VIA EGNATIA REVISITED

Common past, common future

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Via Egnatia Foundation
Via Egnatia Foundation is an international network, based in Holland, founded with the purpose of furthering international cooperation and cultural exchange in the region of Via Egnatia, and furthering the development of Via Egnatia into a cross-border hiking trail. VEF is a not for profit organisation.
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Introduction

Marietta van Attekum

Via Egnatia has been for almost two thousand years a road that connected people from different backgrounds over a vast geographical area in the Balkans. Roman soldiers and postmen, Ottoman civil servants and tax collectors, Greek traders with their long caravans of mules and camels, Christian preachers, Jewish wool traders, Vlach herdsmen, farmers of all kinds on their way to the market, they all used this road and made it into a real Balkan life artery.

By now much of this old paved road is gone, lost in time, or replaced by asphalt and modern highway. But, remarkably, also much has been saved. Especially in Albania and Macedonia, whole parts of the old trail have been preserved, thanks to nature and to the passionate work of archaeologists. In Greece, where most of Via Egnatia is sadly lost, some archaeologists lately invested much labour in the unearthing and preservation of its last scattered pieces. Also in Turkey most of the old pavement is gone, but other monuments along it have been preserved. Turkish archaeologists are eager to discover more of the long forgotten trail. A road that once was a crucial connection could be connected again and inspired with new life. Again it could become a way to exchange goods, knowledge, art and friendship. It could become an international hiking trail, so that people of different cultures meet and the people living along Via Egnatia could have some benefit of it. This road could become a symbol of connection between people, between countries, between East and West.

That is what Via Egnatia Foundation stands for: the reanimation of this old road, literally as well as symbolically. This obviously is a long term goal and asks for a lot of international cooperation. Via Egnatia Foundation strives for this goal and seeks to bring people together, furthering mutual understanding, as well as to develop the old road into a cross border hiking trail. Archaeologists and historians were the first to consult on this huge task.

This book, report of the first international conference on past and future of Via Egnatia, is the first tangible proof of their will to cooperate. On a Conference in the snow covered hills of Pelister National Park, near Bitola, seventy scientists of all involved countries met, among them also musicians, anthropologists, economists and linguists. They all shone their light on the meaning and reanimation of Via Egnatia. For the purpose of this book we will confine to the archaeological, historical and cultural contributions. In the first part of the book you will find the archaeological contributions, that speak about the Road as such. In the second part you will find the historical and cultural texts, alluding to the symbolic meaning of the Road. In the appendix are included summaries of the other lectures and working groups of
the conference, concentrating on promising cross-border projects and future research.

After the opening speech of VEF, in part I we follow the trace of Via Egnatia. As an overview, professor Valter Shtylla - Albanian archaeologist - takes us by the hand and leads us through the Golden Gates of Via Egnatia, from Durrës to Istanbul. His beautiful images, together with his vast library, witness his lifelong dedication to Via Egnatia.

The same holds true for professor Neritan Ceka, the Albanian archaeologist who excavated and restored - together with others - the unique ‘Ad Quintum’ station near Elbasan -, who talks about Via Egnatia in Albania.

From Albania the road leads over the pass of Qafe Thane to Macedonia and the lake of Ohrid. Good work for the preservation of Via Egnatia here has been done by the archaeologist Pazko Kuzman. “I kissed the stones of Via Egnatia”, he told us. His colleague professor Viktor Lilic describes in his extended contribution the search for Via Egnatia in Macedonia.

Professor Zivoin Vincic, the oldest participant at the conference, offers a supplement on this, with his wise advices on young researchers, after a lifelong dedication to Via Egnatia, as showed in his voluminous monograph on the road.

When we cross the border to Greece, Yannis Lolos takes over the estafette-stick. This young archaeologist recently published a beautiful photo book on Via Egnatia that shows us the current remnants of it, from Durrës to Istanbul. Lolos talks about the whole Via Egnatia and about what is left of it in Greece. Especially in Thrace, a growing section of the road is to be seen near Alexandroupoli, thanks to Mrs. Polyxeni Tsatsopoulou of the archaeological service there. Lolos takes us over the Evros river further into Turkey.

Professor Mustapha Sayar supplements this discourse with his own short explanation from the Turkish side. Mustapha Sayar is a Turkish archaeologist specialized in the inscriptions found in Perinthos-Heracleia, ancient city on Via Egnatia in Turkey.

His colleague Mrs. Prof. Illknur Kolay, specialist in Ottoman, Byzantine and classical architecture, enjoyed us with her beautiful speech/article on the Ottoman Caravanserais along Via Egnatia - and elsewhere in Ottoman Turkey - to broaden our view on what these interesting hostels for men and animals looked like. She enlivens our view with information about the food, the religious life, the costs and many other details about life in such a place. Via her images of the Caravanserais we finally arrive in Istanbul, through the last Golden Gate.

Then a special word for Bulgaria: although Via Egnatia at present does not cross Bulgarian territory, before the creation of national borders the road surely served the region, by its branches. We must not forget that national borders came into existence only one century ago and that beforehand the whole (Ottoman, Byzantine, Roman) region had virtually no borders. It was one area, in cultural as well as economical and political respect, albeit lived
in by different groups. Therefore we include a lecture, after the conference 
provided, by the Bulgarian archaeologist Ivan Vasilev, who illuminates the 
role of Via Egnatia in Bulgarian history and passionately pleads for “a cos-
mopolite and tolerant Balkan”, whereof the Via Egnatia might become a 
symbol again.

Then we come to the second part of this book. The opening article is of Pro-
fessor Raymond Detrez – historian and linguist, specialized in the Balkans -
with his lecture on “Balkan cultural identity, the choice between the com-
mon and the particular”. By example of the similarities between different 
Balkan languages, he illustrates the long process of mutual influencing and 
contact between the different ethnic groups in the Balkans. A tendency to 
convergence of different cultural elements has alternated with periods of 
divergence. Professor Detrez offers a very interesting model to look at Bal-
kan history, and stresses the importance of the recognition of the common 
history, instead of the – partly invented – nationalist history, for the future of 
the Balkans.

The next article is by an art-historian: professor Kostas Giakoumis, teac-
ching at the New York University in Tirana, tells us about the remnants of Byzan-
tine art in the region around Berat, in the Western part of Albania.

Mrs. Dragica Zivkova dwells on the historical meaning and develop-
ment of the city of Ohrid, ‘the city of light’, She highlights the importance of trade 
for Ohrid and the meaning of Via Egnatia as a trade-route.

The article of Dimitris Gkintidis, social anthropologist, is definitely oriented 
towards the future. He deals with cross-border networks in the Greek region 
of Thrace. Gkintidis stresses the Europe-oriented policy of the Greek gov-
ernment after 1996, and the political will to improve relations with Turkey 
and Bulgaria. Cross-border networks were set up in the light of “Europeani-
zation”.

This book witnesses of the beginning of a process, rather than an end. It of-
fers a heap of archaeological and historical information on Via Egnatia. It is 
not a comprehensive guide, and even less a practical travelling guide. VEF is 
working on that too.

We hope that you as a reader of this book can appreciate the richness of in-
formation that these scientists offer, and especially their willingness to co-
operate for this purpose: that Via Egnatia can become what it once was: ‘a 
way to connect’.
Opening speech VEF Conference, Bitola: About Spirit of Place

When the painter Edward Lear visited Bitola - then Monastir - in 1848, he wrote: "A more magnificently placed city is hardly possible to imagine.(...) The city is built at the western edge of a noble plain, surrounded by the most exquisitely shaped hills. (...) A river runs through the town, a broad and shifting torrent, crossed by numerous bridges, mostly of wood, on some of which two rows of shops stand forming a broad covered bazaar... Either looking up or down the river, the intermixture of minarets and mosques with cypress and willow foliage, forms subjects of the most admirable beauty".

Evidently, Lear looked at the city with the eyes of a landscape painter and a romanticist. And he saw Monastir in its heydays of prosperity; the time when long chains of mules and camels from all directions brought merchandise into the city, this beautiful city at the crossroads of important trade routes. A city which buzzed with activity like a beehive. The times when all its different population groups - Muslims, Jews and Christians - lived here side by side in relative peace. There were Greeks and Bulgarians living here, Albanians, Vlachs and gypsies. There was a thriving community of Sephardic Jews, immigrated from Spain and Italy in the 15th/16th century. And all these people spoke many languages, at least basically. So they had contact. They had their own religion and way of dressing. As Lear describes: "Greek women in scarlet-striped aprons and long bunches of black silk tied to their hair, Muslim women wearing a white veil, Bulgarian women with enormous silver belts over their crimson woollen robes and scarves with gold lace and beads over their heads, Jewish women with huge over stuffed turbans". (Lear speaking here, apparently he only looked at the women.) There were also men: Vlachs, who wore their white fez, the Bulgarians a hooded cloak, the Turks a long caftan, and the Greek merchants dressed in blue tunics. The streets offered a colourful picture - as many Balkan cities did - of multicultural life.

We all know that this idyllic picture has not lasted. Big turmoils, fires and wars have come over the city. Whole population groups have vanished altogether. But by then there still was a form of multiculturalism. Of course these groups of people spent whole parts of their lives separated from each other, nor were they treated equally. But at least they tolerated each other, they traded together, their languages and their music influenced each other and their children played together.

There also was a definite Western influence in Monastir. We are speaking of the era of the Tanzimat-reforms in the Ottoman empire. Many Turkish rulers had studied in London, or Vienna, or Paris. The Greeks had secular western schools from 1830 onwards. The Jews had French schools and the military academy - where Kemal Ataturk studied - had from 1855 onwards western style schools. Also in this time western countries opened embassies here: Hungary/Austria, France, England, Russia and they brought their western
style elites with them, with their architecture, their fashion, their screen-plays, their piano’s. A taste for modern Western goods and ideas was cultivated here, and all these influences intermingled in this city. Monastir was the place to be, at the time. Imagine this buzzing beehive: there must have been something in the air, those days, something promising, something full of possibilities of cross-fertilization. “All roads lead to Monastir”, they said.

It is in this spirit that we start this Conference. And I feel it is a very happy coincidence that we are together here, near this city. This place at the cross-road, where the Romans funded their city Heracleia, on the Via Egnatia. Let us hope that the spirit of this place will inspire us with fresh ideas, will stimulate us to work together. Let us hope that we here now, with all our possibilities of communication and schooling, can bridge our differences. And make them to use of each other as a source of riches and variety, instead of separation and strife.

Everybody here present has a lot to tell. From his or her own expertise to contribute to this project. And everybody, all of you will come to speak on this conference. Because we believe in the value of working together: that is what this project is about. That is what a road is about: about connection, about exchange. Of goods, of knowledge, of meaning.

This is not my road. Or - to speak with a variation of tonight's film - this is not anybody’s property. If so, it is mostly property of the people living along it. And it is for their benefit we want to work. But foremost this road is a heritage of history, a heritage that we have to protect to preserve and to give meaning towards the future. That is: to use it in a positive way. A way that contributes to contact, to knowledge new discoveries and to friendship. A way that contributes again to a colourful picture, where people of many different backgrounds can meet each other and live together fruitfully. That is the ultimate meaning of: inspiring this road with new life.

Thank you.

Marietta van Attekum, Coordinator VEF
Part I:

Looking for traces
The Golden Gates of the Via Egnatia in the Balkans

Valter Shtylla

The history of the ancient traversary Via Egnatia deserves particular attention for a number of reasons. The appropriate topographical layering, the solid pavements, the numerous artworks alongside this road, the stone and wooden bridges, the supporting walls, the canalizations etc. from the history of its construction technique. Numerous military expeditions throughout centuries depict the military history of this road. Apart from serving for military purposes, this road has aided the interaction among various cultures. It connected a number of highly civilized centers of the antique world such as: Dyrrachium, Scampa, Lychnid, Heraclea, Edessa, Pella, Thessaloniki, Neapolis, and Constantinople, thus aiding the spread of culture and tradition from one centre to the other. In addition, the history and the functions performed by this road in the past, sound very interesting given the euro-balkanic reality. Nowadays Via-Egnatia is represented by the so-called 8th Corridor which has been widely discussed as a project-idea, in terms of technical projects and has also been included in the cost-making processes of the Balkan countries. All these efforts have not been in vain. The Romans, since the beginning of their work in the II century BC had this traversary carefully thought out and decided that the route was the shortest and the most economical one linking Durrës and Constantinople via Thessaloniki. The traversary passed through a section of a mountainous relief of the Polisi mountains, crossed the Skumbini valley in the Illyrian territory, and went through the soft planes of Bukovo and Xhatovo along the Lychnid-Heraclea segment in Macedonia. Viewed from the physical aspect of the construction, Via Egnatia represents a road which passed through regions of moderate altitude as well as through the low coastal areas near Constantinople. It was mostly a field road which crossed through important cities of Albania, Macedonia, Greece and Turkey.

It is precisely for these advantages that this antique road has been at the centre of many debates and discussions lately. The historical traversary Via Egnatia pervaded the four above mentioned territories (states) while all the other roads to the north and to the south of the main road are simply branches. The regeneration of this road in both directions- Macedonia- Bulgaria and Macedonia- Greece- Turkey would be of vital importance for Albania. Through the construction phase, this investment would mean new jobs for Albanians, as well as an enhancement of infrastructural enterprises such as hotels and restaurants, gas stations, etc. If the road would become functional, it would help the transmission of economical and cultural values through Albania. If these projects would materialize, Albania would find itself right at the centre of the Balkans, which is why this country should try
to take advantage of this historical chance. The international community should consider the factors that lead to the construction of the Via Egnatia across the Illyrian-Albanian territory by the Romans, who, to this day, are remembered for the construction of world-wide known roads and buildings. Emergencies such as the economical factor, foreign direct investments and the opening up of the country to highly developed countries, call for an acceleration of cardinal development issues, this project being one of them. Roads have historically been an indicator of the level of a country’s development. Albania, mostly due to its geographical location, has always been pervaded by roads of all kinds. Today, this country might attempt to revive some of its old heritage although it may be faced with superior experience and heritage from other countries. Roads connect people, they help the development of these countries they cross and therefore they must be given special attention, especially in a time where considerations for a United Europe are more pressing than ever. The 8th Corridor (partially and completely Via Egnatia), the road Durrës-Prizren (also of antique origin), the North-South traversary represent the chance of Albania today.

On the details of the construction of Via Egnatia, information has been extracted from a milestone found in the vicinity of Thessaloniki in 1974. On this stone, is sculpted both in Latin and Greek the name of the Macedonian Proconsul, Knaesius Egnatius, the son of Gaius, ruler of Rome, as well as the 260 miles distance between Dyrrachium and Thessaloniki. This scripture bearing the name of the highest official of the Macedonian province, under the rule of which this road was constructed, is evidence to the fact that the construction of the road was undertaken during the republican era of the Roman Empire, between 146-143 BC during the earliest years of the reign of Egnatius, who gave the road his own name. Via Egnatia in the Balkans was an extension of the famous Via Apia which crossed the Italic Peninsula, and which was constructed in 312 BC by Censor Apius Claudi, who was in charge of the state treasury and construction works. Via Apia stretched from Rome to the Brundisium skela in the south, and reached the city of Dyrrachium across the Adriatic Sea. While Egnatius was supervising the construction of the Roman road, emperor Trajan (98-117) undertook various significant works along the road. Therefore his name is often mistaken for the creator of the road. Via Egnatia did not represent just a road with distinct operational functions and optimal technical solutions. It was, at the same time, treated as a monumental work and was enriched with Arches of Triumph, decorative reliefs and Magnificent Gates.

Through the Gates, Via Egnatia made its entrance into the fortified systems of the cities of the time. The gates of the antique cities were located along the fortified surrounding walls and they were called the Golden Gates. Golden Gates of Via Egnatia in the Balkans region can be found in a number of cities such as: Dyrrachion (Durrës), Scampis (Elbasan), Thessaloniki and Constanc-
The Golden Gate of Durrës was found on the ancient brick wall of the castle, which was built in III-IV AD. Excavations carried out in year 2000 revealed the construction of the Durresi Golden Gate. Under the modern street asphalt was found the trace of the beginning of the right side of the big brick arch. The distance from one side to the other was estimated around 9.6 m while to the right of the big arch, was discovered the small one constructed for the movement of passengers. This arch was as wide as 2.5 m. The left side of the big arch has not been found yet, but it could have been preserved under the nearby park. The Golden Gate of Dyrrachion displays a classical form of the gates in the Balkan Peninsula. The gate consisted of a central big arch which allowed the passing of the carts and two smaller symmetrical arches on both sides that were used by the passengers.

In the last decade of the XVII century a scholar named Coronelli designed a gravure of the city of Durrës where one can see the entrance from the side of the sea into the fortified city. The arch of the gate was situated at the lower part of a square tower. Two windows opened above the arch. This is the same tower that can be seen in the pictures take in 1901-1914 in Durrës.
If a comparison is made between the levels of the trace of the big arch foot and the foot of the entrance arch constructed later than 1690, it becomes apparent that, although they are located in the same area, the Golden Gate of Via Egnatia is not the Jallia Gate of the 1690 sketch or of the beginning of the XX century pictures. It can be concluded that, after the historical damages suffered by the city of Durrës, the Golden Gate of Via Egnatia has been destroyed probably by the shifting of the land. It is very likely that in the place of the Golden Gate, after it was destroyed, the new entrance to the city, from the side of the sea, was constructed in the same pattern. As a continuation of the Golden Gate tradition, since the Golden Gate was viewed as the classical entrance of the famous Via Egnatia, during the Turkish period in Albania the entrance from the side of the sea, into the fortified city of Durrës, was called the Jallia Gate, from Turkish word “jollu” for road. This is evidence to the fact that this gate is part of the cultural exchange and commonness across the centuries.

Another Golden Gate of Via Egnatia must have existed in the earliest phase of the Elbasan Castle around the IV century A.D. Via Egnatia penetrated the Scampa fortress through the middle part of the west wall, near the museum, and after it went across the whole city, it left the city from the east side. There are no remains from the Scampis Golden Gate except for the underground archaeological foundations. As can be observed from the traces of the towers at the exit of Via Egnatia, at the Scampis fortress, the entrance and the exit of Via Egnatia were constructed after a different structure. This is what can be concluded judging from the mediaeval phase of the gate, because a proper verification would require further archaeological inquiry. The gates were protected from both sides by semi-circular towers that protruded beyond the walls.

The city of Thessaloniki was one of the most important cities crossed by Via Egnatia in the Balkans. The main boulevard of the city today is called Via Egnatia. According to the fortification planimetry the Golden Gate was situated at the west side wall that today closes the road known as “Odhos Ignatia”. At Thessaloniki, at the centre of this boulevard, was
constructed the triumph arch of Galerio, known by the name of “Kamara”, below which passed the Via Egnatia. Galerio was a high roman military man of Illyrian origin. On March 1st, 293 Galerio became one of the Tetrarchy members (the Power of the Four) created by Diocletian. Galerio from Illyria was proclaimed Caesar in 293-298 and later, until 311, he held the throne of Emperor Augustus. In 297-298 Galerio became known for his glorious victory in a battle against the Persians. To this victory he dedicated the Arch of Triumph that was mentioned above. The Arch of Galerio is a solid construction with a symmetrical composition- a large arch with bricks and with a distance of 9.7 from one foot to the next, and with two smaller arches reaching a length of 4.85 m each. The altitude of the large arch is 12.5 m. At the Galerio Kamara the feet of the arches are covered with white stone tiles on which interesting scenes from the life of the Roman Emperor of Illyrian descent have been carved including the scene of his victory against the Persians.

At last, after winding across the Balkans, Via Egnatia makes its entrance into Constantinople (Istanbul) entering the fortified city through the Golden Gate known as the Jedikule of Istanbul.

Jedikule is a small citadel in the shape of an irregular trapeze with seven towers erected on the boundary walls, hence the name Jedikule (seven towers). Built in 1457-1458 by Sultan Mehmet Fatih II, Jedikule represents an example of the Ottoman military architecture of the XV century. The previous Golden Gate was encompassed in this later construction.

The Golden Gate was an arch of triumph constructed by Emperor Theodosius in 390. During the rule of Emperor Theodosius II, in 408-450 the surrounding wall of Constantinople was built, including in its defensive system the Golden Gate as well. At the centre of this gate is the grand arch made from finely-carved stone blocks, and with space of 7.75 m. On both sides of the central arch are the two
small ones measuring 5.7 m each. After the entrance, traces of Via Egnatia can be easily discerned. The stone road was made of big flat stones well polished on their upper side. The Golden Gates of Via Egnatia in the Balkans are evidence of the importance of this road as an imperial traversary in the antiquity and as a road highly appraised and used by kings during the Middle Ages. However, owing to numerous wars and occupations the road would often lose its importance or become dysfunctional altogether. There is abundant literature and work concerning the history of Via Egnatia, especially owing to the existence and activity of numerous national and international cultural organizations. This ancient road has been awarded special status such as World Culture Heritage, or Balkans Cultural Itinerary. Highlighting the elements of this antique road including the monumental centres and objects that can be found along it, is very important since this would provide not only historical and documentary values, but also a basis for the cultural tourism which, for the moment, is not being exploited to the extent it should.
Marietta van Attekum spoke on the Via Egnatia Project and I was one of the first to get enthusiast to take part in this project. My role was as a specialist for archaeology but I think there is also a political inspiration to this project. Namely the Via Egnatia as a tradition of common life with other cultures along this important road of the antiquity corresponding to our actual aims for regional integration within the framework of EU integration. My participation is also poly-ethnically oriented and not one-sided. Today I speak about what Via Egnatia was in the antiquity.

First of all it was originally not Roman but Illyrian or before that even pre-Illlyrian. What is a road? It is not only the infrastructure, the physical road, the bridges and facilities. It is the movement which is immaterial sometimes: not only the goods and people but also ideas and experiences have been transmitted since the Neolithic period. We are sure of a route through the Skumbin Valley as the main connection between the Adriatic and the Aegean seas from very early times.

Secondly: what was the origin of the name of the road? There are several theories. One theory states that the Via was named after the city of Gnatia. A more ‘romantic’ idea was that the name was derived from the Albanian word i gjatë meaning long. But a few decades ago the archaeologists found an inscription linked with the construction of the Via Egnatia just after Macedonia became a province in 146 BC. The inscription indicates the proconsul Gnaeus Egnatius as the man who built the road. Where did the road start? The old itineraries give Dyrrachium as starting point. But the oldest information dates from 168-167 BC: Polybios mentioned the distance from Apollonia to Thessalonica. This means that the first station was Apollonia and not Dyrrachium. Apollonia was the first military base of the Roman army. Later Dyrrachium became the most important station. I'll present only the Albanian part of Via Egnatia from Dyrrachium (Durrës) at the Adriatic coast to Qafe Thane (the Albanian adaptation of the name of the station Claudanum).

We can find other names from the antiquity preserved in the modern names. The old name of Elbasan, Scampis is preserved in the name of the Skumbin River. Qafa Stefani is the modern name for Stephanafana. This branch goes through Dumbrea to Elbasan and from there to the lakes. Apollonia was before Roman times a flourishing city with in its centre monuments and bronzes of the beginning of the 5th century BC. In the hinterland were flourishing Illyrian cities like Byllis. Amantia was also an important city giving the possibility of growth and prosperity to Apollonia.
A short summing up of some the important findings at Apollonia:

- Fortifications of the city just under the monastery of Apollonia dated 7th century BC. It was created maybe not more than 10-15 years after Dyr-rachium by the same colonists from Corcyra (Corfu, ed.) and Corinth.
- The walls of the 4th century BC and the walls of the 3rd century BC.
- A column of a temple dating from the beginning of classical times, let’s say 400 BC.
- One of the most important and original monuments of Apollonia is the Stoa of the middle of the 4th century BC. The niches served to put sculptures in. It was excavated by Léon Rey in the 1930's.
- The theatre of Apollonia created mid 3rd century.
- Masks used in performances. A mask of the character of Dionysius was imported from Campania (Naples in Italy). Apollonia was a centre of trade with Italy. There is also other proof
for this.

- The monument of the Argonauts and the Bouleutherion (city council) built in the 2nd century AD. The inscription informs us about a fight with 25 couples of gladiators at the occasion of the inauguration of Daemonum and there is a representation of the final fight.
- The Odeon, built in the 2nd century AD. It served only for musical performances. Nowadays it is used for classical concerts during summer-time.
- Some sculptures from the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD of the family of Augustus. One is a priest and you can appreciate the high quality of the sculptures. Apollonia was also a centre of art and culture.
- The residential part of the city. A big palace with central court and many rooms. One of the main mosaics is here (albeit covered with sand) with among other images the battle between Amazons and Greeks under the command of Achilles. Here Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons. The high quality is obvious.
- Sculptures. One of them big one of an Emperor – maybe Commodus- of the 2nd century AD.
- A local work of the 2nd century BC showing Hermes bringing the dead to the Hades. Ladies saying farewell to the dead ferried by Charon. And the judgment of the the souls.
- An interesting relief dating about 100 years later maybe 1st century BC. It is an Illyrian lady from Apollonia. The name is not complete but the dress is typically Illyrian. In the archaeological museum in Durrës you can see many dresses like this one. The other sculpture has the name Aristotel but it is some other philosopher from the 3rd century AD

From a helicopter I took a photo that shows the Via Egnatia from the air. On the ground these traces are invisible. The photo shows the direction of the Via Egnatia from Apollonia to Elbasan.

Some of the findings and monuments along this branch of the Via Egnatia are:

- One of the miliars of Via Egnatia (dated approx. 200 AD) found along the branch between Dyrrachium and Apollonia.
- Not far from Elbasan Via Egnatia crossed the region of Dumrea where the main settlement was Belsh founded in the bronze age as an Illyrian settlement controlling the movements from the coast to the hinterland. It became important in the 5th and 3rd centuries BC.
- A group of terracotta’s found in one of the beautiful lakes in this region. One served as a sanctuary consecrated to Aphrodite. Some of them look Greek but one of them looks more Etruscan. This was made by local masters.
- A grave dated second half of the 4th century BC. An Illyrian helmet and a knemis and a krater from the same grave show the importance of this era.
• A sculpture found not far from the castle, the names are Illyrian, but the clothes are in Greek fashion. Like the clothes in the cities at the Adriatic coast. A clear sign of the acculturation of the Illyrian population along the Via Egnatia.

The second starting point of the Via Egnatia was created later in the Roman period but became the most important. Dyrrachium was created by the Illyrians before the Greek colonization. Illyrian ceramics dating from 650-600 BC have been found in Durrës. We know this also of the legend Appianos told us about the king Dyrachion and Epidamnos founding the city. Later the Greeks came, under the command of Hercules.

The ancient city corresponds with the centre of the modern city. The continental platform was part of the city in antiquity. The Archaeological museum is full of objects documenting the Illyrian and Roman periods.

• One of the earliest objects found in Durrës was the terracotta head of a sphinx from a wooden temple of the second half of the 6th century BC. It is of Corcyrian origin.

• A beautiful stele from the end of the 5th century BC showing the quality of life in Dyrrachium.

• Terracotta objects of Italian origin from the 4th century BC show the links between the two coasts of the Adriatic Sea.

• The so called beauty of Durrës from the first half of the 4th century BC.

• A mosaic which is an antique copy of a mosaic of Pella, showing that the Via Egnatia existed as a route and as movement of culture and ideas long before the Romans built it in the 2nd century BC.

With the Romans Dyrrachium became an imperial centre. About 30 BC it became a roman colony with typical monuments like the theatre. Of the Via Egnatia between Durrës and Elbasan we found only a few remains until now. For one reason it was used for a very long time, repaired, neglected and changed many times and sometimes used as a quarry for building materials.
The remains are listed here:

• Between Durrës and the river Shkumbin traces of the road have been found near Kavala.
• Near Peqin a part of the Via with Ottoman style pavement with a central line of stones is preserved. The Ottoman road followed the same route as the Via Egnatia.

There were also parallel routes. For example from Tirana to Elbasan along the crest of the hills guarded by castles. A treasure from the 7th or 8th century originating from Constantinople shows that this route was of importance also.

In the region of Elbasan we have more remains. 5 Miles before Elbasan at Bradashesh we excavated a very well preserved bathhouse and nymphaeum. The place corresponds with the station Ad Quintum in the itineraries. The remains of the bridge of Topcias west of Elbasan show where the branch from Apollonian crossed the river Skumbin to join the branch from Dyrrachium in the Castle of Skampa, located in the centre of Elbasan. The first documents mentioning Elbasan date from the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD when Skampa was only a vicus (village with 500-1000 inhabitants). Administratively it was linked with Dyrrachium. In the 6th century AD Elbasan became the seat of a bishop.

The castle was built the 4th century AD during the reign of Constantine the Great. It was a castrum for a legion of 6000 or less soldiers. It has been rebuilt many times, but the most important rebuilding was by Sultan Mehmet II in 1466.

• One of the most beautiful buildings within the walls of the castle (where I was born) is the cathedral of Saint Mary. Some of the old buildings in Elbasan are under state protection. One of the projects of the Via Egnatia Foundation could be to invest in the preservation of monuments in Elbasan.

• 40 Years ago Alexander Mexhi and I excavated a basilica just beside Elbasan. Recently a basilica was excavated just in front of the gate of the castle. The mosaic in the central nave is of the Justinian period (6th century AD) and is made in the same fashion as the mosaics of Heracleia Lyncestis by the same masters moving along the Via Egnatia.
The fact that the name of a hill near Elbasan literally means ‘the mountain of Artemis/Diana’ shows the importance of the Artemis cult in this region. In Roman times Artemis was called Diana Candaviensis after the region which was called Candavia.

At Miraka, not far after Elbasan, the road crosses the river Skumbin. Remains of two bridges - one Roman and one Ottoman - can be seen here. To avoid the very narrow valley with many necessary river crossings it winds uphill on the northern slope of Mount Polis. The pavement is still well traceable although damaged and overgrown. Halfway the slopes it continues eastwards with quite a few beautiful remains of pavement, bridges and the remains of antique fortresses.

It is documented that the Illyrians controlled this route before the Romans came. There is an Illyrian castle and also a bronze of local production of an Illyrian musician.

The last information we have of the Via Egnatia in this region dates from 480 AD when Theodoric the Great passed through the Skumbin valley to Dyrrachium. Later the Byzantines changed the route and thus Berat became the most important starting point for the route to Macedonia for the Byzantines. Where the road meets the river Shumbin again at Qukës we find the remains of a bridge. We locate the station “Tres Tabernas” in Qukës.

In pre-Roman times the route went from here through the valley SE to the plains of Korce. It was controlled by the fortress of Pelion which was also residence of Illyrian kings. Along this older route the unique royal graves of Selce of the 4th century BC are located.

Some interesting findings are:

- A relief showing the weapons and helmet of the Illyrian king Monunios. Coins minted in Dyrrachium with his name are found. Monunios controlled the pre-Roman Via Egnatia. Pompeius Trogus informs us that Monunios was also king of Macedonia.

- A relief in one of the graves showing the mythical story of the Phoenician prince Cadmos who brought the alphabet. He is depicted as the
Drako (Serpent) he was transformed into after he died in Illyria fighting for the Illyrians and he is also depicted as an Illyrian chevalier with Illyrian helmet and shield fighting a enemy warrior seemingly Macedonian.

Let us return to the Roman Via Egnatia. From Qukës it runs east to the pass of Qafe Thana. Below the pass lies the village Lin at the lake. It was the summer residence of the bishops of Lychnidus (Ohrid) hence the name Lin. Not far from there a basilica was excavated in the seventies with wonderful mosaics. At the pass of Qafe Thane the Via Egnatia leaves Albania and here I finish my presentation.

*Graves at Selce*
Via Egnatia in the Republic of Macedonia

Viktor Lilcik

Gnaeus Egnatius, a Roman proconsul, around 130 BC modernized the ancient road Via Candavia, also known as the Cadmean or Macedonian Road, on the Balkan Peninsula in order to connect Rome with the region of the East Mediterranean. However, as usual, the story begins much earlier. Somewhere around the second millennium BC Zeus, transformed into a white bull, abducted the young Phoenician princess Europa to the island of Crete, where she gave birth to Minos, the first European king.

In his search for his sister, her brother Cadmo journeyed across Rhodos, Thrace and Boeotia. In fact, his journey had a civilizing role. He founded Thebes, and among the tribe of the eels, the Encheleans at Lake Ohrid, he founded the city of Lychnidus. When his life came near its end, he was transformed into an eel and continued his life in Elysium. It is usually assumed that, actually, an attack of Cretan warriors on Phoenician cities lies behind this story.

As we can see, history and archaeology continually confirm the magic, magnetic force of the city lights of the earliest civilizations on the southeast coast of the Mediterranean.

These Middle East civilizations communicated with the worlds of the mainland Europe (Mycenaean cities, Greek city-states, the kingdom of Macedonia) and it seems that the most important road communication led to Asia Minor along the Thraco-Macedonian coast, through the heart of the kingdom of Antique Macedonians, across Mt. Candavia, and to the Illyrian coast of the Adriatic.

Having made an expert assessment of this situation, the Romans renewed the Via Candavia as the Via Egnatia as a continuation of the route Via Appia, for a speedy and effective contact with the Eastern world of Cadmo. In prehistory, Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the Macedonian Road or the Via Egnatia carried from both sides both good and bad news. From the East, the Persians were marching towards the Athenian Acropolis, the Spartan Brasida and the Macedonian Perdicas reached Lyncestis to conquer Lycus. Alexander was on his way to discover the place where the Sun rises. From the West, Roman legions were on the march to establish the Roman Empire. Later, the Crusaders rode along it towards Jerusalem.

However, it is a fact, too, that the road brought from the southeast the first civilisation and the first cities to the European continent.

The first explorers of the Via Egnatia were Teophille Tafel in 1842 and Comad Miller in 1916. Certain sections of the Via Egnatia in the Republic of Macedonia were stud-
ied by Petar Lisichar in 1953, Fanula Papazoglu in 1972, Ivan Mikulcik in 1999, Vera Bitrakova Grozdanova in 1988, and Tome Janakievski in 1976, Zivojin Vincik from 1997-2003 and Anica Gjorgjievska in 2007. My personal interest in this field dates from 1989 Michele Fasolo in his seminal monograph La Via Egnatia, Vol. 1, presented and reconstructed the first section of the road from Apollonia to Heraclea. The length of the section of the Via Egnatia that runs across the territory of the Republic of Macedonia is approximately 100 km or 66,5 Roman miles. The itineraria and the Tabula Peutengeriana offer scant data on the reconstruction of the distances and settlements through which the Via Egnatia led; however, I believe that a serious scholarly reconstruction requires new detailed field and cabinet archaeological research with modern research methodologies and adequate sophisticated field and office equipment. And now, let us see the terrain, the road corridors, the close and the distant places by which the Via Egnatia passed in the Republic of Macedonia. It definitely passed across the mountain pass of Kjafa San (933 m altitude) in the direction of the Lin Peninsula on Lake Ohrid. However, the road continued to northeast, descending to the village of Radozda. It is precisely in this area that approximately 100 m of the road survived. Nevertheless, this suma crusta appeared different to my dear friend Michele from what he saw in Albania. From Radozda, the Via Egnatia continues along the lake shore to Kalishta and Struga. Near the village of Mali Vlaj, approximately 2 km west of it, and around its middle part, on the mountain, I documented remains of a small Late Antique fortress, which consists of an acropolis and a small south suburbium. Only one visit to this site is not enough to establish whether this is a refugium or a castle whose function would have been that of a watch tower. In this regard, other questions should be raised as well: why does the Via Egnatia descends steeply to the lake shore and why the mild slope along the small valley of the present-day border crossing by Kalishta, practically at the very foot of the castle at Gradishte, the village of Mali Vlaj, was not used? In literature, we encounter the claim concerning the existence of a passage on the Via Egnatia across Jablanica near Krstec (1955 m altitude) and its decent towards Strushko Pole along the river Belica. There are two fortresses along this section: the dominant fortress of Vajtos above Oktisi, which existed throughout the entire Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and the small mediaeval fortress of St. Spas (Holy Saviour) of Zagrachani. Several years ago, P. Lisichar proposed a route that, as he maintained, ran
more to the north, along the line Kalishta - Vranishta - Trebenishte - Lioishte - Kosel, which means that this route bypassed the city of Lychnidus in a wide circle.

However, the so-called Struga miliarium (12 km Struga-Lychnidus) says that the Via Egnatia ran directly along the ancient north shore of Lake Ohrid. Part of the road itself, according to Pasko Kuzman, Dimche Koco and Petar Lisichar have been detected near Kalishte and other places under the waters of the present-day waters of Lake Ohrid. This means that the fortified Antique settlements and fortresses near Tateshi, Delagozda and Trebenishte had no direct contact with the Via Egnatia, but that they observed/monitored it from a certain distance.

Professor Bitrakova locates mutatio Patras (according to the Jerusalem itinerary) near the village of Kalishte.

The Via Egnatia crossed the river Drim which flows out of Lake Ohrid probably several hundred meters from the lake shore, near the old bridge, on the site of the a necropolis which dates from the 3rd century BC. It was probably at this point, where the secondary road to Debar diverged, that Caracella placed a miliarium marked 8 miles (12 km) to Lychnidos in 217.

In a fortress above the village of Tateshi, 8 km north of the lake, I recorded a strong Late Antique/Early Byzantine castle with a small Early Christian church.

The site of Kale above Delagozda, several kilometres east of Tateshi, was a fortified Antique town in which life persisted from the Classical/Hellenistic period to the 6th century AD.

A secondary/subsidiary route from Trebenishte, through Lioishte and to Kosel did exist, but this was not the Via Egnatia.

Rich arcaic graves have been found at famous necropolis near Trebenishte, and a well-fortified settlement on the prominent hill Trebenishko Kale which was a settlement inhabited throughout Antiquity, until the 6th century AD. This was a settlement analogous to that above Delagozda, but larger and richer due to the existence of a cross-roads on the roads at its foot.

But let us return to the route of the Via Egnatia. It entered Ohridsko Pole through a narrow passage on the shore, below the prominent hill of Kulishte St. Erasmus and reached Lychnidus after approximately 4 km. Wilhelm Unverzagt wrote on the fortress on Kulishte St. Erasmus in 1954, Vlado Malenko and Pasko Kuzman in 1988 and Ivan Mikulchik in 1999 and 2002.

In 2008, Pasko Kuzman began ambitious and detailed archaeological excavations in this fortress.

The massive, somewhat crude but powerful opus isodomum is best dated by the bronze coins of Alexander III and especially Cassander (the Sheldarov Collection), strongly supporting the idea that it was precisely Cassander who built this powerful fortress for the defence of Lychnidus and Macedonia from the threats that came from the west.

The Early Christian basilica of St. Razmo (St. Erasmus) at the foot of the
The fortress of Ohrid

The fortress was the site from which Erasmus, the Bishop of Antioch, spread Christianity in the region of Lychnidus during Diocletian. We have already mentioned that the Phoenician Cadmo, brother of the princess Europa, was the legendary founder of the city of Lychnidus. The bronze coins from Lychnidus with a depiction of the Macedonian shield and the prow of a ship minted in 187-171 BC reflect the role of this city as part of the Antique kingdom of Macedonia under the Antigonides.

In fact, the city of Lychnidus, whose name derives from the Old Greek word for light, stands on a low hill on the lake shores; it was the urban centre of the surrounding rotorhistorical and historically known tribes (Bryges, Encheleans, Dessarettes, Sarnuntes Pisantines, Kaloikines and others).

Here are now several images of the city’s Archaic, Antique and Medieval past.

Some of the treasures are a gold mask, an imported statuette of ibis, many inscriptions, the Acropolis, splendid semi-calotte chalices, known as the Megaran cups, with the depiction of the eternal Sun on the top of their crown as micro-models of the sky vault (we can see the same concept of the Sun on the central episema of the Macedonian shield and on the coins minted in Lychnidus in the 2nd century BC) and of course the Antique theatre.

The floor plan of the cathedral tetraconch basilica at Plaoshnik undoubtedly represents the model of the universe as it was perceived by the people in Antiquity.

A miliarium of the twin type, similar to that from Stella, with the same mark (‘8 miles’/12 km to Lychnidus) has been dis-
covered at the Clock Tower of a church in Ohrid. Its position at the time of Carcalla is still a matter of scholarly dispute. Perhaps it stood at the crossroads at Trebenishte or at the crossroads at Prentov Most near Opejnca. The Austrian consul Hahn recorded the existence of a third one in Ohrid, whose inscription, to our regret, has been damaged.
And now, let us look at the section Lychnidus-Resen.

a. A shorter but more difficult road, also known as the "Summer Road" led across Mt. Istok, along the line Lychnidus - Velgoshti - Petrino - Resen.
b. North of it ran the so-called 'Winter Road' with three possible routes. They were all controlled by the watch towers or castles, sites on which I have carried out preliminary explorations, depending on the time and funds available.

There was another pass across the massif of Mt. Galichica, along the line Trpejca - Leskovec, but it stretched much further to the south and was not part of the grid of the Via Egnatia main road.
The so-called 'Summer/Military Road' passed across Mt. Istok along the shortest distance towards Resen. It climbed up to Velgoshti, controlled from a tower on the site of Kulishte-Olmec; bearing in mind its military and strategic character, we can say that this was precisely the original route of the Via Egnatia.

On Mt. Istok, it ran along a relatively flat terrain across Petrinsko Pole to the fortress of Petrinska Kula, where it descended across Petrino, and then across the remains of a large Antique settlement at Katunishte near the village of Bolno, and then to Resen.

As it descended, the road ran along a relatively safe route across Staro Selo and then above Petrino. Across the road and the valley in which the village of Petrino stands, I recorded remains of a rectangular structure on the site of Kula, whose function, at present, remains unidentified. It might have been a specula tower used for monitoring the road and raising visual alarms.

Ivan Mikulchik believes that in this section, the 'Summer Road' descended from Petrinsko Pole across Kale Evla, to Resen. My explorations and documentation of this fortress did not lead me to such a conclusion.

According to Itineraries Burdigalense, the area between Lychnidus and Nicea was the zone of the border between Macedonia and Epirus. It is somewhere in this area that we should look for the station Brucida, perhaps at Petrinska Kula.

And now, I would like to give a brief account of the three possible sections of the so-called 'Winter Road':

a. The safest, but also the longest section ran across Opejnca to Prentov Most, under the village of Svinjishte, under the village of Zavoj on the mountain pass Bukovo (1207 m altitude).
b. The second section ran from the village of Leskovec, along the mountain ridge between the small valleys of Opejnca and Skrebatno, across Stari Zavoj and towards the castle Kulishte near the village of Ilino.
c. The south section, too, led along the small valley to the village of Skrebato at Kulishte Ilino
Perhaps one of the Ohrid milenaria stood near Prentov Most, where a secondary mountain road to Debarca separated from the main road. Here, on the site of Crvejnc, a necropolis with gold jewellery from the Hellenistic period has been discovered. I documented remains of a mediaeval tower on the high hill of Pirchishta, above the crossroads at Prentov Most. There is also a plan of the castle near Kuratica that defended the road to Debarca and a plan plan of Kulishte Skrebato at the southernmost possible route of the Winter Road to Bukovo.
An Early Byzantine roadside castle exists at Kulishte near the village of Ilano, completely unknown in scientific literature. It stands in the vicinity of the mountain pass Bukovo. My preliminary dating of this castle is the 6th century AD.
And now, the passes from the region of Resen to the Bitola part of the Pelagonia Plain.
The station Scirtiana (see Antonini Itinerarium) was perhaps on the site of Makazi near the village of Kozjak, east of Resen.
The main road led across the pass of Gjavato (1167 m attitude) and descended to Castra/Parembole Nicea, the site of Kale near the village of Dolenci.
A secondary, alternative road led across the village of Zlatari to the pass of Derven (1490 m altitude), and was controlled by the castle of Kale near Gopesh.
On Kale Gopesh I recorded the remains of a defensive perimeter wall; however, in the absence of practically any cultural stratigraphy, it was impossible to date.
However, on the south slope of Kale Gjavato, I discovered 185 lead ballets (glandes) and bronze coins of the Macedonian kings Lisimachus, Antigonus Gonatas, Philip V and the city of Apmhipolis.
Unfortunately, the significant fortifications which secured the pass Gjavato near the village of Gjavbto and Dolenci have not been the subject of in-depth explorations as yet, with the exception of a short-term archaeological excavation of the main wall of the fortress at Dolenci carried out by N. Vulik in 1928.
A secondary road separated towards the north along the valley of the river Caparska to the Antique city of Bryanium in Deuropus from Castra/Parembole Nicea on the site of Kale near the village of Dolenci.
The distance between Nicea and Heraclea is 18.5 km, which corresponds to the distances in the itineraria (12 Roman miles).
Two routes have been suggested.
a. Ivan Mikulchik proposes the north route: Nicea - Srpci - below Buri Kale near the village of Rashtani - Heraclea.
b. Tome Janakievski proposes the south route Nicea - Srpci - Rotino -
Trnovo - Heraclea.

According to the scant data provided by N. Vulik and I. Mikulchik, Nicea was a fortification 125 x 122 m, fortified by a defensive wall, with semicircular and circular corner towers and a basilica covering a surface of 1.5 hectares. It was probably here that the first Roman legions who came to Pelagonia were stationed.

Two Early Christian extra muros roadside basilicas have been discovered east of Nicea.

1. The basilica on Suvi Livadi stands 700 m east of Nicea. It is a three-nave basilica with a narthex and two annexed structures.

2. The basilica on Ramenska Tumba stands 600 m east from the first one; it is smaller, with a similar floor plan, but with a tripartite tribelon, an entrance to the central nave and a small baptistery next to the south nave.

And now, let us take a brief look at the distance from Nicea to Gramadishte at Srpci, where the road turned in the southeast direction towards the village of Rotino.

We have mentioned above the two extra muros basilicas as roadside edifices.

In the immediate vicinity of the second basilica, as we can see on the Google image, there is a dark line that shows the Via Egnatia on the flat cultivated fields. In the second part of this stretch leading to Gramadishte at Srpci, the shadowed line of the Via Egnatia visible in the flat cultivated fields is even more prominent.

Tome Janakievski explored the house of Julius Teres, who was the member of a hor! which was probably stationed in castra Nicea in the second half of the 213d cenno tub AD. He and his carrissima wife Valeria Artemini venerated Hercules and Isis, judging from the bronze statuettes discovered in the ruins of their home on the archaeological site of Gramadishte at Srpci.

The nearby castle of Kale Srpci was explored and documented during a one-day visit to this site by Ivan Mikulchik and myself. This site, too, like practically all the mentioned fortifications, has not been the subject of extensive scholarly study.

The nature of the fortress Kale Capari, which covers approximately one hectare and possesses a strong plastered fortification frame but without a more remarkable cultural horizon, definitely points to the existence of a refugium, probably intended for the population of Nicea in Late Antiquity.

And now, we come to the small valley leading to Heraclea, our scholarly challenge for the definition of the direction of the Via Egnatia either to the north or to the south.

I intend to explore and document the fortress of Kale Trnovo this spring.

Ivan Mikulchik and I visited the fortress of Buri Kale Rastani a long time ago. The fortification was formed with layers of soil valum inside the fortress, our colleague from the Bitola Museum discovered the contours of a mediaeval cross-shaped church.
The relatively small urban surface of Heraclea (8 hectares) and the strategic position of the point where the Via Egnatia joins the diagonal road to Stobi at the Axius, as well as the archaeological finds that have been discovered, speak of at least four phases of existence.

a. A small antique Macedonian fortress, part of the acropolis (coin of Philip III Arideus);
b. Early Roman city;
c. Late Roman, Early Byzantine city and an Early Christian episcopal centre;
d. Mediaeval city

Civitas Heraclea, was formed in Roman times, in the vicinity of Lincus, the principal city of the Early Antique Macedonian Lyncestians, whose site has not been yet identified.

There is -among other monuments - an Early Roman theatre as well as certain Late Antique/Early Christian structures: the large cathedral church and fountain of Bishop loaves from 562, from the time of Justinian I, who is mentioned in the donor's text.

Heraclea, too, as the other cities in Late Antiquity, had its refugium. It stood on the site Kale, Markovo Kale above the village of Gorno Oreovo.

There are certain differences in the plans made by Ivan Mikulchik and myself for the route of Via Egnatia from Heraclea southwards. It seems that the Via Egnatia, in the section between Heraclea and Kellai, could not run in a straight line because of the wide swamp created by the flooded waters of the rivers Erigon ad Jelashka. Thus, in its first segment, the Via Egnatia ran along the east foot of Mt. Baba (Pelister).

The road was controlled by the dominant fortress at Kula, near the village of Bistrica and the small Antique town at Kale near the village of Graeshnica. This inscription written by King Philip II, that is, his address to the tribes of the Ketlestoneans and Dardanians, can be seen in the western facade of the Church St.Anne above the village of Oleveni.

In Kale we find the mighty fortress of Kale, Bistrica village. Here, once again, the plans of the two explorers are different.

Judging from the coins discovered on the site, it could be claimed that the fortress was built by Amintas III. However, in the small trial excavation area, our colleagues from the Bitola Museum also discovered coins of Gratian and Theodosius I, which means that the fortress was used once again in Late An-

*The Amphitheatre in Heracleia Lynkestis*
During our visit with Michele Fasolo to the remains of the small town of Kale above the village of Graeshnica in 2003, we recorded an acropolis surrounded with an urban residential terrace and at least three cultural horizons: an Early Antique cultural horizon dated with a coin of Philip V, a funerary stela from the Early Roman period and a Late Antique cultural horizon dated with the coin from the 6th century.

From this point, the Via Egnatia continues on the territory of the neighbouring Republic of Greece.

I believe that Egnatius provided a mainland communication line for the merging of experiences from the Early Antique civilizing urban points between the East and the West. At that time, the Via Egnatia served as a means of exchange and balancing of the experiences of different civilizations.

I believe that the essential question is whether today, we genuinely want the Via Egnatia to bring us together and help in providing the balance for a single civilization of modern European communities in which the ancient cultural heritages will not suffocate us but, on the contrary, will bring us together in the care for their preservation and promotion.

Can we, for this purpose, through our positive, cultural and humane actions, dedicate our objectives to the dignity and reputation of the lady who once, in her youth, managed to bring together the East and the West? If this is so, then I suggest that we try to find positive messages in the human subconsciousness called the Via Egnatia.

Because finally we, travellers through space and time, can choose our own intentions but, I hope, for the good of the larger human communities.

Thank you for your time and attention.
Contribution to the international scientific research project “Via Ignacia”

Zivojin Vincic

Respected participants, allow me first of all to greet our guests and colleagues from abroad and wish them welcome in our land “Republic of Macedonia”, and also to wish all of us a successful work on the scientific research project Via Egnacia. At the same time I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to the leaders of this project for including me in it as well. I am convinced that all of us will justify this trust not only with our past scientific results but especially with our future scientific contributions to this project.

I believe that the material, issues and problems of the scientific research project “Via Egnacia” are more or less known to all of us. This already attained knowledge is without a doubt an important capital with which we can begin such a scientific research project and because of this foundation we apply ourselves without reservations to its successful execution.

Already in the title of this contribution you can see pointed out not only the international character of the scientific research team but also the variety of the teams’ tasks which I am convinced the team is mature enough to fulfill. According to my views ahead of us lie two types of tasks: cabinet-research and field-operative tasks.

I believe that under these two categories all our basic tasks are presented and of course every other additional task would be added on later and respected accordingly. At this point I would not like to go into comparison of the tasks’ techniques, I invite you to do that yourselves, based on the things that have already been accomplished.

My assessment is that in principal and in reality much more has been accomplished in the cabinet research than in the second segment. The field operative tasks are dependent on larger finances which would be totally justified by the scientific discoveries that would follow.

We are thankful to the large cabinet-research of our colleagues especially from the city museum of Ohrid: Vera Bitrakova, Vlado Malenko and Pasko Kuzman, the latter two have also done operative field activities connected with Via Egnacia.

In the next destination, the region of Resen most field research was done by Bojan Pupalovski from the museum collection “Dragi Tozija” from Resen. Additionally the activities of the Organization for Protection of Cultural Monuments and the Bitola Museum, despite one shortcoming, have contributed greatly to the research of Via Egnacia. Our colleague Gordana Filipovksa and the deceased Tome Janikievski have collected some data from the field that may be useful for our project.
From the all above mentioned things we can conclude that the beginning of the realization of the scientific research project Via Egnacia can continue to build on the already established foundation which is a ‘nota bene’ for its realization.

The scientific world in Europe in all the periods of its history has shown great interest for Via Egnacia which was one of the most important communications channel in Roman times. Thanks to this fact the antic road Via Egnacia continues to be a serious challenge to this day. In conclusion, the title of the “novel” which was being written throughout the centuries by different generations continues to spark our interest today still requesting a continuous modeling and specification of its shape. The continuum of this interest is confirmed not only the fundamental TABULA and the two itineraries but also the numerous sources represented by antic and middle age historians, philosophers and writers including the scientists and the researchers of our times.

In the developed network of roads in antic times Via Egnacia holds a special place especially when it comes to the territory of the Balkans but through this also all of Europe. This uniqueness can be seen through the ability of Via Egnacia to transfer cultural processes from the Mediterranean and the antic centers of the time to the inner Balkans and from here through the famous road HERAKLEA LINKESTIS-STOBI through VIA MILETARIS to the whole European territory. Therefore, it is not necessary to continue to look for a reason why we are all gathered here at the opening of the scientific research project Via Egnacia.

In this beginning phase it is necessary to point out certain segments which explain the interest of scientists for Via Egnacia, an interest that has not subsided even to this day. Our generation from all over this region continues to have this interest especially we see this from our colleagues from Albania, Italy, Greece and Turkey and we sincerely applaud this interest.

The scientific research of this field is integrated by various themes from the fields of material and spiritual culture of which we are not only protectors but also consumers. The definition of Via Egnacia actually represents a sublimation of findings from both technical and social sciences. In this moment I would not like nor could I name all definitions individually I only want to appeal to you to treat all aspects and definitions of Via Egnacia equally in our further research and study. Despite the specifically mentioned and other general conditions which allow us to be optimistic, our project will surely not be an easy effort but I am nevertheless convinced that this is a real chance to achieve a lot to this end. Here I also refer to an increased knowledge and thus a greater affirmation of Via Ignacia.

In realization of such an optimistic program what is needed apart from financial resources is a solid organization for our activities in both segments: The cabinet-study and field-operative because only if we unite our efforts can we expect to bear fruit and reach our desired goals.
Without pretention to give a full list I would only like to point out individual activities in each of the two segments bearing in mind their interdependence and equality in regard to aces to financial resources. Approximately, and without putting any limits, the tasks ahead of us would generally look like this:

**CABINET-STUDY WORK**
- Program and calculation (of resources);
- Deciding on personnel and participants of this segment of the team;
- Consultations, tasks, suggestion and working together with the field-operative part of the team;
- Research of the existing bibliography and adding new material to it;
- Gathering of graphical and other technical data and photos;
- Gathering of the known and unknown descriptive and technical artifacts that will be useful to the project;
- Active participation in preparation of the printing materials.

**FIELD-OPERATIVE ACTIVITIES:**
- Program and financial calculations;
- Gathering of administrative and technical tools essential for field research;
- Permission for starting of field-operative activities to be requested at the governmental authorities responsible;
- Financial-material description of all materials and gear needed for the research;
- Descriptive and technical report of accomplished work and achieved results and preparation for their publishing:
  - Texts,
  - Plans of foundations, other architectural drawings,
  - Artistic drawings,
  - Photographs and other,
  - Various artifacts from the field and their documentation.

I have no intention to define the final regulations or processes but I do want to stress the complexity of our task. I invite you all sincerely to work in unison and accomplish our task and I thank you for your attention.
Via Egnatia was the first Roman highway built to the east of the Adriatic. Its name is due to Gaius Egnatius, proconsul of Macedonia in the mid-2nd century B.C., who apparently initiated the project. The ancient Greek geographer of the 1st century BC Strabo provides a brief but unique reference to this road, based on a fuller account written by the Greek historian Polybios a century earlier, but now lost: “From Apollonia to Macedonia one travels the Egnatian Road, towards the east: it has been measured by Roman miles and marked with milestones [κατεστηλωμένη] as far as Kypsela and the Hebrus river – a distance of 535 miles. Now although the road as a whole is called the Egnatian Road, the first part of it is called the Road to Candavia (an Illyrian mountain), and passed through the city of Lychnidos and a place called Pylon, which marks the boundary between the Illyrian country and Macedonia. From Pylon the road runs to Barnus through Heracleia and the country of the Lyncestae and that of the Eordi into Edessa and Pella and as far as Thessalonikea; and the length of this road in miles, according to Polybios, is 267” (7.7.4).

The most helpful ancient source for reconstructing the route of the Via Egnatia is the Tabula Peutingeriana, the only pictorial map of the Roman Empire dating from the 4th century after Christ. Routes throughout are shown as a series of continuous lines, with numerals indicating distances in Roman miles between places. A line, which corresponds to the Egnatia and is drawn in segments, begins at Dyrrachium and ends at Perinthos via Lychnidos and Thessalonike. Besides cities, the map shows the staging-posts along the route (mutationes and mansioones), which offered accommodation and various services to the travellers. Cities and stations are also listed under each journey in the land section of the Antonine Itinerary, also of the 4th century AC. Concerning the Egnatia, the Antonine Itinerary describes two routes (both west to east), one starting from Dyrrachium (Itin Ant. 317,3-323,8), and another from Apollonia (329,3-
332,9), both ending at Byzantion. Of the two, the Apollonia-Byzantion route does follow what is assumed to be the direct line of the Via Egnatia through Kypsela and Apri. From Dyrrachium to Byzantion the overall length is given as 754 Roman miles. Finally, the Itinerarium Hierosolymitanum or Burdigalense, an itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem of AD 333 (the earliest surviving Christian pilgrim account), describes on the return a route that leads (east-west) from Heracleia (Perinthos) to Aulon (Itin. Burd. 601,6-609,3), which was south of Apollonia and apparently the most important harbour of Epirus at that time.

The Egnatia from Apollonia (near modern Fier) and Dyrrachium followed in a roughly eastern direction the valley of the river Genusus (modern Shkumbin), then the northern slopes of Polisit in order to reach lake Ohrid (ancient Lychnidos) though a mountain pass (modern Qafe Thane). It subsequently followed a mountainous route towards Heracleia Lyncestis (south of Bitola) then a south-eastern course towards Lake Vegoritis, and then proceeded eastwards to Edessa, Pella, Thessalonike, Amphipolis, Philippi, Neapolis to Lake Bistonis and over the heights of Zone to Traianoupolis (east of modern Alexandroupoli) and the Evros river. On the ground, the route was marked by milestones, called miliaria, typically cylindrical stones 1.3-1.5 m high, with inscribed mileage either from Dyrrachium/Apollonia or from the main city of a given region. If we are to trust Polybios that the Egnatia was «κατεστηλω ηνη» from Apollonia to Kypsela, then we should think that no less than 535 miliaria were set along the original route. Of these less than 40 have been recovered so far, among which some 25 have been found in Greece. Two miliaria, from Thessalonike and Kavala, are particularly important since they are inscribed with the name Egnatius.

In our effort to locate physical traces of the road, we are assisted by reports and memoirs of early modern travellers, who journeyed through the lands crossed by the Egnatia, particularly in the 18th and the 19th centuries, and mostly originating from western Europe. These include the Venetian Lorenzo Bernardo (16th century), Evliya Çelebi (17th century), Paul Lucas (early 18th), Esprit-Marie Cousinery (late 18th), Louis-Felix de Beaujour, F. Pouqueville E. Clarke and W.M. Leake (all of the early 19th century), Edward Lear (mid-19th) and major Nikolaos Schinas (late 19th century).

Scholarly interest on Egnatia begins very early with the geographical dissertation of Th. Tafel, professor of philosophy at Tübingen, published in 1842. Tafel's work was largely based on reports of ancient and early modern travellers since he did not visit the areas. We have to wait well over a century for a comprehensive report over this artery by the Australian publisher F. O'Sullivan, who biked over the entire Greek stretch in the summer of 1968. In addition, from the late 19th century and increasingly from the 1970s onwards an array of historians and archaeologists have been working on the topography and technical details of various sections of the Egnatia including C. Praschniker and A. Schober, L. Heuzey and H. Daumet, P. Collart, H.

Thanks to all these efforts and the ancient literary testimonia we are now in position to reconstruct the history and topography of Via Egnatia across the ages. Boundary stones of pre-Roman periods, a few literary references to pre-Roman roads and even fewer physical remains attest to the existence of earlier roads along the route of the Egnatia, which the Egnatia builders incorporated into their artery. At the end of the 1st century BC, the Caenic peninsula (eastern Thrace) was annexed by Rome. It is likely at this time that the road extended from the Hebrus river to Byzantion (Constantinople). In 42 BC the entire Egnatia has become the theatre of one of the most decisive military campaigns in Roman history. The army of Brutus and Cassius marched from Hellespont to collide with the army of Antony and Octavian coming from Dyrrachion. The armies, each numbering about 100,000 men, met at the plain of Philippi (which extends between Kavala and Amphipolis), and the battle ended with the utter victory of Antony and Octavian - the latter soon to become the first Roman emperor. In the post-Christian era, after Thrace had become a Roman imperial province, the military character of the road was minimized. From then on, Egnatia will evolve into an artery for commercial, administrative and even touristic purposes. Thanks to inscriptions, we know that the Roman emperor Trajan undertook the repair of the road in the early 2nd century AC. A second repair dates from the Severan period (early 3rd century AC), and a third repair from the early 4th century under the second Tetrarchy, with Galerius based in Salonica, and with the capital of the Empire already transferred to Constantinople. The line between Constantinople and Thessalonike has remained open throughout the Byzantine period with the exception of a few decades in the 6th, 7th and 8th centuries, when the raids of Slavs, Avars and Bulgarians have suspended land traffic. On the contrary, traffic along the western section, from Edessa to Dyrrachion, was basically suspended or better broken into several segments for large part of the Byzantine era. The entire road artery will revive with the coming of the Ottomans from the early 16th until the formation of the modern Balkan nations in the course of the 19th century and the collapse of the Ottoman empire.

Physical remains of the Roman road and its Ottoman successor, either of the road surface itself or of the bridges built along the route, are not abundant. From Apollonia and Dyrrachion to Herakleia Lynkestis, the best sections of the road are preserved near Peqin and on the Polisit mountains in modern Albania, and near Radožda in the F.Y.R.O.M. Remains of large bridges over the Shkumbin river (ancient Genousos) are to be seen near Elbasan, Haxhi Beqarit and Qukës whereas Bradashesh due west of Elbasan preserves the most impressive Roman station of Egnatia (perhaps to be identified with the mutatio ad Quintum). The section from Herakleia to Thessalonike features
no substantial remains of the road, mostly because it was eradicated by modern roads. Unlike the Roman Via, the Ottoman road passed to the north of the lake Veroritis via Arnissa (Ottoman Ostrovo). This section included some important cities, most notably Edessa - Ottoman Vodena and Gianitsa (Ottoman Yenice-i-Vardar - a bright Ottoman centre in Macedonia). From Thessalonike to Amphipolis the Roman road followed the southern shore of the lakes Koroneia and Volvi (unlike the Ottoman road which followed the northern shore) and reached the Stymonic gulf through the straights of Rentina. It is worth noting that it most likely did not go through the centre of Thessalonike but by-passed it by describing a northern loop towards Lete. The only remains of the road surface located along this stretch are by Apollonia (Ottoman Pazarouda). From Amphipolis to Neapolis (modern Kavala) the Roman road traced a loop to the north of Mount Pangaion in order to avoid the marshes of Philippi and reach safely this important city, originally founded by Philip II and refounded as a colony in the late 1st cent. BC. On the contrary, the Ottoman road passed to the south of mount Pangaion and reached Kavala through Eleutheroupolis (Ottoman Pravi) as does the modern road.

In the plain of Philippi no certain remains of the road are visible, and impressive bridges built over the Angitis river and its tributaries are no longer preserved. We are, however, fortunate to have the remnants of the arch of the Egnatia as it approached the city of Philippi, as well as the actual street within the centre of Philippi where it most likely served as a main thoroughfare of the colony.
From Philippi to its harbour Neapolis-modern Kavala a long stretch of the Egnatia is preserved in very good condition over the saddle of mount Symbolon by Agios Syllas. From Neapolis to Lake Bistonis the route of the Roman Egnatia is still uncertain, but from that point eastwards there are physical traces reported, the best being the section between Sapes and Alexandroupoli over the heights of Zone. The Ottoman road passed certainly through Chrysoupolis (Ottoman Sari-Saban) and Genisea (Ottoman Yenice-i-Kara su), having crossed the Nestos river with a wooden bridge, whereas it followed the coast between Maroneia to Zone unlike its Roman predecessor (which went over the Zonaian mountains). A number of fortified cities and stations, mostly of the late-antique and Byzantine periods, developed along the route including Akontisma, Petropege, Topeiros, Anastasiopolis-Peritheorion, Maximianopolis, Komotini (Ottoman Gümülçine) and Makre. From Alexandroupoli to the Hebrus river, we definitely have the best remains of the Egnatia to be seen in Greece, largely thanks to their protection by the archaeological authorities of the region. Many sections of the ancient road are preserved parallel to the modern road leading to Ferres (Byzantine Vera and Ottoman Ferrecik).

The city which undertook the maintenance of the road in this region during Roman imperial times was Traianoupolis, founded by emperor Trajan in the 2nd century AC in order to become the administrative and military centre of Thrace. The site of Traianoupolis is archaeologically unexplored and the most conspicuous remains today are those of an early Ottoman khan - the so-called Chana and of the baths nearby. To the east of Kypsela (modern Ipsala) and all the way to Istanbul, the reconstruction of the route of the Roman Egnatia is almost solely based on the ancient Itineraria, the location of important cities and of Ottoman bridges. The Via went
through or by Apri (the colony founded by emperor Claudius in the mid-1st century AC and identified near the village of Kermeyan), Perinthos-Herakleia (modern Marmara Ereglisi) and Selymbria (modern Silivri). Among the Ottoman bridges most impressive are the ones built by Mimar Sinan at Silivri and over the gulf of Büyükçekmece (ancient Athyras). Having reached the walls of Constantinople, the road entered the city most likely by the Golden Gate, originally a triumphal arch and later incorporated into the walls built by Theodosios I ca. 390 AC (and since the 15th century part of the Yedikule).

The width of the Roman road was not fixed throughout its course: the span of the arch near Philippi, corresponding to the width of the road, is 4.98 m, within Philippi the road is 6 m wide, at Amygdaleonas outside Kavala it was measured to 3.8 m but at Traianoupolis it reached 8 m. The substructure of the road also depended on the geology and the topography: on rocky terrains as at Ag. Syllas of Kavala it consisted of only one layer 0.2 m thick, but the excavated section at the heights of Zone showed 7 layers representing a thickness of 1.2 m. Larger stones are set vertically along the sides of the road in order to act as retaining walls. The road curves across its width for the evacuation of the rainwater and possibly the separation of the opposite lanes (the spine of the road acted as a separator). Very few bridges survive from the dozens that the artery had. Their width varies from 3 to 4 m, same as their masonry. Regular maintenance of the road was necessary and is epigraphically attested (restitutio-refectio). From inscriptions we learn that certain capital cities were in charge of the administration and maintenance of the Via (caputes viae) and of assigning the corresponding duties (liturgies) to the villages and settlements located along the route. These involved resurfacing of damaged road sections, resulting in the elevation of the road surface by as much as 0.3-0.4 m as in the plain of Philippi, and consolidation of its exposed parts, particularly of bridges, with buttresses and the like.

The fact that only a few stretches of the Egnatia are now preserved or at least visible is mainly the result of two factors: a) in many parts its route remained in use up to modern times, consequently the ancient road bed was either destroyed or covered over during widening operations from the mid-20th century onwards, and b) in flat areas where the ancient road deviated from the modern one, it has been ploughed over: this is particularly the case in eastern Macedonia and Thrace, where after the coming of the refugees from Asia Minor in the 1920s, the lands left by the Turks were distributed among the newcomers who turned them to more intensive cultivation, gradually removing the stones of the ancient and medieval road. A very rough, and rather optimistic, estimate of the total length of the ancient and medieval Egnatia visible today, is 26 km out of a total of some 1100 km. It is our duty to preserve what is left of it.
Basic bibliography
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Via Egnatia on Eastern Thrace

Mustafa Sayar

Via Egnatia, which begins at Dyrrachium on the coast of Adria, reaches after Ochrid, Thessalonike on the area of Macedonian, reaches the Thracian territory in Philippoi and than Traianopolis. The formerly Thracian settlement Kypsela (= Ipsala) is the first station on the Eastern Part of Thrace. The localization of the station Dyme between Traianopolis and Kypsela is not secure. From Kypsela there is a connection to Ainos. According to Strabo ends the Via Egnatia on Kypsela. There are regularly milestones between Dyrrachium and Kypsela. The eastern part of Via Egnatia was built perhaps in third century. The Via Egnatia is going on to the East to the next station mutation Drippa, which is registered on the fourth century A. D. in the near of modern Keflan. The next station is Aproi, which is identified with the modern village Kermeyan, where exists some gravestones of Roman soldiers and early Christian epitaphs. The next station is mutatio Bedizum, which was in the near of Chalkis, modern Neck. The mansio Registo (= Tekirdağ) is also registered on the sources of late Antiquity. The next station was mutatio Aerea, which was in the southern area of the village of Karaevli. Via Egnatia reaches after Aerea the capital of the late antiquity province Europa, Herakleia, formerly Perinthos. Between Aerea and Herakleia was found twenty five years ago four milestones, which are erected during the reign of the first tetrarchie. These and two milestones from the territory of Perinthus - Herakleia from the time of Septimius Severus and emperor Galerius, are the only examples of the milestones from the eastern part of Via Egnatia. After Herakleia is Baunnae the first station, which is identified with modern Papazlı Çiftlik. After Baunnae is the Kainophururion the next station. The localization of Kainophururion in modern village Kurfali is certain. The Via


Egnatia going on to Athyra Kolpos, today the Lake of Büyükçekmece and then to Melantias, which is described on Itinerarium Antonini. After Melantias reaches the Via Egnatia the fortress Schiza on the northpoint of the Lake Küçükçekmece in the near of Yarımburgaz cave. After Yarımburgaz follows the Via Egnatia on the eastern coast through the village Ennakosia in the near of modern village Altınflehir to the lake Küçükçekmece to the South and reaches Rhegion, which is identified with modern Küçükçekmece. After Rhegion the Via Egnatia is going on to the villages Kalphas, today Kalfa and Litras today Esenler. After Litras reaches the Via Egnatia Konstantinopolis through the Charsios Gate.

The emperor Constantin had built a new road on the northern shore of Propontis after the establishment of Constantinopolis as new capital of the Roman Empire. It was the same connection, which was used during the march of Xenophon³ and his soldiers between Byzantium and Perinthos at the beginning of fourth century B. C. This road of Constantinus Magnus follows after Herakleia the same destination like the old road at first mutatio Baunnae and than is going on to the South and to Selymbria, today Silivri, and it is going on through Epibatai to mutatio Callum and than Athyra. After Athyra reaches Via Egnatia to Rhexion and it is going on to Hebdomon, modern Bakırköy and through the fortress Strongylon, today Zeytinburnu ends the Via Egnatia on the porta aurea of the Landwalls of Constantinopolis.

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³ See Xenophon, Anabasis VII, 2.
Ottoman Caravanserais on Via Egnatia within the borders of present day Turkey

İlkınur Kolay

The Roman route Via Egnatia connecting Byzantium on the Bosporus to Dyrrachium on the Adriatic Sea lost its function towards the end of the Antique period. The Byzantine Empire had an overall control on the route till the 7th century and once more succeeded in the control in the 11th century to enable transportation through Via Egnatia. The political disturbances in the area and the retreat of the Byzantine Empire from the region caused once more a decline at Via Egnatia in the succeeding centuries. The Ottomans realized the importance of the route right after the conquest of the area, and used it in the conquest of the region up to the shores of the Adriatic Sea. After the conquest, the Ottomans immediately started to construct their buildings in the region. The buildings constructed in the Early Ottoman period (14th and 15th centuries) mainly consisted of mosques, mescids, baths, imarets and zaviyes. The last two buildings also served for passengers to staying overnight. We find information on the construction of three caravanserais on this route in the archive documents of the period in pious foundation deeds of their founders. The three caravanserais are Kırimoğlu Muhyıeddin Caravanserai at Rodoscuk (Tekirdağ), Candarlızade İbrahim Paşa Caravanserai at Rodoscuk (Tekirdağ) and the Mahmud Bey Caravanserai at Malkara none of which exist today. The building activities of the 16th century show that the Ottomans looked after Via Egnatia which they referred as ‘Sol Kol’ (left branch) by constructing some accommodation buildings and bridges, but paid more attention to the route ‘Orta Kol’ (middle branch) that lays inland in Eastern Thrace, reaches Edirne and continues westward to Sofia. Several monumental complexes with huge caravanserais were constructed on this route in the 16th century.

The Ottoman caravan route and accommodation buildings on Via Egnatia

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1 Several articles on Via Egnatia are in: E. A. Zachariadou (ed.), Sol Kol, Osmanlı Egemenliğinde Via Egnatia (1380-1699), translated by Ö. Arikan, E. Güntekin and T. Altunova, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul, 1999.
The Ottoman caravan stops at Via Egnatia within the present Turkish Republic are Küçük Çekmece and Büyük Çekmece, Silivri, Marmara Ereğlisi, Tekirdağ, İnecik, Malkara, Keşan and Ipsala (pict 1). All these present day settlements have been inhabited since the Antique period. They are about 30 km, plus or minus some kilometres, away from each other which is a distance a caravan could travel in one day. This distance is valid for the existing Anatolian Seljuk and Ottoman caravanserais.

The first caravan stop from Istanbul is either Küçük Çekmece approximately 15 km or Büyük Çekmece approximately 33 km away. All the caravan routes from Thrace meet at Büyük Çekmece and reach Istanbul via Küçük Çekmece. Therefore, both towns were a caravan stop and have several caravanserais. Evliya Çelebi states that there were “eleven small or big caravanserais roofed with lead” at Büyük Çekmece, which indicates that they were well designed domed structures. Only the caravanserai (1566/1567) commissioned by Süleyman the Magnificent and designed by architect Sinan survives today. The caravan route within the vicinity of Küçük Çekmece and Büyük Çekmece was improved with the construction of the Odabaşı, Kapıağıası (Harami Brook) and the Süleyman the Magnificent bridges in

6 On the north of Küçük Çekmece Lake over the Sazlı Brook. It has three arches and a length of 39 m.
7 Over the Harami Brook on the route from Küçük Çekmece to Büyük Çekmece. It has
The Süleyman the Magnificent’s bridge at Büyük Çekmece.

The Kütük Çekmece Bridge was constructed over the ruins of the Byzantine bridge at the Kütük Çekmece Lake9.

The Küçük Çekmece Bridge was constructed over the ruins of the Byzantine bridge at the Küçük Çekmece Lake9.

The second stop from Istanbul is Silivri which is 29 km away from Büyük Çekmece. Evliya Çelebi also indicates that his first stop leaving Büyük Çekmece was Silivri and he mentions that there were “sixteen small or big prosperous hans with red tiles over their roof”. He states that the Kassam Çelebi Han had a market consisting of 100 shops10. Today none of these hans exist. On the route to Marmara Ereğlisi over the Silivri Brook the Silivri Bridge was commissioned by Süleyman the Magnificent and designed by architect Sinan in the 16th century11.

The third stop is Marmara Ereğlisi which is 24 km from Silivri. There is no information on the existence of any caravanserais at Silivri.

The fourth stop is Tekirdağ (Rodoscuk) which is 33 km from Marmara Ereğlisi. Just as in the past, Tekirdağ is still an important habor on the Marmara Sea. Evliya Çelebi states that there were hans, guesthouses and three kitchens for the poor (ziyafet imarethanesi) in Tekirdağ12. There is documentary information from the pious foundation deeds of their founders on the existence of the Kırimoğlu Muhyiddin13 and the Candarlızade İbrahim Paşa caravanserais14. The latter one also had shops nearby. The Kırimoğlu Muhyiddin Caravanserai was constructed in the second half of the 15th century and the Candarlızade İbrahim Paşa Caravanserai at the end of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century. Neither of them exists today and their locations are also unknown. In the 16th century Grand Vizier Rüstem Paşa, who was also the son in law of Süleyman the Magnificent, commissioned a complex which was the work of architect Sinan in Tekirdağ. The complex con-

three arches and a length of 69 m.

8 Over the channel between the Büyük Çekmece Lake and the Marmara Sea. It consists of four parts. The first part has seven, the second seven, the third five and the last one nine arches. The overall length of the bridge is 638m. There is a resting and sight-seeing balcony on the first and the fourth part of the bridge.

9 C. Çulpan, Türk Taş Köprüleri, TTK, Ankara, p. 137.

10 Evliya Çelebi, Seyahatname, vol 5, ..., p. 181.

11 The bridge has 32 arches and a length of 348m. Although the Silivri Brook is a small one, its water causes flood in the area in spring time.


13 E. H. Ayverdi, Osmanlı Mimarisinde Fatih ..., vol. 4, p. 840.

14 İ. Aydın Yüksel, Osmanlı Mimarisinde II. Bayezid ..., p. 361.
sisted of a mosque, a medrese, a caravanserai and a kitchen for the poor. Both the caravanserai and the kitchen for the poor have been demolished.

İneçik, 22 km from Tekirdağ is the fifth stop. Evliya Çelebi tells that there was the Kara Piri Paşa Han which was a prosperous guesthouse. Kara Piri Paşa also had a kitchen for the poor built nearby. The pious foundation served the guests a bowl of wheat soup and white bread, an oil candle for each fireplace and a bag of forage for each horse free of charge. Evliya indicates that the building complex had a small bath as well. İ. Aydın Yüksel points out the existence of the caravanserai, kitchen for the soup and bath but says that there is not any documentary evidence that these buildings were commissioned by Piri Paşa. There is an Ottoman bridge which is dated to the beginning of the 16th century on the İneçik-Malkara route.

The sixth stop, Malkara, is 36 km from İneçik. In his book Evliya states that Malkara was the caravan stop between the stops of IPSala and İneçik. We have documentary information from the pious foundation deeds of Mahmud Bey that he had commissioned the construction of a caravanserai as well as a mosque, medrese and a double bath (with two separate parts for men and women). His son Ali Bey had commissioned the construction of a kitchen for the poor and a double bath. Today none of these accommodation buildings exist.

Kesan the seventh stop is 23 km from Malkara. There is no information on the existence of any caravanserai at Kesan.

The last Ottoman caravan stop within the present borders of Turkey is IPSala. Evliya Çelebi states that there were several caravanserais and gives information on the Hüsrev Kethûda Caravanserai which was one of architect Sinan’s works in the 16th century. He says, “all its domes and the roofs of the rooms, stables and camel barns are covered with blue lead. Its imaret is also famous. Day and night, rich or poor, old or young each person is served with a soup bowl of wheat soup and a piece of bread, an oil candle for each fireplace and a bag of barley for each horse. Each Friday night meat stew with onions and saffron and rice are served free of charge. It has about 60 shops.” Evliya Çelebi, cilt 13, p. 36. Today all the caravanserais and other accommodation buildings have been destroyed, only some wall pieces from the Hüsrev Kethûda Caravanserai survives.

The Via Egnatia or as the Ottomans call it the “Sol Kol” continues into present day Greece with the next caravan stop at Firecik (Feres). During the Ottoman period several accommodation buildings of various size -small or big-
big- for the caravans such as caravanserais, guesthouses, stables, camel barns, kitchen for the poor and baths were constructed at the caravan stops up to Durrës at the shores of the Adriatic Sea.

**The Ottoman accommodation buildings**

The main building at the caravan stops on the caravan route was the caravanserai or *han*\(^{21}\) where the people and the animals stayed for the night during their journey. The size, the plan scheme and being part of a complex of the caravanserais were related to the size of the settlement where they were constructed or to the density of the caravan route at the construction date. In larger complexes, which were constructed in larger settlements or dense routes, there were extra buildings beside the caravanserai such as a stable for the horses, a camel barn for the camels and the goods transported, a kitchen for the poor (*imaret*), a bath and shops. The *tekkes* and *zaviyes* of several sects were also used by the Muslim travelers for spending the night. As a matter of fact, the early Ottoman architectural task on Via Egnatia was the construction of various *tekkes* and *zaviyes*. The guesthouses which Evliya Çelebi and several Western travelers mention were smaller buildings, in most cases, low price houses rented to the travellers who would stay longer at the settlement. They were a little bit more comfortable than the caravanserais. We come across guesthouses in the small villages or towns that were not on the common caravan route.

The caravanserais on the caravan route that were a part of a large complex consisted of several accommodation buildings (pict. 3). The caravanserai, where only the travellers stayed, had a quadratic plan scheme with an inner courtyard. The rooms for the travellers were placed around the courtyard on two floors with a *revak* or an arcade in front facing the courtyard. There were small rooms for two people and had a small window. In each room there was a fireplace, a cupboard within a niche and two platforms used as beds along two walls. The rooms did not have any furniture. The travellers brought their beds; usually a carpet or a heap of hay was used as a bed, a bag or a saddle as a pillow and a shawl as a blanket. The fireplace was used for heating in the winter months and for cooking meal if there was not a kitchen for the poor nearby. The *revaks* were also resting places for the travellers as semi-open spaces with a platform

\(^{21}\) Both terms are used to indicate the building where the caravan stays during the journey.
along the balustrades. The engravings of the foreign travellers show that in some caravanserais the large wooden eaves over the arches of the revak provided shade and protection from rain on rainy days. The caravanseri had either a room serving as a mescid, a small mescid in the middle of the courtyard or a mosque nearby for the Muslim travellers to fulfil their religious duties. Fountains that provided water to the travellers and the animals were an essential part of the caravanserais. The fountain was placed in the courtyard of the caravanseri and its water flowed constantly. The excess water from the fountain was conveyed to a lower fountain with a long basin near the stable and the camel barns to supply water to the animals.

In such large complexes, the horses of the travellers spent the night in a separate stable, the camels and the goods transported by the caravan stayed at the camel barns which were constructed close to the caravanseri. The size of the stables and the barns were related to the size of the caravanseri. Both buildings were large rectangular spaces with loop holes for the aeration of the space. The stable and the camel barn were situated close to the caravanseri and the main road, but separated by a side garden from the other buildings. Compared to ones in larger cities, the stables and camel barns on the caravan route had several extra service rooms such as blacksmith and forage store room for resting and preparing the animals to the journey in a short time.

The kitchen for the poor, found in the large complexes had either a quadratic plan scheme with an inner courtyard or an L plan scheme and placed in its private garden. The latter plan scheme was common along the caravan routes. The kitchen for the poor consisted of a kitchen for cooking meal, a bakery for making bread, a cellar and a dining hall (pict. 4). All the rooms were roofed with domes having ventilation chimneys for aeration. The rooms opened directly to the front garden.

4. The kitchen for the poor (right) and the stable (left) of the Bayezid II Complex at Edirne.

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23 Dernschwam states that the caravanseri he stayed at Edirne could house 600 animals at the same time. H. Dernschwam, İstanbul ve Anadolu’ya Seyahat Günlüğü, translated by Y. Önen, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara, 1992, p. 45.
or had a revak in front that lay along the whole façade and provided a roofed semi-open space protected against the sun and rain. The kitchen for the poor had three entrances. The main entrance was for the travellers, a second side entrance for the poor people living in the town to get free food, and a third side entrance used as a service entrance for getting food material and wood for the oven and heart. The building was situated so as to provide easy approach from the caravanserai and the settlement. Evliya Çelebi gives information on the food that was served as “a bowl of wheat soup and a piece of bread is served every day and night. Each Friday night meat stew with onions and saffron and rice are served” and indicates that it is free of charge. Reinhold Lubenau, who stayed at the caravanserai of Sofu Mehmed Paşa Complex in Sofia in 1587, tells that “a meal consisting of boiled sheep meat, rice soup and a piece of bread is brought to each traveller free of charge.” Most of the travellers point out that the food was served twice a day. But most of the caravanserai did not have a kitchen for the poor nearby and the food was cooked by the travellers themselves or by their servants at the fireplaces of the caravanserai rooms.

In such large complexes there was always a bath at the outskirts of the complex serving both the caravanserai and the people living in the settlement. In most cases, it was a single bath serving male users. The plan scheme of the bath was the standard Turkish bath plan scheme.

In the larger settlements along the caravan route the complexes usually had a street passing through the complex buildings where the caravanserai and the other accommodation buildings were placed on one side of the street and the other buildings (mosque, medrese, etc.) on the other. In this complex layout design, there were rows of shops along both sides of the street, which served both the settlement and the caravanserai and bought goods from the caravan.

Also, in some of the complexes in the larger settlements, there was a huge baldachin right at the entrance of the caravanserai and stable-camel barn units referred to as “prayer dome”. The caravan gathered under this baldachin before leaving the caravanserai. A prayer for a safe voyage was held at the baldachin and then the caravan set off for the journey (pict. 5).

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In the small settlements for the caravan stop, the accommodation buildings for the caravan were not as numerous as in the complexes mentioned above. In such places the caravanserai was a large rectangular building with two rows of piers supporting the domed or hipped roof. The animals and the travellers shared the same building to spend the night. A platform ran along the walls at the interior of the building, which was used by the travellers to sleep and sit or even eat on (pict. 6). The food was also cooked by the platform. The animals and the packages of goods of the caravan were placed in the middle of the hall or the central aisle. Sarre, who travelled in Anatolia in the 19th century, describes such a caravanserai in the vicinity of Konya and states that the space between the travellers and the animals was separated from each other only by simple balustrades made of logs\textsuperscript{28}. These caravanserais did not have any furniture for the travellers. The travellers provided their own bed etc. as described for the caravanserais of the large complexes. On one side of the entrance there was a room for the caravanserai keeper, who ran the caravanserai. Also, the rooms for blacksmith and forage store for the animals were outside the building. There was always a fountain nearby to provide water to the caravan.

The caravanserais were well built, castle like structures protected against the attack of thief gangs. The secured doors of the caravanserai were locked at sunset and opened with a ceremony in the morning after the completeness of the goods of the caravan was checked.

The caravanserais on the caravan route were places for the caravan to stay overnight and rest on their way. Therefore, the services at the caravanserais were based on providing a resting place and also equip the caravan for the next journey. The caravanserais were free of charge for three days and a small fee was charged for longer lodging. This indicates that three days was accepted to be an enough time for the travellers and animals of the caravan to rest. The Muslims and non-Muslims lodged together in the same space if it was a one hall caravanserai. Nearly all the foreign travellers point out this fact.

The tekkes and zaviyes of several sects were also used by Muslim travellers.

for spending the night. These buildings, which were a meeting place for the members of the sect had some rooms for the travellers. They were among the earliest building types that were constructed after the conquest of the area in the Ottoman period. The rooms at tekkes and zaviyes had fireplaces and travellers were supplied with food and candles. British traveller Moryson states that non-Muslim travellers were also welcomed to stay in these buildings\(^{29}\). Lodging in these buildings was free of charge.

In the small villages or towns that were not on the main caravan route there were guesthouses for the travellers to spend the night. The guesthouses had a large room for the travellers and a stable for their horses. Here the travellers were served mattresses, quilts, pillows and food. The food consisted of chicken and rice. The service was done by the guesthouse keeper and lodging was free of charge\(^ {30}\).

**The Ottoman accommodation buildings on Via Egnatia**

Most of the Ottoman caravanserais on Via Egnatia within present day Turkey were demolished. Today, we have architectural information on only three caravanserais. The only intact caravanserai on the route is the Sultan Süleyman Caravanserai (1566/1567) at Büyük Çekmece, Istanbul. The caravanserai and the soup kitchen of the Rüstem Paşa Complex (16th century) at Tekirdağ had been demolished, but a reconstruction plan of the caravanserai based on the existing foundation walls in the first half of the 20th century was published by A.S. Ülgen\(^ {31}\). At Ipsala, the partial remains of the foundation walls of the Hüsrev Kethüda Caravanserai (16th century) still survive.

The Sultan Süleyman Caravanserai (1566/1567) at Büyük Çekmece is a single building without any other accommodation buildings to make up a complex. The building is a single rectangular hall with three rows of piers supporting the hipped roof which was originally covered with lead (pict. 7). The hall has 12 fireplaces placed at the axis of the pier spans on each longer side. A

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room used by the caravanserai keeper and situated at the northwest corner of the caravanserai still exists (pict. 8). There are traces of walls and foundation walls next to the building which might be the rooms of the blacksmith and forage store\textsuperscript{32}.

At the Complex of Rüstem Paşa (16th century) at Tekirdağ, which had a mosque, a medrese, a caravanserai and a kitchen for the poor, both the caravanserai and the kitchen for the poor were demolished. The kitchen for the poor was demolished after a fire and its location was determined from the documents as being on the west of the mosque\textsuperscript{33}. The caravanserai was demolished during the fire also, but the remaining walls gave the opportunity to draw its plan scheme (pict. 9). The building had a rectangular plan with a row of piers in the middle supporting the roofing system. On the northeast corner of the caravanserai there was a single room for the caravanserai keeper. The Hürev Kethuda Caravanserai (16th century) at Ipsala was also been demolished. The Sokollu Mehmed Paşa Complex at Lüleburgaz. (from A. S. Ülgen)

Only, some of its wall pieces survive today. Most of the Ottoman caravanserais on Via Egnatia within present day Turkey were demolished due fires, earthquakes and the construction of the railroad to Europe in the 19th century, which resulted in ending their function. The main Ottoman caravan route moved to the ‘Orta Kol’ (middle branch) laying inland at Eastern Thrace, reaching Edirne and continuing westward to Central Europe over Sofia. This route was used by the caravans leading the trade between Europe and Asia till the 19th century. The Via Egnatia or ‘Sağ Kol’ remained as a secondary route connecting the Southern Balkans to the Adriatic Sea. The Ottomans gave great importance to the maintenance of the caravan route and the accommodation conditions of the caravans throughout the Empire for the sake of its impact on the Ottoman economy. Although Via Egnatia was not the main caravan route after the 16th century, its maintenance was carried out in the Ottoman period.

\textsuperscript{33} A. Kuran, Mimar Sinan, Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul, 1986, p. 364.
Via Egnatia in the Bulgarian history (a short historical overview)

Ivan Vasilev

Bulgaria is located in the eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula on the strategic crossroad from Northern Europe to the Mediterranean and Western Europe to Asia. The major axes of geopolitics, trade, communications and cultural exchange in the Bulgarian history have been tied to the ancient roads Via Diagonalis/Militaris from Vienna (ancient Vindibona) to Istanbul (ancient Constantinople), the Danube River road and Via Pontica along the western Black sea coast from Istanbul to the confluences of the Danube, the Dnieper and the Dniester in the Black sea since the very first centuries of existence of the First Bulgarian Empire (7-9 century). There are some other roads that played for shorter or longer periods the same role in the national history, but they do not cross the present territory of the Bulgarian Republic as the roads mentioned above. However, their meaning for the creation and development of the Bulgarian geopolitics and culture was essential. Among the most important of them is Via Egnatia. The current article has the task to summarize and review the historical role of the ancient trans-Balkan road Via Egnatia in the past of Bulgaria and the Bulgarians avoiding interpretations that are not based on well-known historical facts, starting from the Antiquity till the present. Any connotation with political statements expressed by the arguing Balkan political elites is unacceptable.

Gnaeus Egnatius - the Roman proconsul of Macedonia, ordered the construction of that road in the second century BC. Presumably the road took his name. It started at the Adriatic port of Dyrrachium (now Durrës, Albania) and ended at the city of Byzantium (later Constantinople, now Istanbul) connecting, across the Balkans, Via Apia in Italy with the “Royal” road in Asia Minor. The Roman legions used the road to expand the PAX ROMANA and the traders’ caravans that followed them brought to this area a long period of uninterrupted prosperity and welfare until the Gothic wars in 250-s AD. Archaeological evidences and written sources register the serious impact of the economic and political crisis in the 3rd century Roman Empire over the cities (and esp. the countryside) along the road. However, the region restored and even enhanced its economic and political importance in the 4th century due to the increased demographic potential (after the abundance of the province of Dacia in 271AD the majority of its citizens settled down in regions closely tied to Via Egnatia), the increased traffic of Christian pilgrims, priests and missionaries after the Edict of Milan was issued in 313 as well as the removal of the Roman capital to Constantinople in 330. The Great migration of people seriously disturbed the PAX ROMANA turning the Roman history to its end – all the barbarians: Goths, Huns etc. who entered the Balkans in that period reached and plundered parts of or the en-
tire region along Via Egnatia. In the 5th – 6th centuries the East Roman (Byzantine) emperors built numerous castles and fortifications securing the control over this important road. Archaeological evidences from Albania to Turkey confirm that Late Roman society continued its existence protected by the military power of the Empire until the late 6th century. It is considered that the ambitious military program of Emperor Justinian I, the permanent barbarian invasions and the plague were the reasons that led to the collapse of Late Roman civilization in the Balkan mainland and opened a vast space for new demographic groups.

After almost a century of devastating raids over the Byzantine territory, in 580-s, the Slavs started settling down in the unprotected or simply abandoned areas of Central, Western and Northern Balkans. For less than 50 years, they permanently changed the demographic map of the Balkan Peninsula. Via Egnatia was no more under total Byzantine control and was not even mentioned by the written sources in the next two centuries as a road used in its entire length. The road stopped existing as an entire axis of communication and trade. By the mid 7th century its western part (but not Lower Scampinus valley and Dyrrachion (Durres) was in the hands of smaller or bigger Slavic tribal communities (such as Draguvites, Berezites, Strumianes and Smolianes etc.) under loose control or allied with Avar khaganate. These tribes, not only settled down in the hinterlands, but put on risk the existence and security of even larger and important coastal Byzantine cities like Thessalonica and Dyrrachion (Durres) in the 6th -7th century. The Byzantines had to keep the difficult control over the eastern part of Via Egnatia from Thessalonica to Constantinople turning it into a backbone of what remained from the Eastern Roman Empire after the Arab expansion in 7th century. To keep the control on this section of the road remained crucial for the Byzantine Empire until its very end in the 15th century.

For the first time Bulgars (also Proto-Bulgarians) under the leadership of khan Kuber settled down in Pelagonia on Via Egnatia in the second half of the 7th century. The Bulgars were a heterogeneous mixture of diverse semi nomadic steppe people (of Iranian, Slavic, Germanic origin etc.) ruled by Turkic elites. The Bulgar khagan Kubrat established Old Great Bulgaria in 632AD along the Northern shores of Black sea from the Kuban River to the Dnieper. This was the oldest Bulgarian state in Eastern Europe, disintegrated in the second half of the 7th century. Kuber is considered to be one of Kubrat’s sons. After the disintegration of his father’s confederation and a long “trip” with his people across Panonia, he reached Macedonia, where he established one of the Old Great Bulgaria’s successor states. He and his people were in the scope of the Byzantine policy, when put on siege Thessalonica in 682-684 and in 688, when Emperor Justinian II initiated an unsuccessful military campaign against his confederation state (involving local Slavs), called by scholars Kuber’s Bulgaria (different from either Asparuh’s or Danube Bulgaria in NE Balkans). It is pretty possible that Kuber’s army controlled
for a certain period a long stretch along the ancient road Via Egnatia from Lower Struma Valley (where the battle of Aktonyzma took place) to Scumbini and Osumi Valleys (where the treasures of Vrap and Erseke were found. Both are interpreted as early medieval Bulgarian treasures by many prominent scholars). The road might have been the backbone of Kuber’s Bulgaria. This early medieval state disappeared from written sources in the first decades of the 8th century and according to the most probable scenario their elite joined the Byzantine aristocracy as it is witnessed by some seals’ inscriptions found. Recorded Byzantine campaigns against Sclaviniae (Slavic tribal communities or principalities under nominal Byzantine control) along the road in the 8th century brought success and by the end of the century the Empire restored the control over the entire road. However, the majority of the Slavic subjects of the Emperor remained hostile towards Byzantine acts and control. Archaeological evidences show that Byzantine Empire initiated an ambitious program for the restoration of fortifications along Via Egnatia but it was interrupted by the Bulgarian expansion southwestwards. Some Bulgarian scholars regard the genetic relationship between the Bulgarian aristocracy in the Danube Bulgaria and what remained from Kuber’s heirs - members of the Dulo clan as a precondition for the Bulgarian expansion in Macedonia in the 9th century, but most probably the political rationalism was prevailing in the Bulgarian Khans’ decision-making regarding that issue. In the beginning of the 9th century, the Bulgarian Khaganate (also First Bulgarian Empire) looked to be in a process of a victorious raise. After the collapse of Avar Khaganate, it conquered half of Pannonia and the whole Carpathian basin, establishing a steady border in the NW with the Franc Empire. The Bulgarian border on NE with the Hazar Khaganate was on the Dnieper River. The Bulgarian khans Krum, Malamir and Presiyan focused their policy for territorial expansion south towards the Byzantine Empire. Constantinople was deeply engaged with the Arab expansion and internal iconoclastic conflicts to prevent the rise of a serious competitor for domination in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. For less than 30 years the Bulgarians conquered wealthy and strategic regions along Via Diagonalis and Via Egnatia and kept for approximately 200 years the control over the major parts of these transcontinental roads. From the 9th century on, Via Egnatia except its very eastern part, became an axis for trade and cultural exchange within the Bulgarian Empire. The connections between major imperial cities in the Balkans: Constantinople and Thessalonica were mostly across the sea.

In the period of the 9th -10th century several major events in the Bulgarian and European history took place:

Khan Boris (852–889) officially accepted Christianity (after a short period of diplomatic bargaining with the Pope’s Rome and Byzantium) in 864 from the Constantinople Patriarchate. He was recognized as a Christian king and his country became an autonomous archbishopric within the diocese of Constantinople’s patriarch. An inscription found in Balsh (Southern Albania) is a
major evidence for this historical event. Thank to the official Christianization of Bulgaria many churches and monasteries (also along or in the vicinity of Via Egnatia), destroyed during the Great migration of people (4th-7th century) or the Pagan period in Bulgaria (7th-9th century), were restored and many new ones were built to support the state policy such as these in Glavinitsa (Balsh, Albania), Ohrid (Macedonia), Muglen (Almopia, Greece), Kostur (Kastoria, Greece), Ber (Veria, Greece) etc.

Another event in the middle of the 9th century, which greatly influenced the later history and culture of the Bulgarians, was the creation of the first Slavic alphabet. In 855, two Byzantine diplomats of Slavic ancestry, the brothers Cyril and Methodius, established the Glagolitic alphabet for the recently-converted Slav Kingdom of Great Moravia (on territory of present-day Czech and Slovak Republics) in an attempt to keep them far from the claims of the Latin-speaking Roman-Catholic Church. This mission, in fact, failed after the Germans occupied the principality. However, the brothers did succeed in something unheard-of at the time: in a public dispute in Rome they refuted the existing “trilingual” dogma – that there are three God-given languages for Christians (e.g. Greek, Latin and Hebrew) – and diplomatically defended the existence of the new alphabet. After the complete failure of the mission of Cyril and Methodius in Great Moravia most of their followers were chased out by the Germans, but seven of them were invited to Bulgaria by King Boris I. They introduced here the new alphabet and founded with the royal support many scriptoria, schools and first two Bulgarian universities in Preslav and Ohrid (considered the oldest Slavic and among the oldest European universities). One of those followers, St. Kliment of Ohrid, created under the order of the Bulgarian Tsar Simeon I (893-927) an easier and more comprehensible alphabet, based on the Greek one. He named it after his teacher and patron, i.e. Cyrillic. It spread from Bulgaria to the Serbs and Russians – and it is used today by approximately 260 million people. Both the Christianization of the Bulgarians and the creation of the Cyrillic Alphabet marked the birth of a new European nation and culture. With the introduction of the new script, the Bulgarian rulers took into consideration the fact that their expansive state, from Peshta on the Danube (today’s Budapest) to the Aegean Sea, was dominated by ethnic Slavs and avoided cultural assimilation by the Byzantine literary and Orthodox culture. From the 9th century on, the ethnic name “Bulgarians” refers not to the Proto-Bulgarians only, but also to all Christian Slavic speaking subjects of the Bulgarian Empire. According to the local and external historical sources and data, the Bulgarians remained one of the prevailing ethnic groups living along Via Egnatia from the 9th till the beginning of the 20th century.

The son of king Boris I, Simeon the Great (893–927), was one of the most powerful and well-educated rulers of his time. His enthronization as the first Bulgarian emperor (tsar) took place in the capital of Preslav in 919. That same year, the autocephalous Bulgarian Orthodox Church received the sta-
tus of a Patriarchate.

Via Egnatia was used in that time by the Bulgarians to trade and exchange goods as well as culture and information through the ports of Constantinople, Solun (Thessalonica) and Drach (Durres). The Byzantine capital influenced the cultural development of the Eastern Bulgarian lands, while cultural influences from Solun and Drach had their impact over the development of the cultural centers and monasteries in Western Bulgaria, especially Ohrid University and Ohrid Art School.

Trying to prevent the creation of an anti-Bulgarian alliance between the Serbs and Byzantium in 960-s, the Bulgarian tsar Petar (927-970) allied with the Hungarians and they helped him to control the trace of Via Egnatia as a strong military barrier to Byzantine-Serbian alliance and to plunder Byzantine Balkan territories south to Attica. The Emperors Nicephoros II Phokas (963-969) and John Tzimiskes (969-976) were also good diplomatic chess players and involved the Kievan Russians in an alliance against Bulgaria. In the 967-971 wars the Byzantine army with the help of the Russians conquered the Northern and eastern parts of the Bulgarian Empire and the capital of Preslav. The southwestern part of the country remained independent and its capital was moved consequently to Sredets (Sofia), Skopje, Ohrid/Prespa and Bitola, but the Bulgarian patriarch’s cathedra moved from NE Bulgaria to Ohrid. Soon after the crash, Bulgaria restored its territories and even expanded those conquering Serbian principalities in the Western Balkans and the Byzantine regions of Epirus and Thessaly under the ambitious Bulgarian Tsar Samuil (972-1014). Via Egnatia was the backbone of his Empire and his armies controlled and used the road from Drach east to Odrin (Adrianople). After the battle in Klyuch in 1014 the Byzantine Emperor Basil II ordered 15000 defeated Bulgarian soldiers to be blinded and proudly called himself the Voulgaroktonos (Slayer of Bulgarians). Tsar Samuil had a deadly heart attack at the sight of the returning blinded soldiers. The country was left to two unsuccessful descendents. In 1018 the entire territory of Bulgaria was conquered by the Byzantines and included into the Byzantine administrative system until 1185. The Bulgarian Patriarchate was deceased to Archbishopric, called Ohrid Archbishopric to the seat of its cathedra.

In the period of 1018-1180 the Balkan Peninsula without its very western parts belonged at least nominally, to the Byzantine Empire. Via Egnatia was still in use by traders, monks, wanderers and the armies of the Emperor, revolting Bulgarians, invaders and crusaders.

For the knights and pilgrims from the First Crusade traveling along Via Egnatia, the Bulgarian lands started from the Adriatic coast. According to William of Tyre, armies of Bohemond of Taranto went into “Bulgarian desert” immediately after the Adriatic coast. Fulcher of Chartre and Albert Aquinas considered Drach and Avlona (Vlora) as Bulgarian cities. Obviously the “Bulgarian heritage” in the western part of Via Egnatia was still remarkable.
by 1096.
The Bulgarian Empire was revived in 1185 but it did not include lands along
the Road until the beginning of the 13th century. In the 13th and 14th cen-
tury the political control over the road and its sections was a real sample of
the Balkan political history of that time. In 1204 Constantinople fell under
the Fourth Crusade and became the capital of the catholic Latin Empire – the
new Balkan super-power pretending for control over Via Egnatia. Crusaders
had had a short success in that, before the Epiriot despotate took it from
their hands. After the battle of Klokotnitsa in 1230 the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan
Asen II reestablished the Bulgarian sovereignty over the entire trace (except
the cities of Thessalonica and Constantinople). In 1246 the Nicean emperor
John III Duka Vatatzë conquered these lands and they slipped out from the
political appetites of the Bulgarian Tsars, but this was not valid for the Bul-
garian culture that bloomed in the 14th century along with the Byzantine
and the Serbian one – all together creating a real PAX ORTHODOXA – a
synthesis of the Balkan Medieval Art and Culture based the Orthodox Faith.
Bulgarian pilgrims were using the road during the Middle Ages and Newer
History (9th to 19th century) to visit Orthodox Monastic Republic of the
Holy mountain Athos in Halkidiki. The Bulgarian tsars along with the By-
zantine Emperors and Serbian kings richly donated the monasteries in Athos
and along the Via Egnatia considering them as common Orthodox heritage.
No matter whom the road belonged to, it seemed never closed for monks
and priests and artisans until the Ottoman conquest.
Turbulent times around the disintegration of the Serbian Empire after 1355
brought insecurity and fear and certainly Via Egnatia was rather used by
warriors than by traders.
Between 1350-s and 1480-s the Ottoman Turks conquered the entire Balkan
Peninsula and the Road remained under the Sultans’ until 1912. In various
periods of the Ottoman history it was either abandoned without mainte-
nance for longer periods or repaired but the cultural exchange through it
never stopped. In the late 18th and early 19th century masters from Debar
Art School traveled down to Albania to decorate local Orthodox churches
with iconostases. The opposite direction was used by Moskopole
(Voskopoja) icon painters. Teachers spread out Bulgarian secular education
in the Bulgarian schools from Struga to Istanbul and made possible the edu-
cational Revival of Bulgarians in 19th century – one of the pillars of nation’s
modernization.
In the 19th century the Ottoman government constructed the railway from
Solun (Thessalonica) to Istanbul and the Bulgarian trade benefited from it
providing access to the Mediterranean harbors. It can be assumed that the
infrastructure of the western Via Egnatia section between Struga and Durres
was in a really bad condition. Bad infrastructure and insecurity were the
reasons that in the 19th century the Bulgarian trade (even from the Western
regions) was heading south, east and north, towards the harbors on the Ae-
gean, Black sea and the Danube.
For the political agenda of the revived Bulgarian state (1878) Via Egnatia marked an axis for geopolitical development and freedom for the Bulgarians who remained under foreign rule for the whole period between the Berlin Congress (1878) and the Second World War. The San Stefano Treaty (1878) created the political project that will be sought and followed by the Bulgarian politicians in the next 50 years and led to the inclusion of smaller or bigger parts of the Road into Bulgaria during the Wars for liberation of the Bulgarian Diaspora:
1912 – the entire trace from Catalca, near Istanbul, to Halkidiki was occupied by the Bulgarian troops fighting in the First Balkan War; 1913 – as a result of the Balkan wars, Bulgaria gained the section between the Rivers of Maritsa and Mesta, in 1915 – the section between Bitola and Struga was added to the Bulgarian territory - both Via Egnatia sections were lost in 1919 as a result of WW I. According to the Treaty of Neuilly (1919) Bulgaria had to keep an economic exit on the Aegean coast through the harbor of Alexandroupolis – a political project with no result. For the last time Bulgaria gained and lost parts of the road during WW II, in 1941-1944. After WW II, Bulgaria officially rejects the San Stefano doctrine due to changed political and ethnic conditions (the country was occupied by the Soviet army and felt to the Soviet orbit for the next 45 years; Bulgaria joined the Warsaw pact and was considered as a fore post of the Communist block against NATO members: Greece and Turkey; the majority of the Bulgarian population in Eastern Thrace (Turkey) and Western Thrace and Southern Macedonia (Greece) was deported, assimilated or set on genocide between 1913 and 1948.
Via Egnatia has left Bulgarian politics, but its economic importance has been considered in SEE strategies of all recent Bulgarian governments. Democratization of Eastern Europe after 1989 and EU accession policy towards the Balkans brought two alternative traces of the ancient Via Egnatia to the political agenda of the Balkan countries. These are: Greek National Egnatia Odos Project – a transport corridor from Igoumenitsa on the Ionian Sea to the border with Turkey. The project covers only a part of Via Egnatia (since it is a Greek national project) excluding Turkey, Macedonia and Albania. The project has a strong advance since it is being steadily funded by the EU. The other project is European Transport Corridor 8 (C8)– one of the European Transport Corridors, defined in 1994. It starts in Vlora and Durrës in Albania reaching, across Macedonia, the Bulgarian Black sea harbors of Burgas and Varna. The lack of funds and regional cooperation among the countries along C8 has bothered the real start of the realization of that project for over 15 years.
Via Egnatia was for more than a millennium an essential axis for a political, economic and cultural development for Bulgaria and the Bulgarians and for all the Balkan societies living along it. It was a precondition for the creation
of the cosmopolite and tolerant Balkan culture in the past. Nowadays it could be more than ever a real opportunity for enhancement of regional cooperation and EU integration of the Western Balkans as well as a barrier to poverty, crime and instability in that part of Europe – a vision that is broadly accepted by the modern Bulgarian society and the political class.

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Secretary of Corridor 8 - http://www.corridor8.org
Part 2:

The cultural corridor
Balkan cultural identity: the choice between the common and the particular

Raymond Detrez

My presentation focuses on a number of new perceptions and interpretations of Balkan history which are relevant to the subject matter of this conference. I borrowed the title of my presentation from the famous book *The Yugoslav National Question*, published in 1984 by the Croat historian Ivo Banac, who spent most of his life in the US. Banac defines the construction of a Yugoslav national identity, nationhood and state, or, respectively, a Croat or a Serb national identity, nationhood and state as “the choice between the common and the particular”. He suggests that whether Croats and Serbs would develop a common “Yugoslav” national identity or separate Croat and Serb ones was a choice based mainly on political considerations rather than it was the result of objective and compelling conditions of a linguistic or an ethno-cultural nature. I will argue here that a similar “choice between the common and the particular” may be considered, albeit in a slightly different way, as crucial to nation and state building processes in the Balkans in general.

My argument is based on the perception or conceptualization of Balkan cultural history as two subsequent long periods of convergence and divergence. The first period resulted in the emergence of a Balkan common cultural identity by the end of the 18th century; the subsequent second period resulted in the emergence of about half a dozen of ethnic nations, claiming a specific and unique national identity. My approach is not new. Both concepts — convergence and divergence — have been implicitly or explicitly referred to in relation to Balkan history in several scholarly works. Instead of convergence, other terms and expressions as ‘syncretism’ and ‘osmosis’ have been used as well. The Greek historian Paschalis Kitromilides uses the term ‘Balkan mentality’ to denominate a Balkan cultural identity, which gradually came into being due to these long and complex processes of cultural convergence.

The actual historical conditions in which this convergence took place are hard to define; they still remain to be thoroughly studied. Processes of ethno-cultural interaction occurred unnoticed by the antique and medieval chroniclers, whose interest was characteristically limited to the ‘great’ historical events of their time like battles, conquests, treaties, and dynastic changes. Relevant but scant (and often biased) information on everyday cultural life in the Balkans is almost exclusively provided by Western travellers in the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. As a rule, prior to the 19th century, they pay more attention to forms of real and perceived religious discrimination than to ethnic distinctions. Things changed by the end of the
19th century. Balkan ethnography, since its rise as a particular scholarly discipline in that period, has left us vast amounts of textual source materials on regional folk culture, religion, language and oral literature. Recent anthropological research has resulted in a more or less comprehensive understanding of contemporary processes of ethno-cultural interaction and identity formation. This understanding of current processes provides us with new methodological and interpretative tools for historical research, but this research still greatly remains to be done.

For the time being, the most inspiring theoretical model for a historical study of cultural convergence in the Balkans is Balkan linguistics. By its object and its objectives, this offspring of comparative linguistics has found itself from the very beginning at the defining heart of Balkan Studies as an interdisciplinary enterprise. Already in 1829, the founding father of Balkan linguistics, the famous Slovenian linguist and philologist Jernej Kopitar, pointed out the striking similarities between Albanian, Bulgarian and Romanian. He stated that, as the Balkan languages were concerned, “nur eine Sprachform herrscht aber mit dreierlei Sprachmaterie” (only one language form prevails, but with threefold language material). Translated into plain English, this meant that these languages have one single, common grammar (language form), but different vocabularies (language material). From many hundreds of such similarities that exist, the post-positioned article, the reduplicated object, the substitution of the infinitive by a subordinate construction, the formation of the future tense with a particle, and the formation of the numerals from 11 to 19, are probably the most striking ones. Of course, similarities between languages are a common phenomenon, especially between languages which have the same origin (like for instance the German, the Romance and the Slavic languages). However, the Balkan languages, although belonging to the same large Indo-European family of languages, are genetically not closely related to each other: Bulgarian, Macedonian and Serbian are Slavic languages, Romanian is a Romance language, Greek and Albanian belong neither to a larger subgroup within the Indo-European family, nor are they related to each other. The particularity of the Balkan languages is that, in spite of their very different origins which explain the lexical differences, these languages nevertheless have a more or less an identical grammatical structure.

These many hundreds of grammatical similarities between Balkan languages have been labeled “Balkanisms” by experts in Balkan linguistics. Not only morphological and syntactic Balkanisms exist, but also phonological and semantic. They all together constitute something which can be regarded as a common grammar of the Balkan languages. Linguists consider that the Balkan languages sharing this common grammar belong to the ‘Balkan linguistic league’ or ‘union’ (Sprachbund, Union linguistique) — that is, summarizing, according to the definition, “the geographic conglomeration of genetically, unrelated or only distantly related languages which converge
structurally in sharing a common set of grammatical features” (Petja Asenova).  

There are very different opinions among linguists on how this Balkan linguistic league came into being. However, it is now generally assumed that the Balkan linguistic league is the result of a long process of mutual influencing, of centuries of bi- and multilingualism, of interethnic contact “at the most intimate levels”. This cultural interaction could take place in the specific historical conditions which existed in the Balkans, as there are the absence of state borders during very long periods (Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Ottoman Empire), facilitating spatial mobility; the multi-ethnic character not only of these large empires, but also of the smaller political formations as the Bulgarian and the Serb empires which existed in the Middle Ages; the many forms of cultural interaction between different ethnic groups, resulting from migration from one region to another, but also from the country side to the towns, forced transplantation of ethnic or religious groups, seasonal labour (gurbet, pećalba), transhumance, and finally the great religious traditions, which united ethnic groups into large religious communities, sharing one language of worship. In these circumstances, people of very different ethnic origins lived together in the same space and communicated with each other, borrowing from each others’ language not only words, but also grammatical constructions. Briefly, the Balkan linguistic league most probably results from bilingualism and poly-lingualism, phenomena which were very wide-spread in the Balkans, as also historical sources suggest.

We started elaborating on Balkan linguistics pointing out that it provides a promising theoretical model for a historical study of cultural convergence in the Balkans. Indeed, this linguistic interaction must have been only a part of a much broader process of cultural interaction involving all aspects of

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1 Those among you who are familiar with one or more Balkan languages might object that some of these similarities do not occur in this or that language. The post-positioned article for instance does not exist in Serb, where there is no article at all, and in Greek, where there is an article, but it is not post-positioned. The way the numerals from 11 to 19 are formed is different in Greek as well. Indeed, contemporary Balkan linguistics makes a difference between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ Balkan languages. Primary Balkan languages are the languages Kopitar dealt with — Romanian, Bulgarian, Albanian — to which we may add Macedonian and Vlach. They contain the greatest concentration of Balkanisms. Secondary Balkan languages are Greek, Serb and, to a certain extent, Turkish. They contain only a limited number of Balkanisms. This difference in concentration of Balkanisms results from their geographical location. There happen to be many more Balkanisms on the level of the dialects than on the level of the standard languages. Experts in the field of Balkan linguistics have also pointed out the many differences between the Balkan languages, but even then, these differences can be defined as regional particularities of a grammatical structure which is essentially common. Anyhow, linguists have discovered that the densest concentration of Balkanisms occurs in the Slavic, Greek, Romance and Albanian dialects spoken in the surroundings of the Prespa Lake, in the immediate neighbourhood of Bitola.
everyday life or of ‘culture’ in the anthropological sense. An intensive mutual exchange also along channels paralleling those of linguistic contact must have occurred. Correspondingly, Balkan linguistics provides us with a methodological tool, enabling us to define a “Balkan cultural identity” in terms of ‘Balkanisms’ concerning other aspects of Balkan culture than language. Philologists of structural-semiotic orientation have been particularly prone to exploit the postulated similarity between language and culture as sign systems, applying structural linguistic analysis to literary and folklore data with the aim of uncovering the common mental structures and normative categories of a ‘Balkan world view’. Semiotic approaches have set forth from a linkage of linguistics with literature and folklore studies as a legitimate basis for speaking of a *Balkankulturraum* — a Balkan cultural space. ‘Cultural Balkanisms’ appear to be determinative and constitutive of a ‘Balkan cultural league’ or *Balkankulturbund*. Ethno-linguistics in particular adheres to a ‘dialectological’ analogy between linguistic and ethno-cultural phenomena in proposing the idea of a common Balkan cultural heritage (including mentality) that is ‘dialectologically differentiated’. In any case, recent research in anthropological linguistics has shown that the commonality of grammatical features and developments between Balkan languages can be taken as a reasonable indication of the presence of social and cultural modes of convergence — even though a corresponding communal awareness might have been absent.

If we accept that something like a Balkan cultural identity exists, its factual appearance can be defined in many different ways. One may, for instance, as Traian Stojanovich did in his book *Balkan Worlds* (1994), try to define the ‘dominant personal value orientations’ which determine perceptions and behaviour among the members of a Balkan cultural community. Stojanovich’s is an interesting attempt to establish a common “Balkan moral value system”, based on honour and shame. It is a system, typical of a patriarchal society. It looks rather obsolete now, in the beginning of the 21st century, and even in the past it was adhered to predominantly by peasants and herdsman. In addition to this patriarchal common Balkan value system, there was another, referred to by Jozef Matl as the *čaršija* value system, which was a rather petty bourgeois moral value system existing among the craftsmen and traders in the cities. However, both value systems were found all over the Balkans, among all ethnic groups, and in this sense they both are indeed a common Balkan feature.

It is obvious that the Balkan cultural community must have resulted from a long and intensive process of contact and interaction, of the exchange of material and spiritual goods between various ethno-cultural communities. This process, characterized by ‘contamination’ (or ‘osmosis’, to use a less connotative term) or hybridization, may rightfully be termed ‘convergence’. The result are striking similarities in Balkan oral literature, the numerous shared beliefs, customs and practices originating from Slavic, Greek and Romance
matrices and subsequently merged into common Balkan cultural property. The similarities in Balkan folk music induced the Romanian musicologist Rădulescu (1997) to speak of a ‘musique pan-balcanique’. The famous ballad of Master Manolis (Manol, Manole), who wanted to prevent his construction from crumbling down and immured his wife as a sacrifice in fortresses and bridges in Rozafat in Albania, in Arta in Greece, in Višegrad in Bosnia, in Bjala in Bulgaria and in Curtea de Argeș in Romania, belongs to a Balkan cultural heritage and is the expression of common Balkan attitudes to craftsmanship, to duty, to the magical and to women.

However, the development of shared cultural features was due not only to ethno-cultural interaction on the level of popular and everyday culture, but also to major ‘external’ factors situated at the level of Hochkultur, which was as usual penetrating into popular culture. It is unquestionable that the common historical fate of the Balkan peoples, their coexistence within the borders of the same empires (Byzantine, Ottoman) and their exposure to concomitant religious and cultural influences (Orthodox Christianity, Islam) have played a part of paramount importance in the emergence of this shared cultural identity – with a major, though probably overestimated divide along religious lines. While theologically (that means on a High Culture level), the rift between Orthodox Christianity and Islam seems unbridgeable, on the level of popular culture, there used to be a great deal of cultural interaction between Christians and Muslims as well, resulting in a whole set of shared popular beliefs, shared places of pilgrimage, shared moral values, and various forms of religious syncretism.

I would like to dwell briefly on the role of Orthodox Christianity and of Ottoman rule as factors in the creation of a Balkan cultural community. Paschalis Kitromilides, in his famous article “‘Balkan Mentality’: History, Legend, Imagination.” (1996) took Orthodox Christianity and Balkan Enlightenment as the basic parameters in defining and explaining a Balkan cultural community. This “Balkan mentality”, shared by Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians, Macedonians, Romanians and other Orthodox Christians in the Balkans, acquired its final shape during the eighteenth century, on the verge of transition to national self-conception. This common Balkan culture, which is the bearer of this Balkan mentality, looks Greek only to the cursory observer; in fact, it was a common Balkan culture, based on Orthodox Christianity and using Greek as a common language. Greek was not exclusively regarded as the language of one particular ethnic group. It was used as a liturgical language, a means of intellectual communication and a lingua franca by members of several Orthodox Christian ethnic groups. In addition, in the same way as the French – and not only the French – regarded the French language as the language of universal reason and progress, not only the Greeks but all Orthodox Christian intellectuals, under the spell of Enlightenment, considered Greek as a language possessing the same qualities – all the more so as it was (the descendent of) the language of ancient philosophy itself. In the
same way as the French believed that local idioms and dialects should be replaced by French to facilitate the democratic praxis, representative exponents of the Orthodox intelligentsia of different ethnic origins considered it desirable that Greek be used instead of the various other Balkan tongues which, as they were relatively rarely written, actually functioned mainly as dialects. (In Bulgaria and Macedonia, the functions of Church Slavonic were limited mainly to the liturgical sphere and literature in the spoken language was rare and mostly translated from Greek.) We know the names of several dozens of Albanian, Bulgarian, Vlach, and Romanian authors, constituting the common intellectual elite of the Balkan cultural community, who wrote in Greek for a large multi-ethnic, Orthodox Christian audience. It should be emphasized that the common Balkan Enlightenment culture only made use of the Greek language, but was essentially European and not ethnically Greek. The Balkan Enlightened urban elite spoke Greek, but danced the Waltz, and not the sirtaki.

As a rule, the role played by the Ottoman Empire in the formation of a Balkan cultural community is minimized or rather perceived as negative. However, a Balkan Orthodox Christian cultural community would never have come into being if it was not for the large extent of autonomy the Patriarchate of Constantinople enjoyed in the Ottoman Empire. In the framework of the Tanzimat, the ambitious Ottoman reform project, the Christian population in the empire was encouraged to establish public schools and reading rooms, to publish newspapers, journals and books, and to adopt Western ways of life. The picturesque old centres of the Balkan cities are not only very pan-Balkanic, but also the result of 19th-century Ottoman urban renovation programmes. The Ottoman context, which by the way is not the same as the Turkish context, has been thoroughly investigated, but the results of these investigations have been poorly incorporated into Balkan historiography, which in general is still very much influenced by the 19th-century ethnocentric perception of historical events.

The convergent tendencies reached their peak in the late 18th century and they continue to exist in various ways until the present day. However, from the early 19th century onwards, the divergent tendencies obviously started to prevail, resulting into the emergence of a cluster of distinct ethnonational identities in the Balkans. That means, if we consider ethno-cultural identity as a discursive construct rather than as an empirically knowable reality, that a reverse development has taken place, consisting in the ideological construction of ethno-national cultural identities, aimed to be unique, undiluted, and as different as possible from the (perceived) identities of other, neighbouring communities. ‘Pure’ ethno-national identities were characteristically established on the basis of cultural features that could function as markers of the uniqueness of the nation and which irreparably destroyed the former common Balkan cultural unity. For instance, the 19th-century creators of the Greek national identity increasingly referred to the heritage of
Greek antiquity, emphasizing the cultural and even biological continuity of Greekness from ancient times till the present day. They created an identity which, at variance with the former Orthodox-Christian one, could not be shared with other, non-Greek peoples, as the latter could not claim ancient Greek descent. Of course, the Greeks were not the only ones in the Balkans to create an exclusive national identity for themselves. The Romanians rejected the common Orthodox-Christian bonds by stressing their unique *latinitate* or *romanitate*, which also distinguished them from all their neighbours. Bulgarians and Serbians referred to their Slavic origins and to the glory of their respective medieval empires. The Albanians, finally, minimized the significance of religious affiliation as their nation was divided in three religious communities (Islamic, Orthodox and Catholic), and emphasized their equally unique Illyrian descent. In all these cases, the Balkan nations preferred the particular over the common. A shared Balkan identity, based on religion, was rejected in favour of a separate identity, based on ethnicity. At the same time, ethno-cultural hybridism, which was so characteristic of the Balkans, was rejected in favour of an imaginary ethno-national pureness.

Again, language may help us to shed some light on what actually occurred. Through the pursuit of radically purist language policies, most Balkan languages were ‘cleansed’ of ‘foreign’ elements for the purpose of creating ‘pure’ national languages, paralleling the purity or the homogeneity of the nation itself. Of course, the common grammatical features of the Balkan languages could not be eliminated — although many Balkan linguists have worked hard to prove that there was no such thing as a Balkan linguistic league and many Balkan linguists, even dealing with the history of the language, manage to ignore the similarities between the Balkan languages. Purist language policies turned out to be quite successful in the field of vocabulary. Greek was expurgated from Turkish and Slavic words; Greek and Turkish words were to a large extent removed from Bulgarian, and Romanian also quite thoroughly replaced its Slavic words with new words, borrowed predominantly from other Romance languages. (Macedonian, Albanian, Serbian and Bosnian appear to have been less “cleansed” than the abovementioned languages.) In a similar way, a national cultural identity was constructed which was to be as unsoiled as possible by alien elements. A national history was conceived, which dealt with the nation as an autonomous body, which could fight its neighbours or ally with them, but always preserved its autonomy and his homogeneity. Urban landscapes were purified from architectural elements, reminding of “the other”. In particular Ottoman religious architecture fell victim, while at the same time the huge mansions in Ottoman style, which can be found all over the Balkans (and Anatolia) and everywhere look very much the same, were proclaimed as ‘typical’ of Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Romanian, and cetera architecture. In a number of cases, the citizens of the new states were homogenized as well by
compulsory assimilation, population exchanges and brutal ethnic cleansing.

Of course, the ethnic engineers and nation builders in the 19th century faced a number of limitations and difficulties, imposed by objective historical, linguistic and cultural facts. Contradictions appeared between the various defining markers of the nation — such as religion or language as the main distinctive feature of Serbian national identity, or the predominance of Ancient Greece or Byzantium XXX in the formation of Greek national identity. Anyhow, the process of divergence, focusing on cultural homogeneity within specific state borders, ultimately resulted in the emergence of distinct national communities — which acquired their own political institutions, ‘invented’ traditions, national histories and mythologies, national literatures and other ‘national’ distinctive features.

However, here again, we have to be wary of schematization and oversimplification. The Balkan nations still have an immense cultural heritage in common, which is often concealed, neglected or denied in nationalist discourses. This heritage remains a factor of convergence — or rather of ‘being converged’ — even today. Besides, how paradoxically it may sound, the process of divergence in question was provoked by the influence of a third overwhelming converging external factor, namely Westernization. Nationalism, being the moving spirit behind the attempts to construct a unique (ethno-) national cultural identity, was one of the many new political currents that entered the Balkans from the end of the eighteenth century onwards, during the age of the Enlightenment and later of Liberalism. One might argue that the West had a similar converging effect on the Balkans as the Byzantine and the Ottoman empires had, and that Western influence finally contributed much more to culturally homogenize the Balkans than nationalist ideologies succeeded in dividing them. This Western influence has not yet come to an end; it may even be stronger now, in the framework of European integration, than ever before. Finally, ‘divergent’ ethno-nationalist strategies of identity construction often converge, at least typologically, in their essentialist and exclusionary aspirations.

Unfortunately, the divergent tendencies in the development of Balkan cultural identity have been the most important determinative, not only in the markedly contradictory self-image of people in the Balkans, but also in the perceptions of Balkan society — and/or societies — often held by external observers. Albeit mostly outside the academic world, the Balkans is often perceived as an arena of ‘ethnic hatred’ and ‘irrational tribal conflicts’, in addition to economic backwardness and political instability. All these negative features are often considered as constituting the very essence of the Balkans. In some instances, the Balkans is also dealt with by the international community according to this perception. Especially during the wars in Yugoslavia in the first half of the 1990s, there was a tendency to reduce the conflict to a mere emanation of the “violent nature” of the Balkan peoples themselves, rather than to look for the real motives and political aims of the warring par-
ties. I remember a politician who considered it totally impossible and unnecessary to try to understand the conflict in Yugoslavia and told me that the best thing Europe could do was putting a fence around Yugoslavia, wait for five or ten years, and then go and see what has come out of the fighting. In addition, the conflicts which in fact remained limited to only parts of Yugoslavia are still today labelled ‘Balkan Wars’ in the media. The fact that the overwhelming part of the peninsula was not at all involved in the fighting and that countries as Bulgaria and Romania at that moment made their first successful steps towards European integration tended to be ignored. The peninsula as a whole was stigmatized. We may refer here also to the term “Balkanization”. ‘Balkanization’ means the dismemberment of small states into even smaller and unviable states. The use of this term dates back to the time of the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913, when curiously enough, no Balkan state was being dismembered, but all of them considerably enlarged their territory and actually increased their viability.

The American historian of Bulgarian origin, Maria Todorova, has described and analyzed in detail the emergence of this negative image of the Balkans. She called it “Balkanism”, following with critical reservation the American scholar of Palestine origin Edward Said, who launched the term ‘Orientalism’ to indicate the biased Western attitude towards the Middle East. Balkanism, as Todorova uses this term, may be defined as a coherent set of negative images of the Balkans in the West. Explaining the difference between Orientalism and Balkanism, Todorova stressed the “semi” or “transitional” or “in between” character of the Balkans, which seems to be the main distinctive feature of the peninsula, making it different from the Middle East. While the Middle East is unquestionably “the Other”, the Balkans is now “the Other”, now “Us”, depending on the context. The Balkans is located in-between Europe and Asia, whence the clichéd image of the Balkans as a ‘crossroad’ or a ‘bridge’. It constitutes, from a geographical point of view, a kind of transitional zone between Europe and Asia. Its inhabitants are perceived now as Europeans, now as people who do not belong to European civilization. Especially as their religious identity is concerned, the ‘doubleness’ is obvious. Being Christians, they belong to “us” when Islam enters the picture, but when Islam is not taken into account, their being Orthodox Christians seems to make them rather different from genuine European Christians — Catholics and Protestants — nevertheless. Although neither the Ottoman Empire, nor its Balkan successor states have ever been real colonies, they were often dealt with as with colonies by the West. Although they maintained their political independence, economically they were often dependent on the Great Powers.

Some analysts have argued that the strikingly negative image of the Balkans is due to the lack of political correctness of those commenting on events in the Balkans in the 1990s. At that time, political correctness in the West reportedly was limited to those people, who used to live in the former colo-
nies, confess another religion than Christianity (in general Islam), and have a coloured skin. Due to the semi-character of the Balkans, the Balkan peoples do not belong to these categories to an extent that would have made them the beneficiaries of political correctness. Even the colour of their skin is rather ‘in-between’: they are without a doubt more tanned than most people in Western Europe, but not black enough to enjoy the politeness civilized white people — with good reason — are supposed to demonstrate towards black people. As a result, the Balkan peoples were dealt with in the media and by some politicians in a way that would absolutely not have been tolerated if these peoples would originate from the Third World. In the latter case, expressions like “tribal conflicts”, “irrational behaviour”, “barbarianism”, “innate inclination to genocide”, and the like would never have been used. In the case of the conflicts in Yugoslavia, they were used indeed and even in serious newspapers.

Other analysts even explained the extremely negative image of the Balkans in the 1990s in relation to the construction of a European identity at that time. Very often the image of the other is construed in a kind of systematic opposition to the image one builds of oneself. To the extent Europeans imagined the European Union as a political formation which had overcome nationalism, separatism and ethnic intolerance, the Balkans were perceived as a kind of negative alter ego of Europe. In other terms, Europeans ascribed to the Balkan Peninsula the negative qualities they claimed to have got rid of themselves. Or, to put it in a more positive way, stigmatizing the Balkans helped Europeans formulating their own political ideals more clearly.

It is important to be aware of these mental mechanisms of image building and representation and, consequently, of the fact that the perception of the Balkans as a region, characterized by ethnic violence, is highly deceptive. In a particularly acute article, the American linguist Victor Friedman in 1995 confronted the two meanings the word “Balkanism” possesses — in linguistics and in imagology (the study of representations of “the other”). Friedman holds that the similarities between Balkan languages, called Balkanisms, in fact refute the Balkanist (in the sense Todorova attributes to this word) perception of the Balkans as a region of age-old ethnic hatred and warfare. I quote:

“An understanding of the basic linguistic commonality and intercommunication that led to the formation of the Balkan linguistic league is essential to placing notions of Balkan history and modernity in their proper perspective. It is clear from the phonological and morpho-syntactic structures of the Balkan languages — as well as from their shared vocabularies and semantics — that the modern-day preachers of divisiveness, separation, and lack of communication are not basing their arguments on the actual history of South Eastern Europe. Rather they are attempting to project onto the past an image created in the present to further individual and elite political goals. A new model of Balkan cooperation must recognize the deep ties that bind together
all of the Balkan languages and the people that speak them, while at the same time accepting the historical developments that have led to the differentiation of languages and identities.

The intensive cultural interaction which has resulted into the emergence of a Balkan cultural community and a Balkan cultural identity — or mentality — clearly demonstrates that ethnic intolerance and conflict is by no means an inseparable distinctive feature of the Balkans. On the contrary, extensive cultural interaction in conditions of good neighbourly relations, professional cooperation, friendly contacts, and mixed family relations seem to have been much more typical of the peninsula during most of its history. This is not to romanticize the relations between members of the various ethnic groups in the Balkans. However, it is difficult to explain the emergence of a Balkan linguistic, let alone cultural league, if people in the Balkans were not at least “on speaking terms” and had normal relations with each other. Massive conflicts and warfare between Balkan ethnic groups did not occur prior to the 19th century; they were provoked by nationalism, an ideology which incited them to claim separate territories in a region marked by ethnic heterogeneity. But nationalism, and the processes of nation and state building it induced, are historical phenomena, which cannot be considered as inherent to the nature of people neither in the Balkans, nor elsewhere. Friedman’s message, which is also my message, is that the negative and essentialist image of the Balkans which exists in the West needs to be revised. But also, and maybe even more urgently, the Balkan peoples themselves need to revise the popular image they have of their own past as an incessant battle with their neighbours and to become aware of the huge and admirable cultural heritage they share. The contemplation of the past should not instil feelings of fear, resentment and enmity, but rather help people realize that, since they were able to live in harmony with each other in the past, they should be able to do so in the future as well.
Image and Power in the Age of Andronicos II & III Palaiologos: Imperial Patronage in the Western Provinces of Via Egnatia

Konstantinos Giakoumis & Anna Chistidou

When Alfred Adler coined the term fictional finalism to denote each person’s strategy development to strive for perfection, thereby investing a great deal of energies and efforts for effectively overcoming a sense of weakness, he certainly had nothing of Andronikos II’s in mind. Yet, the hopeless efforts of the latter to reestablish the grandeur of a dwindling empire projecting imperial power through imagery, glorious imperial connotation and dynastic loyalty, rather than undertaking deep reforms and infrastructure development projects, could perhaps constitute a good fictional finalism case-study for the former.

In 1258, in which time Michael II, despot of Epiros endowed the cities of Durrës, Vlorë, Kaninë, Sphinaritsa and Berat to his daughter Helen upon her marriage with Manfred of Otranto, he had not foreseen the fatal consequences of his decision. For, after Manfred’s demise in 1266, Charles I of Anjou would raise serious, legally substantiated and aggressive claims on those lands. Laying on key-points of the westernmost parts of Via Egnatia, these castles had always been the Byzantine bulwark against any invasion from the West or the bridgehead for expansionist schemes towards it. Alternating cunningness, pressure and force of arms, the Anjevins under Charles I conquered the forts of Vlorë and Durrës within four years (1268-1272); this paved their way to besiege and occupy a range of the other southern castles in 1279, Butrint, Sopot and Vayenetia, thereby reuniting territories that were part of Helen’s dowry given to Manfred of Otranto. The sole territory that remained under Byzantine control was the triangle between Durrës and Vlorë, save the cities themselves, and Achrida.

The occupation of Krujë and, possibly, Sphinaritsa in 1277 marked the beginning of Anjevin offensives against Berat. Gathering about 8000 soldiers under the lead of Hugues le Russeau de Sully throughout 1279-1280, in the autumn of 1280 Hugues de Sully led the army inland from Durrës to lay siege to the fortress of Berat, the gateway to Macedonia. In the spring of 1281 Sully, longing for a fight, decided to spy out the land for himself and approached the Byzantine camp with a small group of bodyguards, where he
was arrested by Turkish mercenaries, who shot his horse and captured him. This marked the end of Charles I Anjou’s inland expedition against Byzantium; one after the other the castles of Sphinaritsa, Durrës and Vlorë fall again into the hands of Byzantines. Hugues was taken to Constantinople in chains, where the triumph was celebrated in excitement. The Emperor regarded the effortless victory in Berat as evidence of divine favour to his cause and had scenes of the battle painted on the walls of Blacherna palace.

Alas, the conditions of the empire’s provinces were unfit for jubilations. Exhausted from heavy taxation and relatively protracted wars, local rulers in the westernmost regions of Via Egnatia took advantage of people’s dissatisfaction to come to terms with other western powers (e.g. the participation of the Muzaka in Philip of Taranto’s coalition in 1319). A strategic plan for reversing public opinion in those remote, but important provinces of the Byzantine Empire was necessary.

In this paper, we shall cast light on the “West Egnatia” plan of Michael VIII and Andronikos II Palaiologoi. This plan entailed a huge church building or renovation project, accompanied by statements of imperial power through imagery, dynastic loyalty, continuity, glorious imperial connotation and, overall, lavish patronage. In so doing, we shall delve into architectural, pictorial, epigraphical and numismatic evidence, in order to reconstruct the way in which the aforementioned media were employed to articulate the imperial ends for the region.

I. The Monastery of the Nativity of the Virgin at Apollonia

Constantine the Great constituted one of the most enduring historical archetypes. As the first leader of the new Christian world and ‘ισαπόστολος (equal to the Apostles), he developed into the role-model proper of the Christian military ruler who defeats the enemies through faith and God’s grace. Presented by his biographer Eusebius as the new Moses, Constantine became commensurate with the Old Testament kings and New Testament Paul, epitomising thus the Christian ruler and ‘Επίσκοπος (bishop) of the region.

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1 Buschhausen, H. und H, *Die Marienkirche*, 146-147
church.\(^2\)
For the Byzantines Constantine was the unquestionable model for the ideal Byzantine emperor. His attributes as God’s ‘μιμητή’ (imitation), ‘evangelist’ of the true faith and ‘semper victor’, his righteousness and philanthropy became reference points for a successful rule.\(^3\) Due to the ideal Christian ruler that Constantine embodied and also his ‘loudly proclaimed’ sainthood, he sanctified all future emperors that were lauded as ‘New Constantines’. This title became the ultimate ‘ticket’ conferring equivalent magnificence, wisdom and association with the founder. In this respect, the ‘New Constantine’ title acted to ensure the legitimacy of its claimants. It is hardly coincidental that several emperors seeking to establish or consolidate dynasties (Hearakleios, Leo III, Leo V, Theophilos, Basil I) styled themselves as New Constantines. Some of them even named their sons after the great emperor as to render the association more tangible.

A mural testimony of this practice still survives in Apollononia. It is manifested through the inscription accompanying the imperial group portrait of the exonarthex at the Church of the Virgin which represents, among others, emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos and his son co-emperor Andronicos II. The multifarious aim of the particular image will be discussed shortly. Suffice it to mention at this point that the commission of the portrait is associated with the battle of Berat in 1281 and the ‘spectacular victory’ gained by the Byzantine emperor over the self-proclaimed ‘king of Albania’ (1272), Charles d’Anjou I.

The victory of Berat commemorated ‘on the walls of the [Blacherna] palace’ along with his representation on the exonarthex of Apollonios’s monastery reinforces his image as the great restorer of the empire before the eyes of his Constantinopolitan audiences. The wall-painting there followed similar lines of imperial propaganda. It acted as a token of victory and articulated multiple political statements for diverse addresses. The fact that in addition to commemorating his achievements before his immediate subjects – the Constantinopolitan audience – the emperor chose to commission a portrait–symbol of this particular genre in the newly acquired territory reveals the perplexity of challenges that Michael VIII had to tackle.

The emperor was certainly concerned with the reinstatement of the injured Byzantine Empire and prestige. In this respect, the image acted as a declaration of dominance intended, on the one hand, for the remotely located territories of the empire, whose identity and status had to be confirmed and consolidated. On the other hand, it represented a reminder of superiority towards for implacable enemies and dearest foes, both the Latin kings and


\(^3\) As regards ‘holy rulers’ that followed Constantine’s role-model, see: Grabar, A., *L’ Empereur dans l’ Art Byzantin* (Paris, 1936), 159-168.
Epirote Despots.
Yet, the emperor’s deeper concerns were more likely to be personal. He was fully aware that ‘in Byzantium a usurper must legitimise his position or perish’. As a usurper himself, he was conscious of the risk and strived to secure his position and that of his descendants. His interest in establishing his own dynasty and promoting this as the continuation of the glorious past served the image of the empire but primarily himself. He could not act as an emperor unless he was perceived like a legitimate one and this is what he meticulously pursued.

His projection as the ‘New Constantine’ and his dynasty’s affiliation with the celebrated Komnenean emperors, as advertised by the inscription on the one hand, and the allusion to his association with the Virgin-patron of Constantinople on the other hand, betray his ‘legitimacy’ concerns. Commissioning a portrait at a church previously supported by the Komnenoi and confirming privileges that were firstly granted by them might not be coincidental at all. Nor is the fact that in the portrait of the Mavriotissa exonarthex, in Kastoria - also associated with Michael VIII (1261/2) - the connection with the Komnenoi is also advertised, as Palaiologos is juxtaposed with a Komnenean emperor - probably Alexios I.

II. The Monastery of Saint Nikolaos at Perhondi
Similar imperial and dynastic concerns are suggested by the imperial portraits in St. Nicolas church, in Perondi. The Palaeologans here decorate the exonarthex formed on the church’s belfry. Unfortunately, present conditions do not allow a thorough appreciation of the images; however, the mere demonstration of another imperial statement across the same geographical strategic front-line, bears an intrinsic significance.

The accurate identification of the depicted emperors is presently not feasible but historical and architectural indications point to the last decades of the thirteenth century. The precedence of the Apollonia portrait as well as an existing chrysobull of Andronicus II (1282-1328) indicating the emperor’s

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4 Geanakoplos, D.J., Emperor Michael, 115
5 Παπαµαστοράκης, Τ., ’Ένα εικαστικό εγκώµιο του Μιχαήλ Η’ Παλαιολόγου: Οι εξωτερικές τοιχογραφίες στο καθολικό της Μονής Μαυριώτισσα στην Καστοριά’, Δελτίον Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας 1′, ΙΕ (1989-1990), 221-240.
6 Meksi, A., Arkitektura ……,
preoccupation with ecclesiastical and social matters of the Kanina area, might not be directly associated with the church in Perondi but they could well serve as hints of the continuing imperial concern for the particular territorial line.

Until the paintings are properly restored, one can only work with the superficial indications. The four imperial family members – the imperial couple on the north wall and the pair of male members on the south - appear in full imperial attire on suppedia/podia. Unfortunately one cannot detect any inscriptions or what the figures bear in their hands (chrysobull, acacia etc.) - which might have been helpful.

Yet, we notice that the genre and iconographic type of the individual figures are strongly reminiscent of imperial representations also seen in contemporary manuscripts, such as the chrysobull from the Byzantine Museum. It dates from 1301 and is addressed to Archbishop of Monemvasia, to whom the emperor is granting privileges. It opens with a miniature representing Christ blessing Andronicos II. The emperor offers the chrysobull to Christ, to whom the church was dedicated. Apart from its artistic and aesthetic value, the manuscript testifies to Andronicos II’s active patronage of monasteries and support of Orthodoxy, which came as a relieving compensation for his father’s initiative towards the union of the two churches (Lyon 1272).

In the Perhondi wall-paintings, we notice that the three male imperial members share the same size, posture and attire. This might suggest the representation of the emperor (and empress) with co-emperors. The only period until 1345 that an emperor co-existed with two co-emperors, was in 1317-1320 and involved emperor Andronicus II, his son Michael IX and his grandson, Andronicus III. Should this be the case, one could perhaps further assume that since empress Eirene (Yolanda Montferrat) died in 1317, the wall painting could have been commissioned on the same year.

An interesting element of the composition is that the imperial portraits appear on the upper register, above the representations of the warrior saint

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7 Chrysobull, ......
8 Γαλάβαρης, Γ., Ελληνική Τέχνη. Ζωγραφική Βυζαντινών Χειρογράφων (Αθήνα, 1995), fig. 221.
9 For a very brief period in 1281, Michael VIII co-existed with Andronicos II and Michael IX (acclaimed) as co-emperors, but shortly after Michael VIII died.
(north) and the Archangel Michael (?) (south). This arrangement contradicts the traditional Byzantine pictorial hierarchy (celestial-upper and terrestrial-lower). This reversal is also found in the exonarthex of Mavriotissa,\textsuperscript{10} where the imperial portraits are located above St. George and St. Demetrios. It has been interpreted as an attempt on the part of Michael VIII to highlight the association of the Palaiologoi with the military aristocracy.\textsuperscript{11} Whatever the actual meaning might have been, the occurrence of the same statement and symbolic ‘vocabulary’ in Perondi, suggests that the area was a conscious target of a similar official imperial propaganda.

Warrior saints in churches are generally perceived as the impact of turbulent war-times and are associated in coinage with emperors. In our case, three coins found in Berat and dating 1282-1328 render Sts. George and Demetrios. Recently, growing literature associates these coins with annual mints in Thessaloniki to accommodate Andronikos II’s military campaigns. Similarly, archangel Michael - seen on the north wall - was viewed by the Byzantines as a special royal patron of emperors although he was particularly preferred by namesake emperors, Michael VIII included.\textsuperscript{12} Interestingly enough, in this period dates the church of Archangel Michael below the southern wall of Berat’s castle.

Identification apart, the compositions in Perondi imply a concerted effort on the part of the imperial patrons to win over the audience and formulate impressions about the empire and its rulers. In other words, the Apollonia composition might not have been merely an act of impulse prompted by victory, but the beginning of a conscious propaganda that continued to exist. As imperial group portraits, these images on the one hand emphasise and advertise the dynastic rule and its continuity, while on the other hand, they reinforce the imperial concerns conveyed in Apollonia. Consequently, they confirm the area’s political and strategic weight and the deeper interest in the perceptions of its audiences.

III. The Monastery (?) of Holy Trinity in Berat’s Castle

Another indication in favour of this argument is provided by the donor’s inscription in the church or monastery of the Holy Trinity in Berat’s Castle quarters. The inscription is in majuscules, painted with black ink in while-

\textsuperscript{10} Also in Kurbinovo and St. George, in Staro Nagoričino.
\textsuperscript{11} Παπαμαστοράκης, Τ., ‘Ένα εικαστικό εγκώμιο του Μιχαήλ Η’ Παλαιολόγου’, 235-236.
yellow background on the lintel of the narthex’s southern door. Its architecture points to a dating ca. 1300 while the surviving wall-paintings of the main church stylistically allude to St. Clement (Perivleptos) in Achrida (1295). The decoration generally suggests an impressive monument, with a Passion-centred iconographic programme on its upper registers and a juxta-position of monastic saints along the lower registers and secondary arches (prothesis, diakonikon) with military saints.

The inscription reads:

| + ΑΝΟΙΚΟΔΟΜΙΘΗ ΕΚ ΒΑΘΡΩΝ [Ο ΘΕΙΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ] | ΟΥΤΟΣ ΔΙΑ ΣΥΝΔΡΟΜΗΣ Κ(ΑΙ) ΚΟΠΟΥ ΤΟΥ [ΕΥΣΕΒΕΣΣΑΤ] | ΟΥ Κ(ΑΙ) ΑΓΙΟΥ ΗΜ(ΩΝ) ΑΥΘΕΝΤΟΥ Κ(ΑΙ) ΒΑΣΙΛΕΟΣ ΚΥ[Ρ ... Κ(ΑΙ) ΤΗΣ ΣΥΖΥ] | ΓΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΑΣ ΕΙΡΗΝΗΣ ΕΠΙ ΤΗΣ ΒΑΣ[ΙΛΕΙΑΣ] | ΚΥ[Ρ Α]ΝΑΡΟΝΙΚΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΛΑΙΟ[ΑΙ]ΤΟΥ ..... | ..... Κ[Α]\[Ι]........ Τ[.\]Ν ΟΥ....

‘This holy church was reconstructed from foundations through contributions and toils of our most pious and holy king and ruler [along with his wife] Eirene during the reign of ...Andronicos Palaiologos ………’.

Though incomplete, the inscription leaves no doubt about the patronage of the imperial family and not of the local nobility, as was previously thought: emperor Andronicos II, empress Eirene and Andronicos III. In the narthex, one also discerns representations of warrior-saints, while the emphasis on monastic saints and subsequently monasticism in the frescoes of this church, as well as in those of the refectory of the Apollonia Monastery, alludes to the philomonastic policies of Andronicos II and his milieu and the spiritual quests that gave birth to Hesychasm.

The consistency of this policy is further supported by the mentioning of Andronikos III Palaeologos and his wife in the MS. 37 of Berat, dating 1326/7, containing a Martyrologion. A fair number of other manuscripts can be dated from the period from 1281 until the fourth decade of the 13th century and can be attributed to the Palaeologan Renaissance of the city.

IV. The Cave Church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Sinjë, Berat

The cave-church of the Dormition in Sinjë, located between Berat and Ballsh, has a twofold significance: 1) it confirms that the area benefited from Andronicos II’s philomonastic policies; 2) it reveals that imperial patronage was not confined to ecclesiastical centres but also embraced asceticism.

The hardly legible inscriptions on the low south-east corner of the east wall dates the fresco decoration to 1291/2 and associates...
it with the reign Andronicos II and Eirene, whose names still survive. These inscriptions read:

1) | + ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΕ | ΒΟΝΤΟΣ | ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΟΤΑΤΗ[Σ] | ΕΠΗΣΚΟΠΗΣ | ΓΛΑΒΕΝΙ | ΤΖΗΣ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ | ΝΙΚΙΟΥ +. [During the prelacy of kyr Ioannikios, [Bishop] of the All-Holy Diocese of Glavenitsa]

2) | ..... ΤΟΥ | ..... | ΕΙΡΗΝΗΣ | ..... | ΑΛΙ | ..... | ΜΑ | ΚΥΡ | ΝΕΟΦΙΤΟΥ | ΙΕΡΟΜΟΝΑ | ΧΟΥ | ..... | ΕΥ | ΣΕΒΕΣΤΑΤΟΥ | ΒΑΣΙ | ΛΕΟΣ ΑΝΔΡΟ | <ΝΙ>Κ<ΟΥ> | ΣΕΒ | ΕΤΟΥΣ | ΣΤ Ω. […… Eirene …… kyr Neophyto the priest-monk ……… most pious king Andronikos … year 1291/2].

The surviving decoration – charred by fire – indicates least two phases, and includes a typical iconographic programme for cave churches (i.e. Deesis, monk-saints).

V. The Cave Church of Saint Erasmus in Achrida
A similar type of patronage is also manifested in the cave church of St. Erasmus in Achrida. The first layer of frescoes dated 13th century contains the monumental portraits of Michael VIII, Andronicos II and Saoul Theodore, Komnenos, Doukas, the Despot of Epiros. Since this was made known to us through an article, no further comments could be made at this stage. Still, Andronicos II is known to have presented an Epitaphios to the church of Saint Sophia in Achrida, an element which strengthens the aforementioned evidence of imperial patronage in Achrida.

VI. Other Evidence
The above pictorial evidence dating more or less from the last decades of the thirteenth or the first decades of the fourteenth century provide evidence useful for dating a number of monuments found around Berat, such as the church of Blacherna within the Castle quarters in Berat and the church of Saint Nikolaos at Kurjan, Fier.

CONCLUSIONS
Situated in Via Egnatia’s westernmost regions of the restored empire, the triangle Achrida, Durrës, Vlorë was the crucial passage leading from west into the heart of the empire through Macedonia and as such, its strategic importance is evident. Until 1281 the local populations had experienced many changes and different rulers and policies. Following their return under imperial control their political and religious identity had to be confirmed and consolidated anew. In this vein, the imperial patronage and support aimed at reintegrating the remote audiences and reinforcing their sense of belonging to the empire and Orthodoxy. The chain of imperial images across this geographic line is noticeable and
apparently not coincidental. Furthermore, the pro-ecclesiastic stance of Andronicos II, as expressed with the construction or restoration of churches and the confirmation of privileges in the area, suggests that the westernmost provinces of Via Egnatia benefited from the focal policies exercised on a central level in Constantinople and other centres (Thessaloniki). The use of subject-matter and types (i.e. warrior saints) encountered in prominent contemporary monuments suggest that the artists were conscious of the main artistic tendencies and symbolisms. Finally, the pro-monastic character attested in the surviving iconography suggests that the intellectual and spiritual explorations of the metropolitan centres were introduced in this remote province, while the local population was invited to share them, through art and imagery.
Via Egnatia during the Ottoman rule in the Ohrid region

Dragica Živkova

Our participation in the project Via Egnatia was mostly focused on three specific segments from the period of the Ottoman influence, related to the maintenance and the improvement of the trade relations, the economy and the crafts in the Ohrid-Struga region, the inns as significant profane objects which accommodated the merchants and their caravans and the road keeping services as a constituent of the system for securing the safety of the roads.

Ohrid was first mentioned in the Ottoman historic sources in 1394/5, when the empire was ruled by the fourth Ottoman sultan Bajazid I (791-804 AH / 1389-1402 AD).

After the battle of Rovin (1395) in which the king Marko was killed while fighting on the sultan's side as his vassal, the city of Ohrid became fell under the direct Ottoman rule.

The further plans of the Ottoman sultans for enlarging the Empire point out its primary significance. Ohrid, with its perfect geo-strategic location, a well preserved fortress, rich and safe provisions resources and with a developed road net, met the conditions for a constant growth in the Ohrid sanjak (district) as one of the administrative-political and military units within the Rumelia beylerbeylik (province).

Later on, following the battle of Çumurlu, especially in the period of the rule of the sultan Murad II (1421-1451), the domination of the Ottomans was reinforced over the conquered territory in the Balkan. The larger cities grew into strategic posts and transit zones used by the military forces and for securing provisions of the Balkan battlefields, especially in the direction of Albania and Bosnia. On the other hand, the establishment of the permanent Ottoman rule had a positive impact on the stabilization of the economy of the conquered territories, especially on the reestablishment and the improvement of the trade, both the domestic and the foreign one.¹

Besides the historic literature on the period of the Ottoman domination in the Balkan and the region, the historic sources etc., we referred in our researches also to the notes of the travel writers whose information, although seemingly superficial, still included elementary information on the everyday life, adding to our knowledge on certain periods of the past. We referred to them in particular because besides the merchants, the clerks of the sultan and the military, they were the ones who traveled the most, that is, they were direct and permanent users of the roads.

The oldest travel writers, especially the Roman and the Venetian ones, traveled the old Roman road *Via Egnatia* which led from Durrës, via Ohrid - Bitola - Thessalonica to Istanbul. This road had been in use since the Roman times and in the later periods, especially in the first centuries of the Ottoman conquering of the Balkan.\(^2\)

In a later period the so called "Road of Dubrovnik" was also used. It started in Dubrovnik and led via Bosnia, Novi Pazar - Priština - Kačanik - Skopje - Kjustendil - Plovdiv to Istanbul. The travel writers who travelled this road often pointed their impressions of the northern cities in Macedonia. This road was most often used by merchants of Dubrovnik and travel writers from Italy, France and Austria who first came to Dubrovnik and from there set out for Istanbul.

This road forked at Novi Pazar. One branch led towards Niš - Sofia - Odrin to Istanbul, which was the longer itinerary. The travel writers seldom used the roads they had already travelled. For example, when travelling to Istanbul through Bulgaria almost all of the travel writers from Europe used the so called "Istanbul road" which led from Vienna - Budim - Beograd - Sofia - Plovdiv - Odrin to Istanbul. This is why there are many the travelogues on the mentioned regions, but most of them are alike because of the similar descriptions. It also happened that the travel writers passed through Bulgaria avoiding Macedonia, and vice versa.\(^3\)

The renown Turkish travel writer Evliya Çelebi (1611-1682) visited the cities in Macedonia and rendered precious information on them. Although he had mastered the goldsmith trade and had the opportunity to work and study at the sultan's court during the reign of Murad IV (1623-1640), he was more attracted to travelling. He dedicated to a continuous search and exploration of the traces of time and space, restlessly documenting the typical elements imprinted in the architecture, ethnology and the way of life in our cities and the region in general.\(^4\)

The natural beauties of the Ohrid Lake and the abundant flora and fauna, the Ohrid Valley and the Debarca region, the natural beauties of the mountain Galičica, the favourable climate for the development of agriculture, cattle breeding, viticulture, truck farming and fruit growing were the key advantages for the permanent growth of Ohrid throughout the past historic periods.

The dominant centres of the crafts and especially the trade in the Ohrid county were the cities of Ohrid and Struga. The bazaars (*çarsi*) were mostly


occupied by craftsmen, organized in guilds, who made quality products in their workshops and stores, and the merchants who maximally used the well developed road net in the region.\(^5\)

The fishing, the cattle breeding, the viticulture, the fruit growing, the truck farming as well as the crafts in the Ohrid region were a favourable ground for the development of a considerable trade exchange, while the geographic location contributed to the development of the transit commerce, mostly between the Albanian Adriatic coastal region and the inland of the Balkan Peninsula. The prosperity of the domestic trade was mostly due to the distinguished characteristics of the particular production regions in the Ohrid county, and it was executed through direct exchange or through money compensation.\(^6\)

**Fishing** as an economic branch, but also as a craft, was one of the oldest and most prevalent activities of the population that inhabited the Ohrid Lake coast. Since long ago fishing has been one of the most important economic branches which provided the living to the local population.

Among the 17 sorts of fish in the Ohrid Lake, 10 are endemic. Three of them - the Ohrid trout, the "letnica" (*Salmo letnica*) and the "belvica" (*Acantholingua ohridana*) are distinguished for their quality and were exported as far as Istanbul. In the regions closer to the lake the fish was transported and used fresh, while most of the annual catch was sold and distributed all over the region as steeped (in brine) or dried.\(^7\)

During the Ottoman rule, the lake was leased for periods of two years, and later for periods of four years.

The Ohrid boat (*čun*) with its archaic form and size was fully adjusted to meet the everyday needs of the craft with its stability and functionality. It could hold the large quantities of fish, as well as the nets, but it was also used for transporting passengers and products between the opposite coats of the lake, until the sealing of the border. (photo)

Today the boat is no longer in use, but the Institute for the Preservation of Monuments and the Museum of Ohrid have a sample of the old Ohrid boat as an exhibit.

The city had already had a market location, but in the period of the Ottoman rule it was considerably enlarged to a wider area outside the city walls. Later on, the advancing trade led to the opening of several specialized markets. Beside the **fish market**, which had been operational in the pre-Ottoman period, some other markets developed, as well, the most renown being the wheat market. (photo) The number of shops was constantly growing. They were often used both as craft workshops and stores that were selling the


\(^6\) *Ohrid i Ohridsko (Ohrid and Ohrid Region)*, p. 105.

\(^7\) Viktor Plevneš, *Ohrid razviven zanaetčiški centar vo minatoto (Ohrid, A Thriving Crafts Center in the Past)*, p. 146-148.
products manufactured in the workshops. In 1491 Sinanudin Jusuf Çelebi donated 16 of his shops in Ohrid. Since he had also built a zawiya (praying facility) and a school, in order to secure the means for the functioning of the mentioned facilities, Jusuf Çelebi also donated two villages, six watermills, an inn in Voden, a fishery, 10,000 silver coins (akçe), etc. The mentioned data led to the conclusion that ever since the end of the 15th century the bazaar was fully functional part of the city. The bazaars in the Ottoman period were usually located in the busiest parts of the city, at the crossing point of different routes. The very expression çarsi-çarsu means a crossroad, or a square accessible from all four sides.

A branch that underwent permanent growth in this region was the wheat trade. Both Ohrid and Struga had specialized wheat markets. The demand for wheat inside and outside the country was quite large so that the offered quantities always managed to find buyers. When in 1551 Bernardo’s Venetian mission, on its way to Istanbul approached Tirana, two days in a row they used to come upon "many horses as parts of different caravans, carrying wheat on their way to Les." It is also pointed out that the wheat was bought in Struga and was recommended to the Venetian merchants mostly because of its acceptable price.

The grape and wine trade was also quite intense. Large quantities were sold within the Ohrid region itself, where the grapevine was grown, but it was also sold in the surrounding urban centers. The most frequent buyers were the people of Debarca and the Struga region, while in the very city of Struga a monopoly was imposed on wine trade in the early stages of the Ottoman rule.

Silk had a significant role in the export trade. The census of 1582 included an entry of an annual revenue from "silk measuring" (mizani harir) of 15,000 silver coins (akça). The silk merchants sometimes choose to sell their silk in Europe and in other countries instead of Istanbul if they could get higher prices.

The silk produced in the Ohrid sanjak and in the Ohrid region became an object of commerce not only within the empire but also throughout the countries of Europe.

The only ore that was exploited during the Ottoman rule in the Ohrid county was sulphur. It was extracted in the valley of the Kosel River, near the village of Kosel, and was the key ingredient in the production of gun powder for the Ottoman army.

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9 Dušanka Šopova, Makedonija vo XV-XVI vek, dokumenti od carigradskite arhivi, 1557-1645 (Macedonia in 15th -16th centuries, documents from the Istanbul archives, 1557-1645), Skopje, 1955, p. 31-33.
10 Ahmet Şerif PhD, Rudarstvoto vo Makedonija vo vreme na Osmanliskoto vladeenje (The Mi-
As one of the principal state incomes, the exploitation of sulphur was controlled by trusted clerks, while the production was usually leased. The produced sulphur was transported to the state storehouses in Thessalonica, and from there to Istanbul. One shipment usually contained 1,000 kantars, while one kantar contained 44 okas (about 56.5 kg.).

As to the import of products, the most important were salt and oil, as well as the manufactured products from western Europe and the merchandise. The salt was imported from Albania (from Kavaia) and from Thessalonica. Oil and olives were imported from neighbouring Albania, more precisely from the city of Elbasan, and they were carried in skin containers (tulum). The trade exchange with Elbasan grew so much that the merchants from Struga formed a colony of their own shops within the bazaar of Elbasan.11

The transportation of goods was performed exclusively on pack animals because the access roads to the Ohrid region were mostly mountainous and impassable, especially in bad weather. The development of the trade exchange also contributed to the development of the renting trade which was mostly in the hands of the Aruman ethnicity.

In time, Ohrid and Struga became renown centres of the Balkan crafts and trade within the Ottoman empire. These cities hosted the regular market days and fairs which attracted the local producers and merchants, as well as those from other parts of Macedonia and the Balkan, and even the wider region.

According to Evliya Çelebi, Struga had a large annual fair which was attended by up to 50,000 people who stayed there for ten days and ten nights. The fair was held in the second half of September on the location which is even today known as the "Panagjurište" (fair place).

"...It is a huge fair and difficult to describe. Outside the city there are some 300 fair stores. On the very location of the fair there are thousands of improvised stores and counters where people come to buy and sell...

...While here, I set out with my friends and some worthy companions from Struga towards the south-east side, along the lake coast, through the vineyards and the orchards. I passed by the fisheries (daljani) of Ohruzade located are at the spot where a water like a life potion pours down from the plain of Istok and discharges into the Ohrid Lake. From that point onward there is a road leading to Ohrid, along the coast. The 8,000 steps long road is wide and paved with white cobblestone. We passed that road and in three hours we arrived (to Ohrid)..."12

According to the notes of the Turkish historian, travel writer, geographer and bibliographer Haji Kalfa (1609-1657) the trip from Ohrid to Istanbul took 16 days, from Bitola to Istanbul 15 days, while the trip from Debar to Istan-

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12 Aleksandar Matkovski, Patopis na Evlija Čelebi od 1660 do 1668 godina (The Travelogue of Evlija Çelebi from 1660 to 1668), p. 436-437.
bul took 17 days.\textsuperscript{13}

The inns, that is, the caravanserais, were special objects of the profane Ottoman architecture chiefly meant to provide accommodation to the merchants and their goods, and to all the other passengers, as well. They were usually erected on locations near the busy roads or inside the cities. In order to reach safely to a certain destination the merchants' caravans travelled in large groups which were occasionally joined by other travellers.\textsuperscript{14}

In the larger urban centres the inns were built at the marketplaces, near the stores, the mosques and the baths. Besides spending their nights and storing their goods, the merchants used the inns to trade merchandise. The merchants would stay in the inns for a longer time, i.e. until they concluded the trade.

According to some older sources, three inns were built in Ohrid during the Ottoman period.\textsuperscript{15} We have no particular data on their precise location, but according to the notes of Abdulah Sali, an ethnologist from the Institute for the Preservation of Monuments and the Museum of Ohrid, in the centre of the bazaar (near the old oak tree) there was an inn named "Macedonia". The second one was on the access road to Ohrid, on the location "Voska", by the old road to Struga, and the third inn was located by the exit road from Ohrid (near the old graveyards) in the direction of Bitola.

In Struga, according to Evliya Çelebi, the Ottoman buildings that were in function included an inn, a public kitchen (imaret) a school (madrasah) and a bath (hamam).

The introduction of the road keeping (dervenci) service in the security system of the roads did not happen simultaneously all over the empire. On the territory of Macedonia that process was first mentioned at the beginning of the 15th century, but it was intensified in the second half of the 15th century. Throughout the period of the use of road keeping, this service was constantly modified, but it was also called off in some road keepers' villages.\textsuperscript{16}

The term dervendzi stems from the Persian word derbend which is a compound whose basic meaning was mountain passage, narrow path, canyon. In Turkish it was derbentci, denoting the person in charge of keeping the narrow path, the passage or the canyon safe. In our terminology it was used in modified form as derven - dervendzija.

Besides their basic task - to keep, watch and maintain the rough and insecure points on the roads and secure a safe passage, the road keepers had

\textsuperscript{13} Aleksandar Matkovski, \textit{Patopis na Hadzi Kalfa od okolu 1650 godina (The Travelogue of Haji Kalfa from around 1650)}, p. 387-397.


\textsuperscript{15} Fehim Bajraktarević, \textit{Turski spomenici u Ohridu (Turkish Monuments in Ohrid)}, Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju i istoriju jugoslovenski naroda pod turskom vladavinom, no. 5, Sarajevo, 1954-55, p. 111-134.

\textsuperscript{16} Aleksandar Stojanovski PhD, \textit{Dervendzistvoto vo Makedonija (Road Keeping in Macedonia)}, INI, Skopje, 1974, p. 43.
other duties, as well, related to their primary task. Namely, they had to help and accommodate the merchants, the representatives of the Ottoman administration and the members of the army, and occasionally to transfer the state incomes.

They were also in charge of maintaining and repairing the roads, that is, the section which they were assigned to. They were sometimes also obliged to guard and maintain the bridges and the ferries which fell into their section. Such is the example with the section Debovjani near Struga. The data from the Detailed Census Registry (Defter-i mufassal Liva-i Ohri Cild el-evvel) from 1582, kept in the State Archive of the Republic of Turkey in Ankara, under the number 25 referring to the Ohrid sanjak includes: "...This village is located near the bridge Ohri zade on the river Drim. Since the terrain surrounding the bridge was rough and dangerous due to frequent robbers' attacks, the people of this village agreed to guard that location and maintain the bridge, making sure that no passer-by will suffer any damage or loss, under the condition that they will be released of the tax duties. As to the question of certain reduction of the taxes (ispence) or wheat duties, the text does not contain any note, but from the quantity and the amount of the levies it is obvious that all of the imposed duties were paid in full..."17

The road keeping services in the Balkan were usually performed by the Christian population. The historic sources and the literature support our conclusion that the road keepers were recruited solely among the Christians.18

At the points where road keeping services were necessary and which were uninhabited or the old settlements had been already abandoned, the Ottoman sultans insisted to settle people that would be engaged in the road keeping services. This led to the rising of new settlements or to the renewal of the old ones along the important roads. Interesting facts on the mentioned starting of new settlements are to be found with the travel writer Bertrandon de la Brocier (1433).

The starting of the road keepers' settlements was also one of the methods the Ottoman sultans applied in order to revive and colonize the unpopulated regions. Of course, it was not easy to find people who would settle the deserted, often mountainous, passive and, above all, dangerous regions.19

Besides the historic sources, the notes of the travel writers also include certain information on the functioning of the road keeping service. They speak of the road keeping guards being posted on the points of the road which provided the best view (dominant points on the road) on the surrounding terrain, over both directions of the road. At such points the road keepers usually had straw huts which served as a shelter from the bad weather.

17 Metodija Sokoloski, Dervendzistvoto vo ohridskiot sandzak vo vtorata polovina na XVI vek (Road Keeping in the Ohrid Sanjak in the second half of the 16th century), Annual Reference Book of the Faculty of Philosophy, vol. 19, Skopje, 1967, p. 184-185.
18 A. Stojanovski, p. 34.
The road keepers had a drum and as soon as they would spot a traveler on the road they would hit the drum. This was a signal to the travellers that it is safe for them to pass the road. They was probably a special alarm pattern, as well, in which case all of the road keepers from the near-by village would get alerted.20

The road keeping was done around the clock, in shifts. One unit consisted of 13 members. They were well armed, at the beginning with spears and sabres, and later on with guns.

The geographic location of the road keepers' villages point to the main trade and military routes through Macedonia in the past, which is of special significance for the research of the history of commerce and transportation. More elaborate information on the road keepers' villages are included in the mentioned Detailed Census Registry of the Ohrid sanjak from 1582. The mentioned 8 subdistricts (nahiya) included a total of 43 road keepers' villages, 14 of which belonged to the Ohrid district.21

The travelling was mainly done during the day. However, night travelling was not excluded, and it was mostly practiced during the summer heats. While travelling through Albania and Macedonia to Istanbul, the Venetian envoy Lorenzo Bernardo decided to continue his trip from Kavala by night due to the high temperatures during the day.22

The elaborate information rendered by A. Stojanovski PhD in the quoted book include the note of 174 road keeping points that were active in the period of the Ottoman rule in the wider region. According to the description, some of them were located along the road Via Egnatia (for example, the village Zavoj).23

We shall not go deeper into the other organization elements, like the question of the economic-social position and the tax reductions enjoyed by the road keepers within the Ottoman administrative system.24

In this review we made a short analysis of some facts that led us to certain conclusions on the frequency and the function of the road Via Egnatia during the Ottoman reign in the Ohrid region. Of course, there will be a more elaborate research of the material in the rich archive funds which actually render the most credible facts, especially on the period of the Ottoman rule.

We hope that our attempt to select and present our primary results through the discussions at the Conference in Bitola, as well as through the collaboration and exchange of information with the colleagues from the neighbouring countries will result in broadening and supplementing of our present knowledge.

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21 Metodija Sokoloski, Dervendzistvoto vo ohridskiot sandzak vo vtorata polovina na XVI vek (Road Keeping in the Ohrid Sanjak in the Second Half of the 16th Century), Annual Reference Book of the Faculty of Philosophy, vol. 19, Skopje, 1967, p. 188.
22 A. Stojanovski, Dervendzistvoto vo Makedonija (Road Keeping in Macedonia), p. 79.
24 Op Cit., p. 93
Before dealing with the issue of cross-border networks, I would like to make a brief presentation of my field, the Greek region of Thrace. This region bears a set of particularities which render it quite distinct in comparison to other Greek regions. First of all, Thrace is the only Greek region that has terrestrial borders with Turkey. Moreover, one must keep in mind the presence of a minority of approximately 100,000 Muslim inhabitants, a significant part of which is self-defined as ethnic Turk. These two elements, geographic location and demographic particularity, affected the way politics and economy always took place in Thrace throughout the last decades.

Local politics and national debates over Thrace must also be interpreted through the various diplomatic ups and downs between the Greek and Turkish States. In many cases, Thrace represented a field of continuous struggle between two competitive foreign policies.

As for the economy, Thrace was always regarded as a remote place, where private investments were doomed to fail. Let's not forget that besides bordering with Turkey, Thrace also bordered with socialist Bulgaria. The region of Thrace had been rendered, since the 60’s, an isolated, highly militarized and in many cases state-dependent region. Since the late 70’s and especially the 80’s, the Greek state intensified its efforts in the economic “fortification” of the region, as it was then said. All throughout the 80’s, Thrace provided examples of centrally planned policies and funds that aimed at improving the local economy, in the context of interstate struggles.

The traditional dependency of local politics and local economy on the central Greek state is of a crucial importance in order to fully grasp the upcoming developments during the ’90s.

These developments were first of all related to the political change in Eastern Europe. The fall of the so-called socialist governments gave rise to new perceptions of the geographical position of Thrace. There was a common belief among politicians and policy makers that Thrace could evolve from a remote and isolated area to a highly important crossroads area. These new perceptions and aspirations were very frequent in public speech and in the overall local public sphere. Moreover, one has to keep in mind that these new ambitions were also adjusted to the rising neo-liberal policies of the 90’s, policies that promoted the entrepreneurial model in the public sector, as well as the diminishment of centrally planned policies. In this new context, the region of Thrace had to become “competitive” and open to new perspectives.

Despite these new perceptions, Greece still faced problems with some of its Balkan neighbors. Some of these problems had to do with Greek-Turkish
relations. In fact, in 1996 a war almost broke out between Greece and Turkey (the Imia crisis). However, at the same time, in Greece the modernizing faction of the Social Democrat Party (PA.SO.K.) came to power, its leaders being the Prime Minister K. Simitis, and Minister of Foreign Affairs G. Papandreou. The self proclaimed modernizing government seemed to embody the set of new dominant policies that were typical among the reformed social democrat parties of Western Europe in the 90’s (Shore 2000). This new government launched a series of what was thought of as fundamental reforms, in various sectors of public life. As much as it concerns us, we must keep in mind three main policies of this new government: 1) its constant effort to adjust Greek society to the so-called European standards (Featherstone 2006), let’s call it the “Europeanization discourse”, using Borneman and Fowler’s term (Borneman and Fowler 1997), 2) its effort to introduce a series of advanced liberal economic policies in the Greek society (Pagoulatos 2006, Ladi 2006), which had also become the dominant policies in the European Union, as Cris Shore (Shore 2000) has pointed out, and 3) its effort to improve diplomatic relations with Turkey (Rumelili 2005). The policies launched by the modernizing government of the late 90’s were in accordance to new European policies, programs and funds, which seemed to gain importance in the field of Greek public policies (Andrikopoulou 1994, Plaskovitis 1994: 453, Georgantas and Psiharis 2000: 774, Agorastos and Kostopoulos 2000:784).

These European and national policies became the new context in which cross-border practices and discourses in Thrace were quickly disseminated. The first cross-border networks in Thrace were created in the mid-90’s. These networks were in some way set up as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) by local politicians, mayors, etc. The purpose of these networks was to promote cross-border cooperation between the Greek, Turkish and Bulgarian society. In order to understand the way that these networks operated and the wider policies that they embodied, I propose to reflect on the way the two very first networks were created.

Let’s call the first network Eurothraki.1 It was created in 1994 by a local mayor, who was already considered a specialist in obtaining and conducting programs and policies funded by the European Union. He was also one of the founders of a very successful developmental company that administered LEADER and other EU programs. In fact, one could say that European programs had become for this politician a basic means for acquiring symbolic capital. In this context, he also became a pioneer in the field of the European cross-border programs, also known as PHARE-INTERREG. As he explained to me, “the opening of the borders is something unavoidable and useful, it helps on all levels, it’s something that we must understand, in other areas of the world being a border region is a gift from god, this coop-

1 Invented name for the purposes of this paper.
eration brings wealth to all of us”. He also made clear that European policies and INTERREG programs had created new expectations for all local politicians.

Let’s call the second network Thrakicity. It was also set up by a local mayor. This mayor began his efforts in 1995. We must point out here that this politician held a very close relation to the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PASOK government, G. Papandreou. As a result of that, the founder of Thrakicity was overtly involved in the movement in favor of the Greek-Turkish friendship. Moreover, his cross-border initiatives with Bulgaria and, most of all, Turkey seemed to reflect his local political strategies: a large part of his constituency was Muslim, and this mayor seemed eager to show at all times his very close ties to Turkish politicians and Turkish political networks. As it was also the case with the founder of EuroThraki, the founder of Thrakicity was an acknowledged specialist in European policies and programs. When speaking with me, he used a specific term to describe the distinctive knowledge of European policies, norms and procedures: “euroknowledge” (in Greek, «ευρωγνωσία»). He emphasized that “euroknowledge” was the first and most important product that Greek politicians could provide to their Bulgarian and Turkish counterparts.

These two pioneers were involved in a more or less coherent network of politicians, managers and policy makers. This network seemed to be first of all a network of center-left politicians, most of them involved in the local modernizing faction of the social democrats. I had the opportunity to discuss and observe the action of such agents. A number of shared beliefs could be used in order to briefly depict their worldview.

First of all, I would like to stress the new meanings of economy. For most of them, the importance of the economic field had grown during the last years and it seemed that their perception of the new economic realism guided their decisions. For example, many of them explained to me that their old socialist illusions had been blown away by history, and that they had to cope with the new reality of entrepreneurial and free economy models. One of them specified that he had changed, and self-defined as “liberal”, in contradiction to his old socialist and patriotic stance. According to another agent, who had been actively involved in the Greek-Turkish friendship movement, life itself had proved to everyone that the public sector was incapable of bringing any solution to the problems of development and economic growth. This new perception of economy stood in clear contradiction to some of their policies during the 80’s, when protectionism and public investments had been the main slogan in the Greek political field. It is useful

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2 Interview, December 2006.
3 Invented name for the purposes of this paper.
4 Interview, December 2006.
5 Indeed, one could interpret “euroknowledge” as a form of capital, cultural or informational, with specific symbolic impact (symbolic capital).
to note the way that new perceptions of economy were interrelated with new perceptions of dealing with Bulgaria and especially Turkey. The growing importance of economic rationality, over political decisions, was a common theme whenever it came to justifying cross-border policies. For example, in 1998, during a well-known Thracian conference (which up until that point constituted a more or less radical nationalist forum), the representatives of a Greek Chamber of Industry announced to all the participants that cooperation with Turkey was inevitable—that’s why they’d better deal with it, the sooner the better.

All of these cross-border pioneers were very eager to prove that they were the bearers of the Europeanization discourse. The Europeanization discourse can be interpreted as a set of social norms that tend to reproduce the symbolic domination (hegemony) of Western European societies and the European Union, as fully rational and more evolved on an evolutionary scale (Abélès 1994, Borneman and Fowler 1997, Shore 2000), generating new strategies, interests and power struggles (or reproducing old ones) on a local level.

In this context, my interlocutors frequently mentioned various evolutionary themes in order to explain their cross-border activities. The most frequent example was that of the reconciliation of France and Germany after many decades of wars. Also, in a public event that took place in Turkey (in Edirne, summer of 2008), I had the chance to witness one of these cross-border pioneers speaking to a Turkish audience. His speech was an evolutionary discourse, where he explained to Turks that they had to choose between Progress, symbolized by the European Union, and backwardness, symbolized by the exclusion from the European Union. Moreover, he did not forget to remind the audience of the primacy of economy over any other field of social activity. He pointed out that only economy mattered since only economy could secure peace and stability in the Balkans.

Beyond these specific agents, one could note the gradual dissemination of cross-border policies among all agents in the local political field. New cross-border networks were set up, ones that were not directly involved in the formerly coherent network of cross-border pioneers. Pursuing INTERREG funds or organizing cross-border events became a common ground in the late 90’s and the early 00’s in Thrace. Even politicians that had been bearers of an ultranationalist discourse seemed ready to participate in Greek-Turkish INTERREG programs. It is very interesting to note that there was and still is a sort of competition between cross-border networks.

On the other hand, throughout these years cross-border projects (especially Greek-Turkish ones) faced criticism, mostly in the margins of the local public sphere.6

The stagnation of the discussions between Turkey and the European Union,

6 For such examples of critical discourse, Tsibiridou 2006.
as well as the failure of the Greek-Turkish INTERREG, reduced the initial momentum of the Greek-Turkish cross-border networks. It gradually started to seem that Greek-Bulgarian projects were more reliable and efficient.

Finally, I could say that these networks represented a new way for local politicians and policy makers to adapt to the new economic and political conditions of the 90’s, as these were imported through European and, mostly, national policies. It is a useful example of how the strategies of political agents are conditioned by but also reproduce the current hegemonic context, should this be more or less novel.

References
Appendix: Cross-border projects

VE Migration working group
Hans Vermeulen

The working group on migration is one of the working groups established during the Bitola conference. The group has an interdisciplinary character and is open also to people who have no academic background but an interest in and knowledge of the field. Hans Vermeulen volunteered to coordinate the activities of this group. During the meeting in Bitola some important decisions were made. The Via Egnatia region was defined as consisting of Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey and more specifically those parts of these countries most near to the Via Egnatia. We thought it best to start with a fairly specific focus. So we decided to leave out the issue of indigenous minorities, such as the Vlachs or Pomaks, which were originally included and to focus on post-1989 migration i.e. migration after the fall of the wall in Berlin.

In the months after the Bitola conference we started a blog and opened a bibliographical site on internet, both only open to members. After some time we decided that it was best to start with two activities:

1. A life history project. This project is coordinated by Riki van Boeschoten, an anthropologist working at the University of Thessaly in Volos, Greece. Goal of the project is to collect life histories of migrants living along the Via Egnatia road, from Albania to Turkey. These life histories, with photo’s and video’s will then be used for a book on the Via Egnatia to be published by the Via Egnatia Foundation and for a travelling exhibition in places along the Via Egnatia. Migration will be one of the topics addressed in this exhibition. The project also aims at developing a network of teaching staff in the region which could use the life stories in the classroom. A first phase of this project started in November 2009. During this month Albanian and Greek students, supervised by Irena Nikaj - an Albanian sociologist working at the Fan Noli University of Korçe - and Riki van Boeschoten interviewed migrants in Albania. In a similar way life histories will be collected in Macedonia, Greece and European Turkey.

2. The publication of a book or special issue of an international social academic journal devoted to intra-Balkan migration, i.e. migration between the countries mentioned above as belonging to the Via Egnatia region. In the second half of 2009 potential authors were ap-
proached. Martin Baldwin-Edwards, an expert on migration in the region working at Panteion University in Athens, accepted to act as co-editor of this publication – together with Hans Vermeulen. Eleven experts from Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey committed themselves to produce nine articles on migration in the region. At the moment of writing (February 2010) we approach publishers and journals.

Though it was decided to focus on post-1989 migration we have decided to pay also some attention to the history of migration in the region. In the life history project past migration will be included to the degree it is part of living memory. In the second project two articles will be included about two important types of migration in the modern history of the region: population exchange and temporary labor migration known in the region under names such as *pečalba* (Slavic) and *gurbet* (Turkish).

Research is not the primary goal of our group. The purpose is rather to distribute – scientific and other - knowledge about migration in the region to a broad audience, e.g. by documentaries or exhibitions. Those who have ideas in this area are very welcome in the group.

The “Border-crossing” network: an effort to bridge the gap in SE Europe
Ioannis Manos

The "Border Crossings" network has been established in 2003 by academics and students from various universities in Southeastern Europe. It aims in developing cross-border cooperation in the area of Balkan Studies (with emphasis in the Social Sciences and the Humanities) by regularly organizing student conferences and other forms of academic exchange. The activities of the network intend to bring students and university teachers together and enable further common research projects through the better understanding of their common heritage and the benefits of working together. The presentation offered a short overview of the network’s activities.

IRAM (Institute for Research and Archiving of Music) historical collection of Balkan folklore
Dimitrije Buzarovski, Trena Jordanoska and Aleksandar Dimitrijevski

IRAM was established September 4th, 2000, at the University “Ss. Cyril and
Methodius” Faculty of Music in Skopje- Macedonia, with the main objective: *Digitization of the Cultural Heritage*. IRAM activities include: digitization of analog audio and video recordings, scores, photo and other graphic materials, audio and video recordings from concerts and other cultural events, documentary videos, organizing of international conferences and presentations, maintaining a web site, publishing of DVDs, CDs, books, posters and other promotion materials.

The presentation on the conference showed part of the IRAM activities related to the digitization and preservation of the historical collection of Balkan folklore.

Website: http://mmc.edu.mk.
(...) That’s the whole point of being a path: it came to be made long ago. Who made it? Charcoal burners, fisherfolk, women with skinny arms, gathering firewood? The outlaws, shysters, gray as the moss, Still in their dreams the blood of fratricide reddens their hands. Autumn hunters on the tracks of pointer dogs with barks clear as frost? All of them, none of them. We make the path together, you too, on a stormy day, on earth, be the hour late or early: we write the paths and they stick, and the paths are more clever than us, and they know all the things we wanted to know.

From: Ballad of the Paths in Västmanland by Lars Gustafsson
In: Elegies and other poems by Lars Gustafsson, edited by Christopher Middleton, NDP, New York, 2000
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