

Caravan tour 2010, Via Egnatia Foundation

This year the Caravan tour will be quite different from last year's, due to the difference in landscape and the state of the Road, read: lack of the road. There are very few pieces of Via Egnatia left in Greece, mainly in Philippi, Kaballa and a bigger piece near Komotini.

The lack of road, combined with the distance and the heat, made us choose to bridge various parts by bus. You can see in the schedule which. And we decided to divide the whole Caravan walk in two parts. The first part in Western Greece, goes along a sidetrack of Via Egnatia, the road between Korçe and Florina. We will start from the Albanian-Greek border, at the village of Kristallopigi. This is beautiful mountainous terrain, partly Natural Park, with unspoiled nature. We will have a local guide. Actually this is the roughest part from all, so you have to be a bit trained before the beginning! We will camp and half-way there will be a beautiful lodging house. We will probably have donkeys on this part, but that is still in organisation.

Another group will come from the Macedonian (Bitola) border. The groups will join in Florina, where there will be a manifestation, with painting at a school, music, talks, etc. From Florina the two groups will walk together to Edessa in a week. The first – plain- part there will be a choice to use horses. We will pass the local ecological centre, probably with lecture, etc. Archaeological site of Petres, around the Lake of Vegoritis, camping at the lakeside. From there mildly mountainous terrain with a guide up to Edessa. There will be a formal reception, press, painting, etc. Beautiful camping place in the woods near Edessa. On Sunday we will go by bus from Edessa to Thessaloniki, making a long stop at Jiannitsa, to do some publicity, painting etc. in the old center. The bus will arrive in Thessaloniki in the late afternoon.

We have tried to make it as varied as possible, with interesting walks and lectures, manifestations in the cities. The lack of visible Via Egnatia asks for a lot of phantasy, historical knowledge and creativity. This is what we try to provide. But this is also what we ask you – the participants – to contribute. We make this Caravan tour together!

The tour is half-organised, with a lot of room for your own creativity and improvisation.

The second part of the Caravantour is one month later. On Friday the 18th of June we will gather and start with a lecture (or 2) in the morning, as we have done last year in Durrës. From Thessaloniki we will take a bus to Amfipoli, from there we will walk a few days through the Pangeo mountains (mild) to the ancient city of Philippi. From there bus to Kaballa, sightseeing, parts of VE, etc. Next day bus to Komotini: reception, lectures, painting, etc. Bus to Mesti: from there beautiful walk along the few longer saved part of Via Egnatia, to Alexandroupoli. (We are trying to get donkeys, but this is most difficult in Northern Greece. I am afraid there are only a few very aged to find.) There manifestation with international participants in Medieval Han, just before the border. Lecture, music, Karaghiozosis-play. Overnight we will camp in tents, but also sometimes in rooms, cheap hotels, etc. Variation is the norm.

The part in Turkey is still a bit 'under construction', but the recipe is the same: alternating walking and bussing, little road, but quite a lot of monuments. Interesting participants, cultural manifestations in the cities, heat with seabathes in between, and the final reception at the Golden Gate by a beautiful choir singing Balkan Songs in all languages. In Istanbul there will be a great manifestation, exhibition of the (by then very long) painting outside the archaeological museum, etc. In Istanbul we are allowed to camp on the University campus for a few days. More information on the Turkish path follows a.s.a.p.