

ABSTRACTS

Le Centenaire des congrès des études byzantines (1924-2024). Le congrès de Bucarest (1924) et l'internationalisation des études byzantines. Edited by Andrei Timotin and Mihail Mitrea. Heidelberg: Herlo Verlag, 2025, 367 p. *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*, n.s. VII (XIV)

Antonio Rigo (*Ca' Foscari University of Venice*)

Introduction

This introduction examines the formative decades in which Byzantine studies consolidated as an autonomous academic discipline, taking as a pivotal reference point the First International Congress of Byzantine Studies held in Bucharest in 1924.

Paul Magdalino (*University of St Andrews*)

The Foundation of Constantinople and the Beginnings of Byzantine Studies

This essay takes issue with the idea that Byzantium and Byzantine studies are misnamed because the names misrepresent the true identity of the Eastern Roman Empire. It is argued that while Byzantine identity was indeed the invention of Byzantine studies, both developments were internal and native to the culture of the empire. They resulted from research, around the turn of the sixth century, into the origins of Constantinople, which rediscovered the city's past, prior to its refoundation by Constantine as a Roman imperial capital, in the ancient Greek city of *Byzantion*. In using this name to designate Constantinople, local intellectuals did not deny the capital's official status as New Rome, but signalled that it was a Rome with a Greek – Byzantine – difference.

Andrei Timotin (*École Pratique des Hautes Études – PSL, Paris*)

Pourquoi un congrès international des études byzantines ? L'argument de N. Iorga

The article examines the intellectual motivations underlying N. Iorga's initiative to organize the first International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Bucharest in 1924. Through his earlier works, Iorga developed the idea of a single "universal Empire" underpinning medieval civilization – embracing Byzantium, Western Christendom, and Islam. His historical vision emphasized the continuity between Eastern and Western political formations and the necessity of international scholarly collaboration to study this continuity. The congress thus embodied his ambition to establish a comprehensive, interdisciplinary Byzantinology linking history, literature, and art. Ultimately, the Bucharest congress represented both the culmination of Iorga's synthetic historical vision and a lasting institutional foundation for global Byzantine scholarship.

Marie-Hélène Blanchet (*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris*)

Le discours d'ouverture de Nicolas Iorga au congrès de 1924 Byzance entre réminiscences et rémanences

The organization of the First International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Bucharest owed much to the personal initiative of the Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga. The congress opened on Monday, 14 April 1924, with Iorga, as president of the organizing committee, welcoming the delegates from across Europe. This article analyzes his inaugural address, highlighting Iorga's understanding of the Byzantine legacy, the traces of that legacy preserved in Romanian culture, and the place of Byzantine and post-Byzantine history within universal history.

Jannic Durand and Maximilien Durand (*Louvre Museum*)
1924-2024 : cent ans au Louvre

This article traces a century of developments at the Louvre concerning the study, display, and institutional recognition of Byzantine and Eastern Christian art. Beginning with the absence of any Louvre involvement at the first International Congress of Byzantine Studies in 1924, it examines how scholarly advances, major exhibitions, and internal reforms gradually reshaped the museum's approach. Key milestones include the 1931 Byzantine Art exhibition, the short-lived Section of Christian Antiquities (1954-1969), and later curatorial initiatives that expanded research, acquisitions, and international collaborations. The creation in 2022 of the Department of Byzantine and Eastern Christian Arts marks the culmination of this trajectory, bringing together some 20,000 works previously dispersed across eight departments. The article details the department's scientific priorities, acquisition strategy, archival projects, and global partnerships, as well as the forthcoming 2,500-m² museographic circuit that aims to articulate the universal vocation of the Louvre through dialogue between civilizations.

Ioanna Rapti (*École Pratique des Hautes Études – PSL, Paris*)
La Roumanie dans l'oeuvre de Gabriel Millet et la Collection chrétienne et byzantine de l'École pratique des Hautes Études

The article examines the impact of the First International Congress of Byzantine Studies on the development of Byzantine scholarship in France, focusing on largely overlooked visual material preserved in the Byzantine and Christian collection founded by the pioneering Byzantinist Gabriel Millet at the École pratique. It shows that monuments from Romania entered the Collection as early as 1909 but became a regular topic in the seminars and studies in the years around the Congress. The 1925 exhibition at the Jeu de Paume further drew attention on this recently independent country. Millet – who, as a leading scholar, participated in nearly all major art-historical initiatives of his time – was well aware of Romania's Byzantine heritage, which he had studied through the embroidered textiles in the Athonite monasteries. The architecture and iconography of Romanian monuments aligned closely with his interest in the dissemination of artistic traditions across the Balkans and throughout the Byzantine world. In addition, Millet's Romanian contacts contributed to the expansion of the French Byzantinist community. Although he did not fully exploit the visual documentation relating to monastic churches, Millet's teaching and mentorship played a decisive role in integrating the art of the Danubian regions into the broader framework of Byzantine artistic traditions.

Elena N. Boeck (*Institute for South-East European Studies, Romanian Academy, Bucharest*)
Byzantium in the Objectiff: Nikodim Kondakov, Jean Xavier Raoult and Their Photographic Expedition to Sinai

Nikodim Kondakov (1844-1925), arguably the greatest art historian of the Russian empire, provided a new impetus to the study of Byzantine art. During decades of rigorous travels, he documented and introduced into scholarship previously unknown Byzantine monuments by embracing the power and promise of archaeological photography. The academic impact of Kondakov's publications was greatly enhanced by the participation of a brilliant French photographer, Jean Xavier Raoult (ca. 1835-ca. 1890). This article analyses their most challenging venture, the expedition to Sinai in 1881. This journey contributed to advancing a more objective conception of Byzantine art via the collaboration between archaeology and photography. As a key example of how the Kondakov-Raoult partnership advanced the state of

the art of academic knowledge, this article also analyses the historiographic importance of the earliest extant photograph of the Transfiguration mosaic.

Dubravka Preradović (*Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade*)
Research on Serbian Medieval Monuments at the Time of the Internationalisation of Byzantine Studies

This article examines the evolution of research on Serbian medieval monuments within the broader context of the internationalisation of Byzantine studies from the mid-nineteenth century to the interwar period. It traces the pioneering contributions of domestic and foreign scholars – including Mihailo Valtrović, Dragutin Milutinović, Vladimir R. Petković, Nikodim Kondakov, Petr Pokryshkin, Gabriel Millet, and Gheorghe Balș – who laid the foundations for the academic study of Serbian medieval art, with particular emphasis on architecture. The article highlights the growing scholarly interest in Serbian heritage, especially in the context of emerging academic institutions and expanding international collaboration. Special attention is given to the methodological innovations, academic networks, and institutional frameworks that shaped the study of Serbian medieval art during this period, contributing to its recognition within the international field of Byzantine studies.

Lucila Mallart (*Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona*)
The Barcelona-Bucharest Connection: Forging Intellectual and Political Alliances at the 1924 Congress of Byzantine Studies

The 1924 International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Bucharest served as a crucial nexus for intellectual exchange between two European cultural peripheries: Catalonia and Romania. This article examines how this academic gathering facilitated a complex transnational dialogue that operated simultaneously on diplomatic, scholarly, and personal levels. Focusing on the interactions between the Catalan architect and politician Josep Puig i Cadafalch and the Romanian historian and statesman Nicolae Iorga, along with the mediating role of Iorga's student Constantin Marinescu, it argues that the Congress became an arena for cultural protodiplomacy where both parties advanced their nationalist agendas through mutual academic validation. The analysis demonstrates how Catalan and Romanian scholars co-produced historical narratives that reinforced each other's claims to cultural distinctiveness, while personal encounters and travel accounts reveal the tensions between public solidarity and private perception. Drawing on archival sources and published works, the study shows how knowledge, identity, and diplomacy were intertwined in the reconfiguration of interwar Europe.

Srdan Pirivatrić (*Institute of Byzantine Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade*)
The Study of Byzantine History in Belgrade before and after the First World War

The emergence of academically grounded Byzantine studies in the renewed Serbia at the beginning of the twentieth century – marked by the establishment of the Chair and Seminar for Byzantine Studies at the University of Belgrade in 1906 – was connected with efforts to found a scholarly historiography in the restored state with the help of scholars educated at foreign universities. A decisive role in this process was played by Serbian students who had studied at the first Byzantine Studies Chair and Seminar of Professor Karl Krumbacher in Munich – Dragutin Anastasijević, Božidar Prokić, Filaret Granić, and others – who were active during

the period of early internationalization of Byzantine studies, on the eve of and following the end of the First World War.

Christos Stavrakos (*University of Ioannina*)

Greek Participants in the First International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Bucharest: From the Archive of Professor Sokrates Kougeas

Professor Sokrates Kougeas' archive, which documents his participation in the First International Conference of Byzantine Studies held in Bucharest in 1924, offers previously unpublished insights into the nature and scope of Greek involvement in this landmark scholarly event. The pro-Venizelos government of Greece took particular care to ensure national representation by sending two eminent scholars: Sokrates Kougeas, Professor at the University of Athens, and Georgios Soteriou, archaeologist and Director of the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens. Drawing on this archival material, the article presents Kougeas' notes and reflections, focusing not only on his unexpected participation in the Congress but also on his impressions of several papers, the excursion to Wallachia, and his encounters with prominent members of both the Romanian and Greek political elites, as well as representatives of the Greek community in Romania. Finally, the archive sheds light on Athenian social life in the 1920s, recording personal details about the professor's family – most notably the birth of his twin sons during his absence in Bucharest.

Ivan Biliarsky (*Institute of Historical Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia*)

Entre l'histoire et la politique : Byzance et le droit médiéval en Bulgarie à l'époque des premiers congrès des études byzantines

This article explores the inclusion of Byzantine law at the first congresses of Byzantine Studies in the 1920s and 1930s. The legal field was not deliberately neglected; the absence of dedicated sections on law in most programmes and published proceedings resulted from the scarcity of proposals, despite the initial intention to include them. The early congresses were marked by both scholarly and political significance for the host countries. Accordingly, the article examines the Bulgarian delegations and concludes with observations on one participant, Father Kamen Vichev, who later met a tragic fate under the communist regime in Bulgaria.

Adrien Palladino (*Masaryk University, Brno*)

Une alliance inachevée. Les études byzantines (et slaves) comme force fédératrice dans la Tchécoslovaquie d'entre-deux-guerres

Beginning with Czechoslovakia's participation in the 1924 Congress of Byzantine Studies, this article examines the role played by Byzantine and Slavic studies in the cultural and political vision of the First Czechoslovak Republic. Far from occupying a peripheral position, these fields were mobilized as instruments of national cohesion and international engagement. Under the guidance of figures such as Matija Murko and Nikodim P. Kondakov, and inspired by the ideals of Tomáš G. Masaryk, Prague emerged during the interwar years as a vital hub for Byzantine and Slavic studies. Institutions such as the Institute of Slavonic Studies, the *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, and the journal *Byzantinoslavica* embodied the ambition to inscribe Czechoslovak identity within a broader historical and cultural continuum linking the Slavic world to the Byzantine legacy. Yet this project – rooted, at least rhetorically, in ideals of transnational dialogue and intellectual exchange – was gradually weakened by mounting geopolitical tensions, the resurgence of nationalism, and the spread of authoritarian regimes. This contribution invites a reassessment of this moment as a significant chapter in the intellectual history of Byzantine studies in the twentieth century.

Andrea Paribeni (*University of Urbino Carlo Bo*)

The Development of Byzantine Studies in Italy in the First Decades of the Twentieth Century Facing the International Context

Although the growth of Byzantine studies in Italy has generally been hindered by a deep-seated prejudice against a historical period viewed as an era of servitude and antithetical to the values of ancestral Roman identity, starting from the early decades of the twentieth century both cultural institutions and scholars from various disciplines – literature, history, archaeology – began to dedicate their studies to the world of Byzantium. This article aims to shed light on this cultural phenomenon – one that was not devoid of political interests – by tracing the growing participation of Italian scholars in the early international Byzantine congresses, from the inaugural meeting in Bucharest to the fifth congress held in Rome, with particular attention to the conduct of the Italian delegation at the Third Congress in Athens.

Anna C. Kelley (*University of St Andrews*)

Scholars, Adventurers, Spies: Byzantine Archaeology and the Evolution of a Discipline in Interwar Britain

This article examines the development of Byzantine studies as an academic discipline in interwar Britain, arguing that the field's popular and academic resurgence owes a significant debt to the archaeological endeavours of scholars whose work was often intertwined with Britain's imperial ambitions. Figures such as Sir William Mitchell Ramsay, representing Britain at the first International Congress of Byzantine Studies, and David Talbot Rice were instrumental in leveraging both the public's growing fascination with the East and Britain's geopolitical interests to advance their own fieldwork. This article demonstrates that these archaeologists, often overlapping with the structures of diplomacy and intelligence gathering, not only generated new knowledge but also framed the Byzantine Empire as a crucial part of Western heritage to an eager public, thereby legitimizing Britain's political presence and interference in the Middle East. Ultimately, it was this fusion of scholarship, adventure, and politics that solidified Byzantine studies' interdisciplinary identity and secured its institutional foothold in Britain.

Pablo Ubierna (*National Paedagogical University (UNIPE), Buenos Aires*)

Byzance dans le Cône Sud au temps du Premier Congrès international des études byzantines

The article examines the presence of Byzantium in the cultural and artistic life of Buenos Aires from the late nineteenth century to the early interwar period, and traces the beginnings of an academic tradition fostered by the efforts of Clemente Ricci and the visit of Charles Diehl following the Bucharest Congress of 1924. That same year, Diehl delivered several lectures at the University of Buenos Aires and at the National Museum of Fine Arts. His visit contributed to the creation of the first research centre for ancient and medieval history (including Byzantium) at the University of Buenos Aires.

Ovidiu Cristea (*“Nicolae Iorga” Institute of History, Romanian Academy, Bucharest*)

« Le Conseil du roi Charles » : les croisades et Byzance dans l'oeuvre de Gheorghe I. Brătianu

Gheorghe I. Brătianu is renowned for his contributions to the history of the Black Sea region and the Romanian Middle Ages. His interest in the Pontic region, however, also prompted him to explore other fields, including Byzantine history and the late Crusades. His studies on Byzantium were collected in a volume on the social and economic history of the Byzantine

Empire, published in 1938 (with a Romanian translation in 2003). His research on the Crusades of the Late Middle Ages, though largely overlooked today, contains documents, arguments, and conclusions that remain valuable. This is particularly true of his study of King Charles II of Naples' project, significant for publishing an unpublished text and for contextualizing its proposals – such as a maritime blockade of Egypt and the unification of military orders. Although the project was eventually abandoned for various reasons, including the death of Pope Nicholas IV, its ideas were developed by later crusade promoters, including Pierre Dubois and Marino Sanudo Torsello, and were partially implemented during the fourteenth century. Unfortunately, Brătianu's article – published during wartime – received little attention and was subsequently forgotten after the advent of the communist regime in Romania in 1947. *Le Conseil du roi Charles* nonetheless remains an impressive demonstration of historical interpretation, situating a medieval text both in its own context and in relation to contemporary issues.

Mihail Mitrea (*Institute for South-East European Studies, Romanian Academy, Bucharest; Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca*)
Oreste Tafrali's Contributions to Byzantine Studies before and after the 1924 Congress

This article offers insights into the scholarly contributions of Oreste Tafrali (1876-1937) to Byzantine studies, before and after the First International Congress of Byzantine Studies, held in Bucharest in 1924. Drawing on his published works, correspondence, and other archival sources, it reconstructs his intellectual trajectory from his early academic formation in Paris under figures such as Charles Diehl to his tenure at the University of Iași. The article highlights Tafrali's pioneering research on the topography and social history of fourteenth-century Thessaloniki, his contributions to the study of Byzantine art and epigraphy in Romania, and his active participation in the 1924 Congress. By situating Oreste Tafrali within both national and international scholarly networks, the article offers an appraisal of his standing in the historiography of Byzantine studies in the first half of the twentieth century.

Octavian-Adrian Negoită (*Institute for the History of Religions, Romanian Academy, Bucharest*)

Philologia et historia: Vasile Grecu (1885-1972) and the Development of Byzantine Philology

This paper explores the life and scholarly activity of Vasile Grecu (1885-1972), one of the foremost representatives of the Romanian school of Byzantine studies in the twentieth century. Educated in Czernowitz and Vienna, Grecu emerged as a distinguished historian and philologist whose research made significant contributions to the understanding of Byzantine history, literature, and art. His career was marked by a rigorous interdisciplinary methodology that combined historical inquiry with philological precision. As his academic work laid the foundations for the institutional and intellectual advance of Byzantine studies in Romania, this paper investigates Grecu's contribution to the broader development of the discipline.