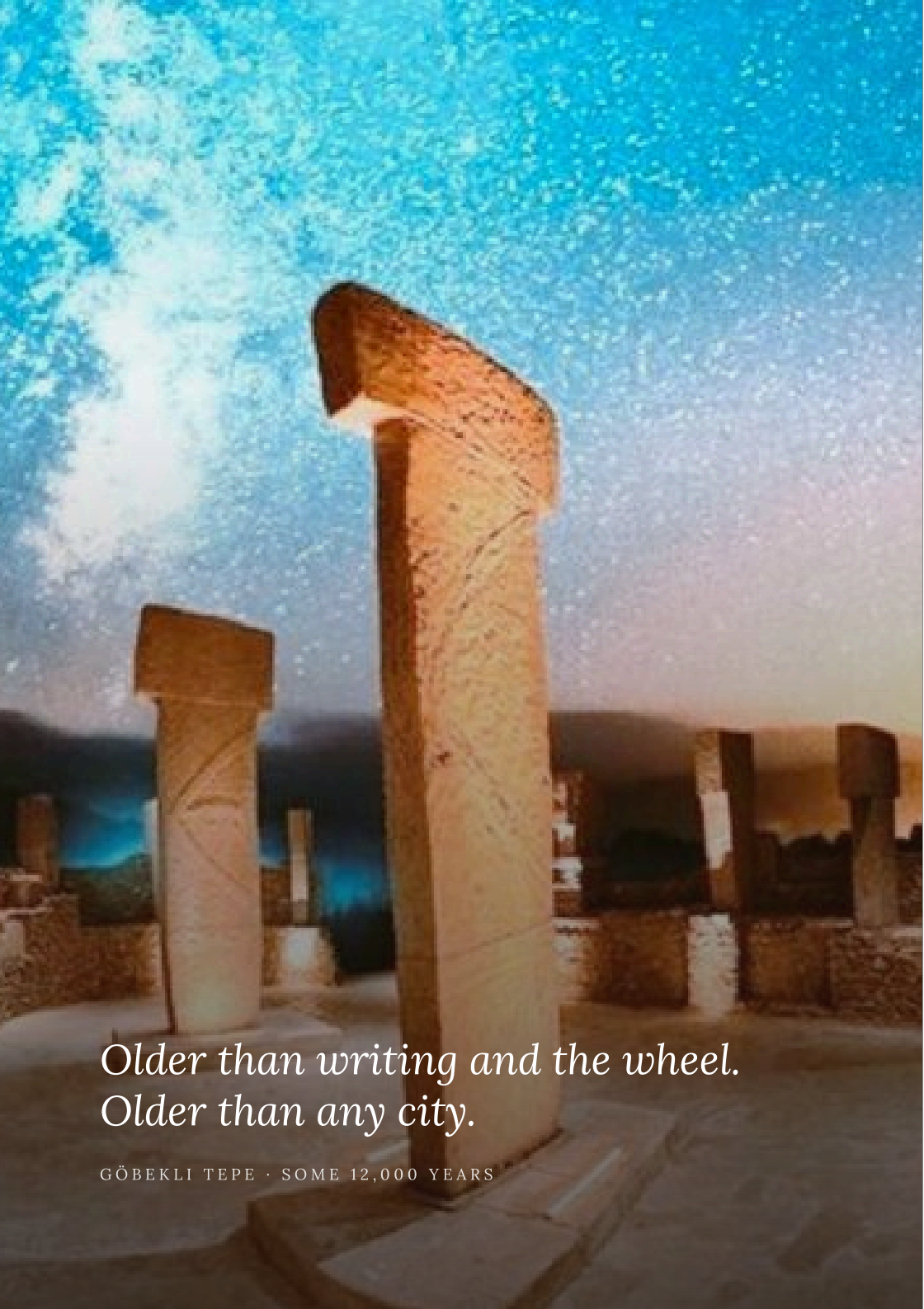
Dear reader,

Göbekli Tepe is one of them. You stand among stones that people raised some 12,000 years ago, long before writing existed. And suddenly much of what keeps you busy at home becomes very small.

I have been travelling to places like this for many years, and Şanlıurfa keeps drawing me back. The city has something I find hard to put into words. You feel it in the lanes, at the pool of sacred fish, in the scent drifting out of the bazaar. The ancients called it the spirit of the place.

This little booklet is an invitation. Leaf through it at your own pace. And if, while reading, you feel something calling you, get in touch with us.

Warmly,
Paul Skorpen



Older than writing and the wheel.
Older than any city.

GÖBEKLI TEPE · SOME 12,000 YEARS

The oldest known temple in the world

On a hill north-east of Şanlıurfa, great T-shaped pillars stand in circles, some more than five metres tall. Carved into the stone are foxes, wild boar, snakes and vultures. On some pillars you can see arms and hands, as if the stones themselves were beings.

They were built by people who did not yet farm. Hunters and gatherers who came together here to honour something greater than themselves. Göbekli Tepe turned much of archaeology upside down. Perhaps the temple came first, and the city after.

We are not here as tourists. We take our time, sit down, become quiet and let the place speak.







TAŞ TEPELER

The stone hills

Göbekli Tepe was not alone. Around Şanlıurfa, more sites from the same era have been excavated in recent years. They are called Taş Tepeler, the stone hills. At Karahantepe, heads and pillars rise straight out of the bedrock, as if emerging from the earth. Harbetsuvan Tepe, Sayburç and others show how alive this early world was.

We visit whatever is open at the time. Each site has its own mood.



ŞANLIURFA

The city of prophets

Locals simply call it Urfa. Tradition says Abraham was born in a cave below the citadel, and you can still visit it today. Job is also said to have lived here; his tomb lies on the edge of town.

Jews, Christians and Muslims all honour Abraham as their forefather. In Urfa you notice that this shared root is more than an idea. It is in the air.



BALIKLIGÖL

The luck of the pool

Legend has it that King Nimrod had Abraham thrown into the fire for refusing to worship the old gods. But the fire turned into water and the glowing logs into fish. And so the pool of sacred fish came to be.

To this day no one catches them. People feed them, children laugh, couples stroll along the water in the evening. And it is said that whoever spots a pale fish among the dark ones is blessed with luck.

EDESSA

The cloth above the city gate



Şanlıurfa is ancient Edessa, the setting of one of the oldest Christian legends. King Abgar was ill and wrote to Jesus. What came back was a cloth bearing his face, and Abgar recovered. Later, it is said, the cloth hung above the city gate. In times of persecution it was hidden in the wall and found again only centuries later.

In 944 the “Image of Edessa” was taken to Constantinople. Some researchers believe it is the same cloth venerated today in Turin as the Shroud. It cannot be proven. But standing at the old walls of Urfa, you understand why this story still moves people.



GENIUS LOCI

The spirit of the place

In Urfa you feel it with every breath. The covered bazaar smells of isot, the dark Urfa pepper, of copper, soap and fresh bread. In the tea houses men play tavla, the call to prayer drifts from the minarets, and somewhere tea is always being poured.

In the evenings we sit together, eat dishes you will find only here, and share what the day has done with us.





HARRAN & SOĞMATAR

Closer to the stars

Harran lies an hour to the south, almost at the Syrian border. Abraham lived here for a while before moving on. The mud-brick houses with their domes look like beehives. In antiquity Harran was a famous city of scholars and stargazers.

At Soğmatar, a bare hill in the plain, sun, moon and planets were worshipped. Standing up there under the wide sky, you sense how close people once felt to the stars.



MUSEUMS

The man from the pool

In the Şanlıurfa Archaeological Museum stands the Urfa Man, almost two metres tall and some 11,000 years old. He was found near the pool of sacred fish. An excursion also takes us to the mosaic museum in Gaziantep, one of the largest in the world.



TRAVELLING WITH PAUL

How we travel

We travel in a small group. That makes a lot possible: time at the sites, good conversations, silence.

Paul accompanies the whole journey. In seminar sessions he prepares the group for each site, and at the places themselves we meditate together. All you need to bring is curiosity.

We stay in a boutique hotel in the heart of the old town, with a courtyard, just a few steps from the pool of sacred fish. The day begins with a long breakfast.

AT A GLANCE

What awaits you

The sacred sites in and around Şanlıurfa, from Göbekli Tepe to Harran

Seminar with Paul Skorpen to prepare for the sites

Shared meditations at the places themselves

A small, personal group

Boutique hotel in the old town, with breakfast

Onward flight Istanbul – Şanlıurfa and all transfers to the sites

Help with booking your flight to Istanbul

Our team is there for you throughout the journey

As a gift, a travel journal with meditations for the journey

You will find everything else about the journey at theosis.com/tas-tepeler-journey.





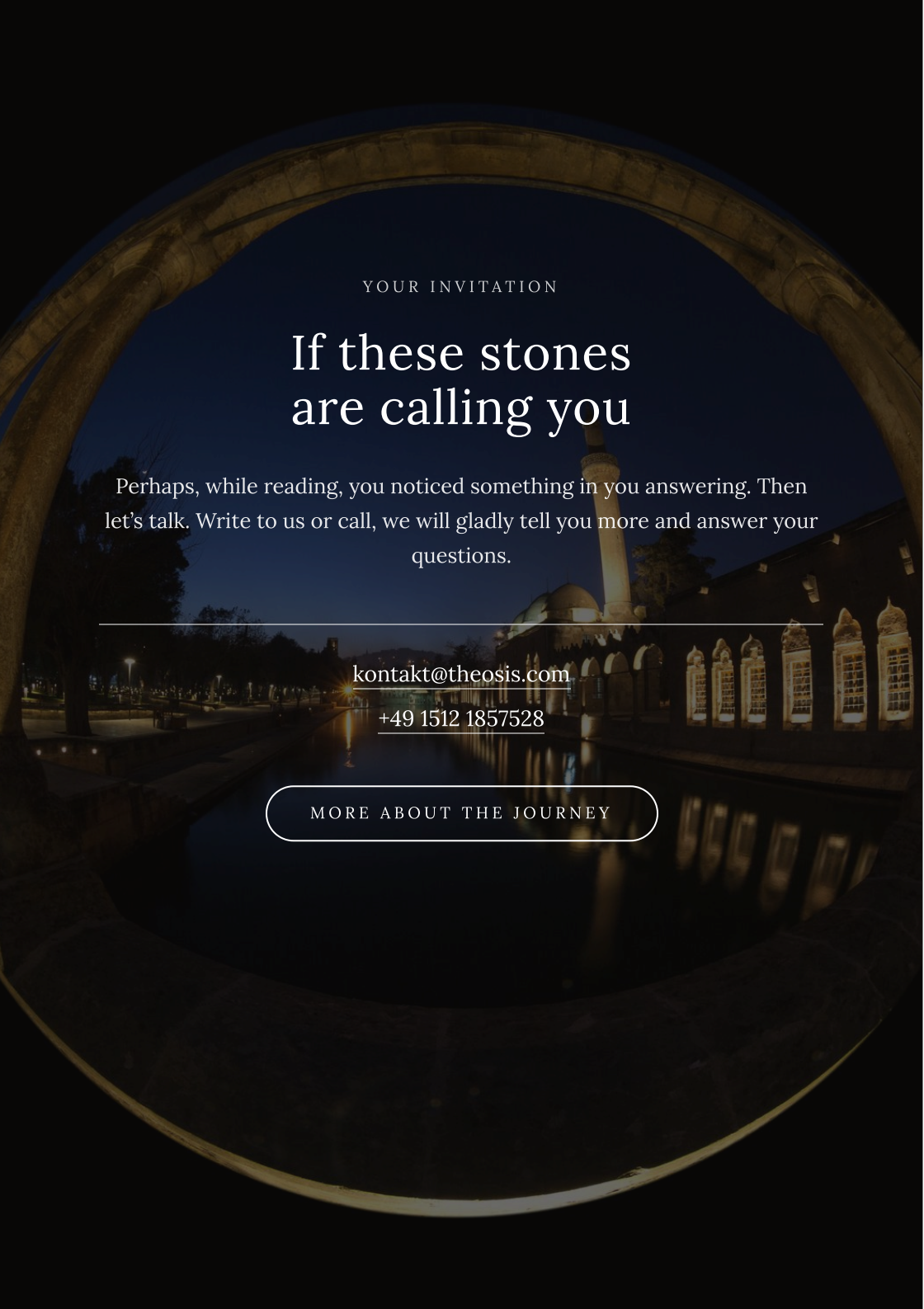
YOUR GUIDE

Paul Skorpen

In 1997 Paul founded Theosis in Starnberg, Germany, together with Birgit Aurell. For many years he has been leading groups to sacred places in Egypt, Greece and Türkiye.

He connects the story of a place with what that place touches in us.

"You are not just joining a journey, you are stepping into another dimension."



YOUR INVITATION

If these stones are calling you

Perhaps, while reading, you noticed something in you answering. Then let's talk. Write to us or call, we will gladly tell you more and answer your questions.

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MORE ABOUT THE JOURNEY

THEOSIS

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