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Lake snagov monastery

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The Snagov Monastery, also known as Vlad Tepeș Monastery, is a medieval monastery located on an island in Lake Snagov, southern Romania. It's an important historical monument and former center of Orthodox spirituality. The monastery was founded around the late 14th century by Mircea the Elder, with significant rebuildings by other rulers like Vlad Tepeș, Mircea Ciobanu, and Neagoe Basarab. Currently, only the church, bell tower, and fountain remain standing. The island's other buildings are either newly built or old ruins. The church has two patron saints: Saint Voivode Neagoe Basarab, the founder of the current church, and Saint Anthim the Iberian, abbot of the monastery. The island was gifted to the Romanian Patriarchate by the commune of Snagov, with the Archdiocese of Bucharest currently administering it. The first written documentation mentioning this monastery dates back to the second half of the 14th century. According to local legends, a chapel dedicated to the Annunciation built in 1453 sank into Lake Snagov around 1600. Imperial doors from this chapel were discovered on the lake's shore and are now kept at the National Art Museum of Romania. A prison was built on the island along with defense walls, a bridge connecting it to the mainland, and tunnels underneath, all made during Vlad III's reign. The prison functioned until around 1856, used by Wallachian Voivodes to imprison traitors and thieves. The current church was built in 1521 after the original building was destroyed in an earthquake. Major renovations occurred during Mircea Ciobanu's reign in the middle of the 16th century. The walls were painted during Petru Șchiopul's reign in 1563 by Dobromir the Young. The church has been used as a royal necropolis, with tombstones of some governors who were beheaded for their crimes still present today. The Snagov Monastery, situated on an island in a lake, has a rich history dating back to the 11th century. Initially built as a wooden structure, it was later rebuilt after being destroyed by fire. The monastery gained prominence during the reign of Constantin Brâncoveanu, who established a printing press on the island in 1643. This printing press produced books in various languages, including Romanian, Greek, Arabic, Old Church Slavonic, and Georgian. The monastery served as an important cultural center, housing significant materials and values at different times. It even functioned as a coin minting center and a place of refuge and exile due to its strategic location. Throughout its history, the Snagov Monastery was home to various notable figures, including Dragomir Postelnicul, Stoica Logofatul, Păru Vornicul, Ioan Clugarul, Metropolitan Serafim, and Anthim the Iberian. The latter played a crucial role in printing church books and establishing the monastery as a pan-Orthodox center. A convent of nuns existed on the island until 1810 when it was abolished by Metropolitan Filitis, who relocated the nuns to the Tîgănești Monastery. In 1933, archaeological research revealed that a first monastic settlement existed on the island in the 11th century. The church suffered damage from earthquakes in 1977 and 1986 but was repaired between 1998 and 2000. A new pedestrian walkway connecting the island to the mainland was built in 2009. The Snagov Monastery is also famous for being the burial place of Vlad Tepeș, according to local belief and specialist opinions. The legend claims that after Vlad's death following the battle with the Ottoman Empire in 1476, the monks hid his body, gave him a Christian burial, and kept it secret due to the new ruler installed by the Ottomans. # The mysterious tomb of Vlad the Impaler, researched by archaeologist Dinu Rosetti between 1933 and 1934, remains a topic of debate. One theory proposes that the remains were stolen and relocated elsewhere. Locals, however, believe that the voivode's body decomposed quickly due to the swampy conditions on Lake Snagov island, leaving nothing behind. A second coffin was discovered nearby, containing a clothed figure and several objects characteristic of a ruler. Unfortunately, these artifacts vanished after being taken to Bucharest's History Museum before they could be analyzed. Some historians suggest that Vlad's grave might actually be located at his Comana foundation in Giurgiu, but there are no sources supporting this theory. The church itself is built in Byzantine style with Romanian decorative elements and features an exterior made from exposed bricks. It has a balcony, nave, and altar. The balcony is supported by 16 pillars of varying geometric shapes, also decorated with exposed bricks, which can be seen on the pronaos' outside. The grand belfry is constructed from river stone and exposed bricks.