

heritage in the Kosovo area and are on display.

Acknowledgments:

Special thanks to the volunteers Ms. Nadia Chuk for editing, to Mrs. Bosa Jelaca for the loan of her "Gračanica" watercolour and Mrs. Svetlana Ratkov for the help with display.

Books on display are from the Serbian Heritage Museum Reference Library, "Gračanica" Library and from the private collection of Svetlana Miskovic. Unmarked artifacts and jewellery are from the Museum collection.

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Serbian Heritage Museum

6770 Tecumseh Road East

Windsor, Ontario

N8T 1E6

Tel: (519) 944-4884

Fax: (519) 974-3963

Groups are welcome by appointment

Visits may include viewing of fresco paintings at the Serbian Orthodox Church "Gračanica". Light lunches served to groups of 15 or more, upon request.

*Serbian Heritage Museum
of
Windsor*

**MONUMENTS
OF**



Gračanica ■

KOSOVO

Exhibit: Aug. 16 - Oct. 23, 1998

Monday-Friday: 10am - 4pm

Sunday: 2 pm - 4 pm

INTRODUCTION

This exhibit describes the Serbian heritage in the area known as Raska in the past and as Kosovo in modern history.

It presents three main churches built in the Roman style and under some western architectural influence: Studenica, 1183, founded by Nemanja, Sopoćani, 1264, founded by his son Uros I, and Decani, 1327, founded by Stefan the First Crowned, also known as Stefan of Decani named by his foundation. Two other churches: Petar's Church considered to be built in the 9th c. in Novi Pazar and Djurdjevi Stubovi 11th c. Built in stunning white and pink marble Decani monastery is the best example of the glorious times of the Nemanjic dynasty and its excellent sense for the monumental architecture. Above mentioned churches have horizontal quality of medieval basilica with well developed sense for structural and aesthetic values.

The most significant monastery considered as a first of its kind is the mother church "Studenica". Nemanja founded it north of the Kosovo area. Magnificent in its beauty, it is a complex of a few churches, as is the case with most of the Serbian monasteries.

A Byzantine style followed the previous period. The best examples of this monumental architectural heritage are Gracanica 1310, Pec's Patriarchy 13-14th c. and Ljevis Mother of God 1310. Easily recognized by the choice of building material this style is significant in the way it is layered with different colours of bricks and interweaving domes into a decorative configuration of churches.

This area is the heart of Serbian land. It is a grand valley between Shara, Kopaonik and a few other mountains. Throughout the history, this area was the main road connecting East and West. It has been a place of many battles: in 1073 young Bodin was proclaimed a tzar of Prizren and during a rebellion against Byzantine he was killed around 1116. In 1168 zupan Nemanja won a battle in which he secured not only his position but established the first official capital town - Ras, uniting the lands where Serbs settled into an organized independent Serbian state - Raska.

When the Osmanly Turks invaded Asia Minor reaching the shores of Europe, they invaded Balkan Peninsula with a fury. In 1389, a fierce battle took place on the Kosovo field, leaving Serbs without their leader, Prince Lazar Hrebeljanovic.

state, land and freedom. That year marks the end of Serbian emancipation and the growth of the medieval Raska state. In 1448, Hunjadi as the Hungarian army leader, furthered the defence of the Balkan peninsula. He was also defeated by the Turks. Austrians fought the Turks for the same reason losing the battle in 1689. A great Serbian migration under Arsenije Carnojevic, the archbishop, took place the next year.

In 1809, Karadjordje, the founder of Karadjordjevic's dynasty, attempted to conquer back Kosovo by building a fortress near Podujevo. In 1912, King Petar I Karadjordjevic liberated Kosovo during the battle on Merdar and Serbia resumed its existence. In 1927 after 523 years the first Orthodox Liturgy was served on the Kosovo field at the spot where Prince Lazar was killed.

Events inspired Nemanjics and other known and unknown Serbs to build over 250 churches and monasteries in this area. By that they expressed gratitude, the love of God, the Holy Mother of God and their saints thus continuing their cultural mission. These assembly of churches and monasteries are relative to the Serbian