



Ivan Foletti

From Byzantium to Holy Russia

Nikodim Kondakov (1844-1925) and the Invention of the Icon

Translated by Sarah Melker

Tracing the life and work of Nikodim Kondakov, a pioneer in the field of late Antiquity and Byzantium in eastern Europe, this biography is a true tale of adventure. It follows the complicated and challenging events in Kondakov's life before and after the Russian Revolution, from his humble beginnings to his university studies and analyzes his inspired creation of an innovative and precocious study of art history in Russia. From a brilliant and successful career to the trauma endured during the Russian Revolution, the story becomes one of wandering and dependence; nevertheless, and in spite of the shift in history and in his own life, Kondakov's studies sketch a vast geography of Late Antique and medieval culture from the Mediterranean to the Urals. The work approaches distant horizons, giving a glimpse of the migrations from Asia and the inception of medieval Europe with its Christian values; and it travels the paths of history along trails marked by artifacts and monuments. Reconstructing the personal and existential events in Nikodim Kondakov's life contributes to the understanding of a critical phase in the founding of art history and, more broadly, the histories of Russia and of the countries the scholar traversed during a long life filled with tribulations.

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