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Departement of Ancient Studies

ITER ADRIATICUM

24 September – 10 October 2020

Roman Aqueduct near Skopje; North-Macedonia



Countries & Cities visited; * indicates overnight stop

Croatia: *Pula;*Plitvice; Sibenik; *Trogir; Salona; Mostar
Bosnia-Herzegovina: *Sarajevo; Visegrad; Studenica
Serbia: *Banja Luka (2)
Kosovo: *Pristina
North-Macedonia: Skopje; *Ohrid
Albania *Tirana
Bosnia- Herzegovina: *Budva (2);Centinje
Montenegro: Kotor
Croatia: *Zagreb; *Dubrovnik; *Split

On this tour we concentrate on countries next or close to the Eastern part of the Adriatic (that long stretch of the Mediterranean between Italy to the west and the Balkan countries to the East.) This area offers not only spectacular scenery, but also cultural highlights—a once in a lifetime travel experience. Our tour includes Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, North- Macedonia & Albania. And, as so often happens, the ancient Greeks and Romans were there before us—so we'll try to see and understand what drew them to this beautiful part of the world.

Our tour will include visits to 12 UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Croatia has been an EU member since 2013; Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo & Albania are looking to be admitted which means that one Schengen visum (for Croatia) will allow us entry into all the countries visited on our tour.

Day 1: 24 September 2020

Cape Town to Zagreb

We meet at the Cape Town International Airport early in the afternoon for our direct, overnight flight to Istanbul and from there we fly directly to Zagreb in Croatia where we arrive early in the morning.

Day 2: 25 September

Croatia: Zagreb to Rovinj 250 km (± 3 hours) to Pula 35 (45 minutes) [285 km]

On our arrival at Franjo Tudman Airport (Zagreb airport), the largest and busiest airport in Croatia, we meet our local guide and immediately head out for the Istrian coast towards Pula. On our way we have the opportunity to stretch our legs a bit and stroll through Rovinj (also known as little Venice) where we have lunch and try not to miss the opportunity for a short visit to the Church of St Euphemia. This church is considered one of the most beautiful Baroque-Venetian style churches in Istria and dominates the old town section where it is situated. We drive to the Pula vicinity and check into our hotel.

Overnight Pula/Medulin

Dinner & breakfast

Hotel Park Plaza Belvedere 4*

Day 3: 26 September

Croatia: Pula to Plitvice 230 km (3 ½ hours) [230 km

This morning we are ready for our first full day in Croatia. We visit Pula's first-century Roman amphitheatre (Arena) where once Gladiator tournaments took place and where 23 000 concert-goers now enjoy summer performances in this impressive space (132 m X 105 m).

Pula Arena (amphitheatre) built in 27 BCE – 68 CE, the best preserved ancient monument in Croatia



We pass through the old town of Pula to visit the **temple of Augustus**, which is remarkably well preserved as well, considering its more than 2000 years since the Emperor Augustus had it erected.

After our visit to these ancient monuments, we head inland to **Plitvice** one of the most beautiful national parks in Europe and a **UNESCO World natural heritage site**.

Plitvice upper waterfall



Overnight Plitvice

Dinner & breakfast

Hotel Jezero 3*

Day 3: 27 September

Croatia: Plitvice to the Dalmatian Coast & Sibenik (170 km; 1 ¾ hour) via Rogoznica (40 km; 45 minutes) to Trogir (26 km; 30 minute) [240 km]

After an early breakfast and a proper hike in the national park, we drive along the Dinarian Alps to the Dalmatian Coast aiming for the seaside towns of Sibenik and Trogir. In **Sibenik**, we visit the Cathedral of St James (**UNESCO World heritage site**), which took about 100 years to build, from 1431 to 1535. In this cathedral the influence of Northern Italy, Dalmatia and Tuscany is clearly to be seen. The three architects overseeing the building succeeded in completing a structure that illustrated the successful fusion of Gothic and Renaissance art to a remarkable degree. The cathedral also forms part of the more than 1000 year-old cultural heritage of the city and the coast.

After lunch we drive further down the coast to **Trogir** with its 2300 years of continuous urban tradition. It is the best-preserved Romanesque-Gothic complex in all of Central Europe including the Adriatic coast.

Trogir – a city with an urban tradition continuously maintained for 2300 years



The city was founded by the Greeks in 300 BCE. We visit the oldest part of the city (Old Town, enclosed by medieval walls) on foot. Old Town as a whole was declared a **UNESCO World Cultural heritage site** in 1997. Most of the important buildings of Trogir are found around the Johannes Paulus II (Ivana Pavla II) Plaza, for instance the Cathedral of St Laurence (Sveti Lovre), the Clock Tower of St Sebastian, the City-Loggia, the St Barbara Church and the Cipiko Palace. The St Laurence Cathedral took over 400 years to build, including the 47 metre high Clock Tower and the impressive main entrance. We visit the Old Town on foot. We check in at our exceptionally comfortable hotel to consolidate some of our experiences up to date.

Overnight **Trogir**

Dinner & breakfast

Hotel Ola 4* or Brown Beach Hotel 4*

Day 4: 28 September

Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina: Trogir to Salona (22 km), via Mostar 195 km (2 ½ hours) to Sarajevo (130 km 2 hours) [325 km]

After breakfast we leave for the ancient city of **Salona**, once the biggest Roman city in the Adriatic, at present the largest archaeological site on the Adriatic coast. It is alleged to be the birthplace of the emperor Diocletian. Salona was first settled by the Dalmati tribe, followed by the Greeks who also established Tragurion (Trogir). Salona was connected to Trogir by the oldest road in Dalmatia the *Via Munita*. Between 40 and 33 BCE Salona became the Roman colony *Colonia Martia Ivliia Salona*. Under Augustus it became the capital of Dalmatia. The city was named after the salt pans once located there. Salona had an amphitheater, a theater, a forum, thermae, the capitolium, numerous basilicas and other structures and facilities. Today not much remains apart from the Manastirine necropolis where Christian martyrs were buried.

Salona's Amphitheatre built in the 2nd century



After our visit to Salona, we drive to **Mostar**, known as “the window to the Orient” and the cultural capital of the **Herzegovina** region. Mostar is situated on the Neretva River and was named after the bridge keepers (*mostari*) who in medieval times guarded the Stari Most (Old Bridge) over the Neretva. We visit the Old Bridge, built by the Ottomans in the 16th century, and one of Bosnia and Herzegovina's most recognizable landmarks. It is a symbol of peace and also a **UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site**.

Mostar's Old Bridge over the Neretva



We continue the drive along the impressive mountainous region of southern Bosnia-Herzegovina on our way to the capital, **Sarajevo**, encircled by the Dinarian Alps.

The Latin Bridge in Sarajevo where Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated



Sarajevo is a city with a long history. On its Latin Bridge, Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated, which event triggered World War I. The bridge is one of the oldest Ottoman bridges in Sarajevo. The city hall (Vjecnica) is still one of the most memorable examples of architecture from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. If we have time, we explore the Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque, built in 1532, and the largest historical mosque in the country as well as an excellent example of Ottoman architecture.

We should also try some *ćevapi*, the national dish of Bosnia. This consists of grilled minced beef, inside a flatbread with onions and sauce, the dish dating from the Ottoman occupation of Bosnia. Nowadays, it is popular and affordable street-food. We take the time to stroll through Sarajevo's Old Town, Baščaršija, the most historic part of the city, dating from the 15th century. Today it is still the cultural centre of the city,

with its narrow streets and small shops, reflecting the mix between Eastern European and Turkish influence that is so typical of Sarajevo. We should also not miss the main square and its very special fountain.

Overnight in **Sarajevo**

Dinner & breakfast

Hotel President 4*

Day 5: 29 September

Bosnia-Herzegovina to Serbia: Sarajevo via Visegrad (115 km; 2 hours) to Studenica (180 km; 3 hours) to Vrnjacka Banja (80 km; 1 ½ hours) [375 km]

Today we drive through spectacular countryside. We leave Sarajevo and its mountains and aim for **Visegrad** where we cross the bridge over the Drina (**UNESCO world heritage site**) into Serbia.

Visegrad - Bridge over the Drina



The Drina is known because of the Nobel-prize winner Ivo Andric's novel *Bridge on the Drina*. The novel itself is a fascinating study where the bridge functions as a metaphor for a number of interpretational possibilities, depending from which cultural context the story is read. The river Drina has always been historically significant. Initially it was a Roman border then it separated Ottoman Bosnia from Serbia and subsequently Austro-Hungarian Bosnia from Serbia.

From Visegrad we go to **Studenica** where we visit another **UNESCO world cultural heritage** site, the Studenica Monastery, where, depending on timing, we may be able to enjoy a late lunch (own account) at the Monastery. The lunch usually consists of the typical bread-cheese & wine combination from this region. This 12th century monastery is an excellent example of life in medieval Serbia. Construction was started in 1196, by Stefan Nemanja and the complex became a centre of political, cultural and spiritual life. The Monastery is best-known for its Byzantine paintings dating from the 13th and 14th century

Studenica Monastery – one of the largest and richest Serb Orthodox monasteries



After our visit, we continue our journey to one of the best-known spa centres in Serbia, **Vrnjacka Banja**.

The springs from this region were popular in ancient times. Here the Romans built the health resort *Aquae Orcinae*. The hot mineral springs were enjoyed by both legionnaires, who had to maintain Roman presence throughout the Empire, as well as the aristocrats who soon learned of the curative benefits associated with the springs. The remains of some of the antique pools are still to be seen. At our hotel several optional spa possibilities are available that could be explored and enjoyed, some of which are included in our overnight stay. By the way, the word SPA comes from the Latin *salus per aquam* or *sanus per aquam* (health through water).

Overnight in **Vrnjacka Banja**

Dinner & breakfast

Hotel Slatina 4*

Day 6: 30 September

Serbia: Vrnjacka Banja to Aleksandrovacka (45 km; 1 hour) [90]

Today we relax. After a late breakfast, we go to the [Aleksandrovacka zupa](#), which is close to Vrnjacka Banja for wine tasting at The Aleksandrovacka Museum of winemaking and viticulture on one of the largest vineyards in the vicinity. Vineyards have been around in this area since Roman times. We will taste wines made from Serbian grape varieties (tamjanika & prokupac) as well as explore some traditional 'vineyard villages', in the area. We return to Vrnjacka Banja and further enjoy some of the spa options available at our hotel or for local exploring on foot. The town is well worth exploring. It is one of the most attractive recreation centres in Serbia. Surrounding the town are a number of UNESCO protected medieval buildings that remind us of the long history of civilization centred in this area.

The bridge of Love in Vrnjacka Banja



Overnight in **Vrnjacka Banja** Dinner & breakfast **Hotel Slatina 4***

Day 7: 1 October

Serbia to Kosovo to Macedonia: Vrnjacka Banja via Niš (130 km; 1 ¾ hours) to Pristina (capital of Kosovo) 300 km (4 hours) [410]

It is mostly a driving day today – through spectacular scenery. After a leisurely breakfast our first aim is the city of **Niš**, birthplace of Constantine the Great. We also visit [Niška Banja](#), a spa just a few kilometres southeast to the city. (We visit the spa as a site and not as another spa experience.) The Romans built a resort here which had a bath and two pools. Many centuries later, people still enjoy the water and mineral-rich mud baths. The water temperature is between 36 - 38°C and claimed to be beneficial for a number of conditions from coronary issues to cellulite (!)

Further south is the impressive Suva Planina mountains (1800 metres high) where fragments of the Roman *via militaris*, connecting Singidunum (Belgrade) and Constantinople (Istanbul) can still be seen on its slopes.

Highest point of Suva Planina



We pass the Jelašnica Gorge as well as visit the [Ripaljka waterfall](#). We meander through a large part of [Kosovo](#) on our way to **Pristina**, Europe's newest capital city.

In Pristina we visit the Serbian Orthodox [Gracanica Monastery](#) (**UNESCO world heritage site**) and explore the small city on foot.

Gracanica Monastery established in 1321



Overnight in **Pristina**

Dinner & breakfast

Hotel Pristina 4*

Day 8: 2 October

Kosovo to Macedonia: Pristina to Skopje (capital of North-Macedonia) 100 km, 1 ¾ hours) and Lake Ohrid 180 km (2 ½ hours) [280 km]

The capital of Macedonia, **Skopje**, is not far from Pristina. We leave for Skopje after an early breakfast. On the way to Skopje we pass the village of Vizbegovo where we stop to visit the Roman Aqueduct (only 2 km away from central Skopje). This is one of the last remaining aqueducts in the Balkan. The aqueduct blends in marvellously with its environment.

The Roman Aqueduct close to Skopje



This impressive Aqueduct is about 386 meters long and about 5 meters high, with its 54 arches in excellent condition. It is one of the most important archaeological sites in North-Macedonia. It is also one of the single most impressive cultural heritage sites in the region. Only two other aqueducts remain in the region: the Diocletianus-aqueduct in Croatia (near Split) and the Bar aqueduct in Montenegro. All of these (including the Skopje aqueduct) were part of a larger water supply serving the region.

We continue to make our way to **Skopje** where we explore the Old city with its small streets on foot. We cross the Stone bridge (built in the 15th century on Roman foundations) over the Vardar river. Skopje has a large number of monuments celebrating rather unique aspects of life. The most famous statue (*Warrior on a horse*) is supposed to represent Alexander the Great. It is situated in Macedonia Square in the central part of Skopje. The Macedonian Gate (*Porta Macedonia*) is a triumphal arch leading to Macedonia Square. Skopje is also the birthplace of Mother Teresa and her actual birthplace is located near the Porta Macedonia. We pass large government buildings as well as the Grand Bazaar on the opposite side of the river to Macedonia Square.

In the afternoon, we leave for **Lake Ohrid** where we enjoy a long, late-afternoon walk next to the beautiful blue-green lake. This same colour is seen in the frescoes of the churches of Ohrid (**UNESCO world heritage site**). Lake Ohrid is one of Europe's deepest lakes and is shared between North Macedonia and Albania.T

Lake Ohrid linking North Macedonia and Albania



Overnight **Lake Ohrid**

Dinner & breakfast

Hotel Belvedere 4*

Day 9: 3 October

North-Macedonia to Albania: Ohrid to Tirana, capital of Albania 130 km; 2 ½ hours [130 km]

On foot, we explore the Old City of Ohrid, visiting some UNESCO World heritage churches, before we leave for **Tirana**, the capital of Albania. We take our time to explore the city and also visit the Skanderbeg Plaza and the Et'hem-Bey Mosque. Skanderbeg Plaza is the main square, named after an Albanian national hero, whose statue dominates the plaza. On the square we find the opera house, visit the National History Museum and if time permits, the Et'Hem Bey Mosque. We will also visit Mount Dajti to admire the view of Tirana from on high. We reach this 1 600 meter peak by cable car—not climbing all the steps!

Mount Dajti in the Skanderbeg Mountains in Albania



Overnight in **Tirana**

Dinner & breakfast

Hotel International 4*

Day 10: 4 October

Albania to Montenegro: Tirana to Podgorica (150 km; 2 ¾ hours) via Cetinje (40 km; 40 minutes) to Budva on the coast (30 km; 40 minutes) [220 km]

We take our leave of Tirana and Albania and, after a good breakfast, we start driving towards **Podgorica**, the capital of Montenegro, where we start our visit by exploring two very different bridges – the new Millenium Bridge spanning the Morača River and the “Old stone bridge” -- which might have been there since Roman times--and which spans the Ribnica River. After lunch we take time to visit one of the most spectacular lakes in Europe in the Lake Skadar National Park. Lake Skadar is the largest lake in Southern Europe.

Lake Skadar/Lake Scutari



After our visit to the National Park, we drive to **Cetinje**, a small city founded in the 1500s and the original capital of Montenegro. The city lies on a plateau in the midst of inaccessible mountain peaks. Its oldest building is the Vlaska Church (Court Church), dating from 1450. After a late afternoon coffee in Cetinje, we leave for **Budva**, where we spend two nights, giving us some time to explore this charming city on our own.

Overnight in **Budva**

Dinner & breakfast

Falkensteiner Hotel Montenegro 4*

Day 11: 5 October

Montenegro: Budva to Kotor 22 km (35 minutes) [44 km]

After breakfast, we drive from Budva to **Kotor** over the Serpentine Road – for many people the most scenic route in Europa. We explore the Old Town of **Kotor**, considered one of the best-preserved medieval walled-towns on the Mediterranean. The walls are up to 20 meters high and over a thousand years old. We also visit the walls above the town (**UNESCO world heritage site**). They are more than 4 km in length and are to 250 meters high. At the top of the ramparts is the fortress of Saint Ivan. There are 1426 steps that will need to be ‘conquered’. We also visit the cathedral of Saint Tryphone (Sveti Tripun), built in 1166, in Old Town. It is the most important medieval monument in Kotor.

Walled medieval city of Kotor



If we have time and the weather co-operates, we include an optional boat trip on **Boka Bay**.

The whole of Boka Bay has played its part in early Greek civilization and Roman times and the influence of the Byzantine and Venetian eras indicate the enduring importance of this strategically placed area.

Overnight in **Budva**

Dinner & breakfast

Falkensteiner Hotel Montenegro 4*

Day 12: 6 October

Montenegro to Croatia: Kotor to Perast (35 km; 50 min) to Dubrovnik 80 km (1 ¼ hours) [115 km]

On the way to Dubrovnik, we first do a bit of exploring in **Perast** (**UNESCO world heritage site**) one of the best preserved small Baroque cities on the Adriatic, containing 16 Baroque palaces, 17 Catholic churches, many towers (not walls) and even Orthodox buildings.

Perast on the Boka Bay



We continue a little further up the coast to **Dubrovnik** (Ragusa in Latin), known as one of the most beautiful cities in the world, not only on the Adriatic, where it is known as the ‘Pearl of the Adriatic’. It therefore makes good sense that this 800 year old city as a whole is also listed as a **UNESCO world heritage site**. In

Dubrovnik we visit the Old Town (**UNESCO world heritage site**), the old port, the Franciscan Monastery, as well as the old city wall and we just enjoy the opportunity to experience this wonderful city.

Old Town of Dubrovnik



Overnight in **Dubrovnik**

Dinner & breakfast

Hotel Valamar Argosy 4*

Day 13: 7 October

Croatia: Dobrovnik to Split 230 km; 3 hours [230 km]

After an early breakfast, our road leads north, keeping the Adriatic on our left on our way to **Split**. We start our visit to Split by walking through the Old Town. We visit the remains of the Roman Emperor Diocletian's immense palace (**UNESCO world heritage site**), especially the four impressive 'gates' [the golden, silver, iron and bronze gates; *porta aurea, argentea, ferrea & aenea*], as well as the Cathedral of St Dominus (Diocletian's mausoleum) and Jupiter's Temple. Split has an excellent archaeological museum which is well worth a visit. Salona (Split) was founded by Gaius Julius Caesar as the Roman colony *Colonia Marita Julia Salona* in the first century BCE.

Reconstruction of the Palace of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (305 CE)



The Emperor Diocletian originally came from this area and about 300 years after its founding, built his impressive palace here, where the Croatian city Split later developed. Diocletian started building his palace in 295 BCE and moved in by 305 CE where he lived until his death in 311 CE.

Overnight **Split**

Dinner & breakfast

Hotel Corner 4*

Day 14: 8 October

Croatia: Split to Zadar (160 km 1 ¾ hours) to Zagreb (290 km; 3 hours) [450 km]

We leave for **Zadar** where part of the walled Old Town's *Land Gate* welcomes visitors. This part of the city was built by the Venetians in the Middle Ages. If we have time to visit the Church of St Donatus, the largest Pre-Romanesque building in Croatia. It was built in the 9th century. We also have time to come across other signs that the Romans too had been here. Columns are to be seen throughout the city; also the temple of Jupiter.

Zagreb - St Mark's Square



We continue to Zagreb and check into our hotel. We do some preliminary exploring of the city, for instance climbing the Zagreb hill to visit the Upper Town with its narrow cobblestone streets. Just as we should try to enjoy a gelato in Zadar, we should aim to try out the local beer in Zagreb, even though the region is better known for its wines.

Overnight in Zagreb Dinner & breakfast **Hotel Academia 4***

Day 15: 9 October

Croatia: Zagreb and evening flight back to Cape Town

This morning we continue our exploring in **Zagreb**. Zagreb Cathedral, also known as the Cathedral of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is immediately recognised by its twin bell towers and not to be missed. We pass St. Mark's church with its unusual patterned roof and take time for a stroll in Maksimir Park, the oldest park in the city. The Dolac Market, a large open-air market celebrates what the city, together with its environs, has to offer. The largest square in the city (and its heart) is called King Tomislav Square, after the first King of Croatia. In this area we can stroll around, enjoy an excellent coffee and still find that special something to take home as a souvenir of our trip, before we head out to the airport for our evening flight from Zagreb to Istanbul and overnight to Cape Town.

Day 16: 10 October

Istanbul to Cape Town

After our overnight flight from Istanbul we are happy to arrive back in Cape Town and start consolidating all the amazing impressions and experiences we collected on our trip.



O n s K l i ë n t e W o r d O n s V r i e n d e

COST

Land Only	€ 2670-00
Single supplement	€ 460-
International direct flights from Cape Town to Zagreb	R4850 (prices for 2020 not available yet)

Please note all prices are based on **20** participants.

INCLUDED

Return economy class direct international flights from Cape Town to Zagreb (via Istanbul)
Meals as specified on the itinerary
All entrance fees
English speaking tour director and guides
Superior tourist class hotels
Transport in air-conditioned luxury bus
Head-sets

EXCLUDED

Domestic flights to CapeTown (if needed)	Please let us know we can assist with add-on flights
Lunch (if possible) at the Monastery Studenica,	€18,00 per person
Optional Boat trip on Boka Bay (Budva)	€18 per person
Tips per person	€ 150-00
Items of personal nature	
Insurance	± R650.00 for clients under the age of 69
Airport taxes (included in air fare)	± R7500.00
A Schengen visa will be required	± R900.00

GENERAL

We request R5 000.00 deposit per person, completed booking form to guarantee a place on the tour. Space on the tour will be on a first come first serve basis. The balance of payment is due 2 months prior to departure unless otherwise notified. Please be aware that if you do not make use of the exact same flights as the group fare, a penalty will apply.

Please note that this is a University of Stellenbosch, Department of Ancient Studies tour. The focus of the tour is therefore on the ancient world and its continued presence in the world of today. To participate in the tour, please contact DR. SJARLENE THOM (st@sun.ac.za) even though all our bookings as well as the final tour arrangements are done by SEAGULL. Please copy me in (at st@sun.ac.za) when you forward your documentation to Seagull.

PRICE IS SUBJECT TO CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS, INCREASES, SIZE OF THE GROUP AND FLIGHT SCHEDULES UNTIL FINAL PAYMENT HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY SEAGULL TOURS. PLEASE NOTE CREDIT PAYMENTS ARE ONLY ACCEPTED FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS AND AIRPORT TAXES.