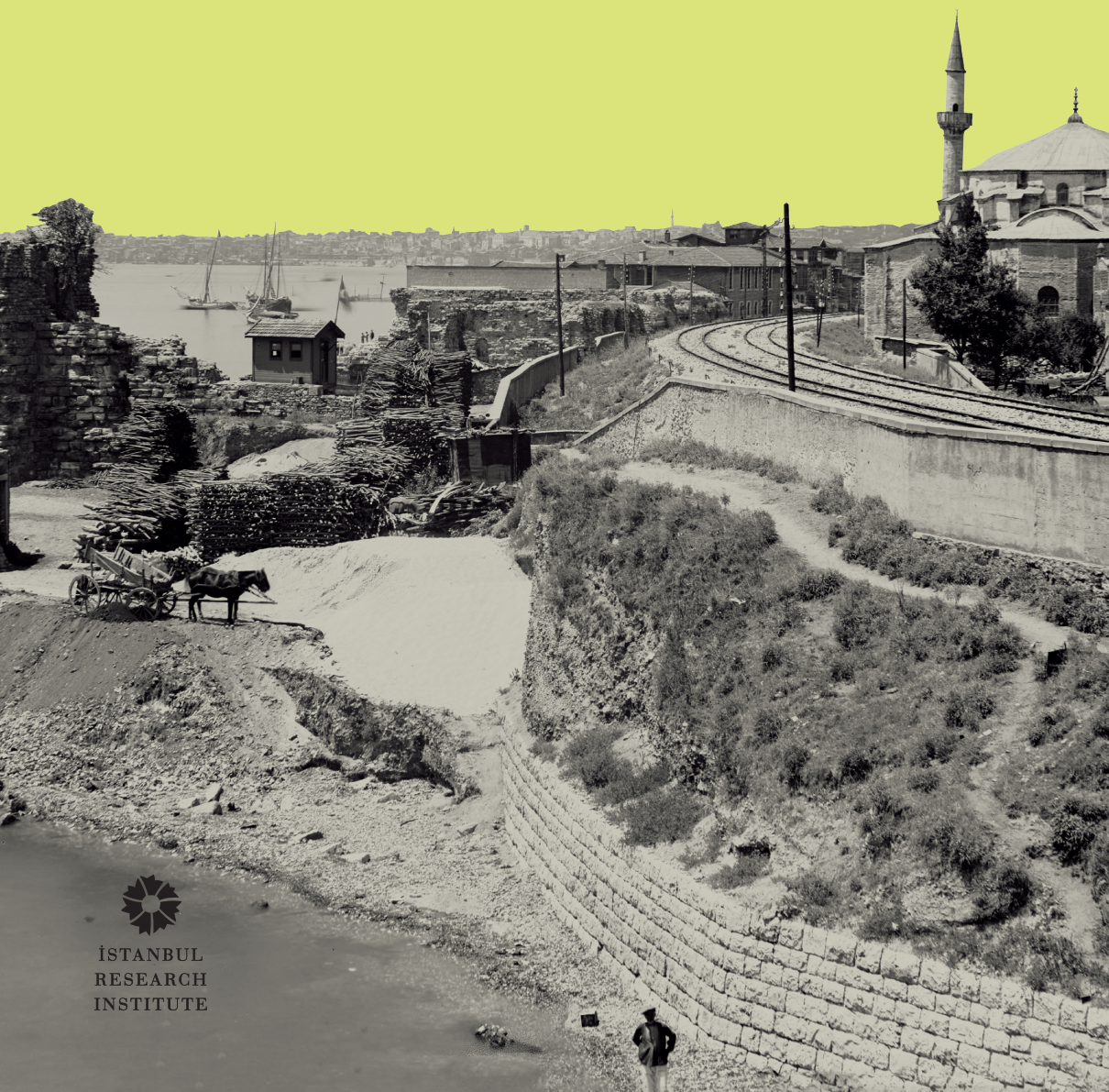


# Discovering Byzantium in Istanbul

*Scholars, Institutions, and Challenges, 1800–1955*

Olivier Delouis and  
Brigitte Pitarakis, *editors*



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INSTITUTE

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1800–1955

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**Editors**  
Olivier Delouis and Brigitte Pitarakis

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# From Robert College to the Byzantine Institute: The American Contribution to the Rediscovery, Study, and Preservation of Byzantine Monuments in Istanbul, ca. 1830–1950

Holger A. Klein

In the early morning hours of 12 November 1800, when the frigate *George Washington* cast its anchor on the southern shores of Constantinople, Captain William Bainbridge sent a message to the Ottoman authorities to announce his ship's arrival. The Turkish officers subsequently sent aboard the ship allegedly did not recognize the colors the vessel was flying and thus inquired as to the location of the country whose flag they were asked to salute. Told that the flag was that of America, the New World, the Turkish officials assured the captain that he was welcome and would be treated with utmost cordiality and respect. As the ship proceeded into the harbor, it is said to have greeted the sultan's palace with a twenty-one-gun salute, marking the first time a US Navy vessel entered the Golden Horn with appropriate pomp

\* I would like to thank my colleague Brigitte Pitarakis for inviting me to participate in the conference she co-organized in November 2017 at the Pera Museum, Istanbul, and for her patience and support throughout the editorial process of this subsequent publication. Thanks are also due to Robert Nelson and Avinoam Shalem, who were kind enough to read and comment on earlier drafts of this article, to Sophie Arnfield for kindly sharing documents and photographs from the family archive of Rudolf Meyer-Riefstahl and his wife, Elizabeth Titzel Riefstahl, and to Tanya Chebotarev for her unbureaucratic help with last-minute photo requests from the Robert College Archive.

and circumstance.<sup>1</sup> Thus began the story of the American presence in Constantinople. Although it would take another thirty-one years for the United States to establish formal diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire, a good number of American merchants, missionaries, and explorers began to arrive on the shores of the Bosphorus and other parts of Asia Minor soon after the turn of the century.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike the French, British, Dutch, Italians, Russians, and Germans, who all had a much longer history of diplomatic and commercial relations with the Sublime Porte, merchants and diplomats from the newly independent former British colonies in America were relative newcomers on the international scene, but quickly realized the economic and geopolitical importance of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>3</sup> By the early nineteenth century, merchants from Philadelphia and Boston engaged in the China trade had already established a mercantile presence in Asia Minor, with Smyrna serving as the most important early hub.<sup>4</sup> It is therefore no coincidence that the first American consul

- 1 The story is recounted in the *Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of Samuel Patterson, Experienced in the Pacific Ocean, and Many Other Parts of the World, with an Account of the FeeGee, and Sandwich Islands* (Palmer, Mass., 1817). See S. Retsov, ed., *The American in Constantinople, 1800–1901* (Greenfield, Mass., 2013), 19–21.
- 2 Following the first act of formal recognition on 11 February 1830, diplomatic relations between the United States and the Ottoman Empire soon resulted in the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, concluded 7 May 1830 and ratified by the Senate and president in the first days of February 1831. See C. O. Paullin, *Diplomatic Negotiations of American Naval Officers, 1778–1883* (Baltimore, 1912), 122–53. See also the *Compilation of Treaties in Force: Prepared under Resolution of the Senate of February 11, 1904* (Washington, DC, 1904), 600–602; A. R. Hasse, *Index to United States Documents Relating to Foreign Affairs, 1828–1861*, part 3, R to Z (Washington, D.C., 1921), 1839; L. J. Gordon, “Turkish-American Treaty Relations,” *American Political Science Review* 22, no. 3 (1928): 711. See also S. Esenbel, B. N. Criss, and T. Greenwood, eds., *American Turkish Encounters: Politics and Culture, 1830–1989* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2011).
- 3 On some of the broader issues of diplomatic and cultural relations between the Ottoman Empire and other European powers, see D. O’Quinn, *Engaging the Ottoman Empire: Vexed Mediations, 1690–1815* (Philadelphia, 2019); V. H. Aksan, *Ottomans and Europeans: Contacts and Conflicts* (Istanbul, 2004). See also M. Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661–1807: Commerce and Diplomatic Practice in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul* (Woodbridge, UK, 2017); F. M. Göçek, *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1987).
- 4 The Philadelphia merchant David Offley (1779–1838) was the first American to establish a commercial firm, Woodmass and Offley, in Turkey in 1811. Based in Smyrna, he was the foremost American merchant in Turkey and served as the U.S. commercial agent to Turkey from 1823 to 1832. Offley was one of the chief negotiators of the first commercial treaty between the United States and the Ottoman Empire, signed in 1830. As a reward for Offley’s activities, President Andrew Jackson appointed him U.S. consul in Turkey, in 1832. Although an earlier U.S. consul had been appointed at Smyrna in 1802, Offley was the first consul to be officially recognized by the Sublime Porte. See A. Avcı, “Yankee Levantine: David Offley

was appointed to Smyrna rather than Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> The first official chargé d’affaires to the Sublime Porte, David Porter, arrived in Constantinople in 1831.<sup>6</sup> His presence was not only the result of U.S. mercantile interests in the region, but also of the steady surge in American missionary activity in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>7</sup> Inspired by the Second Great Awakening, a Protestant religious revival that gained momentum in the United States around 1800, a group of five idealistic young graduates from Williams College had in 1810 formed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which quickly grew into the largest and most important American missionary organization.<sup>8</sup> Within two years, the board sent its first missionaries to India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and in 1819 it launched a mission to Palestine.<sup>9</sup> The board entrusted the latter assignment to the Massachusetts-

- and Ottoman–American Relations in the Early Nineteenth Century” (PhD diss., Bilkent University, 2016). On the presence and activities of the Perkins clan from Boston and Perkins Bros. in the China trade and at Smyrna, see M. E. Chapman, “Taking Business to the Tiger’s Gate: Thomas Handasyd Perkins and the Boston-Smyrna-Canton Opium Trade of the Early Republic,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 52 (2012): 7–28. See also Avcı, “Yankee Levantine,” 5, note 4; S. Marzagalli, J. R. Sofka, and J. McCusker, eds., *Rough Waters: American Involvement with the Mediterranean in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (St. John’s, Canada, 2010), 221–32, here 225. E. Foster, “Americans in Nineteenth-Century Constantinople,” in Retsov, *American in Constantinople*, 1–16, here 1–2. Paullin, *Diplomatic Negotiations*, 126–27.
- 5 Three decades before the appointment of David Offley, William L. Stewart of Pennsylvania had been appointed the first U.S. consul at Smyrna on 27 April 1802, but the Sublime Porte refused to recognize him. See *Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C., 1828), 422.
- 6 Formal diplomatic relations between the United States and the Ottoman Empire were established on 13 September 1831, when Porter presented his credentials. For Porter’s personal notes and recollections, see D. Porter, *Constantinople and Its Environs in a Series of Letters*, 2 vols. (New York, 1835). On earlier U.S. attempts to establish diplomatic relations, including Stewart’s appointment as consul at Smyrna, see Avcı, “Yankee Levantine,” 71–103, with further bibliography; W. L. Wright, Jr., “American Relations with Turkey to 1831” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1928).
- 7 On the close connection between missionary and mercantile activities, see T. M. Roberts, “Commercial Philanthropy: ABCFM Missionaries and the American Opium Trade,” in *The Role of the American Board in the World: Bicentennial Reflections on the organization’s missionary work, 1810–2010*, ed. C. Putney and P. T. Burlin (Eugene, OR, 2012), 27–48.
- 8 See C. R. Keller, *The Second Great Awakening in Connecticut* (New Haven, 1942); R. D. Birdsall, “The Second Great Awakening and the New England Social Order,” *Church History* 39, no. 3 (1970): 345–64. On the so-called Haystack Prayer Meeting and the formation and early history of the American Board, see D. K. Schowalter, “The 1810 Formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,” in Putney and Burlin, *The Role of the American Board*, 1–10, with further bibliography. See also C. J. Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World: The First Half Century of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1810–1860* (Cambridge, 1969).
- 9 For further information on these early missions, see generally the meeting minutes

born Reverend William Goodell (1792–1867), who, after language study in Malta, inaugurated the board’s mission in Beirut.<sup>10</sup> A few years later, it decided to send Goodell to work among the Armenian community in Constantinople, where he arrived with his family in mid-June 1831 and settled in Pera. Goodell later described his first impressions of the city in his *Memoirs*: “When we first caught a glimpse of Top-Hana, Galata, and Pera, stretching from the water’s edge to the summit of the hills, and as we began to sweep around Seraglio Point, the view became most beautiful and sublime. It greatly surpassed all that I had ever conceived of it.... The mosques of St. Sophia and Sultan Achmet, with the palaces and gardens of the current Sultan Mahmoud, were before us in all their majesty and loveliness.”<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately for the Goodells, a great fire swept through Pera, their neighborhood, soon after their arrival, destroying all of their belongings and forcing them to relocate to the suburb of Büyükdere, where they shared a house with three other Americans: the naval architect and shipbuilder Henry Eckford (1775–1832), who had just arrived with his son-in-law, the physician and naturalist James Ellsworth De Kay (1792–1851), and Charles Rhind (1779–1854), a seasoned merchant from New York who had been instrumental in negotiating the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation. They had all traveled to Constantinople on the corvette *United States*.<sup>12</sup> It is likely through them that the Goodells were introduced to Porter, who had likewise just arrived in Constantinople, kindly opened his house for public worship, and soon offered to take in the Goodells.<sup>13</sup> The reason why these historical details matter in the context of an essay that investigates the American contribution to the rediscovery of Byzantium in Istanbul may not be immediately obvious, but it will soon become clear that it provides important contextual information for understanding the nature of the American presence in Constantinople during the early and later nineteenth century.

and reports in the *First Ten Annual Reports of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston, 1834). For the mission to Palestine, see *ibid.*, 229–31 (1819), and 277–81 (1820).

- 10 For biographical information on the Rev. William Goodell, see D. M. Stowe, “Goodell, William,” in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. G. H. Anderson (New York, 1998), 250–51. See also W. Goodell and E. D. G. Prime, *Forty Years in the Turkish Empire: Or, Memoirs of Rev. William Goodell* (New York, 1876).
- 11 Goodell and Prime, *Forty Years*, 113.
- 12 The Great Fire of Pera on 2 August 1831 has been described as having destroyed anywhere between 5,000 to 20,000 houses. For a detailed description of the event, see Goodell and Prime, *Forty Years*, 114–19.
- 13 For more information on the historical background and the circumstances that brought these men together, see D. H. Finnie, *Pioneers East: The Early American Experience in the Middle East*, Harvard Middle Eastern Studies 13 (Cambridge, 1967), 45–81, 103–105.

## Missionaries and Early Educators

Of the Americans who visited or settled in Constantinople in the nineteenth century, quite a few, including Goodell, Porter, and De Kay, later published accounts of their experiences and impressions, providing readers back home with vivid descriptions of Turkish food and customs as well as the city’s filth and beauty.<sup>14</sup> The Rev. Josiah Brewer (1796–1872), who had been sent to Constantinople by the Boston Female Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews in 1827, penned one of the earliest such accounts.<sup>15</sup> Summarizing his experience in *A Residence at Constantinople in the Year 1827*, Brewer did not mince his words: “I have alluded to the filth of the city, and I might have spoken of it under the head of antiquities, for I presume it dates as far back as the time of Constantine. Yet even these Augean streets might be cleansed at a small expense. For a mere pittance, thousands of the poor could be constantly employed as scavengers.”<sup>16</sup> Brewer also devoted a few pages to the city’s layout and monuments: “St. Sophia, with which we must of course begin, need not detain us long. It is as well known as St. Paul’s in London. Travellers differ in opinion how far they should have joined with the Christian emperor Justinian, who when he had completed this church exclaimed, ‘I have outdone thee O Solmon.’ For myself, I cannot say with the queen of Sheba, that it ‘exceedeth the fame which I heard.’ ... Though Christians at present do not obtain access to the interior, you may find in the books of travelers, a minute account of the porphyry, jasper, and marble columns, which the ruined cities of Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Greece, have furnished for their ornament.”<sup>17</sup> Brewer appeared to be more impressed by the antiquities of the Atmeidan, which he describes in detail, referring both to their preserved state and historical significance. He concludes by stating, “[The] other antiquities, which a stranger is taken to visit, are the porphyry or burnt column about ninety feet high, erected by Constantine, together with several lesser columns, of a later date.”<sup>18</sup> His sojourn in the capital lasted only a few short months, after which he briefly returned to the United States, got married, and left again for the Mediterranean at the request and with the support of the New Haven Ladies Greek Association.<sup>19</sup>

- 14 Even though the identity of the author was not in doubt, James De Kay published *Sketches of Turkey in 1831 and 1832* (New York, 1833) anonymously, adding simply “by an American” on the title page.
- 15 On this particular organization and similar ones, see A. M. Boylan, “Women in Groups: An Analysis of Women’s Benevolent Organizations in New York and Boston, 1797–1840,” *Journal of American History* 71, no. 3 (1984): 497–523. For further information on Brewer’s life and career, see F. P. Brewer, *Sketch of the Life of Rev. Josiah Brewer: Missionary to the Greeks* (1880).
- 16 J. Brewer, *A Residence at Constantinople in the Year 1827. With Notes to the Present Time* (New Haven, 1830), 108.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 82–83.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 84.
- 19 On the activities of this philanthropic, missionary organization, see the *First Annual Report of the New-Haven Ladies’ Greek Association* (New Haven, 1831).





Fig. 1 Cyrus Hamlin, ca. late 1860–1870s. Photo by Abdullah Frères. SALT Research, Photograph Archive, Istanbul.



Fig. 2 Bebek Seminary, mansion of Çelebi Yorgaki and later called Heizer Han, ca. early 1900s. Robert College Archives, Columbia University, New York.

He settled in Smyrna, where he spent the next few years running a school and publishing a Greek-language religious newspaper.<sup>20</sup>

Other missionaries stayed longer in Constantinople and established a more lasting legacy in the capital. A case in point is the Congregational missionary and educator Cyrus Hamlin (1811–1900) (Fig. 1). Born in Waterford, Maine, Hamlin attended Bowdoin College before joining the Bangor Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1837.<sup>21</sup> Even though Hamlin had wished to go to Central Africa as an explorer, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions decided to send him to Constantinople instead, with a mandate to work in the mission's school there. Three months after marrying Henrietta Jackson on 3 September 1838, the couple embarked on their journey to Constantinople, where they opened the Bebek Seminary

20 For Brewer's activities in Smyrna, see his reports, journal entries, and appeal in the appendix of *First Annual Report of the New-Haven Ladies' Greek Association*, 16–64.

21 For information on Hamlin's life and career, see C. Hamlin, *Among the Turks* (New York, 1878); C. Hamlin, *My Life and Times* (Boston, 1893). See also M. Stevens, *Against the Devil's Current: The Life and Times of Cyrus Hamlin, with Contributions by Arthur T. Hamlin* (Lanham, MD, 1988); A. R. Thain, *Cyrus Hamlin, D.D., LL.D., Missionary, Statesman, Inventor: A Life Sketch* (Boston, 1910); A. D. F. Hamlin, *In Memoriam Cyrus Hamlin D.D., LL.D.* (Boston, 1903).

in November 1840, less than two years after their arrival (Fig. 2).<sup>22</sup> Students at the seminary received instruction in English, history, philosophy, and theology as well as in math, physics, and chemistry. An industrial workshop in the seminary's basement, a steam flour mill, and a bakery not only permitted student workers to earn money to support themselves, it also allowed the seminary to become self-supporting and turn a substantial profit, all funneled back to the American Board to finance missionary activities.<sup>23</sup> It was allegedly the smell of Hamlin's freshly baked bread that brought him into contact with the New York merchant and philanthropist Christopher R. Robert (1802–78), who sought to fund an educational institution abroad.<sup>24</sup> He found an open ear with Hamlin, who, in 1860, left the American Board to fully dedicate his energies to the establishment of an American college in the Ottoman Empire that should serve as “a channel through which to irrigate the parched fields of the ancient Churches, and perhaps even the corrupt Turkish society, with the life giving streams of English Christian culture.”<sup>25</sup> The school, Robert College, opened on 16 September 1863 and is an unprecedented success story that still bears fruit today, having evolved into Robert College Lisesi and Boğaziçi University.<sup>26</sup>

The question of what role, if any, American missionary activity and the founding of Robert College played in the rediscovery of Byzantium is neither straightforward nor easy to answer. As far as Cyrus Hamlin and the first generation of missionaries are concerned, the answer is probably a resounding “little to none.” We get a sense of Hamlin's own feelings toward the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires from his 1878 memoirs *Among the Turks*:

22 The couple left Boston for Smyrna on the barque *Eunomos* on 2 December 1838. For details, see the *Report of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions* (Boston, 1839): 63. See also the summary account of Hamlin's early life in J. Freely, *A Bridge of Culture: Robert College–Boğaziçi University. How an American College in Istanbul Became a Turkish University* (Istanbul, 2009), 5–20; J. Freely, *History of Robert College, the American College for Girls, and Boğaziçi University, Bosphorus University*, 2 vols. (Istanbul, 2000), 1:16–24.

23 For the early years of Hamlin's activities in Istanbul and the beginnings of the Bebek Seminary, see Freely, *Bridge of Culture*, 21–49; Freely, *History of Robert College*, 27–53.

24 The story is recounted in Hamlin, *Among the Turks*, 284: “Christopher R. Robert, Esq., of New York, had visited Constantinople, in 1856, just at the close of the Crimean war. Seeing, along the shores of the Bosphorus, a boat laden with bread, the appearance and grateful aroma of which drew his attention, he inquired where it was made, and this led to our acquaintance, out of which has grown Robert College. But for that incident, secluded as I was in the village of Bebek, five miles from the city, we should never have met.” See also Freely, *Bridge of Culture*, 42; Freely, *History of Robert College*, 47. For further biographical information on Robert, see W. L. Wright Jr., s.v. “Robert, Christopher Rhinelander,” in *Dictionary of American Biography*, 16:1–2.

25 J. Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions in the Near East* (London, 1910), 129.

26 On the transformation of Robert College into a private high school (Robert Kolej) and a public university (Boğaziçi Üniversitesi), see Freely, *Bridge of Culture*, 353–420.

The Byzantine empire was in a ... deplorable state, resembling the present condition of the Turkish Empire, but without any solid element, like the Moslem population, to maintain its life. The Christianity of the empire was lost in drivelling superstitions. Magic and charms and relics and miraculous pictures, and holy fountains and places, were all that remained of the Gospel among the common people. The court was buried in luxury, the people in poverty. The central government had no power over the provinces, and in its internal dissensions often called upon the Turks for aid. Whoever will look over Labeau's, or any other history of the Byzantine empire, will only wonder that it endured so long. If its government was demoralized, its religion was paganized. The time was approaching when it must pass away. The lamentations often raised over the rich, populous, and happy lands desolated by the Turks, are not justified by history. They had long been the prey to every species of disorder, otherwise the Mohammedan conquests could never have been achieved.<sup>27</sup>

The Hamlin reference here is to Charles Le Beau's (1701–78) multivolume *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, and to Hubert-Pascal Ameilhon (1781–1817), who brought the project left unfinished by Le Beau in 1778 all the way to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Like Edward Gibbon around the same time, Ameilhon characterized the Byzantine Empire as superstitious, decadent, and morally corrupt.<sup>28</sup>

If Hamlin's views were indeed shared by his fellow missionaries, how did the American presence and missionary effort in Constantinople contribute to the rediscovery of Byzantium between 1800 and 1955? The answer lies, at least in part, in the academic staff hired at Robert College in the second half of the nineteenth century and the academic framework it provided for the study of Byzantine history and the exploration of Byzantine monuments in the city. Robert College provided them with an academic home, a library, and a student body that was receptive to their ideas and academic insights.

### Writers, Travelers, and Academics

During the 1850s and 1860s, Constantinople, much like other cities and regions in the Ottoman Empire, saw a steady increase in American and European travelers, a development facilitated by faster and more efficient means of transportation, the establishment and expansion of international trade agreements and commercial networks, and an increase in the production of newspapers, books, and periodicals that disseminated news of world events, missionary activities, and traveler accounts, thus whetting the appetites of

27 Hamlin, *Among the Turks*, 19.

28 C. Le Beau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, completed by H.-P. Ameilhon, 29 vols. (Paris, 1757–1817).

those with means to explore and experience for themselves what they had previously only read or heard about the Orient.<sup>29</sup>

Among the early American travelers who have left literary accounts of their visits to Constantinople was Herman Melville (1819–91), who traveled to Constantinople from Liverpool on the steamer *Egyptian* and stayed there for a week in December 1856.<sup>30</sup> Having arrived on a foggy morning on December 12th, Melville took up lodging at the Hotel du Globe in Pera and began to follow a path common to many tourists then and now: after hiring a guide, he crossed the Golden Horn, on a caique, and started his tour of the downtown monuments with Hagia Sophia. He later noted in his journal, "Saw the Mosque of St Sophia. Went in. Rascally priests demanding 'bak-sheesh.' Fleeced me out of 1/2 dollar; following me round, selling the fallen mosaics. Ascended a kind of horse way leading up, round & round. Came out into a gallery fifty feet above the floor. Supurb [*sic*] interior. Precious marbles Porphyry & Verd antique. Immense magnitude of the building. Names of the prophets in great letters. Roman Catholic air to the whole."<sup>31</sup> From there, Melville went on to inspect the monuments of the Hippodrome, the Cistern of 1001 columns, the Burnt Column (Column of Constantine), and the Grand Bazaar and visited other, more recent landmarks, such as the fire-watch tower on Beyazit Square.<sup>32</sup>

Samuel L. Clemens, better known as Mark Twain (1835–1910), who visited the city a decade later, prescribed a similar parcourse, but was generally less impressed by what he summarily characterized as an "eternal circus."

29 The first steam ship routes to Constantinople were established in the late 1830s, making the voyage from other Mediterranean ports and major European capitals along the Danube both faster and more comfortable for travelers. By the 1840s, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company operated a steam service from Southampton to Constantinople, and over the next two decades Thomas Cook organized cruises to Egypt and the Holy Land for intrepid European and American travelers. On the development of steamship travel to Constantinople, see A. Servantie, "Development of Steamship Travelling in the Mediterranean (1833–1860)," in *Seapower, Technology and Trade: Studies in Turkish Maritime History*, ed. D. Couto, F. Günergun, and M. P. Pedani Fabris (Istanbul, 2014), 504–14. On the beginnings of tourism and leisure travel, see L. Withey, *Grand Tours and Cook's Tours: A History of Leisure Travel, 1750 to 1915* (New York, 1997); F. Hunter, "The Thomas Cook Archive for the Study of Tourism in North Africa and the Middle East," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 36, no. 2 (2003): 157–63; M. Obeidat and I. Mumayiz, "Levantine and Arabian Travels: European and American Experiences (Part 1)," *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies* 4 (2003): 65–84.

30 For a selection of accounts of other American travelers who visited Constantinople from the 1840s through the 1860s, see generally Retsov, *The American in Constantinople*.

31 H. C. Horsford, ed., *Journal of a Visit to Europe and the Levant, October 11, 1856–May 6, 1857 by Herman Melville* (Princeton, 1955), 76–105, here 79–80.

32 H. Obenzinger, *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania* (Princeton, 1999).



His eloquent description of Hagia Sophia is worth quoting here at length:

The Mosque of St. Sophia is the chief lion of Constantinople. You must get a firman and hurry there the first thing. We did that. We did not get a firman, but we took along four or five francs apiece, which is much the same thing. I do not think much of the Mosque of St. Sophia. I suppose I lack appreciation. We will let it go at that. It is the rustiest old barn in heathendom. ... St. Sophia is a colossal church, thirteen or fourteen hundred years old, and unsightly enough to be very, very much older. Its immense dome is said to be more wonderful than St. Peter's, but its dirt is much more wonderful than its dome, though they never mention it. The church has a hundred and seventy pillars in it, each a single piece, and all of costly marbles of various kinds, but they came from ancient temples at Baalbec, Heliopolis, Athens and Ephesus, and are battered, ugly and repulsive. They were a thousand years old when this church was new, and then the contrast must have been ghastly—if Justinian's architects did not trim them any. The inside of the dome is figured all over with a monstrous inscription in Turkish characters, wrought in gold mosaic, that looks as glaring as a circus bill; the pavements and the marble balustrades are all battered and dirty; the perspective is marred every where by a web of ropes that depend from the dizzy height of the dome, and suspend countless dingy, coarse oil lamps, and ostrich-eggs, six or seven feet above the floor. ... Every where was dirt, and dust, and dinginess, and gloom; every where were signs of a hoary antiquity, but with nothing touching or beautiful about it; every where were those groups of fantastic pagans; overhead the gaudy mosaics and the web of lamp-ropes—nowhere was there any thing to win one's love or challenge his admiration. The people who go into ecstasies over St. Sophia must surely get them out of the guide-book.<sup>33</sup>

The type of guidebook Twain refers to in this context started to gain currency among travelers in the 1840s, following the publication of the first ones in French and English by Frédéric Lacroix and John Murray in 1839 and 1840, respectively. These guidebooks provided detailed itineraries and extensive descriptions of the city's most important historical sites and monuments and all kinds of other useful and anecdotal information.<sup>34</sup> While foreign travelers continued to rely heavily on local guides to navigate the city's maze of streets and help facilitate access to more restricted sites and monuments, guidebooks began to play an increasingly important role as sources for reliable historical as well as practical information. As a result, many trav-

33 M. Twain, *The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrims' Progress* (Hartford, 1869), 362–64.

34 F. Lacroix, *Guide du voyageur à Constantinople et dans ses environs* (Paris, 1839); J. Murray, *Hand-book for Travellers in the Ionian Islands, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor, and Constantinople* (London, 1840). For Murray's section on Constantinople, see *ibid.*, 150–88.

elers who visited Constantinople in the second half of the nineteenth century described the same set of sites, monuments, and attractions that formed part of every visitor's core itinerary.<sup>35</sup>

By the time Thomas Cook and others started to organize leisure travel to Egypt and the Holy Land on a larger scale in the 1860s and 1870s, Constantinople had become an important stop en route to Alexandria and Jaffa, bringing a more substantial number of Americans to the city than ever before, among them a few men who sought academic career opportunities at the newly established American college at Bebek.

One of the early American appointees on the faculty of Robert College was Edwin A. Grosvenor (1845–1936).<sup>36</sup> Born in West Newbury, Massachusetts, Grosvenor had received a liberal arts education at Amherst College and graduated in 1867 as class poet and salutatorian. Hired as one of three new American tutors and charged with instruction in Greek and Latin, he left Amherst immediately after his graduation to take up his new teaching position in Constantinople. Unfortunately, Grosvenor's initial tenure at Robert College was only short-lived, as he decided to return to Amherst in 1870 to earn a master's degree. He had left such a favorable impression at Robert College, however, that he was asked to return as professor for history and Latin in 1872. This time, he stayed for nearly two decades, during which he published the short but insightful *Hippodrome of Constantinople, and Its Still Existing Monuments*.<sup>37</sup> Noteworthy in the context here is the short dedication with which he introduces his volume to the reader:

I commit this little work upon the Hippodrome to both the learned and the unlearned in the Antiquities of Constantinople. From the former I ask, and am sure of, charitable and sympathetic judgment, even as they appreciate to the full the labour and difficulty through which one strives to plod his way to the truth concerning the past of this ancient city. To the latter I trust its perusal may afford a pleasant hour, and above all a stimulus to study themselves this and kindred subjects, of which Constantinople is so suggestive and in which it is so rich.<sup>38</sup>

35 For the impact of guidebooks on travelers' experience, see V. Hastaoglu-Martindis, "Visions of Constantinople/Istanbul from the Nineteenth Century Guidebooks," *Journeys* 4, no. 2 (2004): 46–68, with some factual inaccuracies; L. Ziff, *Return Passages: Great American Travel Writing, 1780–1910* (New Haven, 2000); A. Sillitoe, *Leading the Blind: A Century of Guidebook Travel, 1815–1911* (London, 1996), 202–12; E. Swinglehurst, *Cook's Tours: The Story of Popular Travel* (Poole, 1982).

36 For Grosvenor's appointment, see Columbia University, Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Archival Collections, Robert College Records, 1858–2018 (RCR), series VI: Records of the Faculty, list of "American Teachers at Robert College," 1863–1850, box 32, folder 1.

37 E. A. Grosvenor, *The Hippodrome of Constantinople and Its Still Existing Monuments* (London, 1889).

38 *Ibid.*, 3.

Grosvenor returned to the United States in 1890 and taught at both his alma mater and Smith College. In 1895 at Amherst, he became professor of European history, a position he held until his retirement in 1914.<sup>39</sup> Three years after arriving back at Amherst, he completed what would become his most-lasting contribution to the field of Byzantine history, *Constantinople*, a two-volume monograph that earned him a highly favorable review in the *New York Times*, which later included it among its “books of the year.”<sup>40</sup> The book contained an introduction by none other than Lew Wallace (1827–1905), the former general and diplomat who apart from his military achievements in the U.S. Civil War on behalf of the Union is perhaps best known as the author of *Ben-Hur*. The success of *Ben-Hur* ultimately landed Wallace an appointment as U.S. ambassador to the Sublime Porte, from 1881 to 1884.<sup>41</sup> It was during these years that Wallace made the acquaintance of Grosvenor. Wallace’s introduction to *Constantinople* is noteworthy not primarily for the praise of the book and its author, but for the details it provides about Grosvenor’s research for the volume:

As far back as 1831, Amherst College graduated a young Sciote, named Alexander G. Paspatis, who became a man of vast erudition. His whole life succeeding graduation was given to Constantinople and Greece. He was, in fact, the chief Greek archeologist of his time, and knew more of Byzantium than any other scholar, however devoted to that conglomeration of antiquities. Professor Grosvenor accepted a chair in Robert College on the western bank of the Bosphorus, six miles above Stamboul, and while in that position made the acquaintance of Dr. Paspatis. Sons of the same Alma Mater, it was natural that they should be drawn together. Ere long they became intimates; ... Paspatis took him to his heart and became his master and guide. The days they went roaming through the lost quarters and over the diminished hills, digging into tumuli in search of data for this and that, deciphering inscriptions,

and fixing the relations of points, were to the younger professor what the illuminated letters are at the beginning of chapters in the Koran. Paspatis suggested to his friend the writing of a book, and from that moment the latter betook himself to preparation, greatly assisted by a thorough mastery of many languages, modern and classic. He collected authorities, and with the learned Doctor personally tested them on the ground. Old churches were thus resurrected, and palaces restored. Greek sites and remains were rescued from confusion with those of the Turks. In short, the reader, whether student or traveller, will thank Professor Grosvenor for his book; for besides its clear reading, it is profusely enriched by pictures and photographs never before published.<sup>42</sup>

### Honorary Americans

It should be remembered that Alexandros Paspatis (1814–91), who was captured and enslaved during the Chios massacre in 1822, was one of a few orphaned Greek youths freed from the slave market in Smyrna and subsequently selected by the American Board of the Commissioners for Foreign Missions to be sent to the United States to receive a liberal arts education (Fig. 3).<sup>43</sup> Although not born an American, Paspatis can certainly be counted as a beneficiary of the missionary activity of the American Board in Turkey and a product of the American educational system, graduating from Amherst in 1831 before studying medicine in Paris and Pisa and returning to Constantinople.<sup>44</sup> Grosvenor, in his preface to *Constantinople*, gratefully acknowledges

39 For further biographical information, see Grosvenor’s obituary in the *New York Times*, 16 September 1936.

40 E. A. Grosvenor, *Constantinople*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1895). For the review, see “New Publications: The City of Constantine,” *New York Times*, 25 December 1895, 14. For a brief but insightful evaluation of Grosvenor’s description of the antiquities collections on display at the Archaeological Museum, see Z. Çelik, *About Antiquities: Politics of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire* (Austin, 2016), 70–71. For a likewise brief recognition of his contributions to the study of the city’s topography and Ottoman monuments, see D. Gürpınar, *Ottoman/Turkish Visions of the Nation, 1860–1950* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, 2013), 60.

41 L. Wallace, *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (New York, 1880). On the book’s critical reception and impact, see H. Miller, “The Charioteer and the Christ *Ben-Hur* in America from the Gilded Age to the Culture Wars,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 104 (2008): 153–75. For biographical information on Wallace, see L. Wallace, *Lew Wallace: An Autobiography*, 2 vols. (New York, 1905); his obituary, *New York Times*, 16 February 1905; and G. Stephens, *The Shadow of Shiloh: Major General Lew Wallace in the Civil War* (Indianapolis, 2010).

42 Grosvenor, *Constantinople*, 1:xv–xvi.

43 After Alexandros’s mother, who had likewise survived the massacre, bought him back at the slave market in Smyrna, he and five other Greek youths were selected to receive an education in the United States. See *Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions at the Fifteenth Annual Meeting* (Boston, 1824), 112–13. For further biographical information on Paspatis, see M. Denkert and S. Heid, *Personenlexikon zur Christlichen Archäologie: Forscher und Persönlichkeiten vom 16. bis 21. Jahrhundert*, 2 vols. (Regensburg, 2012), 2:997; T. N. Constant, P. Koken, and S. G. Canoutas, “Greeks on the Western Hemisphere,” *Athene* 17 (1956): 12–13, here 13. For background on the group of about forty Greek youths who arrived in the United States during this time, see G. S. Kaloudis, *Modern Greece and the Greek Diaspora in the United States* (Lanham, MD, 2018), 29–30; C. C. Moskos, *Greek Americans: Struggle and Success* (New Brunswick, 1989), 6; T. Burgess, *Greeks in America* (New York, 1970), 192–93; G. A. Kourvetaris, “Greek-American Professionals: 1820’s–1970’s,” *Balkan Studies* 18, no. 2 (1977): 285–323, here 318–23.

44 Paspatis graduated with a degree in medicine from the University of Pisa in 1839, and after completing his internship in London, served as a resident physician at the Hellenic hospital in Constantinople for twenty years. He was also active as an educator, historian, and philologist, in 1861 co-founding the Greek Philological Syllagos in Constantinople. In 1879 Paspatis left the Ottoman capital for Athens, where he spent the rest of his life. He was presented with an honorary doctorate of law by Amherst in 1886. See the summary account by Constant, Koken, and Canou-

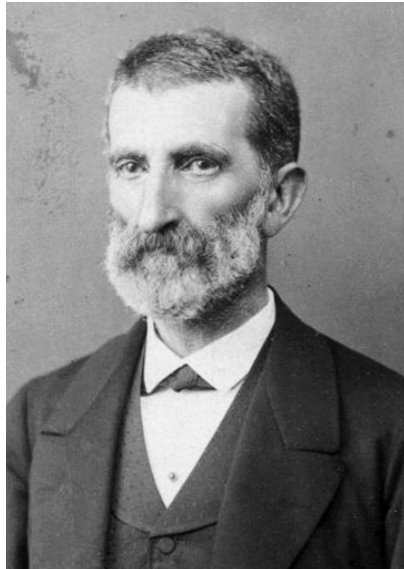


Fig. 3 Alexandros G. Paspatis, ca. 1860s. Steven Zannos, Greek and Linked European Families, s.v., “Paspatis, Alexandros,” <https://stevenzannos.tribalpages.com>.

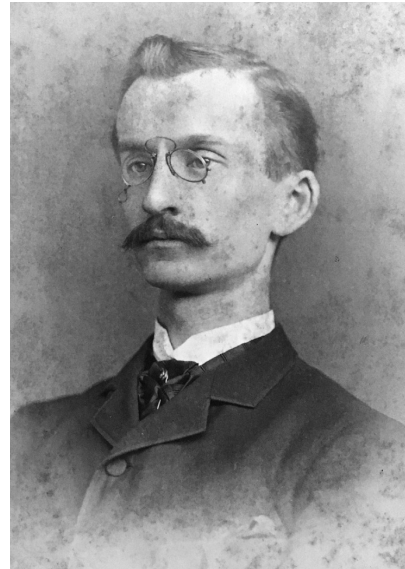


Fig. 4 Alexander van Millingen, ca. 1900. Strout Photo Artist, Woburn, Mass. Robert College Archives, Columbia University, New York.

his fellow Amherst alumnus, affectionately calling him “my teacher and early friend, the most modest, the most patient, the most learned of all those who have striven to probe the mysteries of the classic and the Byzantine city.”<sup>45</sup> Thus Paspatis merits inclusion in this narrative as an American *honoris causa*.

Alexander van Millingen (1840–1915), the Constantinople-born son of Julius Michael van Millingen, the English court physician of Sultan Mahmud II (1785–1839), was another non-American, who, like Grosvenor, served as a long-time and much-beloved faculty member at Robert College during the last decades of nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth century (Fig. 4).<sup>46</sup>

tas, “Greeks on the Western Hemisphere,” 13. For an evaluation of Paspatis’s role in the context of an emerging discipline of Byzantine archaeology, see R. Ousterhout, “The Rediscovery of Constantinople and the Beginnings of Byzantine Archaeology: A Historiographic Survey,” in *Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753–1914*, ed. Z. Bahrani, Z. Çelik, and E. Eldem (Istanbul, 2011), 181–211, here 195–97. On Paspatis, see also Dimitris Stamatopoulos and George Vassiadis’s contribution in this volume.

<sup>45</sup> Grosvenor, *Constantinople*, 1:x.

<sup>46</sup> For biographical information on Alexander van Millingen, see Dennert and Heid, *Personenlexikon*, 2:2070 (M. Dennert). See also Ousterhout, “Rediscovery of Constantinople,” 199–200. On van Millingen, see also George Vassiadis’s contribution in this volume.

George Washburn (1833–1915),<sup>47</sup> son-in-law of Hamlin and the influential second president of Robert College, described van Millingen in the memoir *Fifty Years in Constantinople* in the highest terms:

Probably the most important act of the trustees during the year [1878] was the appointment of Rev. Alexander van Millingen as professor. He has been one of the main pillars of the College ever since. Born in Constantinople, educated in Scotland and a minister of the Free Church, the son of a distinguished English physician, who was one of the most noteworthy men in Constantinople during a long period of years, he has rendered invaluable service to the College and is recognized as the highest authority on the archaeology of Constantinople. ... The fact that Professor van Millingen’s appointment was made at the request of the Faculty is evidence that we had not lost our faith in the future of the College.<sup>48</sup>

Another noteworthy mention by Washburn is that van Millingen, together with another faculty member, William T. Ormiston, narrowly escaped the terrible earthquake of July 1894 while they were “engaged in archaeological work in the dungeons of the old prison of Anemas, under the old walls of the city. Their escape from being buried alive there was almost a miracle.”<sup>49</sup> Van Millingen himself mentions the episode in passing in a note in *Byzantine Constantinople*, stating that “our situation in the chambers was not enviable,”<sup>50</sup> betraying a sense of British humor that makes unmistakably clear that van Millingen should only be claimed as an American *honoris causa* in the context of the present study.

Like Paspatis—whose intimate familiarity with Constantinople’s topography and epigraphic record resulted in two early studies, one on the city’s Byzantine sites and monuments and the other on the Great Palace—van Millingen was a trailblazer in recognizing and promoting the importance of Byzantine art and culture; his later publications on the churches of Constantinople stand as important contributions to the nascent field of Byzantine architectural history.<sup>51</sup> Van Millingen’s humanity and deep devotion to the study of the city is

<sup>47</sup> For biographical information on Washburn, see *Dictionary of American Biography*, “Washburn, George,” 19:500–501.

<sup>48</sup> G. Washburn, *Fifty Years in Constantinople and Recollections of Robert College* (Boston, 1909), 140.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 232. For further information on Ormiston, who provided the photographs for van Millingen’s *Byzantine Constantinople*, see C. Anderson, *An Appreciation, Professor William Thomas Ormiston, A.B., A.M., Robert College, Constantinople, Turkey, 1885–1918* (New York, 1918).

<sup>50</sup> A. van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople: The Walls of the City and Adjoining Historical Sites* (London, 1899), 150.

<sup>51</sup> See A. G. Paspatis, *Βυζαντινὰ μελέται τοπογραφικὰ καὶ ἱστορικὰ* [Byzantine topographical and historical studies] (Constantinople, 1877; repr. Athens, 1986), and *idem*, *Τὰ Βυζαντινὰ ἀνάκτορα καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν ἰδρύματα* [The Byzantine palaces and the foundations around them] (Athens, 1885). The latter book was translated into English by William Metcalfe and published as *The Great Palace of Constantinople*



perhaps best expressed in the preface of *Byzantine Constantinople*, where he states: “The attention I have devoted, for many years, to the subject has been sustained by the conviction that the Empire of which New Rome was the capital defended the higher life of mankind against the attacks of formidable antagonists and rendered eminent service to the cause of human welfare. This is what gives to the archaeological study of the city its dignity and importance.”<sup>52</sup> His research and teaching also bore fruit at Robert College, as evidenced in the commencement orations of the 46th year (1908–9), which included “The Byzantine Empire,” delivered in French by a graduating Greek student.<sup>53</sup>

The years following the Young Turks Revolution in 1908 were in many ways defining and difficult ones for Robert College, and the changes brought about by the Balkan Wars, World War I, and the end of the Ottoman Empire, left their mark on both the institution and its faculty.<sup>54</sup> Van Millingen’s forced departure as a British subject in January 1915 and his death in England in September was not the only loss the college would mourn that year. Washburn, the institution’s former president, had passed away in February, and the distinguished poet Tevfik Fikret, who had been on the teaching faculty since 1894, died after a long illness in September.<sup>55</sup>

After the end of the war, new staff and faculty members were recruited from the United States to fill these vacant positions. As recalled by the college’s then-president, Caleb Gates, in an annual report: “On the 19th of August [1919], a large party of teachers sailed from New York to take up work at Robert College. About twenty of this party were newly appointed men to fill vacancies created during the war, and five were professors returning to their work accompanied by their families. The whole party numbered forty-four including women and children.”<sup>56</sup>

Among those, who joined the instructional faculty of Robert College in the later 1920s, was a young German-born American named Rudolf Meyer Riefstahl (1880–1936), who was hired as a lecturer to offer a single course on Turkish art for the 1927 spring semester (Fig. 5).<sup>57</sup> Riefstahl had come

(London, 1893). See also A. van Millingen, *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople: Their History and Architecture* (London, 1912). For a contextual evaluation of these publications to the field of Byzantine architectural history, see W. E. Kleinbauer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture: An Annotated Bibliography and Historiography* (Boston, 1992), xxxvi.

52 Van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople*, v.

53 See the *Annual Report*, academic year 1908–1909.

54 For a detailed account of the history of Robert College during these years, see the memoir by Caleb F. Gates, *Not to Me Only* (Princeton, 1940), who served as the college’s president from 1903 to 1932. See also Freely, *History of Robert College*, 209–30; Freely, *Bridge of Culture*, 198–229.

55 Freely, *History of Robert College*, 202; Freely, *Bridge of Culture*, 212–13.

56 See the combined *Annual Reports*, academic years 1917–18 and 1918–19; Freely, *Bridge of Culture*, 216.

57 For biographical information on Riefstahl, see P. Kropmanns, “Rudolf A. Meyer



Fig. 5 Rudolf Meyer Riefstahl, ca. early 1930s. Courtesy of Sophie Arnfield.

with the highest recommendations from New York University (NYU), where he held a position as professor of Near Eastern art in the newly founded Department of Fine Arts.<sup>58</sup> Having received an initial education at the University of Göttingen, Riefstahl went on to earn a doctorate at the University of Straßburg (Strasbourg) in 1903. Following employment as a lecturer at the Sorbonne in Paris, he worked for various galleries in Paris and London and eventually took an appointment as secretary-general of the famous exhibi-

Riefstahl (1880–1936)—ein vergessener Kunstvermittler,” *Sediment: Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Kunsthandels* 3 (1989): 63–87; A. P. McMahon, “Rudolf Meyer Riefstahl, 1880–1936,” *Parnassus* 10, no. 1 (1938): 23. For Riefstahl’s role in the Munich exhibition, see J. Kaak, “Hugo von Tschudi, die Ausstellung von ‘Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst’ und die Moderne,” in *After One Hundred Years: The 1910 Exhibition “Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst” Reconsidered*, ed. A. Lermer and A. Shalem (Leiden, 2010), 159–73, here 164–66. See also E.-M. Troelenberg, *Eine Ausstellung wird besichtigt: die Münchner “Ausstellung von Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst” 1910 in kultur- und wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher Perspektive* (Frankfurt, 2011), 373–74. Riefstahl’s full curriculum vitae is preserved at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Libraries and Archives, Fiske Kimball Papers, general correspondence and related materials, 1920–42, Riefstahl, R. Meyer, 1926–31, box: 23, folder 4.

58 New York University’s Department of Fine Arts was established in 1923 under the chairmanship of the architect and architectural historian Fiske Kimball, who hired a small but select group of faculty members, including Walter Cook, Philip McMahon, Richard Offner, John Shapley, and Thomas Whittemore, before moving to Philadelphia in 1925 to become director of the Pennsylvania (later Philadelphia) Museum of Art. See C. H. Smyth, “Glimpses of Richard Offner,” in *A Discerning Eye: Essays on Early Italian Painting by Richard Offner*, ed. A. Ladis (University Park, PA, 1998), 35–46, here 41–42. H. Bober, “The Gothic Tower and the Stork Club,” *Arts and Sciences* 1 (1962): 1–8.

tion on Islamic art in Munich in 1910, a post that foreshadowed his later specialization in Islamic textiles.<sup>59</sup> In 1915, after the outbreak of World War I, Riefstahl emigrated to the United States, where he curated a loan exhibition of historical textiles for the First National Silk Convention in Paterson, New Jersey, held 12–31 October 1915 at City Hall.<sup>60</sup> He subsequently worked as an expert for Near Eastern art at Anderson Galleries in New York and taught various summer and evening courses on rugs and textiles at the University of California, Berkeley, and New York University. After being appointed a full-time professor at NYU in 1924, Riefstahl was drawn back to Europe to travel and conduct research in the Orient.<sup>61</sup>

### Institutional Competition

What is fascinating about Riefstahl's brief sojourn in Constantinople is that he quickly seized on an idea that had been circulating among American scholars and diplomats for more than a decade—establishing an American school or research institute in Constantinople. American efforts at creating research centers in the Mediterranean had a long and checkered history that went back to the late nineteenth century, following the example set by the French and German governments of establishing research libraries and institutes for classical studies in Rome and Athens.<sup>62</sup> By the time the first American institutions of the kind opened—namely the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and the American Schools of Classical Studies and Architecture in Rome, in 1881 and 1894, respectively—the École Française d'Athènes was already half a century old. The Germans had founded a similar institute in Athens in 1874, modeled on the earlier Instituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica founded in Rome in 1829.<sup>63</sup>

59 *Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst: Amtlicher Führer der Ausstellung München 1910* (Munich, 1910). See also Lermer and Shalem, *After One Hundred Years*.

60 R. A. Meyer-Riefstahl, *First National Silk Convention: Catalogue of the Historical Exhibition of Textiles* (Paterson, NJ, 1915).

61 Starting in 1925, Riefstahl made various expeditions to Anatolia and conducted a study trip to Cairo in 1926. See his curriculum vitae at the archives of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (see above, note 57).

62 C. Luke and M. M. Kersel, *U.S. Cultural Diplomacy and Archaeology: Soft Power, Hard Heritage, Routledge Studies in Archaeology* (New York, 2013), 19–43, here 25–29. See also S. Dyson, *Ancient Marbles to American Shores: Classical Archaeology in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1998); idem, *In Pursuit of Ancient Pasts: A History of Classical Archaeology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New Haven, 2006).

63 Founded independently, the American Schools of Classical Studies and Architecture in Rome merged in 1906 to form the American Academy in Rome. On the other foreign archaeological schools, see E. Korca et al., eds., *Foreign Archaeological Schools in Greece—160 Years* (Athens, 2005); K. Sporn, *Das Deutsche Archäologische Institut Athen: Architektur und Geschichte* (Athens, 2018); U. Jantzen, *Einhundert Jahre Athener Institut, 1874–1974* (Mainz, 1986); A. Michaelis, *Geschichte des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, 1829–1879: Festschrift zum einundzwanzig-*

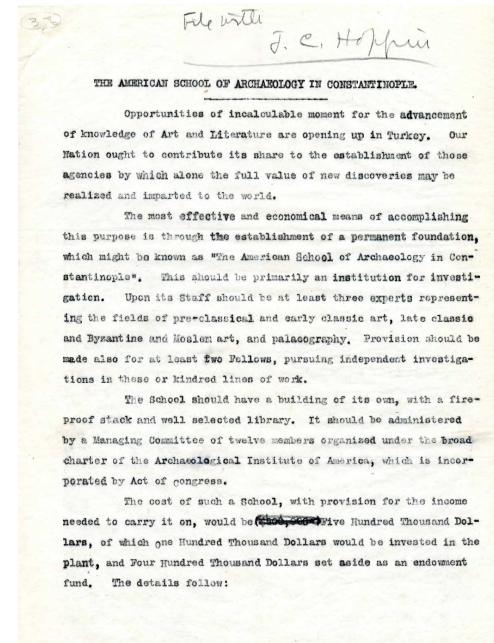


Fig. 6 White paper for an American School of Archaeology in Constantinople. Archaeological Institute of America Archives, Boston University.

Other libraries and institutes, including the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, were established a few years after the American Schools in Athens and Rome to facilitate research on the biblical past and the origins of civilization in the Near East.<sup>64</sup> The Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), which had been founded in 1879 through the efforts of Charles Eliot Norton at Harvard, was instrumental in making a case for the establishment of these foreign schools as early as the 1880s, and it did so again in 1910, when it advocated for the foundation of an American School of Archaeology in Constantinople.<sup>65</sup> Letters exchanged between Francis W. Kelsey (1858–1927), then-AIA president, Bert H. Hill (1874–1958), then-director of the American School in Athens, and Joseph C. Hoppin (1870–1925), an archaeologist and noted specialist in Greek vases who had taught at the American School in Athens during 1904–5, describe the nascent project in some detail.<sup>66</sup> An associated white paper summarizes the AIA's plans as follows (Fig. 6):

*sten April 1879* (Berlin, 1879).

64 P. J. King, *American Archaeology in the Mideast: A History of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Winona Lake, 1983); R. Hallote, "Before Albright: Charles Torrey, James Montgomery, and American Biblical Archaeology, 1907–1922," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 74, no. 3 (2011): 156–69.

65 For the early history of the AIA and its support of foreign research institutes, see also S. H. Allen, *Excavating Our Past: Perspectives on the History of the Archaeological Institute of America* (Boston, 2002).

66 Boston University, Archaeological Institute of America Records, American School in Constantinople, box 12.7, especially the letters from Hoppin to Kelsey, 29 May 1910, and from Kelsey to Hill, 2 June 1910.



Opportunities of incalculable moment for the advancement of knowledge of Art and Literature are opening up in Turkey. Our Nation ought to contribute its share to the establishment of those agencies by which alone the full value of new discoveries may be realized and imparted to the world.

The most effective and economical means of accomplishing this purpose is through the establishment of a permanent foundation, which might be known as “The American School of Archaeology in Constantinople”. This should be primarily an institution for investigation. Upon its Staff should be at least three experts representing the fields of pre-classical and early classic art, late classic and Byzantine and Moslem art, and paleography. Provision should be made also for at least two Fellows, pursuing independent investigations in these or kindred lines of work.

The School should have a building of its own, with a fire-proof stack and well selected library. It should be administered by a Managing Committee of twelve members organized under the broad charter of the Archaeological Institute of America, which is incorporated by Act of Congress.<sup>67</sup>

Although the AIA encountered some resistance from the School of Classical Studies in Athens, which saw its own importance threatened by plans to open a school of archaeology in nearby Constantinople, the Executive Committee of the AIA continued to move ahead with the project. Stalled by the outbreak of World War I, however, it was not until July 1923 that the committee took decisive action and voted in favor of the new school, motivated at least in part by news from Constantinople that the French were pursuing a similar project.<sup>68</sup> On 7 September 1922, John J. Tigert (1882–1965), commissioner of the United States Bureau of Education, had informed Kelsey in a letter (Fig. 7):

The United States Bureau of Education has received through the Department of State a communication from the American High Commissioner at Constantinople [Admiral Mark Bristol] calling attention to the fact that it is the intention of the French to establish a School of History and Archaeology at Constantinople. “It is presumed”, the High Commissioner states, “that M. Charles Diehl, Professor of Byzantine History at the Sorbonne, who has recently spent a month at Constantinople, will be entrusted with the Directorship of this school. The Department is perhaps aware of the important historical work accomplished by the French scholars who have formed the various ‘Missions archéologiques’ which have visited Constantinople from time

67 Ibid., box 12.7, “The American School of Archaeology in Constantinople,” undated paper.

68 Ibid., box 73, folder 16, letter from Magoffin to the commissioner of education (attn. George F. Zook), 20 July 1923.

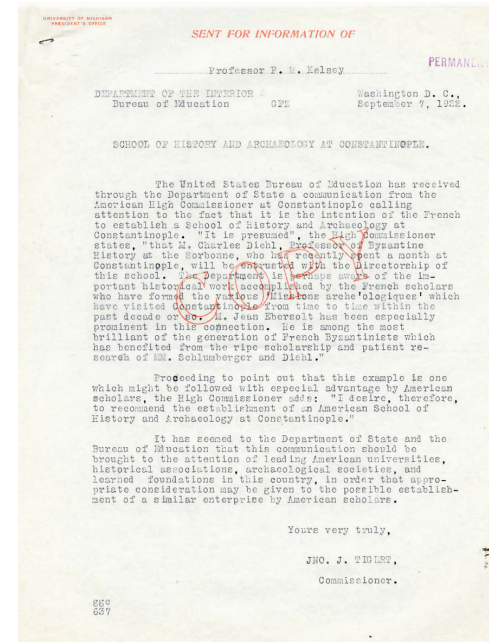


Fig. 7 Letter from John Tigert to Francis Kelsey, 7 September 1922. Archaeological Institute of America Archives, Boston University.

to time within the past decade or so. M. Jean Ebersolt has been especially prominent in this connection. He is among the most brilliant of the generation of French Byzantinists which [*sic*] has benefited from the ripe scholarship and patient research of MM. Schlumberger and Diehl.

Proceeding to point out that this example is one which might be followed with especial advantage by American scholars, the High Commissioner adds: “I desire, therefore, to recommend the establishment of an American School of History and Archaeology at Constantinople.”

It has seemed to the Department of State and the Bureau of Education that this communication should be brought to the attention of leading American universities, historical associations, archaeological societies, and learned foundations in this country, in order that appropriate consideration may be given to the possible establishment of a similar enterprise by American scholars.<sup>69</sup>

Despite support from the Bureau of Education and the AIA’s intention to present its plans at its annual meeting at Princeton in December 1923 for final approval, world events took an unfavorable turn, and the project was once again delayed, this time due to the political uncertainties ensuing from the declaration of the Turkish Republic on 29 October.<sup>70</sup>

69 Ibid., box 73, folder 16, letter from Tigert to Kelsey, 7 September 1922.

70 For analysis of the political context, see Luke and Kersel, *U.S. Cultural Diplomacy*, 25–29.



Fig. 8 Caleb Gates and Albert Staub at Robert College, 1923. Robert College Archives, Columbia University, New York.

Confidential letters preserved in the archives of NYU and Columbia University provide evidence that the idea of establishing an American institute or school for classical and Byzantine studies was still very much alive after the founding of the Turkish Republic. Of interest is a letter sent by Robert College president Gates on 25 April 1927 to Albert W. Staub (1880–1952) (Fig. 8), the New York–based director of the Near East College Association, to which Robert College, the American College for Girls, the International College at Smyrna, the American University of Beirut, and other colleges in the Eastern Mediterranean belonged (Fig. 9):

My dear Mr. Staub:

We have every year a considerable number of students and scholars coming from America for study to Constantinople. Their number is increasing from year to year. As you know, living in Stambul under present conditions is impossible, but all the monuments and museums, classic, Byzantine, Mohammedan, and Ancient Eastern, are in Stambul. Transportation eats the best hours of the day. A student requires a library and a room for study, also a drafting room if he is an architect or interested in architectonic problems. He particularly needs congenial

Robert College  
Constantinople  
Turkey  
April 25, 1927.

Mr. Albert W. Staub:  
19 East 42nd Street,  
New York City.

My dear Mr. Staub:-

We have every year a considerable number of students and scholars coming from America for study to Constantinople. Their number is increasing from year to year. As you know, living in Stambul under present conditions is impossible, but all the monuments and museums, classic, Byzantine, Mohammedan and Ancient Eastern, are in Stambul. Transportation eats the best hours of the day. A student requires a library and a room for study, also a drafting room if he is an architect or interested in architectonic problems. He particularly needs congenial company of fellow scholars in his hours of rest to gain information and inspiration. Nothing of all this is available in Stambul under present conditions.

An American Institute or center of archaeological studies, situated in Stambul would solve the problem.

In other centers of archaeological studies, such as Rome, Athens and Jerusalem such American Institutes exist.

As far as Constantinople is concerned the idea is not new. Admiral Bristol recommended such an Institute as early as the spring of 1925 in a note to the State Department. Dr. Hirstabul, professor of Fine Art of New York University, has discussed the idea in 1923 with Admiral Bristol, and in 1925 with me. He suggested that an Institute for the study of classical and Byzantine Art in the first rank, would really inter-fer with the Turkish Government, while an Institute making possible (and in a wider range) (and so) as an advisory agency to be followed later by the other fields of study, would certainly receive all the favor of the Turkish Government. Dr. Hirstabul's presence in Constantinople has again centered discussion on this subject. As you know, Dr. Hirstabul has been giving a course of lectures on Turkish Art and Architecture at Robert College. His course, still in progress, is attracting steadily over 100 persons attended the last lecture. This course has created quite a stir, not only in the American community but also in Turkish circles, and will be doubt be taken in account by the Turkish Govern-

ment as a general manifestation of good will. On our part, I think that Dr. Hirstabul knows his subject and is liked by the students. I think also that as a personality and with his experience in cooperating in the building up of the Department of Fine Arts of New York University he has organizing and executive ability. I see therefore a possibility of realizing this much needed American Institute in Constantinople under his leadership. The valuable contacts which he has made in Turkish circles will certainly prove helpful.

What would be the scope and function of such an Institute? It would offer lodging, board, a library, rooms for study, and a drafting room to American students, scholars and architects coming to Constantinople for serious study. It will be easy to find a roomy house at a low figure in Stambul, because everything may be of a provisional character at the start. Only the library ought to be developed very thoroughly and rapidly, as every scholar here complains about the lack of facilities for scientific study in the Islamic, Byzantine and classic fields.

This building would bring all the museums and monuments of Stambul within walking distance, and a country life full of inspiration and information will develop between resident and transient Americans. This Institute, as the same time, with Dr. Hirstabul's rich material on Islamic and Ottoman art, would be an excellent center for the study of oriental art in general, which is attracting increasing attention in the United States.

I am personally in favor of such an Institute under Dr. Hirstabul's leadership, and I am anxious to see it linked up with the Near East College, and Robert College in particular, for the following reasons:

An American Institute linked up with the Near East College and devoted in the first line to the study of Mohammedan or Turkish art would, through its very existence, smooth out many little frictions and difficulties with the Turkish Government. Dr. Hirstabul's presence in Constantinople would enable us to have a course on Islamic art and architecture permanently on the study program of Robert College, which is desirable, first, for its educational value for students and country, and second, for its political significance. Furthermore, Dr. Hirstabul, as a resident of Constantinople, would in the interest of the Institute, be helpful in developing the study of Islamic art in other Near Eastern Colleges, a necessity which will soon be felt with the other institutions, as it has been felt with us.

The main difficulty seems to me the question, to what extent the Near East College Association or the Board of Trustees of

Robert College are willing to assume any new responsibility. I personally feel that in our great campaign the maintenance of an American Institute sponsored by the Colleges would probably open new resources hitherto inaccessible. I also think that the difficulty might be solved in the following way:

We figure that the initial expense and running expense of the Institute for two years will amount to fifty thousand dollars on the outside. There are certain prospects which make me think that this sum can be raised in circles that as yet have not taken interest in the Near East College. Once these prospects have taken definite shape, a "Provisional Organizing Committee" of the American Institute in Constantinople could constitute itself in Constantinople, of which I should be glad to be a member. This provisional organizing committee would have the whole financial responsibility. Once the Institute has shown its utility and force of life, the Provisional Committee is in a position to appeal for support to institutions like the Carnegie Foundation which has committed itself deeply to sending American scholars and students abroad.

And once the Institute is on its feet, the Provisional Committee would dissolve, give way to a board of trustees located in the United States, and the new institution could then finally enter into the fold of the Near East College Association and would gradually powerfully contribute to build up a new branch of graduate studies in the several Near Eastern Colleges. I think personally that the starting of this Institute might be an important asset in the general endeavor drive of the colleges. This, however, is a matter to be decided in New York and not in Constantinople.

In my opinion, the preparatory work for the Institute ought to begin right now. There are certain prospects which make this desirable and it is perfectly possible to have the Institute itself functioning from March 1, 1928. I understand that the German Government intends to build an Institute, mainly for classical studies, as soon as the moving of the embassy to Ankara is finished. The large library building in Wye will then be wanted. It would be a pity to have the United States limp behind.

I should like to add another point. We all know sufficiently the unpleasant discussion about the Balkan states and the interrelated war debts. Our splendid answer has been given by the "International House" in New York. As soon as the situation permits I should like to see the hospitality of the American Institute in Stambul opened not only to Americans,

but to serious research students of all nations. Like the Americans these students of other nations would pay for their board and lodging an amount slightly below the actual cost, and I should particularly like to see in such an institution, as its guests, a few of these Turkish teachers who struggle so valiantly to develop education in their own country. As a mark of international good-will, the American Institute would be of greatest value to Americans in general and especially to the Near East Colleges.

It would be valuable to get things going before Admiral Bristol, who is in power of the project, leaves his post. I therefore ask you to bring up the matter before the Board of Trustees of Robert College at the very earliest convenience, and to advise by cable whether or not the Board is in favor of my joining the "Provisional Organizing Committee" of the American Institute in Constantinople, with the understanding that the full financial responsibility rests upon this Provisional Committee and upon nobody else.

Expecting your answer by cable, I remain  
Yours very sincerely,  
Caleb Gates

Fig. 9 Letter from Caleb Gates to Albert Staub, 25 April 1927. New York University Archives, New York.

company of fellow scholars ... Nothing of all this is available in Stambul under present conditions.

An American Institute or center of archaeological studies, situated in Stambul, would solve the problem.

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Further information can be gleaned from a letter Gates wrote to Elmer E. Brown, chancellor of New York University, on 7 May 1927 (Fig. 10):

My dear Chancellor Brown:

You are acquainted with the plan of founding an American Archaeological Institute in Constantinople. Dr. Riefstahl told me the matter had been discussed as early as the fall 1925 in a meeting at which you, Admiral Bristol, General Sherrill, and Dr. Riefstahl were present.

Dr. Riefstahl's presence in Constantinople, and his course on Turkish art and architecture, have aroused a wide interest in these subjects both in American and in Turkish circles, and have again attracted attention to the project of an Institute. As you know, this idea is not new; it was the subject of a note of Admiral Bristol to the Department of State as early as the spring of 1925 [sic]

I, of course, see the project from the angle of Robert College and of the Near East College Association in general. Our experience in more than

71 New York University Libraries, Special Collections, University Archives, Records of the Office of the Chancellor (Elmer Ellsworth Brown) RG.3.0.4, series I, box 60, folder 8: Riefstahl, Rudolph M. (Professor of Fine Arts, Roberts College, Constantinople), 1924-32. For biographical information on Albert W. Staub, see American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *The Missionary Herald at Home and Abroad* 104 (1908): 358-59.

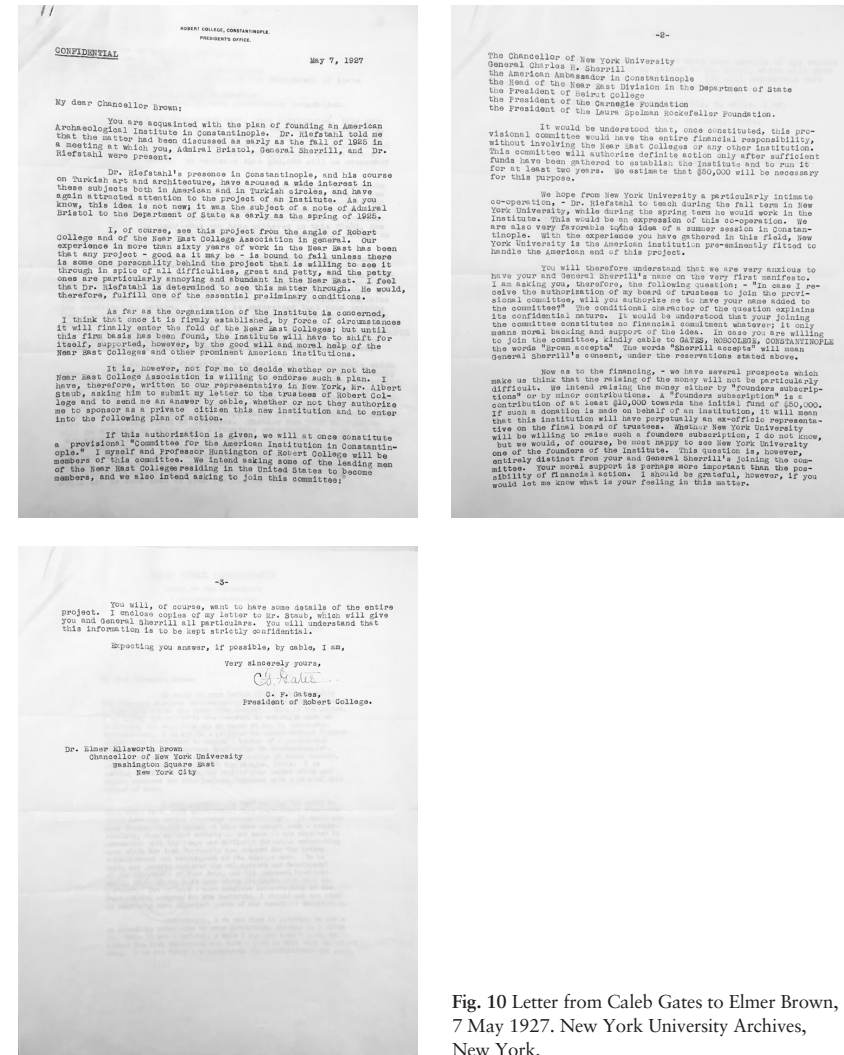


Fig. 10 Letter from Caleb Gates to Elmer Brown, 7 May 1927. New York University Archives, New York.

sixty years of work in the Near East has been that any project—good as it may be—is bound to fail unless there is some one personality behind the project that is willing to see it through in spite of all difficulties, great and petty, and the petty ones are particularly annoying and abundant in the Near East. I feel that Dr. Riefstahl is determined to see this matter through. He would therefore, fulfill one of the essential preliminary conditions.

As far as the organization of the Institute is concerned, I think that once it is firmly established, by force of circumstances it will finally enter the fold of the Near East Colleges; but until this firm basis has been found, the Institute will have to shift [sic] for itself, support, however, by the

good will and moral help of the Near East Colleges and other prominent American institutions.

... I have, therefore, written to our representative in New York, Mr. Albert Staub, asking him to submit my letter to the trustees of Robert College and to send me an answer by cable, whether or not they authorize me to sponsor as a private citizen this new institution and to enter the following plan of action.

... We intend asking some of the leading men of the Near East Colleges residing in the United States to become members, and we also intend asking you [to] join this committee:

The Chancellor of New York University

General Charles H. Sherrill

the American Ambassador in Constantinople

the Head of the Near East Division in the Department of State

the President of Beirut College

the President of the Carnegie Foundation

the President of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Foundation

...

We hope from New York University a particularly intimate co-operation,—Dr. Riefstahl to teach during the fall term in New York University, while during the spring term he would work in the Institute. This would be an expression of this co-operation. We are also favorable to the idea of a summer session in Constantinople. With the experience you have gathered in this field, New York University is the American institution pre-eminently fitted to handle the American end of this project.

...

Now as to the financing,—we have several prospects which make us think that the raising of money will not be particularly difficult. We intend raising the money either by “founders subscription” or by minor contributions. A “founders subscription” is a contribution of at least \$10,000 towards the initial fund of \$50,000. If such a donation is made on behalf of an institution, it will mean that this institution will have perpetually an ex-officio representative on the final board of trustees. Whether New York University will be willing to raise such a founders subscription is, I do not know, but we would, of course, be most happy to see New York University one of the founders of the Institute.

... I enclose copies of my letter to Mr. Staub, which will give you and General Sherrill all particulars. You will understand that this information is to be kept strictly confidential.<sup>72</sup>

Similar letters were addressed to the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations, the College Art Association, and other potential institutional supporters and funders.<sup>73</sup> For different reasons, however, neither of them stepped up to commit funds or lend institutional support to the project.<sup>74</sup> Apart from Gates, Riefstahl himself worked on all fronts in support of the idea of an American school at Constantinople. This is vividly illustrated by the correspondence of the young Meyer Schapiro (1904–96), then a doctoral student at Columbia’s Department of Fine Arts, who wrote to his future wife, Lillian, from Athens on 20 April 1927, during his Mediterranean travels:

[In Constantinople] I lived in the midst of intrigues of Riefstahl to found an American School of Near Eastern Studies in Constantinople—I was invited to stay with him, introduced to his presumed benefactors, & used as an argument. Finally I was offered a position teaching in this school which does not yet exist. Riefstahl was not candid and it was not until after much questioning that he admitted that there would be only [a] small chance for the independent research that draws me to Const[antinople].—& that in the summer there would be no vacation . . . Then I would be interrupted . . . to lecture to each fresh ship-load on Byzantine toilets; or similar matters. There are other reasons why R[iefstahl] wishes to have me in Constantinople—but none of these, at present, seem to promise the chance I desire.<sup>75</sup>

By the end of September 1929, Riefstahl’s project had not significantly developed. In a letter to Fiske Kimball, he wrote, “My own affair has hardly advanced. The Near East Colleges are somnolent. [Edward] Capps [Sr.], interviewed by [Charles R.] Morey, seems lukewarm to a venture in Turkey, being

72 Columbia University, Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Archival Collections, RCR, series V: Faculty Lists, box 19, folder R. M. Riefstahl.

73 This information is included in a letter dated 20 June 1927 from Riefstahl to his friend and former colleague Fiske Kimball: “Gates and Admiral Bristol have taken up the Institutes [*sic*] plan with enthusiasm. The Institute is to be linked up later with the Near East Colleges, which I think is a very good scheme. The Committee has written letters to Dr. Flexner, Dr. Fosdick and Mr. Keppel of the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations, asking them to finance the beginning of the Institute with 50000 dollars distributed over two years stating also that they have selected me as future director on account [*sic*] of my many lovely qualities.” Philadelphia Museum of Art, Libraries and Archives, Fiske Kimball Papers, general correspondence and related materials, 1920–1942, Riefstahl, R. Meyer, 1926–31, box: 23, folder 4.

74 Their responses are preserved at Columbia University, Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Archival Collections, RCR, series V: Faculty Lists, box 19, folder R. M. Riefstahl.

75 D. Esterman, ed., *Meyer Schapiro Abroad: Letters to Lillian and Travel Notebooks* (New York, 2009), 82–83, here 83.



Fig. 11 Thomas Whittemore, ca. 1900. Dumbarton Oaks, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archive, Washington, D.C.

Athenian himself. If nothing comes forward this winter I may shift my basis from Cospoli to Paris, having for 2 years material for publication on hand. The Bibliothèque Doucet is better than Cospoli or NYC working opportunities.”<sup>76</sup>

Riefstahl’s sojourn in Constantinople came to an end in 1930, but rather than returning to NYU or relocating to Paris, he and his wife established their new residence in Rome to “study Medieval Italian art and the Oriental influence it underwent.”<sup>77</sup> With Riefstahl’s departure from Constantinople, the opportunity to establish an American school in Constantinople had passed or was now a more distant possibility than ever before—at least as far as the involvement of American academic institutions, philanthropic and non-profit organizations, and the federal government was concerned.

76 Philadelphia Museum of Art, Libraries and Archives, Fiske Kimball Papers, general correspondence and related materials, 1920–1942, Riefstahl, R. Meyer, 1926–31, box 23, folder 4. See the handwritten letter from Riefstahl to Kimball, 29 September 1929, on S.S. *Majestic* letterhead. Capps, a Princeton classicist, headed the managing committee of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. Morey, a medievalist, was also at Princeton. The fashion designer, art collector, and philanthropist Jacques Doucet (1853–1929) built an extraordinary private library during the course of his lifetime. He donated his art and archaeology collection to the University of Paris in 1917. The library remains one of the most comprehensive in the fields of art, architecture, and archaeology to this day.

77 Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Libraries and Archives, Fiske Kimball Papers, general correspondence and related materials, 1920–42, Riefstahl, R. Meyer, 1926–31, box 23, folder 4. See Riefstahl’s curriculum vitae, Philadelphia Museum of Art archives.

Coincidentally, it was in 1930 that another American, Thomas Whittemore (1871–1950)—the Boston-born literary historian turned archaeologist, relief worker, and historic preservationist—began to take up a similar cause, and with the support of a strong philanthropic network of high-minded and politically well-connected friends, established what would become known as the Byzantine Institute of America (Fig. 11).<sup>78</sup> Between its founding during 1929/30 and Whittemore’s sudden death in 1950, the Byzantine Institute’s work in Constantinople and elsewhere must be considered America’s most significant and lasting contribution to the rediscovery of Byzantium in Istanbul within the timeframe covered by this volume. It is therefore appropriate to conclude with a more focused examination of the circumstances that led to its founder’s interest in Byzantine art and culture and the preservation and study of its monuments.

### Thomas Whittemore: Life and Legacy

A graduate of Tufts College, which his paternal grandfather had founded, Thomas Whittemore likely discovered his passion for art and archaeology in the mid- to late-1890s, while enrolled at Harvard University as a graduate student.<sup>79</sup> During this time, he started to develop a range of lectures on ancient and medieval art that he would present at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and in fine arts courses at Tufts, which in 1988 employed him as an assistant professor of English. A leave of absence in 1908 enabled Whittemore to move to Europe, where he studied architecture at the Sorbonne and traveled widely across the continent.<sup>80</sup> He returned to Europe frequently

78 For a synopsis of biographical information on Whittemore relevant here, see most recently Dennert and Heid, *Personenlexikon*, 2:1314–15. For more in-depth studies of certain aspects of his life and career, see H. A. Klein, “The Elusive Mr. Whittemore,” in *The Kariye Camii Reconsidered*, ed. H. A. Klein, R. G. Ousterhout, and B. Pitarakis (Istanbul, 2011), 283–96; R. Nelson, *Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950: Holy Wisdom Modern Monument* (Chicago, 2004), 155–66; N. Teteriatnikov, “The Byzantine Institute and Its Role in the Conservation of the Kariye Camii,” in *Restoring Byzantium: The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, ed. H. A. Klein (New York, 2004), R. Labrusse and N. Podzemskaia, “Naissance d’une vocation: aux sources de la carrière Byzantine de Thomas Whittemore,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000): 43–69, here 61. W. L. MacDonald, “Thomas Whittemore,” *Dictionary of American Biography*, suppl. 4 (1974), 890–91. An unpublished (and fragmentary) biography, “Thomas Whittemore: His Life and Work,” written by Boris Ermoloff, is preserved at Dumbarton Oaks, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archive (ICFA), Washington, D.C., and in Providence, Rhode Island, at Brown University’s John Hay Library, Special Collections, John Nicholas Brown II (1900–79) Papers, box 12, folder 7. I would like to acknowledge and thank Alison Bundy at the John Hay Library for her help in locating the manuscript at the university.

79 Whittemore was enrolled in Harvard’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences from 1895 to 1898. He is listed as an alumnus of 1898 in the *Harvard University Directory* (Cambridge, MA, 1910), 729 and 1034; *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* 20, no. 3 (1917): 55. See also Klein, “The Elusive Mr. Whittemore,” 469.

80 For the leave announcement, see *The Tufts College Graduate* (Boston, 1908), 91.



thereafter, visiting the great exhibition of Islamic art in Munich shortly before it closed in 1910, and between 1911 and 1915, immersing himself in archaeological fieldwork in Bulgaria and Egypt, where he worked under the auspices of the British Egypt Exploration Fund at Abydos, Sawâma, and Balabish.<sup>81</sup> When excavating in Egypt was no longer possible due to the outbreak of World War I, Whittemore joined the relief efforts of the American Red Cross in France, and, following extensive travels through Russia during the winter of 1915/16, founded the American Committee of Relief for Russian Refugees.<sup>82</sup> In a 1916 interview with the *New York Times*, Whittemore gave a vivid account of his recent experiences in Russia and emphasized the urgent need for financial assistance and material support:

Russia is rich, and sometimes it is said that she is so rich that she needs no alien help. Silent resignation is characteristic of Russian sacrifice, and if we have not heard the cry of Russia as we have heard the cry of France and Belgium and the other warring nations it is not because the need is not great. The problems of the summer will have to be met. Adequate bathing facilities are needed before the winter, or that terrible Russian scourge, typhus, will strike once more. ... Thousands have died because of this lack of equipment and the hygienic conditions naturally attendant on getting these people off the roadsides and into their winter quarters.<sup>83</sup>

In light of the humanitarian tragedy Whittemore witnessed in Russia, he immersed himself fully in Russian affairs and became a full-time fundraiser and relief worker, traveling to Russia several times between 1917 and 1919 to deliver much-needed funds and supplies from his relief organization.<sup>84</sup>

For Whittemore's travels in Europe between 1908 and 1914, see Klein, "The Elusive Mr. Whittemore," 472–80; for a reflection of Whittemore's 1908 trip to Moscow and visit to the modernist painting collection of Sergei Shchukin, see T. Whittemore, "The Bolshevik and the Cubist," *Touchstone* 4, no. 4 (1919): 314–21.

81 For Whittemore's involvement in archaeological fieldwork with the Egypt Exploration Fund, later the Egypt Exploration Society, see A. Stevenson, *Scattered Finds: Archaeology, Egyptology, and Museums* (London, 2019), 67–104, here 94–100. For the academic fruits of his archaeological labors, see T. Whittemore, "The Sawâma Cemeteries," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 1, no. 4 (1914): 246–47.

82 For Whittemore's involvement in the Red Cross, see Labrusse and Podzemskaia, "Naissance d'une vocation," 61. See also "War Surgeons Work without Anesthetics: Thomas Whittemore of Boston Wires of Operations without Ether," *Boston Journal*, 5 November 1914.

83 "Russians in Want, but Won't Ask Aid," *New York Times*, 10 June 1916.

84 Whittemore's interest in Russia had emerged a few years earlier: "In 1912 my archaeological studies took me to Bulgaria, where after the Balkan Wars I worked to some extent with the Bulgarian refugees. There I became interested in the various phases of the Slavic question, and especially in Russia." See Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Archival Collections, Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian and East European Culture (BAR), Committee for the Education of Russian Youth in Exile Records, 1914–39 (CERYE), subjects IX.5: T. Whittemore Papers, Writings, box 99, folder 14, "Relatia of My Journey in Russia: November–December 1915 and January–February 1916."

During these visits he witnessed several notable political and religious events in Petrograd and Moscow, including a meeting of the All-Russian Church Council, or Sobor, in August 1917.<sup>85</sup> The following year, he recounted his experiences in an article for *National Geographic Magazine*, lamenting the recent shelling and partial destruction of the churches and palaces in the Kremlin as acts of madness and barbarism.<sup>86</sup> Whittemore's text was illustrated with photographs of the Kremlin's severely damaged churches, their liturgical objects broken and strewn about. Describing the Easter services once celebrated in the Kremlin's Cathedral, he refers to them as "a vision of the forms and color of the Imperial Byzantine Court, in which the Church on earth pays her most splendid homage to Heaven."<sup>87</sup> For Boris Ermoloff, a Whittemore friend and associate who helped with his relief efforts and who later drafted a few chapters of Whittemore's biography, there was no doubt that his later enthusiasm for Byzantium had emerged from "his several voyages to Russia and the Near East since 1908 and his frequent visits to the Holy Mountain of Athos."<sup>88</sup>

It was Whittemore's Russian relief work, however, rather than his interest in Byzantine art and culture, that took him to Constantinople in the spring of 1919. A year later, he recalled at a Boston fundraiser: "I went to

85 Ibid.

86 For Whittemore, the Kremlin was the uncontested religious and cultural center of all Russia: "It is impossible not to recognize that in the Kremlin are found the history of the art, moral strength, might, greatness and glory of the Russian land," he wrote. "If ancient Moscow is the heart of all Russia, then the altar of this heart is the Kremlin. A sacrilegious attack upon it could be made only by madmen or by men to whom nothing is holy and who are incapable of understanding (whatever Russia's future is to be) the significance and importance of this monument to Russian history." T. Whittemore, "The Rebirth of Religion in Russia: The Church Reorganized While Bolshevik Cannon Spread Destruction in the Nation's Holy of Holies," *National Geographic Magazine*, November 1918, 389.

87 Ermoloff, "Thomas Whittemore," 12: "During his several voyages to Russia and the Near East since 1908 and his frequent visits to the Holy Mountain of Athos, he discovered the beauty and mystic side of the Greek-orthodox liturgy with its beautiful choirs, the splendid ordonnance [*sic*] of the ceremonies reminding those of the Imperial court of Byzantium. This appealed to him specially and he liked to hear the Mass in a Russian church, wherever there was one."

88 Whittemore's interest in early Christian, Byzantine, and Islamic art and culture had been nurtured early on by his close friend and mentor Matthew S. Prichard, an Englishman who had spent several years in Boston as assistant director of the Museum of Fine Arts and developed friendships with both Whittemore and Isabella Stewart Gardner there. See Klein, "Elusive Mr. Whittemore," 474–75. For Prichard's friendship with another circle of enthusiasts and art dealers keenly interested in Byzantine art and culture that included, among others, Royall Tyler and Joseph Brummer, see R. Nelson, "Private Passions Made Public: The Beginnings of the Bliss Collection," in *Sacred Art Secular Context: Objects of Art from the Byzantine Collection of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.* (Athens, GA, 2005), 43. Ermoloff, "Thomas Whittemore," 12.



Fig. 12 Charles Richard Crane, 1909. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-USZ62-35870.

Constantinople, expecting to find my way immediately to Russia; but it was just after the fall of Odessa, and I found that Constantinople had become a Russian city. The streets were flowing with Russians. There were grand dukes and Cossacks and peasants and princes, and I saw that there was work to be done for the Russians there, for the Russian refugees.”<sup>89</sup>

Among the circle of Boston and New York socialites who served as members of the executive board of Whittemore’s American Committee of Relief for Russian Refugees, one who deserves particular attention in the context of this study is Charles Richard Crane (1858–1939) (Fig. 12), the eldest son of the Chicago industrialist Richard Teller Crane (1832–1912), who had made his fortune supplying plumbing for the Windy City’s reconstruction after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.<sup>90</sup> Charles had divested himself of ownership in the Crane Company in 1914, selling his shares to his younger brother, Richard T. Crane Jr., to pursue his own political and diplomatic interests in Russia and the Middle East.<sup>91</sup> Whittemore and Crane must have met in Russia in early 1917, and like Whittemore, Crane had visited Constantinople many times, beginning in the late 1880s. Crane had become a steadfast supporter and trustee of both Robert College and the Constantinople Women’s College (formerly the American College for Girls).<sup>92</sup> More important here, Crane,

89 Columbia University, BAR, CERYE, subseries IX.4: T. Whittemore Papers, Talks, Addresses, Reports, Appeals by T. Whittemore, 1917–24, box 99, folder 9, stenograph record of T. Whittemore and Charles W. Eliot Address, 19 February 1920. See also Labrusse and Podzemskaia, “Naissance d’une vocation,” 61.

90 For biographical information on Charles Crane, see N. E. Saul, *The Life and Times of Charles R. Crane, 1858–1939: American Businessman, Philanthropist, and a Founder of Russian Studies in America* (Lanham, 2013), and Columbia University, Rare Books and Manuscript Library, BAR, The Crane Family Papers, 1875–1980.

91 For Crane’s family background, see Saul, *Life and Times of Charles R. Crane*, 1–37.

92 Crane joined the board of trustees of the American College for Girls in 1910 and

who had contributed heavily to Woodrow Wilson’s 1912 election campaign, was rewarded with appointments to the 1917 Special Diplomatic Commission to Russia and the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, and he later co-directed the King-Crane Commission, tasked to study the fate of the Middle East for Wilson after the Great War, making him a politically well-connected and highly influential figure in Constantinople during the last years of the Ottoman Empire and the early days of the Turkish Republic.<sup>93</sup>

Following the fall of Odessa in the spring of 1919, Whittemore and supporters of his aid committee started to shift the organization’s mission from war relief for refugees in Russia to preserving Russian culture and values in a struggle that they perceived in both real and spiritual terms. The American Committee of Relief for Refugees in Russia was thus renamed the Committee for the Rescue and Education of Russian Children and eventually became the Committee for the Education of Russian Youth in Exile in 1922.<sup>94</sup> Providing an education for the children of refugees who had fled Russia, particularly to Constantinople, was considered a priority for the committee, so over the next few years Whittemore concentrated solely on educational and relief work outside Russia. During the early 1920s, the committee focused on the construction of new schools in Constantinople as well as in Bulgaria and elsewhere in Europe and provisioning them with textbooks and other educational materials. It subsequently sent Russian students from Constantinople across Europe to Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, France, and even Germany to complete their education.<sup>95</sup> The grateful beneficiaries of this work later compiled a number of photo albums to commemorate their educational achievements and to thank Whittemore and the committee for their support.<sup>96</sup> These photos may be seen as documents of the success of the committee’s investment in the children of Russia’s intellectual elite, some of whom Whittemore later employed to oversee the committee’s various operations in Europe or recommended to friends for employment in France and the United States.<sup>97</sup>

served as the board’s president by 1922. In this role, he also joined the board of trustees of Robert College. See Saul, *Life and Times of Charles R. Crane*, 216.

93 *Ibid.*, 167–212, esp. 192–99.

94 For a reflection of Whittemore’s experiences traveling in Russia, see his unpublished “Relatia of My Journey in Russia,” and Whittemore, “The Rebirth of Religion in Russia,” 378–401. For a descriptive account of Whittemore’s relief work in Russia, see “Caring for Little Russian Children: The Work of American Committee for the Relief of Refugees in Russia,” in *Touchstone* 4 (1919): 288–91.

95 Columbia University, BAR, CERYE, subseries II.5: Office Correspondence, Correspondence with Schools.

96 *Ibid.*, subseries X.14: Photographs, photo albums.

97 Dmitrii Ermoloff, brother of Boris, was put in charge of the committee’s operations in Bulgaria. Columbia University, BAR, CERYE, subseries IX.1: T. Whittemore Papers, Correspondence, Ermolov, Dmitrii, undated, 1922–29, box 95, folders 1–3. See also, *ibid.*, subseries II.2: Office Correspondence, Committee’s Representatives in Europe Correspondence, box 8, folders 10–13.



Fig. 13 Thomas Whittemore and George Pratt on Mount Athos, 1923. Dumbarton Oaks, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archive, Washington, D.C.

By the end of August 1923, Whittemore wrote to the Boston branch of the committee that further relief work in Constantinople was no longer needed: “[E]xcept [for] those already in American colleges, there are no more Russians in Constantinople worth our consideration for education.”<sup>98</sup> Whittemore himself had already begun to engage in a number of other activities earlier in the year, including the distribution of financial aid and supplies to a number of Russian and Bulgarian monasteries on Mount Athos.<sup>99</sup> On Whittemore’s journey to the Holy Mountain in May 1923, he was accompanied by members of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, including Charles Pratt, Jr., son of the founder of the Standard Oil Company and the Pratt Institute in New York, as several photos of their visit attest (Fig. 13).<sup>100</sup>

98 Columbia University, BAR, CERYE, subseries IX.1: T. Whittemore Correspondence, letter from Thomas Whittemore to Committee, 20 August 1923, box 98, folder 1–20.

99 Ibid., subseries IX.8: T. Whittemore Correspondence, subject files, Mount Athos, undated, 1922–30, box 101, folders 1–12. The correspondence preserved indicates visits to the skete of St. Andrew, the skete of Prophet Elias, and the monastery of St. Panteleimon.

100 Dumbarton Oaks, ICFA. Pratt and other high-profile donors whom Whittemore cultivated during this time would later become important supporters of the Byzantine Institute of America. See Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 175.

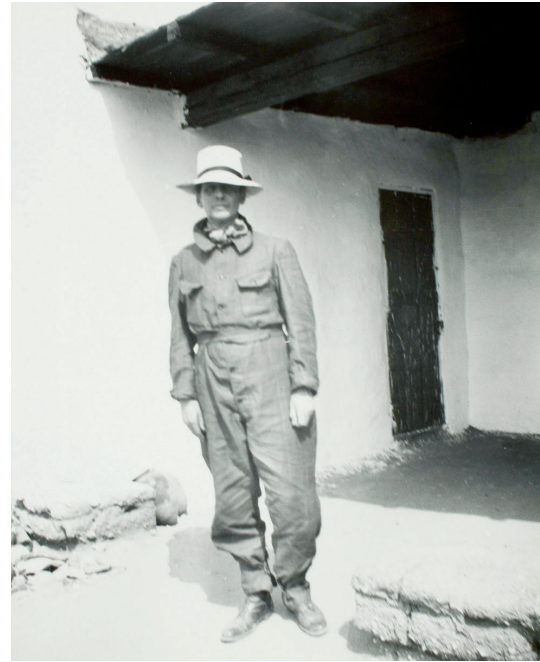


Fig. 14 Whittemore excavating at Amarna, 1923–24. Dumbarton Oaks, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archive, Washington, D.C.

The winding down of Whittemore’s activities in Constantinople allowed him to reengage in archaeological work in Egypt (Fig. 14), where he joined the Egypt Exploration Society at its Amarna excavations in November 1923 and took over as field director the following season after the sudden death of Francis G. Newton (1878–1924) on Christmas.<sup>101</sup> The subsequent cancellation of the 1925–26 season of fieldwork at Amarna provided Whittemore an opportunity to also reengage with academic work back in the United States.<sup>102</sup> This opportunity arose early in 1927, when Charles Sherrill, chairman of the Department of Fine Arts at NYU, approached Whittemore to become a research associate and teach courses at the newly formed College of Fine Arts.<sup>103</sup> Quickly promoted to assistant professor, Whittemore taught at NYU for the next three years, offering classes and lectures on medieval and

101 Photographs taken during the 1923–24 campaign are preserved at Dumbarton Oaks, ICFA. For further information, see Dumbarton Oaks’s online exhibition *Before Byzantium: The Early Activities of Thomas Whittemore (1871–1931)*, <https://www.doaks.org/resources/online-exhibits/before-byzantium>.

102 Whittemore participated in the shortened 1926–27 fieldwork season, as indicated in the report of H. Frankfort, “Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Tell El-Amarnah, 1926–27,” *Journal for Egyptian Archaeology* 13 (1927): 209–18, here 209: “Whittemore assisted us for several weeks while completing his notes on the North Palace.” See also Dumbarton Oaks, *Before Byzantium*.

103 Paris, Bibliothèque Byzantine, Fonds Thomas Whittemore, letter from C. S. Sherrill to Thomas Whittemore, 31 January 1927. Perhaps not by coincidence, Whittemore’s hire coincided with the departure of Riefstahl to teach a spring class at Robert College.



Byzantine art at the university and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>104</sup> He had already, however, set his sight on a different prize.

Sometime during the summer of 1929, perhaps during a dinner Whittemore hosted for a group of eight friends at the posh Hotel Tokatlian on the Grande Rue of Pera in Constantinople, the idea took root to establish what would soon become the Byzantine Institute of America. Officially incorporated in Massachusetts and headquartered out of Boston, but with an address and research library at 4, rue de Lille in Paris, the institute's mission was to facilitate the study, documentation, and preservation of the architectural and artistic heritage of the former Byzantine Empire.<sup>105</sup> As William McDonald later wrote, Whittemore's message was "that Christian art in the Near East, especially in Constantinople, was unknown, utterly magnificent, equal or superior to Western medieval art, and ought to be revealed and understood."<sup>106</sup>

While NYU tried to retain Whittemore by offering him a leave of absence for a year and a full-time professorial position as head of the department's Near East section upon his return, the effort was in vain.<sup>107</sup> Whittemore responded two days later with a letter of resignation:

104 See *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 19 (1928): 259 and 319.

105 While the exact circumstances of the founding and funding of the Byzantine Institute and research library in Paris are unknown, Robert Nelson has suggested that it was during the Tokatlian dinner with friends, including John Nicholas Brown, Richard T. Crane Jr. (?), and Benjamin Kittredge. See Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 172–73. The first known institute letterhead lists Seth Gano, Whittemore's longtime collaborator and trusted secretary of the various incarnations of the American Committee for Russian Relief, in the same capacity, George D. Pratt as treasurer, and John Shapley, the former Samuel Morse Professor at NYU and then-chairman of the art department at the University of Chicago, as president.

106 MacDonald, "Thomas Whittemore," 890.

107 The offer is preserved in a letter at Columbia University, BAR, CERYE, subseries IX.8: T. Whittemore Papers, subject files, NYU, 1927–1930, box 100, folder 15, letter from Sherrill to Whittemore, 4 February 1930: "In granting a year's leave of absence to Professor Thomas Whittemore of the College of Fine Arts, New York University, Chancellor Brown and Dean Bossange, of the College of Fine Arts, express great pleasure in announcing that upon Professor Whittemore's return he would be in charge of the Near East section and organize a group of graduate and undergraduate lectures and graduate seminars, having for its purpose a comprehensive study of Near Eastern art from the angle of the Byzantine influence which made itself felt over so many centuries and so wide a territory. Not only would these courses treat architecture, painting, sculpture, etc. as found in Constantinople, Asia Minor and the former territory of the Turkish Empire, but also its expressions found from Egypt to Russia and from Persia to Rome. New York University feels that while Classical and Gothic art have long received ample attention from universities and art Institutes, Byzantine art has not yet received the recognition it has long richly deserved. ... During Professor Whittemore's leave of absence he will be engaged not only in Byzantine researches in ancient monasteries and other buildings in Egypt, Greece, Bulgaria and Russia, but will also be collaborating and preparing for the Press a number of documents hitherto unedited. Much of this new material will be of a sort usefully to fit into the proposed courses of study soon to be offered by the College."

My dear General Sherrill:

The tempting proposal of Chancellor Brown and Dean Bossange for me to organize, after a leave of absence for a year, a department of the arts of the Near East in New York University has caused me to delay my reply for very careful consideration. The graduate students called by the University to my classes in the three years just past have given me an agreeable opportunity to teach, and the use I have been able to make of the Metropolitan Museum has been equally stimulating. So that it is with regret that other important undertakings lay claim to my entire time and forbid me for the present to teach at all. Nor do I dare commit myself to any definite time of return to my professorship.

The Byzantine Institute, of which I am Director, will during these years of its infancy require my entire attention both at home and abroad.

Believe me, I beg you, that it is therefore on this account that I cannot, in justice, to your undertaking assume the responsibility which you so gratifyingly suggest and must reluctantly terminate my connection with New York University at the close of this academic year.<sup>108</sup>

As much as Whittemore relied on his circle of wealthy and politically well connected friends in Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington, DC, and elsewhere to enable the Byzantine Institute's new venture financially and in terms of facilitating access to the highest levels of the Turkish government, it was his Russian contacts from Constantinople that provided him with the artistic and intellectual talent to staff the organization. Boris Ermoloff was put in charge of the research library in Paris.<sup>109</sup> Vladimir Rayevsky, another close friend who initially helped with Russian relief efforts, served as a librarian (Fig. 15).<sup>110</sup> Alexandre Piankoff (1897–1966) oversaw Arabic and Coptic material at the library and accompanied Whittemore and his small team on the institute's first project, an expedition to the Red Monasteries in 1930–31 as an epigraphist.<sup>111</sup> The Russian-born Piankoff had studied in Moscow during the war and had been supported by the American Committee to study Egyptian philology with Adolf Erman and Kurt Sethe in Berlin before relocating to Paris to further pursue his studies at the Sorbonne. He

108 *Ibid.*, letter from Whittemore to Sherrill, February 6, 1930.

109 The first encounter between Ermoloff and Whittemore in Sebastopol in 1919 is described at length in the introduction of Ermoloff, "Thomas Whittemore," 1–3.

110 Some of Rayevsky's correspondence with Whittemore is preserved at Columbia University. See BAR, CERYE, subseries IX.1, T. Whittemore Papers, Correspondence, Raevsky, Vladimir, undated, 1922–28, box 96, folder 46.

111 Apart from Piankoff, the team included another Russian, the artist V(asily?) Netchetailoff, but the circumstances under which he became acquainted with Whittemore and his circle in Paris are unknown. For an assessment of the expedition and an appreciation of the work of Piankoff, see E. Bolman, ed., *Monastic Visions: Wall Paintings in the Monastery of St. Antony at the Red Sea* (New Haven, 2002), 182–83.



Fig. 15 Byzantine Library with Boris Ermoloff and Vladimir Rayevsky, 1947. Dumbarton Oaks, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archive, Washington, D.C.

began collaborating with Whittemore at Amarna and Abydos in 1924.<sup>112</sup> Other Russians involved in the institute's library included Anatole Frolov (1906–72), who went to Paris in 1923 to study with Gabriel Millet at the *École pratique des hautes études* and later became acquainted with Whittemore and the library staff. He eventually served as the library's keeper and Whittemore's scientific associate.<sup>113</sup>

Whittemore again relied heavily on Russian talent for the Byzantine Institute's second and arguable most prestigious project: the uncovering, documentation, and restoration of the mosaics of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, an endeavor that lasted nearly eighteen years, from 1931 to 1949.<sup>114</sup> The

112 Plans, drawings, notes, and letters on Amarna and Abydos are preserved at Dumbarton Oaks, ICFA, Byzantine Institute of America, 1931–62, boxes 1–2. Some of the material from Abydos was eventually published by Piankoff in memory of Whittemore and as an homage to his efforts to document and preserve the monument. See A. Piankoff, "The Osireion of Seti I at Abidos during the Graeco-Roman and Christian Occupation," *Bulletin of the Society of Coptic Archaeology* 15 (1958–60): 125–49. See also Teteriatnikov, "The Byzantine Institute and Its Role," 48–49. For biographical information on Piankoff, see F. Dumas, "Alexandre Piankoff (1897–1966)," *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 65 (1965): 227–30.

113 A. Grabar, "In memoriam: Anatole Frolov (1906–1972)," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 22 (1972): 247. Teteriatnikov, "The Byzantine Institute and Its Role," 47–48.

114 The project started in December 1931. The Council of Ministers in Ankara had issued an official decree on 7 June 1931 permitting the work. The decree is preserved in An-

painter, photographer, and archaeologist Nikolai K. Kluge (1869–1947), an important member of Whittemore's team at Hagia Sophia, had worked for the Imperial Russian Institute of Archaeology in Constantinople (IRAIK) as early as 1897 and continued to do so until its closure as a result of Russia's entry into the war in October 1914.<sup>115</sup> Between 1899 and 1908, he was not only tasked with painting color reproductions and taking photographs of the mosaics of the Kariye Camii—later published in Theodor Schmitt's publication of the monument—he had also photographed several important Byzantine manuscripts and monuments in Constantinople, Smyrna, Thessalonica, and Mount Athos for seminal publications of IRAIK's director, Theodore Uspensky.<sup>116</sup> Kluge was responsible for many of the tracings from the apse and gallery mosaics at Hagia Sophia as well as their description for subsequent publications.<sup>117</sup>

Another Russian artist active in Constantinople during the early and mid-1920s was Dimitri Ismailovitch (1890–1976).<sup>118</sup> Having arrived in the city as a Russian refugee in 1919, he was neither affiliated with IRAIK, which by his arrival had long shut down its activities, nor with the Byzantine Institute's project to restore the mosaics of Hagia Sophia, because he had left the city for the United States in early 1927. One must not, however, overlook his connection to IRAIK's earlier work and his ultimate impact on the Byzantine Institute's second large-scale project in Constantinople: the restoration of the Byzantine mosaics and frescoes at the Kariye Camii.<sup>119</sup> Around 1924

kara, Presidential State Archives, 11195–30.18.1.2/20.37.18. For the circumstances, see P. Aykaç, "Contesting the Byzantine Past: Four Hagia Sophias as Ideological Battlegrounds of Architectural Conservation in Turkey," *Heritage and Society* 11, no. 2 (2018), 151–78, here 156–57. For an account of the work accomplished during the first four seasons, see T. Whittemore, *The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul: Preliminary Report on the First–Fourth Year's Work, 1931/1932–1934/38*, 4 vols. (Oxford and Boston, 1933–52). See also N. Teteriatnikov, *Mosaics of Hagia Sophia: The Fossati Restoration and the Work of the Byzantine Institute* (Washington, DC, 1998), 29–68; Teteriatnikov, "The Byzantine Institute and Its Role," 49–52.

115 For an in-depth discussion of Kluge's work at IRAIK, see N. Podzemskaia, "À propos des copies d'art byzantin à Istanbul: les artistes russes émigrés et l'Institut byzantin d'Amérique," *Histoire de l'art* 44 (1999): 123–36, here 124–25. For a brief obituary and touching homage to Kluge, likely written by Boris Ermoloff or Rayevsky, see "N. K. Kluge," *Byzantion* 17 (1948): 352–53. On the history of IRAIK, see E. Basargina, "L'institut archéologique russe à Constantinople: les fonds d'archives," in *Les archives des byzantinistes russes à Saint-Petersbourg* [Архивы русских византинистов в Санкт-Петербурге], ed. I. Medvedev (St. Petersburg, 1995), 62–92.

116 Podzemskaia, "À propos des copies," 137, notes 10–12.

117 For an example of Kluge's work, see the head of the Virgin from the apse of Hagia Sophia in Teteriatnikov, *Mosaics of Hagia Sophia*, 69–70. See also the notes, letters, and diaries at Dumbarton Oaks, ICFA, Byzantine Institute of America, 1931–1962.

118 The most instructive account of Ismailovitch's work is offered by Podzemskaia, "À propos des copies," 127–36.

119 For the final publication on the Kariye Camii, see P. A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, Bollingen Series 70, 4 vols. (New York, 1966–75). Earlier preliminary reports were published by P. Underwood, "First Preliminary Report on the Restoration of



Ismaïlovitch had started to paint faithful reproductions of the Byzantine mosaics in the Kariye Camii at the request of Gardiner Howland Shaw (1893–1965), an American diplomat serving as secretary at the U.S. embassy in Constantinople at the time.<sup>120</sup> Ismaïlovitch later recounted his motivation as follows:

À la fin de 1919 je me trouvais à Constantinople, avec une boîte de couleurs comme unique moyen d'existence. Enthousiasmé par la beauté d'Istanbul je me suis mis à peindre des paysages. C'était un moment très difficile, mais l'estomac vide n'a jamais diminué mon enthousiasme pour la peinture. J'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer Mr. Gardiner Howland Shaw, secrétaire de l'Ambassade des États-Unis, qui m'a chargé de faire une copie de la mosaïque byzantine se trouvant à Kahrié-Djami. Cette commande m'a orienté vers l'art byzantin, pour la compréhension duquel j'avais reçu auparavant des indications très précieuses du peintre A. Gritchenko. Une fois lancé dans l'étude de l'art byzantin, j'ai décidé de faire le relevé complet des fresques de la chapelle de Kahrié-Djami, de même que d'autres mosaïques. À ce sujet il y a lieu de dire que l'Institut archéologique impérial russe y avait commencé des travaux de relevé, dont la première partie avait été éditée. Les travaux ont été arrêtés en 1912. Ceci m'a donné l'idée de continuer ces travaux à mes propres risques et périls. Par conséquent les travaux présentés dans ma collection—et qui ont duré trois ans—complètent de manière définitive les travaux de l'Institut d'archéologie russe et permettraient l'édition d'un deuxième et dernier volume consacré à Kahrié-Djami.<sup>121</sup>

A set of letters preserved at the Byzantine Institute's library in Paris and at Dumbarton Oaks reveals that Whittemore was already aware of Ismaïlovitch's project documenting the mosaics and frescoes of the Kariye Camii in 1926 and had met him in Constantinople at the time. On August 5, 1926, Ismaïlovitch wrote to Whittemore (Fig. 16):

the Frescoes in the Kariye Camii at Istanbul by the Byzantine Institute, 1952–1954,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9/10 (1956): 253–88; idem, “Second Preliminary Report on the Restoration of the Frescoes in the Kariye Camii at Istanbul by the Byzantine Institute 1955,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 11 (1957): 175–220; idem, “Third Preliminary Report on the Restoration of the Frescoes in the Kariye Camii at Istanbul by the Byzantine Institute, 1956,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 (1958): 237–65; idem, “Fourth Preliminary Report on the Restoration of the Frescoes in the Kariye Camii at Istanbul by the Byzantine Institute, 1957–1958,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 13 (1959): 187–212.

<sup>120</sup> Howland Shaw, a Harvard graduate and career Foreign Service officer, had been posted to Constantinople in 1917. He later became interim chargé d'affaires at the embassy in Istanbul and ended his career as assistant secretary of state in December 1944. On Shaw and the political context in Constantinople during the 1920s, see N. B. Criss, “Shades of Diplomatic Recognition: American Encounters with Turkey (1923–1937),” in *Studies in Atatürk's Turkey: The American Dimension*, ed. N. B. Criss and G. S. Harris (Leiden, 2009), 97–144.

<sup>121</sup> Bordeaux, Archives du Musée des Beaux-Arts, letter from Dimitri Ismaïlovitch to Jean-Gérome Lemoine, 24 June 1948, cited in Podzemskaia, “À propos des copies,” 127–28.

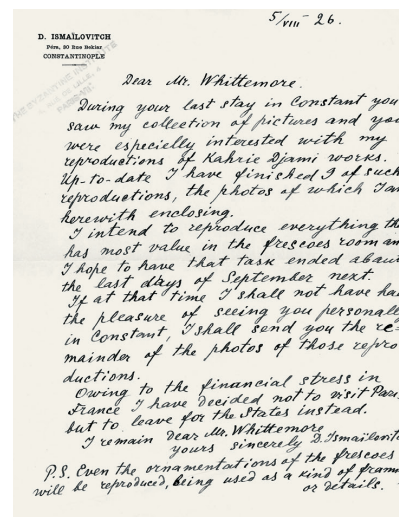


Fig. 16 Letter from Dimitri Ismaïlovitch to Thomas Whittemore, 5 August 1926. Collège de France, Bibliothèque Byzantine, Paris, Fonds Thomas Whittemore.

Dear Mr. Whittemore,

During your last stay in Constant[inople] you saw my collection of pictures and you were especially interested with my reproductions of Kahrie Djami works. Up-to-date I have finished 9 of such reproductions, the photos of which I am herewith enclosing. I intend to reproduce everything that has most value in the frescoes room and I hope to have that task ended about the last days of September next. If at that time I shall not have had the pleasure of seeing you personally in Constant[inople], I shall send you the remainder of the photos of those reproductions.”<sup>122</sup>

Over the next two months, Ismaïlovitch sent Whittemore two more sets of photos of his reproductions, indicating in the accompanying letters that he planned to depart Constantinople for the United States in early 1927 to exhibit his works in Washington and, possibly, at the Field Museum in Chicago the following year.<sup>123</sup> While plans for a Chicago show appear to have fallen through, his work was eventually displayed at an impressive number of international venues, including in Athens (Hotel Splendid Palace), Washington, DC (Gordon Dunthorne Gallery), New York (Brooklyn Museum), and Rio de Janeiro (U.S. embassy) during the spring and summer of 1927,

<sup>122</sup> The letters of 5 August 1926 and 23 December 1926 were previously published in H. A. Klein, R. G. Ousterhout, and B. Pitarakis, eds., *Kariye: Bir Anıt-İki Anıtsal Kişilik. Theodoros Methokites'den Thomas Whittemore'a / From Theodore Metochites to Thomas Whittemore: One Monument—Two Monumental Personalities* (Istanbul, 2007), 135–36.

<sup>123</sup> The full set of letters has been reproduced in R. Razon, “Improving Archival Collections’ Discoverability, Accessibility, and Usability through Contextual Information,” *Humanitaro Zinatnu urnals* 36 (2017): 97–114, here 107–109.

in London (Victoria & Albert Museum) in the spring of 1928, and after a hiatus of twenty years, in Bordeaux at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in 1948.<sup>124</sup>

Ismailovitch expressed his rationale for the accurate reproduction of the mosaics and frescoes at Kariye Camii and his concern for the documentation and preservation of other extraordinary Byzantine monuments in Constantinople in the lecture “On the Mosaics and Frescoes of the Kariye Camii and on the State of Preservation of other Byzantine monuments in Constantinople” (in Russian), which was found in the private archives of the Russian art historian and critic Viktor N. Lazarev in Moscow in the 1990s.<sup>125</sup> In the lecture, dated “Constantinople, March 1, 1927” and partly written on stationery from the S.S. *Vestris*, Ismailovitch emphatically advocates for the protection and preservation of Constantinople’s rich Byzantine heritage:<sup>126</sup>

La protection des monuments artistiques est une règle générale du monde civilisé. Les organisations artistiques et archéologiques, mais aussi les gouvernements doivent prendre des mesures sérieuses et définitives pour protéger les antiquités de la destruction et de la barbarie. De telles mesures protectrices doivent être appliquées avec une énergie encore plus grande là où des valeurs historiques et artistiques particulières sont en jeu.

124 Following the first U.S. exhibition, at the Gordon Dunthorne Gallery, the works were shown at the Brooklyn Museum from 10 June through 27 June 1927 as *Byzantine and Still Life Paintings by D.V. Ismailovitch*. A short review in the *American Magazine of Art* describes the Brooklyn Museum exhibition as comprising “the work of Dimitri V. Ismailovitch, a Russian artist who has recently arrived in this country and is exhibiting in several of the larger cities. He shows a large number of drawings and paintings which accurately reproduce the frescoes and mosaics in the fourteenth century church of St. Saviour (Kahrie Djami), Stamboul. These works, in the making of which the artist has engaged seven years, are particularly interesting in view of the fact that they represent the old frescoes precisely as they appeared after the removal of the coating of white which had for many years concealed them. So minute and accurate are Mr. Ismailovitch’s renderings that it is said that if the originals were destroyed today the work could be perfectly reproduced.” See *American Magazine of Art* 18, no. 8 (1927): 447. Only the Victoria & Albert Museum seems to have produced an illustrated catalogue: *Mosaics and Frescoes in Kahrié-Djami, Constantinople, copied by Dmitri Ismailovitch* (London, 1928). See Podzemskaia, “À propos des copies,” 132–33.

125 The lecture was first published by G. I. Vzdornov in *Tvorchestvo* 1 (1992), 32–33. For a French translation, see Podzemskaia, “À propos des copies,” 133–36.

126 Podzemskaia, “À propos des copies,” assumes the lecture was first delivered in Constantinople, but the S.S. *Vestris*, operated by Lamport & Holt between Liverpool, New York, and Buenos Aires, famously sank off the coast of Virginia on 12 November 1928, en route from New York to Barbados and South American ports. It is therefore not entirely clear when and where the lecture was first written or delivered. The fact that it was written on S.S. *Vestris* letterhead seems to indicate that it was either written or transcribed after Ismailovich had left Constantinople.

Constantinople, avec ses églises byzantines transformées en mosquées, est particulièrement riche. Les restes de l’art byzantin conservés là-bas nécessitent naturellement une surveillance vigilante et un maniement délicat. Transformées en mosquées, les églises byzantines se trouvent sous la gestion de l’Evgaf (ministère des affaires religieuses) et sont sous la surveillance et protection du Musée des antiquités d’Istanbul. Dans certaines de ces mosquées est célébré l’office musulman, les autres sont fermées ou, plus exactement, abandonnées. Il faut reconnaître que la protection des unes et des autres est insuffisante. Particulièrement insuffisante est la protection de la célèbre Kahrié-Djami.

La destruction des antiquités byzantines apparaît clairement quand on constate l’état de l’église Sainte-Marie-Panachrantos (Chaladjilar), Mireleion (Bodroum Djami), Odalar Djami. Le bétail se promène dans les ruines, les espaces intérieurs sont salis par les immondices, les précieux revêtements sont l’objet de pillage barbare. ...

La mosquée de Kahrié-Djami, qui est en service et dont les fresques et les mosaïques ont une valeur artistique sans pareil, est aussi dans un état pitoyable. ... Une telle négligence, concernant un monument byzantin illustre, ne peut pas ne pas provoquer l’inquiétude et la tristesse. L’indifférence du département de l’Evgaf, dont dépend Kahrié-Djami, peut conduire à une destruction complète de son trésor artistique. Des mesures de protection sont indispensables à une échelle bien plus vaste que celle que peut offrir la ville de Constantinople. La direction du musée ne dispose probablement pas de moyens de contrainte suffisants en matière de protection. La question de la tutelle à exercer sur Kahrié-Djami doit être soulevée par les organisations internationales artistiques et archéologiques.

Malheureusement, il n’y a pas eu jusqu’à ce jour d’organisation de ce type à Constantinople, qui, de sa propre initiative, se soit engagée pour la protection des antiquités byzantines. Cette institution, il faut la créer, et de toute manière, il faut mettre en œuvre les moyens et les possibilités d’arrêter le processus de destruction de Kahrié-Djami comme d’autres monuments. Cela sera possible grâce à l’influence de l’opinion publique et de la presse, aussi bien qu’aux initiatives prises par des organisations publiques d’art et d’archéologie. C’est à une intervention unanime de tous ceux qui aiment l’art véritable, pour la protection des hautes valeurs artistiques de Constantinople contre les atteintes de la destruction et de la barbarie, qu’appelle votre modeste conférencier.<sup>127</sup>

While it is not known whether Whittemore was aware of Ismailovitch’s views or even heard him present his lecture in Constantinople or New

127 Podzemskaia, “À propos des copies,” 135–36. For the original Russian text, see *Tvorchestvo* 1 (1992), 33.

York—perhaps on the occasion of his exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum in the summer of 1927—the founding of the Byzantine Institute of America only a few years later may not be a mere coincidence, given how closely its mission matched the aspirations expressed by Ismailovitch.<sup>128</sup>

Having witnessed the destruction of cultural monuments during the Balkan Wars in 1912–13 had made Whittemore keenly aware of the need for the preservation of Constantinople’s unique heritage. In March 1913, he had expressed his concerns in a letter to Isabella Stewart Gardner: “It seems probably that before you have this, Constantinople will have fallen but not, I fear, until all the Mosques have been destroyed. That I am told is the intention of Turkey, to bombard Santa Sophia if they have to surrender.”<sup>129</sup>

Whittemore’s information was indeed accurate, with U.S. ambassador Henry Morgenthau confirming Turkish plans for the destruction of Hagia Sophia: “The Turks had particularly marked for dynamiting the Mosque of Saint Sophia. This building, which had been a Christian church centuries before it became a Mohammedan mosque, is one of the most magnificent structures of the vanished Byzantine Empire. Naturally the suggestion of such an act of vandalism aroused us all, and I made a plea to Talaat [Mehmed Talaat Pasha] that Saint Sophia should be spared. He treated the proposed destruction lightly.”<sup>130</sup>

When the Byzantine Institute began its project to clean, conserve, and copy the mosaics of Hagia Sophia in December 1931 (Fig. 17), Ismailovitch’s call to save the Byzantine monuments of Constantinople finally started to gain traction. It would, however, take another sixteen years before the institute began to conserve the very monument that Ismailovitch had so vigorously advocated for, Kariye Camii—the former church of the monastery of Christ of the Chora—a project that would last from 1947 into the 1960s, when the institute’s fieldwork activities were transferred to Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University’s center for Byzantine studies in Washington, DC.<sup>131</sup>

128 Whittemore had longstanding ties to the Brooklyn Museum. He first lectured there in 1905 and continued to do so as part of his archaeological work for the Egypt Exploration Fund, for which the Brooklyn Museum was an American subscriber. Whittemore later donated several Egyptian objects to the museum as gifts and published in the museum’s quarterly. See T. Whittemore, “A Statuette of Akhenaten for America,” *Brooklyn Museum Quarterly* 11 (1924): 59–65. Whittemore was still active in the museum’s programming while lecturing at NYU. For instance, on 8 January 1928, he delivered the public lecture “Mount Athos, the Last Enchantment of the Middle Ages.” See *Brooklyn Museum Quarterly* 15 (1928): 41.

129 Boston, Archives of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, letter from Whittemore to Gardner, 8 March 1913. See Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 165 at note 73.

130 H. Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* (Toronto, 1918), 198.

131 For the history of the Kariye Camii restoration, see the various contributions in Klein, Ousterhout, and Pitarakis, *The Kariye Camii Reconsidered*; Klein, Ousterhout, and Pitarakis, *Kariye: From Theodore Metochites to Thomas Whittemore*; Klein, *Restoring Byzantium*.



Fig. 17 Thomas Whittemore during the Restoration at Hagia Sophia, ca. 1938. Dumbarton Oaks, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archive, Washington, D.C.

By the launch of the Kariye project, in the city by then officially called Istanbul, another world war had been fought and ended. Luckily, the city and its Byzantine monuments were spared the senseless destruction that devastated so many cities and regions across Europe and other parts of the world. During the early and mid-1940s, Whittemore, very much aware of the impending danger the war posed to the Byzantine cultural heritage, had accelerated the production of faithful copies at Hagia Sophia. In an undated letter to Robert Woods and Mildred Bliss, the founders of Dumbarton Oaks, avid collectors of Byzantine art, and steadfast supporters of the Byzantine Institute, he expressed his intention to help safeguard these rediscovered monuments for posterity:

The most notable mosaic paintings of a thousand years of Christendom in the Domed Basilica of Aya Sofia in Istanbul are, as you know, at present entrusted to our care. These paintings like all forms of decoration we call Byzantine are a compulsorily organic part of the building. Unlike easel paintings or objects in museums they cannot be removed to places of safety. Rather like the mosaics in the choir of Saint Paul’s in London they are unprotected in the path of war.

Interest in this treasure is embedded in both Christians and Mohammedans. There is only one thing we can do to safeguard these painting for the future. That is to copy them in colors and bring the





Fig. 18 Gallery View of the Exhibition *Reproductions of Mosaics from Hagia Sophia*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1944. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

copies to America. This we have been doing. Unique copies of several paintings have reached America and already adorn our museums. But many paintings remain to be copied.<sup>132</sup>

The culmination of Whittemore efforts to safeguard, preserve, and popularize Byzantine art in America was an exhibition of copies of the mosaics of Hagia Sophia that opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on 29 February 1944 (Fig. 18). Present in New York at the inaugural event to honor the ongoing work of the Byzantine Institute in uncovering and preserving the mosaics was none other than Assistant Secretary of State Gardiner Howland Shaw, along with the consul general of the Republic of Turkey.<sup>133</sup> After Ismailovitch's painted replicas of the mosaics and frescoes of Kariye Camii (Fig. 19), it was the second exhibition of Byzantine art, albeit in the form of surrogates, that Howland Shaw had been instrumental in bringing to America. His role in supporting the Byzantine Institute's efforts were reflected in the

132 Dumbarton Oaks, ICFA, letter from Whittemore to Robert Woods and Mildred Bliss, undated. See Teteriatnikov, "Role of the Byzantine Institute," 48 at note 26.

133 See the introductory remarks, F. H. Taylor, *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 2, no. 7 (1944): 1; C. R. Morey, "The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia," *ibid.*, 201–210; T. Whittemore, "On the Dating of Some Mosaics in Hagia Sophia," *ibid.*, 5, no. 1 (1946): 34–45. For Whittemore's correspondence with Woods and Bliss during this period and the Metropolitan Museum exhibition, see Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 181–86.



Fig. 19 Dimitri Ismailovitch, replica of the lunette mosaic of Kariye Camii, 1924. Dumbarton Oaks, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archive, Washington, D.C.

listing of his name on Byzantine Institute letterhead during the 1940s and early 1950s. It was a time of triumph and optimism for Whittemore, as he expressed in a letter to the Blisses on June 1946:

The Turkish Government last year declared St. John the Baptist in Studion, Pammakaristos, and the Chora national monuments. In the darkest days of the Russian Revolution, when churches in Moscow ... and in Leningrad ... were appropriated for exhibitions of anti-religious propaganda, [and] my friends used to say, it is the will of God that these churches shall be saved and taken care of in this way while we wait in the red corner. So, in Turkey it is a satisfaction to see these buildings become at last the object of Turkish valuation. This is wholly in response to the warnings of the Byzantine Institute to the Turkish Government [and its role] as a custodian of the remaining Byzantine churches in Istanbul that is responsible for the belated preservation of their remains. The place recently accorded to me in the new National Council for the Conservation and Preservation of monuments gives me firmer ground of influence than ever I have had to stand on before in Turkey."<sup>134</sup>

Further recognition and honors for Whittemore and the Byzantine Insti-

134 Dumbarton Oaks, ICFA, letter from Whittemore to Woods and Bliss, 26 June 1946; see Teteriatnikov, "Role of the Byzantine Institute," 49, at note 37.



tute would follow when work on the narthex mosaics at Kariye Camii got fully underway in 1948, culminating in the award of an honorary doctoral degree at Brown University, an institution closely associated with his friend and supporter John Nicholas Brown II (1900–79).<sup>135</sup> When Whittemore died of a heart attack in the State Department in Washington, DC, on 8 June 1950, the Kariye project had barely started. When it was eventually completed more than a decade later, the Byzantine Institute of America had long outlived the charisma of its founder. The institute's fieldwork operations were transferred to Dumbarton Oaks and Harvard University while its library holdings in Paris were eventually integrated into the Collège de France.<sup>136</sup> Thus began a new chapter in the rediscovery of Byzantium.

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135 For the citation of the honorary degree, see Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 185.

136 G. Constable, "Dumbarton Oaks and Byzantine Fieldwork," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983): 171–76.