

Soğmatar has been far off any tourist route and much further of any interest.

The excavation of the quite unique Karahan Tepe, “sister” site of Göbekli Tepe, nearby might turn that around.

It was hard to find Soğmatar or Sumatar at that time. No exact location to get from the internet, and the young guys making tour guide in Harran had only very vague ideas, what we were talking about. So we headed by ourselves into the TekTek Mountains. The name Tektek translates as one-by-one, single or alone. The Mesopotamian outback. A hilarious landscape of naked smooth rock under a burning sun that reminds on desert dunes and dreamscapes a la Dalì. Almost timeless. Somewhere two sunburned shepherds with clear, sharp eyes walking their goats and dogs. Vultures, hawks and eagles in the endless sky, watching every movement on the ground.



Rolling heavy eroded bare stone hills, beautiful layered horizontally, shining in a bright pale Grey. In the small valleys some red-brown soil and tiny patches of acres, now in spring already almost dry and deserted. Too arid for any bushes or trees, not even much food for a goat apart from low grass. A few farm houses from time to time, low buildings made of rough stone, all meticulously closed, nobody to see around. Tektek.



We spent a beautiful night in a recent quarry near Bazda- peaceful and quiet, with a clear sky full of thousands of stars, as there are no lights and no pollution around, not even dampness in the air. About Bazda Caves will be a short article of its own. Visiting one of the many Bazda Caves my Partner got attacked by one of these huge watchdogs, which had escaped from his chain. Usually all dogs love her. Me still taking pictures in the cave I only heard people shouting. Luckily just her back-bag got injured. The farmers were quite frightened and shocked themselves.

At least we knew we are on the right road. No sign of Soğmatar though. Asking two shepherds near the road with their animals they didn't understand or didn't know the place. Stopping at a gasoline station near a bigger village. Nobody. Searching and sneaking around there appeared a young guy: no gasoline, closed. Soğmatar he doesn't know, he is refugee from Afghanistan. There seemed to be more men hiding in the house....

Stopped for a break at the town of Job, the prophet, father in law of Moses, which got his magic wand right here. A few farm houses and plenty of ruins. Obviously it hadn't been just a rural village at the time.

Driving along till we get out of the mountains, turning round and still searching. A tiny mosque with a few houses, and a lot of cars at some distance off the road. Some guys rushing out of the mosque, jumping in their car and driving off very fast. Others follow, get in their cars and chase after the first car, honking and waving and shouting, overtaking us one after the other. They stop the first car, start beating on the roof, getting loud and very aggressive. As they block the road with all the people and cars, we stop some hundred meters in front and wait watching. the last car was a people carrier with some policemen. they try to settle the situation, but even with their guns lifted they are quite timid and need a long time to get people calming down. They push one guy into their people carrier and then drive off, the whole others following them. Later we found out it was election day.

So driving on and searching it was getting late- passing a school building and a farm beyond, and then i saw it!

In a valley behind the farm i saw a huge castle, narrow but with high towers and flags up in the sky. A bit like Neuschwanstein and a bit like Sintra. It was only a blink of an eye, but i really saw it. We stop at the parking of the school. There is a young teacher behind the fence, speaking even a few words English. He said we are at Soğmatar, but we can't stay here because it is too dangerous.

Asking why he warns for the dogs being very strange and dangerous especially in this village. Even though we don't need to step out of our Campervan, he insists us not to stay in the area, to get out of the mountains and come back next morning. Usually we would laugh about that, especially about being afraid of dogs, but after that day - we finally drove off to the next town. Somehow really strange feeling to look for shelter in town to protect from the outback. Anyhow saw some kind of lightning in the sky over Tektek Mountains that night - with clear sky and almost no cloud around--- I am very aware that this story sounds not real, but it is just what we experienced.

So next morning we finally walk into the valley of Soğmatar. It is surrounded by seven of these typical bald layered stone hills, each one with remnants of ancient temples on top, creating roughly a circle of around one Kilometer diameter. Of some ruins there is no more left than a large square or circular platform and a heap of big rectangular cut stones. All these hill foots are filled with square or rectangular holes, most of them tombs no more than 2 meters wide, but some with huge entrances to caves. Seems all these over hundred tombs are oriented to the center, some are said to be roman, or at least reused at the time, but there are as well neolithic ones. In one they found a neat little toy chariot made of clay, 5000 yrs old. Which is quite old, but still not half way to the 12 000 Years of Karahan Tepe, which is just about 10 miles north.



Back to today and Soğmatar. Just beside the driveway in the rocky slope the first tomb openings.



Toy Car Picture Courtesy of Anadolu Agency



They look like dug out only recently, that is, in the last few years, for the stone is not grey weathered. No special energies noted. Right by the way are laying two of the fierce and dangerous dogs, lifting their heads and growling as we come nearer. Saying hello to them and walking on they are not further interested and continue lazying and daydreaming; whatever they daydream about. Our interest is captured now by the central mound of the valley; unlike the other hills it is almost completely covered with red brown earth, partly overgrown, and it is not flat rounded but getting increasingly steeper and steeper 'till the top with a ring from remnants of cut stone walls and pillars, or bases of towers. The whole mound's shape reminds on a tiny volcano. Red clay erupted from the earth? Not very likely. Very obviously there was a construction covering the top, and i presume the red clay of the slopes are the washed down leftovers of bricks; which would indicate a huge construction. Just like the high castle and towers in my vision.



Much later i found the following description, very possibly referring to the ancient Soğmatar:

"At the extreme boundaries of the Earth stands an ancient temple, which is round and has seven doors on each side and a lofty dome which has also seven sides and is famous throughout the land for its extraordinary height and admirable construction. On top of the dome is a kind precious stone or crystal as large as a bull's head, dispelling darkness for a great distance... Many great kings of old have tried to get hold of this stone, but with no success: all



those who tried, fell lifeless at a distance of 10 feet...even if one uses spears, arrows or other similar contrivances, these similarly stop and fall mid-air at a distance of 10 feet. ..To this date, there is no means for a man could get hold of this stone. Those so daring or foolish to think they could demolish the temple would be struck by instant death. Certain sages explained this phenomenon as caused by certain magnetic stones placed at a regular distance all around the temple[...]

Within the temple is a very deep pit, how deep nobody knows. It has seven sides and is constructed in such a manner that whoever attempts to get too close in order to look down will fall into the deep and thus find his death. Around the pit is a ring of brass carrying the signs of an ancient writing:

"This pit leads to the Hall of Records, in which all the wisdom of the world is kept since time immemorial. Here is preserved the history of the World, the science of Heavens and the hidden secret of all things past, present and future. In this pit lie all the treasures of the World, but whoever wishes to be worthy of it must be our equal in power, wisdom and science. Whoever is able to do so, then he will know himself as one of our kind. But beware shall you not be worthy, because you will learn how much more profound is our wisdom, broader our science and impenetrable our vigilance"

"This temple, just as its dome, rests on a rock of stupendous size, similar to a great mountain, so hard that no excavation can be made in its sides...Nobody who has seen this ancient temple, can go away without being struck by a great melancholy and unexplained attraction for it"

Al Mas'udi, [897-952 AD], The Meadows of Gold, LXVII – "Sacred buildings and monuments of the Sabians of Harran"



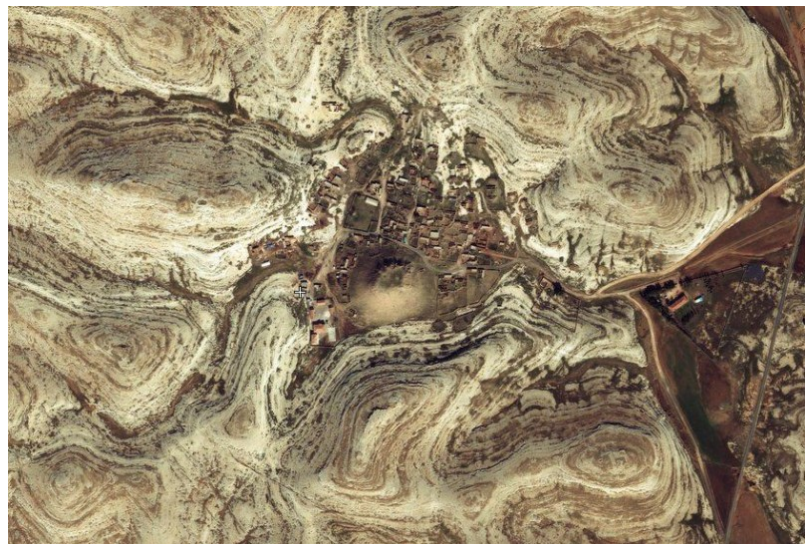
Now the extreme boundary we would imagine at the boarder of an ocean, desert or wayless mountains, like Djebel Aqra or Mount Nemrut, but they might be too far from Harran. Maybe it has been boundary to the inaccessible Urartu/ Armenia at the time.

So the pit to the hall of records in the temple has seven sides, so inclined that you can't lean over to look down

without falling. That sounds like a parabolic shape, or in 3D a vortex. With a rim made of brass on top. Covered is the temple by a huge, as well seven sided, dome. Possibly there is another ring made of magnetic stone. And then we have the enigmatic crystal on top of that, presumably on top of the center ax of dome and vortex and rings. shining so bright it illuminates all the surrounding. We will get back to the crystal.

This and the hall of records might be the reason why the knights templars were so eager to get to Harran. We remember the Sabians of Harran were the keepers of the writings of Hermes Trismegistos like the tabula smaragdina and guardians of most of the written ancient wisdom rescued from the famous library of Alexandria. Beneath the temples on the surrounding hills were a few tunnels discovered, which are not just ending in tombs, but seem to continue as longer passageways.

Rumors about the tunnels say they



Satellite Map by Bing

lead from each temple to the center (the Pit?) and that there are more about tunnels down south to Bazda Caves and continuing under the lowlands until Harran. And another tunnel running north and reaching within 10 miles one of the oldest and most mysterious temples of the worlds: Karahan Tepe.

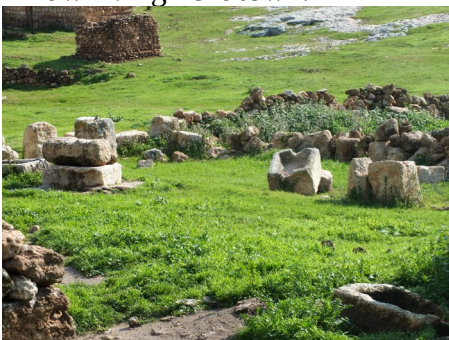
Soğmatar temples were standing until the 12th century, when the Mongols conquered and devastated it like all in their way, as we are told



Back to present, there still seem shadows of wrath and destruction in the air, the heaps of tumbled stones look more like after a continuous bombing to ashes than a horde of riding warriors passing by.



The smaller stones seem to got reused for the few houses, yards and stables of the actual village. I see a torus shaped stone used for the wooden bar to close a yard, and there is still one elaborated stone arch standing. Used troughs and grain milling stones everywhere laying round. At the foot of the central temple we reach a rustique well which is said to originate by Moses himself, who lived here for some time. No wonder he trained here with his magic wand after getting it from his father-in-law living next town.



The kids from the village volunteer as guides and take us along a path passing a few houses. Around and behind the farm houses we see a lot of caves, some openings closed with rough stones, but most of them still in use for storage and livestock.



The kids lead us into one of these caves that looks from outside just like the others. A football missing air in the center in a pitch. Our eyes getting used to the dark we realize bit by bit the human figures carved out of the walls, slightly taller than natural size. This is the so-called Pognon Cave. Presumably a tomb from roman times the figures are said to represent roman gods or maybe some important people of their time. They are heavily damaged so you can't make out much details. But the relief of one guy in the row is clearly different from the others: a very big bloke with broad shoulders and a different style of clothes. Nothing to tell us who that might be. We leave that to the historians.



Though the kids want to take us to one of the hills with a rock relief of Apollo, we choose to continue in direction of another, the northeastern hill. As we are getting closer to an empty abandoned house half way up, they stay behind one by one, the last little girl still trying to make us change directions, and then waving goodbye. In the grass in front of the house is a pit, almost 1m in diameter. No bottom to see. A cistern, well, storage, or tomb?

The farm house is partly cut into the hillside, the back rooms being completely in the rock, the massive roof seamless continuing the slope above. Not to figure out, if it consists of partly of natural bedrock or if its made of flat slabs laid by men. I consider the main part being old, really old. The openings and terrace are, like all here, facing the central mound.



Right behind it, a little further up the slope, is a heap of the large rectangular cut stones like on all the hilltops with ruins, and a rather small, perhaps 6 x 6m foundation. Here is almost literally not one stone left on top of another, no idea what it has been once, but it doesn't feel like a temple or sacred site to me. Up here, though still close, we don't see or hear anybody around or down in the village any more. But we feel the eyes on us.

Many rectangle openings in the bare bedrock as we get further up, most of them filled with rubble and overgrown with grass. Some quite large and long, others just big enough to crawl inside. Close to the top of the hill i feel called to stop at one tomb that is, quite fresh, dug out and opened. Not to make out if this was officially or not, nor how long ago. It is one of that biblical kind to close the entrance with a huge stone wheel, like a millstone. You can block them with little stones or remove those and open the door rolling it with a long log or branch. Remembered seeing them not long ago in the underground cities of Kappadokia, with a little difference: those were made to handle from inside in order to keep the enemies out. This here, like all tombs, was to handle from outside. What to keep in and prevent from escape?

Now out of this one came something looking like fog or smoke as i looked down to it. Very slowly whirling up and then dissolving in a circle around me. There is no physical explanation to it. Though it had been raining the night, it was far too warm and dry for some kind of fog. It did not smell smoke from a fire neither. And no reason at all to make that strange movement. It felt somehow friendly, more bewildered and benewed to meet me here, but then just blessing and not further connecting. I welcomed it, but it was gone already. I knew this being important to me, but then there was nothing more to do around for me. It was obvious to me I won't find out the nature and meaning of that Djin right here and now.

I turned around to follow my partner and almost stumbled over a big block of glass.

At least it was looking like glass at first glance: glossy, colorless and transparent, but somehow darker than usual. I could not look straight through, as if it was multiple times refracting and mirroring inside. It was kind of irregular formless, like molten and hardened again, though there was one almost regular rounded rectangle edge to it.

Reminded me somehow on the broken glass of a TV-tube, but it was far to massive for that. The piece was lengthy maybe 50cm and from 15 to over 30cm in diameter. Even being glass from a huge burned TV or isolator it would be very strange somebody carrying it up to the hilltop and then leaving it here. And there was no other litter around, not even a tissue or plastic bag, and no sign of a fire. It did not feel like a leftover of this civilization and it was definitely out of place here.

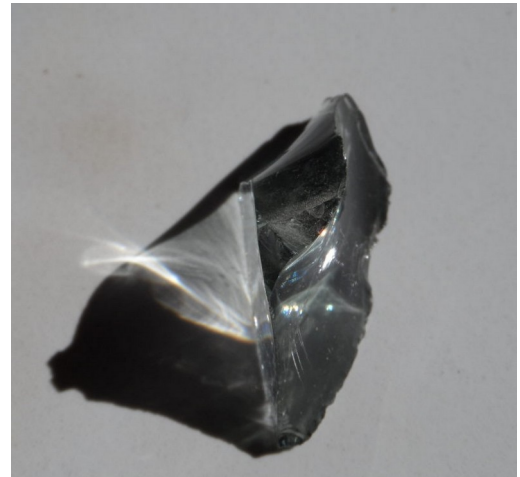
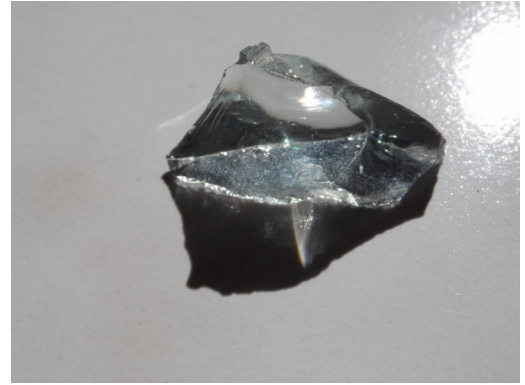
This visit of an historic site is turning into a fairy tale, you might think now.

First getting all alone, then some strange fog and now this strange crystal -.

I can assure experiencing all just like that, and i don't use any drugs stronger than coffee.

But no, i did not crawl into the tomb to check for a fire or whatever, and i didn't even take a pic of the glass block. What i have, is a photo with some fog at the entrance, my memory, and a tiny piece of the crystal, that had broken off and wanted to go with me.





Barbara had already continued to the stone platform right on the hilltop. As she put one foot on the platform, the belt of her backbag gave way and it almost dropped on the floor. Remember it had been attacked the day before by the Bazda dog. She took that for a sign to leave. What i have learned not only to respect, but to follow in general. Being blonde and blue-eyed i tend to walk easily into surprising adventures...

So i spent a just few minutes on this platform of one of the former temples, envisioned the central temple and the circle of others on the visible hilltops.



A majestic stone circle formed by temples, the sacred center of knowledge and wisdom, the cradle of astrology, astronomy and mathematics, hidden in the middle of the ancient world. Didn't know at that time about the dome and pit and hall of records. Nor the crystal. What do they have to teach us or to complete us to get universal?

A powerful place, lofty and far from the busy world. It does not feel like a place to connect to the stars and heavens, it is rather as if you are the sky itself just touching the solid earth.

Back to the ground going downhill I step around the various tomb openings. As this is the northeastern hill my way leads away from the village and Temple circle down to the access road, where our Campervan awaits us.

Still halfway up looking across the mainroad i discover in a ditch a large tent and some men herding their sheep. Nomads. Maybe that is one reason the teacher did not let us stay there overnight nearby. I read about this nomads making the trail to the TekTek mountains to stay here over winter. In summertime they and their animals go back up the slopes of Karaca Dag, the big old shield volcano in the northeast. As they do since thousands of years. Domestication of sheep and goats was spreading from this area, and the wild ancestors of wheat and other grains grow right there; still today.

