

The New Late Antiquity

A Gallery
of Intellectual Portraits

Edited by
CLIFFORD ANDO
MARCO FORMISANO

Contents

Clifford Ando and Marco Formisano	
Preface.....	1
Philippe Blaudeau	
Henri Irénée Marrou (1904-1977): Antiquité tardive et Cité de Dieu.....	7
Jan Bremmer	
Harnack and Late Antiquity	27
Luigi Capogrossi Colognesi	
Edoardo Volterra.....	55
Jean-Michel Carrié	
Lellia Cracco Ruggini	77
Giovanni Cecconi	
Edward A. Thompson	111
Lellia Cracco Ruggini and Rita Lizzi Testa	
Alan Cameron	131
Mark Edwards	
Henry Chadwick.....	151
Jaś Elsner	
Alois Riegl: Art History and the Beginning of Late Antique Studies as a Discipline	167
Andrea Giardina	
“Tutto il vigore è negli occhi.” Peter Brown e la nascita della New Late Antiquity	183
Hervé Inglebert	
Noël Duval et l’archéologie de l’Antiquité tardive	237
Michael Kulikowski	
Andreas Alföldi and Late Antiquity	257
Noel Lenski	
Santo Mazzarino: Revolutions in Society and Economy in Late Antiquity	273

Hartmut Leppin	
Ern(e)st Stein: Christentum, Nationalitätenkonflikt und Reichszerfall	297
Christina Maranci	
Josef Strzygowski (1862-1941).....	317
Arnaldo Marcone	
Mommsen e la Tarda Antichità.....	333
Richard Payne	
Nina Pigulevskaya: Late Antiquity in Leningrad.....	353
Aaron Pelttari	
Unity and diversity in Jacques Fontaine's late antiquity	365
James Porter	
Disfigurations: Erich Auerbach's Theory of Figura.....	387
Danny Praet	
Franz Cumont: Late Antiquity and the dialectics of progress on Franz Cumont.....	421
Stefan Rebenich	
Otto Seeck und die Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt.....	451
Michael Roberts	
Reinhart Herzog and Late Latin Poetry.....	471
Siri Sande	
Hans Peter L'Orange	485
Aldo Schiavone	
Il Tardoantico di Arnaldo Momigliano	505
Sebastian Schmidt-Hofner	
Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz (1895-1963).....	517
Sigríð Schottenius Cullhed	
The Consolation of Late Antiquity: Pierre Courcelle (1912–1980)	535
Gareth Sears	
Transforming Late Antique Africa: Claude Lepelley.....	551
Cristiana Sogno	
François Paschoud and Late Antique Historiography	567
Ignazio Tantillo	
André Chastagnol (1920-1996).....	579
Maria Taroutina	
From First Rome to Third Rome: Nikodim Kondakov and Late Antique Studies.....	595

Chiara O. Tommasi
 Averil Cameron609

Guisto Traina
 Ronald Syme630

John Weisweiler
 Paideia in the Andes: Sabine MacCormack on the History of Imperial
 Culture in Late Antiquity643

From First Rome to Third Rome: Nikodim Kondakov and Late Antique Studies

Maria Taroutina

1 The Cultural and Political Context

In 2002, the Russian State Historical Museum in Moscow re-opened to the public after a period of closure for nearly twenty years. Following the fall of the Soviet regime, the museum building, together with its numerous collections, underwent a long process of renovation and restructuring to reflect its original nineteenth-century design and installation. First opened in June of 1883, the Imperial Russian Historical Museum, as it was called then, was centrally located on the Red Square next to the Moscow Kremlin – where it still is today – and was designed by Vladimir Sherwood and Anatolii Semenov in a Neo-Russian architectural style. According to the museum’s founding charter, its principle goal was to “serve as a visual history of major epochs of the Russian state and to advance distribution of information about facts of national history.”¹ The museum’s exposition visually charted a complex and “comprehensive” narrative of Russia’s history from antiquity to the late nineteenth century, presenting the nation’s “monuments of religion, law, science, and literature, with objects of arts, crafts, and trades.”² However, following the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the museum was completely reorganized to reflect a Marxist conception of history, which aimed “to battle bourgeois ideology.”³ It was not until the opening decade of the twenty first century that the museum was once again returned to its original late-Imperial iteration. Today, in the exhibition room dedicated to Russia’s late nineteenth-century culture, the contemporary viewer encounters a prominently displayed, lavishly bound, and sumptuously illustrated edition of Nikodim Kondakov’s *History and Monuments of Byzantine Enamels from the Collection of A. V. Zwenigorodskoi*, the artwork of whose French edition forms

¹ Aleksei Uvarov, “Ustav Muzeia imeni ego imperatorskogo vysochestva gosudaria naslednika cesarevicha,” *Otchet imperatorskogo Rossiiskogo Istoricheskogo muzeia imeni imperatora Aleksandra III v Moskvea za XXV let (1883-1908)* (Moscow: Siodal’naia Tipografia, 1916), p. 187.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

³ Vadim Egorov and Elena Yukhimenko, “The State Historical Museum: Treasures of History and Culture,” *The State Historical Museum*, eds. Alexander Shkurko, Vadim Egorov (Moscow: Interbook Business, 2006), p. 45

the frontespiece to this volume.⁴ First published in 1892, this seminal work examined the long history, evolution and circulation of enamel art from antiquity to the Middle Ages, paying particular attention to the techniques, styles and iconography of Byzantine, Russian and Georgian examples. The book was simultaneously published in Russian, French and German and cemented Kondakov's international reputation as a leading expert in early Christian and Byzantine art and – by extension – the late antique period.⁵ It was positively reviewed in both the Russian and foreign press, including by leading European Byzantinists Charles Diehl and Paul Weber, and was awarded a Gold Medal by the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society. Kondakov was also made an honorary member of the European Archaeological Society in Italy and a Grand Officier in the Légion d'Honneur in France.⁶

The book's inclusion as an important artifact in a museum of national history, as well as its central placement in an exhibition hall devoted to modernization, the rise of nationalism, and the Russian religious renaissance, not only testifies to the major impact that the rediscovery of early Christian and Byzantine art and culture had on turn-of-the-century Russian thought, but also to Kondakov's leading role in that rediscovery.⁷ Moreover, it demonstrates that Kondakov's scholarship was both directly and indirectly implicated in larger questions surrounding issues of national identity, modern statehood, religion, heritage and Russia's political and imperialist ambitions.

Following Russia's resounding defeat by Britain, France and the Ottoman Empire in the Crimean War (1853–1856), both official state policy and broader public discourse began to question Russia's deference to and emulation of Western European culture, which characterized the Enlightenment period. Instead,

⁴ Nikodim Kondakov, *Istoriia i Pamiatniki Vizantiiskih Emalei* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia M.M. Stasiulevicha, 1892); *Histoire et Monuments des Emaux Byzantins* (Francfort sur Mein: [s.n.], 1892; *Geschichte und Denkmäler des Byzantinischen Emails* (Frankfurt am Main: Typographische Anstalt A. Osterrieth, 1892).

⁵ A number of recent publications have examined in depth both the national and international significance of Kondakov's scholarly work: Maria Taroutina, *The Icon and the Square: Russian Modernism and the Russo-Byzantine Revival* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018): 38-45, 63-73; Maria Lidova, "The Rise of Byzantine Art and Archaeology in Late Imperial Russia," in *Empires of Faith in Late Antiquity Histories of Art and Religion from India to Ireland*, ed. Jaś Elsner (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 128-160; Ivan Foletti, *From Byzantium to Holy Russia: Nikodim Kondakov (1844–1925) and the Invention of the Icon* (Rome: Viella, 2017).

⁶ Svetlana Savina, "N. P. Kondakov," *Vizantinovedenie v Ermitazhe*, ed. V.S. Shandrovskaja (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh, 1991), pp. 34-38.

⁷ The term "Russian religious Renaissance" was first coined by Nicholas Zernov, who explored this phenomenon at length in his seminal book, *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century* (1963). In this study Zernov traced a widespread rebirth of interest in Christian Orthodox thought and philosophy among the Russian intelligentsia in the first decade of the twentieth century.

prominent Slavophile thinkers such as Aleksei Khomiakov (1804-1869), Ivan Kireevskii (1806-1856), and Konstantin Aksakov (1817-1860) called for a widespread re-evaluation of Russia's pre-Petrine past and especially its historical ties to the Byzantine Empire. Rather than seeing the Byzantine epoch as a dark stain in the country's history, they proposed that it was a period of cultural flowering and ascendance in medieval Russia. In 1859, Khomiakov wrote that "to speak of Byzantium with disdain – is to disclose one's own ignorance."⁸ Accordingly, by the time that Kondakov was a student at the Moscow University in the early 1860s, the idea of the Byzantine "East" as a symbol of barbarism, ignorance, and backwardness had increasingly given way to the notion that Byzantium had directly inherited the philosophical, literary, and artistic culture of ancient Greece and Rome, and had preserved it for posterity in a "Christianized" form.⁹

Such conceptions of the Byzantine Empire were actively welcomed and promoted by the crown, since Constantinople's ties to Kievan Rus served to bolster Imperial Russia's expansionist policies in Eastern and Central Europe by providing a historical justification. In his widely read 1869 book, *Russia and Europe*, Nikolai Danilevskii argued that it was Russia's historic mission to reclaim Constantinople and restore the Eastern Roman Empire, much like the Franks had restored the Western Roman Empire.¹⁰ He advocated the creation of a Slavic Federation under Russia's political leadership, which would comprise of the Slavic countries, Greece, Romania, and the Magyars with its capital in Constantinople. In the wake of the Balkan uprisings (1875-1876) and the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), the question of "safeguarding" the Byzantine legacy and "liberating" the Christian Orthodox peoples of the Ottoman Empire became even more urgent, as reflected in Sergei Zhigarev's claim that it was Russia's immediate imperative "to help her Eastern cobelievers and kindred in their struggle against Islam towards national and religious self-preservation, to remove them from Turkish enslavement and to bring them into the family of cultured European peoples [...]."¹¹ Within this socio-political context, Kondakov's positive

⁸ Aleksei Khomiakov, "The voice of a Greek in defense of Byzantium," *Works of A.S. Khomiakov*, Vol. 3, Fourth Edition (Moscow: Univ. tip, 1900), p. 366.

⁹ For more information on the Byzantine Revival in nineteenth-century Russia, see Maria Taroutina, *The Icon and the Square: Russian Modernism and the Russo-Byzantine Revival* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018), pp. 13-49; 63-137 and "Second Rome or Seat of Savagery: The Case of Byzantium in Nineteenth-Century European Imaginaries," *Civilization and Nineteenth-Century Art: A European Concept in a Global Context*, ed. David O'Brien (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 150-177.

¹⁰ Nikolai Danilevskii, *Rossiya i Evropa*, 4th edition (St. Petersburg: Izdanie N. Strakhova, 1889), pp. 398-473

¹¹ Sergei Zhigarev, *Russkaia politika v vostochnom voprosie; ee istoriia v 16-19 vekakh, kriticheskaia otsenka i budushchiia zadachi; istoriko-iuridicheskie ocherki Sergeia Zhigareva*. Vol. 1 (Moscow: Universitetskaia Tipografia, 1896), p. 49.

reappraisal of Byzantium's artistic and cultural legacy, as well as his sustained investigation into the continuities between it and classical antiquity on the one hand and medieval Russia on the other, all fell on fertile ground as they helped to reinforce the popular dictum that "two Romes have fallen, the third endures, and a fourth there will not be."¹²

2 Biography

Nikodim Pavlovich Kondakov (1844-1925) was born on November 1st, 1844 in the village of Khalan' in the Kursk province of Tsarist Russia. Kondakov's father was a liberated serf of the princely Trubetskoi family and oversaw their multiple estates in the Novooskolskii district. As a young child, Kondakov was sent to Moscow to study in the prestigious Second Moscow Gymnasium on Razguliai Square, from which he graduated in 1861 – the year that Tsar Alexander II abolished serfdom throughout the Russian Empire. Immediately upon graduation, Kondakov enrolled in Moscow University to study archaeology and the then nascent discipline of art history. Although he initially trained as a classicist, Kondakov soon turned his attention to early Christian art and architecture under the influence of the famous Slavonic philologist and linguist Fyodor Buslaev (1818-1898). Shortly after graduating from the university, Kondakov became a member of the Society of Ancient Russian Art, which was founded under the auspices of the Moscow Public and Rumiantsev Museum, and which functioned as an independent cultural research institute within that institution, promoting its collections and advancing its scholarly output. The society oversaw a number of important scholarly publications on late antique, early Christian and medieval art and Kondakov published his first three academic articles in its 1866 volume of the *Anthology of the Society of Ancient Russian Art*.¹³

¹² These words are typically attributed to the monk Philotheus or Filofei (1465–1542), who was the hegumen of the Pskov-Eliazarov Monastery and who famously proclaimed that Moscow had succeeded Rome and Byzantium as the true center of Christianity and the only heir of the Roman Empire:

"The Apollinarian heresy caused the downfall of old Rome. The Turks used their axes to shatter the doors of all churches of the Second Rome, the city of Constantinople. Now [in Moscow], the new Third Rome, the Holy Ecumenical Apostolic Church of your sovereign state shines brighter than the sun in the universal Orthodox Christian faith throughout the world. Pious Tsar! Let [people of] your state know that all states of the Orthodox faith have now merged into one, your state. You are the only true Christian ruler under the sky!"

¹³ Nikodim Kondakov, "Drevnekhristsianskiye Khramy;" "Pravoslavnoe iskusstvo v Serbii;" "Anglo-saksonskaia Krest VIII stoletia," *Sbornik na 1866 god, izdannyi Obshchestvom Drevnerusskogo iskusstva pri Moskovskom publichnom muzee* (Moscow: Tipografiia Gracheva i Ko., 1866), pp. 4-19, 49-52, 60-62.

After teaching at the Moscow Art School for a few years in the late 1860s, Kondakov was invited to join the faculty of the University of Novorossia in Odessa in 1870, first as a lecturer and subsequently as a professor of the theory and history of art. He proceeded to spend seventeen very productive years at the institution, during which time he published his first seminal studies of classical, late antique and Byzantine art, including the *Harpy Tomb from Asia Minor and the Symbolism of Greek Art* (1873), *The Ancient Architecture of Georgia* (1876), *The History of Byzantine Art and Iconography Traced in the Miniatures of Greek Manuscripts* (1877), *Grecian Terracotta Statuettes* (1879), *The Byzantine Mosaics of the Mosque of Kariye Camii in Constantinople* (1881) and *The Byzantine Churches and Monuments of Constantinople* (1886).¹⁴ He also traveled extensively during this period, making repeated trips to France, England, Austria, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Georgia and Armenia to study the art and architecture of the late antique, early Christian and later Byzantine epochs.

In 1888 Kondakov was invited to teach at the University of St. Petersburg (1888-1897) and was simultaneously appointed the Head Curator of the Department of Medieval and Renaissance Art at the Hermitage Museum (1888-1893). That year, he was also delegated to oversee the archaeological excavations of the ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine settlements in Chersonesus in the Crimean Peninsula, which proved to be a formative experience for the scholar, encouraging him to reconsider both the chronological and geographical boundaries of the late antique and early Christian worlds. It was likewise at this time that he first became involved in the establishment of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople, which was ultimately opened on February 26, 1895.¹⁵ Over the course of two decades, the institute not only became a major research center with a significant library collection, but it also adopted the active role of protecting and restoring surviving monuments of classical, early Christian and Byzantine antiquity in Ottoman territories that had been neglected by the Turkish authorities for centuries.

¹⁴ Nikodim Kondakov, *Pamiatnik Garpii iz Maloi Azii i simovlika grecheskago iskusstva* (Odessa: Tipografiia Ul'rikha i Shul'tse, 1873); *Drevniaia Arkhitektura Gruzii. Issledovanie Istorii* (Moscow: Sinodal'naia Tipografiia, 1876); *Istorii Vizantiiskogo Iskusstva i Ikonografii po Miniaturam Grecheskikh Rukopisei* (Odessa: Tipografiia Ul'rikha i Shul'tse, 1876); *Histoire de l'Art Byzantin Considéré Principalement dans Les Miniatures*, ed. M. Trawinski (Paris: Jules Rouam, 1886); *Grecheskiiia terrakottovyiia statuetki* (Odessa: Franko-Ruskaia Tipografiia L. Danikana, 1879); *Mozaiki mecheti Kakhrie-Dzhamisi - Mone tes Choras - v Konstantinopolie* (Odessa: Tipografiia G. Ul'rikha, 1881); *Vizantiiskie tserkvi i pamiatniki Konstantinopolia* (Odessa: Tipografiia A. Schultz, 1886).

¹⁵ Iurii Piatnitskii, "Russkii Archeologicheskii Institut v Konstantinopole (RAIK)," *Vizantinovedenie v Ermitazhe*, ed. V.S. Shandrovskaia (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh, 1991), p. 28

In addition to continuing his work on early Christian and Byzantine art, in the 1890s and early 1900s Kondakov also turned his attention to medieval Russian art and architecture, publishing a number of encyclopedic works such as the multivolume *Russian Antiquities and Monuments of Art* (1889-1899), *Treasures from the Period of the Kievan Dukedoms* (1896), *The Iconography of the Mother of God* (1910) and posthumously *The Russian Icon* (1927).¹⁶ The closing decades of the nineteenth century saw him undertake a number of important trips to Egypt, Syria and Palestine, which resulted in the publication of *Travels to Sinai: The Antiquities of the Mount Sinai Monastery* (1882) and the *Archaeological Expedition to Syria and Palestine* (1904).¹⁷ The latter trip in particular shaped his views on the historical significance of the Middle East and Asia in influencing the development of Byzantine and Western European art in the late antique and early Christian periods. It appears that during this trip Kondakov contracted tuberculosis and on account of poor health was forced to give up his position at the University of St. Petersburg in order to spend more time in the south of Russia. Following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, Kondakov made the difficult decision to leave his native country, moving first to Sofia and subsequently to Prague, where he taught at the Charles University until his death at the age of eighty on February 16, 1925. In a lengthy obituary published in the Czech academic journal *Slavia*, the authors lamented the passing of a great “Slavic Viking of Science,” whose “foundational works enriched world art history” and “created an entire school of Russian archaeologists.”¹⁸

3 The Iconographic Method

Beginning with some of his earliest publications in the 1870s, Kondakov developed what he called a “historical iconographic” method of visual analysis, which entailed a close examination of how and why artists developed new iconographies to reflect changing ideologies, tastes and quotidian living conditions. In contrast to Alois Riegl (1858-1905), Kondakov objected to a purely formalist

¹⁶ Nikodim Kondakov and Ivan Tolstoi, *Russkii drevnosti v pamiatnikakh iskusstva* (St. Petersburg: A. Benke, 1889-1899); *Antiquités de la Russie Méridionale*, trans. Salomon Reinach (Paris: E. Leroux, 1891); *Russkie klady: Izslidovanie drevnostei velikniazheskago perioda* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Glavnago Upravleniia Udelov, 1896); *Ikonografiia Bogomateri: sviazi grecheskoi i russkoi ikonopisi s ital'ianskoiu ranniago Vozrozhdeniia* (St. Petersburg: R. Golike i A. Vil'borg, 1910); *The Russian Icon*, trans. Ellis Minns (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927).

¹⁷ Nikodim Kondakov, *Puteshestvie na Sinai v 1881 godu: iz putevykh vpechatlenii; drevnosti Sinaiskago monastyria* (Odessa: Tipografiia P.A. Zelenago, 1882); *Arkheologicheskoe puteshestvie po Sirii i Palestinie* (St. Petersburg: Izdatelstvo Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1904).

¹⁸ *Slavia Praha*, 1925. Vol. III, Sec. 4, pp. 787-789.

approach to art and architecture. Referring explicitly to Riegl's methodology, Kondakov argued in *Archaeological Expedition to Syria and Palestine* that

An aesthetic approach to the analysis of historical monuments of painting presents an even larger problem [...] under pressure from the current fashion for the decadent enjoyment of ornamentation [...] instead of investigating the essence and content of monuments, it will be enough [for the specialist] to pronounce his assessment based on formal structures [alone] and the task of the historian will thus be exhausted, as if he had closed his eyes and ears in order not to see and hear what monuments of the past have to show and communicate, as though their creators did not have anything serious to say or anything of substance to demonstrate, and were [instead] exclusively concerned with questions of composition, color and tonality, etc.¹⁹

Unlike Riegl, Kondakov was not at all sympathetic to modernist aesthetics and instead contended that the most successful examples of early Christian and later medieval art were formally akin to Italian Trecento paintings or Hellenistic grave-portraits. He maintained that artists of all epochs – not least the late antique and early Christian periods – consistently aspired towards “naturalism,” “vitality” and “liveliness,” wishing to reflect in their artworks the “realities” of their everyday experience.²⁰ In fact, he had nothing but contempt for the new-found modernist appreciation of the non-representational and “abstract” qualities of early Christian and Byzantine art that had swept through Europe in the early nineteenth century, writing that the formalist approach of twentieth-century “aesthetes” and “dilettantes” was “absolutely wanting in any scientific consistency or philosophical content.”²¹ Instead, he believed that style was inextricably linked to iconography and it was the latter that had been entirely re-conceptualized and reinvented on an unprecedented scale in the late antique period as a result of Christianization.

For Kondakov, the introduction of new “philosophical content” in art brought about a reinvigoration rather than a degeneration of Hellenistic forms. Departing from the prevalent view that late antique and Byzantine art were the decadent nadirs of the Greco-Roman aesthetic tradition, Kondakov contended that it was precisely this transitional historical moment that witnessed the production of some of the most dynamic and interesting works of art and architecture in the history of art, concluding that “what we...often call the decline of art, is in fact its Renaissance.”²² He attributed any crudeness of form or awkwardness of exe-

¹⁹ Kondakov, *Archeologicheskoe puteshestvie po Sirii i Palestinie*, p. 24.

²⁰ Kondakov, *Istoriia Vizantiiskogo Iskusstva i Ikonografii po Miniaturam Grecheskikh Rukopisei*, pp. 40, 43, 77, 89.

²¹ Nikodim Kondakov, *The Russian Icon*, trans. Ellis Minns (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 10.

²² Kondakov, *Russkie klady*, Vol. 1, p. 79.

cution in late antique and early Christian art to disparities between works created by sophisticated metropolitan craftsmanship and their poorly executed provincial “copies” from the Roman and Byzantine periphery rather than to a widespread “loss” of artistic skill in the culture at large.

In fact, Kondakov’s outright rejection of Edward Gibbon’s widely accepted thesis of political, cultural and artistic degradation following the sack of Rome in the fifth century – as articulated in the latter’s seminal account of the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* – had important implications not only for late antique studies, but for later historical periods as well.²³ For example,

²³ Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vols. 1-6 (London: Printed for W. Straham; and T. Cadell, in the Strand, 1776-1788). Kondakov explicitly referred to Gibbon’s “tendentious attacks” and “biased views” in his *Byzantine Churches and Monuments of Constantinople* (1886) and *Archaeological Expedition to Syria and Palestine* (1904). See Nikodim Kondakov, *Vizantiiskie tserkvi i pamiatniki Konstantinopolia*, eds. Gerold Vzdornov and Aleksei Lidov (Moscow: Indrik, 2006), pp. 26, 30, 70 and *Arkheologicheskoe putesthestvie po Sirii i Palestinie* (St. Petersburg: Izdatelstvo Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1904), pp. 45-46. Although Gibbon’s *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was translated into Russian by Mikhail Nevedomsky only in 1883, it was already quite well-known by way of Leclerc De Sept-Chenes’s French translation of 1788-90. Thus, in 1790 the Russian historian, Nikolai Karamzin, cited Gibbon as his model for historical writing, proceeding to base his own twelve volume *History of the Russian State* from 1816–26 on the former’s *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*: “It is painful, but in all fairness necessary, to say that at this time we still do not possess a good Russian History, that is, one written with noble eloquence, critically, by a philosophical mind. Tacitus, Hume, Robertson, Gibbon – they are models!” Nikolai Karamzin, *Letters of a Russian Traveller*, 1789-90 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 252, quoted in Andrew Wachtel, *An Obsession with History: Russian Writers Confront the Past* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 46. Likewise, in 1823 Alexander Pushkin referred to Gibbon’s work in the eighth chapter of his *Eugene Onegin*:

Once more he turned to books, unchoosing,
 devouring Gibbon and Rousseau,
 Manzoni and Chamfort, perusing
 Madame de Staël, Bichat, Tissot,
 Herder, and even at times a Russian –
 nothing was barred beyond discussion –
 he read of course the skeptic Bayle
 and all the works of Fontanelle –
 almanacs, journals of reflection,
 where admonitions are pronounced,
 where nowadays I'm soundly trounced,
 but where such hymns in my direction
 were chanted, I remember when –
e sempre bene, gentlemen.

Alexander Pushkin, “Chapter VIII, Verse 35,” *Eugene Onegin*, trans. Charles Johnston (New York: Viking Press, 1977).

Kondakov fervently challenged conventional accounts of the European Renaissance, which maintained that artists spontaneously rediscovered classical art when surviving antique statuary was first unearthed in Italy in the mid-fifteenth century. Instead, Kondakov argued that Hellenistic forms were steadily transmitted to Europe from Byzantium over the course of several centuries beginning with the Crusades and culminating with Greek artists fleeing to Italy from the Ottomans, following the fall of Constantinople in 1453. At the end of his life, Kondakov claimed that this theory was at the heart of much of his life's work, writing that he had "always been preoccupied with the investigation of how the antique, Greco-Roman world transformed into a new European one, and attempted to demonstrate how Byzantium, the Eastern center of Europe, played a leading role in this process."²⁴

4 The Role of the East

Just like Josef Strzygowski (1862–1941) – discussed elsewhere in this volume – Kondakov attributed many of the transformations in late antique art and architecture to an influx of aesthetic influences from the East, although he viewed this phenomenon in positive rather than negative terms.²⁵ Following his trips to Mount Sinai, Syria and Palestine, he concluded that the ancient monuments of these regions were of "primary importance" to the development of early Christian and later Byzantine art and architecture, which according to him were as indebted to "Persian" forms as they were to Hellenistic ones.²⁶ Indeed, from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries, the Byzantine Empire was at the nexus of a number of transcontinental trade networks between East, Central and South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and the Mediterranean. As a result, artists, architects and craftsmen were continuously exposed to a number of different

²⁴ Nikodi Kondakov, "Les costumes orientaux à la Cour Byzantine," *Byzantion*, Vol. 1 (1924): 41-42.

²⁵ It is tempting to speculate about the possibility of Strzygowski having adopted some of these ideas directly from Kondakov, given that he had traveled to Moscow and St. Petersburg in the early 1890s and was well aware of the older scholar's work. In fact, when Kondakov's student, Dmitrii Ainalov, reviewed Strzygowski's *The Orient or Rome: Contributions to the History of Late Antique and Early Christian Art* (1901), he observed that "the whole direction of [Strzygowski's] thinking, with the addition of much more to which he has not yet paid adequate attention, is already contained *in extenso* in Russian scholarship." See *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* 9 (1902): 138-152, quoted Garth Fowden, *Before and after Muhammad: the First Millennium Refocused* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 30.

²⁶ See Dmitrii Ainalov, "Akademik N.P. Kondakov kak istorik iskusstva i metodolog," *N.P. Kodakov: Vospominania i Dumy*, ed. Irina Kyzlasova (Moscow: Indrik, 2002), pp. 338-339.

artistic traditions in the form of circulating luxury goods, which had made a lasting impact both on the early Christian and on subsequent Byzantine monumental and decorative arts, leading to the gradual development of new syncretic and highly original styles of representation and ornamentation. Kondakov referred to these styles as “idealistic,” “schematic,” “symbolic” and “iconic,” and contrasted them to the more “realistic” and “naturalistic” ones discussed earlier, which derived from the classical Greco-Roman tradition.²⁷ Although he expressed a personal preference for the more Hellenistic-inspired late antique and early Christian representational styles, he nonetheless maintained that the “symbolic” manner of execution imbued a work of art with monumentality and “genuine grandeur and refinement.”²⁸ He was especially impressed with its deployment of brilliant, saturated color. Such an unorthodox perspective radically departed from the more prevalent opinion that “Oriental” influences – and especially Islamic art – had a pernicious effect on the trajectory of late antique, early Christian art and medieval art.

To a certain degree, Kondakov combined Riegl’s and Franz Wickhoff’s positivistic model of Christian transformation of the Roman Empire with Strzygowski’s notion that the late antique arts of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Palestine had a far-reaching effect on the evolution of Western European art. Kondakov’s expansive view of late antiquity as a period of progressive pluralism and dynamic cultural exchange between diverse linguistic, religious and ethnic groups posited a mutually propagating and generative coexistence of a multiplicity of different visual traditions and tastes. Indeed, until the end of his life, Kondakov prophetically claimed that the future of art history and archaeology would ultimately come to be dominated by a comparative approach to different aesthetic traditions and by a “global” perspective.

It is important to note here that Kondakov was extremely well versed in contemporary European scholarship on classical, late antique and medieval art, and maintained an active correspondence throughout his lifetime with scholars such as Charles Diehl, Ormonde Dalton, Giovanni Batista de Rossi, Gustave Schlumberger, Franz Xaver Kraus and Gabriel Millet, among others.²⁹ As noted above, he regularly read and reviewed the work of Alois Riegl, Josef Strzygowski, Émile Mâle, Antonio Muñoz and Oskar Wulff, and consistently engaged with their methodologies and theories in his own publications.³⁰ For instance, in *Archaeological Expedition to Syria and Palestine*, Kondakov discussed at length

²⁷ Kondakov, *Istoriia Vizantiiskogo Iskusstva i Ikonografii po Miniaturam Grecheskikh Rukopisei* pp. 60, 89, 137, 145.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

²⁹ For more information on Kondakov’s Western European contacts, see Irina Kyzlasova, *Istoriia izuchenii vizantiiskogo i drevnerusskogo iskusstva v Rossii: F.I. Buslaev, N.P. Kondakov: metody, idei, teorii* (Moscow: Izd-vo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1985), pp. 84-90.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 89.

both Riegl's and Strzygowski's hypotheses about the development and evolution of late antique and early Christian art, while in his turn, he spent the summer of 1910 anxiously anticipating the publication of Strzygowski's review of his *Macedonia: An Archeological Expedition*, sections of which had been translated into German.³¹ In fact, Kondakov ensured that a number of his most important books, such as *The History of Byzantine Art and Iconography Traced in the Miniatures of Greek Manuscripts*, *The History and Monuments of Byzantine Enamels, Russian Antiquities and Monuments of Art* and *The Russian Icon*, were all republished in Western European languages – namely French, German and English – in order to be available to a broader international readership.³²

Kondakov especially appreciated and repeatedly praised what he viewed as the unprecedented originality and dynamism of early Christian and Byzantine art, which he argued led to the “renewal” of an increasingly depleted and attenuated classical tradition. He traced the seeds of this phenomenon already in the archaic period of Greek civilization, writing that as early as the sixth century BC, Greek art had benefitted from its adaptation and transformation in Asia Minor and other “barbaric regions,” where it was “enlivened” and reinvigorated to generate new forms and styles.³³ He insisted that only sustained “critical inquiry of monuments [created in these territories] [...] will solve the question of the influence of the East on Greek art.”³⁴ He likewise contended that the same was true of the Roman Empire and observed that Eastern elements had already entered Roman imperial art long before the emergence of Byzantium as a discrete entity, concluding that

[...] if we are inevitably bound to accept the fact of the proliferation of Roman style and taste in the ancient world, then we must naturally assume the reverse as well: the transmission of artistic forms from the Greek East to Rome in the epoch of syncretism of religions, rites, customs and art.³⁵

Kondakov believed that in the late antique and early Christian periods, these processes were accelerated still further and, from the sixth to the ninth centuries

³¹ Nikodim Kondakov, *Makedoniia: arkheologicheskoe puteshestvie* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1909).

³² Nikodim Kondakov, *Histoire de l'art byzantin, considéré principalement dans les miniatures* (Paris: Librairie de l'Art, 1886-91); *Histoire et Monuments des Emaux Byzantins* (Frankfort sur Mein: [s.n.], 1892); *Geschichte und Denkmäler des Byzantinischen Emails* (Frankfurt am Main: Typographische Anstalt A. Osterrieth, 1892); *The Russian Icon*, trans. Ellis Minns (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927); Nikodim Kondakov and Ivan Tolstoy, *Antiquités de la Russie Méridionale*, trans. Salomon Reinach (Paris: E. Leroux, 1891).

³³ Kondakov, *Pamiatnik Garprii iz Maloi Azii i simovlika grecheskago iskusstva*, p. 192.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Kondakov, *Arkheologicheskoe puteshestvie po Sirii i Palestinie*, p. 20

in particular, “the East prevailed over the West,” resulting in “a series of Eastern prototypes and Western copies.”³⁶

He actively promoted this view both in his publications and as Head Curator of the Department of Medieval and Renaissance Art at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg by completely rearranging both the geographical and chronological sequence of the display. The halls with medieval and Renaissance art were purposely set up to follow the rooms of Eastern Art and to precede those of subsequent Western European painting. In his accompanying 1891 catalogue for the collection, Kondakov explained that

Such an arrangement of the displays corresponds to the historical role of the East, beginning with the fall of the Western Roman Empire and ending with [the onset of] the Crusades. The era of the great migration of peoples entailed the movement of peoples and culture from East to West [...]. Recent studies of the Middle Ages increasingly lead us to Eastern sources.³⁷

As discussed by Jas’ Elsner in the present volume, following Kondakov’s death, the idea of a “renewal from the East” was taken up by several of his students, including André Grabar, who popularized it in the West throughout the second half of the twentieth century in works such as *Christian Iconography: A Study of its Origins and Early Christian Art: From the Rise of Christianity to the Death of Theodosius*.³⁸ As a result, from the 1960s onwards, academic discourse on the late antique and early Christian periods has increasingly engaged with both texts and artworks produced in Northeast Africa, Arabia, Iran and the Caucasus.

Kondakov felt that these Eastern aesthetic influences were most prominently expressed in the European decorative arts, which clearly manifested the “artistic worldview” of a particular historical period as much as the monumental and fine arts.³⁹ Much like Riegl, Kondakov rejected what he saw as the artificial distinction between the “high” and “low” arts, especially since the latter were even more intimately intertwined with people’s everyday lives or *byt* than the former.⁴⁰ He believed that an attentive historian could gain invaluable insights into

³⁶ Ibid. p. 12

³⁷ Nikodim Kondakov, *Imperatorskii Ermitazh: Ukazatel’ otdelenia Srednih Vekhov i epohi Vozrozhdeniya* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Ministerstva Putei Soobshcheniia A. Benke, 1891), p. 19.

³⁸ André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of its Origins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); *Early Christian Art: From the Rise of Christianity to the Death of Theodosius*, trans. Stuart Gilbert and James Emmons (New York, Odyssey Press, 1968).

³⁹ Nikodim Kondakov, *Grecheskiiia terrakottovyyia statuetki* (Odessa: Franko-Russkaia Tipografiia L. Danikana, 1879), p. 7.

⁴⁰ Riegl’s last chapter in *Late Roman Art Industry* is dedicated to the arts and crafts as historically and artistically valuable products of late antique culture.

the vernacular culture and popular ideologies of a given epoch by closely examining its decorative and applied arts and he himself moved effortlessly between the study of architecture, monumental frescos and mosaics, illuminated manuscripts, icons, enamels, sculpture, costume and jewelry, paying special attention to their interconnectedness and shared features. Anticipating the social history of art by almost a century, Kondakov contended that the role of the historian or archeologist was not simply to trace the changes in artistic forms, styles and concepts for their own sakes, but to ascertain what those changes revealed about the shifting political, social and material realities of specific individuals, nations and entire civilizations. In *History and Monuments of Byzantine Enamels*, he affirmed that “a monument of art is always the expression of personal, local and temporal thoughts, feelings and tastes.”⁴¹

Although today Kondakov is primarily known for his scholarship on Byzantine and medieval Russian art, as the present essay has attempted to show, his work has also contributed in notable ways to the study of late antiquity both directly and indirectly through his students such as André Grabar (1896-1990), George Ostrogorsky (1902-1976), Yakov Smirnov (1869-1918) and most importantly, Mikhail Rostovtzev (1870-1952). As Garth Fowden notes in his recent book on this subject, even the pre-eminent scholar of late antiquity, Peter Brown, “drank from the same Russian spring that had nourished Strzygowski,” among others, at the turn of the century.⁴² Perhaps Kondakov’s most significant achievement in this field was his far-reaching reconsideration of the artificial division between the late antique and early Byzantine epochs, as well as his challenge to the dominant theory of abrupt rupture with the ancient world and the resultant inevitable political and cultural decline, especially since the Byzantines had considered themselves to be Romans and referred to themselves as “Romai-oi.” Likewise, by emphasizing the pervasive cultural connections and aesthetic exchanges between Byzantium, Western Europe and the East, Kondakov dramatically extended the geographical boundaries of the late antique and early Christian worlds to include Southern Russia, Central Asia, North Africa and the Caucasus. Lastly, he was one of the first European scholars to focus on the ubiquitous and enduring influence that the East had on the development of the early Christian and subsequent European visual canons.

Unfortunately, since the vast majority of Kondakov’s publications are still only available in Russian, he has not received as much attention in Anglophone scholarship as he has in his native country, where he is almost universally acknowledged to be a monolithic cultural and historical figure and the founder of Byzantine and Russian art history, as evidenced by the display in the Russian State Historical Museum discussed at the beginning of this essay. The last dec-

⁴¹ Kondakov, *History and Monuments of Byzantine Enamels*, p. 254.

⁴² Garth Fowden, *Before and after Muḥammad: the First Millennium Refocused* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 43.

ade in particular has witnessed a slew of new re-editions of some of Kondakov's seminal works such as *The Monuments of Christian Art on Mt. Athos* (2004), *The Byzantine Churches and Monuments of Constantinople* (2006), *Icons* (2008) and *The History of Byzantine Art and Iconography Traced in the Miniatures of Greek Manuscripts* (2012).⁴³ In addition, numerous compilations of his memoirs, correspondence and contemporary tributes have also recently appeared in the Russian press.⁴⁴ Having said that, growing historiographical interest in Kondakov's theories and interpretations – especially in relation to his Western European contemporaries – has also begun to increasingly attract the attention of international scholars, leading to a gradual re-instatement of Kondakov's intellectual legacy in the broader academic community, to which the present volume is a clear testament.⁴⁵

⁴³ Nikodim Kondakov, *Pamiatniki khristianskogo iskusstva na Afone* (Moscow: Indrik, 2004); *Vizantiiskie tserkvi i pamiatniki Konstantinopolia*, eds. Gerold Vzdornov and Aleksei Lidov (Moscow: Indrik, 2006); *Icons* (New York: Parkstone International, 2008); *Istoriia Vizantiiskogo Iskusstva i Ikonografii po Miniaturam Grecheskikh Rukopisei*, eds. Georgi Radomirov Parpulov and Aleksandr L'vovich Saminskii (Plovdiv: Georgi Radomirov Parpulov, 2012).

⁴⁴ Irina Kyzlasova, ed. *Mir Kondakova: publikatsii, stat'i, katalog vystavki* (Moscow: Russkii put', 2004); Nikodim Kondakov, *Vospominaniia i dumy*, ed. Irina Kyzlasova (Moscow: Indrik, 2002); Gerold Vzdornov, "Nikodim Pavlovich Kondakov v zerkale sovremennoi vizantinistiki," *Restavratsiia i nauka: ocherki po istorii otkrytiia i izucheniia drevnerusskoi zhivopisi* (Moscow: Indrik, 2006), pp. 291-307.

⁴⁵ The recent reinstatement of the international academic journal, *Convivium (Seminarium Kondakovianum Series Nova)*, is one such example of the newfound interest in Kondakov's work.