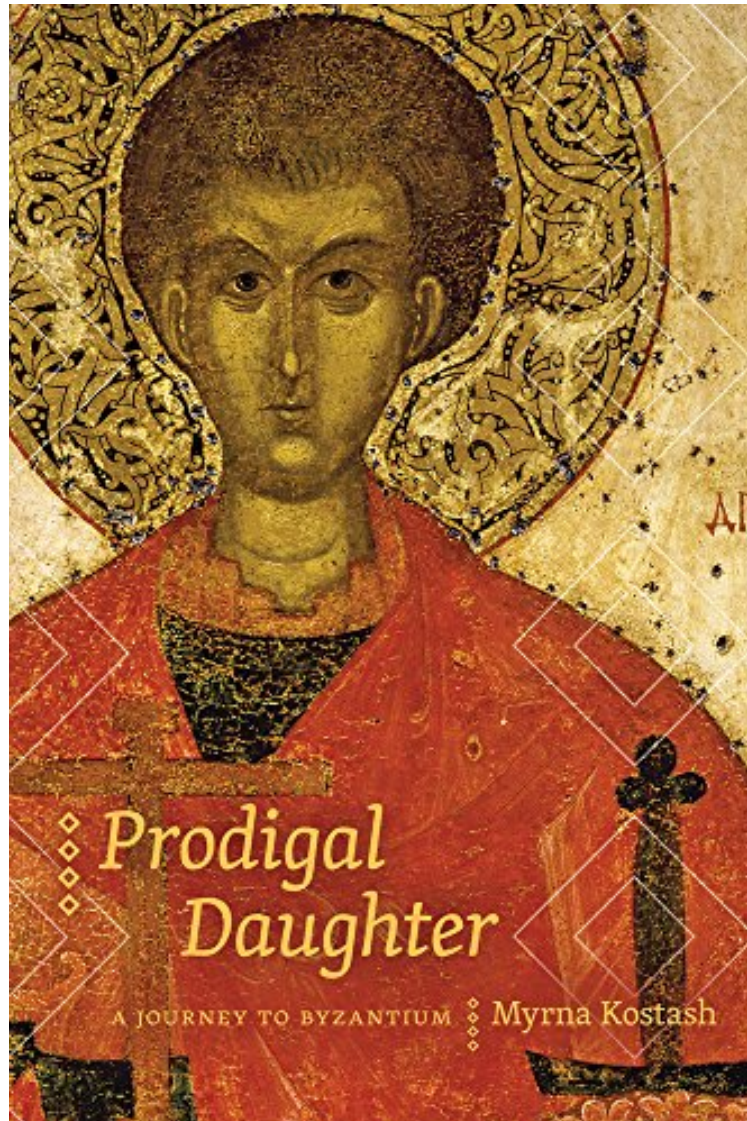


(Download pdf) *Prodigal Daughter: A Journey to Byzantium (Wayfarer)*

## **Prodigal Daughter: A Journey to Byzantium (Wayfarer)**

*Myrna Kostash*

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**Myrna Kostash : Prodigal Daughter: A Journey to Byzantium (Wayfarer)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Prodigal Daughter: A Journey to Byzantium (Wayfarer)*:

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Pretty Good Read By Sterling Demchinsky On the whole I enjoyed this book because of Kostash's folksy telling of her discoveries in Eastern Europe. However, make no mistake that this is a serious book of history because it isn't. She made one mistake in saying that St. Olga was St. Vladimir's mother (actually, she was his grandmother) and whenever I find one historical error I begin to wonder about how well the research really was. This is the telling of a very personal journey for Kostash and, if you don't take it as such, it could

be disappointing. She interviews a lot of people and gets a wide spectrum of interesting views. Sometimes the interviews are more entertaining than informative and clearly some of the people that she interviews do not know what they are talking about regardless of how impassioned they may be. However, this is surely deliberate on her part, as doubtless the entertainment factor is as important to Kostash as the history and theology of the Byzantine world. Sterling 3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. History, memoir and travelogue blend in a vivid personal journey of discovery. By Midwest Book Review **PRODIGAL DAUGHTER: A JOURNEY TO BYZANTIUM** provides a fine historic narrative of one woman's journey through the Balkans as she searches for the real Demetrius. Questioning her inherited religion, she embarks upon a personal and spiritual journey that begins in Canada and takes her to the Balkans. History, memoir and travelogue blend in a vivid personal journey of discovery.

A deep-seated questioning of her inherited religion resurfaces when Myrna Kostash chances upon the icon of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica. A historical, cultural and spiritual odyssey that begins in Edmonton, ranges around the Balkans, and plunges into a renewed vision of Byzantium in search of the Great Saint of the East delivers the author to an unexpected place—the threshold of her childhood church. An epic work of travel memoir, *Prodigal Daughter* sings with immediacy and depth, rewarding readers with a profound sense of an adventure they have lived. This book will appeal to readers interested in Ukrainian-Canadian culture, the Eastern Church, and medieval history, as well as to fans of Kostash's bold creative nonfiction.

"The slow recovery from the hubris of Western Civilization must include a reconsideration of Byzantine culture. *Prodigal Daughter*, with its perspective of personal exploration adds something new and different." John-Paul Himka, Professor in History and Classics, University of Alberta "Myrna Kostash sets out to discover and explore the roots of Canadian-Ukrainian culture and religious essence in the ancient world of the Byzantine Empire. This brings her to a scholarly investigation of her own intricate linkage and debt to the world of the Eastern Orthodox Church. *Prodigal Daughter* is at one and the same time an anthropological, cultural, and religious quest on two levels: the personal, autobiographical and the wider sociological and cultural. It is both deeply spiritual and intellectually satisfying." Tom Harpur, author, journalist, TV host "Part spiritual quest, part scholarly inquiry, part travel memoir, *Prodigal Daughter* is as richly layered as the civilization [Kostash] explores. A self-described secular humanist, Kostash nevertheless has a deep interest in the Orthodox Church, and the result is an intellectually vigorous study.... The journey itself, like many quests that writers undertake for self-examination and reflection, is more important than reaching conclusions.... The award-winning Kostash...weaves all of her themes of religion, Byzantine and Slavic history and the diversity of the Balkans into an engrossing and richly informative story." Cheryl Purdey, *The Edmonton Journal*, January 8, 2011 "...a travel memoir with a blend of creative non-fiction.... [H]ighly recommended." Midwest Book <http://ukietalks.com/site/news.php?extend.194> "Kostash gives an historical account of the way that Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians and Macedonians have fought for possession of Demetrius. The writing is lively, told through interviews, mythological descriptions of the saint, and visits to ancient churches. But this is not the crux of *Prodigal Daughter*. The intellectual journey ends with the chapter 'Lord, have Mercy.' Talking to an icon painter, Kostash suddenly discovers that her quest is not intellectual, but spiritual. She wants transcendence; she wants to be moved by a force from outside herself. The second half of *Prodigal Daughter* explores this spiritual side of her journey.... [D]espite the richness of the old world, Kostash is not yet spiritually at home. Instead, it is in the moving epilogue that she brings her journey to conclusion." Jeff Stepnisky, *New Trail*, Winter 2011 "Prodigal Daughter, A Journey to Byzantium provides a fine historic narrative of one woman's journey through the Balkans as she searches for the real Demetrius. Questioning her inherited religion, she embarks upon a personal and spiritual journey that begins in Canada and takes her to the Balkans. History, memoir and travelogue blend in a vivid personal journey of discovery." California Bookwatch, *The Travel Shelf*, March 2011 Kostash works her extensive bibliography into the academic texts, (for example, she quotes a poem by Bernadette Wagner on Demeter); but her first-hand impressions overcome exposition and truly capture informal interviews with an assembly of relevant characters. Throughout she engages the reader in this evolutionary and epic quest. Anne Burke, *Prairie Journal Trust* "Myrna Kostash's stellar *Prodigal Daughter* might be a conundrum for cataloguing librarians as it could be pegged as travelogue, spiritual quest, memoir, historical study, and scholarly work. To make it simple, perhaps a new category of 'Must Read' should be created." "Prodigal Daughter follows Kostash's quest to answer 'Who is St. Demetrius?' In her fascinating and richly layered work, she journeys geographically and spiritually through the Balkans, discovering and reexamining her roots and the history of the complex part of the world. She is sweeping in her exploration, visiting churches, museums, and cafes; talking with scholars, religious leaders, friends, new and old. Beautifully written and carefully rendered, it is clear that Kostash is a master at her craft." "Prodigal Daughter is a true voyage to Byzantium. From the classrooms and Sunday schools of Edmonton, Alberta, to the deeper faith that accompanies belief, Myrna Kostash chronicles a liturgy of discovery. This is a luminous personal narrative, both quest and love story, deeply sensitive and evocatively written. It breaks a silence and investigates the silence behind deep and profound transmutation." "Of the three, Myrna Kostash's work *Prodigal Daughter* involves a journey that is both physical and metaphysical, taking her deep into the modern Balkans to seek

the roots of Demetrius, whose life and example were part of the formative spiritual experience of her own childhood. In the process, we find a spellbinding narrative crafted by a writer in the full maturity of her powers, an effortless segue between physical, political, emotional, intellectual and cultural spheres. Wry insights, a lovely sense of time and place, a fine ability to incorporate the telling detail, make Kostash's memoir deeply memorable. The integration of private and public space, done fearlessly and openly, without any hint of apology or condescension, make her work all the more germane in a borderless world where barriers between language, cultures, people are assaulted in ways unimaginable in any previous age of the human experience. Hers is very much a book of our times, and about our times: of how we are both blessed and cursed with the past. In her hands the past is no longer a foreign country, but a vigorous current in the present." Juror comments. Winner of the WGA's Wilfrid Eggleston Award for nonfiction prize, 2011 Alberta Book Awards #9 on the "Edmonton Journal" Best Seller list for the week of June 26, 2011. #5 on the "Edmonton Journal" Best Seller list for the week of July 10, 2011. "The author also has a good eye for humour and amusing anecdotes. These lively accounts, coupled with astute observations and interviews with experts on St Demetrius, do much to make the book come alive. On reading "Prodigal Daughter", the reader is rewarded with a vivid picture of the lands through which Kostash is travelling - not just the religion and medieval history of those regions, but how they exist today in their modern post-Soviet guises." Mike Carr, The Anglo-Hellenic "Written in lyrical, vibrant prose, Prodigal Daughter is part travelogue and part memoir - a detailed account of findings from her travels to Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia and Macedonia.... One of the book's strengths is the author's passion for her subject. During her travels, Kostash arranges countless interviews with art historians, archaeologists, priests and theologians in order to pick their brains about St. Demetrius.... Throughout the book, Kostash demonstrates her ability as a storyteller. Some of the most memorable vignettes describe her meetings with an archaeology professor and an art historian in Belgrade. As well, Kostash renders her own interpretation of Demetrius's final day, along with an account of the events leading up to his death. Winner of the 2011 City of Edmonton Prize, Prodigal Daughter is a thought-provoking book." Bev Sandell Greenberg, Prairie Fire of Books, Vol. 11, No. 3 "Prodigal Daughter is both like and unlike anything Kostash has written before, and I think it may just be her best book to date.... For at its heart, Kostash's journey into discovering who and what St. Demetrius may be-both in a historical and contemporary sense-is a shockingly honest and open articulation of a spiritual quest, one that is rich with possibilities." Lindy Ledohowski, Canadian Literature, June 2012. From the Back Cover The slow recovery from the hubris of Western Civilization must include a reconsideration of Byzantine culture. Prodigal Daughter, with its perspective of personal exploration, adds something new and different. -John-Paul Himka, Professor in History and Classics, University of Alberta Prodigal Daughter: A Journey to Byzantium is the narrative of a woman's journey through the Balkans as she embarks on her quest to find the real Demetrius. A deep-seated questioning of her inherited religion resurfaces when Myrna Kostash chances upon the icon of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica, the Great Saint of the East. The discovery leads Kostash on an historical, cultural, and spiritual odyssey that begins in Edmonton, ranges around the Balkans, and plunges into a renewed vision of Byzantium. As we travel with Kostash through the history of the Balkans, we are led to an unexpected place-the threshold of her childhood church. An epic work of travel memoir, Prodigal Daughter sings with immediacy and depth, rewarding readers with a profound sense of an adventure they have lived. This book will appeal to readers interested in Ukrainian-Canadian culture, the Eastern Church and medieval history, as well as to fans of Kostash's bold creative nonfiction. Myrna Kostash's creative nonfiction continues to define and push the limits of the genre. Since the publication of All of Baba's Children in 1977, she has been a strong voice in depicting the Ukrainian-Canadian experience in the West and its roots in European history. Her award-winning memoirs, essays, and other writing, along with her avid participation in the literary community, have garnered Kostash popular and critical acclaim at home and abroad. She lives in Edmonton. About the Author Myrna Kostash's creative nonfiction continues to define and push the limits of the genre. Since the publication of All of Baba's Children in 1977, she has been a strong voice in depicting the Ukrainian-Canadian experience and its roots in European history. Her award-winning memoirs, essays, and other writing, along with her avid participation in the literary community, have garnered Kostash popular and critical acclaim at home and abroad. Most recently, she won the 2010 Writers' Trust Matt Cohen Award: In Celebration of a Writing Life. She lives in Edmonton.