

Byzantine »Slavery« as Postcolonial Imagination: »Foreign« Rulers of a »Pure« Bulgarian Nation (1850-1930)

Until the 19th century, medieval religious lieux de mémoire such as the Kosovo myth (referring to the battle of Sultan Murad against Prince Lazar on Kosovo Polje in 1389), Kliment of Ohrid (ca. 835-916), Saints Sava (1175-1236), Cyril (ca. 826-869), and Methodius (815-885) were (re)produced not in national, but in dynastic and clerical social contexts and often across the borders of Church provinces and (former) realms: Saints labelled »Bulgarian« in the Ottoman Empire or the archbishopric of Ohrid were venerated in churches and monasteries of the nominally Serb patriarchate of Peć and vice versa. The aim of their veneration was primarily religious – the commemoration of the imagined community of the saints in heaven and the faithful on Earth. Cyril and Methodius were venerated in a Byzantine, then in a Bulgarian and overall Slavonic context as religious missionaries and scholars. They only gained a limited degree of fame among larger groups, as their relics are missing (Methodius) or are located outside the area (Cyril was buried in Rome).

Bishops Kliment – a prominent disciple of Cyril and Methodius – and Sava, son of the Serbian Grand Prince Stefan Nemanja and the first Serbian bishop, were venerated among a broader circle, their remains having been accessible, although in the case of Sava only until 1594, when they were allegedly burned by the Ottomans. The myth about the martyrs of the battle on Kosovo Polje in 1389 evolved first in liturgical texts, then in folk songs and tales.

Yet these lieux de mémoire did crystallize national identities or visions of national modernity only within the framework of national movements during the 19th century, although their initial veneration was, in the case of Cyril and Methodius, to a high degree Slavonic or transnational. In the 19th century, one can more or less clearly distinguish a secularization of the saints, while within the context of historicism and nationalism during the 1930s these saints served to sacralise nationalism¹.

In this context of religious lieux de mémoire², practices of referring to Byzantium after 1850 in Bulgarian texts will be presented here. These texts were largely published in news-

papers and non-scientific journals, with only a few of those examined here found in monographs. It will be argued that reference³ to Byzantium was a common European practice in the framework of invented traditions and historicism, at a time when it was modern to conceptualize an antiquity of one's own. This essay tries to analyse the rhetorical practices concerned as part of a postcolonial, post-Ottoman set of newly produced historical and national narratives: Independence was to be conceived, attained and legitimized by the stark rejection of anything connected with the former state of dependency. Contrary to the later Bulgarian point of view, encouraging citizens to identify as Bulgarians had been an Ottoman discursive strategy after Greek independence against widespread forms of Rhomean or Greek identities, especially among merchants in the cities of the region. Referring to Byzantium became for the evolving Bulgarian national narrative just another »Medievalism«⁴, as did the reference to the Second Bulgarian Tsardom during the establishment of the Third Bulgarian Tsardom⁵. It can be seen in the context of »multiple Antiquities«⁶ popularized across Europe, including the evolving modern Bulgarian ethnical discourse and Turkic national discourse on Pelasgia, Thrace or Turan alike⁷. The reference to and against Byzantium and the description of Greeks as enemies had, to some degree, already been prepared in Father Paisij's writings⁸. But the evolution of the imagination of a Christian, European Bulgarian nation by means of its conception as detached and isolated or at least emancipated from Greek and Ottoman contexts⁹ accelerated only well after 1850.

To begin with a monograph: Marin Drinov, one of the founders of modern Bulgarian historiography and mastermind of the Bulgarian national narrative – labelled and established not least by him as a »renaissance« in the sense of »risorgimento« and the German national »Wiedergeburt« of the early 19th century – described Tsar Boris in 1869 in his book on Bulgarian Church history not explicitly as a sacred but merely as a secular ruler and church founder. In this role

1 Very briefly: Rohdewald, Figures.

2 Extensively: Rohdewald, Götter.

3 e. g. Marciniak/Smythe, Reception.

4 d'Arcens, Medievalism.

5 Polyviannyi, Foundation, cf. Weber, Auf der Suche.

6 Klaniczay/Werner/Gecser, Multiple Antiquities.

7 Foss, Kemal Atatürk.

8 Daskalov, Bulgarian-Greek 225.

9 Cf. Van Meurs/Mungiu-Pippidi, Ottomans into Europeans.

Boris had a similar function to that of Sava under the Nemanjić dynasty, but of course the extent of his devotion in the framework of the invention of the Bulgarian nation in the 19th century was still significantly weaker. In this work, the idea of a »Phanariote yoke« during the late 18th and 19th century¹⁰ was much more important for Drinov than denouncing Byzantine rule over Bulgaria, although he also wrote about the »Byzantine yoke« during the 11th and 12th century¹¹. But even though the Byzantine Emperor Basileus II, after his victory in 1018, wished for the »annihilation« of the Bulgarians, »yet, he was forced to acknowledge, that their subjection under his Empire would not be lengthy, if he were to impose a heavy yoke on them. Thus, he did not dare to curb their internal administration, nor to impose a heavy tribute«¹².

Then, only a year later, in Drinov's anniversary interpretation of »One Thousand Years of the Bulgarian National Church 1870« for the newspaper Macedonia, published in Bulgarian in Constantinople, he wrote more explicitly about Boris as if he had had the idea that in the face of competition between Byzantium and Rome, a »national« church should be established, which he conceived as »purely national [čisto narodna] and free of any foreign-folkish [čuždo-narodno] influence«¹³. A Bulgarian nation and culture had to be established in the minds of 19th-century writers in strict distinction from »the Other«, which included not only Rome, but also Byzantium.

In the first comprehensive monograph on Bulgarian national history, published in 1876, one of the few other leading modern scholars of these years, Constantin Jireček, wrote: »The first reason [for the fall of the Tsardom of Tárnov] was Byzantinism [Byzantinismus]. The Bulgarians, adopting law and literature, habits good and bad [Sitten und Unsitten], from the defunct Byzantines, were pulled by their masters into the same grave«¹⁴. In this very context, Jireček also introduced the narrative of the Bulgarians' historical »double yoke«: »Physically, the once so esteemed and feared nation fell under the yoke of the Turks, spiritually under the yoke of the Greeks, and remained in this subjection until today, when it once again proves that its historical mission is by no means achieved yet«¹⁵. This view was to become dominant in the following decades, as will be shown in the following.

The idea of a foreign yoke or Fremdherrschaft, which is intrinsically modern, as Christian Koller has shown¹⁶, in Bulgaria, as elsewhere, was imagined as a difference between foreign and national governance: The latter was retrospectively projected onto the Middle Ages. Contrary to it, the Ottoman administration was seen as a yoke at the latest by

1893, when the novel *Under the Yoke* by the national poet Ivan Vazov was published.

Of course, such a national imagination of medieval history has little to do with today's state of research on Bulgarian history during the Middle Ages: Contrary to the notion of isolated homogenous cultures, delineated against each others and fighting for national survival, one can argue for the analysis of a medieval north-eastern Mediterranean or southern Europe (including Asia minor) as a »multiple contact zone« constituted by a multitude of more or less common cultural practices. When describing these cultural practices in their social and communicative settings, ethnic labels are not helpful. On an abstract level of interpretation, Byzantine, Slavic, Turkic, Cuman, Bulgarian or Seljuk elites, warriors and religious men, Ottomans and Western Europeans were interwoven in dense networks of confrontation and collaboration, constituting an unstable and heterogeneous region of communication with several centres of condensation and Constantinople at its core. This region was defined rather by the entanglement¹⁷ and competition of related or shared cultural practices of negotiation of difference, legitimization of power, religious worship, social habits, economics, regional dynastic alliances and factional warfare than by impermeable cultural, ethnic or imperial boundaries. All the involved realms were heterogeneous and rather unstable multi-ethnic empires on every social level¹⁸.

Yet, the example of Drinov shows, the imagined Middle Ages had a fundamental role to play in establishing Bulgarian modernity and Europeaness since the 19th century: This was to be the official interpretation after the establishment of the Bulgarian principality after the Congress of Berlin, though it was still only recognized as a suzerain entity under the sovereignty of the Sultan.

For example, in 1885, in a speech during a commemoration of the death of Methodius, the former foreign minister of Bulgaria, Marko Balabanov, broadened the context to the so-called »oriental question« and to the Bulgarian history in the context of Byzantium:

»It is remarkable that one of the reasons why Bulgaria later fell, was the Byzantinism [Vizantinismät], from which the Bulgarians took not only the laws, literature and customs, but also [its] perversion [razvrat], and by this civilization of Byzantinism the nobility and the clergy and the urban population were also infected. Byzantinism is not really a political example to give to [other] people, and even less to emulate; and rather strong is the verdict spoken by the historians, especially by the Western ones, on Byzantinism«¹⁹.

10 Drinov, *Istoričeski pregled* 139-148.

11 *Ibidem* 105.

12 *Ibidem* 55.

13 According to Drinov, Boris wanted to have a Church »which should not be different inwardly from the One, Catholic (Sábornja) and Apostolic Church, but outwardly it should be purely national (čisto narodna) and free of any foreign national (čuždo-narodno) influence«. Drinov, *Tyseštelétieto*.

14 Jireček, *Geschichte* 373.

15 *Ibidem* 372.

16 Koller, *Fremdherrschaft*.

17 Cf. Daskalov/Marinov, *Entangled Histories*.

18 Rohdewald, *Kyrrill und Method*.

19 Balabanov, *Déloto* 24f.

Montesquieu and Gibbon are mentioned by name. But Balabanov then also refers to other, younger Western historians, who were judging Byzantium »more independently and more fairly«²⁰. Balabanov continues his analysis and asks the rhetorical question: »Without Byzantium, would it have been possible for mankind to have had the great Renaissance during the 16th century?«²¹. Thus, in his eyes, the »influence of Byzantium was, obviously, not small and not so disastrous«²² for Bulgaria, too. But Balabanov's relatively positive reassessment of Byzantium did not gain a larger echo in the evolving Bulgarian discourse focused upon in this article.

D. Cuhlev, a teacher at a lyceum (grammar school) in Russe, explained at a celebration in honour of the brothers in 1892 that he assumed their missionary deeds to be the beginnings of a »normal« historical »existence« and development of the Bulgarians: »Bulgaria since went on in its normal way of existence. The deeds of SS. Cyril and Methodius did win a full victory over disastrous Byzantinism when they conquered the Bulgarian people and all Southern Slavs«²³. As if Cyril and Methodius did »salvage and gave rebirth« to the Bulgarian people »with their genius, their work and their deeds«, they also, then, triumphed over »Byzantinism«. And if the Bulgarian people remembered this fact as the »beginning of its conscious existence« or birthday, then it would also prevail now against the contemporary Phanariotes of Macedonia:

»Thus, dear ladies and gentlemen, citizens, the Bulgarian people celebrates the memory of its great fathers and apostles, SS. Cyril and Methodius, who saved it from its downfall and restored it to a new life by their abilities, their genius, and their work and great deeds. At the same time the Bulgarian people celebrates the beginning of its conscious existence and commemorates the glorious victory against pernicious Byzantinism. In the view of this great triumph it is a shame, that even today, this [pernicious Byzantinism] is gaining strength from the mouths of some rotten [razvaleni] Greek Phanariote bishops, to pour its disruptive elements among those Bulgarians settled in beautiful Macedonia«²⁴.

For Cuhlev – as for many others – the rhetorical propagation of a battle against »Greek« bishops was more important than the fight against imperial Ottoman domination: Instead, he directly related the alleged »victory« over Byzantine Constantinople to the ongoing ecclesiastical conflict against »Greek Phanariote bishops« in the historical – in his view, Bulgarian – region of Macedonia. The fight for this region should help inspire the whole Bulgarian people on its way to »future greatness«²⁵.

The clerics of the newly consolidated Bulgarian Church embraced this discourse, too. Just after the establishment of its official weekly Newspaper of the Church in 1900, an

editorial article explained: Allegedly, Boris had known the Bulgarians needed a »national idea [nacionalna ideja]« and an »independent« culture in order not to serve just as the »dough« of Byzantium or Rome. Under his rule, the Bulgarian borders reached even further than under the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano. »This is our saintly inheritance, our all-national ideal. This creative idea consists of the holy Orthodox faith, the schools, ethical perfection, the army, the independent culture and of all Bulgarians with a spirit and in a fatherland.« Thus, the official newspaper of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church supported the modern, Orthodox and national monarchy by referring to Saint Boris and stressing an imagined detachment from the Byzantine heritage²⁶.

For the commemoration of the thousandth anniversary of the death of Saint (Tsar) Boris, the priest Mihail Himitlijski held a sermon in St. Nedeljka Church in Sofia on 2 May 1907, in which he explained the importance of the date »so that we remember the author of our entry among the number of peoples of the Christian faith«. Boris was important for the priest not because of the traditional qualities of a saint, but due to his allegedly »tireless work« »to transform his people to a whole, to create an organized state with its own [samobitna] national culture and Church«²⁷. Because of his »work« – especially »the baptism of Bulgarians« – , neither Cyril nor Methodius nor Kliment, but Boris should be seen as the founder of the building »that we now call the Bulgarian Church, the Bulgarian school, the Bulgarian country – the state of the Bulgarian national culture«²⁸. For this nationalist political priest, the reference to Boris seemed suitable to counter determinedly the alleged day-to-day political hazards of »our social and public life«. According to Himitlijski, remembrance of these concepts was of most urgent importance exactly at this moment:

»Everyone among us has to ask himself these questions during the contemporary difficult moments of our societal and political life, when the ancient foes of Bulgardom, of Slavdom and Orthodoxy are attacking us and want to cut us with their claws, to destroy once and for all our hope of pan-Bulgarian liberation and pan-Slavic unity«²⁹.

The threat the preacher saw himself exposed to was imagined still to be the same as it was a thousand years ago – »old Byzantium and ancient Rome« – and, thus, should be considered as of the utmost seriousness:

»Bulgarian Brothers! Ancient Byzantium and old Rome are still alive today in the persons of the patriarch of Tsarigrad [Constantinople] and the pope in Rome. Also today, as centuries ago and throughout entire centuries, they are greedily looking to devour us. [...] What should we do? We can answer this question: Nothing else but to follow the steps of

20 Ibidem 25.

21 Ibidem 28.

22 Ibidem 29.

23 Cuhlev, Reč' za značienieto 13.

24 Ibidem 13.

25 Ibidem.

26 Čarkoven Věstnik, 5.5.1900, Nr. 4, 1 f.

27 Himitlijski, Prazdnikät 22.

28 Ibidem 26.

29 Ibidem.

Saint Tsar Boris and those of his great successors who have shown that they have been warriors for Bulgarian literature and language, that they loved them, struggled for them and, doing this, worked to enshrine in the soul of Bulgarians the three principles of our life: Orthodoxy, nationality and Slavicness [pravoslovie [sic], narodnost' i slavjanstvo]«³⁰.

Thus, he evoked a permanent danger and knew how to deal with it by devising a supposedly indigenous and independent national culture. By invoking Uvarov's formula of Russian national autocratic imperialism (pravoslavie, narodnost', samoderžavie), the Bulgarian political context was to be adapted to a Bulgarian general Slavic national action framework to help to strengthen so-called »life« principles »in the soul of the Bulgarians'«³¹.

Only after the Balkan Wars³², and directly before the First World War, Bishop Neofit Velički described the brothers in 1914 and the day of the »Slavenobulgarian Enlighteners« in the Newspaper of the Church in a more Bulgarian nationalistic tone and wished for »fighters« for the ideal of the brothers: Important for him was the confrontation with alleged internal weaknesses of Bulgarian society. The two »giants [velikany]«, the descendants of the »Bulgarian tribe«, ought to be Bulgaria's »connection with the cultured peoples [s kulturnite narodi], its contribution in the pantheon of the enlightened humanity«. Cyril and Methodius had played, in the eyes of the bishop, a primarily secular role: Overall, the culture of the Bulgarians was to be »Cyrilomethodianic« in character: With them the »pure-Slavic Bulgarian culture« is supposed to have begun, which allegedly had brought forth »pure« Bulgarian »ethics«³³. The Bishop characterized the subsequent centuries as »slavery [robstvo]«. He held »Byzantinism [vizantijština]«, or to should be held doubly responsible, as they »had called the Turks for help«. But also the Bulgarian rulers had »countless infirmities [nedāzi, even abuses] in the state organism« to answer for:

At this time, but especially under the Ottomans, the clergy had held divine »watch« over the imagined whole of »nation«. Later, during the so called national »rebirth«, people such as Father Paisi allegedly had helped »national [narodnoto] self-awareness to awaken and to be reborn«³⁴. Ultimately internal faults such as those of the politicians or »social life« had been responsible for the »slavery«, but not external factors such as the strength of Byzantium or of the Ottomans. This made it possible to display the »rebirth« as the result of a supposed moral social recovery: »The vices and defects in social life, which had led into slavery, have now ceased to exist. Also the national [nacionalnoto] sense was born again with no difficulties [lesno se vāzraždāše].« »Slavery« or especially Byzantine, but also Ottoman domination, appeared in this

interpretation – as in some late medieval interpretations – to a certain extent as divine punishment for »vice«³⁵.

The bishop used the opportunity and the sense of crisis to claim – by means of Cyril and Methodius – a leadership role for the Orthodox Church in society and in the state: He presented the Church as a guarantee of the existence of the state as well as of the people – it secured »the national particular [narodnoto samobitno] and independent future as a state. Orthodoxy should be »flesh and blood«, the »soul« of the Bulgarian people, which »was born and raised in it«. The Church's pretension to be – according to the Byzantine tradition of »symphonia« – an essential support of the state was extended to the claim that the Church was the basis for the existence of the imagined nation and its state in the present and in the future: At last, Byzantium was, in this context, a positive example for Bulgarian society³⁶.

The narrative figure of the »double yoke« or »double slavery« referred to here had already been introduced to the Bulgarian public debate by this moment. Together with the rhetoric of the »new rebirth« during the 19th century, this strategy aimed to get rid of an imagined double yoke of »foreign faith« and »foreign language«, i.e. the »yoke of the Phanariots«, which was constructed with the same argumentative logic as the »Turkish yoke« and substituted this latter to some degree: Thus, the Bulgarians appeared as victims of multiple oppressions by strangers. While Ottomans and Greeks had hitherto been depicted as the main enemies, now Serbs and Greeks were vilified in a narrative following the same logics: These »false friends« were allegedly more dangerous than »Turkish slavery [robstvo]«³⁷. By 1916, Cyril and Methodius were presented in the official newspaper of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church as fundamental to Bulgarian national and cultural existence³⁸.

After the First World War and during the 1930s, these discourses were continued and radicalized even further: In 1937, the explicitly pro-Hitler publisher M. Esiv reduced Ivan's miracles to the protection of a Bulgarian national identity against a policy of the Greek clergy and of Byzantium to »destroy« anything Bulgarian:

»All the efforts of the Greek clergy to destroy the Bulgarian Church with all its customs and to replace them by Greek [traditions] were without success. The Bulgarian clergy was deeply inspired by the spirit of the Blessed Wonderworker Ivan and therefore has courageously defended the essence [sāštnot' ta], rules and traditions of the Bulgarian Church's life. While defending this, the national [nacionalnijat] face of the Bulgarian people was left untouched. There is no and can be no doubt that it is only through the wonders of the God-supported [Bogonosnija] father Ivan, that all attempts

30 Himitlijski, Prazdnikāt.

31 Ibidem 27.

32 Cf. Rohdewald, Religious Wars?

33 Čärkoven Vēstnik, 10.5.1914, Nr. 19, 217-219, here 217.

34 Ibidem 218.

35 Ibidem.

36 Ibidem.

37 Čärkoven Vēstnik, 27.5.1916, Nr. 20, 197 f.

38 Ibidem.

by the Byzantine Church to appropriate all Bulgarian spiritual and material values were in vain«³⁹.

From today's analytical point of view, of course, rather the opposite is correct: The appropriation of Byzantine values by Bulgarian thinkers in the Middle Ages and during the 19th century is a showcase for the study of translation or the circulation of knowledge. But during the 1930s, this was seen quite differently in Bulgaria: In 1938, the rector of the Saint Kliment University of Sofia, Professor Genov, and the philologist and subsequent minister of education, Professor Jocov, gave a public speech about »Bulgaria and the Slavic world«. In this lecture, the rector stressed the highly questionable point »that of the four empires – that of the Franks, the Byzantine Empire and the Arab Caliphate [and the Bulgarian tsardom], [three] decayed, but only the empire of the Bulgarians had been a national [nacionalna] one and did [for this reason] not decay«⁴⁰.

During the Second World War, nationalist escalation continued: The Byzantinist and university professor Petăr Mutafčiev wrote in 1941/42 in the Journal Education (prosveta), published by the »Federation of Education in Bulgaria«, an essay under the title: »The works of Cyril and Methodius in the cultural mission of the Bulgarian people.« After a detailed analysis of the consolidation of Bulgarian society during the 8th and 9th centuries, the historian saw it as an accomplishment of the two brothers from Solun to have prevented a failure of the nation-building of the Bulgarians facing the dangers of Byzantine missionaries. Their achievement was to enable the »nationalization« of the Church, and thus the protection of Bulgaria from »foreign interference« and the prevention of »degeneration – in the sense of »Entartung« – of the Bulgarian people. A religious dimension of the activity of the two brothers did not play an important role in this view:

»But that this fatal end has been prevented and that our people did not vanish even before its coming to existence had been accomplished was the merit of the two brothers from Solun. [...] By means of Slavonic speech and liturgy, Christendom has given us ethical contents and was consolidated. By the strengthening of teaching, the leaders of our people's clergy were prepared. Step by step, the leadership of the Church was taken over by Bulgarians. Because of its nationalization [nacionalizacijata], the possibility of external interference in our spiritual life and, thus, in the leadership of our fate as a state has been eliminated once and for all. Instead of leading to degeneration [obezrođjavane], the new faith caused

a mighty rebound of national consciousness [narodnata svěst'] and an unlimited confidence in our own powers«⁴¹.

The historian praised the propagation of the Orthodox faith not because of its Christian inspiration, but because of the »upswing of the public consciousness [narodnata svěst'] «caused by it, and the entirely secular and national »boundless faith in our own forces«.

Conclusion: Translation, Traveling Concepts, Emancipation, Postcolonialism

With the establishment of a Bulgarian state in a European framework 1878, which until 1908 was still under Ottoman sovereignty and highly vulnerable, part of its elite's strategy to legitimize this project and emancipate it from the Ottoman or competing Greek and Serbian contexts was the reference to medieval empires and religious lieux de mémoire. From a postcolonial perspective, we can discern in this rhetoric not so much a »mimicry« of the cross-regional centre and metropolis Constantinople as the imitation of the Western master narrative of the modern nation state, even if this circulated in Bulgaria by the transmission via the centre of the Ottoman Empire, where several Bulgarian newspapers were published and whose elite was involved in this same mobility of ideas. Thus, seen in a postcolonial context, Orthodox religion, or Ivan Rilski and Cyril and Methodius, and the notion of a »double slavery« offered usable means to promote a new society in which nationalized religion and national progress as an Orthodox Bulgarian modernity were to be the future, delineated and located against »the Turk« – inside⁴² or outside Bulgaria – within the boundaries of an imagined Europe in former Ottoman lands. This development continued, as shown, until the Second World War, and, afterwards, remained – with several changes – the basis of national self-consciousness until today. At the same time, a positive reference to Byzantium can be discerned in the fact that Byzantine architectural features were adopted e.g. in the neo-Byzantine Aleksandr Nevskij Memorial Church in Sofia, planned and built between 1879 and 1924, in honour of Russian aid during the uprising and war of 1876-1878. Thus, the new Bulgarian state should be located inside, even though at the periphery, of Europe, but still with reference to the historical regional centre of Constantinople, and in this dimension remaining in a »Transottoman« context⁴³.

39 Esiv, Trānlivijāt pāt 13f.

40 Utro, 23.5.1938, Nr. 8637, 6.

41 Mutafčiev, Dēloto 762.

42 Neuburger, The Orient within.

43 Cf. the Priority Programme Transottomanica 1981, founded by the German Research Foundation (DFG): [www.transottomanica.de].

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Summary / Zusammenfassung

Byzantine »Slavery« as Postcolonial Imagination: »Foreign« Rulers of a »Pure« Bulgarian Nation (1850-1930)

Since the 19th century, Medieval religious lieux de mémoire such as SS. Cyril and Methodius and others served in the Bulgarian-Ottoman context to imagine a national past, present and future. Within this function, they served also as platforms to refer to imaginations of Byzantium: In newspapers and other publications, Byzantium served as a negative »other« to consolidate a positive Bulgarian public image of »one's own« nation, tsardom and statehood. The national Bulgarian »Rebirth« was to emancipate Bulgarians not only from the Ottoman »yoke«, but also from Byzantine or modern Greek/Phanariote domination, which were combined to be depicted as a »double yoke«.

Byzantinische »Sklaverei« als postkoloniale Imagination: »fremde« Herrscher über die »reine« bulgarische Nation (1850-1930)

Mittelalterliche religiöse lieux de mémoire wie die heiligen Kyrill und Method und andere dienten seit dem 19. Jahrhundert im bulgarisch-osmanischen Zusammenhang zur Imagination einer für möglichst alle Bulgaren in jeder Hinsicht zentralen nationalen Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft. Im Rahmen dieser Funktion wurden sie zu Medien auch der Beschreibung des Byzantinischen Reichs: In Zeitungen und anderen Veröffentlichungen wurde Byzanz als das negative »Andere« entworfen, um ein positiv besetztes bulgarisches Projekt einer »eigenen« Nation, eines »eigenen« Zarenreiches bzw. »eigener« Staatlichkeit zu entwickeln. Die nationale bulgarische »Wiedergeburt« sollte Bulgarien nicht nur vom Osmanischen »Joch«, sondern gleichermaßen vom byzantinischen bzw. von zeitgenössischer griechischer, phanariotischer Bevormundung emanzipieren, was in der Kombination zur post-osmanischen Rede vom angeblichen »doppelten Joch« führte. Dieses Narrativ blieb aber gerade mit der Anstrengung einer doppelten Emanzipation von Konstantinopel weiterhin erkennbar in einem gewissermaßen transosmanischen Kontext verankert.