

The Reception of Byzantium in Russian Church Historiography

In the last twenty years, speaking about Russia as the legitimate and direct successor of the Byzantine Empire and its culture has become received wisdom in Russian political discourse. After the breakup of the Soviet Union and the collapse of its normative order, a great need has arisen for a new personal and collective identity in Russian society and a demand for integrative narratives capable of reconciling the most contradictory elements of Russian history. The public opinion makers labelled this situation an »ideological vacuum« and immediately proposed a wide range of concepts for a state ideology, stretching from the restoration of the monarchy to that of the Soviet Union. The appeal to history has become dominant, and with it the promise that the »humiliating« condition of the once great country could be overcome through understanding history in a wider, more interconnected perspective. In this constellation of a public demand for narratives about the »great Russia«, Byzantium or Byzantine heritage has re-appeared at the centre of public interest, reminiscent of the situation at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. At said time, an attempt was made to shift discussions about the Byzantine legacy as they had appeared in the middle of the 19th century from poetic-philosophical metaphors and myths to one of profound knowledge based on the standards of scientific research, specifically the standard set by western historical science¹.

The Russian Orthodox Church is the central actor, consistently claiming an interest in Byzantium as its natural discourse. In the last two decades, it has become an inseparable partner of the Russian state in accordance with its understanding of the Byzantine ideal of relations between state and church powers, called »symphony«. Since 2008, some representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church have been at the fore-

front of the (re)construction of Byzantine narratives and the instrumentalisation of Byzantine history for political goals².

After the annexation of Crimea and Russia's military actions in Syria, speaking about Russia's »Byzantine roots« has acquired a new function of historically justifying particular (geo-)political interests. It is argued that in Crimea, Russia returned to its spiritual homeland and the protection of Christians in the Middle East is considered to be a continuation of a genuine Byzantine mission in the Middle Ages³.

»Constantinople is a spiritual homeland, a bridge between the Earthly (Rus') and the Heavenly homeland (the City of God). For this reason, the longing for and gratitude towards Byzantium is so very distinctive for us. This longing is like the yearning of a child whose parents died before its historical adulthood was reached. For a Russian, this is difficult to reflect upon, but easy to feel. In fact, this very child-parent complex of ideas was substituted by the Western idea, through the interpretation of the West (instead of Byzantium) as a »country of saintly wonders«. However, as everybody knows, one cannot choose one's parents«⁴.

The entire perception of Byzantium in this quotation deals with feelings and historiosophical speculations and metaphors rather than with historical facts, and it therefore works as a tool aimed at public persuasion, but not as scientifically relevant argument. Yet if we want to answer the question when Byzantium became a constitutive element of Church consciousness, we should look at Church historiography as a reliable source of evidence, at least from when it attempted to develop into scientific historiography and use scientific methods such as the study and criticism of sources. And if we proceed with the assumption of today's Church spokesmen that Byzantine heritage of the Russian Church is rooted in the Church's long-term memory, then we must examine the

1 Meaning the development of Byzantine Studies at the end of the 19th c. at Russian universities. On this topic, see the article by Lora Gerd in this volume and Medvedev, Nekotorye razmyšlenija. – Medvedev, Peterburgskoe vizantinovedenie. For more about public discussions in the 19th c., see: Brüning, Von »Byzance après Byzance«.

2 For more about actual Byzantine discourses, see: Alshanskaya, Das Erbe von Byzanz. – Berezhnaya, Longing for the Empire. – Briskina-Müller, Das neue »neue Rom«. – Domanovskij, Mif Vizantii. – Hagemester, Der »Nördliche Katechon«. – Ivanov, The Second Rome.

3 See e. g.: Ščipkov, Vizantija. Consider also the visit to Mount Athos on 28 May 2016, the date of the millennium of Russian monasticism on the Holy Mount, by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin. According to Russian mass media, during his visit, he was »enthroned« on the emperor's throne. Additionally, for some media representatives, the fact that he visited Mount Athos just one day before the anniversary of the Fall of Constantinople was not incidental.

It was neither the first nor last public reference Putin made to Byzantine heritage as a political rhetorical figure – some examples are his dive to the bottom of the Black Sea to see the remains of a Byzantine trading ship in 2015 and his speech in 2014 proclaiming the »crucial civilizational and sacral meaning of Chersonesus and Crimea for Russia« (Putin, Poslanie).

4 Ščipkov, Russkij mir. »Константинополь – духовная Родина, мостик между земным отечеством (Русью) и отечеством небесным (градом Божиим). Отсюда характерная для нас вечная благодарность Византии и вечная тоска разлученности, тоска ребёнка, чьи родители умерли до его исторического совершеннолетия. Русскому это трудно отразить, но легко ощутить. На самом деле именно этот детско-родительский идейный комплекс подвергся подмене со стороны западной идеи – трактовкой Запада (вместо Византии) как «страны святых чудес». Хотя, как известно, родителей не выбирают.« (Translation of this and following quotations by A. A.).



Fig. 1 Metropolitan Platon (Levšin). – (Magnitskij, Platon II, 3).



Fig. 2 Archbishop Filaret (Gumilevskij) of Černigovskij and Nežinskij. – (Litography by P. B. Boref, 2nd half 19th c.).



Fig. 3 Painting in the icon style «Moscow the Third Rome», 21th c. – (unknown painter, www.runivers.ru/gal/gallery-all.php?SECTION_ID=7641&ELEMENT_ID=462777 [20.08.2018]).

appropriate sources, like academic Church historiography. The latter is not altogether susceptible to changing political trends and can be considered as a continuous attempt to register the most dominant attributes of the institutional self. In my article, I will focus on the use of the Byzantine argument in the most famous historiographical writings of the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as on the more specialized research concerning Byzantium and church history, with the task of examining the speculative constructions of Byzantium as a reference point and instrument in the process of the self-identification of the Russian Church.

General Church history

Russian Church historiography begins in the early 19th century, after the first publications of the histories of the Russian state⁵. The first history of the Russian Church was written in 1805 by the Metropolitan Platon (Levšin) (fig. 1), whom some scholars consider to be the first »Russian orthodox enlightened intellectual«⁶. »A Brief History of the Russian Church« still had similarities with chronicles, but he tried to tell the whole history from the beginnings of the Russian Church

5 Puškarev, Istoriografija.

6 Wirtschafter, Religion and Enlightenment.

rather than merely describing some of its aspects⁷. Unlike previous Russian history writings, as the history of the church was inseparable from the history of the state, the author intended to write ecclesiastical history as an institutional history. Next, Archbishop Filaret (Gumilevskij) (fig. 2) presented Russian Church history systematically and completely, divided into five periods, in the 1840s⁸. As far as the Byzantine argument is concerned, in both of these fundamental Church history writings, which immensely influenced subsequent Church historiography, the »Byzantine legacy« is immaterial to the writers. Instead, they accentuate the independent and self-sufficient character of the history of the Russian Church. So for these authors, the guiding hand of God's providence provides sufficient ground for the identity of the Russian Church and ensures the exclusive position of Russian Orthodoxy as the dominant religion in particular region. There were no reasons, as for Western Christians, to develop an identity in competition with another Christian identities.

It was Metropolitan Makarij (Bulgakov), who in his »History of the Russian Church« in twelve volumes (1857-1883) alluded to the idea of »Moscow as the Third Rome« (fig. 3) for the first time with reference to establishing a Patriarchal See in the 16th century. He explained this decision as follows:

»The reason for this [establishing a patriarchal see] was an awareness people shared with their czar that, as was often said, the old Rome with the Western churches fell because of the Apollinarian heresy. The new Rome, Constantinople, and all patriarchal Eastern Churches were in the grip of the godless Turks. But the Russian great czardom expanded, flourished and thrived, and the Orthodox faith shone for all like a sun. Hence the czar considered it fair to honour the Russian Church and to raise it to a patriarchate«⁹.

So we notice that Makarij made no consideration about Byzantine influence on Russian Church.

The first to mention the idea »Moscow as the Third Rome«, formulated in the letter of Monk Filofej of Pskov in the 16th century, was Professor Petr Znamenskij in his »Manual for the Study of Russian Church History« (1871), after Filofej's letters were first published in the 1860s¹⁰. Znamenskij made no conclusions as to the meaning of the idea of Moscow being the Third Rome and the role of Byzantium and Byzantine culture in Russian history or the history of the Russian Church, but considered this letter only as a historical ev-

idence of the struggle of the monk and intellectual Maximos the Greek with astrological superstitions widely propagated among Russian believers and churchmen:

»The well-known expectation of the end of the world was reflected in the astrological nonsense of Nikolaj Nemčin and was upheld until 1492. The opinion that Moscow was the last apocalyptical czardom, the Third Rome, and the fourth Rome would never come, was expressed in the chronicles and the letters of Monk Filofej of Pskov written to the great Prince Vasilij and Diakon Munechin and was a widely-known view«¹¹.

He also mentioned the legend of Monomakh and stressed explicitly that it was a legend, according to which »in the person of Aleksej Komnen, the empire handed over the czar's regalia, the crown and mantle, to the Russian prince, and the Greek Metropolitan Neophitus anointed him. This legend carried a great weight in Rus' and indicated the succession of the Russian autocracy from the Greek autocracy«¹².

These two brief mentions exhausted the references to the Byzantine legacy by Znamenskij in his textbook, which is still the main source for studying Church history in Russian seminaries and academies and has formed the collective consciousness of the modern Russian Orthodox priesthood.

It is thought that with the work of Professor Evgenij Golubinskij the new age in the writing of the Church history began, namely the scientific writing of Church history, which meets e.g. requirements of source criticism. Two volumes, which include the history of the Russian Church to the beginning of the 16th century, were written in the 1880s, but the second volume was published only at the very beginning of the 20th century. The author was widely criticized by churchmen because he deconstructed some fundamental historical myths of the Russian Church, e.g. the legend of Apostle Andrew visiting Rus'. Especially the Chief Procurator of the Most Holy Governing Synod, Konstantin Pobedonosev, sought to prevent the publication of the second part in every conceivable way. Hence, the history was not completed, so that the period of the supposed *translatio imperii* could not be expounded by Golubinskij. But despite his scientific approach, Golubinskij presented the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome without further criticism. In the introduction to his Church history, he wrote: »Under Ivan IV, Rus' became a new state, from a grand duchy it was transformed into a

7 Platon, *Kratkaja istorija*.

8 Filaret, *Istorija*.

9 Makarij, *Istorija* 2180. »Основанием ее послужило сознание, которое вместе с царем разделяли и его подданные, что ветхий Рим с подчиненными ему на Западе церквями, как выражались тогда, пал от ереси Аполлинариевой, новый Рим, Константинополь, и все патриаршие Церкви на Востоке находились во власти безбожных турок, а великое царство Русское расширилось, процветало и благоденствовало, и православная вера в нем сияла для всех, как солнце. И потому царь находил справедливым почтить Церковь Русскую учреждением в ней патриаршества«.

10 For more about the writings of Monk Filofej of Pskov and the reception of his thoughts about »Moscow as the Third Rome«, see e.g.: Briskina-Müller, *Das neue »neue Rom«*. – Duncan, *Russian Messianism*. – Poe, *Moscow*. – Sinicyna, *Tretij Rim*.

11 Znamenskij, *Istorija* 424: »В астрологических бреднях Николая Немчина нашло себе отголосок знакомое нам ожидание скорой кончины мира, не пропавшее и после 1492 года. Распространилось мнение, которое высказывается в летописях и в посланиях псковского елсазаровского монаха Филофея к великому князю Василию и дьяку Мунехину, что Москва есть последнее апокалипсическое царство, третий Рим, а четвертому уже не быть.«

12 *Ibidem* 107: »[...] империя в лице императора Алексея Комнена передала русскому князю знаки царского сана, венец и бармы, а греческий митрополит Неофит совершил над ним обряд царского помазания. Это предание имело потом большой вес на Руси, указывая на преемственность русского самодержавия от греческого лице императора Алексея Комнена передала русскому князю знаки царского сана, венец и бармы, а греческий митрополит Неофит совершил над ним обряд царского помазания. Это предание имело потом большой вес на Руси, указывая на преемственность русского самодержавия от греческого«.

czardom with the great role of the second Byzantium and the Third Rome»¹³.

This was the first time that this kind of statement appeared in a general Church historiography. Yet the author postulated the idea of the succession of Russia from Byzantium as a given and a widely known and accepted fact among contemporaries, but he wrote nothing about the factual credibility of such statements.

As a result, we can see that Byzantium as well as Byzantine heritage was marginal for Church historians in Russia within the given period; it had little or just no influence on the identity of the Imperial Church. The absence of Byzantine heritage in Church narratives could partially be explained by the fact that at the time, when the grand Church narratives appeared, Byzantine studies were not yet fully developed and consequently there was a lack of material for such constructions.

Specialized Research into Byzantium and Church History

If we look at the specialized research focusing on the question of Byzantine influence on Rus', we can find similar statements to the above already a few years before the work of Professor Golubinskij, and may thus assume that he merely relied on the conclusions of previous investigations in this field.

Parallel to the development of Byzantine studies and especially research into old Russian sources at the universities, the interest in Byzantium arose in Church academies. The best example of such research into Byzantine influence on Rus' was the doctoral dissertation by Philipp Ternovskij entitled »A Study of Byzantine History and Its Biased Application in Old Rus'« from 1875. Speaking in defence of his dissertation, he defined his task as a historian of Byzantium as follows: »The object of my research is the history of Byzantium, but solely inasmuch as it was familiar to our ancestors in Old Rus' until Peter the Great«¹⁴. Ternovskij was one of the few Russian historians who reflected on the end of historiography as a universal instrument of people's identity formation. He accepted the pragmatic task of history as the main strategy to justify the changes in a particular society at a time when the idea of the progress of the historical process was largely unknown in Russia. For him, history was as manipulated – also in Rus' – as was deemed necessary at particular times. Byzantium was the nearest »world-historical material« available to Russians to be used for practical ends. Ternovskij underlined that the »spirit of intolerance« by which Russians hoped to shield their Orthodox faith from any contamination made it impossible

for them to accept other sources of historical inspiration, be they pagan or Latin Christian.

He found the circumstances of life and problems of Byzantine and Old Russian societies to be similar and hence came to the conclusion that »our ancestors not only naturally, but also absolutely applied the available Byzantine patterns«¹⁵. Such groundless analogies brought Ternovskij criticism from opponents like Vladimir Ikonnikov¹⁶. And finally he concluded: »It may be said that Byzantium, already having finished its political existence, bequeathed the title of the *second Byzantium* and the *third Rome* to Moscow in connection with the duty to follow it and resurrect it in its [Moscow's] own history«¹⁷.

One more prominent example of a construction of the probable influence of Byzantium on Rus' is the work by Nikolaj Kapterev, professor of Church history at the Moscow Church Academy, »The Character of Russia's Relationship with the Orthodox East in the 16th and 17th Centuries« 1883¹⁸. Kapterev's work can be considered as a history of mentalities – he describes and analyses the ways in which Russians adopted and imitated the culture and religion of Byzantium and then, after the birth of national consciousness, distanced themselves from the »Greek heritage« for the sake of the national and religious missionary role of Moscow. According to him, the »Greeks«, i. e. the Byzantines, exerted an immense influence as a state with a perfectly organized social and cultural life on Russians and their formation as a Christian nation and state. For Kapterev, this was not only a positive influence – in some cases, it had clearly been destructive, as when Russians adopted the hatred of Latin Western Christianity from Byzantium. Even the concept of Moscow as the third Rome Kapterev explained as a feature adopted from the excessive attention Byzantines paid to purity, and to the rigidity of the Orthodox faith and its liturgy. The last was also a reason why and how Russians changed their attitude towards the Greeks after the Union with Rome, when they lost their leading role as a Christian people in the eyes of the Russians. As a result, a widespread lack of respect for Constantinople ensued among the Russians. Kapterev claimed it was the main reason (among others) for Russian chroniclers to invent legends such as the one about the Apostle Andrew's visit with the aim of tracing the foundation of Russian Christianity bypassing Byzantium and going back to the common and immediate origin of eastern Christianity. Due to this unpleasant and critical picture of the Russians, Kapterev suffered a similar fate to his teacher Professor Golubinskij: both were persecuted by clerical and state powers. But to this day, he is one of the most influential Church thinkers.

13 Golubinskij, *Istorija* XV. »При Иване Васильевиче IV Русь стала новым государством – из великого княжества царством, с великой ролью второй Византии и третьего Рима«.

14 Ternovskij, *Doktorskij disput* 14. »Предмет моего сочинения - история Византии исключительно в том размере и виде, в том духе и направлении, как она была известна на Руси нашим предкам в период допетровский.«

15 Ternovskij, *Izučenie* 3.

16 For the reception of Byzantium by Ikonnikov, see: Ikonnikov, *Опыт*.

17 Ternovskij, *Izučenie* 3. »Можно сказать, что, окончившая свое политическое существование, Византия завещала Москве вместе с названием второй Византии и третьего Рима – обязанность идти по ее следам и воскрешать в своей жизни ее историю. второй Византии третьего Рима«.

18 Kapterev, *Charakter*.

At the same time, some historians in Church academies devoted themselves to investigating the problem of the relationship between secular and Church powers in Byzantium and the so-called »symphony«. These were, amongst others, Professors Fedor Kurganov¹⁹, Nikolaj Skabalanovič²⁰ and Ivan Sokolov²¹. Among them, the ideas of Ivan Sokolov deserve the most attention. Along with philosopher Konstantin Leont'ev, who in 1875 wrote a book entitled »Byzantinism and Slavdom«, Sokolov is considered to have elaborated the concept of Byzantinism. And whereas Leontjev developed his Byzantinism as a historiosophical idea, Sokolov presented it within the scientific community – during the inaugural lecture as a professor of the history of the Greek Eastern Church at the Church academy in Saint Petersburg, entitled »Byzantinism from the perspective of Church history«, in 1903²². Sokolov aimed at providing a historical and philosophical analysis of the term Byzantinism, which according to his teacher Kurganov had definitely had a pejorative meaning in the 19th century. In the lecture, Sokolov retold the common facts of the history of Church-society-relations in Byzantium and created a highly idealized image on the basis of the uncritical appreciation of primary sources. At the conclusion of his lecture, he himself acknowledged this fact, but defended the appropriateness of such an approach as an attempt to show the best side of Byzantium, not the worst that surely existed. Sokolov claimed: »The historical truth will be clearer if the positive phenomena are clearly named and principles and ideals are outlined and illustrated«²³. He stated his credo as a scientist: Byzantium had accomplished great cultural and political achievements and created an ideal of Byzantinism, which actually meant the »churched state«, »independent of how perfectly it was realized in practice«, as he carefully noted.

Although he made no reference to the Byzantine legacy in Russia in his programmatic lecture, in general he tried to demonstrate how the realization of the principle of Byzantinism, namely the crucial role that the Orthodox Church should play in all spheres of society, could lead to the creation of a similarly perfect society as Byzantium had been. He explained the fall of Byzantium as having occurred only due to external causes. And this lecture by Sokolov can be considered as a culmination of ideologically instrumentalised Byzantinism and Byzantine studies, which echoes and is perceived in Orthodox discourse to this day. Yet it was probably not the occasion on which Ivan Sokolov, along with archbishop Antonij Chrapovickij, was charged with preparing a note for the ministry of foreign affairs in 1915 in the name

of the Holy Synod²⁴. It was to contain the justification for the future government of Constantinople, assuming Russia was able to conquer the city. Sokolov created a detailed historical preface concerning the position of the Church in Byzantium. In his estimation, it was quite possible to restore the Byzantine Empire under the rule of the Russian czar and Constantinople could be one of the residences of the Russian czar. It is noteworthy that Sokolov is very moderate in this text compared to some of his contemporaries and colleagues concerning the future of the ecumenical patriarchate. For Sokolov, it should ideally stay independent under the protectorate of the Russian czar, who would be its patron and defend Orthodoxy not only in Constantinople but also in Palestine. It seemed the most appropriate moment to write about the crucial Byzantine influence on the Russian Church, but he did not offer any arguments in favour of this. It can be explained by the lack of arguments suitable for such an official document or, even more probably, by the irrelevance of the Byzantine legacy for the national self-consciousness of the Church.

Church History Writing in Emigration

The flourishing and fully developed reference to Byzantine legacy can be found in the last full Russian Church history, published in Paris in 1959²⁵. It was written by the last chief procurator of the Holy Synod, the emigré professor of Church history, Anton Kartašev, who was one of the founders of the theological institute of Saint-Serge in Paris. Kartašev summarized a lot of the previous Byzantium discourse in his »History of the Russian Church« without modifications and references to contemporary Byzantine studies. He explained the fact of the baptism of Rus' with Vladimir's desire to ennoble his origins by »becoming related to ›blue bloods‹ of the one and only Porphyrogenetos«: »Only this relationship gave birth to hopes of receiving all the benefits and secrets of its pre-eminent culture around the world from Byzantium and that an awakened Russian barbarian could join the Christian family of peoples as an equal member«²⁶. According to Kartašev, when Prince Vladimir introduced Christianity to Rus', he had hoped to make of his people an »enlightened, cultivated and brilliant nation like that of Byzantium«²⁷.

Kartašev explained the overwhelming authority of the Moscow prince, growing rapidly over Russian metropolitans, when he adopted the title of Czar by following the Byzantine idea of patronage over all Orthodox Christians: »Church

19 Kurganov, Otnošenija.

20 Skabalanovič, Vizantijskoe gosudarstvo.

21 Lebedeva, Russkie istoriki.

22 For more about Sokolov, see the article by Lora Gerd in this volume. Furthermore, see: Gerd, Russian policy and Stamatopoulos, From the Vizantinism.

23 Sokolov, O vizantinizme 775. »Историческая правда будет яснее, когда будут точно указаны явления положительного порядка, намечены принципы и идеалы и представлены фактические к ним иллюстрации.«

24 Sokolov, Konstantinopol'.

25 Kartašev, Istorija.

26 Ibidem 144. »Лишь это родство открывало надежды на получение от Византии всех благ и секретов ее первенствующей во всем мире культуры и прочного вхождения проснувшегося русского варвара в круг равноправных членов христианской семьи народов«.

27 Kartašev, Istorija 313.

hierarchy, which fostered Moscow's autocracy in word and deed, had to bow humbly under the authoritative hand of its own offspring»²⁸. He wrote that it was the clergy that had transferred Byzantine ideas about state authority from the beginning of the Christian Church to Rus' and implemented them. Moreover, the Russian Church promoted the rise of the Moscow princes' authority because of the substance of this idea: »The Moscow princes ought to emulate the ecclesiastical position of Byzantine emperors«²⁹.

Kartašev described the so-called *translatio imperii* as a conviction that emerged in Moscow after the fall of Constantinople, according to which »the Orthodox faith of the Greeks was mutilated and remained in its purity only in Rus', and that instead of the destroyed Constantinople, Moscow must be the world capital of Orthodoxy ruled over by the true faithful Czar chosen by God«³⁰.

»After the Ferrara-Florence Union and the Fall of Constantinople, the idea of the transfer of the rights and privileges of the Byzantine emperor to the Moscow prince rose among Russians and found its realization in the marriage of Ivan III (1462-1505) and Zoe Paleologina, the niece of the last Byzantine emperor. [...] By this marriage, it appeared as if the Moscow prince had acquired the formal legal rights to the Byzantine crown«³¹.

So Kartašev regarded this and other transferred symbols such as the two-headed eagle or the title »autocrat« as affirmations of the »vehement belief among Russian authorities and society as to transferring the world-historical role of the Byzantine Christian kingdom to Moscow that thus became a »Third Rome« by Divine Providence«³². Kartašev claimed that the monk Filofej had only formulated a view prevalent among the majority of the people in his famous concept. Kartašev's conclusion about the reliability of this historical construction seems to be even more implausible than most previous historiographical narratives from a time when critical source studies were not as commonly used as they were in the middle of the 20th century when Kartašev was writing.

He stated that after the Russian Church had become *de facto* autocephalous, Moscow should have been, but was

not, satisfied with its emancipation from the Greek Church and dared to go further.

»After 250 years of the Tatar yoke, the leading Russian tribe gathered around Moscow and developed an awareness which today is called the imperial consciousness. [...] The fact is that they [the Russians] did not give up, but boldly persevered [...]. The natural impulse had encouraged Russians fearlessly to discover their Russian mission in the context of global history and indicated the trueness of Muscovite pretensions to the providential transfer of the leading role of eternal Rome to Muscovite Orthodox czardom, which after the fall of the second Rome became the Third and Last Rome«³³.

All other alternative narratives such as that of Michail Gruševskij for general Ukrainian historiography or Professor Albert Ammann for a Church historiography, which Kartašev called »secular Ukrainism« and »Church Uniatism« respectively, he rejected as »defective historiography« that had »failed to challenge the irreversible Primate of Great Russia«. According to the author, all these attempts at alternative historiography were very instructive to future generations of historians who should avoid and moreover combat any doubts as to the imperial nature of Russia³⁴. He advised Church historians not to judge ancient Russian history in modern terms and valuations, but »to accept the course of Russian history as organically inevitable according to the unflinching instinct of biological self-affirmation«³⁵. Even today, may Russian historian use this mode of argument, referring to Russia as the recipient of a »providential transfer«, as well as other exclusive historical metaphors.

28 Kartašev, *Istorija* 354. »Церковная иерархия, словом и делом воспитавшая московское самодержавие, сама должна была смиренно подклониться под властную руку взлелеянного ею дитя.«

29 *Ibidem* 459. »Московские князья должны были явиться заместителями церковного положения византийских императоров.«

30 *Ibidem* 462. »Итак, после падения КПля на Москве сложилось убеждение, что у греков православная вера подверглась искажениям, что в чистейшем виде она сохранилась только на Руси, что всемирной столицей православия поэтому вместо разрушенного Царьграда должна стать Москва, управляемая истинно правоверным, богоизбранным царем.«

31 *Ibidem* 477 f. »Возникшая у русских после Флорентийской унии и падения КПля идея о переходе прав и привилегий византийских императоров на московского князя нашла себе реальное основание и поддержку в браке великого князя Ивана III Васильевича (1462-1505) с племянницей последнего греческого царя Зоей Палеолог [...] С этим браком московский государь как будто приобретал и формальные юридические права на византийскую корону.«

32 *Ibidem* 478. »[...] убеждение в переходе всемирно-исторической роли византийского христианского царства на Москву, которая, по благоволению Промысла, стала »Третьим Римом.«

33 *Ibidem* 488 f. »Изжив 250-летнее татарское иго, ведущее из русских племен, собравшись около Москвы, достигло того, что в новое время называется имперским самосознанием. Дерзнув отбросить греческий соблазн унии с Римом (это дерзновение веры), Москва решилась логически и на меньшее (дерзновение каноническое) – стать де факто автокефальной. При всей формальной скромности и осторожности Москвы, при твердом признании за греками исторического примата, новоявленные идеологи этой, отныне совершенно независимой и свободной Москвы этим могли бы и удовлетвориться, на этом и остановиться. И вот то, что они на этом не остановились, а смело двинулись в неожиданную ширь и даль, не смущаясь недвижностью мысли у других собратьев по православию, – этот именно инстинктивный призыв к дерзновенно смелой разгадке своего русского призвания в масштабе всемирной истории и стал навсегда признаком безошибочности претензий – утверждать провиденциальный переход на Московское православное царство ведущей роли вечного Рима, ставшего теперь, после падения Второго Рима – Римом Третьим и Последним.«

34 *Ibidem* 491.

35 *Ibidem* 510. »[...] признать органически неизбежным генеральный ход ее по безошибочному инстинкту биологического самоутверждения.«

Conclusion

In conclusion, contrary to the actual public discourse of Russian Orthodox spokesmen, there are no sufficient grounds to speak about the active reception and use of the Byzantine argument in Church historiography in any of its central works – except that of Kartašev. These authorized writings on Russian Church history provide no evidence for Byzantine heritage having been of formative moment in the development of a Russian Orthodox consciousness before the very end of the 19th century. It indicates also that there was no continuous self-attribution and self-reflection on the part of the Russian people as heirs to the Byzantine Empire and the Russian mission as the Third Rome. It was a notion newly invented at the end of the 19th century, partly due to newly discovered

and popularized sources and partly following trends in public thinking, which were to some extent provoked by the political constellations of the time. Only the last Church history by Kartašev contains a sophisticated narrative of Byzantine influence, and it was, oddly enough, written after the Russian Empire collapsed, doing away with the Russian Orthodox czar. Kartašev brought all forms of historiosophical speculation about Moscow as a successor of Constantinople to the historiography of the Russian Church. How stable this narrative is will only become clear when a new textbook on the history of the Russian Church will be written making a statement with regard to this problem. To date, »The History of the Russian Church« by Kartašev, along with Znamenskij's work, are still the main sources for the educational institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church.

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Summary / Zusammenfassung

The Reception of Byzantium in Russian Church Historiography

In the last twenty years, the depiction of Russia as the legitimate and direct successor of the Byzantine Empire and the Russian Orthodox Church as the genuine bearer of its religious culture has become received wisdom in Russian public discourse. These discussions actually hark back to the situation at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, a time when Byzantium and Byzantine heritage also appeared at the centre of public interest. The article focuses on the use of the Byzantine argument in the most famous historiographical writings of the Russian Orthodox Church as well as on the more specialized research concerning Byzantium and Church history, closely examining the speculative constructions of Byzantium as a reference point and instrument in the process of self-identification on the part of the Russian Church in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Die Rezeption von Byzanz in der russischen Kirchengeschichtsschreibung

Die Rede über Russland als direkten und legitimierten Nachfolger des Byzantinischen Imperiums sowie über die Russische Orthodoxe Kirche als authentische Trägerin der byzantinischen Religionskultur ist in den letzten zwanzig Jahren im russischen politischen Diskurs landläufig geworden. Diese Diskussionen verlaufen nach dem gleichen Muster wie am Ende des 19. und zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts, als Byzanz und das byzantinische Erbe ins Zentrum des öffentlichen Interesses gerückt war. Dieser Beitrag widmet sich der Nutzung des byzantinischen Arguments in den bekanntesten Werken der Kirchengeschichtsschreibung in Russland sowie in der Forschung, die sich gezielt mit der Frage des byzantinischen Einflusses auf die Geschichte der Russischen Kirche beschäftigte. Insbesondere werden die spekulativen Konstruktionen von Byzanz als Instrument in der Gestaltung der kirchlichen Identität im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert analysiert.