Day 1 – September 12, 2021
Arrival to Skopje. Transfer to the hotel.
Dinner and orientation. Hotel “Ambasador” or similar

Day 2 – September 13, 2021
Skopje and vicinity
Breakfast at the Hotel
During our first day in the N. Macedonian capital we will explore several important monuments in the city and its outskirts. Of greatest interest are the churches of Sveti Spas, with an amazing carved iconostas from the
early 19th century, and the modern Cathedral of St. Kliment Ohridski (St. Clement of Ohrid) built in a rather unique style. Not far from the Cathedral there is an Icon Museum with a very interesting collection of Balkan icons. After Lunch we will visit three Medieval “jewels” – Markov Monastery, the Monastery of St. Nikita, and the church of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel in Kucevishte Village. Markov Monastery dates to the 14th century and its beautiful frescoes that survive from that period are of great importance to Byzantine Art as they contain many unique themes. St. Nikita Monastery is older than Markov Monastery, but as the original place was destroyed, it was restored in the 14th century by the Serbian King Milutin. The church itself is rather small, but contains many unique frescoes of the highest artistic quality.

Lunch brake in the city center.

**St. Panteleimon in Gorno Nerezi**, near Skopje. This Monastery was constructed in 1164 and is famous for its spectacular Komnenous-era frescoes. The church was repainted in subsequent ages on several occasions, but in the 1920’s original frescoes were discovered and restored. **Markov monastery was founded in the first half of the 14 century** and the church dedicated to St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki was build in 1346 under King Vukashin. During next 30 years church was decorated with beatiful frescoes. Despite the turbulent history, sacred images survive until the present day largely intact.

Overnight in Skopje at the «Ambasador» (or similar) hotel.

**Day 3 – September 14, 2021 Kosovo**

After breakfast at the hotel we will depart for **Kosovo**. Today we are planning to visit several Medieval monuments that are on the UNESCO World heritage list as an important monuments of the Byzantine and Romanesque culture. **Church of our Lady Levishka was build in 1306** under the patronage of the Serbian King Stefan Miljutin. Church was adored with frescoes at about the same time. During the Ottoman rule church was converted into a mosque, but frescoes lagerely survive. In 2006 church was added to the UNESCO list of the endangered monuments due to threat from the albaniun militias. In 2004 church greatly suffered during an attack and arson but within ten years after the attack it was beatifully restored by a team of Italian restorers.
who did a beautiful job at restoring the frescoes and exterior of the building.

**Visoki Decani** - The monastery was established in a chestnut grove by Serbian King Stefan Uroš III Dečanski in 1327. Its original founding charter is dated to 1330. The following year the king died and was buried at the monastery, which thenceforth became his popular shrine. The construction was continued by his son Emperor Stefan Uroš IV Dušan until 1335, but the wall-painting was not completed until 1350. Free time for lunch near Pec.

**Pec Patriarchate and Monastery.**
The precise date of the foundation of the Patriarchate is unknown. It is thought that while Saint Sava (d. 1235) was still alive that the site became a metoh (land owned and governed by a monastery) of Žiča monastery, then the seat of the Serbian archbishopric. Archbishop Arsenije I (d. 1266) built the Church of the Holy Apostles, as he wanted the seat of the Serbian Church to be at a more secure location and closer to the center of the country. Soon, around 1250, he ordered it decoration. Overnight at hotel Ulipiana (or similar) in Prishtina

**Day 4 – September 15, 2021**
**Gracanica – Matka Canyon - Ohrid**

**Gračanica Convent** was constructed on the ruins of an older 13th-century church of the Holy Virgin, which was built on the ruins of a 6th-century early Christian three-naved basilica. On the southern wall of the chapel is written the king's charter, including the following words: "I have seen the ruins and the decay of the Holy Virgin's temple of Gračanica, the bishopric of Lipljan, so I have built it from the ground and painted and decorated it both from inside and outside".

**The Matka Canyon** or "The womb", canyon is one of the most magnificent regions in Macedonia. From among numerous Medieval monuments in the area we are going to visit two most impressive ones.

**Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos** (14th) Built on an older early Christian basilica, the monastery is dedicated to the Great Holly Mother of God and is one of the first monasteries built at the holly canyon. It is famous among Macedonian Christians for its rare vestments handcrafted by the nuns.

**The Monastery of St. Andrew** was built in 1388-89. and is filled with frescos of great artistic value. In the preserved inscription
above the west entrance from the inside it reads that this monastery church was built in the year 1389 by Andreash, the second-born son of the king Volkašin.

Free time for lunch at Canyon Matka restaurant.

Departure for Ohrid

Arrival in Ohrid - accommodation at a 3* hotel Nova Riviera or similar

Dinner at a traditional restaurant - National Night.

Day 5 – September 16, 2021

Ohrid, also known as Jerusalem of the Balkans.

Ohrid is one of the most historically and culturally significant cities in the Balkans. Its location on the hilly shores of Lake Ohrid gives it a very special feeling and beauty. Same time due to the presence of many important Ancient and Medieval monuments it was added to the UNESCO World Heritage list back in 1980.

The church of St. Sofia is one of the largest medieval churches on this territory. For a long time it was the cathedral church ("Great Church") of the Ohrid Archiepiscopate whose ecclesiastical authority covered the territories up to the river Danube to the north, the Albanian coast to the west, and the Bay of Thessalonica to the east.

The Holy Mother of Christ Peribleptos.

According to an inscription on the inner wall of the narthex above the main entrance, the church was built under the name of the Holy mother of God Most Glorious (Peribleptos) in 1295 by the Byzantine military commander, Progon Zgur, a relative of the Emperor Andronicus II Paleologus. The church was fresco painted by the Mihail and Evthihj.

St. Panteleimno Monastery.

St. Clement built the monastery in 893 A.D. near the remains of an old Christian basilica, on the location from which
Christianity was preached in the III c. AD. Clement is one of two famous disciples of Cyril and Methodius whose mission was to spread the Christianity and literacy among the Slavs. It is one of the oldest Slavic monuments of culture and one of the first Universities in Europe. The current building is a new replica of an ancient church, but the remains of the ancient complex can be seen in the archaeological excavations. The church of St. John in Kaneo enjoys a picturesque setting right above Lake Ohrid, with some surviving frescoes from the early 15th century. Although frescoes inside are not numerous or impressive, spectacular location of the church on the cliff above the waters of lake Ohrid makes the church an “icon” of Ohrid and all of the Northern Macedonia at large.

Free time in Ohrid. Dinner at the restaurant Night at the hotel «Nova Riviera» 3* or similar

Day 6, September 17, 2021
Monastery of St. Naum, Kurbinovo, Bitola

This morning we will depart Ohrid and will be driving along the shore of Lake Ohrid to St. Naum’s monastery. St. Naum’s Monastery was founded early in the 10th century but hardly anything remains from that period. The frescoes that we can see today were done “only” in 1806. Still, St. Naum’s Monastery remains an incredibly important place in Slavic history and literacy.

After crossing the mountain pass we will come to the little “off the beaten path” village of Kurbinovo to see the church of the former Monastery of St. George. The church of St. George is one of the most famous in all of Macedonia and greater Balkans, due to the unique frescoes of the interior of the church. The holy site was built, frescoed and consecrated some time at the very end of the 12th century. Our last stop will be at the Archaeological Park of Heraclea Lycenstis, an ancient city, founded by Philip II of Macedon in the middle of the 4th century BC. The city was further expended under the Roman Emperor Hadrian and was an important point along the Via Egnatia route. Under the Byzantines, city had Christian Bishopric, that came to end along with the destruction and decline of the city of the Slavic attacks sometime in the 6 or 7th centuries AD. For dinner and overnight we will arrive at the town of Prilep.
Day 7, September 18, 2021
Monasteries and churches of Prilep
Prilep is one of the oldest cities in our country, situated in the central part of Northern Macedonia. He incredible pieces of spirituality and art put in the frescoes, iconostases and building’s architecture in the monasteries and churches on the nearby hills and mountains with beautiful location and breathtaking views.

St. Nicholas church - village Manastir
The original church was built in 1095 by Alexius, who was a cousin of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus. In 1266, the abbot Joanikis name has built the current church, which later, in 1271, was painted by John the deacon. On the foothills of Mount Dautica is one of the oldest monasteries in our country with the oldest cave monastic complex in the Balkans from the IX century. Monastery complex at Zrze is consisted of several churches and chapel placed under the same roof. In addition to these two important monuments we will visit Church of St. Nicholas from the 13 century and Church of St. Demetrius of Thessalonika from the 14 century in the village of Varosh. Returning at hotel Salida (or similar) in Prilep.

Day 8 – September 19, 2021
Stobi, Lesnovi, Kumanovo, Skopje
Our first will be at the Archaeological Park of Stobi, capital of Ancient Macedonia Secunda. Stobi Archaeological Park has some of the best preserved ancient Roman Ruins in Macedonia, and of particular interest to us are the ruins of the Christian Basilica and Baptistery with their extensive and beautiful mosaics.
After Stobi, we will continue to a remote Lesnovo Monastery, yet another medieval foundation, with church and frescoes that date back to mid-14th century. During Medieval period Lesnovo was a great ascetical and learning center. Monastic caves still could be seen along the gorge the leads to the monastery and manuscripts produced there were found in many ecclesiastical libraries through Eastern Europe and even as far as Russia. The main church decorated with frescoes inspired by now-lost originals from Constantinople. Free time for Lunch.
The Church of St. George in the village of Staro Nagoricane near Kumanovo was originally built in the second half of the 11th century, but expanded and renovated early in the 14th century under the Serbian King Stephan Milutin. The frescoes of the interior come to us from the same period and done by the hand of the already known to us medieval iconographers Michael Astrapa and Evtikhije.

Arrival to the hotel “Ambassador” (or similar) for a farewell dinner, reflection and overnight

Day 9, September 20, 2021
Breakfast at the hotel.
Departure for the airport.
PRICING AND INCLUSIONS:

Price include:
• Accommodations in "***" hotels along the way
• All breakfasts and dinners
• Private bus transportation along the way
• Group transfers from and to the airport in Skopje
• All admissions, according to the schedule
• Professional English speaking [local] tour guides
• English speaking guide/escort during the entire tour

Price does not include:
• Personal health/accident insurance
• Air tickets
• Transportation to and from the airport in Turkey if traveling separately from the group
• Private activities: transfers, optional tours, tickets to shows or additional museums.
• Some newly introduced fees that may occur in certain places
• Tips to bus drivers and tour guides (Minimal suggested amount per person is $2 per day for bus drivers and $3 for local tour guides. Your generosity will be always greatly appreciated)
• Anything that is not specifically mentioned in “Price includes”

Financial arrangements:
$1000 EUR (or the US dollar equivalent at a time of final payment) per person, in double occupancy in a group of 25 participants; Single supplement: 250EUR extra. Please factor that the final price may fluctuate due to the actual number of participants or due to significant difference in exchange rate of local currency vs US dollar at the time of the final payment. In case of need for financial adjustment you’ll be informed right away.

All payments should be made by check to: "Palomnik, LLC" and mailed to 1613 Campus Drive, Vestal, NY 13850. Any returned checks are subject to $25 fee. For payment with a Credit Card; domestic or international bank wires, please contact Fr. Ilya directly.

A deposit of $400 is required when you sign up for the trip. The deposit is non-refundable, unless pilgrimage is cancelled by the organizers due to lack of participation or for some other valid or unforeseen circumstance. To avoid any money loss, emergency/travel cancellation insurance strongly recommended.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: The deadline for signing up for the trip is June 1, 2021. The entire amount is due 91 days prior to departure, June 12, 2021. Failure to pay in full by June 12, 2021 without written notice of explanation may lead to the cancellation of your participation, with no refund of any previously committed funds.

CANCELLATION POLICY: If you need to cancel after you signed up, penalty is:
• 25% of the tour cost, 91 to 61 days prior to the departure
• 50% of the tour cost, 61 to 31 days prior to the departure
• 100% of the tour cost 31 or fewer days prior to the departure

All cancellations must be done in writing as well and sent directly to agent/coordinator - Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky and must be received for reimbursement by the dates shown in the cancellation schedule.

We also have to add that should cancellation or alteration of the program occur due to COVID and associated emergencies, civil disturbances, acts of terrorism, war, natural disaster, and other events of force majeur or acts of God (including threat or fear of same), refunds will be made only to the extent that they are recoverable, and that such cancellation or alteration may result in the total loss of funds paid by participants. It is assumed each participant has reviewed the same with respect to their own comfort level of risk and personal safety. A decision to withdraw from the trip for these reasons or any others will be bound by the same terms of cancellation.
ALTERATIONS TO ITINERARY:
Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky reserves the right to alter, modify or withdraw the itinerary if air schedules and/or events beyond his control deem it necessary. In the event it becomes necessary for the comfort or well-being of the travelers to alter or modify the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to the tour operator and are not grounds for cancellation with refund. Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky assumes no responsibility over any consequences as a result of any participant deviating from the group tour. Because of the difference in language and customs, it is expected that the traveler will follow the directions of the Tour Director at all times. Tour Director reserves the right to restrict a person’s participation in the group’s activities, including exclusion from the group, when, in the opinion of the Director, such action is necessary.

REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:
• A passport with validity for at least six months beyond end of stay
• Turkish visa to be obtained online prior to travel: https://www.evisa.gov.tr/en/
• A certificate of a negative COVID test performed not more than 72 hours before arrival to N/ Macedonia or a recognized vaccination passport. Request for a vaccination passport may become a mandatory request by the time of travel.

IT IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED THAT YOU:
- Obtain insurance covering medical needs and coverage of personal property
- Be aware that financial coverage for all emergency medical and other emergency needs (including those related to COVID hospitalization, treatment, or quarantine) will be your sole responsibility. We will provide all possible logistical and personal assistance, but the financial aspect is your responsibility.
- Act in a manner consistent with the surrounding environment
- Make arrangements to have access to sufficient funds to cover personal needs and unexpected events

- Airlines expect travelers to pass a COVID test before boarding on an International flight

This agreement becomes effective upon acceptance into the tour by Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky

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REGISTRATION FORM:
BYZANTINE SACRED ART IN NORTHERN MACEDONIA

September 12-20, 2021

To register: please complete this registration form and return it along with your deposit check ($400.00) made to PALOMNIK, LLC to the following address:
Palomnik, LLC, 1613 Campus Drive, Vestal, NY 13850.
Alternative methods of payment are possible, please check for details
Please write “N. Macedonia 2021” on the memo line.

Full Name (exactly as in your passport):

Date of Birth (day/month/year):

Nationality, Passport #:

Issue and expiration date (day/month/year):

Address:

City, State, Zip/Postal Code

Home phone:

Alt. phone and Email:

Emergency Contact Information (Name, Phone, Relation):

Medical restrictions:

Dietary restrictions:

Would you prefer single accommodations at additional costs specified in the itinerary?

Would you prefer to make your own flight reservations, or would you like us to help you to find the best airfare?

Please let us know if there is anything else that we should know in order to make your travel experience more comfortable and pleasant:

Your signature below confirms that you have read the itinerary and agree to abide by Terms and Conditions that accompany the itinerary.

NAME/SIGNATURE: DATE: