

Discovering Carmignano and the hills of Montalbano

Saturday, 3 October 2009

Meeting point: Florence Railway station Santa Maria Novella

Departure of the train for Prato at 8.08, the next train leaves at 8.29

From Prato Railway station there is a bus to Carmignano

Participants may also go directly to Carmignano by car and meet the group at 9.00 in the centre of the village

The excursion, ending in Carmignano, will be over by 17.00, first train from Prato thereafter arrives in Florence at 18.52.

Level of difficulty of the excursion: medium.

There will be a lunch break in a restaurant. Please bring at least one bottle of water with you for the walk.

Train and bus ticket as well as restaurant costs are to be born by participants.

Description of the walk:

A ring walk, departure is from and return to Carmignano. The guides are Marco Pacenti, a passionate trekker who organizes excursions all around Florence, and Valerie Hayaert, President of the Alumni Association and a researcher in early modern art history.

The area we plan to visit is on the slopes of Montalbano and is full of history and evidence of the past.

First we intend to visit a church in Carmignano, Chiesa di S. Michele which has a famous painting by Jacopo Carucci, known as "Il Pontorno" (1494-1556): the "Visitazione" (it shows the visit of the pregnant holy Mary to her cousin Elisabeth). Valerie will tell us about the painter and his work and will also talk about another artist Bill Viola and his interpretation of this painting which he described in a video recording in 1995. You may find further information on Bill Viola's work at: <http://www.mediaartnet.org/works/the-greeting/>

The tourist association Proloco of Carmignano also illustrates Il Pontorno's painting on its website (in Italian): <http://www.carmignanodivino.prato.it/itinerari/htm/visita.htm> .

Around Carmignano there is evidence of diverse antic Etruscan settlements; they settled there because of the climate, ideal for the cultivation of grapes and to have control over an important communication route, the Arno, which at that time was almost completely navigable.

During the Middle Ages Carmignano challenged by Florence and Pistoia finally fell under the rule of the Florentine Republic in 1300. All which is left of the old fortifications is the tower, called "Il Campano", on high ground overlooking the village.

The excursion, immersed in typical Florentine countryside, is characterized by its grapevines, olive trees and small medieval villages