

FULL-DAY EXCURSION TO THE ANCIENT PHILIPPI

Thursday 10 September 2020 / 13:00 – 22:00

Price: 75,00€ per person (included lunch box and dinner)

All-powerful kings of the ancient Greek world, Roman generals and thousands of soldiers, the most important Apostle of the Early Christian years and the first European Christian. Find the traces that they left behind with just one trip to the amazing archaeological site of Philippi!

“Visit the magnificent archaeological site of Philippi and discover its glorious history.”

156 km from Alexandroupolis, in the region of Kavala, is the **Ancient City of Philippi** one of the most important historical sights of Greece, it was founded by Alexander’s the Great’s father, Philip II of Macedon.

It was originally colonized in 360 B.C. by the people of Thasos and later renamed Philippi by Philip II, the king of Macedonia. In 49 A.D., Apostle Paul through the Via Egnatia got from the port of Neapolis to Philippi, where he founded the first Christian church on European soil and baptized the first Christian, a woman named Lydia, right by the Gagitis river, where a famous baptistery and a modern church exist today. A complex trip, where you will be able to see the collection of artifacts and buildings which have been unearthed and



restored, including the Roman forum, the commercial agora, the part of the Egnatia highway that was passing next to the agora of Philippi, the prison of St. Paul, tombstones, mosaic pavements, and an impressive Greek theater with remainings of architecture showing that in the Roman times it was used as an arena.

After your guided tour, you will be able to enjoy some free time in order to take pictures or have a drink at the small cafe there is.



After having had a guided tour of **Philippi's** archeological site for 2 ½ hours we will visit Kavala (15 km distance), the amphitheatric town, where we have a couple of free hours for shopping, for a walk or for a visit of the old fortress, the aqueduct or to see Muhammad Ali's house.

Early in the evening, we will have our dinner in a traditional taverna by the sea, eating fishes & "Greek meze" and drinking ouzo!



We recommend that you wear light, casual clothing and comfortable, low-heeled walking shoes or sneakers, to have a hat and sunglasses. You should have a passport as well as a camera and a great mood!

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF PHILIPPI UNESCO World Heritage Site

All-powerful kings of the ancient Greek world, Roman generals and thousands of soldiers, the most important Apostle of the Early Christian years and the first European Christian. Find the traces that they left behind with just one trip to the amazing archaeological site of Philippi!

The region of Philippi is connected to many exceptional historical figures and events that shaped the Western world. Stunning monuments, which have survived until today, are evidence of the long history of the cultures that interacted and grew in this region.

The ancient city of Philippi was initially (360 BC) a colony of the Thassians, with the name of Krinides. It was soon conquered, however, by the then all-powerful Philip II, king of Macedonia, who fortified the city and gave it his name. In the Hellenistic period the city gained its wall, theatre, public buildings and private residences. Undoubtedly, the most impressive building of this period, despite the changes that it has undergone over the centuries, is the ancient theatre of Philippi, which each summer plays host to productions during the Philippi Festival. In the 2nd century BC the Via Egnatia, one of the largest military and commercial roads of the ancient world, was built through Philippi, making the city a focal point of the region.



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The most important event during the Roman years, however, which left an indelible stamp on the history of the town was the battle of Philippi in 42 BC, when the Roman Republicans, led by the generals Brutus and Cassius, faced the supporters of the monarchy – Mark Antony, Octavian (subsequently Caesar Augustus, first Emperor of the Romans) and Lepidus. The Republicans lost and their leaders committed suicide. From now on, Rome would be ruled by an aristocratic government.

Even so, another significant event was to change the town yet once more: the arrival of the Apostle Paul,

who founded the first Christian Church on European territory in 49/50 AD. The prevalence of the new religion and the transfer of the capital of the Roman state to Byzantium (later Constantinople) shone glory on Philippi. In the Early Christian period (4th-6th centuries AD) the Octagon complex, the metropolitan cathedral dedicated to the Apostle Paul and the “Bishop’s Palace” as well as three grand Christian basilicas were built upon the sites of Roman buildings and private houses.

The city was gradually abandoned from the early 7th century AD, due to large earthquakes and Slavic raids. It survived in the Byzantine period as a fortress, but was completely abandoned after the Turkish conquest in the late 14th century.

Archaeological excavations at Philippi were started in 1914 by the French Archaeological School. After the Second World War, the Archaeological Service and the Archaeological Society conducted systematic excavations here. Today, the Archaeological Service, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the French School of Archaeology are continuing the archaeological research. The finds from the excavations are stored in the Archaeological Museum of Philippi. In July 2016 the archaeological site of Philippi was inscribed on the UNESCO register of world heritage sites. You can find further information on the criteria according to which the site was selected on [UNESCO's website](#).



The perimeter of the walls is 3.5 km.

The site's most important monuments and archaeological groups are: the walls and the acropolis, the theatre, the forum, Basilica A, Basilica B, and the octagonal church.

The walls begin from the peak of the hill, where the fortified **acropolis** dominates, and they enclose its foothills and a section of the plain (first phase: Philip II – mid-4th century BC; second phase: Justinian I, 527-565 AD). Inside the acropolis there is a tower dating to the Late Byzantine period. The total length of the

The **theatre** was built probably by King Philip II in the mid-4th century BC. In the 2nd and 3rd century AD significant changes and additions were made, to adapt its functions to the needs of the spectacular entertainment offered in the Roman era.

Basilica A dates to around the end of the 5th century AD. It is a large, three-aisled basilica measuring 130 x 50 m., with a transept aisle in the east side, a square atrium, a gallery above the aisles, and the narthex and a peculiar phiale. The middle aisle preserves sections of the luxurious tile floor and part of the pulpit. The wall paintings in the vestibule of the chamber, which imitate marble revetment, are particularly impressive.

The "**Jail**" of the Apostle Paul is located to the south of Basilica A. Tradition holds that this is the spot where Paul was jailed. In reality, however, it is a Roman water cistern, which was later converted into a place of worship.



The **Roman forum** was the administrative centre of Philippi during the Roman period. It is a unified planned complex of public buildings, which are arranged around a central square with monumental buildings, the northeast and the northwest temples. A large paved road passes through the north part of the forum, which has been identified with the ancient Via Egnatia.

The rectangular building (27 x 10 m) uncovered to the south of the forum of the Roman town, with a portico that consisted of a colonnade of six Corinthian columns on its facade, has been identified by its



architectural layout and the accompanying inscriptions, as the Roman **commercial market** (macellum). The complex consisted of a central colonnaded court, to the right and left of which there were shops. The complex of the commercial market is separated from that of the Forum by a wide road, 9 m wide, which was the commercial road. This building was constructed during the Antonine period (second half of the 2nd century AD) and is contemporary with the Forum. In the mid-6th century AD, most of it was destroyed to the foundations in order to create the space needed to build Basilica B. Only its northern section was preserved, with the six-column colonnade that the Byzantine architect incorporated into the Basilica to create a monumental entrance in its north aisle.

Most of the **Palaestra** has been covered by Basilica B. It included a colonnaded central courtyard, rooms and a small amphitheatre. The best-preserved section is that of the latrines (toilets) in the southeast corner of the building.

Basilica B dates to around 550 AD. It is a three-aisled basilica with a narthex and outbuildings in its north and south (phiale, diaconicon). The almost square central aisle was covered by a dome, which was supported by large pillars. The altar area was covered by a dome, the sculptural decoration of which reflects a Constantinople influence.

The **Octagon** was the complex of the episcopal church of Philippi. It encloses the octagonal church that had three building phases (from the late 4th/early 5th centuries to the mid-6th century AD) and was built on the site of a house of prayer dedicated to the Apostle Paul (early 4th century AD). This house had in turn been built on the site of a Late Hellenistic tomb/hero monument. The complex even contains a phiale, baptistery, baths, a two-storey Bishopric and a monumental pillar facing the Via Egnatia.

Basilica C is a grand, three-aisled basilica with a narthex and a transept, double pulpit, luxurious marble floor and rich sculptural and architectural decoration. It dates to the 6th century AD.