

NEW YORK OPEN CENTER AND LAPIS MAGAZINE ONLINE

Present

# An Esoteric Quest for THE MYSTERIES AND PHILOSOPHY OF ANTIQUITY

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE, WISDOM AND ART IN ANCIENT GREECE

The Island of Samothrace, September 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008



## POST CONFERENCE JOURNEYS



Mystery Centers of Mainland Greece  
September 8<sup>th</sup>- 13<sup>th</sup>

The Sufi and Byzantine World of Istanbul  
September 8<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>

Ephesus, Didyma and Miletus:  
Oracles and Early Christianity  
September 13<sup>th</sup>- September 16<sup>th</sup>

Co sponsored with The Prefecture of Evros, The Lumen Foundation and The Olympus Society

[www.EsotericQuest.org](http://www.EsotericQuest.org)

# Join us on a Quest...

JOIN US ON A QUEST FOR THE MYSTERIES AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANTIQUITY ON THE FABLED ISLAND OF SAMOTHRAKI (SAMOTHRACE) FAR OFF THE BEATEN TRACK IN THE NORTHERN AEGEAN SEA.

Our world today longs for wisdom, and where better to search for its spiritual roots in the West than ancient Greece? For a thousand years, the Sanctuary of the Great Gods on Samothrace was one of the most famous mystery centers of the ancient world, rivaling Delphi in stature and high regard. From throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, figures as varied as Philip II, father of Alexander, Herodotus, the Egyptian Ptolemies and the Emperor Hadrian came to receive initiation into the cosmic secrets of the Samothracian Kabiri, and returned to their homes wiser and nobler.

What was the nature of the spiritual experience in the ancient mysteries, and how did it pave the way for so much that followed in the deeper streams of Western wisdom? How was this experience transformed into philosophy, sacred number, and geometry by the work of Pythagoras, Plato and other great figures? How did this profoundly esoteric and logical worldview influence sacred architecture and art? And how are the mysteries revealed in phenomena like The Golden Section, the ubiquitous and beautiful ratio that appears in so many dimensions of life from the microcosm to the macrocosm?

International scholars, writers and artists will gather on Samothrace for the seventh in the Open Center's series of conferences on the Western Esoteric Tradition. This time we will focus our attention on the roots of the tradition, including the great works of classical wisdom whose translation by Marsilio Ficino in Florence sparked the esoteric philosophy of the Renaissance.

The conference will be followed by two optional journeys. One will go to Istanbul where we will explore Byzantium and continue themes from last year's quest in Andalusia with some of Turkey's most knowledgeable Sufi scholars. The other will take us to Eleusis, Delphi, Epidaurus and other evocative mystery centers of mainland Greece where we can deepen our understanding of the rites and spirituality of antiquity. Participants in both journeys have the option of concluding the Quest at the ancient sites of Ephesus and Didyma on the beautiful Ionian coast of Anatolia.

## CONTACT:

For more information please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 ext. 101 or write [quest@opencenter.org](mailto:quest@opencenter.org). Please see our website at [www.esotericquest.org](http://www.esotericquest.org) for more information and program updates.

The New York Open Center would like to thank the Greek National Tourist Organization for their support.



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# PLENARY SESSIONS

## WISDOM, THE MYSTERIES AND THE ESOTERIC QUEST: SOPHIA, MYSTERIA, PSYCHE

*Leonard George, Ph.D.*

This talk introduces the interrelated themes of the conference: Philosophy (Philia and Sophia) is the Love of Wisdom. What did the ancients mean by Wisdom? How did it relate to the spiritual movements known as the Mysteries that arose in Eleusis, Samothrace and other places? Both Philosophy and the Mysteries were quests of the soul, a theme reflected for instance in the tale of Eros and Psyche recounted by Apuleius (an initiate of the Mysteries of Isis).

## THE SAMOTHRACIAN MYSTERIES

*Christopher Bamford*

The Samothracian Mysteries of the Kabiri are among the most ancient whose traces are still available to us. Predating the Greek mysteries, reaching back into pre-history, with echoes in Hermetic Egypt and the revelation of ancient Zoroaster, they provide a meditative bridge between the primordial cosmological wisdom of humankind and its transmission into modern Western esotericism. They allow us to begin to understand and interpret the deeper meaning of the Western



*Relief from Samothrace in the Louvre showing Agamemnon being initiated into the rites of the Kabiri.*

path. We shall contemplate the Samothracian mysteries, meditating on the archeological, mythological and historical evidence, as well as on the interpretations placed upon it by such figures as the philosopher Schelling, the spiritual scientist Rudolf Steiner and the alchemist René Alleau.

## THE ANCIENT ORACLES

*Crystal Addey, M.A.*

For at least a thousand years, Greeks, Romans and other ancient peoples turned to oracles, often located in ancient temples, for spiritual, personal and civic advice and guidance. The most famous ancient oracle was that of Delphi, but there were many other oracle centers, such as the oracles of Didyma and Claros in Asia Minor. Oracular gods and goddesses include Apollo, Asclepius, Sarapis, Hekate and Hermes. This talk shows how oracles were linked with philosophy, and how both were considered to provide access to divine truth and wisdom. Oracles were also connected with the Mysteries: both lie at the heart of traditional Greco-Roman pagan religion.

## DECODING THE MEANING OF THE ANCIENT GREEK MYSTERIES

*Theologos Simeoforos*

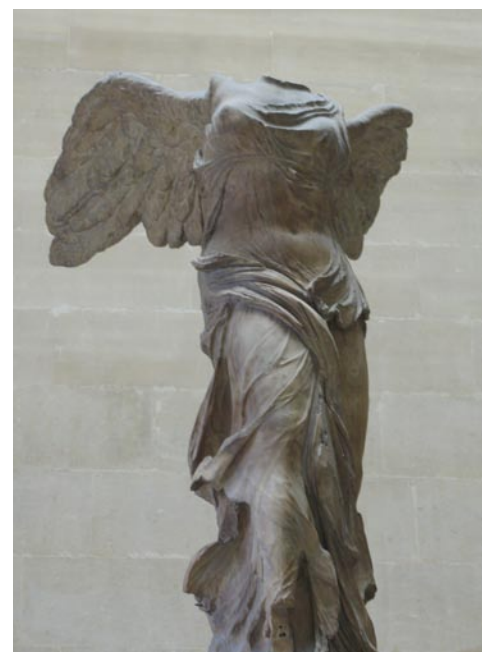
Centered upon the Greek language and its esoteric meaning, this talk will examine the ancient Mysteries, the divine oracular Revelations, and the worship practices of the faithful. It will also address the interpretation of the Eleusinian and Kabirian (Samothracian) Mysteries, as well as the role of Pythia, the Oracle at Delphi, and the sacrifices to Apollo that took place there. All of these will be drawn together to illustrate the glory of the ancient Greek language, the codes and meanings within it, and the way in which its interpretation can answer profound questions regarding the human being, nature and the divine.



## PLATO, GEOMETRY AND THE 'EVER-TRUE'

*Keith Critchlow*

This presentation will revisit the implications inherent in Plato's Timaeus dialogue - that our universe is made up of "Sameness," "Difference" and their amalgam "Being". From this extraordinary, simple, yet profound, beginning, the world soul is made up of proportions of numerical ratios which echo musical proportions and reflect a seven-ness that unites the soul of human beings to the soul of the world. The physical elements are associations in regular geometrical forms of molecules. Thus our, as well as the universal, Being is made up of the self-evident subjects of Arithmetic, Geometry, Harmony and Astronomy - the "ever-true".



*Nike of Samothrace, Louvre Museum*

## THE BIRTH OF THE SOUL: HELLENISTIC SOURCES OF WESTERN ESOTERICISM

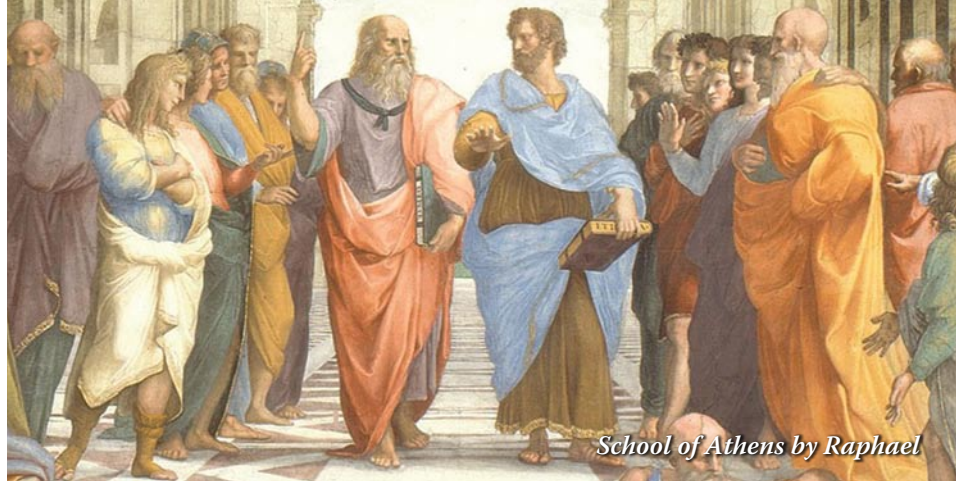
*Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, D.Phil.*

The roots of esotericism lie far back in Classical antiquity in the patterns of thinking about the cosmos, man and divinity found in the teachings of Plato and Aristotle. Above all, Plato's concept of the soul, amplified by Neo-Platonists like Plotinus and Iamblichus, fed into Christianity (via St. Augustine) and the Hermetic wisdom traditions of the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus the Western Esoteric tradition represents a marriage of the Greek rational mind with the mystery religions of the late pagan world. Transmitted to the Latin West first in the twelfth-century and then in a second wave in the late fifteenth century, Greek notions of the beauty of the soul entered into the Western imagination and stimulated a flowering of philosophical, literary and artistic endeavor.

## THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES

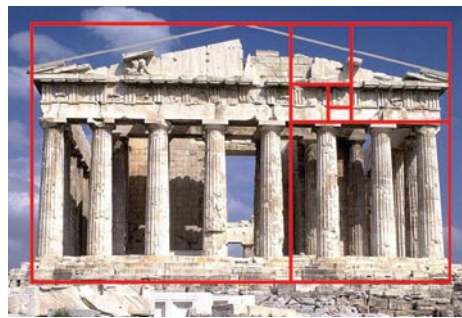
*Michalis Poulantzas, Ph.D.*

This talk examines the myth, history and esoteric teachings of the Eleusinian Mysteries. We will consider the importance of Demeter and her daughter; the meaning of the seizure of Persephone by Pluto; and the separation of the seasons. The Eleusinian rituals include the sacrifice in the sanctuary and the initiation into the secret mysteries of the Upper and Lower World. We



*School of Athens by Raphael*

will also focus on the significance of the procession of the priesthood and initiates from Eleusis to the Agora of Athens; and the feasts, banquets and theatrical productions dedicated to Demeter. Finally, we will examine the esoteric interpretation of the Eleusinian Mysteries – the relation of the beings of nature to nature herself, and the course of the soul toward complete purification.



## THE MYSTERY OF THE DIVINE PROPORTION

*Scott Olsen, Ph.D.*

The Divine Proportion or Golden Section may well be the most beautiful ratio in Nature, and the very bond that holds everything together through ratio, resonance and self-similar harmony at all levels. This talk demonstrates the beauty, wisdom and pervasiveness of the golden section in everything from DNA, plants, animals, humans and the solar system, to music, quarks, pyramids and hurricanes. Known to Plato and the initiates of classical Greece, the Golden Section's ubiquitous presence in all things provides the means for our progressive unfoldment into higher states of consciousness, in what the ancients referred to as initiation into the mysteries.

## ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPT OF GOD

*Stanley Sfekas, Ph.D.*

Aristotle conceived of God as outside of the world, as the final cause of all motion in Nature, as Prime Mover and Unmoved Mover of the universe. He was the crowning objective of all dynamic development in the cosmos from matter to form and from potentiality to actuality. He stood outside the Great Chain of Being yet was the source of all motion and development. Aristotle did not attribute mercy, love, sympathy and providence to God, but rather eternal self-contemplation. Yet Aquinas and the medieval theologians achieved a synthesis of Aristotle's God and Christianity. For Aristotle, metaphysics ultimately culminates in theology.

## PLATO AND THE SOUL

*Paulos Pissanos*

This talk centers around Plato's conception of the Good as the absolute purpose of the world and the final cause of its existence. It will also address Plato's understanding of the soul and the relationship of his philosophy to the mysticism of Pythagoras and Orpheus. We will ponder the Good as the first principle of knowledge of eternal beings beyond sensory things, and contemplate the divine origin of the soul and its habitation of the human body, culminating in liberation after death. There the soul faces the judgment of the dead and the purification necessary for entry into the Kingdom of Immortal Existence.

*Persephone marble statue from Ancient Greece, in the Pergamon Museum*

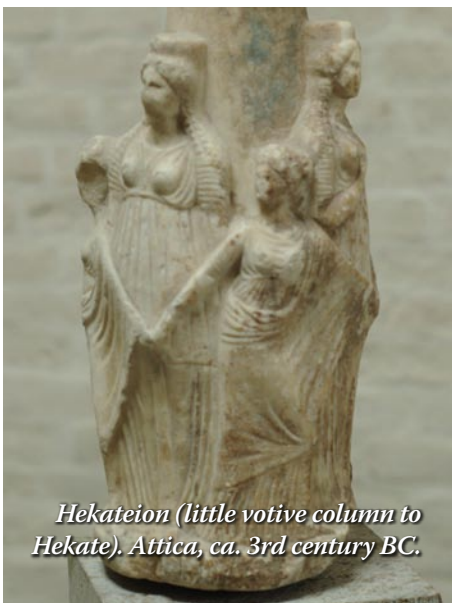
# WORKSHOP SESSIONS

**THE EVOLUTION OF HEKATE:**  
From Magical Goddess of the  
Underworld to Soul of the World  
*Crystal Addey, M.A.*

For ancient people, the gods were not abstractions – their presence and their gifts were vital features of life. Each human habitat was felt to be shared with spiritual beings. In archaic times, the lands of Thrace and Caria were the homes of Hekate, who was honored as a goddess of three realms. In later times, her presence spread across the Mediterranean regions, and her roles included goddess of the Underworld, goddess of magic and witches, oracular goddess and Soul of the World.

**NUMBER. BEAUTY. MYSTERY**  
Classical Architecture  
in a Sacred Context  
*Steve Bass, M.A.*

The spiritual context of early civilization was mystery religion, and the classical system of architecture was developed as its backdrop. If civilization is considered a product of human vision, often expressed through symbolic number and geometry, then architecture must also be informed by such symbols. In this presentation, the nature of symbolic number will be illustrated by demonstration, and the relation of number to beauty explored. The elements of architecture, guided by number, will be placed as elements in the process of the mysteries.



*Hekateion (little votive column to Hekate). Attica, ca. 3rd century BC.*

**THE MYSTERIES AND THE  
ANCIENT THEOLOGIAN IN  
MYSTICAL ISLAM**  
*Christopher Bamford*

This workshop will examine the implicit influence of the Mysteries and the explicit role of ancient theologians and philosophers such as Pythagoras, Empedocles and Plato in Islamic alchemy and Sufi philosophy and mysticism. We shall see how the Greek wisdom teachings and texts gradually migrated eastward during Hellenistic times and up through the first five Christian centuries to provide cosmological and metaphysical supports for the Qu'ranic revelation. Looking at the various alchemical traditions, as well as Sufi traditions such as the school of Suhrawardi and the Persian platonic theosophists of Light, we shall trace how, especially through Gemistos Plethon, Islamic insights fructified the Renaissance.

**A GIFT OF VISION:**  
Iamblichus and the  
Sanctification of the Senses  
*Leonard George, Ph.D.*

The Syrian sage Iamblichus (240 – c.325 AD) was so famously wise that even in his lifetime he was crowned with the title Theos, “Divine.” The best-known of his few surviving works is *De Mysteriis*, “On the Mysteries.” Drawing from the deepest wells of pagan insight, Iamblichus formed a grand synthesis of antique wisdom. Through philosophical study and ritual enactment, he taught, the senses could be opened to “the communion of all things.”

**SITES THAT INSPIRE  
AND BUILDINGS THAT SING:**  
The Mysteries of Classical Architecture  
*Alvin Holm*

Much has been written about famous sacred sites and how and why they retain their charisma, sometimes for millennia. Even more has been written about beautiful buildings and how their splendor is achieved. There are no conclusions, so far, to either of



*Architectural part from  
Arsinoe's rotunda in Samothraki.*

these independent studies, but perhaps through a consideration of Pythagorean teachings we can come to understand more about both in relation to each other. Harmonic relationships as they exist in architecture, music, the earth and the human body will be the subject of this investigation. Particular emphasis will be given to Greek myth and the mysteries of classical architecture.

**HERMES**  
*Clare Goodrick-Clarke*

Hermes, Homer's messenger of the gods “richest in the gifts of the Olympians”, is perhaps the most idiosyncratic figure in the Greek pantheon. Hermes, god of writing, laws and boundaries, merged with Thoth, the great Egyptian god of wisdom, to become Hermes Trismegistus, guide of souls and revealer of cosmic order. This illustrated talk traces Hermes from antiquity to the present and shows that, although his finest hour may have been in the Renaissance, he remains a perennial frontier guide for the spirit.

**“DO NOT ENTER HERE  
WITHOUT GEOMETRY”**  
*Keith Critchlow*

How many of the platonic scholars of the last and even this century have taken seriously the implications of this injunction? It did not say those without literacy or numeracy or even music cannot enter. It particularly specified geometry. Geometry ensures that thought and word become deed. These values are implicit in the Pythagorean/Platonic teachings on the goal of life – i.e., wisdom. This workshop will be an introduction to the practice and symbolism of “number in space”, which is geometry in essence. Two- and three-dimensional geometrical experiences will be offered.

## HADRIAN AND JULIAN: From Noon to Twilight of Roman Paganism

*Leonard George, Ph.D.*

Hadrian ruled the Roman Empire at the moment of its greatest reach. A skilled warrior, he chose peace when possible, and focused his genius on the spiritual life of the Empire, most profoundly expressed in his design of the Pantheon in Rome. Two centuries later, times had changed. The Empire was shrinking, menaced on all sides, and Christians were taking power. Julian II was the last pagan emperor. His brief reign marked the final brilliant glimpse of a pagan vision.

## PLATO, THE MYSTERIES AND THE GOLDEN SECTION

*Scott Olsen, Ph.D.*

Plato, an initiate of the Pythagorean and Eleusinian mysteries, has long been acknowledged as “the world’s interpreter.” But under an oath of silence, he was forbidden to openly disclose the deeper revelations. We know from written fragments by members of the Academy that he revealed much in his esoteric (oral) teachings in his Unwritten Lectures. In this workshop we will investigate how Plato may have subtly inserted keys to the mysteries (including the secret of the Divine Proportion) into his dialogues, along with puzzles and hints which he may have hoped would provoke astute readers into their own revelations.

## THE CORPUS HERMETICUM

*Nicholas and Clare Goodrick-Clarke*

When a Greek manuscript of the Corpus Hermeticum was brought to Florence in 1460, Cosimo de Medici requested Marsilio Ficino to translate it immediately, postponing the translation of Plato. Cosimo believed he held in his hands a revelation from the time of Moses and a source of the *prisca theologia*. Hermetic ideas underpin alchemical philosophy and practice, astrology and literature from the Renaissance to the present day. Augmented by finds at Nag Hammadi, the Corpus Hermeticum still has numinous and ontological relevance today. In this workshop, we will read and meditate upon the significance of this extraordinary work.



*Plato's Symposium, Anselm Feuerbach, 1873*

## A SYMPOSIUM ON THE PSYCHE

*Paulos Pissanos and others*

Following the tradition of the ancient academies, the ‘panelists’ will lead a discussion on the Psyche, each briefly presenting their position according to their particular field of expertise in a more conversational and rhetorical style. Following this, participants are invited to raise questions and issues which will be answered by various members of the panel according to their perspective, whether philosophical, classicist or esoteric.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOGOS

*Stanley Sfekas, Ph.D.*

Among Greeks, Logos became the common philosophical term for that all-pervading order that underlies the universe (called variously nature, providence, destiny or God). This workshop deals with the genesis, the development and the nature of Logos, from Pre-Socratic philosophy to the present. We will examine the concept of Logos in Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics,

Philo, Plotinus, the Church Fathers and Byzantine philosophers. We will also consider the meaning of Logos in contemporary culture.

## THE TAROT: A LIVING ORACLE

*Ellen Goldberg, M.A.*

Although the epoch of the temples and shrines of the Oracles is now past, the Tarot remains as a living oracle based in the Western Esoteric Tradition. It is a compendium of knowledge into which the streams of kabbalah, alchemy and hermetic philosophy have flowed. It is filled with archetypal symbols that stimulate the deeper levels of the subconscious mind. In our time, the temple of the Oracle lies in our hearts. In this workshop we will learn how to pose questions to the oracle, and how to let ourselves become receptive to its answer.

## THE ORPHIC HYMNS

*Theologos Simeoforos*

This workshop examines the Orphic hymns in relation to their use in the Mysteries. We will also explore the esoteric meanings within the language of the hymns and the ways in which these evocations of the gods were expressed. This will be connected to the deeper symbolism inherent in the Greek language that is apparent in alphanumeric symbolism and in the significance of epithets and root-words in these ancient peans.



*Marsilio Ficino*



Sanctuary of the Great Gods

Evri Christodoulou



alpiega



Chelys-Lyra, Greece, 400 BCE



Boston Lykeion Ellinon

Yiar Yiar - traditional Samothraci dance

## AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

### THE SANCTUARY OF THE GREAT GODS

Each afternoon, a group will be able to visit the Sanctuary – a ten-minute walk from the main conference site and the place of initiation into the mysteries for centuries. It has many acres to explore, evocative ancient ruins and an informative museum. No esoterically oriented visitor to the island would wish to miss the chance to attune here to the mystery of the great gods.

### BOAT TRIP AROUND SAMOTHRAKI

Each afternoon there will be free time to explore and enjoy the island. A boat will be available to take us around the island to the southern side, an area inaccessible by road, where dramatic rock formations, waterfalls and secluded beaches await us. Join us for a time of relaxation and beauty on the Aegean Sea.

### WALKING THE CANYONS OF MOUNT SAOS

Homer informs us that Poseidon gazed on the Greeks at the gates of Troy from the summit of Mount Saos, the 5,000 foot mountain that dominates the island. Its sides are marked by canyons and trails that lead to exquisite waterfalls and swimming pools. Most afternoons we will have the opportunity to hike the trails amidst natural beauty.

## EVENING ACTIVITIES

### THE TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCE OF SAMOTHRACE

No visit to a Greek island would be complete without an experience of the local dance and music. Some of the dances of Samothrace go back over 3,000 years and have been preserved almost entirely as they were in antiquity. We will enter into the spirit of the island as both spectator and participants in this ancient dance.

### MUSIC OF PYTHAGORAS AND ANCIENT GREECE

*with Pantelis and Friends*

Pantelis has devoted many years to researching, constructing and playing ancient instruments such as the lyre. His performance draws on meticulously chosen archival fragments of ancient music that enable him to evoke the use of music in the Pythagorean school. This music can touch our souls and generate profound emotion. The sound of the lyre, and the accompanying lyric verses, are said to move the innermost vibrations of the heart.

### A PERFORMANCE OF THE BACCHAE BY EURIPIDES

*with Evros-Agapi Theatre*

One of the greatest of all Greek dramas, *The Bacchae* powerfully dramatizes the conflict between the ecstatic and rational sides of the human psyche. When the people of Thebes deny the existence of the god Dionysos, he unleashes the full force of female passion, thereby destroying social order and driving them to tragedy. By turns savage, comic, and intensely lyrical, *The Bacchae*, is considered Euripides' finest and most provocative play.

# PRE-CONFERENCE WALKING TOUR OF THE ACROPOLIS IN ATHENS

September 2<sup>nd</sup>

For those who wish to visit the Acropolis before heading North to Samothrace, a morning walking tour will be offered with philosopher Stanley Sfekas (please see bio on page 10). This is highly recommended for those who have never visited Greece before. The Acropolis has a unique capacity to convey a powerful sense of beauty and wisdom of classical culture. Walk in the footsteps of the great philosophers and feel the magnificent civilization that was ancient Greece.

Cost: \$65.00, tour only

Note: You will be responsible for making your own hotel arrangements in Athens and then booking your flight to Alexandroupolis. For recommended hotels and flight suggestions please see [www.esotericquest.org](http://www.esotericquest.org).

# POST-CONFERENCE JOURNEY: THE MYSTERY CENTERS OF MAINLAND GREECE: ELEUSIS, DELPHI, EPIDAUROS AND THE TEMPLE OF POSEIDON

September 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>

This journey is intended for those who wish to deepen their attunement to the ancient Greek Mysteries and includes visits to some of the best-known sites on the mainland. After a night in Athens, we travel to Eleusis where the cult of the goddess Demeter existed for many centuries. Here we will visit the site of The Eleusinian Mystery School and a sanctuary of the Goddess. We will then proceed to Delphi, considered by many the center of the known world in antiquity, the place where heaven and earth met. Delphi was known as the center of worship of Apollo, who embodied moral discipline and spiritual clarity. Our visit includes a walk on the Archaio Monopati (Ancient Footpath) overlooking the sanctuary. The next morning we will visit Epidaurus, an ancient Greek city on the east coast of Argolis, and site of the 4th century BCE temple of Asclepius, the god of healing. Excavations of the sacred precinct reveal that it contained the temples of both Asclepius and Artemis. From here we continue to The Temple of Poseidon on Cape Sounion, perhaps the most beautiful ancient site in the whole Aegean. Our final day will be spent in Athens with time to explore individually. Our journey will be interspersed with talks on the mysteries and the gods, and meditations on the spirit of sacred place.

**Price for those traveling with the Open Center from the main conference:** \$1200 per person for accommodations in a double room, \$1400 for a single room. This cost includes accommodations for the nights of September 8–12, all meals (except lunch and dinner on September 12th, which will be time for personal exploration in Athens), English-speaking tour guides, air fare from Alexandroupolis to Athens, travel in a luxury coach and entrance fees to sites.

**People not attending the conference on Samothrace are welcome to join us for this post conference journey.** Please see [www.EsotericQuest.org](http://www.EsotericQuest.org) or call Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 ext. 101 for more details.

**Please note:** It is possible to continue on after this trip to meet up with other conference participants in Southwestern Turkey to explore Ephesus and Didyma (please see the next page for a full description and price of the trip). Those continuing on will fly from Athens on September 12th to the island of Samos, birthplace of Pythagoras. After spending the night there, we will board a ferry and sail to the Turkish port of Kusadasi. From there we will travel a short distance to Selcuk/ Ephesus, where we will meet up with the other post-conference group that visited Istanbul.



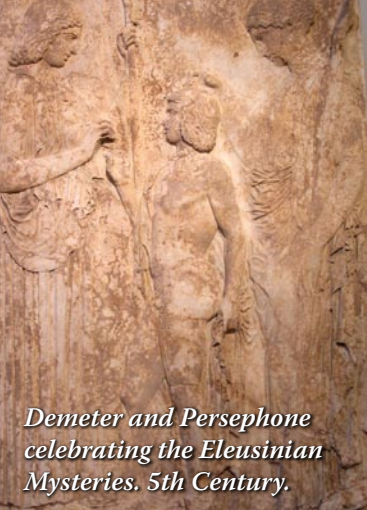
The Acropolis

Stefanos Kolopoulos



Delphi

Dr. Le Thanh Hung



Demeter and Persephone celebrating the Eleusinian Mysteries. 5th Century.



Epidaurus

Rosino



The Temple of Poseidon

Ken Russell Salvador



# POST-CONFERENCE JOURNEYS IN TURKEY: THE SUFI AND BYZANTINE WORLDS OF ISTANBUL

September 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>

Istanbul is one of the most beautiful and profound cities in the world. It is the only great city to span two continents – Europe and Asia – and perhaps no other city has such a rich texture of history, culture and spirituality. In its incarnation as Constantinople, it was a brilliant center of Byzantine Greek culture and, as the Ottoman capital, it had a great tradition of Sufism. As Samothrace lies only a few miles from the nautical boundary of Turkey, we have an invaluable opportunity to experience Istanbul in all its mystery and magnificence. We will travel by bus from the port of Alexandroupolis to Istanbul, where we will meet with some of Turkey's leading scholars of Sufism, continuing a theme from last year's Esoteric Quest in Andalusia. For centuries, each of the 300 mosques of the city contained a lodge for wandering dervishes, and we will have the opportunity to experience the mystical practices of contemporary Sufis, heirs to the tradition of Rumi. Our guide will be Stephen Hirtenstein, scholar of Ibn 'Arabi. Among the city's most striking features are The Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia and Topkapi Palace, standing high above the Bosphorus on the Golden Horn. We will also explore the rich culture of Byzantium with its architecture and esoteric spirituality. Brian Cotnoir will lecture on Byzantine alchemy and we will sail along the shores of the Bosphorus viewing the castles and monuments that mark this place as one of the most significant in world history. Time will also be found to visit the vast Bazaar, eat in restaurants that exude Ottoman splendor, and glimpse the remains of the Roman Empire at its peak.

**Price for those traveling with the Open Center from the main conference:** \$1,350 per person for accommodations in a double room, \$1490 for a single room. This cost includes accommodations from September 8–12, all meals (except for lunch on September 12th which will be time for personal exploration in Istanbul), coach travel to Istanbul, English-speaking tour guides, all presentations, ground transport and entrance fees to scheduled sites, and a boat tour up the Bosphorus strait.

**People not attending the conference on Samothrace are welcome to join us for this post conference journey.** Please see [www.EsotericQuest.org](http://www.EsotericQuest.org) or call Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 ext. 101 for more details.

## EPHESUS, DIDYMA AND MILETUS: ORACLES AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

September 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>

Our Quest concludes in South Western Turkey in an area filled with sites of great significance to both the culture of antiquity and the early years of Christianity. The Temple of Artemis of Ephesus was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, and the site of a remarkable mystery center. A short distance from the Temple stand the remnants of St. John's Basilica, marking the place where the Apostle John wrote his Gospel. Nearby are the extensive remnants of the Roman city of Ephesus and, above these ruins, stands the house thought to be the last home of Mary, mother of Jesus. After a day in Selcuk/ Ephesus, we will travel to Didyma, site of an oracle devoted to Apollo and comparable in influence to Delphi. From there we go on to Miletus and Priene. These ruins are some of the best-preserved and most evocative in the Mediterranean and form a fitting conclusion to our Esoteric Quest.

**Price for the Istanbul and Ephesus trip (September 8-16) for those traveling from main conference:** \$1930 per person for accommodations in a double room, \$2200 for a single room. This cost includes the entire Istanbul trip outlined above, airfare from Istanbul to Izmir on September 13, bus travel from Izmir to Selcuk, accommodations for the nights of September 13–15 in Selcuk, all meals, English-speaking tour guides, ground transport and entrance fees to sites.

**Price for the Mainland Greece trip and the Ephesus trip (September 8-16) for those traveling from the main conference:** \$2190 per person for accommodations in a double room, \$2435 for a single room. This cost includes the full post conference Greece trip (outlined on the previous page), accommodations and dinner on the Island of Samos, Greece on September 12, ferry and bus travel to Selcuk, Turkey, on September 13, accommodations for the nights of September 13–15 in Selcuk, all meals, English-speaking tour guides, ground transport and entrance fees to sites. Participants will arrange for their own air travel from Athens to Samos on the 12th (see [www.esotericquest.org](http://www.esotericquest.org) for travel suggestions).



Blue Mosque

Ekaterina Polyashova

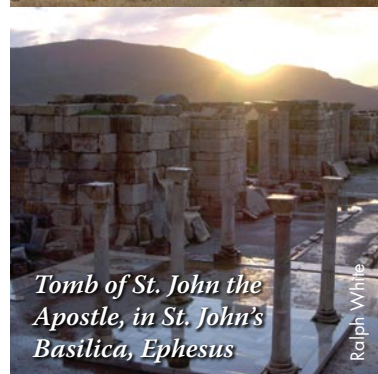


Vladimir Shostovitz



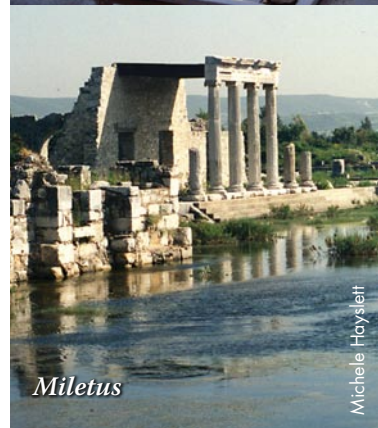
Byzantine Mosaic

Luisangel



Tomb of St. John the Apostle, in St. John's Basilica, Ephesus

Ralph White



Miletus

Michele Hayslett

# BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

**Crystal Addey, M.A.** researches the role of oracles and other forms of divination at the University of Bristol, England. Her areas of focus include mystery cults, the religions of late antiquity, and the role of oracles in the development of late Platonist philosophy.

**Christopher Bamford** is the editorial director of SteinerBooks and Lindisfarne Press. He is the author of *An Endless Trace: The Passionate Pursuit of Wisdom in the West*, and has written numerous introductions to the works of Rudolf Steiner. Most recently, he co-authored *Green Hermeticism: Alchemy and Ecology*.

**Steve Bass, M.A.**, is an architect in New York City and currently Visiting Assistant Professor of Architecture at Notre Dame University. A Fellow of the Institute of Classical Architecture, he teaches on aspects of proportion and geometry in design. His book, *Proportion in Architecture*, will be published next year.

**Brian Cotnoir** is an independent researcher. He has been studying and experimenting with alchemical procedures for 35 years. He is author of *The Weiser's Concise Guide to Alchemy*. Brian will speak on Byzantine Alchemy in Istanbul.

**Keith Critchlow** is an internationally known lecturer and the author of numerous books including *Order in Space* and *Time Stands Still*. A leading expert on sacred architecture and sacred geometry, he is a former professor at the Royal College of Art and is connected to the Temenos Academy and The Prince's School of Traditional Arts. He is Director of Studies for Kairos.

**Ellen Goldberg, M.A.**, is a psychotherapist, artist and mystic working within the Hermetic Tradition. She has been teaching Tarot at the New York Open Center for twenty years. Ellen is the director of the 'School of Oracles,' and writes on both these subjects. She has taught at five previous Open Center esoteric conferences.

**Leonard George, Ph.D.**, is a Canadian psychologist, educator, author and broadcaster. His academic affiliations include Capilano College, Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia. Author of two books, he has focused for many years on the spirituality of antiquity.

**Clare Goodrick-Clarke** is an honorary fellow of the University of Exeter, where she teaches the hermetic art of alchemy in the Master's program in Western Esotericism. She is the co-author of *G.R.S. Mead and the Gnostic Quest*, which examines the gnostic inspiration of many of C.G Jung's most powerful ideas.

**Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, D.Phil.**, is a professor of western esotericism at the University of Exeter and the author of many books on the Western esoteric tradition, including works on Swedenborg; Paracelsus and Blavatsky. His latest book, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction*, is published by Oxford University Press.

**Stephen Hirtenstein, M.A.**, is the author of *The Unlimited Mercifier*, a spiritual biography of Ibn 'Arabi, and co-translator of two treatises by Ibn 'Arabi, *Divine Sayings* and *The Seven Days of the Heart*. He led last year's post-conference journey through Andalusia and will be our guide in Istanbul.

**Alvin Holm, AIA**, has been teaching classical architecture design since 1981. An architect in general practice with projects throughout the United States, he is a founder of the Institute of Classical Architecture, and has taught at University of Pennsylvania and many other colleges.

**Scott Olsen, Ph.D.** is the author of the recently published and award-winning book, *The Golden Section: Nature's Greatest Secret*. He is Professor of Philosophy at Central Florida CC, and is known internationally for his work on decoding the geometric mysteries of Plato.

**Paulos Pissanos** is the President of the Olympus International Cultural Centre,

which aims to revitalize the ancient Greek spirit in modern education. He has produced hundreds of documentaries for Greek National Television, focusing on classical philosophy, archeology and history. His latest series was nominated for the Templeton Prize.

**Michael Poulantzas, Ph.D.**, is professor of Social Science at the Catholic University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome. A scholar of the Greek mysteries for many years, he has a strong interest in the politics of democracy in the Athenian Golden Age.

**Stanley Sfekas, Ph.D.**, is professor of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Indianapolis, Athens Campus. A scholar of Aristotelian Metaphysics, he has appeared in numerous documentary films and television programs as a philosophical consultant. He is also the educational adviser for the Fulbright Commission in Greece.

**Theologos Simeoforos** has been researching the esoteric significance and symbolic interpretation of the Greek language for over twenty years. The author of several books on the subject, he lectures at the People's University of Athens and is adjunct Professor of Hellenic Philology at the Alpine University of Zurich.

**Ralph White** is co-founder and creative director of the New York Open Center, one of America's leading institutions of holistic learning, and editor of *Lapis Magazine Online*. He has directed and organized a series of seven international conferences on Western Esotericism, of which this is the latest.

## Conference Staff:

**Director:** Ralph White,  
New York Open Center

**Coordinator:** Carrie Wykoff,  
Events That Matter

**Greek Conference Coordinator:**  
Sasha Chaitow

**Registrar:** Andrea Lomanto,  
New York Open Center

**Director of Finance:** Daniel Chulsky,  
New York Open Center

# CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

## CONFERENCE FEE

**Course Code: 08SQUEST**

**Registration before June 16: \$1595**

**July 14: \$1725**

**August 18: \$1875**

The conference fee includes the full conference program, afternoon activities, evening events, all meals and the ferry to and from Samothraki (Samothrace).

## ACCOMMODATIONS FEE

Accommodations are provided on Samothraki (Samothrace) for the five nights of Wednesday, September 3, through Sunday, September 7. There is an option of spending Tuesday, September 2, in Alexandroupolis to catch the early morning ferry the next day. Please see below for details.

**September 3–7** (five nights) on Samothraki (Samothrace)

**Single rooms:** \$450

**Double rooms:** \$250 per person, per room

For booking double rooms, please specify whether you will be attending as a couple, sharing a room with a friend, or wish to have a roommate arranged for you by the Open Center (pending availability).

**September 2** (optional evening) in Alexandroupolis

**Basic single:** \$95

**Basic share:** \$80 per person, per room

**Upgraded single:** \$145

**Upgraded share:** \$95 per person, per room

## REGISTRATION

The Open Center invites you to register on our website at [www.EsotericQuest.org](http://www.EsotericQuest.org), where you will find our complete registration information and payment form. Payment is required to secure your registration.

## PAYMENT

All payment is in US dollars. Please pay by credit card, international money order or personal check (US bank accounts only). Prices do not include travel to and from Alexandroupolis, Greece. An affordable payment plan for the conference is available. Please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 ext. 101, or at [quest@opencenter.org](mailto:quest@opencenter.org) for details.

## TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Participants must make their own travel arrangements to and from Alexandroupolis in Thrace in northeastern Greece (or from your final destination if you are joining us for a post-conference trip). Olympic Airlines is offering a special discount to conference participants, information and a special code will be provided on confirmation of your registration.

## ARRIVAL ON SAMOTHRAKI (SAMOTHRACE)

Participants begin their journey by flying into the Greek city of Alexandroupolis' Democritos Airport (AXD). Alexandroupolis is our point of departure for the 3-hour ferry ride to the island of Samothraki (Samothrace) on the morning of Wednesday, September 3rd. For participants joining us from North America or any other location entailing an overnight flight, we highly recommend arriving in Alexandroupolis on the 2nd of September. This will facilitate travel with Open Center staff on the early morning ferry the following day.

## ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The conference will begin on the evening of September 3rd as we meet for an orientation followed by dinner. Each day that follows, we will have morning plenary sessions followed by lunch at the Samothraki Village Hotel. After lunch there will be an afternoon break

with a number of activities allowing you to explore the island. Later in the afternoon there will be a choice of workshops to attend, followed by dinner. In the evenings we will gather for music, traditional dance and other cultural events. The conference will end at lunchtime on Sunday, September 8th.

## REFUNDS

A full refund, less a \$200 processing fee, will be offered for cancellations made by July 16, 2008. Travel insurance is strongly recommended in the event of unexpectedly having to cancel or change your travel plans either before or during the conference, losing your luggage, needing medical assistance, or if the program is affected by circumstances beyond our control. You can purchase it online or from your own travel agent. Travel insurance options are available at [www.myinsurance.com](http://www.myinsurance.com) or [www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com).

## OFFSETTING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

Our Esoteric Quests take us to many wonderful places around the world. The Open Center is committed to caring for the planet and its climate. Our brochure is printed on recycled paper and this year we will be offsetting the carbon footprint generated by staff air travel. We invite you to do the same by visiting [www.sustainabletravelinternational.org](http://www.sustainabletravelinternational.org) so you can find out how many greenhouse gases are produced by your journey and then purchase Green Tags which make your travel 100% climate-neutral.

## SCHOLARSHIPS / WORK STUDY

A limited number of partial scholarships are available. Anyone awarded a scholarship will be expected to assist on site at the conference. Please see our website for a scholarship application form. These requests will be reviewed on a first come, first serve basis.

*“Wonder is the feeling of the philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder.”*

— Plato

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMS INCLUDE

PLATO, GEOMETRY AND THE  
'EVER-TRUE'

*Keith Critchlow*

THE SAMOTHRACIAN  
MYSTERIES

*Christopher Bamford*

DECODING THE MEANING OF  
THE ANCIENT GREEK MYSTERIES

*Theologos Simeoforos*

THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES

*Michalis Poulantzas, Ph.D.*

THE ANCIENT ORACLES

*Crystal Addey, M.A.*

THE MYSTERY OF THE  
DIVINE PROPORTION

*Scott Olsen, Ph.D.*

VISIT THE SANCTUARY  
OF THE GREAT GODS

WALK THE CANYONS  
OF MOUNT SAOS

MUSIC OF PYTHAGORAS  
AND ANCIENT GREECE

POST-CONFERENCE JOURNEYS

*to the*

SUFI AND BYZANTINE WORLDS  
OF ISTANBUL

*and the*

MYSTERY CENTERS OF  
MAINLAND GREECE

*and*

EPHESUS, DIDYMA AND MILETUS

Ralph White



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*An Esoteric Quest for*  
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