

North Greece:

Land of Science and Philosophy

> Chalkidhiki - Motaz Othman

It never occurred to me that someday I would visit Stagira, the city where the famous Greek philosopher, Aristotle was born, grew up and wrote his great works.

I received an invitation sent to Islamic Tourism, by the President of the Commission for Tourist Development in the region of Chalkidhiki (North Greece), through my friend Dimitri Laspas. Unfortunately, my Schengen visa had expired but the kind assistance of the Greek Embassy in Jordan enabled me to obtain an urgent visa and I travelled by air to Athens and from there to Salonika.

I was received by Dimitri and we headed north through green mountains and beautiful landscapes, until we arrived at "Athena Palace Village" where we stayed. It is about 100 km north of Salonika. We had supper in the company of journalists from Turkish radio and television, and the host Mrs. Maria Markopoulou, Director of Iona Travel, who organised our visit. I went to sleep, leaving the windows of my room open so as to breathe the fresh air and to contemplate the green landscape that surrounds the resort.

Next morning, we drove through the rural landscape, surrounded by trees and thick forests: a sparsely populated region that has not been exploited for tourism. Finally we reached the northern coast of the Aegean Sea that separates Greece and Turkey. From there we took a boat for a tour of the islands dispersed in the far north of the Aegean Sea. After the tour and lunch we returned by a different route to Stagira, the country of the famous philosopher and scientist Aristotle. We went to "Aristotle Park" constructed in honour of this great man. It displays objects he created and used in his scientific research. In fact, the description cannot give a real idea



Instruments used by Aristotle (prism, pendulum and compass)
بعض الأجهزة العلمية التي استخدمها أرسطو. وهي (الموشور، الرقاص والبوصلة)

of the location: your presence among green mountains and the pure air is mixed with the beauty of the park and the extraordinary prestige that the Greeks accord to Aristotle. At night we had a supper where a traditional orchestra played the famous musical piece "Zorba the Greek", in the presence of hundreds of German tourists. On the third day we went south, to the locality where Alexander the Great is buried. It has numerous archaeological pieces and acquired very valuable others. We returned to participate in the meetings of the Association

of Travel Agencies and Tourism of Greece in "Athena Palace Village". The objective of the meeting was to develop policies to improve tourism in the north of the country, within the framework of the Greek market. The splendour of Greece is not limited to the islands of the Mediterranean and the culture of its traditional cities: northern Greece has a really charming character in a frame that conserves its rural nature. The amiability and hospitality of its people is extraordinary and guaranteed to make any visit a visit to remember. ■