

ETAPE 2 Distance 44 km. Route: "Tegea" - "Kandela"

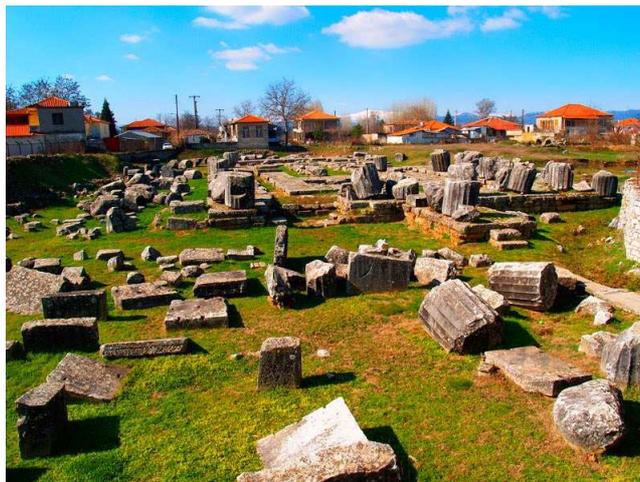
Second day of our journey and the route has no great difficulties. We are running on tarmac again, but this time, through calm small streets, rarely crossed by vehicles.

Amidst the Arcadian land's green fields, the archaeological sites and the ancient villages, we feel that our meeting point with history is right here.

With a panorama visibility on the horizon, this landscape of rare beauty gently leads us in a magical dream. That's how we start feeling in this Etape.



After a very cold night at a house of friends in the fir forest of Mainalon – kingdom of god Pan and the Nymphs, in accordance with the Greek mythology– and after a good breakfast, we start the second Etape from Tegea running through the surroundings of ancient towns and traditional modern buildings alike, a beautiful and neat society of vast history.



Leaving Tegea, we pass through vineyards, fields with beautiful terraces and trees laden with big ripe cherries, and arrive in ancient Mantinea.

Running through the ancient site of Mantinea, the kilometres go by smoothly and pleasantly.



Green is the dominant colour. We are surrounded by it. Leaving the border of Mantinea, we reach the area of Artemisio. The route is calm, covered with many trees. Long straights in the green, along fields, gardens with flowers and vegetables.

With our spirits up and our feet feeling much better than the first day, we are heading steadily for Artemisio, admiring the surrounding landscape that stretches ahead of us, uninterrupted, for a long distance.



We realize that we are inside a vast green basin, surrounded by sharp steep mountain peaks like spikes from the warriors' spears.

This is the mountainous "Arcadia», spectacular and wild. Up in the sky, far behind us, there is a big grey cloud, but, judging from the direction of the wind and the small clouds above us, we realize that we will avoid this summer storm. In fact, peace is all around us.

There are no vehicles; we rarely see another person. On our left, we see the village of Levidi. We take the direction towards the right, leaving the village behind us and, always through the fields, we start the great ascent to the historic town of Kandela.



During this time, our support crew reaches us by car and, after asking us whether we need something, informs us that they will be waiting for us in Kandela for a sandwich and a beverage.

As we run through this calm and magical landscape, on our right, a unique monastery caught our sight, standing like a white dove inside the stiff rocks.



On our left, cultivated land, water all around from the Kyllini mountain nearby, a breathtaking scenery that helps us forget the heat of the asphalt under our feet and the ascent towards the mountainous Kandela.

After a while, the village appears in the wild, like a Nymph, with its well-preserved white houses and front yards.



Approaching the central square of the village, the smell of burnt wood and fresh coffee welcomes us. We sit near a water fountain to eat the food given to us by the support crew, thinking of the pace that we should follow on the next Etape, as we have to endure the great ascent towards the highest spot on the mountain that will lead us through a path, to the descent towards the village of Skotini.



The few inhabitants of Kandela have left their beloved coffee shop to discuss with our support crew the details of the Feat we are trying to achieve. They cannot believe that we have started from the town of Sparta heading all the way to Thermopylae. Perhaps because they cannot feel that, for us, the beauty of nature that we have preciously gathered in our soul during this day, has been enough to give us the courage to proceed.



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By Pavlos