Splendors of Georgia & Armenia
September 5 – 24, 2014
Escorted by Dr. Tasha Vorderstrasse
The Oriental Institute
THE SOUTH CAUCASUS is a complex region filled with many languages, peoples, and cultures. It is a place where many cultures and religions have come into contact over the centuries. Join the Oriental Institute for a tour of the countries of Georgia and Armenia, through tall mountains and medieval churches, ancient ruins and tower houses. These are lands of contrast and this tour will examine the entire history of these countries, allowing you to fully experience them.

Join the Oriental Institute on a unique tour of the archaeology, landscape, and culture of Georgia and Armenia. In Georgia, we will visit the medieval ruins of Dmanisi, where Homo erectus skeletons have been found, the mountains region of Svaneset with its soaring towers, medieval Byzantine wall paintings, Napoleonic memorabilia in Zugdidi, and Stalin’s birthplace in Gori. We will also enjoy the opportunity to experience Georgian culture, including musical and dance performances, for which the Georgians are world famous. In Armenia, we will visit some of the many archaeological sites that fill the country, prehistoric standing stones, the magnificent Roman temple of Garni, medieval monasteries, and a recently discovered Jewish cemetery. Again, we will have the opportunity to explore the heritage of Armenia through its music and dance. Participants in this tour will not only have the opportunity to see the highlights but also experience out-of-the-way places that tourists often do not visit.

Depart Chicago this evening.

SATURDAY, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 & 7: TBILISI
We will arrive into Tbilisi early Sunday morning depending on the flights booked. Touring will begin late Sunday morning at the Metekhi Church, which occupies one of the most important historical sites in the city. We will then visit the Synagoge and the 6th-century Anchikhati Basilica. We will stroll the maze of twisting streets lined with colorfully painted wooden houses and elaborately carved balconies and visit the Herekle Bath, the oldest remaining of the 68 sulfur baths that once occupied this area. Our hotel is centrally located in the heart of the city.
MARRIOTT HOTEL TBILISI (B/L/D)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8: TBILISI
Touring today takes us to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Mtskheta, an important religious and trading center and capital of the eastern Georgian kingdom of Iberia from the 3rd century BC through the 5th century AD. En route we will stop at the Armazis-Khevi acropolis (also known as the Bagineti archaeological site), the center of power until Georgia converted to Christianity, replacing pagan temples with churches, the most important of which is the Cathedral of Svetitskhoveli. We will also stop at Jvari Monastery, one of the earliest churches in Georgia.
MARRIOTT HOTEL TBILISI (B/L)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9: TBILISI
After walking up to Narikala Fortress, we continue to the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia, where the country’s major archaeological finds are displayed, including a fabulous treasury of gold from ancient Akhalgori and Trialeti, and jewelry from the Iberian rulers of the first century AD. Lastly, we will visit the icon collection in the Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Fine Arts. Dinner this evening will be accompanied by a performance of Georgian music.
MARRIOTT HOTEL TBILISI (B/L/D)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10: LOMSIA
We depart for Lomsia stopping to visit the Stalin Museum in Gori. We then continue to Uplis-tsikhe, an unusual medieval cave town that developed over hundreds of years beginning in the first millennium BC. At its height it was an important trade center, occupying 22 acres. The invasions of Tamerlane and the Mongols in the 13th century marked the beginning of its decline. After lunch, a wonderful and scenic drive via the Borjomi Gorge into the village of Lomsia (6,000 feet), where we will spend two nights at the new Akhaltsikhe Hotel.
AKHALTSIKHE HOTEL (B/L/D)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12: KUTAISI
Touring today begins at the important 14th-century Byzantine frescoes by Damiane in the charming little church of Ubisi. We then visit Vani, a major city between 700 and 100 BC. We have seen the gold and silver from this rich site in the museum in Tbilisi. The remainder of the artifacts found at Vani are displayed in the site museum. Still visible on the site are the remains of the city gate, defense walls, and temples. The remainder of the day will be spent at the Gelati Monastery complex, visiting the Cathedral, Church of St. Nicholas, Bell Tower, Chapel, and the Academy, which was built in 1104. The day ends at our small hotel in Kutaisi.
HOTEL BAGRATI 1003 (B/L/D)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13: MESTIA
Today we will drive into the high Caucasus and the land of the Svans. There will be stops along the way including Zugdidi to see the palace of the Dadiani family. Now a museum, the palace houses among its treasures Napoleon Bonaparte’s death mask. As we drive on we
will begin to see the ancient defensive towers of the Swans. We stop in Latali to visit its famous church and in Lenjeri, the Lashtkhveri Church of Taringzel is renowned for its frescos of Amirani killing the devil Devi and St. George killing the pagan Roman emperor Diocletian. We will arrive into Mestia late in the day.

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14: MESTIA**

Our full day of touring will begin at the Museum of History and Ethnography and continue with Architectural Museum, where we will have the opportunity to visit a defensive tower as well as a typical Machubi house. We then drive into the countryside to visit the UNESCO World Heritage village of Ushguli and either the Lagurka church in Kala or the Nakipari Church of St. George built in 1130 in Ipari.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15: TIBILISI**

Today we will fly to Tbilisi. The afternoon will be at leisure. (We will drive to Tbilisi if the flight does not operate.)

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16: TIBILISI**

Today we will visit the Sioni Church at Bolnisi, an excellent example of early church architecture, and the 9th-century fortress city of Dmanisi. Within its walls we will see the remains of workshops, caravanserais, residences, and baths similar in design to those we visited in Tbilisi. This evening we will gather for a special Georgian dinner.

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17: YEREVAN**

We will transfer to the border, where our Armenian guide awaits. After completing the formalities, we will begin our touring at two of the finest representatives of Armenian architecture, Haghpat and Sanahin Monasteries, both dating from the 10th-13th centuries. Our touring in Armenia will be in the environs of Yerevan, allowing us to use the Marriott Hotel in Yerevan as our base for all but two nights of our stay.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18: YEREVAN**

Touring begins with Garni, a Roman temple built on a site that has been inhabited since Neolithic times. Evidence of previous cultures surrounds the temple. We then continue to the 13th-century Geghard, with interesting small rock-cut chapels and hermitage. Lastly, we will visit the wonderful, recently renovated History Museum. This evening our dinner will be accompanied by a performance of traditional music and dance.

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19: YEREVAN**

Today’s touring begins at the world-famous collection of illuminated Armenian manuscripts at the Matenadaran and continues at Etchmiadzin, the seat of the Armenian patriarch and place of pilgrimage. The most important materials are displayed in small site museums throughout the city. We will see several of these museums as well as the remains of the 7th-century Cathedral of St. Gregory at Zvartnots, the cyclopean fortress at Metzamor.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20: SISIAN**

We will spend the day visiting two ancient cities. Our first stop is Khor-Virap Monastery on the site of ancient Artashat. Legend has it that St. Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned for 12 years here in a well. We will explore the ancient city before continuing through a beautiful canyon to Noravank Monastery.

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21: SISIAN**

Our day begins with a cable car ride to Tatev Monastery. Our visit will include the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul built between 895 and 906 and restored after an earthquake in 1931, and the smaller Church of St. Gregory which dates from 1295. We will explore the ancillary building built into the large fortified wall and the unusual 11th-century Mother of God Church built over the main entrance. After completing our visit, our touring continues at the Zorats Stones (Carahunge), which hardly describes the incredible landscape of tumuli and seemingly endless lines of standing stone circles that we will explore. Our last visit today is a unique Tower Tomb in the village of Aghitu.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22: YEREVAN**

We will return to Yerevan stopping en route in Yeghegis to see a 800-year-old Jewish cemetery. Our visit will also include a visit to the town and the unusual Surp Zorats with its outdoor altar.

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23: YEREVAN**

Today we complete our touring with visits to three famous sites, Urartian Erebuni, Karmir Blur (Red Hill), where excavations have uncovered an Urartian settlement, and 4th-millennium BC Shengavit with its small museum. This evening we will exchange toasts at our farewell dinner.

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24:**

This morning we will transfer to the airport for our flight home.
Splendors of Georgia & Armenia

Reservation Form

Please make reservations for the following people:

Name #1 (Legal name, exactly as it appears on passport)

Name #2 (Legal name, exactly as it appears on passport)

Street address

City/State/Zip code

Home telephone Other telephone

E-mail address

☐ Enclosed is a deposit of $................($1500 per person, payable to Archaeological Tours)

☐ Please charge my deposit of $........................to my credit card.

Name as listed on the credit card

Card name and number

Expiration date

Signature

☐ I request a single room. I understand there is a supplement charge.

☐ I will be sharing with

☐ I request a roommate and understand a roommate is not guaranteed.

☐ I/We would like to be contacted to discuss my/our flight options.

☐ I/We have read the Tour Conditions and Responsibility clause and agree to all therein.

Signature

Signature

Return this form to: Archaeological Tours 271 Madison Avenue, Suite 904, New York, NY 10016

For additional information, please call Archaeological Tours at: (Toll free) 1-866-740-5130 or (e-mail) archtours@aol.com

Please note: This tour should be considered moderately strenuous. It will require some walking over rough, uneven terrain or climbing steps without hand rails and some long driving days. All participants are expected to be physically active and able to walk independently throughout our full touring days. If you have questions about your ability to participate in this tour, please contact the Oriental Institute or Archaeological Tours to discuss your options.

Cost of Tour: $6465
(excludes airfare from Chicago)

Single Supplement: $1190
(typical airfare from Chicago: $1350)

The Tour Rate Includes:

☒ Flights within Georgia. Surface travel by motor coach and as detailed in the itinerary.

☒ Accommodations are based on two persons sharing a twin-bedded room with private bath as listed or similar.

☒ Meals as listed in the detailed itinerary, table d’hôte. B – Breakfast  L – Lunch  D – Dinner

☒ Baggage handling for one suitcase per person.

☒ Arrival and departure transfers on tour dates only.

☒ Gratuities to tour managers, guides, drivers and porters.

☒ A $600 contribution to the Oriental Institute.

Not Included in the Tour Cost: International airfare, passport and visa fees, excess baggage charges, transfers to and from airports for tour participants arriving or departing on dates other than tour dates, insurance, beverages and items not on the menus.

TARIFS: Based on rates in effect February 2014 and a minimum of 15 participants. All rates subject to change.

Deposits & Payments: A $1500 deposit is required to book. Final payment is due sixteen weeks before departure.

Single Rooms: For those traveling alone but who prefer to share with another, we will endeavor to work out congenial rooming arrangements. If impossible, or if a single room must be assigned due to the roommate’s canceling or incompatibility, or for any other reason, even if at the last moment or while on tour, the single supplement or prorate thereof must be collected.

Insurance: Insurance is available and is recommended. By purchasing trip cancellation insurance within 21 days of your initial deposit, Travelers Insurance International, Inc. will waive the usual exclusion for preexisting medical conditions.

Cancellations: In the event of cancellation, refund in full less a $350 handling fee will be made until sixteen weeks before departure. From sixteen to twelve weeks before departure, the penalty is $2000. From twelve weeks until eight weeks before departure, the penalty is $5500, and after that time the penalty is $6100 plus any penalties levied by hotels and operators. These penalties could reach 100% for last-minute cancellations. There will be no refund for cancellations on the day of departure or thereafter. In addition, if cancellation is made within 60 days of departure, the airlines require a penalty. Cancellation of the tour by the Oriental Institute: full refund.

Note: Neither the Oriental Institute nor Archaeological Tours accepts liability for any airline penalties incurred by the purchase of nonrefundable airline tickets.

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