

André Grabar (born 26 July 1896, died 3 October 1990): The novel conception of iconography

1.- Biographical notes: From Kiev to Paris and Washington D.C.

André Grabar was born in 1896 in the city of Kiev, a place with an undeniable Byzantine tradition which is still palpable today¹. There has rightly been a desire to emphasize the artistic environment in which he grew up: in fact, his learning of painting was undoubtedly influenced by his mother, who had studied fine arts, and sculpture in particular².

After winning a Gold Medal in Kiev, he entered the University of St. Vladimir, where he enrolled in the faculty of classical studies, which at that time included Art History. After completing his studies in 1915, he moved to what was at that time Petrograd, then Leningrad and is today St. Petersburg, the city founded on 16 May 1703 by Tsar Peter the Great, who aimed to make it "Russia's Window to the West." His teachers in that city included Dimitrii Vlas'evich Ainalov³ and the archaeologist and medievalist Jacob Smirnov⁴; who both became professors at the Russian Academy of Sciences and undoubtedly influenced their student. It was also where André Grabar discovered Russian and Byzantine art through Nikodim Parlovich Kondakov, a member of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts, member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the founder with Fyodor Uspensky of the Russian Archaeological Institute of Constantinople. The works of this third teacher, which marked the inception of the modern method in the history of the art of the Eastern Roman Empire, and which include numerous works on the history of Ancient Greek, Russian, Georgian and Eastern Roman Art, were echoed in the work of Grabar, who paid tribute to him in a selection of articles published in 1979⁵. Grabar himself acknowledged that this period, which ended in November 1917 (shortly after the Bolsheviks seized power) constituted the formative years that led to his novel conception of iconography⁶; in other words, as the crucial years in his intellectual formation, because it was at this time that he began to consider

¹ Gilbert Dagron, "André Grabar, 26 juillet 1896-3 octobre 1990", in *Annuaire du Collège de France*, Paris 1990-1991), pp. 91-94. Also accessible at http://www.college-de-france.fr/media/professeurs-disparus/UPL53403_necrograbar.pdf. The most recent references to the work of André Grabar can be found in Engelina Segeevna Smirnova, *Drevneruskoe iskusstvo: Vizantiia i Drevniaia Rus: K 100-letiiu Andrieia Nilolaevicha Grabara [1896-1009]*, St. Petersburg, 1999; in Maria Giovanna Muzj, *Un maître pour l'art chrétien-André Grabar: Iconographie de la théophanie*, Paris, 2005 and Linda Marie Rouillard, "Grabar, André (July 26, 1896, Kiev – October, 5, 1990, Paris), Archaeologist and Art Historian of Classical Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Middle Ages", in Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Studies. Terms, Methods, Trends*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin-New York, 2010, vol. III, pp. 2320-2323.

² On this period of his life, during which the artistic influences of his mother and grandmother may have been important for Grabar's sensitivity, see Henry Maguire, "André Grabar. 1896-1990", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 45, 1991, p. xii. This vocation would lead him to paint until the end of his life, in what he called "*des séances de peintre-amateur*". *Ibid.*

³ One of whose most important studies was *The Hellenistic Basis of Byzantine Art* (1900), which highlighted the nature of the aesthetic evolution of Byzantine art for the first time.

⁴ Who produced very important works in the Balkans, Crimea, Palestine and Asia Minor.

⁵ André Grabar, *L'art paleochrétien et l'art byzantin: recueil d'études 1967-1977*, London, 1979.

⁶ Lee Sorensen, "Grabar, André, Nilolaevich", in Lee Sorensen (ed.), *Dictionary of Art Historians. A Biographical Dictionary of Historic Scholars, Museum Professionals and Academic Historians of Art*, in Association with the Department of Art, Art History and Visual Studies, Duke University: <http://www.dictionarofarthistorians.org/index.htm>. This website was consulted for the general details about art historians which appear throughout this lecture.

iconography and the links between religious life and its art⁷, which formed the core of his enormous bibliography, which had such a great impact on later historiography.

After the First World War, in which he did not participate due to being deemed unfit for military service⁸ and after passing his final exams in Odessa in 1919⁹, in January 1920 he moved to what had previously been the city of Sredets, which was renamed Sofia after the War of Liberation and became the capital of Bulgaria in 1879. He remained there for three years, and became the assistant curator of the Archaeological Museum at the behest of then director Bogdan Filov, the renowned archaeologist and art historian¹⁰. This position enabled him to compile an extremely rich documentation of medieval Bulgarian monuments on various trips, when he was able to discover and photograph many buildings that were still unknown at that time¹¹. During this period, when he was full of great enthusiasm and complete dedication, he produced his doctoral thesis, *La peinture religieuse en Bulgarie au moyen Age*, which was published in Paris in 1928.

Six years earlier, as a Russian language teacher in the Faculty of Arts at Strasbourg¹², he had moved to France¹³, where he became a nationalized citizen. He lived in Paris, the "City of Lights," where for the first time Grabar met the man who he would later acknowledge as being the most important influence on his career: the Hellenist and Medievalist Émile-Paul-Frédéric Pedrizet¹⁴, who opened up new avenues of knowledge in the study of the popular arts, by arguing against the superficial theory of those who only saw decorative figures in them, whereas he saw an obvious religious backdrop. From this teacher, who had endowed French Byzantinology with internationally renowned material and intellectual tools¹⁵, Grabar adopted the particularly developed sense of everything that pertained to religion¹⁶, although in this respect the author also followed in the wake of the rich and prolific works of Émile Male on the meaning and significance of the religious image¹⁷. In Paris he became a student of Gabriel Millet, who spent most of his career studying Byzantine Christianity and Christian archaeology until

⁷ H. Maguire, *André Grabar*, p. xii.

⁸ He also did not participate in the Russian Civil War (1918-1920) for the same reason: Gilbert Dagron, "Hommage à André Grabar", at http://www.college-de-france.fr/site/professeurs-disparus/andre_grabar.htm, website accessed on 8 January, 2014.

⁹ H. Maguire, *André Grabar*, p. xii.

¹⁰ He was also a politician: he was Prime Minister of Bulgaria during World War II, which led to his execution by firing squad as a result of the active role he played in the Holocaust.

¹¹ The results of this research included his monographs *L'Église de Boïana, architecture, peinture*, Sofia, 1924 and *La Peinture religieuse en Bulgaire*, Paris, 1928.

¹² He taught Art History as well as Russian in Strasbourg, first as an assistant lecturer and then as a replacement for Albert Gabriel, who had been appointed Director of the French Institute in Istanbul.

¹³ In 1923, he married a Bulgarian student of medicine, Julie Ivanova, who died in 1977.

¹⁴ Whose important work as an epigraphist and archaeologist has also been recognized. It is enlightening to read the article by Charles Picard, "Eloge funèbre de M. Paul Pedrizet, membre de l'Académie", in *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, vol. 82, no. 3, 1938, pp. 270-280.

¹⁵ The particular degree of interest in Byzantine studies at the end of XVIII century is analyzed in Sophia Germanidou, "Byzantine Art and Architecture", in Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval studies*, vol. I, pp. 181-185.

¹⁶ "[...] son sens particulièrement développé de tout ce qui touche au fait religieux": Gilbert Dagron, *André Grabar*.

¹⁷ Germain Bazin, *Histoire de l'histoire de l'art. De Vasari à nous jors*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1986, pp. 495-496. He was director of the Académie de France in Rome, and his thesis, *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France*, remains a key reference work for historiographers to this day. The importance of his studies, and their resonance in Grabar's work, has been highlighted in Elina Gertsman, "Art History", in Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, vol. I, pp. 118-119.

his retirement in 1937, when he was replaced by Grabar at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (5th Section of l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes). At this institution he was able to continue applying some of the methods he had learned from his Russian masters until the end of this period in 1966. His relationship with this scholar who was internationally renowned as a historian, an archaeologist and also as a photographer¹⁸, began just as he was bringing together the first large group of internationally reputed French Byzantinists at his seminar at l'École des Hautes Études (in the religious sciences section) and the Collège de France.

In 1945, he founded the famous *Revue archeologique* with the aim of exploring and learning about the origins of Christian art, in both the East and West. This enabled him, with Jean Hubert, to partially co-edit the first 27 issues of what became known as the *Cahiers archeologiques*. A year later, he was made a professor of Byzantine Archaeology at the Collège de France, a position he held until his retirement in 1966. In 1955, he was accepted as a full member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres¹⁹ and a few years later, in 1961, he gave the A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, which when compiled as miscellaneous works, would become one of his most famous books, the celebrated *Christian Iconography: a Study of its Origins*²⁰. The importance of his studies led to him being awarded numerous honours: he was named Doctor Honoris Causa of the Universities of Princeton, Uppsala and Edinburgh; and as well as being a leading member of numerous internationally recognized scientific societies, he was a foreign member (or the equivalent) of the American, Greek, Austrian, British, Bulgarian, Danish, Norwegian and Serbian National Academies.

2.- Intellectual formation, historical background and career: from traditional historiography to new methods and approaches to study

He was educated in St. Petersburg before the First World War and the Revolution, and his teachers included two of the most brilliant and restless minds of the era, whose works opened up new perspectives in art historiography: the analysis of iconographic types and affiliations according to models inspired by the history of texts, and the study of what would subsequently be called the universe of the forms of the great civilizations²¹. The first of these was Nikodim Parlovich Kondakov, whose career included his role in the development of an iconographic method of studying major artistic works, primarily analyzing their typological features and the social, cultural and political reasons for these features²². Indeed, this Byzantinist art historian is considered a founder of the modern art method for Byzantine studies primarily through iconography. He also taught Grabar much of his working method, in which iconographic principles played a major role in the

¹⁸ André Grabar and other colleagues published the *Catalogue des négatifs de la Collection chrétienne et byzantine fondée par Gabriel Millet*, Paris, 1955.

¹⁹ Gilbert Dagron, *André Grabar*.

²⁰ André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of its Origins*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

²¹ Gilbert Dagron, *André Grabar*.

²² His most important works are *Istoriia vizantiiskogo iskusstva ikonografii po miniaturam grecheskikh rukopisei*, Odessa, 1876; *Vizantiiskie emali: Sobranie A. V. Zvenigorodskogo Istoriia ipamiatniki vizantiiskoi emali*, St. Petersburg, 1892; *Arkheologicheskoe putesthestvie po Sirii i Palestine*, St. Petersburg, 1904; *Ikonografiia Bogomateri*, 2 vols., St Petersburg, 1914-15; *The Russian Icon*, Oxford, 1927. For further details on this author, see V. Lazarev, N. N. P. Kondakov, 1844-1925, Moscow, 1925.

study of artistic works: Icons were conceived as cultural artefacts as much as art objects, so his work, like that of André Grabar, places them in a historical context. The second important teacher in his professional development during this initial Russian period was Dimitrii Vlas'evich Ainalov, whose works combined an aesthetic analysis of works of art with historical and cultural evaluation²³. His innovative research led the young Grabar not only to study Byzantine art in more depth and from new perspectives, but also to read and appreciate the innovative and often controversial working methods of other contemporary historians, such as the works of Percy Ernst Schramm, whose numerous studies demonstrate the importance of symbols, liturgical ceremony, gestures and images as critical sources for political history. In fact, Schramm, like Ernst H. Kantorowicz, introduced an important element of cultural history to a field which especially in Germany, tended to focus largely on institutions and their texts²⁴.

It can thus be said without fear of error that when considering André Grabar's teachers, his own work and that of some of his contemporaries, we are witnessing a type of rupture between the various historiographical approaches they created, and the traditional approach, which was losing ground in academia. While up until that point studies of the artistic object emphasized formal and technical qualities according to a positivist approach driven by the transformations that Europe experienced in the early nineteenth century above all, new ways of working emerged after the Second World War. These encouraged a study of the works from new and polyhedral points of view. Indeed, it was at precisely this point that specialists working independently in Europe and the United States began to create what became known as architectural iconography.

This new field of study was highly praised in many of the studies by André Grabar, although the most important authors who nurtured it most included Richard Krautheimer, whose work *Iconography of Medieval Architecture*²⁵ has been regarded as seminal in the study of buildings that are today considered symbolic elements that transcend the purely structural domain. As a medievalist, he emphasized the works of Germany and Eastern Europe, and presented the Middle Ages as a period that was very different from the results presented at that time by Francophone and American medievalist professors such as Arthur Kingsley Porter and Henri Focillon. One of his most important contributions was his theory in which he argued that medieval architects built churches as "copies" of venerable archetypal structures: in the words of Paul Crossley, "by linking symbolism with the perceptions of the medieval onlooker, Krautheimer found a way of understanding the loose associations between form and meaning in the Middle Ages, and relating meaning to tradition and patrimonial intention"²⁶. He thus

²³ His bibliography includes "Ellinisticheskie osnovy vizantiiskogo islutva", in the *Bulletin of the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society*, St. Petersburg, 1900-1901, which 60 years later was translated into English and edited by Cyril Mango, and entitled *Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Art*, Rutgers University Press, 1961.

²⁴ On these authors, see Roberto delle Donne, "Kantorowicz, Ernst Hartwig" and Janos M. Bak, "Schramm, Percy Ernst", in Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, pp. 2388-2393 and pp. 2633-2335, respectively. See also Francisco Javier Caspistegui, "Ernst H. Kantorowicz", in Jaume Aurell and Francisco Crossas, *Rewriting the Middle Ages in the Twentieth Century*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2005, pp. 195-222.

²⁵ R. Krautheimer, "Introduction to an Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* V, 1942, pp. 1-33.

²⁶ Paul Crossley, "Introduction: Frankl's Text: Its Achievement and Significance", in Paul Frankl, *Gothic Architecture*, revised by Paul Crossley, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000, p. 28. See also Willibald Sauerländer, "Richard Krautheimer: 1897-1994", in *Burlington Magazine*, 137, 1995, pp. 119-120.

devoted an enormous amount of work to studying how architectural meaning was seen in the Middle Ages and by doing so, analyzing the conception behind the prototypes and their copies. The results of Krautheimer's study and the methodology he proposed was carried further in the work of Irving Lavin, whose interests focused primarily on the correlation between form and meaning in the visual arts. One of his best known works, *The House of the Lord*, shows that Lavin's approach to architecture is essentially iconographic, as an interpretation of the symbolic details of a structure to create meaning, in a similar way to how it was understood by Erwin Panofsky, whose essays he published in 1995²⁷.

At exactly the same time as Krautheimer was formulating his new methodology, André Grabar was preparing his monumental study *Martyrium: Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*²⁸, in which he divided Christian places of worship into two categories, according to their form and function: congregational churches and *martyria* and *memoriae*, which he used to present a fundamental distinction between the Christian architecture of the Greek East and the Latin West, reinterpreting the origins of these forms and their differences²⁹. In this study above all -although he also highlighted the point in other publications throughout his career- Grabar argued along the lines of the urban planner Gustavo Giovannoni³⁰, the renowned Rudolf Wittkower³¹, the scholar of early Christian art Earl Baldwin Smith³² and the art historian and curator Louis-Eugène-Georges Hautecoeur³³ and highlighted the importance of the new iconography of architecture, in which symbolic interpretation was not the domain of images, but instead of architecture, precisely because the ritual use made of it by man was endowed with a highly symbolic value. This was all based on the premise that form and content in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages were two sides of the same coin: *Martyrium* contained some reflections that would later provide the basis of another of his most important works: *L'Iconoclasme byzantin*³⁴, in which as

²⁷ In *Three Essays on Style*, Cambridge and London, 1995.

²⁸ A. Grabar, *Martyrium. Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art Chrétien antique*, 2 vols. et atlas, Paris, 1943-1946. The premises of his work were: the numerous links between pagan and Christian sacred art; recognition of the differences between the ecclesiastical architecture of the East and West, and the need to explain them; the need to explain the emergence from the fifth century onwards of a new iconography that differed from that found in the catacombs, and its intimate connection with the cult of relics. This work on martyrs and relics was greatly admired by Richard Krautheimer who says in his review: (*Art Bulletin*, XXXV, 1953, pp. 57-61): "The application of [his] thesis to Early Christian and Byzantine church architecture has led Grabar to what may well be the first consistent interpretation on the origin of these forms and of the basic differences that separate Eastern and Western medieval architecture".

²⁹ Eugène Kleinbauer and Thomas P. Slavens, *Research Guide to the History of Western Art*, Chicago, American Library Association, 1982, pp. 70-71.

³⁰ A documentary architectural historian, architect and urban planner. His strong technical and art-historical interest led him into the field of conservation and urban redevelopment projects.

³¹ Richard Krautheimer described Wittkower's art history as blending mathematics and philosophy, the religious and cultural climate with the interrelations between patron and artist: See Lee Sorensen, "Wittkower, Rudols "Rudi"", in Lee Sorensen (ed.), *Dictionary of Art Historians*: <http://www.dictionarvofarthistorians.org/wittkowerr.htm>.

³² One of whose most renowned works is *Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages*, 1956. His dissertation, *Early Christian Iconography and the School of Provence*, has been considered the basis for the Index of Christian Art, created by Charles Rufus Morey in 1917, which has become the most important archive of medieval art in existence, and the most specialized resource for the iconographer.

³³ Who dedicated a monumental work to this general argument, covering a broad chronological arc running from the third millennium BC to the twentieth century. See L. Hautecoeur, *Mystique et architecture, Symboles du cercle et de la coupole*, Paris, 1954.

³⁴ André Grabar, *L'Iconoclasme byzantin. Dossier archéologique*, Paris, 1957. An interesting review, in which it is apparent that Grabar attaches much greater importance than was customary to icons as instruments of imperial policy in M.V. Anastos, "André Grabar. L'Iconoclasme byzantin: Dossier archéologique, Paris: Collège

regards political thought he addresses the artistic production of the Byzantine world - a universe to which he had been very close since the earliest days of his education. It is true that this inclination was the result of the influence of his Russian teachers, although research on Byzantine art was already well advanced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and not only among art historians. A case in point is François-Auguste Choisy, a polytechnic engineer and friend of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, who demonstrated in *L'Art de bâtir chez les Byzantines*, published in 1882³⁵, the technical and constructive qualities of this art³⁶, and showed that he had a far greater interest in the structure of these monuments than their decorative detail, in an analysis that has been defined as the logical culmination of two centuries of French rationalism³⁷. Moreover, the most important compendia of German language documentary sources had been published in 1878 and 1893³⁸, while Robert Vischer, whose method combining the disciplines of art history and philosophy gave him numerous detractors despite creating an interdisciplinary art history, rehabilitated this art in his *Études d'histoire de l'art*³⁹ and Russe Kondakoff published a French language summary of the art, which was still considered one of the "low" areas of art history, although it focused on the miniature⁴⁰. Soon afterwards, in 1900, Dimitrii Vlas'evich Ainalov published in Russian his work on the *Fondements hellénistiques de l'art byzantin*⁴¹, while in the same year Josef Strzygowski, who some years previously had made substantial contributions to the knowledge of the Byzantine miniature, gave historiography his revelatory *Orient oder Rom?*⁴², in which he argued that early medieval architecture owed much of its influence to the oriental middle east. As a result, Grabar's work took shape and developed in an environment in which new methods and historiographical perspectives were emerging in the field of art history, which had been considerably enriched -while also being extremely disturbed- by the discussions arising from the results of the new research, which were often received with great controversy by the traditional critics. Grabar joined the debate by arguing that iconographic study had to be brought up to date: he was convinced that every ancient image, sacred or otherwise, contained a series of traditions and intentions that the historian was called upon to define and explain.

de France, Dondation Schlumberger pour les études byzantines, 1957, pp. 277 and 163 plates", *Medieval Academy of America*, 34, no. 2 (1959), pp. 273-278. In it, he also emphasizes that in his study, he included not only the extant monuments of Byzantine art but also the texts dealing with monuments and the opinions of rulers, churchmen and others about the significance of this art.

³⁵ Published in Paris by the Société Anonyme de Publications Périodiques. Ten years earlier, the society had published *L'art de bâtir chez les Romains*, Ducher, Paris, 1873. Among other titles, *L'art de bâtir chez les Égyptiens* was produced by Rouveyre in Paris in 1904.

³⁶ Germain Bazin, *Histoire de l'histoire de l'art. De Vasari à nous jours*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1986, p. 201.

³⁷ David Watkin, *The Rise of Architectural History*, London, Architectural Press, 1980, pp. 28 and 89-90.

³⁸ J. P. Richter, *Quellen der Byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte*, Vienna, 1893 and R. Vischer, *Studien zur Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart, 1886.

³⁹ Robert Vischer, *Studien zur Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart, 1886. However, this historian, the son of the philosopher Friedrich Theodor Vischer, had addressed numerous periods and various topics in his studies, as evidenced by, among other works, the essay *Zur Kritik Mittelalterlicher Kunst*, a methodical, Impressionist-inspired diatribe against the more modern art forms which he considered decadent. His use of his father's theories on empathy, leading him to new conclusions, are also noteworthy.

⁴⁰ Russe Kondakoff, *Histoire de l'art byzantin considéré principalement dans la miniature*, 2 vols, Paris, 1886-1891.

⁴¹ M. Ainalov, *Fondements hellénistiques de l'art byzantin*, St Petersburg, 1900.

⁴² J. Strzygowski, *Das Etchmiadzin Evangeliar*, Vienna, 1891.

He did so using a structuralist method which was rejected by many, and which he was able to use and adapt for his iconographic and architectonic studies⁴³.

3.- Published work: Fruitful interrogations and their echo in subsequent historiography

The work of André Grabar is enormous, and it is no exaggeration to say that it has been the stimulus behind thousands of studies. According to the main argument of this book, and in order to give as thorough and accurate a picture as possible, the following section will focus on the most fundamental studies which constitute the outstanding landmarks in the periods that make up the evolution of his thought. His reflections, which have not always been correctly translated⁴⁴, led to a series of fruitful interrogations that not only shaped the history of Byzantine art, which attained genuine influence with him, but also affected the teaching behind the development and promotion of subsequent historiography. His work was based on the core conviction that no sacred work, either pagan or Christian, from either the ancient or medieval period, could be understood without considering its religious implications because, as has been well said, art, religion and culture form a unity⁴⁵.

At 31 years old, during his time in Strasbourg, he published one of the most essential works in terms of the visual discourse of the political entity: in *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin*⁴⁶, a volume he was urged to publish not by his teachers but by Byzantinist historians such as Henri Grégoire⁴⁷, Franz Dölger⁴⁸, Louis Bréhier⁴⁹ and George Alexandrovič Ostrogorski⁵⁰. André Grabar immersed himself in the significance of the cult of the emperor and its profound echoes in the art of the Christian West; in other words, in an analysis of the images of the imperial cycle and the influence they exerted on the Christian art of the Middle Ages. Through the pursuit of artistic references by means of all the themes inherited from Rome, the Hellenistic East and Persia, and therefore with the

⁴³ See his article on Pentecost published in *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, II, 1928 and reprinted in 1968 under the title *Art de la fin de l'Antiquité et du moyen âge*. See also his work *Martyrium*, Paris, 1943, 1946. Subsequent studies used the same method. As examples, Andre Grabar himself cited the studies by Gordana Babie, *Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines. Fonction liturgique et programmes iconographiques*, Paris, 1969, and Armen Khatchatrian, *L'architecture arménienne du IVe et VIe siècle*, Paris, 1971.

⁴⁴ See for example David H. Wright, "André Grabar and Carl Nordenfalk, *Early Medieval Painting from the Fourth to the Eleventh Century*, New York, Skira, 1957, pp. 243; 100 pls (98 in colour). \$ 22.50 (The Great Centuries of Painting", in *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 247 and 255.

⁴⁵ The nature and meaning of Christian art was analyzed in the now traditional work by Jane Dillenberger, *Style and Content in Christian Art*, New York. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965.

⁴⁶ André Grabar, *L'Empereur dans l'art byzantin*, Paris, 1928. This study was the result of numerous reviews, like the one written by C.R. Morey in *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 19, no.1 (1937), pp. 124-125, which despite being brief, highlighted the forced nature of some of his dating, while emphasizing the artistic and literary material used by the author and how essential this work would be for any student of the subject.

⁴⁷ Often referred to as "Abbé Grégoire", as he was a constitutional bishop of Blois. He was also one of the founders members of the Bureau des Longitudes, the Institut de France and the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers. For more information, see Louis Maggiolo, *La Vie et les oeuvres de l'abbé Grégoire*, Nancy, 1884.

⁴⁸ Chief editor of the journal *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* from 1931 to 1963, and a member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

⁴⁹ A specialist in Byzantine iconography, whose best known work is the three-volume *Le Monde byzantin*, Paris, 1947-1950 (vol. I: Vie et mort de Byzance; vol. 2: Les Institutions de l'Empire byzantin; vol. 3: La civilization byzantine).

⁵⁰ He received his doctorate from the University of Heidelberg in 1925, with a dissertation in which he combined his interests in economics and byzantine history. His best known work was *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates*, Munich, 1940. For further information, see Herbert Hunger, "Georg Ostrogorsky, Nachruf", in *Almanach der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 127 (1977), pp. 538-544.

examples of the most important historians of these cultures, which he adopted as models⁵¹, the author showed the extent of the exaltation and magnification of the sovereign, who used them to proclaim his "éternelle victoire" and who used his insignias, attributes and body language to emphasize his dual legitimacy conferred by the people and by God. His vision of imperial iconography, which he considered in more depth in subsequent studies⁵², was critical in understanding that this art, political and propaganda tool, which had an extremely high degree of symbolic significance, was strictly codified and controlled. André Grabar concluded that this iconography at the service of empire was simply a reasoned cluster of representations of pagan origin, full of religious significance, which had been Christianized at the same time as the Empire. In order to justify and provide grounds for his hypothesis, he listed images of imperial and religious propaganda, without forgetting the rich numismatic iconography which depicted the "baptism of the old types" in the words of Gilbert Dagron⁵³, by adding signs such as the Constantinian labarum, the monogram of Christ or the cross. However, he also analyzed them in terms of their relationship to texts describing court ceremonial, which included obvious Old Testament analogies of exaltation of the emperor, such as that of King David, in a simile that would persist throughout the Middle Ages. With this work, he presented a hypothesis that he would subsequently support and work on in more depth in other studies: the very close resemblance between courtly ceremonies and religious liturgy -something that was easily to explain, because in the words of the author: "*il s'agit de deux cultes pratiqués au sein de la même société, qui ont été dotés d'un ensemble de rites, à la même époque, principalement au IV^e siècle*". He rightly concluded that iconoclasm, the profitable iconographic process instigated and driven by the Byzantine authorities, which led to the flourishing of that splendid, complex imperial art, was succeeded by the triumphant orthodoxy which began to decline in the mid-ninth century.

L'empereur dans l'art Byzantin is undoubtedly a work that is unsurpassed in terms of its approach, methodology and results and is still considered an inexhaustible source of study today. Grabar's publications testify to the potential of this prolific line of research, in which the figures of Constantine and his mother Helena are particularly important, "*les très divins*" in the words of the eleventh century Byzantine theologian and philosopher Jean Italos⁵⁴, whose effigies can be found in the jewellery pieces known as *constantinata* which were guarantors of a

⁵¹ In the introduction to the reprint of his work in 1971, he acknowledged that "j'y ai suivi l'exemple des historiens de la culture hellénistique et romaine, qui furent particulièrement brillants à cette époque – Franz Cumont, Michel Rostovtzeff, André Alföldi et P. E. Schramm (pour le moyen âge occidental)": Grabar, *L'Empereur*, i.

⁵² Such as the analysis of the miniatures in the manuscript by Jean Skylitzès dating from the XIII-XIV centuries and preserved in the National Library of Madrid, published in Volume XXI of the *Cahiers archeologiques* in 1971, a study on he would subsequently resume work in the complete edition of these illustrations entitled *Skylitzes Matritensis*, Barcelona, 1965. And the study of the role of the portraits of emperors and consuls in the formation of the types dedicated to the icons of Christ, the Virgin or the Apostles, a theme to which he returned in issue XXXVI of the *Revue des sciences religieuses*, which was published in Strasbourg in 1962, and in *The Christian Iconography. A Study of its Beginnings*, Princeton, 1968, pp. 60-86.

⁵³ Gilbert Dagron, *André Grabar*.

⁵⁴ As translated by V. Laurent. Original text: J. Cramer, *Anecdota graeca e codicibus manuscriptis bibliothecarum Oxoniensium*, Oxford, 1836), pp. 190-191. French translation and study by V. Laurent, "Numismatique et folklore dans la tradition byzantine" in *Chronica Numismatica si Archeologica*, no. 119-120, Bucharest, 1940, reprint by the Institut d'Amérique Byzantin in Paris. Cited in André Grabar, "Un médaillon en or provenant de Mersine en Cilicie", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 6, 1951, pp. 30-31, n. 7.

prophylactic efficacy similar to that of the Cross itself⁵⁵. This agentivity or performativity of the image, which acted by itself⁵⁶, struck a chord in the Middle Ages, with the creation of numerous new amulets with Constantinian themes, in iconography in numerous artistic media which are still the subject of study today⁵⁷. Grabar's studies also showed that regardless of its preventive value, the cross or the labarum also had a value as the proclamation of the sovereign's Christian *fidelitas*. The latter concept was also embodied plastically or visually through the *dextera domini* crowning the emperor, which showed the *permanent* delegation of power from God to the emperor at the precise instant when the beginning of his *potestas* was proclaimed: that is, at the same instant as his reign began⁵⁸. I cannot conclude the commentary on this work without emphasizing that Grabar wrote it after having witnessed the murder of the almost mythical and mystified final embodiment of the Byzantine emperor, in the person of the Czar⁵⁹.

The second major landmark in his research career was the *Martyrium*⁶⁰, a volume in which he performed a masterful analysis of the buildings that held custody of relics, holy places which imbibed from the Greek and Roman traditions (particularly the *heroon* and its centralized plans). With this study, which was undoubtedly new in terms of its method and purpose, André Grabar encompassed architecture and iconography within the same synthesis for the first time: images and relics were shown to be inseparable from the representations of the *loca sancta*, so that relics were adorned with images, and images became relics due to their proximity to the holy body and by virtue of their likeness.

It is precisely at this point of convergence between images and architectures where it is possible to sense what was at the heart of another of his most paradigmatic works: *L'Iconoclasme byzantin*⁶¹, in which he attempted to analyze and understand how images were used and in what sense they were bearers of symbols of power. His analysis, which reflected historians' difficulties with understanding that images created a movement of such magnitude (of advocates and detractors), began by specifying the knowledge that was available about them

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 32.

⁵⁶ *Performativité* and *agentivité*, according to the terms used by French historiography, which are two of the new arguments in art history studies. An example is the book by Alain Bartholeyns Thomas Golsenne and Alain Dierkens (eds.), *La performance des images*, Brussels, 2010, and in the Spanish case, the article "Agentividad e interacción del discurso en las portadas románicas. Las imágenes de los umbrales de Santa María de la Seu d'Urgell", in *Ianua Coeli. La porta monumental romànica als territoris peninsulars*, in press, which is the result of the work by Gerardo Boto, director of the international conference on this topic held in Spain: *III Congreso Ars Mediaevalis: Imágenes en acción. Actos y actuaciones de las imágenes en la Edad Media*, 4-6 October 2013, Aguilar de Campoo (Palencia).

⁵⁷ A recent example, in the context of the kingdom of Aragon in the eleventh century, is that of Francisco de Asís García García, "HII TRES IVRE QVIDEM DOMINVS SVNT VNVS ET IDEM. El tímpano de Jaca y la escenificación de la ortodoxia", in *Anales de Historia del Arte*, extraordinary volume (2), 2011, pp. 123-146 and by the same author, "Dogma, ritual y contienda: arte y frontera en el reino de Aragón a finales del siglo XI", in Juan Martos Quesada and Marisa Bueno Sánchez (eds.), *Fronteras en discusión*, Madrid, 2012, pp. 217-250.

⁵⁸ André Grabar, *Un médaillon en or*, p. 37.

⁵⁹ Other possible areas for consideration include those who encouraged him to publish it, or the role of Kantorowicz and his counterpoint with respect to the mystique of the western Germanic Holy Roman Emperors, who abdicated in 1918, only a year after the Czar's downfall in 1917. Europe lost the emperors of the East and the West at almost the same time.

⁶⁰ Review in Richard Krautheimer, "ANDRÉ GRABAR, *Martyrium. Recherches sur le culte des reliques en l'art chrétien antique*, 2 vols. and atlas, Paris, Collège de France, 1943-1946, pp. 1.040; 147 figs; 70 pls.", in *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1953, pp. 57-61.

⁶¹ André Grabar, *L'Iconoclasme byzantin. Dossier archéologique*, Paris, 1957. Reissued by Flammarion in 1984, with the text corrected, augmented and even extended with some additions, and also abbreviated in some specific cases. The reasons for the deletion of some passages are set out in the Preface to the second edition.

at that time, and how they were considered in the era of the iconoclastic Complaint. Hence, after the famous first sentence of his volume, “Byzance a vu des gens mourir pour les images”⁶² and after clearly and scrupulously specifying the working method he would follow in the preface, André Grabar immersed himself in the study of all kinds of representations to extract all their meaning. His discourse, set out with his usual brilliance, was marked by an iconographic repertoire which he had expanded with the inclusion of numismatic representations -legal and official images which according to the author were the best display of the imperial ideology- and some images that had been considered marginal in the debate on the image until that point. The book, which was in fact an archaeological report on the history of iconoclasm, was received with varying degrees of enthusiasm by the world of research on its publication: his method and aims, which differed significantly from the expectations of traditional historiography, led him to respond to some reviews in the second edition by highlighting some aspects, adding a caption to the original title of the work, and claiming that the study of the history of Byzantine iconoclasm could go beyond written testimony⁶³. However, the more modern Byzantinists had praised his efforts: an example is the review by Georges Ostrogorski, who was considered the shrewdest *connoisseur* and most insightful historian of the iconoclastic Complaint, and has already been mentioned herein, who praised Grabar as a pioneer in terms of method, documentation and the type of questions he asked⁶⁴.

His contribution on the process of the emperors' appropriation of Christian imagery was very important, and was the first chapter in the original publication, although the second chapter in the second edition⁶⁵. He addressed the extent to which the emperors were addicted to the veneration of icons by entrusting them with the protection of their domains and their empire -an issue that contained an intrinsic debate about the use of sacred images, and also of sacred objects, by those in power. He therefore gave in depth consideration to one of the arguments on which he had done the most work: the filtration or osmosis between sacred and imperial iconography. A particularly instructive work is his study of the shrine of St Demetrius belonging to the treasury of the Patriarchate of Moscow, where images of Constantine X and Eudoxia being crowned by Christ proclaimed the legitimacy of the kingdom and the perfection of its government in accordance with the acclamation “*Beaucoup d’années aux souverains Constantin et Eudocie bénits par le Christ*” that was invoked in every ceremony at the palace⁶⁶. Or perhaps even more significance for this argument, was the ivory pyx of Dumbarton Oaks, in which he not only noticed the *damnatio memoriae* inflicted on imperial portraits, but also the theoretical association with the power of Andronikos, the eldest son of John V⁶⁷. He also pointed out that the late appearance of the family portrait, with

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ The fundamentally philological nature of Byzantine history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was illustrated by the work of Alain Touwaide, “Byzantine Sciences”, in Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, vol. I, pp. 195-239.

⁶⁴ Review published in *Bizantino Slavica*, no. XXI.

⁶⁵ For the second edition, Grabar believed that he needed to provide an opening chapter in which he analyzed the period in which Christian images, revered by some and rejected by others, spread through the Christian communities but did not penetrate the official art of the emperors and the court.

⁶⁶ André Grabar “Quelques reliquaires de saint Démétrios et le martyrium du saint à Salonique”, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol 5, 1950, p. 25.

⁶⁷ The young Andronikos had been commemorated in the churches of Constantinople as an emperor: J. Cantacuzème, *Hist.* III, p. 269. On this pyx, see André Grabar, “Une pixide en ivoire a Dumbarton Oaks.

all the members at prayer before God or the Virgin, which echoed contemporary Latin iconography perhaps imported to the East by the Crusaders and undoubtedly derived from Christ's family tree (the Tree of Jesse), confirmed the Byzantine emperor's use of model-templates from sacred characters, meaning that tangible traces of Christian iconography were evident in secular iconography. As the author said, it provided further confirmation that some of the motifs in profane art had originated in religious iconography⁶⁸.

Within the maelstrom of new interpretations that not only supported Byzantine art but also made it the bulwark of the new research, historiographers continued to ponder the palpable degradation of Greco-Roman plastic and the destruction of the space in perspective which had been carried out by an artistic environment that was simultaneously very different and very difficult to explain. The most common response at the time was based on the trend towards spirituality and the new Christian religion which abolished any corporal aspect of man and the world, thereby transforming everything that was represented into a pure symbol. However, André Grabar was able to reach the crux of the matter by interpreting the most subtle symbols in a 30-page article entitled *Plotinus et les origines de l'esthétique médiévale*⁶⁹, in which after reading the *Enneads* of Plotinus, he discovered that the optical phenomenon was located at the level of the perceived object and not in the eye, which is where reality cancels out perspective and even inverts it. He therefore concluded that these anti-classical forms, which some had interpreted in terms of the decline of an aesthetic, should be reinterpreted by going beyond the pure intention to deny their appearance. And in doing this, the artistic collection from the Byzantine world, far from being arbitrary, formed a consistent series within the new world view⁷⁰.

His final work, which was devoted to the origins of Christian iconography, and was described by Gilbert Dagron as very modern in spirit but very classic in tone⁷¹, is the text that was the result of the lectures he gave at Princeton, which appeared in English in 1968 and in French a decade later, although with an unpublished appendix⁷². Entitled *Christian Iconography. A Study of Its Origins*⁷³, on its pages André Grabar set out and showed that Christian art had been born two centuries after Christ, and used images and forms from late antiquity to encourage devotion among the faithful, which explained the way in which a religious concept and belief was translated into an image. He also said that these images and forms were only used to serve the dogma at a later date⁷⁴. By doing so, he highlighted the

Quelques notes sur l'art profane pendant les derniers siècles de l'empire byzantin", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 14, 1960, pp. 121 + 123-146.

⁶⁸ "On a pu constater, d'autre part, que les motifs de l'art profane [...] ont pu passer dans l'iconographie religieuse": *Ibid*, pp. 145-146.

⁶⁹ André Grabar, "Plotin et les origines de l'esthétique médiévale", in *Cahiers archéologiques*, 1968, I, pp. 15-29; III, pl. 1-6.

⁷⁰ Germain Bazin, *Histoire de l'histoire de l'art. De Vasari à nos jours*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1986, p. 205.

⁷¹ Gilbert Dagron, *André Grabar*.

⁷² André Grabar, *Christian Iconography. A study of its origins*, Princeton, 1968 and A. Grabar, *Les Voies de la création en iconographie chrétienne*, Paris, 1979. The Spanish edition is A. Grabar, *Las vías de la creación en la iconografía cristiana*, Madrid, 1994.

⁷³ On this subject, see inter alia, Robert M. Grant, "*Christian Iconography. A Study of Its Origins*. By ANDRÉ GRABAR (The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1961), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, 1 + 174 pp. + 346 plates. \$ 15.00", in *Church History*, vol. 38, no. 4, 1969, pp. 524-525.

⁷⁴ An anthology of André Grabar's most important articles was published in 1968 under the title *L'Art de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Âge*. In the same year, his students offered him a repertoire of studies entitled *Synthronon*, and this volume will be referred to later.

proposition that “at the beginning of the Christian experiment in iconography, the inspiration could have come only from the art of other religions or from profane art”⁷⁵; in fact, one of the most important values that has been attributed to this work by Grabar is its insistence on the sources and evolution of motifs in Christian iconography as inspired by its contemporaneous contexts, the religious and profane art of the Roman Empire, itself heir to a Greek iconic lexicon⁷⁶. At the time, he strongly supported the renewal of the iconographic research conducted by Émile Mâle in France and Willibald Sauerländer in Germany -a type of research that enhanced semiotics, which had been generally underrated by art history until that point. Indeed, negative reviews were swift to appear, like those by the British archaeologist and historian Jocelyn Mary Catherine Toynbee⁷⁷, while other more favourable reviews appeared in various journals, like the one written by Ellis Kirkham Waterhouse⁷⁸.

4.- Academic contributions: his scholar’s influence on Byzantinism and medievalism

André Grabar, whose rich and stimulating work provided the greatest contribution to the knowledge and interpretation of early Christian and Byzantine art, created a school first in Paris, where he taught many art historians who were not only French, but also Americans, British, Yugoslavs and Greeks. The journal *Cahiers archéologiques*, which he founded in 1946 with Jean Hubert, the archivist and curator of antiquities in the department of Seine-et-Marne until 1955⁷⁹, and to which by a collection (the *Bibliothèque des Cahiers archéologiques*) was immediately appended, was the channel of expression for this prolific school. However, it was in the United States where this researcher, who was passionate about his work, and an intuitive and undoubted innovator of the art-historical method of study, found true colleagues and was able to develop and disseminate his ideas, especially through the renowned *symposium*, which were truly milestones, at the Dumbarton Oaks Center⁸⁰, which he regularly attended between 1949 and 1961. There he had the opportunity to work with luminaries including the Russian Byzantinist Alexander Alexandrovich Vasiliev⁸¹, the priest and academic Francis Dvornik⁸² and the Armenian Sirarpie der Nersessian⁸³, all of

⁷⁵ André Grabar, *Christian Iconography*, p. xliii

⁷⁶ Linda Marie Rouillard, *Grabar, André*, p. 2321.

⁷⁷ Her review, which highlighted the depth at which the correlation between Christian and pagan iconography was analysed and developed with a comprehensiveness and wealth of detail and scholarly discussion far greater than had been attempted by any previous writer on the subject, was published in *The Classical Review*, 20, December 1970, pp. 380-383.

⁷⁸ Ellis Kirkham Waterhouse, “Christian Iconography” in *The English Historical Review*, 86, July 1971, pp. 598-599.

⁷⁹ He played a considerable role in the “Save French Art” campaign, fighting a long battle to have French monuments considered “minor” recognized and saved, as noted by Lee Sorensen, “Hubert, Jean”, in Lee Sorensen (ed.), *Dictionary of Art Historians*: <http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/hubertj.htm>.

⁸⁰ Indeed, those organized by André Grabar, Dvornik and Kitzinger have been considered the greatest intellectual creations by historiography. The Programme in Byzantine Studies at Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections of Harvard University, which is located in Washington, D. C., hosts a collection of more than 149,000 volumes, devoted to all aspects of Byzantine history, including the sciences: Alain Touwaide, *Byzantine Sciences*, p. 235.

⁸¹ Considered the foremost authority on Byzantine History and culture of the mid-twentieth century.

⁸² One of the leading twentieth-century experts on Slavic and Byzantine history.

⁸³ Whose work was primarily concerned with Armenian art history, including the study of religious architecture, illuminated manuscripts, and sculpture.

whom he had met as a student in Paris in the 1920s. At that institution, he came into contact with other specialists from all over the world: they included the influential Harvard Byzantinist and medievalist art historian Ernst Kitzinger⁸⁴, who as Director of Byzantine Studies at Dumbarton Oaks between 1955 and 1966 transformed the institution into the world's leading Byzantine studies centre, to whom Grabar felt a particularly close bond due to their shared intellectual concerns⁸⁵. However, this list would grow considerably longer with time: it included Milton V. Anastos⁸⁶, Glanville Downey⁸⁷, Kurt Weitzmann⁸⁸ and Ihor Sevcenko⁸⁹, who acknowledged their debt to a multitude of numerous scholarly influences, and many others who never ceased to express their debt, admiration and friendship, as highlighted recently by Cyril Mango⁹⁰.

In general terms, Grabar could be said to have embodied the French and French-Slavic research traditions, in which abstract thinking and the need to categorize are combined with an unusual degree of intuition about the materiality of objects in material culture⁹¹. His novel approach to studying works of art made him feel very comfortable professionally at Dumbarton Oaks. He also felt this comfort at a personal level, in contrast to how alien Grabar and his wife felt in America, where they saw a world that was completely unrelated to everything that they were accustomed to: indeed, his son Oleg defined this institution as "essentially [...] European [...] with wonderful European manners"⁹².

Moreover, and as Grabar himself admitted, there were important contributions from other researchers within the powerful line of research that he had created, and some of them were closely linked to Dumbarton Oaks, while others who were

⁸⁴ On this author, see Lee Sorensen, "Kitzinger, Ernst", in Lee Sorensen (ed.), *Dictionary of Art Historians*: <http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/kitzingere.htm>

⁸⁵ André's son, Oleg Grabar, said: "I'm even not sure that it was very good for Kitzinger to have my father there, because my father was about fifteen years older than he was. And that kind of a little bit made life difficult -I don't mean technically but intellectually- for Kitzinger, who was certainly the most intelligent, the most creative of those four professors": in *Oral History interview with Oleg Grabar (1929-2011), undertaken by Anna Bonnell-Freiden and Clem Wood at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, on 21 August, 2008*. Published online in the *Dumbarton Oaks Oral History Project*, Research Library and Collection: <http://www.doaks.org/library-archives/dumbarton-oaks-archives/oral-history-project/oleg-grabar>.

⁸⁶ To whom Speros Vryonis dedicated *Byzantine studies in honour of Milton V. Anastos*, Malibu, 1985.

⁸⁷ Who was the first to solve certain terminological problems about the builders, showing that the *méchaniké* involved mastery of much more than building techniques alone: on this subject, see Glanville Downey, "Byzantine Architects, their Training and Methods", in *Byzantion*, 18, 1946-1948, pp. 99-118.

⁸⁸ A recognized and influential Byzantine and medievalist scholar, who learnt from notable teachers such as Julius von Schlosser, and Adolph Goldschmidt, who supervised his doctoral thesis. With Ernst Kitzinger, he organized the 1965 Dumbarton Oaks conference on the Byzantine contribution to the art of the West in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Oleg Grabar was one of his students.

⁸⁹ Who wrote on philology, literature, epigraphy, paleography and codicology. Among other positions, he was Professor of Byzantine History and Literature emeritus until his death in Dumbarton Oaks.

⁹⁰ This historian, a renowned scholar of the art and architecture of the Byzantine Empire, said that he had not been particularly influenced by anyone, but admitted to having learned a great deal "from both people who were there and the visitors, people like André Grabar, who would come from time to time, but I had met him in Paris": *Edited Oral History Interview with Cyril Alexander Mango and Marlia Mundell Mango, by Anna Bonnell-Freidin at Oxford University, on 1 August, 2009*. Published online in the *Dumbarton Oaks Oral History Project*, Research Library and Collection: <http://www.doaks.org/library-archives/dumbarton-oaks-archives/oral-history-project/cyрил-mango-and-marlia-mundell-mango>.

⁹¹ The various ways of undertaking research are expressed perfectly in E. Bertaux, *L'art dans l'Italie Méridionale*, 3 vols, Paris, 1903 and in G. de Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art Byzantin. Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, 2 vols. in 4 parts, Paris, 1926, 1932, 1936 and 1942.

⁹² This problem was felt particularly acutely by his mother, who did not speak English very well: interview by Anna Bonnell-Freiden and Clem Wood with Oleg Grabar at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey on 21 August, 2008. <http://www.doaks.org/library-archives/dumbarton-oaks-archives/oral-history-project/oleg-grabar>.

not. The model of the images of the emperor, his throne and other insignias, the model provided by some of his triumphal, judicial and other ceremonies, and their echoes in the figuration of Christ the King, Christ as judge and Christ presiding over the cenacle with the apostles, were thus core issues in the studies undertaken by prestigious researchers who sympathized with the new methodology and the recent arguments. These include the renowned Klaus Wessel⁹³, Carl Otto Nordström⁹⁴, Christopher Walter⁹⁵, Yves Christe⁹⁶, Johannes Kollwitz⁹⁷, Otto Treitinger⁹⁸, and Phaëdon Kouloulès⁹⁹, who with many others confirm the immediacy of the impact of his work.

While the bibliography of many of his colleagues more or less explicitly includes the debt that their authors had to the contributions of Grabar, many of his students also expressed their gratitude. One of the most irrefutable was undoubtedly the publication of the collection *Synthronon. Art et archéologie de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age*¹⁰⁰, in which his ex-students, mainly during his time at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, unreservedly acknowledged their debt to their teacher for his inspiration and working method. The Norwegian Hjalmar Torp¹⁰¹, the Byzantinist Ivor Sevcenko¹⁰², Sahoko G. Tsuji¹⁰³, Nicole Thierry¹⁰⁴, the theologian John Meyendorff¹⁰⁵, Tania Velmans¹⁰⁶, Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne¹⁰⁷, Gordana Babic¹⁰⁸, Colette Lamy-Lassale¹⁰⁹ and Jean Fournée¹¹⁰ were

⁹³ The author of "Christus Rex. Kaisserkult und Christusbild", in *Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts. Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 68, 1953, pp. 118-136, in which the influence of André Grabar is perhaps most readily apparent.

⁹⁴ Whose most important work in this regard is undoubtedly *Ravennastudien: ideengeschichtliche und ikonographische Untersuchungen über die Mosaiken von Ravenna*, Stockholm, 1953.

⁹⁵ This influence is most evident in *L'Iconographie des conciles dans la tradition byzantine*, Paris, 1970, and in the study of the thirteenth century papal paintings in the Lateran chapel, which appeared in number XX of the *Cahiers archéologiques* published in 1970, p. 155 ff. However, his later work was also indebted to this new perspective; an example is Christopher Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church*, London, 1982.

⁹⁶ Whose abundant bibliography includes *Les grands romans portails. Etude sur l'iconologie de théophanies romanes*, Geneva, 1969.

⁹⁷ Perhaps his work *Oströmische Plastik der Theodosianischen Zeit*, Berlin, 1914 is the most representative in this field.

⁹⁸ With *Die oströmische kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell*, Jena, 1938, containing an in-depth analysis of acclamations in Byzantium, which was soon highly praised by Ernst Kantorowicz in *Laudes Regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship*, Berkeley, 1958, p. 25, n. 35.

⁹⁹ With his monumental *Byzantine Life and Civilization*, which he published in Athens in eight volumes between 1948 and 1955.

¹⁰⁰ *Synthronon. Art et archéologie de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age*. Recueil d'études par André GRABAR et un groupe de ses disciples, Paris, 1968.

¹⁰¹ In 1999 he received the Fridtjof Nansen Award for Excellence in the Humanities for his work on early Christian and Byzantine art, among other areas.

¹⁰² Who among other studies addressed political and intellectual life at the time of the early Palaiologos: *La vie intellectuelle et politique à Byzance sous les premiers Paleologues*, Brussels, 1962.

¹⁰³ Whose doctoral thesis, supervised by André Grabar, focused on the doors of Santa Sabina in Rome: *Étude iconographique des reliefs des portes de Sainte Sabine à Roma*, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, 1961

¹⁰⁴ Who has conducted her scientific research in Cappadocia for more than fifty years.

¹⁰⁵ A priest in the Orthodox Church, a Professor of Church History and Patristics, who held successive joint appointments as a lecturer in Byzantine theology at Harvard University and Dumbarton Oaks.

¹⁰⁶ Whose research is focused on the Byzantine art and its influence on the Balkans, especially painting. She was co-editor of *Cahiers Archéologiques* from 1979 to 1996.

¹⁰⁷ In her studies, she used biblical, apocryphal and liturgical texts as important sources of interpretation. She was head of the section of Christian Art at the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire /Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst en Geschiedenis in Brussels, and Professor of Byzantine Art at the Catholic University of Louvain.

¹⁰⁸ Who has been described as the most prominent iconologist in Serbian and Balkan art history, as well as a scholar of international influence in Byzantine studies: Matthew Rampley, Thierry Lenain, Hubert Locher, *Art History and Visual Studies in Europe: Transnational Discourses and National Frameworks*, Leiden-Boston, 2012, p. 468.

the contributors to a volume with a title that in honour of Grabar aimed to evoke the old image of the disciples meeting their teacher, with whom they share discussions and reflections.

In conclusion, I must once again emphasize that Andre Grabar transformed the study of the visual arts of Byzantium and Eastern Europe, and his legacy was a school whose standing and influence remains unsurpassed. In fact, Grabar's corpus of research, from his early work to his later writing, continues to be cited in general studies on Byzantine art, as well as in many others that aim to study the image of power, to the extent that listing them is impossible. As noted at the time by Annabel J. Wharton, Grabar's work is much more than a distinct art-historical tradition¹¹¹ that was not always accepted: in fact, in addition to the other references mentioned above, Ward Perkins criticized what he considered to be structural determinism in his studies¹¹². Likewise, in another vein, there is also no doubt that André Grabar, like the other Byzantinists of his day -whether they were from Central, Eastern or Western Europe, or American- were really only interested in scholarship. They had no other agenda. In the words of his son Oleg, "now old national types have come, and Byzantine studies have tended to become a series of competing nationalisms" -a concern and a goal that I fear extends to modern current historiography of other artistic periods and other geographical areas.

5.- Chronology

1896 Born in Kiev

1914 After graduating in his hometown, he is admitted to the University of St. Vladimir

1915 Moves to the University of Petrograd

1920 Moves to Bulgaria

1922 Moves to France, where he would live the rest of his life

1937 Becomes Professor of Christian Archaeology at the École Pratique des Hautes Etudes

1946 Becomes Professor of Byzantine Art and Archaeology at the Collège de France. In the same year, with Jean Hubert he founds the *Cahiers archeologiques*

1950 Becomes research professor at Dumbarton Oaks (until 1964). In the same year, he chairs the institution's symposium with the central theme of "The Emperor and the Palace"

1955 Elected member of the French Academy

¹⁰⁹ Who studied Christian iconography following the guidelines set out by her teacher. Examples include "Les représentations du combat de l'archange en France au début du Moyen Age", in *Millénaire monastique du Mont Saint-Michel*, Paris, 1971, pp. 53-64, containing contributions from other authors influenced by Grabar, such as Yves Christe.

¹¹⁰ Who worked on piety, liturgy, rites of devotion to the saints and iconography, especially in Normandy: See *Le culte populaire et l'iconographie des saints en Normandie. Étude générale*, Paris, 1973.

¹¹¹ Annabel Jane Wharton, "Rereading *Martyrium*: The Modernist and Postmodernist Texts", in *Gesta*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1990, p. 3.

¹¹² J. B. Ward-Perkins, "Memoria, Martyr's Tomb and Martyr's Church", *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., XVII-I, April 1966, p. 22. Quoted in *Ibid*, p.4, n- 13.

1961 Gives the A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington

1990 Dies in Paris

6.- Selected bibliography

His prolific and multi-disciplinary research includes more than thirty books, plus numerous book chapters and approximately three hundred articles¹¹³. I present here, in full awareness of the impossibility of listing all his work, the most relevant studies, partly following the outline provided by Gilbert Dagron¹¹⁴.

6.1.- General problems

L'empereur dans l'art byzantin. Recherches sur l'art officiel de l'empire d'Orient, Paris, 1936.

Martyrium. Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art antique, Paris, 1943.

L'iconoclasme byzantin, Dossier archéologique, Paris, 1957.

"Les peintures murales chrétiennes", in *Cahiers de civilisation Médiévale*, vol. 1, 1958, pp. 9-15.

"Les origines de l'icone chrétienne et byzantine", in *Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina*, vol. 7, 1, 1960, pp. 57-58.

"Le portrait en iconographie paléochrétienne", in *Revue des sciences religieuses*, vol. 36, 3/4, 1962, pp. 87-109.

"Les sujets bibliques au service de l'iconographie chrétienne", in *La Bibbia nell'alto medioevo*, 1963, pp. 387-412.

"Recherches sur les sources juives de l'art paléochrétien", in *Cahiers archéologiques. Fin de l'antiquité et moyen-âge*, vol. 14, 1964, pp. 49-57.

"The message of Byzantine Art", in *Byzantine Art a European Art*. 9th Exhibition of the Council of Europe, Athens, 1964, pp. 51-6.

"Études critiques", in *Cahiers archéologiques. Fin de l'antiquité et moyen-âge*, vol. 17, 1967, pp. 249-256.

L'art du moyen âge en Europe Orientale, Paris, 1968.

Christian Iconography: a Study of its Origins, Princeton, 1968.

L'art du moyen âge en occident. Influences byzantines et orientales, London, 1980.

Dieu et les hommes: un thème d'iconographie chrétienne. Esquisse d'un programme d'études pour l'antiquité et moyen-âge, vol. 38, 1990, pp.5-6.

6.2.- Descriptions of Byzantine and other related works

La peinture religieuse en Bulgarie au moyen âge, 2 vols., Doctoral Thesis, 1928.

¹¹³ As mentioned at the time by Rouillard, *Grabar, André*, p. 2320.

¹¹⁴ Gilbert Dagron, *André Grabar*.

La décoration byzantine, Paris, 1928.

La Sainte Face de Laon: le mandylion dans l'art orthodoxe, Prague, 1931.

Miniatures byzantines de la Bibliothèque Nationale: 66 photographies inédites, Paris, 1939.

"Miniatures byzantines du IXe au XIVe siècle", in *Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina*, vol. 7, 1, 1960, pp. 59-62.

"Quel est le sens de l'offrande de Justinien et de Théodora sur les mosaïques de Saint-Vital?", in *Felix Ravenna*, Ser. 3, vol. 30, 1960, pp. 41-71.

Sculptures byzantines de Constantinople, IVe-Xe siècle, Paris, 1963.

"Les cycles d'images byzantins tirés à l'histoire biblique et leur symbolisme princier", in *Starinar*, 20, 1969, pp. 133-137.

"La sculpture byzantine au Moyen Âge", in *Comptes rendus. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 4, 1971, pp. 741-758.

Les revêtements en or et en argent des icônes byzantines du moyen âge, Venice, 1975.

"Les illustrations de la chronique de Jean Skylitzès à la Bibliothèque nationale de Madrid", in *Cahiers archéologiques. Fin de l'antiquité et moyen-âge*, vol. 21, 1971, pp. 191-211.

6.3.- Other relevant articles in Miscellaneous Works, Proceedings and Journals

"Le Pantocrator vêtu à l'antique et ses archanges en costume impérial", in *Atti del V Congresso Internazionale di Studi Bizantini*, Rome, 1940.

"Plotin et les origines de l'esthétique médiévale", in *Cahiers archéologiques. Fin de l'antiquité et moyen-âge*, vol. 1, 1945, pp. 15-36.

"La témoignage d'une hymne syriaque sur l'architecture de la cathédrale d'Edesse au VIe siècle et sur la symbolique de l'édifice chrétien", in *Cahiers archéologiques. Fin de l'antiquité et moyen-âge*, vol. 2, 1947, pp. 41-68.

"La représentation de l'intelligible dans l'art byzantin du moyen âge", in *Actes du VIe Congrès International des Études Byzantines*, Paris, 1951, pt. 2, pp. 127-143.

"Le succès des arts orientaux à la cour Byzantine sous les Macédoniens", in *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, ser 3, vol. 2, 1951, pp. 32-60.

"God and the 'Family of Princes' Presided Over by the Byzantine Emperor", in *Harvard Slavic studies*, vol. 2, 1954, pp. 117-124.

"Portraits oubliés d'empereurs byzantins", in *Mémoires de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France*, vol. 83, 1954, pp. 7-54.

"L'archéologie des insignes médiévaux du pouvoir", in *Journal des Savants*, 1956, pp. 5-18 and 77-91.

"Le reliquaire byzantin de la cathédrale d'Aix-la-Chapelle", in *Karolingische und ottonische Kunst. Werden, Wesen, Wirkung*, 1957, p. 282-297.

“L’imago clipeata chétienne”, in *Comptes rendus. Académie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 2, 1975, pp. 209-213.

L’art de la fin de l’Antiquité et du Moyen Âge, Collège de France, 3 vols., Paris, 1968.

L’art paléochrétien et l’art byzantin, London, 1979.

L’art du moyen âge en Occident, London, 1980.

6.4.- Luxury publications for the general public

La peinture byzantine: étude historique et critique, Geneva, 1953

With Cari Nordenfalk, *Le haut moyen âge, du quatrième au onzième siècle*) Les grand siècles de la peinture), Geneva, 1957.

With Cari Nordenfalk, *La peinture Romane du Onzième au Treizième Siècle*, Geneva, 1958.

Le premier art chrétien. L’Univers des Formes, Paris, 1966.

L’âge d’or de Justinien, de la mort de Théodose à l’Islam, L’Univers des formes, Paris, 1966.