08/04/2026

Byzantine Studies Conference in Tokyo, Japan



On the weekend of March 28 and 29, 2026, the 23rd Annual Byzantine Studies Conference was held in Tokyo, Japan, organized by the Japan Association for Byzantine Studies at Waseda University. His Eminence Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea and Exarch of Japan was invited as the keynote speaker, presenting on the topic: “Byzantine Icons from an Aesthetic and Theological Perspective.”

At the aforementioned conference, ten scholarly papers were presented by Japanese researchers specializing in Byzantine art. The organizer and moderator of the conference was the Greek-speaking Japanese art historian, Professor Tomoyuki Masuda, a specialist in Byzantine art, iconography, and manuscripts. The subject of his doctoral dissertation, submitted in 1990 to the Department of History and Archaeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, is entitled, The Illustration of Manuscript No. 587 of the Dionysiou Monastery on Mount Athos — A Contribution to the Study of Byzantine Lectionaries.

Highly noteworthy was the interest with which the approximately 70 participants—for the most part graduate students of Art History—followed the presentations, as well as the questions they addressed to the speakers.

Of particular importance for many participants was the theology of icons. For many, it was the first time they had encountered this subject, and they came to realize that the rich, hidden Orthodox theology within the symbols, designs, and colors is the fundamental background to what they study scientifically as art historians.



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