“The Socialite Archaeologist”
Thomas Whittemore (1871-1950) and the roles of patronage, politics, and personal connections in cultural heritage preservation

An Honors thesis submitted to the History Department of Rutgers University, written under the supervision of Professor Stephen Reinert

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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: The First Adventures in Russia</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: Prelude to Preserving Byzantium -</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserving Russian Minds and Bells</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: Sailing to Byzantium</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion:</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Thomas Whittemore and a friend, probably Charles C. Crane, at a Russian monastery on Mt. Athos, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks Image Collection and Fieldwork Archive (DO:ICFA)*
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks go to Rutgers University first; this paper is the culmination of an interesting and stimulating time on the banks. This institution has provided me with an excellent education and great degree of freedom in investigating different career paths. At first I fancied myself doctor, and Rutgers provided me with a stint in a biological lab right after my freshman year. Despite the patience of my mentor, Dr. Dipak Sarkar, I found that my talents could be better used elsewhere. I returned to my original passion of Byzantine history. The University promptly sent me abroad to Istanbul for a year. I saw the walls of Constantinople and the Hagia Sophia with a joy that comes from finally seeing the place one has read about since childhood. Rutgers has honored the tradition of learning by doing.

Specifically, I must offer my deepest thanks to my advisor, Dr. Stephen Reinert, who is responsible for the direction of much of my career at Rutgers and into the future. I first met him as my teacher in a class on late Byzantine history in the fall of 2007. This was the second excellent class on the subject I took at Rutgers, the first being taught by an enthusiastic and talented Princeton graduate student, Jack Tannous. In the class, Dr. Reinert advertised a new study abroad opportunity in Istanbul. I decided immediately to go, and Dr. Reinert worked with me during the application process. He kept the program going for me even though it was only myself and one other student that went to Turkey in the autumn of 2008. I was honored to be one of the first students to represent our University abroad.

I spent a long time abroad, I even decided to extend my stay by a semester. My travels and studies in Istanbul have determined the rest of my life. The previous year doing biological research had been frustrating, and my lack of success in that field sapped much of my confidence. Turkey was a open window, and for the first time in my college career I felt deeply at home, academically and spiritually. I met two professors at Koç University that gave me vision for my career. Dr. Alessandra Ricci got me hooked on archaeology and cultural preservation. She has uncovered a Byzantine monastery in Istanbul and is engaged in revitalizing this site as an archaeological park. I hope to be
involved in such projects in the future. Through her work at Ottoman fortresses, Dr. Lucienne Thys-
Şenocak taught me the value of knowing the people around an archaeological site. My thanks to both
these professors.

When I returned to Rutgers last fall, Dr. Reinert recognized my new interest in archaeology and
recommended that I investigate one of the archaeological organizations that operated in Istanbul in the
first half of the 20th century. I chose the Byzantine Institute because of its role in restoring the Hagia
Sophia, the most glorious building I’ve ever beheld. I quickly became fascinated by its enigmatic
director, Thomas Whittemore. He remains the closest thing to a real-life Indiana Jones, taking
American battleships to rescue Russian refugees, meeting royalty and artists, and restoring one of
man's greatest structures. My interest in him grows with each month, and even though I must turn in
this thesis now, my investigation is very much a work in progress. I owe further thanks to Dr. Reinert
for guiding me to Rutgers' graduate program in Cultural Heritage and Preservation, where I will
continue my research on Whittemore and his fascinating network of friends.

I thank Jim Niessen for his assistance in navigating the rich material in Alexander Library, and
for Dean Sarolta Takacs for acting as a second reader of my thesis.

I gratefully acknowledge the aid of Dumbarton Oaks, the preeminent institute for Byzantine
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The Aresty Research Center has always been generous to me. They underwrote my research
with Dr. Sarkar as an underclassman and have strongly supported my research on the senior thesis. The
Center is one of the prime drivers of student research here and I thank them for their support and
providing me an opportunity to share the findings of my research this spring.

Much of this thesis would not exist were it not for the work of scholars before me. Professor Robert S. Nelson's recent book on Hagia Sophia made connections between Whittemore and his patrons I had never suspected. My research became much more focused after I read his work. I learned how to weave a narrative out of Whittemore's often disjointed biography. I also thank Dr. Natalia Teteriatnikov for writing articles on Whittemore that greatly aided my understanding of his life. Both scholars' brought the important collections at Columbia University to my attention.

I praise Professor Masschaele for running an excellent thesis program. I appreciate that we had small deadlines for chapters throughout the year so we could not procrastinate until the last moment (not that I would ever do such a thing...). This has been my most challenging assignment, but the History Department gave me the tools and the structure to make it go as smoothly as possible. Simply comparing my progress on the thesis at this time in late March with those of my friends' in other departments or universities offer the best testament; I have completed my thesis when others are only starting to write.

It is my hope that this modest contribution to the study of Thomas Whittemore's life will aid Byzantists, preservationists, and archaeologists in understanding this important figure. I believe his life has been overlooked, and unjustly so. I look forward to continuing this project and making Whittemore's story ever richer and more exciting. My thanks again to those who have allowed me to bring this far.

- Ben Major,
Hub City, NJ,
25 March, 2010
I. Introduction

Thomas Whittemore (1871-1950) performed one of the greatest feats of cultural preservation by revealing the Byzantine mosaics in the church of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, formerly Constantinople. These mosaics and the building that hosts them are greatest remnants of Byzantium, the Christian and Greek-speaking heir to the Roman Empire. The Hagia Sophia sits adjacent to the ruined grounds of the Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors. From this place, the heirs of Augustus and Caesar prevailed over the land and sea from the Danube to the Euphrates. Emperor Justinian I (r. 527-65 C.E.) built the Hagia Sophia at a time when his Empire was the dominant political, commercial, military, and cultural force in the world. Constantinople, positioned on the shores of Asia, was Europe's largest city and the capital of its greatest state.¹ The city united Europe and Asia in trade, making it the richest in Europe and allowing Justinian to pay 20,000 pounds of gold for the construction of his “Church of Holy Wisdom” (Ἁγία Σοφία or Hagia Sophia in Greek).² The structure proclaimed the might of Justinian after his armies had reconquered Carthage, Southern Spain, and the greatest prize of all – Rome. The Church was the center of Christendom; the Patriarch of Constantinople sat at the right hand of the Emperor, whose rule was approved by God. Millions of people considered the Hagia Sophia their mother church, and it has long exerted a mystical pull on Orthodox Christians.

¹ Norman John Greville Pounds, An Historical Geography of Europe, 1500-1840 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 124.
² Peter Heather, The Fall of the Roman Empire (Philadelphia: Trans-Atlantic Publications, 2006), 283.
It was perpetually Byzantium's fate to be surrounded by powerful and aggressive neighbors; tales of its riches always circulated in markets from London to Beijing. Countless armies attempted to conquer Constantinople, but its double walls remained impregnable. The city remained unattainable to any foe as long as the Byzantine navy defended the it, the Emperor's purse remained deep, and the rumble of the Imperial Army could be heard over the next hill. In the 11th century, a deadly new foe rode off the steppes of Central Asia – the Seljuk Turks. They had converted to Islam only in the 9th century. They invaded the advanced but declining civilizations in Persia and Arabia, which had used the Turks as soldier-slaves. They conquered Baghdad in 1055 and in 1071, the Seljuk Alp Arslan defeated the Byzantine Army and captured the Emperor in pitched battle at Manzikert. The gates of Anatolia were open and a migration of Turks, of soldiers and their families, reached the shores of the Bosphorus opposite Constantinople. Despite a resurgence in the 12th century, Byzantium was never able to remove the Turks from central Anatolia. Asia Minor became the breeding ground of a new Turkish, Muslim civilization.

Byzantium was also undone by Western Europe, which Byzantium had protected from the eastern advances of Islam in the 8th century. In 1204, the predominantly French knights of the Fourth Crusade, originally destined for Egypt, found themselves besieging Constantinople. They had involved themselves in an internal struggle for the throne of Byzantium, but misunderstanding between with the Greeks caused the Crusaders to turn on their employers. The Crusaders were also financed and directed by Venice, which along with Genoa, had eaten away at the Empire's trade and naval dominance of the Mediterranean. Unexpectedly, the Crusaders conquered the city and spread terrible ruin and dealt the Byzantine Empire a blow from which it never recovered. Although the Greeks reclaimed the city in 1261, the reconstructed realm offered little bulwark against the Turks, who had advanced on the last Imperial cities in Asia. One Turkish warrior family in particular, that of Osman, proved more fierce than any other. Ottoman armies conquered the petty states of Anatolia and the Balkans, and by 1453
had reduced the Byzantine Empire to merely the city of Constantinople itself.

On May 29th, 1453, the armies of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II took Constantinople after several months of siege. The Sultan Mehmet II appropriated the church for Islam and made it a mosque. As minarets rose around it, the structure served as a symbol of the cultural transformation that the city and its empire underwent. Turkish replaced Greek and Islam replaced Christianity. The mosque of Ayasofya remained an imperial emblem and it was adjacent to the new Ottoman Palace, which was only minutes from crumbling Byzantine seat of power. Mehmet II emphasized the continuity between the imperial authority of Byzantium, and by extension Rome, and his own. He had a keen appreciation of its role in cementing his authority and he was struck by the mosaics.

The contemporary court historian describes how the awe-struck Sultan wandered through the “paradise-like” Hagia Sophia with a group of learned men and dignitaries, contemplating the vastness of its “celestial dome,” its patterned marble floors resembling the wavy sea, and its artistic gold mosaics. Tursun extolls the expert portraitist (musavvir-i mahir) who with pieces of colored glass had depicted on the summit of the dome the “portrait of an imposing man, so that it appeared to turn its face toward whatever direction one looked from,” a reference to the illusionistic image of Christ Pantokrator, which the Muslim historian could not accept to be a representation of Christ as God. Tursun continues to describe how the “world emperor (padishah-i cihan)” climbed to the dome “as the spirit of God had mounted to the fourth story of the heavens,” after he had observed from below the wonderful and strange figural mosaics. Having fully comprehended the significance of the building, the “emperor of the universe” ordered it to be repaired and transformed into his royal mosque.³

The Church's interior was once covered with mosaics that are central to understanding Byzantium. One shows the subordination of imperial to religious authority as an emperor kneels at Christ's feet. Over the southwest entrance of the church, a mosaic shows the two greatest Emperors, Constantine and Justinian. The former, the founder of the city, offers a model of Constantinople to the

Virgin Mary and Justinian gives her the Church. The mosaics bear witness to religious discord in the empire; the shining mosaic of the Virgin and Child is a 9th century reconstruction of one that was destroyed by iconoclasts a century earlier. Byzantium recorded its rulers, saints, and key religious ideas in the mosaics of the Hagia Sophia.

One civilization often generates its cultural heritage by erasing that of previous cultures. Indeed, although Mehmet enjoyed the political aspects of Hagia Sophia's architecture, he did not relish the Church's religious role in Orthodoxy. He started to destroy or cover up the same mosaics he had marveled at. His successors followed suit and the mosaics did not see the light of day until the middle of the 19th century, when Sultan Abdul Mecid commissioned the Italian Fossati brothers to investigate and restore the imperial mosque. They briefly uncovered the mosaics and sketched them before covering them over again. Nonetheless, their rediscovery of the mosaics excited Europe, which had considered them lost. The Orthodox Saints were condemned to obscurity as long as the Ottoman Sultans ruled in Constantinople, but their time was coming rapidly to close. In 1923, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk founded the Turkish Republic and exiled the last Sultan. He launched a cultural revolution, one which had to redefine Hagia Sophia such that it reflected the Turkey's place at the crossroads of civilizations. Unexpectedly, Ataturk's maestro was a slight, impeccably dressed man from Cambridge, Massachusetts: Thomas Whittemore.

This paper uses Thomas Whittemore's life as a tool to understanding the influence of patronage, personal connections, and political fortune on cultural preservation. Whittemore capitalized on the desire of wealthy Americans to investigate and appropriate Byzantine culture. The elite classes of the Gilded Age probably saw in Byzantium a distant mirror of their own time: sophisticated, wealthy, and culturally advanced. In the same way that the Medicis paid artists to be surrounded by the cultural accoutrements of Rome, American nobility paid Whittemore to fill their drawing rooms, reading lists, or minds with Byzantine things. He tapped a diverse array of fortunes and talents. One of his greatest
patrons was the son of the plumbing tycoon that helped rebuilt Chicago after its Great Fire. Another friend was of the Brown Family, of the prestigious University in Rhode Island. Another patron and confidant of his was an exiled composer of Russia. He sent pamphlets on Byzantine art to the Rockefellers and may have helped introduce America to the work of Henri Matisse.

Whittemore was a man deeply connected to the upper class of his time, and yet in certain ways he remained quite apart from it. Even at a time of remarkable socializing between the upper classes of the world, Whittemore showed exceptional skill in uniting people and making unlikely friendships possible. He wove an interesting social network as he journeyed from land to land. My primary joy in studying Whittemore's life has been the sheer improbability and fascinating consequences of his friendships. He met a great friend and shall we say, 'partner in crime', Charles C. Crane, while both of them were adventuring in Manchuria in 1918. Whittemore was on his way to Japan to pay respects to the grave of his acquaintance Okakura Kakuzo, a dominant presence in Japanese Art and the adviser to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts on the subject. Crane was in Manchuria feeding his insatiable curiosity about everything Russian, using the Chicago plumbing fortune he had inherited to do so. Whittemore's career was one of the biggest beneficiaries of Crane's philanthropy. These two men worked together on a number of projects which involved giving provisions to Russian monasteries, aiding those fleeing the Bolsheviks in Russia, and educating the exiled youth of that country. They also brought something of Russia back to America, the greatest church bells in the country, and installed them in Harvard's Lowell House in 1930. The intertwining of Whittemore and Crane's lives is but one example of the intriguing personal connections that allowed Whittemore to do his life's work.

The study of Whittemore's story allows us to complete the 'lives of imperial monuments' as they see the coming and going of new governments. Justinian raised the Hagia Sophia to proclaim the greatness of Byzantium, and Mehmet II made it mosque to elevate his new empire and religion.

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4 See Necipoglu above.
Mustafa Kemal Ataturk made the structure express the union of East and West, Christianity and Islam. To do so, he made it a museum and charged Whittemore with revealing its previous Byzantine greatness by removing the plaster that obscured the mosaics, while still leaving Ottoman calligraphy and the fittings of a mosque. Thus, Whittemore aided Ataturk's new Turkish civilization in reestablishing its connection with whole breadth of its history. Whittemore aided the Hagia Sophia in its transformation, but also documented the deaths of many of its children – the churches of Russia. Whittemore wrote for *National Geographic* about the Bolshevik destruction of the cathedrals in the Kremlin. Fittingly, he was inspired to save the greatest imperial church in the world by watching Russia desecrate its own, the Uspensky Cathedral where the Tsars received their crowns. We should study Whittemore because he shows how a government may elevate or destroy its cultural heritage.
Chapter One: The First Adventures in Russia

Thomas Whittemore was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts to Joseph and Elizabeth St. Clair Whittemore. He came from an ancient family, with long-standing connections to many others in the area. Judging from pictures and from the fact that Whittemore never experienced financial difficulty, we may assume his parents were wealthy. He graduated Tufts University in 1894. He attended Harvard University from 1895-98, though it is not known what he studied. His attraction to religion and the high social circles of Boston are evident early on. He associated with a group of people that worshiped at the Cowley Monastery that included the prolific architect Ralph Adams Cram, patron of the Boston arts Catherine Huntington, and Frederick Law Olmsted's protégé, the landscape artist and architect Fletcher Steele. Described as a 'Quentin Crisp' character, a keen aesthete, and an ardent Anglo-Catholic, Whittemore must have been perfectly at home in the diverse neighborhood of Beacon Hill. Whittemore was friends with Isabella Stewart Gardner, a

5 Massachusetts State Senate, *An Act Designating Captain Samuel Whittemore the Official State Hero of the Commonwealth and Providing for an Annual Proclamation of a Day in his Honor* (Boston, 2005), http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/senate/st01/st01839.htm (accessed February 17, 2010). One ancestor, Samuel Whittemore (1694-1793), became the oldest known combatant in the American Revolution when he opened fire on British soldiers passing his farm in Arlington, Massachusetts in 1775. He killed one soldier with his musket at point-blank, then drew dueling pistols to kill another two. Despite being shot in the face and bayoneted several times, he survived another 18 years. His doctor was Cotton Tufts of the family that later gave its name to the university that Whittemore attended.


8 I disagree with the characterization of Whittemore as a 'Quentin Crisp' character. Whittemore struck most observers as
Boston socialite that threw extravagant parties at her Italianate house on the Fenway.

Although he became an associate professor of English at Tufts, he still found plenty of time to pursue his interests in travel and art. Ticket stubs indicate extensive traveling in England around the turn of the century, and he met Henri Matisse in 1908 in Berlin. In letters home to Isabella Stewart Gardner, he mentioned spending time with Gustav Klimt and the influential art historian Josef Strzygowski. Wanderlust getting the better of him, Whittemore left his career at Tufts University for archaeological work in Egypt by way of Italy. Perhaps it had been all of Strzygowski's talk about the ancient Armenian influence on European architecture, or the allure of the east in the Munich Islamic Art Exhibit Whittemore attended. In any case, Whittemore decided that a career lecturing on Rudyard Kipling and directing plays like *Old Fortunatus* no longer appealed to him.\(^9\)

Whittemore was never far from high society and spent the fall of 1911 motoring around in Italy with Louise E. du Pont Crowninshield and her husband Francis Boardman Crowninshield. This meeting was probably not without long-term importance for Whittemore. Mrs. Crowninshield is noted as one of America's leading preservationists, founding the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949 and giving her name to an award from that organization.\(^{10}\)

Whittemore worked on the archaeological site of Abydos in Egypt from 1911 to 1915, although sober and not least flamboyant like the British homosexual Mr. Crisp. \(^{Ibid.}\)

\(^{9}\) The chronology of Whittemore's time at Tufts is problematic. Robert Nelson lists him as teaching at Tufts immediately following his graduation in 1894. This would have made Whittemore a busy man indeed while pursuing graduate studies at Harvard at the end of the century. Whittemore apparently taught English until 1902 or 1903. He taught a summer course at Columbia University on Rudyard Kipling in 1908.


\(^{10}\) This information comes from a letter that Whittemore wrote to Isabella Stewart Gardner on Dec. 22, 1911, but the first names of the Crowninshields are left out. Its interesting to speculate whether Whittemore knew other members of the distinguished Crowninshield family. Frank Crowninshield (1872-1947) was the closest to Whittemore in age and profession, the editor of Vanity Fair from 1915-1935. Frederic Crowninshield (1845-1918) was a stained glass artist and teacher at the Museum of Fine Arts School of Drawing and Painting in Boston. He was in Italy in 1911, being recently appointed director of the American Academy in Rome.

Nelson, 164.
little is known of the details of his work there. More information may be found by consulting the archives of the Egypt Exploration Society, the English organization that ran the digs. Despite its poor documentation, this part of Whittemore's life was important because he got the first taste of the technical aspects of archaeology and preservation. This period probably featured extensive travel throughout Europe, and the degree to which Whittemore built his social network there will only be found by researching his correspondence. For now, however, we move on to the outbreak of the Great War. Whittemore, always a man of his times, threw himself into the action.

He was in London “two months after the start of hostilities” of World War I. He had suspended his work in Egypt and offered his services to France at her embassy. He disembarked at Calais, and bought tea and biscuits for the starving and freezing soldiers he found there. The British used Calais as their base during the fierce fighting in northern France known as the 'Race to the Sea' in which the Western front shot rapidly north to the North Sea as the Allied and German armies attempted to outflank the other. Assuming Whittemore arrived in Calais in early or mid October, he probably encountered many British soldiers on their way to and from the battles of Messines (12 October-2 November), Armentieres (13 October-2 November), the Yser (18 October-30 November), among others.

Whittemore enlisted locals to continue his relief work, according to Ermoloff, although what this entailed is not known. He visited other Atlantic Ports, offering similar services. He wired money from America and supplies from London, bringing them to the “improvised” hospitals in France, which

11 Teteriatnikov, 45.
12 Boris Ermoloff, unpublished biography of Thomas Whittemore, Thomas Whittemore Papers, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archive, Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, Washington D.C. (hereafter abbreviated as DO: ICFA). This information comes from the unfinished biography of Thomas Whittemore, written by his protege and librarian, Boris Ermoloff. To which start of hostilities Ermoloff refers to is unknown. World War 1 opened on 28 June, 1914 with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Austria declared war on Serbia on 28 July. The war on the Western Front began on 2 August, with the unopposed German occupation of Luxembourg. We may then place Whittemore's arrival in London as early as 28 August, but it was probably closer to 2 October, 1914.
were presumably in the northern port cities. French, British and Belgian military authorities gave him high priority in travel via military trains, trucks and cars to facilitate his work. His friends in America provided the funds for this enterprise, and he traveled between Boulogne [sur-Mer], Dunkerque, Calais, and London. His aid was much needed; in this period, the British Expeditionary Force was destroyed by heavy fighting nearby and there must have been a grievous medical situation up and down the Channel Coast.

It is this author's hope that more details about Whittemore's exploits in France can be found. Perhaps investigation into the archives of the French Red Cross will be fruitful. Could we search in the letters of his friends at this time? Perhaps Isabella Stewart Gardner was one of his backers, or Ralph Adams Cram. Robert and Mildred Woods Bliss, friends of Whittemore and founders of the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, lived in Paris during the War. Young Bliss worked in the American embassy and he and his wife enjoyed the company of high society in Paris. There, they formed the artistic and intellectual tastes which led them, decades later, to create a magnificent collection of Byzantine art and literature at their home in Washington D.C. They are prime examples of the cultured, traveled, and wealthy people that supported Whittemore. Its likely that Whittemore visited the Blisses

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\[13\] It seems that Mr. Ermoloff had access to diaries of Whittemore which are no longer extant. The biography, written in and around 1959 in Paris, offers us many clues about Whittemore's exploits during the Great War. Alas, it still leaves out many details. Furthermore, Ermoloff did not cite any of the facts in his book, presumably because this copy of the biography was clearly a work in progress. I expect that research with the French Red Cross may yield a more detailed account of how Whittemore occupied himself in wartime France.
in Paris and may have received inspiration for his next venture in Russia. Mildred Bliss worked with
novelist Edith Wharton and Elisina Royall Tyler to aid refugees. Presumably these were French
refugees displaced by the German advance.¹⁴

During this period, Whittemore made two trips to Berlin and probably met a young official in
the American Embassy there, Joseph C. Grew, who, as American ambassador to Turkey, later aided
Whittemore in securing his commission for his magnum opus in Hagia Sophia¹⁵. Whittemore
apparently visited camps and hospitals throughout Germany, and reconnected people within them to
their families in France and Germany. Letters of thanks from those countries attest to this¹⁶. Perhaps it
was in Berlin that he heard of the tremendous civilian suffering coming from the Eastern Front as the
Germans advanced into Russia in 1915. He sped off to St. Petersburg, although it is not known by what
route he traveled, nor when precisely when he arrived.

¹⁴ Nelson, p. 162. Unfortunately, we cannot learn any more details about this refugee work within Nelson's text. He does
cite R.W.B. Lewis' Edith Wharton: A Biography (1975) and Alan Price's The End of the Age of Innocence: Edith
Wharton and the First World War (1996)
¹⁵ Nelson, p. 164. Both men wrote letters to Isabella Stewart Gardner from Berlin, Whittemore on 16 February, 1915 and
Grew on 29 December, 1914. Grew wrote concerning his visit to the interned Matthew Stewart Prichard, a British friend
of Whittemore and Gardner.
¹⁶ Ermoloff, 2; Nelson, 164. Alas, these letters are only mentioned by Ermoloff and I've not seen them for myself. Of all
the numerous French and British citizens that the Germans imprisoned upon the start of the war, Matthew Stewart
Prichard deserves special attention for this study. Like Whittemore, he was familiar with the high society of Boston and
knew Isabella Stewart Gardner. The Germans imprisoned him for his British citizenship in 1914, although he had lived
in Germany for several years. Joseph C. Grew visited him in Berlin, although Whittemore did not. A series of letters
between these people attests to this. Matthew Stewart Prichard's life, so similar in sensibility to that of Whittemore
although far inferior in career, remained intertwined with Whittemore's for decades.
In St. Petersburg, he joined the Committee for the Relief of War Refugees, presided over by Grand Duchess Tatiana Nikolaevna. He became the 'official delegate of this committee and had a special passport procured from the American embassy. This document allowed him to travel freely in European Russia and Romania. He traveled throughout rural Russia aiding the poor, orphaned, and starving. It appears that his work was not limited only to faceless poor; Whittemore traced the feet of some of the members of the Tolstoy family at their home near Moscow. In order to facilitate his humanitarian efforts, he founded the Committee for the Relief of Refugees in Russia, an organization

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17 Ermoloff, 2; Whittemore to Mary Walcott, September 27, 1930, Committee for the Education of Russian Youth in Exile papers, Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian & East European Culture, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York (hereafter BAR-CERYE), box 1, folder 44. Ermoloff offers little information the details of Whittemore's aid work or how well, if at all, he knew the Grand Duchess. Whittemore's peerless ability to meet the rich and famous makes a relationship between him and the Grand Duchess not altogether unlikely. He sent a friend a shawl from Orenburg many years later, citing the Grand Duchess's fondness for them:

“\[\text{I am sending you a shawl from Orenburg. They are very rare now. The Grand Duchess used to say that Russia produced two great things, Ourenburgsky shawls and sables. One seldom sees them now. This I brought from Central Asia with me, and I want to think of you wearing it this winter.}\]”
recognized as a relief National Organization by the American Red Cross. Whittemore could now appeal to a large network of wealthy friends:

“Everything in Russia is on a gigantic scale...Roughly speaking, there are today (1916) 13,000,000 refugees in Russia or were – for hunger and exposure have already claimed one million. A constant stream trekking through the land and pouring in afresh from Rumania and from the endless stretches of her Western border. Three times the population of Norway and nearly twice that of Canada are today in desperate need.”18 - Thomas Whittemore

The Committee was the first incarnation of the organization that Thomas Whittemore used to aid the Russian people until 1930. He traveled the breadth of the decaying Russian Empire, through Kazan and Irkutsk. He traveled all the way to the Pacific and was at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo by December in order to receive aid from America for the Committee. His visit was not all work though, and he took time to visit the grave of Okakura Kazuno19. He departed shortly thereafter, traveling west through Irkutsk, Perm, Viatka, and Vologda to St. Petersburg in February 1917, on the eve of the Revolution. He wrote a letter to George Post Wheeler, the Charge d'Affaires in Tokyo:

I returned from Japan the other day with about fifty cases and bales of clothes and medicines. The next time I may bring two carloads of clothing and food for the children who still live? The storm that has been settling for so long has struck at last. The ancient trees lie everywhere across the road, what the Russian scene of tomorrow will be no one can tell. I will write next when I know more definitely about the new afflictions may make for my work [sic]. 20

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18 These words were either in a letter that Thomas Whittemore wrote to friends at home or in a publication for his new organization.

Ermoloff, 3.
20 Ermoloff, 4-5.
It is difficult to tell if Whittemore is referring to an actual storm in the harsh winter of 1916-17, or the disturbances preceding the Revolution. Workers milled around the streets in 35-five-degree-below-zero cold while revolutionary agitators mixed in their ranks. The winter was so cold it burst many of the engines of trains that Whittemore used to travel. On 7 March, 1917, workers at the Putilov munitions plant, the largest factory in the city, announced a strike and skirmished with the Tsar's forces. Three days later, the strike had spread to encompass virtually all the industrial enterprises in the city. The strike metastasized into a “popular rebellion” against the Tsar's government and its despised Minister of the Interior, Alexander Protopopov. The Tsar sent in soldiers, many of whom sympathized

22 Council of the Russian Empire to Tsar Nicholas II, letter, undated (probably 13 or 14 March, 1917), Thomas Whittemore Papers, DO: ICFA.
with the protestors, to aid the overwhelmed police. The soldiers defected, some in the Volinksy brigade even shot an officer who ordered them to fire into the crowd. The proudest regiments of the Russian army joined the Revolution on the morning of 12 March, 1917, and spurred the ever-growing mob in the streets of St. Petersburg, who shouted, “Down with the German woman! Down with Protopopov! Down with the war!”

Nicholas II was five hundred miles away in the forward army base of Moghilev. He had a poor understanding of the seriousness of the situation in St. Petersburg; the incompetent Protopopov told him only of “street disorders”. He attempted to return to St. Petersburg by train, but was diverted by disloyal soldiers. He was advised to abdicate by the remainder of his government when he reached Pskov on 14 March, and he did so the next day. The new Provisional government of Alexander Gurchov's Progressive Block placed the Tsar under house arrest in Tsarkoe Selo, the imperial residence south of the city. Among the revolutionaries, there was a feeling of elation as the two inheritors of power, the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government cooperated at first.

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23 Massie, 379.
24 Ibid., 390.
It is difficult to tell precisely where Whittemore was during these events. After his return to St. Petersburg, he visited Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, and Samara. He may have been far from St. Petersburg when the Revolution started. However, his archives contain a tantalizing look into Whittemore's interests from his time in Russia: an English translation of a letter that the Council of the Russian Empire sent to Tsar Nicholas II. The letter mentions the capture of the Peter and Paul Fortress on March 12 (using the Gregorian Calendar, curiously ahead of its institution by the Soviets), yet still addresses “Your Imperial Majesty”. It must have been written on 13 or 14 March, and could be one of the dire telegraphs from Chairman of the Duma Mikhail Rodzianko that the Tsar famously ignored just before his abdication.\(^25\) Relatively little of Whittemore's personal documents survive from his time in

\(^{25}\) *Ibid.*, 381. On the night of 9 March, 1917, as the disturbance worsened, Rodzianko informed the Tsar of the perilous state of the capital. The Tsar considered Rodzianko hysterical and told an aide, “That far Rodziankii has sent me some nonsense which I shall not even bother to answer.”
Russia, and it is striking that he kept a narrative of the drama he lived through, even if his own is missing.

Vladimir Lenin returned to Russia from exile in Switzerland on 3 April to a crowd of raucous supporters singing the “Marseillaise” and over the spring and summer of 1917. He delivered the April Theses which demanded all power for the Soviets and an end to the Provisional Government. Alexander Kerensky took power of the wavering Provisional government's Constituent Assembly, the democratic body that was entrusted to write a new constitution for Russia. He made a huge error in committing Russia to continued war with Germany, even though one Russian general warned him that the army “will tumble like a house of cards.” Moreover, he was unable to solve the dysfunction in industry and transportation that had led to the provisioning problems in the last winter. As industrial production declined, the cost of living increased and strikes began throughout the nation. These problems boiled to the surface in July with an abortive Bolshevik uprising. Workers across Russia took control of their factories. The government launched punitive expeditions but succeeded only in infuriating the peasants further and alienating the military, which declared its unwillingness to support the Provisional Government. In July, Kerensky appointed a new leader of the army, Lavr Kornilov. Kerensky instructed Kornilov to maintain an army in readiness to counter an expected Bolshevik uprising. However, Kerensky got cold feet and became convinced that Kornilov was instead bent on displacing him. When the confused general marched on St. Petersburg, Kerensky had to fall back on the Soviets. He released many from prison and re-armed the Red Guard. Kornilov's army disbanded and he was placed under arrest. The affair fatally weakened Kerensky's government; he had demonstrated his lack of control on the army and armed the very Bolsheviks that were plotting his demise. On 7 November, the Bolsheviks staged a largely bloodless coup that succeeded in removing

27 Ibid., 453.
28 Ibid., 468.
Kerensky and his ineffectual government. The Soviets began their restructuring of Russia: all Russian banks were nationalized, control of the factories was given to the soviets, private bank accounts were confiscated, the Church's properties (including bank accounts) were seized, wages were raised, the working day was shortened, and all foreign debts were repudiated. The Russian Civil war began immediately as military commanders and other factions that did not recognize the Soviet government attacked the new state. The Allies also sent small detachments into Russia, worried that the Bolsheviks would remove Russia from the War and prevent payment of Russia's debt to the Allies.

For Whittemore, it was a time of study and observation of life in St. Petersburg and travel to Moscow. Of particular interest to Whittemore, a religious man, was the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1918, he wrote a story for *National Geographic*, “The Rebirth of Religion in Russia: The Church Reorganized While Bolshevik Cannon Spread Destruction in the Nation's Holy of Holies”. In this article, Whittemore recounted his attendance at the All-Russian Sobor (Church-council) in the summer of 1917 that elevated Tikhon to the Patriarchal throne. The next spring, he witnessed the last Easter celebration in the Kremlin that Pavel Kortin spent forty years portraying in his series of works *Farewell to Rus*. Kortin originally wanted to call this *Requiem for Russia*, to express the loss of the noble families, traditions, and spirituality that the Bolsheviks destroyed. Whittemore wrote about this ceremony in *National Geographic*:

> “It is all a vision of the forms and colour of the Imperial Byzantine Court, in which the Church on earth pays her most splendid homage to Heaven.”

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“No doubt that the enthusiasm of Thomas Whittemore for Byzantium was born amidst these medieval visions in Russia,” writes Boris Ermoloff. Whittemore's ideas about preserving cultural heritage were also formed in Russia. It was Whittemore's hope that the Bolshevik revolution would allow the Orthodox Church to reassert its authority now that it was free of Tsarist control. However, his hopes were dashed by the savage Bolshevik assault on Russia's great religious buildings. It is here that Whittemore gained his first inspiration for preserving Byzantium, as he saw the Bolsheviks tearing down its modern incarnation in Russia. Whittemore understood that a nation's history is most clearly expressed in its buildings:

From the time of the beheading of St. John Baptists and of the little Church of our Savior in the Forest, bespeaking the days when the acropolis was still a wooded hill, a multitude of churches and palaces, witnesses of Russia's glory, have written here a national document in
stone. The history of Russia is the history of the monuments of the Kremlin.

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. 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 whom nothing is holy and who are incapable of understanding (whatever Russia's future is to be) the significance and importance of this monument of Russian history. It cannot be considered a sufficient reason that the artillery fire directed against the Kremlin had for its object to crush the handful of officers and cadets who were within.

Alas! This crazy fallacy is characteristic of the self-imposed government. What they did in the Kremlin they are doing today throughout Russia. One would like to believe that, if these men were once Russians, all consciousness of love for their country had been drained out of their hearts before their subservience to the enemies of all that is to a true Russian dear and holy!

Whittemore learned about the power of a revolution to destroy the cultural heritage of a country. He must have shared the sadness of many Russians in seeing the country's ancient monuments desecrated. It was a brutal lesson that a building's survival cannot be taken for granted, and depends on the whim of the government. This lesson was not lost on Whittemore, who went on to work closely with another revolutionary government, that of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, to save the great edifices of Turkey.

While writing to Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss many years later, he contrasted the Turkish government's preservation of churches in Istanbul to the wanton...
destruction of the Bolsheviks:

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 like Grezinski-Bojyamater and Svete Nichola, and in Leningrad Saint Isaac's and Kazanski Cathedral were appropriated for exhibitions of anti-religious propaganda, 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 warning of the Byzantine Institute to the Turkish Government 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 before in Turkey. 30

Whittemore always had friends in the clergy, and Russia was little exception. He writes that he “had the advantage of knowing the Patriarch and many members of the Sobor and acquiring, in intimate relationships, a knowledge of their hopes for Russia.” Whittemore befriended the Russian priest and polymath Pavel Florensky (1882-1937), who dedicated his book *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth* (1924) to Whittemore. Florensky, of Armenian, Georgian, and Russian ancestry, has been compared to Leonardo da Vinci by his enthusiasts because of his wide range of interests, which included theology, electrical engineering, mathematics, and philosophy. Upon graduating from Moscow State University in 1904 with degrees in mathematics and philosophy, he became enamored of radical Christianity of Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900), Dostoevsky’s basis for Alyosha and Ivan Karamazov. He studied and taught at the Ecclesiastical Academy in Sergiyev Posad, a city just north of Moscow, becoming a priest in 1911. He was a prominent member of the Russian Symbolist movement. After the Bolsheviks closed down the churches and monasteries of Sergiyev Posad, Leon Trotsky recommended that Florensky aid the government in bringing electricity to rural Russia. Despite this and other services to his nation, Florensky perished in the purge of 1937.

30 Teteriatnikov, p. 29, citing Thomas Whittemore to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss, letter, 26 June 1946, Dumbarton Oaks.
The nature of Whittemore's relationship with this interesting figure can be gleaned from *The Pillar and Ground of Truth*. This book explores themes which would have suited Whittemore: the ancient rite of adelphopoiesis (brother-making) in which male friends were bound in 'chaste bonds of love'; Christian love as a mixture of universal love (*agape*) and friendship (*philia*); and the 'Divine Sophia', a complex modern theological concept with ancient roots that establishes a female deity as a counterpoint or partner to Christ. Whittemore's experience with another Sophia would come a decade later. Florensky and Whittemore, both religiously inclined intellectuals and similar in temperament, seem to have forged a strong friendship, attested to by Florensky's dedication to Whittemore:

“In hopeless dejection we are accustomed to think there is the West of our West. Yet through The will of God, turned towards the East, our double-faced Mother-Country, Again sees the same neighbor – now More to the East. It is the East of our East –with Timed hope I am asking about the Soul of America? May it be so – and new Light shall Be revealed to the World.

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On the occasion of a most appreciated by me meeting, which gave me the opportunity to put this question to a son of America


Whittemore's relief work during this period did not cease. It was written about him that he “that he distributes gifts given to hospitals by the American nation.” He visited many Russian soldiers during this time and met a nurse, Madame Fedorchenko, who had been compiling the stories of Russian soldiers at the front from 1915. Whittemore collected and translated these accounts, publishing them in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1918. He also visited orphans, one of whom recited the following poem:

³¹ I found this paper within Ermoloff’s biography. Alas, I cannot interpret the date. It is likely that the two men met in 1917 or 1918.
“We have no better greetings
by which to honor you worthy
May God keep you many years -
You have cared for us poor.
In our prayers every day
We will ask of the Lord
That he would grant us piously
To thank Him for you.”

Although his life in Russia was stimulating, the country was sinking into the depths of brutal civil war. As the Soviet regime fought for its life against a host of enemies foreign and domestic, industrial and agricultural production plummeted, leading to starvation in the cities:

All along Nevsky Prospect, like in most of the big streets of the center, you see a moving exposition of public misery. Hundreds and thousands of little tenders of all kind of social position and of all ages, arrayed themselves sitting near the doors, holding before them baskets or simply trays with miserable eatables: a few tablets of chocolate, a dozen pieces of sugar, a few eggs, is to-day the beginning of trade. A little piece of sugar is sold for a rouble, one egg – for 1,20, a piece of chocolate 60 kopeks and a little bit of bread which you could swallow as one mouthful reports a rouble. Here is a whole people wretched, who silently submit to a long torture of Tantales and slowly dies of hunger, every day not eating quite enough.32

Whittemore's records contained a notice to the inhabitants of St. Petersburg about burglary.33 He was also aware of the grim executions that the Bolsheviks carried out, especially against his former patron, Grand Duchess Tatiana Nikolaevna and the other Romanovs. His records contained mention of the murder of Elizabeth Feodorovna, the sister of Empress Alexandra, who had been married to the Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich. After the assassination of her radically conservative husband by a revolutionary, Elizabeth became a nun and dedicated her life to alleviating the suffering of the poor in Moscow. In 1918, she was killed by the Cheka at Alapaevsk along with many of her relatives and Whittemore's diaries record her last words, again revealing his religious sensibilities:

32 Ermoloff, 17.
33 Ibid., 12.
I thought we were not worthy to bear a heavy cross, but God has given it to us. Let us thank Him and try to bear it with joy and gratitude.

He also captured the popular angst as Russians tried to find out what had happened to their beloved Elizabeth:

When the Grand Duchess was arrested and taken she left the city. The answer usually was that she was sent with a message to her sister – the Empress Alexandra in Ekaterinburg, or that she was removed from Moscow on account of the approach of the Germans, or again that the dowager Empress Maria left Crimea and that the Grand Duchess is now with her in Kiev in safety.

With these disturbances and others making his relief work difficult, Whittemore left Bolshevik Russia in October 1918. He passed through France on his way home, probably relieved to see a luxurious and well-run city for the first time in over a year. The Revolution left a bad aftertaste in his mouth:

There is no state vision in Russia. There is no morality between nations. Lenin set workmen against peasants by giving workmen arms and saying to them: ‘Go and take the bread for yourselves'

The year 1919 began with fund raising and lectures in Boston, Cleveland, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Chicago, and Detroit. His organization was now called the Committee for the Rescue and Education of Russian Children, and would assume its final name shortly thereafter as the Committee for the Education of Russian Youth in Exile. The name changes reflect the large amount of refugees that left Russia, many because they were unwelcome in the new Soviet state. Unable or wary of going into Bolshevik territory, Whittemore sailed to Ukraine in spring of 1919 by way of Istanbul, laden with supplies. Rear Admiral Mark Bristol, the American High Commissioner in Turkey from 1919 to 1927, aided Whittemore by providing him with a cruiser for his journey. Its likely that Whittemore met
Brusten through their mutual friend Charles R. Crane, who had visited the monks of Mt. Athos with
Admiral Bristol in 1917 aboard another American warship.

Whittemore disembarked at Odessa, which was controlled by the White anti-Soviet army. There
he met Boris Ermoloff, who offered one of the only accounts of Whittemore losing his temper.
Whittemore had tried to unload his goods and was stopped by uncooperative dock workers.
Whittemore threatened the workers with American intervention and the fury of the White General
Wrangel if the supplies should fail to be delivered. The threat was effective and it reveals an interesting
insight into how Whittemore used the power of his friends and associates to get things done, even if it
meant bluffing.

In the last months of 1920, the Red Army defeated Wrangel and more than 100,000 Russian
refugees that did not want to live under Soviet rule left the shores of the Ukraine bound for
Constantinople. One source lists 126 craft varying from cruisers to simple barges left the Crimea,
carrying 145, 693 people excluding the crew. Admiral Bristol conveyed the scope of the emigration:

The arrival in Constantinople, of 110 ships of all classes with 139, 200
refugees is confirmed. All are civilians except 110,000 troops including
6,000 wounded. 20,000 troops have been sent to Lemnos as 10,000 to
Gallipoli. Several thousands will be take care of at a refugee camp which
is being established at San Stefano. United States destroyer CHANDLER
and American steamer EASTERN VICTOR transported about 2,000
civilians to Cattaro. In spite of these measures taken to dispose of the
refugees, the ships in the harbor are terribly congested, and sanitary
conditions and feeding arrangements are very bad. Constantinople is
becoming congested with many refugees who are escaping from ships.
Although American citizens, and the officers and men of naval vessels
are contributing liberally, and every assistance is being rendered to the
refugees, - with the small amount of naval rations available such
assistance is very meager, and other funds are needed to alleviate the
prevailing distress. Bristol met with representatives of different humanitarian, military, and educational institutions
in Constantinople, including Thomas Whittemore, who represented the 'American Russian Relief

35 G. Howland Shaw (forwarding from Bristol) to Seth Gano, telegram, December 3 1920, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 4.
Committee'. Representatives of Constantinople and Robert College, as well as the Red Cross and the American military were present. They decided that Bristol, as the coordinator of all American interests in Constantinople, should request all possible funds from President Woodrow Wilson for the alleviation of the crisis. Bristol also requested that the Department of State grant visas to all the desirable Russian emigrants, stating: “It was the consensus of the opinion of all Americans at a meeting held in the embassy yesterday afternoon that these Russians would make most desirable emigrants for America, and I was urged to do all that I could to arrange for the entry of the desirables [sic] ones into our country.”

The interaction between Bristol and Whittemore is an example of the power of personal connection in Whittemore's life. If it were not for Bristol, it is doubtful that Whittemore would have been able to aid the Russian refugees in Constantinople that went on to form the core of his educational programs in the 1920s. In addition to providing transport, Bristol later forwarded supplies to Whittemore's schools for Russians in Bulgaria. Whittemore asked Bristol for America visas for certain promising Russians that were stuck in Constantinople. We may also inquire if Bristol played any role in introducing Whittemore to Ataturk in 1930. In working with Bristol, Whittemore was associating himself with one of the most influential Americans in Constantinople at the time. Bristol was the first Western diplomat to open relations with Ataturk, reaching an agreement with him to restore Turkish-American trade. Bristol commanded U.S. Destroyers to aid in the Greek evacuation of Smyrna as the Turks reconquered the city in 1922.

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36 “The Beverly Chapter of the American Red Cross provided two boxes of clothing for the children in the Committee's school in Petschera, Bulgaria. Fowarded to Bristol via Standard Oil Company, via Steamship “Nobles”, destined for D.N. Ermoloff, representative of the committee in Sofia. To be delivered to the President of the Bulgarian Red Cross at Varna.”

Seth Gano to Mark Bristol, telegram, May 21, 1924, BAR-CERYE, box 1, folder 4.

37 Gano asked if Bristol could get an American visa for Wencheslaw W. Krylow, c/o Mr. Takimansky, 16 rue Bekiar, Pera.

Seth Gano to Mark Bristol, letter, June 18, 1925, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 4.

38 Biographical Summary, “Mark Lambert Bristol”, within BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 4
were the U.S. Representatives at the Lausanne Conference that ended the Greco-Turkish War and drew
the modern boundaries of Turkey. Bristol also knew another patron and important figure in
Whittemore's life – Robert Woods Bliss. As Third Assistant Secretary of State in 1922, Bliss handled
some of the correspondence between Whittemore and Bristol.39

By the end of 1920, Thomas Whittemore had transformed himself from an academic into a
globetrotting relief worker. His adventures laid the groundwork for the rest of his life. He saw the
Bolsheviks launch shells through Russia's heritage. He became enamored of the culture of Russia,
meeting with her clergy and listening to tales of its soldiers. He demonstrated skill in raising money
and awareness of the plight of that country. With uncanny insight, he attached himself to the influential
people on the scene, whether that was the Grand Duchess Tatiana in Russia or Admiral Bristol in
Constantinople. As he helped feed and shelter the thousands of Russians in Constantinople, his eye
must have landed on the dome of the Hagia Sophia. Here, he would make his contribution to history
and the world's culture by restoring the legacy of Byzantium. However, he first had to demonstrate the
ability to united moneyed interests in America with a project on the other side of the world.

39 Robert Woods Bliss to Thomas Whittemore, telegram, October 20, 1922, BAR-CERYE, box 1, folder 44. The telegraph
quotes a telegraph from Helen Bristol, the Admiral's wife, “All Russians must be evacuated before Constantinople is
reoccupied by the Turks or forcibly repatriated, American Red Cross money gone time limit making necessity for
cooperation and special relief. Immediate funds absolutely essential.” This telegraph was written on the eve of Ataturk's
reclamation of the Straits and Istanbul as per the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. The Allies deprived the Ottoman Empire
of control of this area upon the end of WWI. Note that Robert Woods Bliss handled the correspondence.
Chapter Two: Prelude to Preserving Byzantium - Preserving Russian Minds and Bells

Whittemore's aid organization, the Committee for the Education of Russian Youth in Exile, illustrated his talents for organizing American wealth and making important social connections. It is important to understand this organization because it was the predecessor of the Byzantine Institute. Many of the people on the Committee would later be in the Institute, and Whittemore used similar methods to finance both operations.

The goal of the organization was to educate the most promising young Russians in the arts and sciences such that they could help rebuild their country. Whittemore wanted to preserve the Russian
culture that he encountered before the Revolution. By the mid 1920s he had established scores of educational programs across Europe. For the most part, the Committee provided funding for Russian students to attend pre-existing schools in Europe.

The Committee began with Whittemore's early efforts to feed refugees within Imperial Russia and emigres from the Soviets during the Russian Civil War. Unfortunately, these initial chapters are poorly understood. Whittemore did have a school for Russians in Constantinople from 1920 to 1922 that Charles R. Crane and others funded, but we know hardly anything of it. From the reports that Bristol sent to the Committee, it seems as if late 1920 and 1921 passed poorly for many Russian emigrants to Constantinople.

In order for Whittemore to preserve his students' culture, he sent many of them to Slavic countries. Constantinople was never suitable as a permanent home for a Russian community in exile. Its culture, religion, and language were too dissimilar. The city was too expensive; many emigrants must have left Russia impoverished. By March 1922, Whittemore was moving students from Constantinople into Europe. 700 went to the universities of Prague, Brno, and Trebova in Czechoslovakia. Bulgaria accepted many students as well; 230 boys renovated “half-abandoned” monasteries about Tirnova. There, they maintained a self-sufficient agricultural community.40

Despite his wishes to preserve a Russian cultural setting for his students, he supported the studies of many of pupils in the technical institutes of Western Europe. They studied engineering, chemistry, and other scientific fields. In 1926, the Committee supported 306 students across in Toulouse, Montpellier, Marseilles, Grenoble, Lyons, Saint-Étienne, Besançon, Gembloux, Nancy, Strasbourg, Paris, Lille, Ghent, Brussels, Louvain, Waremme, Liège, Poitiers, Angers, Nantes, Rennes, Caen, Le Havre and Rouen.41

The Committee was involved with the Institut de Theologie Orthdoxe, where Sergei Bulgakov

40 Thomas Whittemore to Frederick C. Walcott, letter, March 14, 1922, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 44
41 Thomas Whittemore to Frederick and Mary Walcott, letter, June 29, 1926, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 44
gave exams in Russian Orthodoxy to his students, some of which were supported by the Committee.\textsuperscript{42} This connection between the Committee and the Institut indicates that students under Whittemore's tutelage were still able to maintain the religious component of Russian culture. It also suggests another of the unlikely friendships of Thomas Whittemore. Sergei Bulgakov knew Whittemore's acquaintance, the theologian Pavel Florensky. Mikhail Nesterov painted the two men walking through the country in 1917, when Whittemore met Florensky. Perhaps they were strolling outside walls of Moscow, taking a break from the All-Russian Church Council that Thomas Whittemore covered for National Geographic. Bulgakov participated in the Council as member of the clergy. Bulgakov denounced the October Revolution as the Bolsheviks turned their guns on Russia's churches. Taking refuge from the Red Army in Crimea, Bulgakov may have met Whittemore in Southern Russia. For their opposition to the philosophy of the Revolutionary regime, Bulgakov and more than one-hundred other Russian thinkers were exiled in 1922. Did Whittemore help Bulgakov get established when he disembarked at Stettin, Germany? We do not know, but Bulgakov contributed greatly to the Russian exile community in Europe by helping to found the Théologie Orthodoxe Saint-Serge. These facts all suggest that Whittemore was well-connected with the exiled intelligentsia of Russia. By reconnecting it with the young minds of exiled Russia, Whittemore could truly keep the torch of pre-Revolutionary Russian culture alight.\textsuperscript{43}

The Committee's membership reveals that Whittemore already had a vast network of friends in the highest social circles of America. Its president was Elizabeth Cram, the wife of the prominent architect Ralph Adams Cram, who is known, among other things, for his design of Princeton University's Chapel and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Another patron was Charles W. Eliot.

\textsuperscript{42} The archival material of the Committee, in Columbia University, includes three exam forms of the Institut with the names of Nicholas Ignatieff, Alexandre Terechkevitch, and Wsevolode Palachkovsky. Sergei Bulgakov signed all the forms, presumably indicating himself as examiner, in July, 1927.

\textsuperscript{43} Wikipedia, “Sergei Bulgakov” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergei_Bulgakov, accessed 22 March, 2010. Alas, the information in this paragraph comes from the articles about Bulgakov and related topics. More scholarly research is necessary to elucidate the nature of Bulgakov's relationship with Whittemore.
who as President of Harvard from 1869 to 1909, made that university into the leading institution it is
today. John Nicholas Brown was the inheritor of the prominent Brown family (i.e. Brown University)
fortune and led an interesting life that paralleled Whittemore's in its sensibilities. Traveling in Egypt in
his youth, he traveled to Europe after the second World War and helped repatriate art works stolen by
the Nazis. President Truman made him Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1946, a position he served in
until 1949. He was later president of the Byzantine Institute and a lifelong friend of Whittemore,
carrying his coffin at his funeral in 1950.

One of the most fascinating members of the Committee was Charles R. Crane, the son of the
Chicago industrialist Richard Teller Crane. Richard Crane made his fortune supplying the plumbing for
the Windy City's reconstruction after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Charles divested himself of
ownership in Crane Company in 1914, selling his shares to his younger brother Richard T. Crane Jr..
He first became interested in Slavic affairs when he visited Constantinople in 1878. Like Whittemore,
Crane visited Istanbul many times. Crane supported Robert College and the Constantinople College of
Women, serving on their boards of trustees. He co-directed the King-Crane commission that studied the
fate of the Middle East for President Woodrow Wilson after the Great War. He was instrumental in
gaining the first American oil concessions in Saudi Arabia. 44

Whittemore met Crane in Harbin, Manchuria, 1918 on one of the Crane's innumerable visits to
Russia and the Far East. Crane wrote “Whittemore never had a great deal of money and ... lived the
most austere way.” 45 The two men began a life-long relationship that included some interesting exploits
like provisioning Russian monasteries on Mt. Athos in the 1920s and saving the Danilov Monastery's
great bell from Stalin's wrath in 1930. They brought the bell to hang in Lowell House at Harvard
University, where it remained until recently. Richard T. Crane Jr. and other members of the Crane
family supported Whittemore and through him satisfied their interest in all things Russian and

44 Nelson, 166.
Byzantine. Richard T. Crane Jr. was even buried under a copy of the mosaic of St. John Chrysostom that Whittemore had brought from Istanbul.46

In running the Committee, Whittemore became adept at using the wealth of his friends for philanthropic work. He no doubt mastered the diplomatic style, methodical organization, and careful preparation necessary to harness the wealth of prominent members of society. There were many problems with the Committee in the early 1920s that illustrate that Whittemore was not born with the skill to effortlessly get money from the rich. Whittemore failed to clearly explain the nature of his relief efforts, often sending terse or confusing messages. He also did not work closely enough with the US fund raising efforts while he was abroad. Whittemore set up fund raising committees in Boston and New York. Frederick C. Walcott, a Connecticut politician and later US Senator, was the chair of the New York committee. He advised Whittemore and the Committee's treasurer Seth Gano about how to improve the organization. Whittemore had written an field update to his two committees in 1921, but Walcott was thoroughly unimpressed:

“Your letter is so general and so barren of specific information, that it is utterly useless at this distance. I have recently learned that you asked Miss Hart to write something for you in the New York Times and Miss Dole took this attempt of hers over to Dr. Finley, but he will of course not publish that. I have had to explain the situation as best I could. It is utterly colorless. The usual attempt of someone without knowledge of any of the vital facts to put on paper a story that arouses sympathy. It cannot be done. Unless you can give us a first-hand story with some high lights in it, there is not use of attempting it at this end, because the quality of reports on Russia today is high. They are both of color and human interest and of course many of them from the famined district are the most pitiful stories we have had from Europe since the beginning of the war.

Now comes a letter from you showing children have been evacuated from Constantinople. You say nothing more about it of course that means to us that you have given up the school and do not need the $2500 a month for the running of the Constantinople School. Of course it is fair to assume that you really do need this money but there is no use in attempting to ask for it unless we know just how it is going to be used,

46 Nelson, 184.
the numbers to be taken care of and the cost per capita where the school is located, or to be located.

You must realize that people, particularly in New York and Boston, have been solicited to death for seven years and they will not pay attention to a mail appeal today unless it comes with authority from some well-known person and is very definite and specific with a strong appeal.

I am rather tired of reiterating these points. I am not attempting to speak for the Boston committee. We have none of us lost one atom of faith in you and the quality of your work but frankly when you are out of this country, you do not help us at all to get the money for your work and the long and short of it that we are not making any headway in this direction. You will be out of funds very shortly, if you are not already out of them and the only remedy I can think of is for you to plan to come over here by February or March.

….You sent a lot of photographs with various facts concerning certain Russians but you made no comments about them whether they want an education, whether they are men you have chosen. There is not a single line in your envelope filled with papers that gives us any specific information about any individual or individuals, - where they are going, where they want to go, or how many and in what universities you have students at the present time. Mr. Gano has no record of the precise character of any of the pledges, whether it was to be in cash or whether specifically given for the education of an individual or individuals. All we have is a brief list which you took over with you and returned with this last budget, which I have before me now, which has pledges for the care of fourteen people at $375 each. I am sending you a copy of this list to find out whether this is all you know about these pledges and whether there are any more. What is Mr. Crane's gift of $7500 for? Is that specifically for a university for twenty boys? I understood that it was but you do not mention it in your list. Is the list otherwise complete? You have some correspondence about a school at Tiflis and the only comment on this is that you have contributed.

The members of my New York Committee, particularly Mrs. Draper and Mrs. Belmont and Jerome Green, ask me what is happening. I am unwilling to confess how little is happening....

….What is the significance of “Lusid and unforgetting childhood” and “Baba-Yaga-Hostianaya-Noga”? We cannot interpret these things. I have no doubt it all means something to you and that you could make a beautiful story of it fit for the Atlantic Monthly.”

Although Whittemore at first bristled at this letter, it is clear that he streamlined his organization shortly after. He placed all the financial transactions in the hands of Seth Gano, who was entrusted with

47 Frederick C. Walcott to Thomas Whittemore, January 9, 1922, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 44.
corresponding with all the donors and maintaining financial records. When Walcott wrote to Gano the
next year, Gano's response indicates that he was processing all the financial information.

Moreover, Whittemore had to contend with declining public attention to the plight of Russian
emigrees. Gano disclosed in 1922 that the revenue of the Committee had declined steadily from a peak
in 1919, during the height of the Russian Civil War.\footnote{Seth Gano to Frederick C. Walcott, March 24, 1922, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 44.} Although Walcott demanded a grisly story from Russia in order to attract aid, Whittemore declined to offer one. Walcott's logic was flawed because it misunderstood the nature of Whittemore's work, which by 1922 was engaged in advancing hundreds of Russian emigre children through schools across Europe. A report of horrible deprivation would only raise doubts about how successful the Committee had been in the last years. Whittemore replied to Walcott:

You write that new calamities in Russia appeal to you; you tell me that if I want this money it will be necessary for me to use higher colors in my descriptions of they will fade away beside the lurid painting of the Volga Relief. You ask for heartrending scenes of starving children and pictures of cannibal feasts in Constantinople, like those reported to you from Samara. Would these pictures, if I could honestly draw them, bespeak well, I ask you, the work for Russia with which you have entrusted us during the last two years?\footnote{Thomas Whittemore to Frederick C. Walcott, March 14, 1922, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 44.}

Whittemore relied instead on the good endorsements to sell his Committee. Like any good fund-
raising endeavor, the Committee had good testimonials. It seems these statements were included in
periodic bulletins that went out to the Committee's subscribers. These endorsements inform us about
the importance of American money and Whittemore's cooperation with officials throughout Europe and
the Middle East. They also allow us to know how contemporaries viewed the Committee and what they
thought its goals were. Gano requested that Admiral Bristol write an endorsement for the Committee.
The admiral was glad to oblige:

Mr. Whittemore had in mind the saving to the world and to Russia those minds which had developed art, literature and the sciences in
Russia. In carrying out this idea he desired to select from the refugees those young men who could continue their education or be educated in the arts and sciences, and where possible, under the old professors from Russia, so that some day, if it were possible, these young men thus educated could go back to assist Russia in her reconstruction. In this education it was desired that the young men should retain the best of Russian psychology and of Russian sentiment and thus have at heart the true interests of Russia.

From the very beginning I have been sympathetic with this work of Mr. Whittemore and have followed it as closely as possible. I am very much in favor of education to assist backward peoples, also to assist any nation in the evolution that is necessary for modern progressive development.

The future of Russia must be an evolution, therefore these young men that Mr. Whittemore is preparing will undoubtedly be a great asset to the future development of Russia. I have felt that this initiative on the part of Mr. Whittemore in attempting to educate the Russian youth in exile showed forethought and a broad-minded imagination. I endorse his work as constructive and highly philanthropic. I think the Committee for the Education of Russian Youth in Exile can be congratulated upon supporting this valuable work of Mr. Whittemore's.

I have often personally congratulated Mr. Whittemore upon his work. I am glad to give to the Committee my testimony of the splendid work that Mr. Whittemore is doing.50

We also have the testimony of Peter von Wrangel, the general of the White Army that led the evacuation from Ukraine. Wrangel settled the majority of his exiled soldiers in the Balkans or France, where he turned swords into plowshares. He founded the Armed Forces Union which presided over the remnants of the White Army in Europe. His soldiers and their children may have been beneficiaries of Whittemore's schools. As Whittemore's life becomes clearer, it will be interesting indeed to learn the nature of the interaction between Whittemore and the general. Wrangel was the center of the best-organized group of Russian exiles.51

I would like to express to the Committee my feelings of appreciation and profound gratitude for its generous and disinterested work in caring for the Russian Youth in Exile.

This youth, scattered at present to the four winds of heaven, constitutes the greatest asset in our hopes for the future regeneration of

50 Mark L. Bristol to Seth Gano, November 13, 1923, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 44.
51 Wrangel, 234. Wrangel established three cadet schools in Yugoslavia and sent some students to universities in France, Czechoslovakia and Belgium. The Committee had a strong presence in all three countries.
Russia, for, having acquired useful learning while in exile, the young folk, upon their return to Russia, will form the nucleus of educated workers, destined to labor in the task of rebuilding our devastated country.

I believe I find myself the spokesman of all patriotic Russians, when I express the firm conviction that the generosity of the Great American People, manifested through the medium of the Committee, will ever remain graven, not only in the memories of those, whose privilege it was to benefit directly, but in the hearts of all true Russians, who will never forget what the U.S.A did for them in the hour of need.\(^{52}\)

We also have the testimony of the President of Harvard, Charles W. Eliot. He was a faithful donor to Whittemore's enterprise and edited letters to the subscribers.\(^{53}\)

Mr. Thomas Whittemore's work for the education of Russian Youth in Exile relates solely to the restoration of Russia through the later services to Russia of Russian children and youth educated under his direction by the American Committee which he has organized.

For the time being, the Committee's work necessarily includes the providing of food and clothing for its beneficiaries; but the ultimate aim of the Committee is to revive the intellectual life an spiritual hopes of the Russian people by putting into service at home self-respecting, self-supporting, patriotic young leaders of a new Russia.

Mr. Whittemore has secured invaluable cooperation from public officials and educational institutions in France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Constantinople, Beyrut, Germany, and Bulgaria; but the main stay of the whole enterprise is money raised in America. The cost per student is, however, rising in several of the cooperating countries. More money is therefore needed to maintain the work already undertaken, and to give it desirable enlargements; but this money is for annual expenditures during the next seven or eight years. When the present beneficiaries of the work have served in Russia for a few years, they will make the continuation of Mr. Whittemore's present function unnecessary. No permanent endowment is required.

I have not heard of any restorative work now going on for Europe which is as well-conceived and as successfully executed as Mr. Whittemore's.\(^{54}\)

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\(^{52}\) Peter von Wrangel to the Committee, letter, 24 November, 1923. Did Whittemore ever meet Wrangel? The two men were in the same place in southern Russia in 1919. Alas, the specifics of Whittemore's time in Russia are so vague that no conclusion can be drawn.

\(^{53}\) Charles W. Eliot to Thomas Whittemore, letter, 14 September, 1923, BAR-CERYE Box 1, folder 12. Eliot suggested ways that Whittemore might better convey his progress to contributors.

\(^{54}\) Charles W. Eliot to the Committee, letter, January 5, 1924, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 12.
Charles C. Crane in 1920, was the first of Whittemore's major patrons to endorse the Committee:

During the last several years I have seen Mr. Whittemore at work in out of the way places and under most difficult circumstances. I have come to have the most unqualified admiration for the courage, resourcefulness and devotion with which he follows up his suffering people. I know of no service of the kind, in which so high a percentage of effort and expenditure reaches the object aimed at.55

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55 Crane to the Committee, letter, February 24, 1920, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 7.
Whittemore also generated publicity with benefit concerts directed by Russian musicians. Ossip Gabrilowitsch was a Russian-born pianist and the founding conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. He held a benefit concert for Whittemore's Committee and several other Russian organizations in Philadelphia on 14 April, 1920. \(^{56}\) Gabrilowitsch provided a Detroit bridgehead to Whittemore, who requested to speak to “men and women brought together informally” at a club or private house on the subject of “A Changing Russia”. \(^{57}\) Whittemore befriended Sergei Koussevitzky,

\(^{56}\) Ossip Gabrilowitsch to Seth Gano, letter, April 28, 1920, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 14.
\(^{57}\) Thomas Whittemore to Ossip Gabrilowitsch, letter, November 9, 1925, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 14. “The opportunity that a visit to Detroit would give me to see you and hear the orchestra is not the least reason for my wishing to come, - and I have another wish, and that is to speak to a few representative men and women brought together informally either at a club or in a private house, on the subject of ’A Changing Russia’.”
the Russian-born double bassist and director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. On October 24th, 1927, Koussevitzky gave a concert in Boston's Symphony Hall for the benefit of Russian students, contributing $500 of the proceeds to the Committee. At Whittemore's request, Koussevitzky publicly endorsed the Kedroff Quartet which performed a benefit concert on April 24th, 1928. Charles R. Crane funded this concert.58

Whittemore also counted among his supporters the greatest of Russian musician-emigres, Sergei Rachmaninoff. Ironically, he does not seem to have produced any music for Whittemore's Committee, but offered faithful financial support throughout the 1920s. He wrote to Gano that he deeply appreciated Whittemore's assistance to his motherland. Indeed, Rachmaninoff was in a similar position to many of the exiled students. In the Revolution, he lost his estate, livelihood, and the rich network of friends that he, like Whittemore, depended on. He left St. Petersburg in December 1917 on an open sled to Finland with his wife and children. Rachmaninoff

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purchased a house at Locust Point, NJ, in 1921 and transformed it into a Russian dacha complete with Russian servants, customs, and guests.

Rachmaninoff 'adopted' a student in the Committee in 1926, a certain Paul Milovanoff studying chemistry at the University of Sofia. This adoption meant that Rachmaninoff supported Milovanoff's studies with $150 per year. Whittemore ensured that Milovanoff sent his picture, a biography, and periodic updates to Rachmaninoff. This kind of support proved effective for Whittemore, since he was able to enlist a patron's emotions for the continued support of a certain pupil. Rachmaninoff supported students in this fashion at least until 1932, even after the Committee had ceased most of its activities. Frederick C. Walcott and his wife also adopted a child, and there were probably many other young Russians cared for in this way.59

How does one go about contacting the wealthy in America? Although Whittemore was a sociable man, it was not as if he knew the entire cream of the crop. The Boston committee decided to use the names in the *Social Register* of New York and Boston. The New York edition had 16,000 names and the Committee notified Walcott that they sent invitations to the first 2000 names. They did this according to alphabetical order, regardless of business interests or philanthropic inclinations. Since the first 2000 names were chosen randomly, they could serve as an indicator of how lucrative the *Social Register* would be. It cost $296.00 to send the first invitations. If the Committee brought in $1500 from the first 2000 names it could expect $12,000 from the entire register.

The effort was a stirring success and it is impressive to read the list of correspondents. In addition to the persons mentioned above, Whittemore received aid from Thomas Edison, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and Frederick B. Pratt, the son of the oil tycoon Charles Pratt. From the letterhead of the Committee we can see that supporters included Allen Welsh Dulles, later the director of the CIA (1953-

59 For Rachmaninoff's support, see the series of letters between Gano and the composer, stretching from June 17, 1921 until October 10, 1932, BAR-CERYE box 1, folders 29 and 30. For Walcott see Thomas Whittemore to Frederick C. and Mary Walcott, letter, 19 June, 1926, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 44.
61) and Mrs. August Belmont (of the Belmont Stakes).

The Committee had also provided Whittemore with talented assistants. One of the last pupils, Alexander Piankoff, received a degree in Egyptian art and archaeology from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes in Paris in 1930. He worked with Whittemore in excavations in Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Egypt and with the Byzantine Institute. Vladimir Rayevsky and Boris Ermoloff both received aid for their education and aided the Committee and the Byzantine Institute. Boris Ermoloff, along with his brother Dmitri, coordinated the Committee's operations in Bulgaria. Rayevsky and Boris Ermoloff were both librarians at the Institute's library in Paris.

The case of the Danilov Bells demonstrates Whittemore's role in cultural preservation by uniting the ambitions of wealthy patrons with his own. Giant bells came into fashion with the wealthy in 1928 when the Gillet and Johnston company cast the largest tuned bell in the world for John D. Rockefeller Jr. at 18 tonnes. He installed in the carillon of the Riverside Church in New York in 1932 in memory of his mother. On the other side of the world, Josef Stalin was engaged in melting down bells, including those of the historic Danilov Monastery in Moscow. Whittemore had been powerless to stop the Communists from ravaging churches a decade before, but now he had rich and powerful backers. Whittemore saw his chance to save a critical part of Orthodox culture by enlisting the aid of Charles R. Crane, his long-time associate and an enthusiast of Russia. It is likely that Whittemore first saw the Danilov bells as a consequence of his extensive friendship with Russian clergy during the Revolution. In the same year that Rockefeller cast his bell, Whittemore sent a telegram to Crane, “Go Russia July first to get bells” and asked in a subsequent telegram for $1,000 for them.

However, the final deal was not concluded until 1930, and much of the events of intervening years have been lost to us. In a telegram to Seth Gano from Berlin on June 8th, Whittemore asked his friend to wire $10,000 from “University”, using a code-name for Crane as he always did in cables

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60 Teteriatnikov, 47. “Whittemore's involvement with the Education of Russian Youth in Exile had a profound impact on his future work for the Byzantine Institute.”
originating in Russia, lest the Soviets discover Crane's involvement. Crane hid his part in the transaction until discovered by *Time* magazine in 1931, which put his picture on its cover. Whittemore contacted the Russian Antiquariat, the government body responsible for management of Russia's artifacts. He signed an agreement which exists in Russian and English, indicating the route the bells took from Moscow to St. Petersburg. Saradjev, whom Whittemore hired to play the bells in America, accompanied the bells on their journey. Whittemore used an account that was frequently replenished by Crane, indicating how often the two men worked together. Addressing Crane as 'dearest friend' in a June 17\textsuperscript{th} telegram, he informed his patron that he inspected the bells with an expert and found them in perfect condition. Whittemore closed the letter with “love”.

The destination of the bells was Lowell House at Whittemore's beloved Harvard. Whittemore had been in contact with President Lowell for at least a year before the purchase of the bells. Lowell placed great trust in Whittemore by ordering the architect of the dormitory to cease construction on the clock tower and change it into a bell tower capable of storing an entire carillon of Russian bells in November 1929, a full eight months before the bells' delivery was assured. Whittemore received architectural plans of the tower on January 30, 1930, which he planned to take to Russia to determine how the bells should be hung in the tower. Whittemore visited Harvard on April 17 with President Lowell, surveying the steel superstructure of the bell tower before his departure to Russia.

Crane had agreed to pay all the import duties, but Harvard still insisted on finding the lowest price possible and their negotiations with the US Treasury Department remind us of important details of trading in cultural artifacts at the time. The government had an elaborate set of criteria by which they assessed the value of imported items like the Bells. The import duty depended on whether the Bells were part of a carillon, or bell set, which consisted of no less than 23 bells. There were additional fees associated with the musical ability of the bells. The only way that the instruments could be brought into the US without an import duty was if they older than 100 years. Harvard failed to prove their claim as
such; most of the bells were only from the late 19th century.

The bells were delivered to New York harbor and arrived in multiple trips by train. Crane telegraphed from Cairo indicating that the first official ringing of the bells should be on Easter Sunday, April 5, 1931. The bells' benefactor could not attend the ceremony, and well he did not since President Lowell had placed mufflers on the bells. Seth Gano wrote to Whittemore, by that time in Istanbul: “As a protection against too much noise President Lowell had ordered the tongues of the large bells muffled in leather so they sounded like an alarm clock which had been wrapped in a handkerchief.” These were duly removed and when Crane heard the bells for the first time on July 18th, 1931, he remarked, “The bells are magnificent, installation is beautifully and perfectly done...it is possible that this little installation may be the last and almost sole morsel left in world of the beautiful Russian culture.”

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Whittemore saved this morsel even while traveling with Evelyn Waugh throughout Ethiopia to see the coronation of the Haile Selassie. This friendship and others with Graham Greene and Greek poet George Seferis are representative of the company that Whittemore was keeping by this point in his career. Greene described him as “a great authority on Byzantine art and architecture and a vegetarian.” Whittemore probably met Seferis in Alexandria in the 1920s, which, like Istanbul, had a vibrant European intellectual community. Whittemore guided Seferis around the Hagia Sophia and the smaller Chora Church, where the Institute was also carrying out restoration. Seferis described Whittemore as the

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62 Nelson, 156.
“unforgettable venerator of the monuments of Orthodoxy.”

Whittemore pursued numerous archaeological projects in the 1920s that honed the technical skills he needed for the Byzantine Institute and demonstrated his interest in preserving the Christian cultural heritage of the Middle East. Whittemore visited Bulgaria as early as 1919 and in the early twenties, he found it an agreeable site for many of the Committee's schools and educational programs. He showed Admiral Bristol the country 1920 and Tsar Boris III provided the two with cars and trains for their trip. Whittemore probably gained inspiration for his work on the mosaics of Hagia Sophia as he copied the frescoes of the Byzantine Bachkovo Monastery. Founded in 1083 by Prince Gregory Pakourianos, a Byzantine military commander, the monastery is known for a unique combination of Byzantine, Caucasian and Bulgarian cultures. Whittemore met the Tsar in 1924, perhaps to receive thanks for documenting this important part of Bulgarian culture.

Whittemore's work in Bulgaria included excavations at the basilica of Mesembria on the Black Sea, of a church outside Golemo Belovo in the Balkan Mountains, and at the Red Church, Tchervena Tcherkva.

Whittemore continued his archaeological work in Egypt. He and Alexander Piankoff, whose education was financed by the Committee, surveyed or excavated at several important ancient Egyptian sites. The two explored the monasteries of Saint Anthony and Saint Paul on the Red Sea. The Monastery of St. Anthony is centered around the tomb of the Saint, one of the leading figures in Christian monasticism. The Monastery of St. Paul bears testament to

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63 Ibid., 156.
64 Ibid., 170.
65 Ibid., 170.
66 Teteriatnikov, Restoring Byzantium, 48.
the violent fate of many Christians in the Middle East – it was ransacked repeatedly by Bedouin. The first monastery was build around the cave where St. Paul the Anchorite lived and died in the fifth century. However, it was so thoroughly ransacked in the 16th century that Whittemore was visiting a 1701 reconstruction. Whittemore and Piankoff photographed, filmed, painted, and drew plans of the monasteries. These experiences must have increased his curiosity about what bits of Christian culture remained in the Hagia Sophia, which was at one time the center of the Christian, Byzantine Empire of Saints Anthony and Paul.67

Whittemore closed most of the Committee's operations in 1930:

The signs of the Russian Committee have come down in Paris, and I go over to close the office on the first of October. We have a remnant of six children and fifteen students. The children, Dolgoroukys, Ouvarouvs, Wizzemskys and Paleologues, can only be continued by individual adoption. If you hear of any one who would like to care for a child of distinguished parentage you will tell me. 68

He had made important friends and partners in America, Europe, and Russia that enabled him to preserve the intellects and instruments of Russian culture. He demonstrated the ability to marshal American funds from diverse ends in an organized, sustainable way. With his ceaseless globetrotting, entertaining, appealing, writing, and teaching Whittemore spun a web of social and financial connections that could support the weight of an extensive restoration project. He set his eyes on Hagia Sophia.

67 Ibid., 48.
68 Thomas Whittemore to Mary Walcott, letter, September 27, 1930, BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 44
Chapter Three: Sailing to Byzantium

The city on the straits had long played a role in Whittemore's life. In 1920, he arrived there from southern Russia with refugees in tow. The city was briefly his headquarters for the Committee for the Education of Russian Youth in Exile. On 12 June, 1929 he hosted a dinner party at the Hotel Tokatlian on the Grand Rue de Pera. Signatures on a menu indicate attendance and we can make out a few names among many others: John Nicholas Brown, R.T. Crane, and Ben Kittredge. Brown was the wielder of the Brown family fortune and enterprises and a friend of Whittemore's for decades. 'R.T. Crane' could refer to either R.T. Crane Jr., or Richard T. Crane III, the son of Charles R. Crane. At the time, Kittredge was restoring Cypress Gardens, an old plantation in Charleston, S.C. He served as an attache to governments in exile in London during World War II and had a career with the State Department. It is probable that Whittemore gathered these men to discuss his aims in Istanbul: the restoration of the Greek mosaics in the Hagia Sophia. They are indicative of the high society that Whittemore frequented around the world. It was this society that was essential to success in his magnum opus: the restoration of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

Whittemore's desire to do so certainly stemmed in part from his time in Russia a decade before. He had gained an appreciation for the power of a revolutionary government to quickly dispatch buildings considered sacred under a former government. Whittemore spent much of his career researching Christian heritage throughout the Middle East, it must have been difficult to bear the destruction of the revolution. Countless churches had been defiled, including what one might deem the Hagia Sophia of Russia, the Uspensky Cathedral. Here, the Bolsheviks spat not only on the cross, but also on the scepter of the Tsars that had been crowned in Uspensky for centuries. Whittemore was keen

69 Nelson, 170.
to comment on the similarity between the rite of the Orthodox Church and the ceremony of the Byzantine court. He must have felt a shudder at the desecration of imperial Russia's mother church. What was to happen to imperial Byzantium's mother on the Bosphorus?

In some respects, the political climate of Turkey was similar to that of revolutionary Russia. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938) and the vicissitudes of World War I had deposed the Ottoman family, an ancient dynasty like the Romanovs. Atatürk also had to depose the Ottoman Sultan from his central role in the narrative of Turkish history. Atatürk had to convince the Turks to end their trust in a family that had led them to world empire. As Russians peasants viewed the Tsar as their father, so did many Turks treasure the Sultan. Atatürk turned popular opinion against the monarchy by reminding his countrymen that the Ottomans forged and maintained their rule through compulsion. They were no different than the many different Beys, Sultans, and Shahs that had ruled the Turks since time immemorial. Deprived of their central role in the eyes of the Turks, the Ottomans were seen as being justly overthrown. In dismissing the Ottoman government in the autumn of 1922 Atatürk said:

The Ottoman dynasty appropriated by force the government of the Turks, and reigned over them for six centuries. Now the Turkish nation has effectively gained possession of its sovereignty.\footnote{Andrew Mango, Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey (New York: Overlook, 1999), 364.}

Much like the Bolsheviks, Atatürk sought to reconfigure a people's perception of themselves and separate its fate from traditional adherence to religion. While in Bolshevik Russia this repudiation of religion meant the destruction of churches and violent persecution of the clergy, it took milder forms in the Republic of Turkey. Atatürk inveighed against the Dervish lodges, the traditional Sufi centers of Islamic mysticism and religious power in Ottoman Turkey. Like Karl Marx, who deemed religion the “opiate of the people”, Atatürk believed that religious institutions limited the progress of man. In a speech in Kastamonu in 1925, Atatürk spoke to the public about why he was closing the ancient
Dervish lodges:

In the face of knowledge, science, and of the whole extent of radiant civilization, I cannot accept the presence in Turkey's civilized community of people primitive enough to seek material and spiritual benefits in the guidance of sheikhs. The Turkish republic cannot be a country of sheikhs, dervishes and disciples. The best, the truest order is the order of civilization. To be a man it is enough to carry out the requirements of civilization. The leaders of dervish orders will understand the truth of my words, and will themselves close down their lodges [tekke] and admit that their disciples have grown up. 72

Ataturk's believed that Turkish greatness was independent of the greatness of Islam, indeed it predated it:

The Turks were a great nation even before they adopted the Muslim religion...The religion founded by Muhammad was based on a policy of setting Arab nationalism above all other nationalisms. 73

Ataturk reformed all aspects of Muslim identity in Turkey, restricting clothing, ending the celebration of saints, adopting the Christian Gregorian calendar, and elevating women to positions of power and esteem. He stripped the Turkish language of its many Persian and Arabic loan words. Turkish replaced Arabic as the language of governance and religion, and Ataturk even did away with the old Arabic alphabet. He advocated the adoption of many aspects of Western culture, forcing Turks to adopt Western-style surnames and adopt European dress. He made the German composer Paul Hindemith the leader of Turkey's education in European music.74

The Gazi sought to establish the Turks in their right to Asia Minor. At the time of Wilson's principles of national self-determination, it was essential that a people show their deep roots in a land. For the Turks, this was complicated by the fact that Turkey is littered with the remains of Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Hittite, Phrygian and other cultures. The main Turkish contributions to Asia Minor's cultural heritage were fortifications and mosques, which did little to counter Europe's

72 Mango, Ataturk, 435.
73 Ibid., 469.
74 Ibid., 464-66.
traditional view of Turks as the timeless Muslim foe. Ataturk countered this simplistic claim with an equally flawed assertion: that the many historic peoples of Asia Minor had been, in fact, Turkish and the modern Republic had legitimate claim to their land. In 1930 Ataturk ordered the writing of Turkish history, the *Outline of Turkish History*, which formed the core of history education for 15 to 18-year-old Turks. In this and other historiographical efforts, Ataturk sought to make his people more knowledgeable protectors of the artistic monuments of their country's pre-Islamic heritage, even if that heritage was incorrectly deemed proto-Turkish. As Whittemore himself wrote:

A current from the dynamic will of Kemal Ataturk, at the inception of the Republic, ran through all national life. History, archaeology and the study of language were charged with his incentive. The Turks became widely aware of the wealth of their historic inheritance as they arose to answer their great leader's call to a new destiny. The advance of archaeology as a science has since that time been substantial in Turkey. It was an excusable tendency on the part of the Turks at the outset to humor an ethnical self-interest in their scholarship, but this national interest in their monuments has now passed to larger interest of the far-reaching importance and comparative value of the objects discovered.

Whittemore's concession to restore the Hagia Sophia was part of Ataturk's cultural revolution. By revealing the Byzantine mosaics beneath Ottoman plaster, Whittemore was calling attention to the Greek, Christian heritage of the building and the city. It some respects, it appears ironic that Ataturk wanted to restore the monument of Turkey's chief competing culture, the Greeks, when at the very same time rewriting history so as to subsume the predecessors of Turkish civilization. However, the restoration of the building was not a loss to Turkish culture, but to Islam. By making the building a museum, the Turkish government ended 14 centuries of continuous religious use of the Hagia Sophia. It was the architectural and cultural symbol of Ataturk's goals of secularization and modernization. Like

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75 This author can attest that this belief still exists. When visiting Bergama in June of 2009, I stayed at nice pension, the owner of which insisted that the Turks built Bergama, which was ancient Pergamon to the Greeks that built it. When I countered with my own version of history, which I dare say is more current, my host stated that since the ancient Greeks were also Turkish, it made little difference. One is led to wonder who was defending those walls with such spirit in 1453.

the Bolsheviks, he secularized the imperial place of worship. Fortunately for Whittemore and mankind, he did so not with violence but with foresight in preserving one of man's best structures.

As Lord Kinross wrote:

Ataturk was aspiring to create, in his Turkish Republic, a fusion between the civilizations of East and West. The shrine of Hagia Sophia, which had long been a symbol of the conflict between them, was now to symbolize their union. Ataturk decided to convert the shrine into a Byzantine-Ottoman museum.77

Precisely how Whittemore secured this important commission is not known. He was certainly not the only one trying. The Italian architect Luigi Marangoni was reportedly scoping out the building. He had been involved in a survey of Hagia Sophia in 1910-11 with Henry Prost and Thomas Graham Jackson, the renowned British architect. The British applied to work in the Great Palace in 1932.

Our knowledge of the events leading up to the commission come from letters between Whittemore and George D. Pratt, son of Charles Pratt, a pioneer in the American oil industry and the founder of the Pratt Institute in New York City. Pratt supported Whittemore's ventures in Russia and his name appears on the letterhead of the Byzantine Institute; he was its treasurer in 1932.78 His brother, Frederick B. Pratt managed the family's institute and contributed $1000 a year to Whittemore's Committee from 1923 to 1928, with smaller contributions in the following years.79

In 1930, it seems Thomas Whittemore had been in negotiations with Halil Ethem Bey, the brother of the illustrious Osman Hamdi Bey (1842-1910), the founder of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum and the Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts. Halil Bey was the director the museum after his brother's death and an Istanbul deputy to the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Whittemore wrote to Seth Gano about negotiations with Halil Bey and Gano passed word to Pratt who wrote back that it would wonderful if Whittemore could seal the deal. From his writing, it appears Pratt was personally

78 Nelson, 175.
79 Frederick B. Pratt to Seth Gano, letters, September 21, 1922 to March 18, 1930. BAR-CERYE box 1, folder 28
invested in the outcome. Whittemore gave Halil Bey two works of art as a token of his appreciation.\(^80\)

According to this account, it was Whittemore's own agency that secured the commission, and perhaps it was not just his relationship with Halil Bey that did it. Lord Kinross claimed the Whittemore immediately established good relations with Ataturk. Kinross recounts a tale that Whittemore told him:

Santa Sophia was a mosque the day I talked to [Ataturk]. The next morning, when I went to the mosque, there was a sign on the door written in Ataturk's own hand. It said: 'the museum is closed for repairs.'\(^81\)

Although this is not the only mention of such negotiations,\(^82\) this account is hard to square with the facts. This author has found no record of Ataturk meeting Whittemore immediately nor did the Turkish Council of Ministers make the Hagia Sophia a museum instantaneously. It was not until 24 November 1934, the same day that Mustafa Kemal took his name as “Father of the Turks”, that the Hagia Sophia became a museum. It appears that Whittemore fabricated this story. If we are to believe a former colleague, Robert Van Nice, Whittemore was not exempt from stretching the truth on occasion.\(^83\)

It is more likely that the American Ambassador to Turkey, Joseph C. Grew, persuaded Ataturk of the merits of Whittemore's petition, which may have come up the ranks from Halil Bey. Robert Blake outlined this idea in a 1950 letter to Secretary of State Dean Acheson that covered the history of the Byzantine Institute. Whittemore thanked Grew in the *First Preliminary Report* and the reader may


\(^{81}\) Kinross, *Hagia Sophia*, p. 128

\(^{82}\) Teteriatnikov, p. 49

\(^{83}\) Interview with Professor Heath Lowry, October 28, 2009; Interview with Dr. Giles Constable, 18 December 2009. Drs. Heath Lowry and Giles Constable remembered Robert Van Nice's derision of Whittemore as a self-aggrandizing fraud. Van Nice had worked on an architectural survey of Hagia Sophia with William Emerson, the dean of MIT’s architectural school, from 1937 to 1941. He was a common fixture at the lunch table of Dumbarton Oaks many years later. Constable tells an interesting story about Thomas Whittemore and Archibald Walker, with whom Whittemore often lived when in Istanbul. Walker, who appears on the letterhead of the Byzantine Institute, was the long-time country manager for Socony-Vacuum Oil Company in Turkey. He lived in an apartment in Yenikoy with a chauffeur that took him to Sultanahmet whenever he pleased. Whittemore, often arising earlier than Walker, would himself take the chauffeur, leaving Walker to struggle around the city with ferries and taxis. One of the ways Whittemore "shamelessly exploited" Mr. Walker.
remember that Whittemore probably met Grew in Berlin in 1915. Robert Woods Bliss was friends with Grew.\textsuperscript{84} A career foreign service officer with a long history in Asia, he wrote \textit{Sport and Travel in the Far East} (1910) about his adventures in Northern India. It gained the accolades of Theodore Roosevelt, and probably of Grew gained lasting fame as the ambassador to Japan at outbreak of World War II. A man seemingly forever gifted with an privileged understanding of things, he cabled the American government about an attack on Pearl Harbor months before it occurred.\textsuperscript{85}

In June 1931, the Turkish Council of Ministers authorized Whittemore to begin work on the Hagia Sophia. This was the beginning of the greatest chapter of his life, in which he was able to marry his love of preservation with his proven skills in raising money and organizing wealthy people towards a cause.

Giles Constable described the Byzantine Institute as a fund-raising organization for Whittemore. Indeed, the paucity of publications of the Institute cast doubt to its role as a research institution. The Institute did have a library at 4 Rue de Lille in Paris with approximately twelve thousand volumes that was popular with scholars throughout Europe. This library even attracted the attention of the Nazis during their occupation of the city. The Germans were thrown out by the Allies before they could confiscate the books. Ermoloff had already carefully hidden the most precious volumes.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{84} Nelson, 176.
First and foremost, the Institute was a way for many wealthy and powerful people in America to satisfy their interests in art, architecture, culture, and philanthropy. The letterhead of the Byzantine Institute provides much insight into the financiers of the operation. Leading off the list as Treasurer is Charles Francis Adams III, of the illustrious Adams family that gave the nation two presidents. He was a Harvard graduate, champion yachtsman, and the Secretary of the Navy from 1929 to 1933. The letterhead indicates that Adams was at the State Street Trust Company in Boston. Whittemore may not have known him personally, but approached him because of his role in business.  

Whittemore harnessed impressive academics for his project, most of whom were luminaries in Byzantine Studies. The President of the Institute was Robert Pierpont Blake, a professor at Harvard and one of the founders of Byzantine Studies in America. Norman H. Baynes was a noted British 

Byzantinist, teaching at University College of London from 1931 until 1942. Paul Lemerle worked on such topics as the agrarian history of Byzantium. Another scholar on the letterhead, Gabriel Millet, is best known for training Sirarpie Der-Nersessian, the first female teacher of Byzantine Studies in America. James B. Munn was a English professor at Harvard, though Whittemore probably met him when he was teaching at NYU with Whittemore in the late 1920s. Mikhail I. Rostovtzeff was a Russian historian of the ancient Greek, Iranian and Roman worlds, and one of the first historians to introduce modern ideas of social and economic forces to the study of ancient history in such works as *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (1926). He invited another great Byzantine historian and member of the Institute, A.A. Vasiliev, to America in 1925. At the founding of the Institute, Vasiliev had just written his seminal *History of the Byzantine Empire* (1928).

Many museum curators populate the letterhead of the Byzantine Institute, indicating Whittemore's connections in the art and antiquities world. Sir John Forsdyke was the Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum from 1936 to 1950. Edward W. Forbes was the director of the Fogg Museum of Art at Harvard University, an institution that Whittemore was long associated with. Eric Maclagan was the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum from 1924 until 1945 and an enthusiast of early Christian and Byzantine art. Whittemore hosted Maclagan and his wife in Boston in 1929 and Maclagan declared that “without knowing [Whittemore] it would be little use for an authority on art to visit that country, for he knows all that world.” To which world Maclagan referred to is unknown; Whittemore was well-versed in artistic traditions from around the globe.

G. Howland Shaw deserves mention as a member of the Institute. He was a member of the American Embassy in Ankara and the consul General of Turkey. His membership indicates the political

89 Forbes, p. 182. “Whittemore also made a very fine collection of gold, silver, and bronze Byzantine coins and lead seals. These he deposited in the Fogg Museum of Art, where they are being catalogued by Mr. Roland Gray.” Mr. Gray was also on the Byzantine Institute's letterhead.
91 Nelson, 170-71.
aspects of Whittemore's work in Turkey. Shaw later spoke at the Institute's exhibition of the Hagia Sophia mosaics at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1944.

The letterhead indicates that the Institute was also associated with several important Turkish academics and cultural officials such as Hamit Zübeyir Koşay (1897-1984), director of the Turkish Department of Culture and the excavator of the Alaca Höyük site which revealed the greatness of the Hatti culture in Asia Minor. Aziz Ogan was the Director of the National Museum in Istanbul. He founded museums at Bergama and Izmir. Men such as these were critical in preserving Turkey's cultural heritage and their membership in the Byzantine Institute indicates that they viewed Whittemore's project as having the same goal.

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92 Whittemore, “Archaeology”, 164.
Some of the most significant members of the Byzantine Institute were Robert Woods and Mildred Barnes Bliss and their friend, Royall Tyler (1884-1953). Robert Bliss was a career diplomat and was stationed in Paris during the Great war, during which they met Whittemore for the first time. The Blisses built up an impressive collection of Byzantine Art with the assistance of Tyler, who procured pieces such as a chalice from the age of Justinian. These artifacts became part of a major private research library in the 1930s at the Blisses' mansion of Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C. They dedicated their estate and its holdings to Harvard University in 1940 and the Oaks remains the preeminent center of Byzantine Studies in America today. The Byzantine Institute was eventually
subsumed into this research center after Whittemore's death.

As the Bliss's case attests, the Byzantine Institute rode a wave of growing Western interest and appreciation of Byzantium. The beginning of Whittemore's interest in this area began when he attended the 1910 Munich Islamic Art Exhibit, one of the first major presentations of Near Eastern art in modern Europe. Other attendees include Henri Matisse, Roger Fry, Matthew Stewart Prichard, and Royall Tyler. Yeats published “Sailing to Byzantium” in 1926 and followed with a sequel “Byzantium” in 1930. Architects displayed their interest in Byzantine architecture in churches in France such as Eglise du Saint-Esprit (1935) by Paul Tournon, and New York with Saint Bartholomew's Episcopal Church (1914) by Bertram Goodhue and the Methodist Christ Church (1932). Abby Rockefeller collected Byzantine artwork and thanked Whittemore for pamphlets on Byzantine art that he sent her. She was the driving force behind the establishment of the Museum of Modern Art and the director of that museum, Alfred H. Barr, considered Byzantine art to have had a formative influence on modern art. Abby's husband, John D. Rockefeller Jr., had been a contributor to Whittemore's Byzantine ventures.93

Whittemore knew that many people were watching his work intently on both sides of the Atlantic. In order to inform the public, and his creditors, about the progress of the work, he released a series of Preliminary Reports. The first, published in 1933, allowed him to thank the many people that made his work possible. It is filled with technical terms and precise detail about the mosaics and their restoration. This must have satisfied the many interested Byzantinists, mosaicists, and artists in Whittemore's audience. Despite the term 'preliminary', the Byzantine Institute never published any more scholarly papers on the restoration of Hagia Sophia other than the three subsequent reports. Whether Whittemore was working on a more substantial work at his death, we may never know.

Whittemore opened the gates to investigation of Byzantine art and architecture by allowing other investigators to probe the depths of the Hagia Sophia. The aforementioned Western interest in

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93 Nelson, 173.
Byzantine architecture was in some respects ironic, considering that its wellspring had been unavailable for thorough architectural analysis. It was not until 1937 that William Emerson, the dean of MIT’s School of Architecture, began a detailed survey of the structure with his young colleague Robert L. Van Nice. Emerson made the request to the Turkish government through Whittemore. Unfortunately, this project was cut short by the threat of war in 1941. Emerson's notes show the importance of the Byzantine Institute's Library in Paris and its librarian, Boris Ermoloff. Emerson also mentions that Seth T. Gano, treasurer of the Institute, “advised constantly since the inception of the work.” These references indicate that the Byzantine Institute strove to aid any scholarly pursuits at the Hagia Sophia. Emerson described the importance of Hagia Sophia:

Lack of detailed records of the structure of this building – unique in its historical and architectural interest, characterized as one of the four pinnacles of architecture and the supreme monument of the Christian cycle – creates a conspicuous and paradoxical gap in our knowledge of ancient monuments.  

The reception to Whittemore's work in Hagia Sophia was understandably skeptical in some sections of Turkish society. The major newspapers of Istanbul had to refute rumors about the nature of Whittemore's work in the former mosque. These probably involved Whittemore secretly preparing the structure for reconsecration as a church. The Turks were not ignorant of the Megali Idea, the old Greek plan to recapture Constantinople and reawaken the last Byzantine Emperor from his slumber beneath the walls of the city. It was less than ten years before that the Greeks had occupied much of western Turkey and at least one of Whittemore's associates, Charles R. Crane, had expressed sympathy with a Greek reconquest. Whittemore never expressed any sentiments in favor of such, doubtlessly too intelligent to seriously consider Christian control of the city, and too circumspect to anger his Turkish patrons.


95 In 1919 Charles R. Crane wrote to Admiral William Benson, commanding admiral of the United State Navy, about the “S. Sophia Redemption Committe”: 
At least one Turk was thoroughly pleased. On July 11-12, 1932, Ataturk received Whittemore at the Ghazi's farm outside Ankara. As an indication of Whittemore's importance, Halil Bey and Zehra Kemal, Ataturk's adopted daughter, met him at the train station. Ataturk carefully reviewed Whittemore's work and took many photographs with him in front of the Turkish press. It was a personal triumph for Whittemore and another affirmation of how important the work at Hagia Sophia was for Ataturk. Whittemore left an account of the meeting with the Ghazi:

The Ghazi's daughter took me about the kiosque and the gardens and at about half past five the President of the Republic arrived and sent almost immediately for me. I was taken in by his daughter...It was very hot in the kiosque and he proposed that we move out to the terrace. There at once the cameras began to work with some of the results that I sent you in the *Hakimiyeti Milliye*. The close-up shows me in the effort under his intense concentration to tell him something about Byzantine Art. Just between us and behind stands the Minister of Public Instruction and at my right Zehra Kemal. Then the conversation turned to how far Turkish builders had carried architecture beyond the Byzantines. With so many about it us it was not the time to look at the Photographs I had brought to show him but he assured me that there would be a moment before I left the city. After this conversation of twenty minutes or more during which others were waiting to be received he permitted me to retire...and a little later I returned to my hotel in his car.96

Whittemore rewarded his patrons and the public with beautiful reproductions of the mosaics. George Holt was instrumental in finding a way to make accurate casts of the mosaics and worked throughout the summer of 1939. These reproductions satisfied the artistic desires of his patrons and the financial needs of the institute. The Deesis mosaic, displaying the Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist giving homage to Christ, was reproduced and sold to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for $7,500. A copy of the mosaic of St. John Chrysostom later made it all the way out to Chicago for the decoration

“The Eastern Orthodox world is most anxious that Santa Sophia should be restored to it. It is one of the most important Christian monuments taken out of the hands of the Christians, after all inside had been massacred when the Turks took Constantinople. Ever since then it has been a mosque. The other day I ran across a fine old Russian woman who had made a pilgrimage on her own account, having heard in Russia that the Cross was now on Santa Sophia. It ought to be.” Nelson, pp. 167, 179

96 William MacDonald reported that he has a photograph of Whittemore asking Ataturk for permission to start work on the Hagia Sophia, through an interpreter. In the absence of any firm documentation of that earlier meeting, I am inclined to believe that the photo is actually of the 1932 meeting at Ankara.

Letter from William MacDonald, January 2010 (date needed!); Nelson, pp. 179-80.
of the Crane family church.

In addition to financial gain, the reproductions brought Byzantine art to America as never before. With the 1944 Metropolitan Museum of Art Exhibit of mosaics from the Hagia Sophia, it was clear that Whittemore was the strongest connection between the American public and Byzantine past. The director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Francis Taylor, praised the Turkish government's foresight in secularizing mosques and reorganizing the museums, as well as entertaining Whittemore's risky venture. Whittemore received praise for his faith in the existence of the mosaics and his “genial fanaticism” in carrying out the project. Charles R. Morey, a professor of medieval art at Princeton, believed the marbles were as important for Byzantine art as the Elgin Marbles had been for Greek art. 97

The similarity between certain aspects of Byzantine and modern art had been increasingly recognized for some years. As long ago as 1907, Matthew Stewart Prichard had introduced Roger Fry and, possibly, Henri Matisse to the merits of Byzantine art. Fry and Whittemore both made connections between Byzantine and modern art. Whittemore's exhibit cemented that connection so many years later. Ferdinand Leger reviewed the exhibition, writing that such art “is infinitely interesting to us modern artists because of its nearness to our conception of an art form which invents, and not merely copies.” The press release for the show states that the mosaics “have an affinity in their boldness and directness to much of contemporary painting” and “remind one of the work of Picasso, and of Roualt.”

Whittemore's role as a conduit for Byzantine art achieved its highest degree when he spoke at the Church of St. John Chrysostom in Chicago for the dedication of a chapel to Richard T. Crane, Jr, the brother of Charles C. Crane. Richard had never been as adventurous as his brother, nor shown such a familiarity with foreign cultures. Nonetheless, the company he presided over fueled the philanthropy of his entire family. His wife, Florence Higinbotham Crane, adorned her husband's grave with the Institute's copy of St. John Chrysostom. The elite's interest in Byzantine culture had transcended the

97 Taylor is indicated on Whittemore's will.

Thomas Whittemore, Will; Nelson, p. 184
drawing room and entered the tomb.

It was not long before Whittemore was in his. In his last years, he found himself struggling to keep the donations flowing. It was not for any lack of networking – he guided Le Corbusier around Hagia Sophia in this period. However, R.T. Crane Jr. was only the first of many patrons to die. In a letter to Mildred Bliss, Whittemore mentions the death of Mrs. Richard Crane, Mrs. Otto Kahn, and Miss Sinkler. Whittemore had tremendous energy but he was approaching 80 years of age and his normal habit of working straight for one half of the year and fund-raising for the rest was taking its toll. On June 8, 1950, Thomas Whittemore died of a heart attack in the State Department on his way to visit John Foster Dulles. The New York Times, Boston Herald, and New York Herald Tribune covered his death. The greatest memorials came from those who knew him. Edward Forbes was the director of the Fogg Art Museum and a colleague of Whittemore's, he wrote the following:

A great public benefactor has died after a memorable career. His astonishingly brilliant work of eighteen years at Santa Sophia, unfortunately, is left unfinished.

Whittemore was unique, forceful, courageous, intelligent, sensitive, keen, eager, self-controlled, abstemious, and high-minded. These and many more adjectives are needed to describe the numerous facets of this diamond-like character.

Strong words of praise also came from Mildred Bliss, one of Whittemore earliest supporters captured his enigmatic nature:

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98 Nelson, 204.
Were one to be asked what manner of man was T.W., the answer would come readily enough: a quintessential individualist. And within that loose and indefinite phrase, one would name the most positive and contradictory characteristics: the monk's asceticism, coupled with a sensual enjoyment of liturgical subtleties; the actor's delight in a good entry and the stressing of a salient point; the student's curiosity and capacity for study, accompanied by a seemingly haphazard talent for assimilation which permitted a reverence for erudition and a respect for scholarship as well as a thinly disguised contempt for academic formulae.100

100Mildred Barnes Bliss, “Thomas Whittemore: An Evocation”, DO: ICFA.
Conclusion

Millions of visitors to Hagia Sophia today thank Whittemore for his work. The mosaics are a beautiful illustration of why cultural heritage is important. It is informative; we can see how rich Byzantium was, how accomplished its artistic traditions were, and who the major figures in its civilization were. It ennobles its host civilization; Turks today are proud of Hagia Sophia because it shows the genius of their ancestors, both Christian and Muslim, Byzantine and Ottoman. It enriches its curators; Turkey is such a desirable destination because of the material remains of past civilizations. It is beautiful; the value of Byzantine mosaics transcends any quantifiable political or financial gain – it is has inherent artistic value and should be open for humans to enjoy.

Whittemore's work went unfinished, and this author hopes that modern preservationists can learn from his success so as to continue his tradition. Close to the end of his life, in 1948, Whittemore proposed an archaeological survey of the areas around the Hagia Sophia that had been cleared by fire. His death in 1950 and the gradual dissolution of the Byzantine Institute thereafter precluded any progress on this goal. Had this area been properly restored, people could walk through the Byzantine Great Palace and the city would have an archaeological area comparable to the Roman Forum in the extent and importance of its ruins. Alas, houses, hotels, and restaurants have obscured the ruins and their foundations have ripped violent gashes into the historical matrix of old Constantinople. This author has been into the spacious underground vaults that held up the palace. Even this last precious ruin lies in obscurity and one has to enter through a trash-strewn ancient stair. How does Whittemore's work teach us how to save more of the city and country loved?

Before we ponder this question though, we must recognize the many ways in which Whittemore's time is different from our own. The upper class that patronized Whittemore no longer exists. This is not to say that America has no wealthy people, or that they do not contribute to various

101Nelson, 184.
causes in the public sphere. The direction of elite philanthropy, at least of its most prominent examples, has changed from the patronage of the arts to the eradication of diseases, hunger, and poverty. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation invests in such things as vaccination, educational reform, and global health. These directives, particularly the second, would have certainly appealed to Whittemore. However, the Gates Foundation does not pursue any sort of cultural, artistic, or architectural preservation as a main focus. Bill Gates has not founded a museum, as the Rockefellers and Carnegie did, or sponsored the transfer of some precious antiquity to Seattle.\footnote{The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Pages/home.aspx, (accessed on May 22, 2010).}

This change in philanthropy reflects a declining patronage among the American elite for preservation of ancient or medieval culture. How can we explain this decline? We can not attribute it to a lack of means; the wealthy today have as much, if not more, money than their Gilded Age predecessors had. Perhaps the wealthy think that all the great museums have already been founded, the concert halls have been raised, and the art collections are set. The cultural patronage of yesteryear can appear less important today, when the rich are expected to invest in 'real' issues like poverty and starvation in the Third World. If the rich spent their money hauling around Byzantine crucifixes or Bulgarian mosaics, we would probably accuse them of fiddling while the world burns.

There is less personal interest in the ancient world among the elite today. This is partially due to the fact that the wealthy in Whittemore's time were also academics or amateur followers of an artistic or scientific pursuit that provided them with an obvious target for philanthropy. One of Whittemore's patrons, John Nicholas Brown, was an amateur Egyptologist in addition to being the heir of the Brown family fortune. The decline of the scholarly patrician may be due, in part, to the decline in the teaching of classical knowledge in American primary and secondary education, public and private. No educational statistician could argue that more kids today know Latin and Greek than children in 1900 did. The wealthy can't converse with the ancient world because they simply don't know the language.
Most importantly, they do not even have a translator like Thomas Whittemore, a man who translated elite interest in Byzantium and Russia into concrete cultural preservation projects.

Whittemore is illustrative of an age in which one man was free to embrace many disciplines and intellectual communities. Indeed, he could not easily exist in today's academic world. Consider how improbable Whittemore's career path was: he went from an English professor to an archaeologist, from a relief worker to a conservationist. Would an archaeological organization today hire an English professor? Would an English professor even abandon his career in such a way? How often does a Red Cross organizer turn his talents to architectural preservation? Today, each one of Whittemore's metamorphoses would require more degrees, such as a PhD in Archaeology, in order to happen. Academia consists of specialized experts and we would have to find many people to account for all the talents that Whittemore combined in himself. Moreover, we would be hard-pressed to find someone so conversant with the figures in different disciplines. Whittemore had an unfailing energy to meet composers, industrialists, leaders of nations, and mystics. He found a way to use the talents of these people for his own ends.

The story of Whittemore's life challenges the preservationists of the future to find their own mechanisms to save the world's monuments and artifacts. This brings us back to issue of preservation in Turkey, and how we can apply the findings of this paper to it.

Private patronage has remained essential to the preservation of Armenian and Assyrian cultural sites of Turkey, which, like the churches of Russia, were dealt a violent blow because of the political fortunes of World War I. The Ottoman Empire, under the wayward sway of the revolutionary Young Turks, killed approximately 250,000 Assyrian Christians in southeastern Turkey from 1913 to 1916. Kurdish bands destroyed Assyrian monasteries that predated the advent of Islam, massacring their inhabitants and torching cultural repositories that held centuries of material. Fortunately, these sites

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have seen remarkable revitalization in recent years because of the donations by the Assyrian diaspora. Armenian sites in Turkey lie in a sadder state. This author has seen charred ruins of an Armenian cathedral in Diyarbakir and as recently as the 1960s, the Turkish military deliberately destroyed many site of Armenian culture. The 4th century monastery of St. Bartholomew was blasted by dynamite and now lies in ruins within a Turkish military base.\textsuperscript{104} Although the Armenian diaspora is wealthy and willing to support projects of cultural preservation, certain elements of the Turkish government are still too opposed to Armenian interests for much progress to be made. However, there is some hope; the Turkish Ministry of Culture recently spent more than 2 million Turkish Lira (1.4 million USD) to restore the Armenian monastery in the middle of Lake Van.

As Whittemore learned from the Bolshevik and Ataturk's revolution, it is ultimately the responsibilities of governments to safeguard their cultural heritage. Although patronage may work for the Armenian and Assyrian communities, only the Turkish government has the resources and sway to carry out a grand project like Whittemore's today. Moreover, the Assyrian and Armenian sites depend on their benefactors' ethnic and religious identity. For many monuments in Turkey, there are no longer communities that can patronize them. We cannot find any Hittites to save their crumbling capital of Hattusas, nor can we ask any Seljuks to donate to the preservation of their lonely caravanserais.

The necessity of the Turkish government's role is clear when we consider that the greatest threats to Turkey's cultural heritage comes from development, not from any campaign of cultural destruction. The Turkish government is building a rail tunnel under the Bosphorus. Ironically, this transportation infrastructure is destroying a key remnant of Constantinople's ancient transportation network. During excavation for the tunnel, workers discovered the Port of Theodosius, the largest port of Byzantine Constantinople. More than twenty ships have been unearthed, including the first medieval

galley ever found. The archaeological site has revealed the oldest settlement in Istanbul, dating to Neolithic times. The archaeological crew on the site consisted of 50 archaeologists and 750 workers going around the clock. They had to race against construction of a rail tunnel and a nearby station.

Fortunately, the engineers altered their plans to save more of the archaeological site, and the new train station will feature a museum.\textsuperscript{105}

The alteration of the station plans indicate that Turkish preservation may finally be coming into its own. Thomas Whittemore helped initiate this process with his work at Hagia Sophia. By revealing the Byzantine mosaics, he fulfilled Ataturk’s vision of a new Turkish civilization that embraced the full scope of its past. With ceaseless energy and charm he won the friendship of many of America's elite and directed their resources to illuminate the ancient heart of Byzantium. Just as the Church of Holy Wisdom was the center of the Byzantine world, we may hope that the success of its renovation may serve as a central example for future preservation efforts in Turkey.

\textsuperscript{105}Mark Rose and Sengül Aydingün, “Under Istanbul”, Abstract, \textit{Archaeology} Vol. 60 Number 4 (July/August 2007)
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