



Bernard Berenson and Byzantine Art

Correspondence, 1920-1957

by Gabriella Bernardi and Spyros Koulouris

DESCRIPTION:

The American art historian Bernard Berenson, born in 1865, is famous for his pioneering studies of the Italian Renaissance, but his work on Byzantine art remains less well-known and less studied. Yet his passion for studies of Byzantium - dubbed the 'Byzantine infection' - played a major role throughout Berenson's life, and in the 1920s, he began work on a magnum opus on this topic that was sadly never completed. This volume aims to illuminate and revisit Berenson's approach to Byzantium and the art of the Christian East through an exploration and analysis of the correspondence, travel notes, and photo archive that Berenson built up over his lifetime, and that taken together, clearly points to an explicit recognition by Berenson of the importance of Byzantine art in the Latin Middle Ages. Drawing together Berenson's correspondence with art historians, collectors, and scholars from across Europe, the US, and the Near East, together with an overview of his numerous photography campaigns, the book is able to open a new window into Byzantine art historiography from the 1920s to the 1950s. In doing so, it sheds light onto a period in which important discoveries and extensive restoration campaigns were carried out, such as those of the mosaics of Hagia Sophia and Kariye Camii in Istanbul, as well as of the Basilica of San Marco in Venice and its decoration.

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