

*Byzantine Studies at  
the University of Notre Dame*









Angelos Akotantos, *Peter and Paul Embrace*, Hodegetria Monastery, Crete, Greece, mid-15th century

## *Byzantine Studies at Notre Dame*

### A WORLD CIVILIZATION

Constantinople was the heart of Byzantine culture, a spiritual and political capital linking Europe with the Mediterranean and with Asia Minor. At its height, the city's population was at least ten times that of medieval Paris or Rome. It knew no peer in the medieval west.

When the Western Roman Empire fell, the Eastern Empire, centered in Constantinople, survived—and its influence grew. Indeed, it became the centerpiece of a thriving world civilization: a hub for trade, art, intellectual endeavor, and dialogue across regions and cultures; a locus for interchange between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam; and a key link between Europe and the Middle East.

Within this bustling and complex civilization, we find the keys to understanding many of the cultural and religious dynamics of our own time. Unfortunately, Byzantine history



is seldom comprehensively studied in American universities. Scholars typically concentrate only on individual aspects of the culture's art or on its secular and institutional history. This will change with the foundation of a transformative new program in Byzantine studies at the University of Notre Dame.

No university is better suited to the task, for what we now call "Byzantine studies" is really medieval studies, focused on the Greek half of the old Roman Empire and its neighbors. Notre Dame's long and illustrious record in medieval studies—our internationally lauded Medieval Institute was the first in the United States—puts us in a unique position to establish one of the nation's premier centers for scholarship and teaching in Byzantine studies.

More than fifty faculty members across the humanities are affiliated with the Medieval Institute, and Notre Dame's library collections in this area (covering both western medieval Europe and Byzantium) are among the very best in the world. Yet, while all aspects of western medieval civilization are taught and studied at Notre Dame, Byzantine scholarship needs further development, particularly as the University adds faculty positions in history and theology. This new program will not only enhance the distinction of the Medieval Institute at Notre Dame, but will also have a significant impact on how Byzantine culture is studied and understood throughout the Academy.

"NOTRE DAME IS GOING TO RAISE THE BAR, AND RATHER HIGHLY. OTHER UNIVERSITIES WILL TAKE NOTE AND HOPEFULLY RETHINK AND EXPAND THE RANGE OF THEIR TEACHING IN HISTORY, RELIGION, AND LITERATURE."

*Robert S. Nelson, the Robert Lehman Professor of the History of Art at Yale University*

TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT

*Metamorphosis*, from a manuscript of the theological writings of the Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ca. 1370

*Christ Pantokrator*, Church of the Dormition, Daphni, Greece, ca. 1100

Hagia Eirene, former Eastern Orthodox church located in the outer courtyard of Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, Turkey, in the mid-eighth century

*Mother of God*, apse mosaic, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey, dedicated 867





## BUILDING ON EXCELLENCE

Notre Dame is superbly positioned to promote the future of Byzantine studies. Through our profound commitment to teaching excellence, we can enhance the field by combining traditional classroom instruction with the rigor and academic sophistication necessary for original research, at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. By drawing on our Catholic heritage, moreover, we can reach beyond the limitations of a secular university.

Beginning in the fourth century, Constantine and other rulers of the Eastern Empire understood their dominion as Christian. The empire was saturated with Christian images, brought to expression in Christian language and concepts, and marked by Christian liturgical practice. Notre Dame's expertise in early Christian, Islamic, Jewish, and medieval studies will enrich the study of Byzantine culture. As we seek to deepen our merit as the world's preeminent Catholic research university, commitment to scholarship in this field—and the development of future Byzantinists—will add to our existing strengths and complement our academic mission.

The study of Byzantine tradition will provide a distinct concentration within the Medieval Institute's undergraduate and doctoral programs, broadening the institute's profile by developing an indispensable component to the study of the Middle Ages. By expanding upon our existing strengths in medieval and early Christianity, we will also underscore Notre Dame's reputation as an international center for teaching and research in these fields.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has recognized Notre Dame's potential to contribute to the field of Byzantine studies and, more generally, to scholarship in the humanities with a challenge grant of \$800,000 to establish an endowment for this program. Recent large grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation have brought us closer to our goal of raising an additional \$3.2 million in matching gifts. Endowing Byzantine studies and integrating it more broadly into the University's superior programs in the humanities is thus among the University's top priorities.



## *Funding Opportunities in Byzantine Studies*

### LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

In 1997, Notre Dame acquired the extraordinary library of the late Milton V. Anastos (1909–97), one of America’s premier Byzantinists. The Anastos Collection added more than 40,000 volumes and fifty journals to Notre Dame’s already exceptional collection in medieval studies, and it has continued to grow following its arrival at Notre Dame. It is the third-largest dedicated collection in Byzantine studies in the United States, following Harvard and Dumbarton Oaks, a research center for Byzantine studies in Washington, D.C.

Since integrating the Anastos Collection, Notre Dame has hosted an annual meeting of the Byzantine Studies Conference and established a biennial workshop in Byzantine intellectual history that draws scholars from around the world to work together on common topics.

The University understands that scholarship and teaching in Byzantine studies depend upon the continued development of a world-class research library. At the core of our Byzantine Reference Collection will be Greek texts and studies pertaining to Byzantine culture. As it grows, the collection will augment its holdings in the areas in which the Empire held sway, or with which it had diplomatic relations, by purchasing materials that address the cultures of the Christian eastern churches in Arabic, Old Church Slavonic, Georgian, Armenian, Syriac, and Coptic.

Library collections may be endowed at the *Named* (\$100,000), *Prize* (\$250,000), *Distinguished* (\$500,000), *Presidential* (\$1 million), or *Premier* (\$5 million) levels. Additionally, the new Byzantine Studies Reading Room may be named with a gift of \$500,000. Please also note that expendable gifts in any amount, in support of the acquisition of library materials in Byzantine studies, are also deeply appreciated.

“NOTRE DAME’S PROGRAM IN BYZANTINE STUDIES REPRESENTS ANOTHER MEANINGFUL STEP IN OUR SHARED WORK TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT AMONG THE WORLD’S GREAT CULTURES AND RELIGIONS.”

*Archbishop Demetrios Trakatellis, Ph.D., Th.D.  
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*



## ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIPS

Notre Dame has excellent faculty with expertise in medieval, early Christian, Renaissance, Jewish, and Islamic studies. The addition of two collegiate-level professorships in Byzantine history and theology will considerably increase our reach in Byzantine studies and fill the gap that currently exists in programs addressing eastern (Byzantine) medieval civilization.

The first professorship, to be held by a scholar whose research and teaching address central questions in Byzantine history, will anchor distinguished Notre Dame programs in medieval and renaissance Mediterranean history and Byzantine art history. The chair holder will be a permanent member of the Department of History, while also serving as a fellow of the Medieval Institute.

The second professorship is to be named for Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America and the recipient of an honorary Notre Dame degree in 2010. Building on Notre Dame's acknowledged strengths in patristic and western medieval theology, this new position—which will be appointed in the Department of Theology, with a fellowship in the Medieval Institute—will focus on the historical dialogues between Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Islam.

The professorships in history and theology may be endowed with gifts of \$1.5 million each; contributions in any amount may also be applied collectively to the funding of either faculty endowment.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME BESTOWED AN HONORARY DOCTORATE OF LAWS DEGREE UPON ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS, PRIMATE OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA, DURING THE MAY 2010 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY.

TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT

The Cathedral of Monreale, Sicily, Italy, 1174–85

*Leo's Gift to the Mother of God*, Leo Bible, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome, 10th century

Archbishop Demetrios with University of Notre Dame President Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., during the 2010 Commencement Ceremony.

*Michael Psellos and the Emperor Michael VII Doukas*, Mount Athos, Pantokrator Monastery, 12th century





## GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

The Medieval Institute already attracts top graduate students from all over the world to pursue a PhD in Medieval Studies; the opportunity to do graduate work in Byzantine studies will only make our doctoral program more attractive. With new professors in Byzantine theology and Byzantine history added to our existing pool of distinguished faculty and a world-class library, Notre Dame will be able to recruit the most talented students whose interests center on the medieval Greek and Orthodox world.

Our vision for Byzantine studies also includes the establishment of postgraduate fellowships, which will allow promising researchers to take advantage of our growing expertise and library holdings in Byzantium. These young scholars will go on to become the leaders in their field and will be at the forefront of Byzantine studies in the twenty-first century.

Expendable gifts in any amount will be gratefully received for the support of graduate or postdoctoral fellowships. Alternately, named graduate fellowships may be endowed at the *Named* (\$100,000), *Prize* (\$250,000), *Distinguished* (\$500,000), *Presidential* (\$1 million), or *Premier* (\$5 million) levels; postdoctoral fellowships may be endowed beginning at the *Distinguished* (\$500,000) level.





## PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT

Programming in Byzantine studies includes a wide range of activities, from lectures by distinguished visiting scholars, major conferences, workshops for graduate students, and smaller academic colloquia, to funding for travel, research, and language acquisition. In the past, we have provided funding for students and faculty to attend conferences and pursue research in archives, and we regularly send students to study Byzantine Greek in Athens and at Dumbarton Oaks. In years past—and in 2010 and 2011 in conjunction with Dumbarton Oaks—the Medieval Institute has also sponsored a biennial workshop in Byzantine studies that attracts participation from top international scholars in the field. Increased funding would allow the acceleration of all of these programs, along with the addition of new ones.

Endowments in support of programming needs may be created at the *Named* (\$100,000), *Prize* (\$250,000), *Distinguished* (\$500,000), *Presidential* (\$1 million), or *Premier* (\$5 million) levels. Other naming opportunities include the visiting lectureship (\$100,000), publications in Byzantine history (\$300,000), workshops in Byzantine intellectual history (\$500,000), and symposia in Byzantine studies (\$500,000). Expendable gifts in any amount are also deeply appreciated.

### TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT

Hosios Loukas Monastery (interior), near the town of Distomo, in Boeotia, Greece, 11th century

*The Divine Liturgy*, Notre Dame: Snite Museum of Art 1958.20, later 17th century

*Mother of God with John II and Eirene*, wall mosaic, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey, ca. 1130

Angelos Akotantos, *John the Forerunner*, Byzantine and Christian Museum, T.2639, Athens, Greece, mid-15th century

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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*Mamun Sends an Ambassador to Emperor Theophilos*, Madrid Skylitzes, Biblioteca Nacional de España Vitr. 26-2, Madrid, 12th century





*Isaiah's Prayer*, The Paris Psalter, Paris: Bibliothèque nationale gr. 139, ca. 970



SPIRIT  
OF NOTRE DAME