

# Introduction to Part 1

*Maria Taroutina*

Roger Fry first coined the term “Proto-Byzantines” in 1908 in an article describing the modernist masterpieces of Signac, Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Cézanne then on display at the International Society in London. He wrote:

[Cézanne and Gauguin] are not really Impressionists at all, they are proto-Byzantines rather than Neo-Impressionists. They have already attained to the contour, and assert its value with keen emphasis. They fill the contour with willfully simplified and unmodulated masses, and rely for their whole effect upon a well-considered co-ordination of the simplest elements.<sup>1</sup>

Responding to a negative review in *Burlington Magazine*, Fry defended the Post-Impressionists by arguing that their pictorially daring artworks were not the result of an “eclectic” distortion or misunderstanding of Impressionist painting. Rather, he thought of these works as a deliberate “recovery” of “Byzantinism.” Relying on historical precedent, Fry articulated a cyclical, rather than a teleological, theory of artistic development, arguing that

“Impressionism” has existed before, in the Roman art of the Empire, and it too was followed, as I believe inevitably, by a movement similar to that observable in the Neo-Impressionists—we may call it for convenience Byzantinism. In the mosaics of Sta Maria Maggiore ... one can see something of this transformation from Impressionism in the original work to Byzantinism in subsequent restorations. It is probably a mistake to suppose, as is usually done, that Byzantinism was due to a loss of the technical ability to be realistic, consequent upon barbarian invasions. In the Eastern empire there was never any loss of technical skill; indeed, nothing could surpass the perfections of some Byzantine craftsmanship. Byzantinism was the necessary outcome of Impressionism, a necessary and inevitable reaction from it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Fry, “Letter” to the *Burlington Magazine*, March 1908, in Christopher Reed, *A Roger Fry Reader by Roger Fry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

From an etymological perspective, “*proto-Byzantine*” implied that the art of the Post-Impressionists was first and foremost “Byzantine” rather than “Impressionist” in nature, which, in its turn, signaled both an aesthetic and conceptual break with the naturalist tradition of representation. Fry thus recast the most cutting-edge French avant-garde movement of the late-nineteenth century as an essentially Byzantine revival; one that self-consciously shifted the representational paradigm, much like Byzantine art had done centuries before.

A similar idea was articulated two years later by the Russian artist, critic, and art historian Alexander Benois, who described the burgeoning Russian avant-garde movement of the early twentieth century as the “Byzantinism of our age.”<sup>3</sup> Benois argued that “Byzantinism” was neither an isolated nor a localized trend, but signaled a widespread “turning point” in artistic culture more broadly; and while in Russia the winds of “Byzantine” change were only beginning to appear, in Europe, and especially in France, they had already reached full force. Singling out Matisse as one of the most important pioneers of “Byzantinism,” Benois wrote:

Matisse develops mistakes and blunders into a system, a theory.... A return to “correct” design, to “accurate” coloration is no longer possible for him. Any such return would be a compromise—such as those compromises, which often distort the art of one of the most wonderful artists of our time, Maurice Denis.<sup>4</sup>

For Benois, “Byzantinism” represented not only a particular set of modernist pictorial values, which he identified as a “simplified style, monumentality and primitive decorativeness,” but also a new theory of art that firmly rejected the slightest hints of representational illusionism as an aesthetic “compromise.”<sup>5</sup> Despite his personal predilection for the art of Maurice Denis, Benois believed that mere stylistic and iconographic borrowing remained only superficial “Byzantinism” that failed to fully embrace the multiple aesthetic and conceptual possibilities inherent in Byzantine art. Modern “Byzantinism” was thus understood both by Benois and Fry as a totalizing and definitive reconceptualization of the appearance and function of art in modernity, one that moved beyond reductive imitation or copying of medieval Byzantine forms.

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3 Alexander Benois, “Khudozhestvennyie Pisma—Salon i shkola Baskta (Letters on Art: The Salon and the School of Bakst),” *Rech'* 117 (May, 1910):3.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

It remains unclear whether Benois and Fry employed the term “Byzantine” simply as a convenient metaphor or historical analogy for modernism, or whether they genuinely (mis)read Byzantine goals and aesthetics as anachronistically proto-modern. In any case, their formulation of “Modernism as Byzantinism” set an important precedent in the understanding and reception of contemporary modern art, and a number of other thinkers, critics, and artists began to draw similar conceptual and aesthetic parallels. Thus, for example, in his study *On the Connections between Russian Painting, Byzantium, and the West from the 12th through the 20th Centuries*, the artist and theorist Aleksei Grishchenko asserted that “twentieth-century Paris is strangely synonymous with medieval Moscow.”<sup>6</sup> Comparing a medieval icon to the most recent work of Picasso, Grishchenko underscored what he saw as meaningful formal resonances between the two, highlighting their similarities rather than their differences:

... it is wonderful [to see] that in several Moscow icons ... the coloristic problem of combining three different tonalities is masterfully solved, [a problem] only recently explored by Picasso in his famous portrait *Woman with a Fan* from S.I. Shchukin’s collection.<sup>7</sup>

The avant-garde artist, Natalia Goncharova, likewise observed that

If one looks closely at the work of contemporary French artists, beginning with Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh, and at ancient Russian painting—if one thinks hard—it becomes clear that the aims of one and the other coincide. This is the only true and constant aim in art.<sup>8</sup>

Benois developed this idea further in his 1913 article “Icons and the New Art,” where he claimed that Byzantine and modern art not only had analogous aims aesthetically and conceptually, but were also mutually generative, wherein exposure to one facilitated the understanding and appreciation of the other:

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6 Aleksei Grishchenko, *O Sviaziakh russkoi zhivopisi s Vizantiei i Zapadom XIII–XX vv* (Moscow: Izd. A. Grishchenko, 1913), 26.

7 Ibid., 17.

8 Natalia Goncharova, “Press Statement, 24 December 1911,” in Jane Sharp, *Russian Modernism Between East and West: Natalia Goncharova and the Moscow Avant-Garde* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 271.

Not only does the fourteenth-century *Nicholas the Miracle Worker* or *Nativity of the Mother of God* help us to understand Matisse, Picasso, Le Fauconnier or Goncharova; but through Matisse, Picasso, Le Fauconnier or Goncharova, we feel the great beauty of these Byzantine pictures much better, the fact that they have youth, power and animation.<sup>9</sup>

Two years later, he would famously state that one of the most celebrated masterpieces of modern art, Malevich's *Black Square* (1915), was "without doubt ... an icon."<sup>10</sup> In this particular case, Benois was implying a conceptual parallel rather than a formal resemblance—one that Malevich had undoubtedly intended by hanging his *Black Square* in the "sacred corner" of the gallery at the 0.10: *Last Futurist Exhibition of Painting* in St. Petersburg (Fig. A.1).<sup>11</sup> This provocative placement implied that the *Black Square* had by analogy assumed the icon's consummate totality as the "zero of form."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Malevich's subsequent multiple copies of the *Black Square*, as well as its virulent reproduction in miniature on plates, cups, saucers, clothes, and architectural models, further enacted its claims to iconicity as a "sacred" prototype.<sup>13</sup>

The leftist art historian and critic Nikolai Punin similarly traced a theoretical lineage between the Russo-Byzantine artistic tradition and the newly minted Russian avant-garde of the nineteen teens. Analyzing Vladimir Tatlin's 1915 *Corner Counter-Reliefs* (Fig. A.2), Punin argued that the artist's paradigmatic shift into three-dimensionality was deeply indebted to the iconic tradition, both in terms of material heterogeneity and the conceptual shift from pictorial to real space.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, having studied medieval art at St. Petersburg University under the direction of the well-known Byzantinist Dmitri Ainalov, Punin believed that Byzantine art and its Russian variant belonged to a

9 Alexander Benois, "Khudozhestvennye Pisma: Ikony i Novoe Iskusstvo (Letters on Art: Icons and the New Art)," *Rech'* 93 (5 April 1913): 4.

10 Alexander Benois, "Review of the 0.10 Exhibition," *Rech'* (9 January, 1916), quoted in Linda S. Boersma, *0.10: The Last Futurist Exhibition of Painting* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1994), 70.

11 The sacred or "red corner"—*krasnyi ugol*—is a small worship space in the corner of a room, just under the ceiling, which is traditionally reserved for Orthodox icons in domestic spaces.

12 Kazimir Malevich, *From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism: The New Realism in Painting, 1915 in Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902–1934*, ed. and trans. John E. Bowlt, 2nd ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 118.

13 There are at least three known copies of the *Black Square*, which Malevich executed in 1923, 1929, and 1932.

14 Nikolai Punin, *Tatlin (Protiv Kubizma)* (St. Petersburg: Gos. izd-vo, 1921).



FIGURE A.1 *Kazimir Malevich. Black Square (1915). Oil on canvas, 79.5 × 79.5 cm (31 5/16 × 31 5/16 in). State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia. On display at the Posledniaia futuristicheskaia vystavka kartin 0,10 (nol'-desiat') (LAST FUTURIST EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS 0.10 [ZERO-TEN]), KHUDOZHESTVENNOE BIURO, PETROGRAD, DECEMBER 1915–JANUARY 1916.*

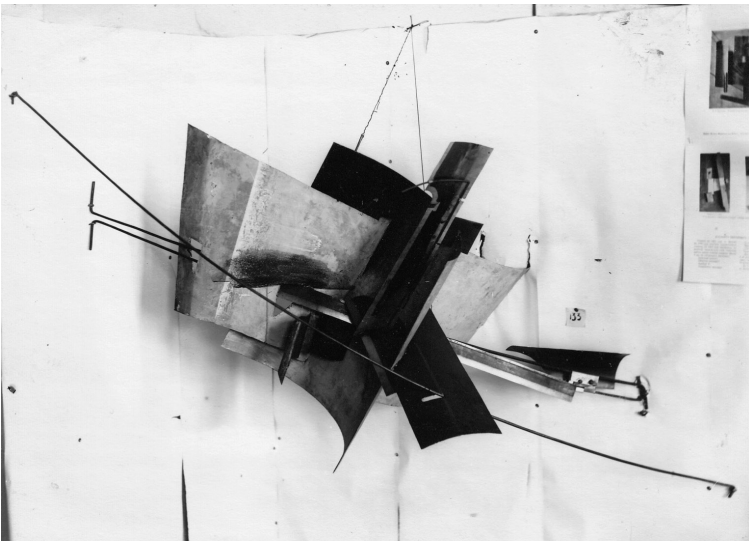


FIGURE A.2 *Vladimir Tatlin. Corner Counter-Relief (1914–15). Iron, aluminum, paint, dimensions unknown. Location unknown. On display at the Posledniaia futuristicheskaia vystavka kartin 0,10 (nol'-desiat') (LAST FUTURIST EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS 0.10 [ZERO-TEN]), KHUDOZHESTVENNOE BIURO, PETROGRAD, DECEMBER 1915–JANUARY 1916.*

fundamentally different artistic tradition from that of the Western European canon. Unlike Fry and Benois, Punin considered modern French painting and Byzantine art to be diametrically opposed, both stylistically and conceptually. For Punin, the most recent French art—exemplified by Picasso’s Cubist paintings—marked the end of the “old school of painting” rather than “the dawn of a new era.”<sup>15</sup> Punin understood Cubism as the continuation of Impressionism, which he saw as an essentially “naturalist” project, much as Roger Fry did. After all, despite its seemingly abstract visual vocabulary, Cubism was still a representational style, rooted in external reality and interested in playing “with the difference between, and collision of, illusion and reality, representation and its model.”<sup>16</sup> By contrast, the Byzantine tradition presupposed an entirely different relationship between the image and that which it represented. Instead of being an illusionistic “window” onto some perceived reality, the icon was a physical materialization of that reality—a direct “presentation” of it. Similarly, the different materials that Tatlin employed in his *Corner Counter-Reliefs* remained autonomous and abstract “presentations” in so far as they were not made to stand in for something else within the representational logic of the artwork.

Accordingly, in his 1913 article, “On the Problem of Byzantine Art,” Punin argued that only the rediscovery of Byzantine art could catalyze a genuinely new direction in contemporary European painting.<sup>17</sup> Holding up Tatlin as a paradigmatic example of this new direction, Punin explained that the artist’s “culture of materials” and shift into “real space” had evolved out of his direct exposure to the Russo-Byzantine artistic tradition, given his training as an icon painter in the workshops of Moscow and Yaroslavl.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, as Otto Demus had convincingly demonstrated in 1948, instead of functioning purely pictorially, the Middle Byzantine mosaic image actually projected itself into real space, collapsing the separation between the exclusively representational realm of the artwork and the lived environment of the viewer.<sup>19</sup> Although Demus’s theory was formulated over two decades after Punin’s initial publication of *Tatlin (Against Cubism)*, it is evident both from this and Punin’s other essays

15 Punin, *Tatlin*. Reprinted in Nikolai Punin, *O Tatline*, eds. I.N. Punina and V.I. Rakinin (Moscow: Literaturno-khudozhestvennoe agestvo “RA”, 1994), 28–41.

16 Paul Wood, “The Revolutionary Avant-Gardes: Dada, Constructivism and Surrealism,” in *The Challenge of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 221

17 Nikolai Punin, “K probleme Vizantiiskogo Iskusstva,” *Apollon* 3 (March 1913): 25.

18 Christina Lodder, *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 11.

19 Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (Boston: Boston Book & Art Shop, 1955), 13–14.

that he had already understood the representational complexities and conceptual possibilities that Byzantine images offered for modernist artistic practice.<sup>20</sup>

Although such Byzantine/modern analogies were more prevalent in Russia because of the country's lengthy historical relationship with Byzantium and its resulting cultural, religious, and artistic affinities, similar aesthetic and theoretical trends were nonetheless equally present in Germany and Austria. At the turn of the century, artists and critics alike were quick to seize on the formal and conceptual resonances between Byzantium, Jugendstil, and Expressionism. For example, Gustav Klimt actively associated his "Golden Period" paintings with the Byzantine representational mode and Julius Meier-Graefe positioned Byzantine mosaics as important precursors to many of the new tendencies that he was witnessing in fin-de-siècle European art.<sup>21</sup> Wilhelm Worringer likewise located what he considered to be the universal, timeless drive toward abstraction in the hieratic and anti-organic aspect of Byzantine representation; while Vasily Kandinsky illustrated his treatise on abstract painting, *On the Spiritual in Art*, with a reproduction of the San Vitale mosaic in Ravenna, similarly implying a correlation between the seeds of abstraction and Byzantine art. Other compelling cases of modernist interest in and experimentation with the art and image theory of Byzantium were likewise present in Italy, Greece, the Balkan states, and Eastern and Central Europe, and it is therefore the hope of the editors that the case studies discussed in *Byzantium/Modernism* will encourage further inquiry into this subject.

Indeed, the diverse and repeated appeals to Byzantine art in relation to canonical modernist movements such as Post-Impressionism, Cubism, German

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20 Punin had a considerable background in medieval art and theory. He trained as a medievalist at St. Petersburg University under the direction of the famous Byzantinist Dmitri Ainalov. In 1913, he began to work in the Department of Christian Antiquities of the State Russian Museum, and in the following year he was simultaneously elected as the secretary of the Society for the Study of Medieval Russian Art and as a member of the editorial board for the journal *Russkaya Ikona* or *Russian Icon*. One of Punin's first major publications was a lengthy study of the works of Andrei Rublev, so it is evident that he would have been highly attuned to the formal complexities and pictorial particularities of Byzantine representation. For an overview of Punin's biography, see V.N. Petrov, "N.N. Punin i ego iskusstvovedcheskie raboti," in N.N. Punin, *Russkoe i sovetskoe iskusstvo: Izbrannye trudy o russkom i sovetskom izobrazitel'nom iskusstve; Mastera russkogo iskusstva XIV–nachala XX veka: sov. khudozhniki*, ed. I.N. Punina (Moscow: Sov. khudozhnik, 1976), 7–32.

21 See Julius Meier-Graefe, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der modernen Kunst. Vergleichende Betrachtung der bildenden Künste, als Beitrag zu einer neuen Aesthetik*. 3 vols. (Stuttgart: Verlag Julius Hofmann, 1904).

Expressionism, abstract painting, Suprematism, and Constructivism, among others, cannot simply be dismissed as the theoretical vagaries of the early twentieth century. Instead, they invite a sustained inquiry into how and why Byzantium became such an attractive representational and conceptual model in the inception and articulation of modernist aesthetics. What did modern art try to learn from Byzantium and how did Byzantine image philosophy contribute to the continually shifting landscape of avant-garde polemics? More importantly, what does contemporary scholarship have to gain from the re-inscription of Byzantine art and theory into the modernist narrative?

This volume aims to address some of these questions by demonstrating that these multiple and pervasive “Byzantine parallels” were not merely accidental or isolated incidents, but were in fact conscious dialectical strategies for modernist self-definition. There was, of course, nothing new in the avant-garde’s espousal of earlier art forms as a means of reinventing a moribund and exhausted artistic culture. From the English Pre-Raphaelites to Gauguin and Picasso, various modern artists looked to the past and to foreign cultures as rich repositories of “primitive” pictorial elements such as flatness, abstraction, decorative opulence, and spatial ambiguity. However, as Nikolai Punin presciently perceived in the early twentieth century, the unique and complex ontological status of Byzantine images as both of this world and not, meant that they radically departed from the dominant conceptual model of art propagated by the Western pictorial tradition. As “presentations” rather than representations of the divine, they presupposed an entirely different relationship between the subject and the object, the viewer and the artwork, and the material and immaterial realms. Accordingly, moving beyond mere formal homologies between Byzantine and modern art, the authors in the present volume probe deeper into the philosophical, ontological, and epistemic frameworks that structured the Byzantium/modernism encounter.

While a number of excellent recent publications have explored the topic of the “medieval/modern” encounter broadly defined, such as Alexander Nagel’s *Medieval/Modern*, Bruce Holsinger’s *The Premodern Condition*, Laura Marks’s *Enfoldment and Infinity: An Islamic Genealogy of New Media Art*, and Amy Knight Powell’s *Depositions: Scenes from the Late Medieval Church and the Modern Museum*, few have focused exclusively on its Byzantine variant. Given the ontological particularity of the Byzantine image, the present study strives to move beyond the generalizations of “medieval,” “Christian,” “spiritual,” or “religious” to analyze specifically how and what was meant and understood by the term “Byzantine.” In addition, the essays in this book engage questions of atemporality, cross-temporality, and anachronism by analyzing the Byzantium/modernism encounter both within the chronologically specific matrix of



modernity and more flexibly as a methodological and theoretical construct. Those few studies that have focused specifically on the Byzantine image and its impact on modern art, such as Andrew Spira's *The Avant-Garde Icon: Russian Avant-Garde Art and the Icon Painting Tradition*, Jefferson Gatrall's and Douglas Greenfield's *Alter Icons: The Russian Icon and Modernity*, and Glenn Peers's "Utopia and Heterotopia: Byzantine Modernisms in America," have tended to be regionally circumscribed to the art and culture of a single nation. Accordingly, instead of grouping the essays by region, the editors of the present volume have tried to outline a broader, transnational narrative, examining key thematic and conceptual continuities and discontinuities across, rather than within, nations.

Having said that, it is important to mention a few significant exceptions, where the authors have explored Byzantium's legacy in modernity across a broader geographical and chronological span. These include Barrie Bullen's *Byzantium Rediscovered*, Glenn Peers's *Byzantine Things in the World* and Marie-José Mondzain's *Image, Icon, Economy: The Byzantine Origins of the Contemporary Imaginary*. The latter, in particular, proposes an alternative theoretical framework for understanding the power and ubiquity of the image in modern and contemporary visual culture by tracing a discursive lineage all the way back to the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries. Building on this seminal study, it is the ambition of the present volume to expand the methodological and discursive field for engaging questions about Byzantium and its multivalent meanings in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in order to re-imagine worn-out art-historical teleologies in novel and stimulating ways.

Accordingly, *Byzantium/Modernism* brings together a number of methodological approaches and interdisciplinary perspectives, and explores a diverse range of media from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries, including painting, architecture, theater, literature, photography, and film. Robert S. Nelson opens the volume with an essay on "Modernism's Byzantiums Byzantium's Modernisms," in which he analyzes the complex ways in which "modernism" and "Byzantium" are mutually informed constructs. As modernism absorbed Byzantium into its complex genealogy, it recast the understanding and study of Byzantine art and architecture in its own image for decades to come. Indeed, as Nelson observes, "Byzantine art would never be the same again." Exposing the multiple biases and motivations that underwrote modernism's self-articulation vis-à-vis the past, Nelson suggests that the goals, aims, and aesthetics of Byzantine art and architecture have been largely misrepresented and misread in the course of the twentieth century in order to accommodate modernism's own powerful self-mythologizing. Nelson persua-

sively demonstrates that modernism's Byzantium and Byzantium's modernism are unstable and continually shifting binaries that necessitate more nuanced methodological models of interpretation and analysis than they have hitherto been accorded.

Robert Ousterhout and Tulay Atak develop this theme further, examining the dualities and complexities that underwrote the Byzantium/modernism encounter in architecture. In her essay on Le Corbusier's continuous interest in the Hagia Sophia, Atak explores the importance of Byzantine sacred spaces to the modernist imaginary. Analyzing Le Corbusier's sketches of the church in relation to his 1926 article, "Architecture d'Epoque Machiniste," Atak argues that architectural modernism was deeply indebted to its Byzantine predecessor in its attempt to renegotiate and reorganize the relation between the visible and the invisible by means of abstraction. Conversely, Robert Ousterhout explores how the goals and aims of Byzantine architecture have been largely misrepresented, misunderstood, and misinterpreted in the course of the twentieth century. Influenced by the modernist ideals of simplicity, clarity, and functionality at the expense of an activated and embodied architectural idiom, twentieth-century scholarship, according to Ousterhout, has fundamentally negated the mobile, dynamic, and participatory aspects of Byzantine architecture. By re-examining the notions of sacred versus profane space, representational versus abstract idioms, and participatory versus static modalities of viewing, Ousterhout and Atak demonstrate the dual impact that the Byzantium/modernism encounter had on the architectural imagination.

Myroslava Mudrak likewise considers the ways in which sacred spaces and practices may have shaped the aesthetic and conceptual formation of one of modernism's most radical representatives: Kazimir Malevich. Moving beyond the narrow confines of formal appropriation, Mudrak considers how the multi-sensorial, synesthetic environment of the Orthodox Church might have influenced Malevich's artistic development. More specifically, she examines Malevich's primitivizing fresco cycle from 1907 in relation to Orthodox ritual and ceremony, as well as the theological writings of the Eastern Christian liturgical tradition, and speculates as to how and why this early experience could have contributed to the artist's subsequent transition to Suprematism. By exploring a little-known period in Malevich's art, Mudrak suggests that his interest in Orthodox representation significantly predated the *Black Square*. Furthermore, the author implies that Malevich's ongoing conceptual engagement with the Byzantine transcended momentary polemical provocation and avant-garde sensationalism and should be understood as a larger theme within his oeuvre.

Last but not least, Elena Boeck's and Dimitra Kotoula's essays expand the scope of the Byzantium/modernism encounter beyond the hermetic realm of the twentieth-century avant-gardes. Here "modernism" is no longer understood as a narrowly defined set of radical artistic and utopian aims, but rather as a more ubiquitous cultural response to the continually shifting conditions of modernity. These included increased travel, new archeological discoveries, evolving historical knowledge and an ever-growing demand for fresh forms of entertainment, distraction, and aesthetic expression in the public realm. By exploring the ways in which the Byzantine was restaged in the larger public imaginary as a generative symbol of alterity already in the 1880s, Boeck's and Kotoula's essays point to the pressing need to re-inscribe Byzantium into the broader discourse of late nineteenth-century modernity. Reflecting a complex triangulation of radicalism, exoticism, nationalism, imperialism, traditionalism, revivalism, and avant-gardism, the nineteenth-century engagement with Byzantium traversed the boundaries between the high and the low, East and West, the fine and the decorative arts, and between modernism and its others. As Elena Boeck persuasively demonstrates, in his theatrical rendition of *Theodora*, the playwright Victorien Sardou presented audiences with an exotic and tantalizing visual world that he had transformed beyond all historical recognition, all the while insisting on its "archaeological authenticity." Capitalizing on the most recent archaeological discoveries and academic publications, Sardou's decadent, Orientalizing and seductive vision of medieval Constantinople and its inhabitants was thus deeply imbricated in the simultaneous consumption and production of knowledge about Byzantium. Along similar lines, Dimitra Kotoula analyzes how the meticulous archaeological research on some of the major Byzantine monuments of Italy, Turkey, and the Greek islands, carried out by leading Arts and Crafts architects Robert-Weir Schultz, Sidney H. Barnsley, Walter S. George, William Harvey, and Ramsay Traquair, came to bear on the art, literature, and philosophy of the Arts and Crafts movement. In particular, Kotoula examines how the reception and interpretation of Byzantium by the founding members of the movement fundamentally affected their development as artists and architects and fuelled the subsequent popularization of "the Byzantine" among a broader public.

The present volume strives to move beyond the two poles of a narrowly circumscribed revivalism on the one hand, and a clearly defined modernist agenda on the other. Instead, it delineates a rich multiplicity of ways in which the Byzantine was understood, constructed, and represented under the conditions of modernity. It is evident that rather than being a stable signifier, Byzantium came to reflect a number of competing aspirations, goals, and philosophies. From theater, Art Nouveau jewelry, and furniture designs, to the interior



FIGURE A.3 The Princess of Dreams (La Princesse Lointaine). *Metropol Hotel, Moscow, 1893–1903. The composition is a copy of Mikhail Vrubel's painting, The Princess of Dreams (La Princesse Lointaine), 1896. Oil on canvas. 750 × 1400 cm. The ceramic tiles for the Metropol façade were produced in S. I. Mamontov's Abramtsevo Ceramic Factory.*

decoration of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Mikhail Vrubel's 1902 mosaic façade for the Metropol Hotel in Moscow (Fig. A.3), and Barry Faulkner's 1933 "Intelligence Awakening Mankind" mosaic on the Rockefeller Center in New York, Byzantine aesthetics traversed various geographies, temporalities, and media to permeate our visual consciousness and material culture in substantial and lasting ways. The ambition of this volume, therefore, is to chart both the scope of these pervasive Byzantine iterations and their continued significance to the present day. To sum up then, *Byzantium/Modernism* hopes to pose a new set of interesting questions and to generate fresh approaches to Byzantium, modernism, and Byzantium/modernism.

SECTION 1

*The Avant-Gardes and Their Counter Movements*



