



At the beginning of XIV century, King Milutin relocated the capital of Serbia to Prizren (Kosovo) and went to conque Byzantium's southern territories. A five year-old Byzantine princess, Simonida who, as the guarantor of peace, was married to Milutin, brought to Serbia Constantinople's education, ceremonies, manner of dressing and food culture, and the Serbian culture transformed in a direct contact with Imperial Byzantium. OVO AND METOHIA Rise of Serbian Empire

The powerful empire of the Serbian Middle Ages fell after Emperor Dušan's death. After the Turks had penetrated into the Balkan Peninsula, the state center relocated to the west, to the valley of the Morava. However, besides the chaotic political circumstances, in Prince Lazar's and his son Despot Stefan's state, culture unusually flourished.

MORAVIAN SERBIA

On European Defensive Wall

The thriving of the Serbian monasteries started with Stefan Nemanja, the founder of the Serbian state, in the second half of XII century. In the vicinity of the first residence, the town of Ras, the monasteries Sv. Nikola (St. Nicholas) in Kuršumlija, Sv. Bogorodica (Our Lady) in Toplica and Đurđevi stupovi (George's Pillars) emerged one after another; however, in later eras, they were unfortunately heavily stricken. As a church builder, Nemanja laid the foundations for a centuries-long rulers' tradition, and his last endowment, the monastery of Studenica, was a great paragon future builders identified with

MONASTERIES -

BACKBONE OF IDENTITY As the Byzantine power weakened in XIII century, an opportunity arose for Nemania's successors to build the state and cultural identities of their country. In Žiča, Stefan the First-Crowned was crowned king, and Sava Nemanjić made the monastery the center of the independent Serbian Archbishopric. The idea of an ideal Christian blend of the Church and the state was embodied in the monasteries – they became the spiritual, political and cultural centers, and, there, the most important pages of the Serbs' history were being written.



Although Fruška gora hills in Srem are by far known for its beautiful nature and

noble sorts of grapes used for producing

the best quality wine, it is, first of all,

known for its monasteries.

EAST-WEST CONNECTION In XIII century, located at a critical

juncture of roads, influences and interests, Serbia created its national art, which resulted from the blend of the influences of the Romanesque and Byzantine arts. The originality of the blend is manifested in the Bogorodična crkva (Our Lady's Church) in Studenica, permeated with the Romanesque style in the decoration of the marble façades and in the sculpture on the portals and the windows; however, its interiority is spiritually Byzantine and the walls are painted with frescoes of surreal beauty.

In the picturesque gorge of the West Morava, on the precipitous slopes of

as the Serbian Holy Mountain.

Ovčar and Kablar mountains, there is a

unique community of monasteries known

PAINTING PERFECTION The monumental Beli Anđeo (White

Angel) in the monastery of Mileševa is the most beautiful example of that extraordinary style based on harmony and the classical ideals of beauty. In Sopoćani, built a little later, that style reached perfection. The solemn and rejoicing Sopoćani figures exude internal beauty and dignified expression. That is the antique concept of art, a sort of Renaissance celebrating the beauty of human nature. Sopoćani is the Sistine Chapel of the Serbian Middle Ages.



A TOUCH OF GOTHIC

The most beloved Serbian Queen, Jelena Anžujska (Helen Anjou), was the one to bring the touch of the Gothic style to Serbia. The French princess, married to King Uroš I, is remembered to have been a great benefactress and the first female donator in Serbia. Her endowment Gradac was built on the example of Studenica, with the interweaving of the French Gothic style elements.

IN THE SPIRIT OF

BYZANTIUM In his life, King Milutin built more than 40 endowments. Throughout Kosovo, famous builders from Constantinople and Thessaloniki built churches in the form of a cross in a square, with one or five domes, whose exteriority was richly decorated with stones and bricks. The masterpiece of that style is Gračanica, a harmonious and dynamic building making you feel it is lightweight and sky-rocketing, where the Byzantine idea of the church as a picture of universe is perfectly realized. King Milutin brought distinguished Byzantine painters Michael and Euthychios to decorate his endowments. Their extraordinary frescoes in Bogorodica Ljeviška, as well as in other royal endowments, not at least lag behind the most beautiful



MONASTERIES – CENTRES OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE After Milutin's death, conquering continued in the south and. simultaneously, estate-owners and ecclesiastical circles abruptly gained greater power. They became new donators and built more and more monasteries. Pećka patrijaršija was the spiritual center of the state and also the place where the Serbian state reached the peak of its fame – in Peć, Stefan Dušan was crowned Emperor and Serbia became an empire. Throughout Dušan's vast empire, monasteries were also significant educational and cultural centers. There, books were

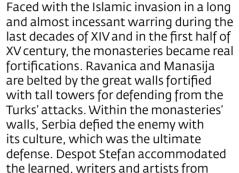
monastery of Dečani, there was the

Miroslav's Evangel, written at the coul f Prince Miroslav, Nemanja's brother,

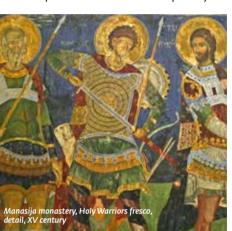
und 1180, is decorated with luxurious

niatures, vignettes, and the Romanio

famous school for icon-painting.



the learned, writers and artists from conquered countries. In Manasija, the Resava Manuscript School worked hard, and, there, the despot himself wrote his "Slovo ljubve", one of the most beautiful poems of the Serbian medieval poetry.



41° 52' and 46° 11' North latitude

18° 06′ and 23° 01′ East longitude

7,120,666 residents

Cyrillic and Latin

Dinar (RSD)

FAMOUS DECORATIVE SCULPTURES

The Moravian churches Lazarica, Ravanica, Ljubostinja and Kalenić are a new type of church, where decorative sculpture had a significant place. On the portals, windows, rosettes and arches, interweaving bands and fantastic animals as well as human figures come one after another. The Moravian ornament is a brand novelty and a proof of the epoch's creative power

LAVISH PAINTING OF A LYRICAL ATMOSPHERE

On the Morava School's frescoes, the great Byzantine painting tradition blazed for the last time. Manasija's and Kalenić's elegant aristocratic painting exudes lyrical atmosphere and sophistication. Divine clothes, precious jewels, shining vessels and unusual hoods following the fashion of that time transformed the walls of the Moravian churches into a historical document for understanding the spirit of the time which disappeared for good with the fall of Smederevo, in 1459, and the decline of the Serbian medieval state.

Humid continental, with

and snowy winters with

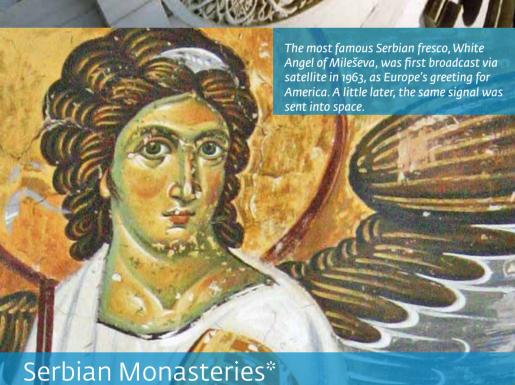
temperatures ranging from

CET, GMT+1 hour (March –

October, GMT+2 hours)

warm summers with temperatures up to 33°C

-5°C to 10°C.



praying and pilgrimage became national In Serbia, there are more than two hundred monasteries, 54 of which have been declared cultural monuments, while Stari Ras (Old Ras) with Sopoćani, Studenica and the medieval Serbian monasteries in Kosovo and Metohija, namely Dečani, Gračanica, Pećka patrijaršija (Patriarchate of Peć) and Bogorodica Ljeviška (Our Lady of Ljeviš) have been inscribed on the UNESCO world cultural heritage list. For their superior cultural and spiritual values,

heritage and the whole world. Hidden in the wooded areas, under the cliffs or on the mountain rivers' sources, the monasteries enshrine the serenity of monastic life. By them, refectories, temporary lodgings and repositories were built, and stone walls belt them. Yet, historically, the Serbian monasteries have not isolated themselves from the rest of the world. They have always been places for people to gather, so, today as

In the Middle Ages, monasteries were very significant: since the European culture was developing under the aegis of the church, those places for

well, their gates welcome all visitors of

good will.

that heritage is, at the same time,

a permanent value of the European

anchorages and hotbeds for education and art. Knowing well their role and significance, all Serbian rulers without exception, starting with the Nemanjić family, built numerous monasteries. Instead of building sumptuous palaces, these fighters for high principles built monasteries as their pledge for the future. Their endowments testify to their donators' faith, perseverance and devotion to spiritual values, and also to the creative energy of that era.



you visit Žiča, Studenica, Gradac, ırđevi Stupovi or Sopoćani, you will ind yourself on the European "Tranromanica" route which links Europe's Romanic heritage. On that important cultural route, which makes its promoon possible, the Serbian monasteries are a must exactly because of their origi nal contribution to the European culture neritage. **www.transromanica.com**

Although Fruška gora hills in Srem are by far known for its beautiful nature

FRUŠKA GORA

Serbian Holy Mountain

and noble sorts of grapes used for producing the best quality wine, it is, first of all, known for its monasteries, whose building started after the Great Migration of the Serbs in 1690, when the Serbs moved to Hungary and, exiled by the Turks, sheltered there. Fruška gora is frequently said to be the Serbian Holy Mountain because on its slopes there are numerous monasteries and the spiritual center of exiled Serbs was

established there - Metropolitanate of Karlovci. In Fruška gora's monasteries, the spirituality and culture of the Serbs were preserved through centuries: also. they were an important political center and the symbol of the national resistance to the Turkish Empire.

AUTHENTIC BAROQUE STYLE

In the monasteries Krušedol, Vrdnik or

Novo Hopovo (New Hopovo), there is evidence of a great artistic renaissance that emerged when it met with the West-European culture. In Fruška gora, the authentic baroque style was incepted, the first printing shops opened and Serbian graphics was born. Very tall and luxurious baroque bell-towers were built to churches, and baroque iconostases, big and richly carved wooden separation walls covered with icons painted by the best Serbian painters of that time inside them. While opening towards the European culture, there was a vivid remembrance of the golden era of the Nemanjić family epoch, so, the specific style of the Serbian baroque came to surface in that blend of the modern and the traditional. For all that, the seventeen preserved Fruška gora's monasteries have a great significance in Serbia's cultural and historical heritage.



Harbor of Serbian Culture

The monasteries were being built in XIV and XV centuries, in the turbulent times when the Turkish Empire put the Serbian territory under control. Retreating from the Turkish conquerors, Serbian monks found a solitary and isolated spot in the gorge and started building the monasteries. Tradition has it that there were more than forty monasteries on that small space, and today there are ten: Blagoveštenje (Annunciation), Vavedenje (Presentation of Mary), Vaznesenje (Ascension), Ilinje, Jovanje, Nikolje, Preobraženje (Transfiguration), Sretenje (Presentation of Jesus at the Temple), Uspenje (Assumption) and Svete Trojice (The Holy Trinity) monasteries.

CUSTODIANS OF SPRITUALITY

For centuries, those monasteries preserved the orthodox spirituality and national awareness of the Serbs; also, refugees hid there, in the gorge and nearby caves. Cultural and artistic activities were not discontinued in the Serbian Holy Mountain in the most difficult times, either. In XVI century, schools for copying books worked there, churches were decorated with frescoes, icons were painted and valuable objects were designed.

OVČAR-KABLAR GORGE REPOSITORIES



Repositories emerged at the same time with the foundation of the monasteries since, from the distant past, donators and numerous pilgrims gifted valuable artistic and liturgical objects. Today, in the monasteries' repositories' china cabinets, visitors can see the monasteries' relics, evangels, chalices, gold crosses, ecclesiastic embroidery,

valuable objects.

Gems of Ecclesiastical Art



silver-plated icons and many other

LIFE DEVOTED TO PRAYER AND WORK

Ithough mostly built in the medieval epoch, the monasteries are rather active today, too. Monks livina there live according to the ancient monastic rule: pray and work. That is why serenity and happiness coming out of the harmonious blend of the spiritual and the hysical permeate them. Also, they are nguished by the familiar hospitalit of orthodox monasticism from the Holy Nountain to Russia, so they will host piritual, such as books, icons and praye eads to physical, such as honey, wine, nedicinal teas and nice fabrics. Enterin ı monastery in Serbia makes you feel as you were stepping out from the pacey ing of the real world and stepping into iving antiquity which, today as well,



stifies that eternity is not far from us.



Religious holidays in Serbia are marked according to Julian calendar. January 7: Christmas Orthodox Easter: from Good Friday to

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Tuesday – Sunday 10:00 - 22:00



or publisher: Marija Labović, acting director ditor: Smiljana Novičić ext: Jasmina Milovanović Text. Jasmina Milovanović Translation: Slobodan Rakić Language editor: Russell Stenhouse Design: Marijana Markoska Photographs: Dragan Bosnić, Branko Jova Vladimir Sretenović Mapping board: Merkur SV Map consultant: Olgica Miljković PhD Print: Službeni glasnik, Belgrade 1º edition in English, 2017 Volume: 10.000 ISBN 978-86-6005-531-8 o1 broj 034-01-1-58/2017 0T14.06.2017.



Belgrade

88.509 km

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Konak is a part of monastery complex, intended for everyday accommodation of monks. Some monastery complexes today provide accommodation for

E**ntry fees are not charged** at nonasteries in Serbia.

a) Манастири - Србија - Географске карте COBISS.SR-ID 248668172

271.222(497.11)-523.4/.6(084.3) MILOVANOVIĆ, Jasmina, 1972-Serbia [Kartografska građa] : monasteries map / [text Jasmin Milovanović ; translation Slobodan Rakić ; photographs Draga Bosnic ... [et al.] - 1st ed. in English. - 1:800 000. - Belgrade : National Tourisr Organisation of Serbia, 2017 (Belgrade : Službeni glasnik). - 1 geogr. karta : u bojama ; na listu 70 x 50 cm, presavijena na 21 x 11 cm Tiraž 10.000. - Sadrži: legendu, spisak manastira i kratke tekstove srpskoj srednjevekovnoj umetnosti sa fotografijama. ISBN 978-86-6005-531-8

nasteries presented in this publication are Orthodox. More information on facilities of other confessions are availabl vww.serbia.travel, where you can also download our publication "Cultural Treasures of Serbia".

