

BYZANTINE SACRED ART TOUR SEPTEMBER 18 – OCTOBER 1, 2022

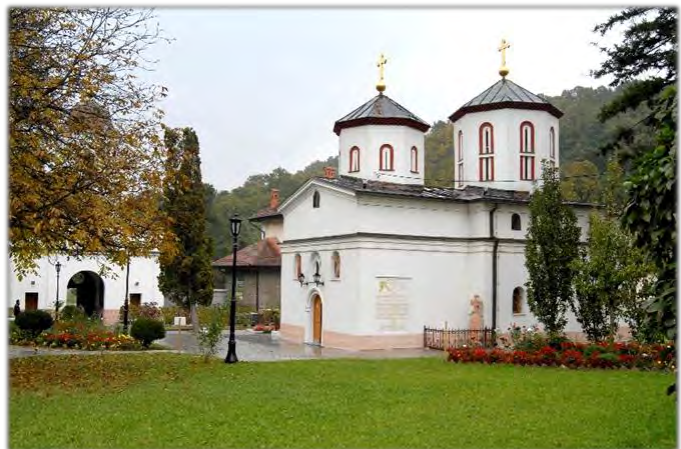
Day 1, Monday,
September 18, 2023

Meals: Dinner

Arrival to **Belgrade**, welcome dinner and meeting with your guide for the trip. Overnight in **Belgrade**. Hotel "Crystal"

Day 2, Tuesday,
September 19, 2023

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner. Explore the capital of Serbia on a full day tour. Today you'll visit the **Kalemegdan Fortress, Rakovica Monastery, Cathedral of Saint Sava** with the largest complex of neo-Byzantine mosaics in the world, and much more. Overnight in **Belgrade**.





Day 3, Wednesday, September 20, 2023

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner

This morning we will leave Belgrade and will start our journey South. Our first stop will be at the **Manasija Monastery**, a fortified establishment of the Serbian Despot Stefan Lazarevic. The nicely restored church set amidst the ruins of the mighty fortifications has some very nice frescoes of the period, done, according to the surviving historical records, by “the most skilful artists of the time”. Not far from the Manasija Monastery, is another gem - **Ravanica Monastery**. It was built by the

famous Prince Lazar, hero of the Kosovo Battle in the 1370's. The interior frescoes were done a bit later, at some point toward the end of the 14th century. After Lunch we will tour **Ljubostina Monastery** which is a bit older than Kalenic monastery. The church here shares the same features of the Morava architectural style. However, most of the frescoes were destroyed during the fire and following pillage of the monastery under the Ottoman Army as a reprisal for the Serbian rebellion against Turkish dominance.

Dinner and overnight. Next - **Zica monastery**.



Day 4, Thursday, September 21, 2023

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner

Today we will visit some of the most important and splendid monastic foundations on the Balkans. First stop will be **Zica** (pronounced Zhee-cha) Monastery. It is easily recognizable for

its main church, painted a fiery red color. Zica Monastery was built by the first Serbian King II Nemanjić, who was crowned here, and by his brother St. Savva, the greatest Serbian Saint and first Archbishop of the Serbian Church.



The monastery also incorporates elements of the Romanesque and Byzantine styles, and was frescoed by an outstanding iconographer, likely from Constantinople itself. Our next stop, **Studena Monastery**, the largest of all Serbian Monasteries, was established in the 12th century. Its main church combines well the features of the Romanesque West and Byzantine East. The beautiful marble churches of the Monastery contain some of the best preserved and most beautiful frescoes from the 12th and 14th centuries. Yet one more jewel on our way, **Gradac**

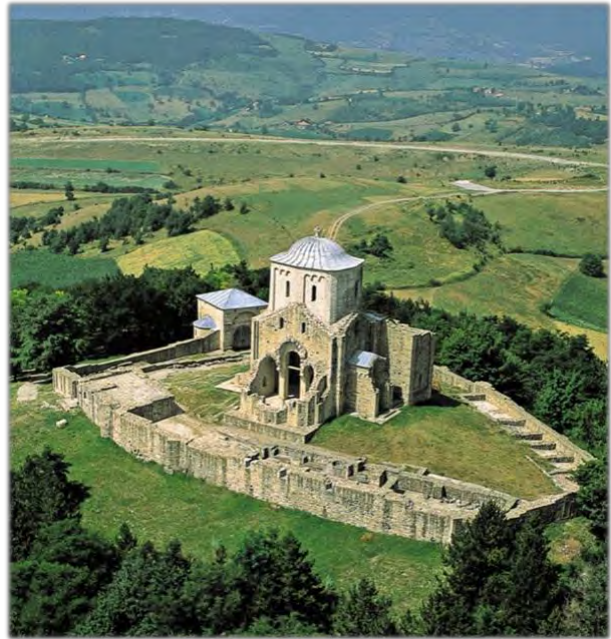
Monastery is an endowment of Helen of Anjou, wife of the Serbian King Urosh I. The Monastery is built in the tradition of Rashka architectural style. Today the church is beautifully restored, and visitors can see the remaining frescoes of the 13th century. **Dinner and overnight near Novi Pazar.**

Day 5, Friday, September 22, 2023

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner

First, we will spend the morning in the vicinity of **Novi Pazar**, beginning our exploration with one of the most important Serbian ecclesiastical centers – the **Monastery of Sopocani**. The Monastery was built by King Urosh in 1265 and soon afterwards the main church of the Monastery, which was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, was frescoed during that time. Despite the fact that for centuries the monastery was desecrated and remained

exposed to the elements, a very significant portion of the frescoes have survived to the present day and can be seen in the renewed monastery. Not far from Sopocani, there is another important royal foundation from the 13th century, the Monastery of St. George, nicknamed “**St. George’s Pillars or Towers**” or **Djurdjevi Stupovi** in Serbian (although some dispute such translation) due to the presence of the two Romanesque towers that flanked the building. Most of the surviving frescoes have been removed from the ruins of the complex, but this spectacular place, now also a revived Monastery, once again has become a renowned religious center and popular destination for all lovers of history, art and architecture. Just down the hill from Djurdjevi Stupovi, there is the oldest church in all of Serbia dedicated to SS. Apostles Peter and Paul. After a late lunch we will transfer to the **Prishtina** (Kosovo). Overnight: Hotel Ulpiana (or similar) in Gračanica.* *Serbian “č” reads like “ch” (akin to the sound in word “CH-ildren”)*



Day 6, Saturday, September 23, 2023



Meals: Breakfast and Lunch.

Today we are planning to visit several Medieval monuments that are on the UNESCO World heritage list as an important monument of the Byzantine and Romanesque culture.

Visoki Dečani - The monastery was established in a chestnut grove by Serbian King Stefan Uroš III Dečanski in 1327. Its original founding charter is dated to 1330. The following year the king died and was buried at the monastery, which thenceforth became his popular shrine. The construction was continued by his son Emperor Stefan Uroš IV Dušan until 1335, but the wall-painting was not completed until 1350.

The precise date of the foundation of the **Patriarchate of Peč** is unknown. It is thought that while Saint Sava (d. 1235) was still alive that the site became a metoh (land owned and governed by a monastery) of Žiča monastery, then the seat of the Serbian

archbishopric. Archbishop Arsenije I (d. 1266) built the Church of the Holy Apostles, as he wanted the seat of the Serbian Church to be at a more secure location and closer to the center of the country. Soon, around 1250, he ordered it to be decorated. Free time for dinner. Overnight: Hotel Ulipiana (or similar) in Gračanica.



Day 7, Sunday, September 24, 2023

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

Church of our Lady Levishka was build in 1306

under the patronage of the Serbian King Stefan Miljutin. The Church was adorned with **frescoes** at about the same time. During Ottoman rule, the church was converted into a mosque, but frescoes largely survive. In 2006, the church was added to the UNESCO list of the endangered monuments due to threat from the Albanian militias. In 2004, the church greatly suffered during an attack and arson but within ten years after the attack it was partially restored by a team of Italian conservators who did a beautiful job restoring the frescoes and exterior of the building.



Gračanica Convent was constructed on the ruins of an older 13th-century church of the Holy Virgin, which was built on the ruins of a 6th-century early Christian three-naved basilica. On the southern wall of the chapel is written the king's charter, including the following words: "I have seen the ruins and the decay of the Holy Virgin's temple of Gračanica, the bishopric of Lipljan, so I have built it from the ground and painted and decorated it both from inside and outside".

Later in the afternoon we will transfer to Skopje [Skop-YE]. Overnight: Hotel "Holiday Inn" or similar

Day 8, Monday, September 25, 2023

Meals: Breakfast and Lunch

During our first day in the N. Macedonian capital, we will explore several important monuments on the outskirts of the city. Of greatest interest are the churches – three Medieval "jewels" – **Markov Monastery, the Monastery of St. Nikita,** and the **church of Sveti Spas** in the Village of **Kučevishte**. Archangels Michael and Gabriel located nearby, Kučevishte is also of certain interest, albeit built later





than first three edifices. Markov monastery was founded in the first half of the 14 century and the church dedicated to St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki was built in 1346 under King Vukashin. During next 30 years, the church was decorated with beautiful frescoes. Despite the turbulent history, sacred images survive until the present day largely intact.

St. Nikita Monastery is older than Markov Monastery, but as the original place was destroyed, it was restored in the 14th century by the Serbian King Milutin. The church itself is rather small, but contains many unique frescoes of the highest artistic quality. Free time for Dinner. Overnight: Hotel "Holiday Inn" or similar.

Day 9, Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

The Church of St. George in the village of Staro Nagoričane near Kumanovo was originally built in the second half of the 11th century, but expanded and renovated early in the 14th century under the Serbian King Stephan Milutin. The frescoes of the interior come to us from the same period and done by the hand of the medieval iconographers Michael Astrapa and Evtikhije. Our next stop will be at **St. Nicholas monastery** in the village of Psača [PsaCHa]. Very little known about the exact time



of the building of the church, however, from the written sources it is known that by 1354 it was completed. The fresco decoration in Psača, although not as extensive as in some other monuments, ranks among the best of the mid-14th century. It was executed sometime between 1366 and 1371.



After Lunch, we will continue to a remote **Lesnovo Monastery**, yet another medieval foundation, with church and frescoes that date back to mid-14th century. During the Medieval period, Lesnovo was a great ascetic and learning center. **Monastic caves** still could be seen along the gorge the leads to the monastery and manuscripts produced there were found in many ecclesiastical libraries through Eastern Europe and even as far as Russia. The main church decorated with frescoes was inspired by now-lost originals from Constantinople.

At the end of the day we are planning to stop at a local winery, to sample some excellent local wines, accompanied by a wonderful dinner. For an overnight we will arrive to Prilep. Hotel "Crystal Palace" or similar.

Day 10, Wednesday, September 27, 2023

Meals: Breakfast and Lunch.

Prilep is one of the oldest cities in our country, situated in the central part of Northern Macedonia. You will experience incredible spirituality in the art of frescoes, iconostases and architecture in the monasteries and churches on the nearby hills and mountains, with breathtaking views. **St. Nicolas church** - village Manastir. The original church was built in 1095 by Alexius, cousin of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus. In 1266, the abbot Ioannikios name has built the current church, which later, in 1271, was painted by John the deacon.



Monastery complex at Zrze consists of several churches and chapel placed under the same roof. The Monastery is situated at the foothills of Mount Dautica and is one of the oldest monasteries in the country with the oldest cave monastic complex in the Balkans, dating from the 9th century. In addition to these two important monuments, we will visit **Church of St. Nicholas** from the 13th century and **Church of St. Demetrius of Thessalonika** from the 14th century in the village of Varosh. Hotel "Crystal Palace" or similar. Free time for dinner.

Day 11, Thursday, September, 28, 2023

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

This morning we will depart Prilep and drive toward **lake Ohrid**. Our first stop will be at the **Archaeological Park of Heraclea Lyncensis**, an ancient city, founded by Philip II of Macedon in the middle of the 4th century BC. The city was further expanded under the Roman Emperor Hadrian and was an important point along the Via Egnatia route. Under the Byzantines, the city had Christian Bishopric, that came to end along with the destruction and decline of the city of the Slavic





attacks sometime in the sixth or seventh centuries AD. Our next stop will be somewhat “**off the beaten path**” at the village of Kurbinovo. Here we will see the church of the former **Monastery of St. George (if accessible)**. Despite its size, this church is one of the most famous in the greater Balkans, and incredibly important to all students of the Byzantine Art due to the unique **frescoes** in the interior of the church. The holy site was built, frescoed and consecrated some time at the very end of the 12th century.

After crossing the mountain pass we will come to our last stop at **St. Naum Monastery** on the shores of Lake Ohrid. St. Naum’s Monastery was founded early in the 10th century but hardly anything remains from that period. The frescoes that we can see today were done “only” in 1806. Still, St. Naum’s Monastery remains an incredibly important place in Slavic history and literacy. For dinner and overnight we will arrive to the city of Ohrid. Dinner at a traditional restaurant - National Night.

Overnight: Hotel “Belvedere” or similar

Day 12, Friday, September 29, 2023

Meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Ohrid is one of the most historically and culturally significant cities in the Balkans. Its location on the hilly shores of Lake Ohrid gives it a very special feeling and beauty. At the same time due to the presence of many important Ancient and Medieval monuments it was added to the UNESCO World Heritage list back in 1980.



The church of St. Sofia is one of the largest medieval churches on this territory. For a long time, it was the cathedral church (“Great Church”) of the Ohrid Archiepiscopate whose ecclesiastical authority covered the territories up to the river Danube to the north, the Albanian coast to the west, and the Bay of Thessalonica to the east.



The Holy Mother of Christ Perivleptos. According to an inscription on the inner wall of the narthex above the main entrance, the church was built

under the name of the Holy mother of God Most Glorious (Perivleptos) in 1295 by the Byzantine military commander, Progon Zgur, a relative of the Emperor Andronicus II Paleologus. The church was fresco painted by the Mihail and Evtihije.

St. Panteleimon Monastery. St. Clement built the monastery in 893 A.D. near the remains of an old Christian Basilica, on the location from which Christianity was preached in the 3rd century. Clement is one of two famous disciples of Cyril and Methodius whose mission was to spread the Christianity and literacy among the Slavs. It is one of the oldest Slavic monuments of culture and



one of the first Universities in Europe. The current building is a new replica of an ancient church, but the remains of the ancient complex can be seen in the archeological excavations. **The church of St. John in Kaneo** enjoys a picturesque setting right above Lake Ohrid, with some surviving frescoes from the early 15th century. Although frescoes inside are not numerous or impressive, spectacular location of the church on the cliff above the waters of lake Ohrid makes the church an “icon” of Ohrid and all the Northern Macedonia at large.

Free time in Ohrid. Overnight: Hotel “Belvedere” or similar



Day 13, Saturday, September 30, 2023

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

This morning we will transfer **back to Skopje**. We will stop at **the Matka Canyon** for a lunch break and sightseeing. The Matka Canyon or “The womb”, canyon is one of the most magnificent regions in Macedonia. From among numerous Medieval monuments in the area we are going to visit two most impressive ones.

The Church of the **Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos** was built in the 14th century on the foundations of the much older early Christian Basilica. Today, the monastery is inhabited by nuns and is famous among the Macedonian Christians for it’s the beautiful vestments the nuns produce. **The Monastery of St. Andrew** was built in 1388-89. That small and at first glance unpretentious structure is filled with frescos of great artistic value. In the preserved inscription above the west entrance the dedicatory inscription survives. It reads that the church was built in the year 1389 by Andreash, the second-born son of the king Volkašin.

Lunch at Canyon Matka restaurant.

The last stop of our trip will be at **St. Panteleimon Monastery in Gorno Nerezi**, near Skopje. This Monastery was constructed in 1164 and is famous for its spectacular Komnenous-era frescoes. The church was repainted in subsequent ages on several occasions, but in in the 1920’s original frescoes were discovered and restored.

Farewell Dinner.

Overnight: Hotel “Holiday Inn” or similar.

Day 14, Sunday, October 1, 2023

Breakfast at the hotel.

Departure for the airport.



PRICING AND INCLUSIONS:

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Price include:

- Accommodations in "****/*****" hotels along the way (3/4 stars)
- All breakfasts and most lunches and dinners (30 meals)
- Private bus transportation along the way
- Group transfers from and to the airport
- All admissions, according to the schedule
- Professional English speaking [local] tour guides
- English speaking guide/escort during the entire tour

Price does not include:

- Personal health/accident insurance
- Air tickets
- Transportation to and from the airport in if traveling separately from the group
- Private activities: transfers, optional tours, tickets to shows or additional museums.
- Some newly introduced fees that may occur in certain places
- Tips to bus drivers and tour guides (Minimal suggested amount per person is \$3 per day for bus drivers and \$4 for local tour guides. Your generosity will be always greatly appreciated)
- Anything that is not specifically mentioned in "Price includes"

Financial arrangements:

\$2750 USD per person, in double occupancy in a group of 25 participants; **Single supplement: \$400 USD extra.** Please factor that the final price may fluctuate due to the actual number of participants, due to significant difference in exchange rate or may increase due to the continuous fluctuation in oil prices. Our hope is that the price of the tour will remain the same. In any case you'll be informed right away of any possible financial changes or adjustments.

All payments should be made by check to: "Palomnik, LLC" and mailed to 1613 Campus Drive, Vestal, NY 13850. Any returned checks are subject to \$25 fee. For payment with a Credit Card; domestic or international bank wires, please contact Fr. Ilya directly. **A deposit of \$500 is required when you sign up for the trip.** The deposit is non-refundable, unless pilgrimage is cancelled by the organizers due to lack of participation or for some other valid or unforeseen circumstance. To avoid

any money loss, emergency/travel cancellation insurance strongly recommended.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: The deadline for signing up for the trip is June 20, 2023. The entire amount is due 91 days prior to departure, June 20, 2023. Failure to pay in full by June 20, 2023 without written notice of explanation may lead to the cancellation of your participation, with no refund of any previously committed funds.

CANCELLATION POLICY: If you need to cancel after you signed up, penalty is:

- 25% of the tour cost, 91 to 61 days prior to the departure
- 50% of the tour cost, 61 to 31 days prior to the departure
- 100% of the tour cost 31 or fewer days prior to the departure All cancellations must be done in writing as well and sent directly to agent/coordinator - Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky and must be received for reimbursement by the dates shown in the cancellation schedule.

We also have to add that should cancellation or alteration of the program occur due to COVID and associated emergencies, civil disturbances, acts of terrorism, war, natural disaster, and other events of force majeure or acts of God (including threat or fear of same), refunds will be made only to the extent that they are recoverable, and that such cancellation or alteration may result in the total loss of funds paid by participants. It is assumed each participant has reviewed the same with respect to their own comfort level of risk and personal safety. A decision to withdraw from the trip for these reasons or any others will be bound by the same terms of cancellation.

ALTERATIONS TO ITINERARY:

Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky reserves the right to alter, modify or withdraw the itinerary if air schedules and/or events beyond his control deem it necessary. In the event it becomes necessary for the comfort or well-being of the travelers to alter or modify the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to the tour operator and are not grounds for cancellation with refund. Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky assumes no responsibility over any consequences as a result of any participant deviating from the group tour. Because of the

difference in language and customs, it is expected that the traveler will follow the directions of the Tour Director at all times.

Tour Director reserves the right to restrict a person's participation in the group's activities, including exclusion from the group, when, in the opinion of the Director, such action is necessary.

REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:

- A passport with validity for at least six months beyond end of stay

IT IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED THAT YOU:

- Obtain insurance covering medical needs and coverage of personal property and all COVID associated emergencies
- Be aware that financial coverage for all emergency medical and other emergency needs (including those related to COVID hospitalization, treatment, or quarantine) will be your sole responsibility. We will provide all possible logistical and personal assistance, but the financial aspect is your responsibility.
- Act in a manner consistent with the surrounding environment, and follow local protocols established due to COVID pandemic
- Make arrangements to have access to sufficient funds to cover personal needs and unexpected events

- Be aware that the places that we will be visiting may not have the same amenities that you are accustomed to. Medical facilities in some areas may be limited.

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**REGISTRATION FORM:
BYZANTINE SACRED ART TOUR
September 18 – October 1, 2023**

*To register: please complete this registration form and return it along with
your deposit check (\$500.00) made to PALOMNIK, LLC to the following address:*

Palomnik, LLC, 1613 Campus Drive, Vestal, NY 13850.

Alternative methods of payment are possible, please check for details

Please write "BALKANS 2023" on the memo line.

Full Name (exactly as in your passport):

Date of Birth (day/month/year):

Nationality, Passport # :

Issue and expirations date (day/month/year):

Address:

City, State, Zip/Postal Code

Home phone:

Alt. phone and Email:

Emergency Contact Information (Name, Phone, Relation):

Medical restrictions:

Dietary restrictions:

Would you prefer single accommodations at additional costs specified in the itinerary?

Would you prefer to make your own flight reservations, or would you like us to help you to find the best airfare?

Please let us know if there is anything else that we should know in order to make your travel experience more comfortable and pleasant:

*Your signature below confirms that you have read the itinerary and agree to abide by Terms and
Conditions that accompany the itinerary.*

NAME/SIGNATURE:

DATE: