

CONSTRUCTING THE IMAGE OF BYZANTIUM IN THE 20TH CENTURY: THE RUSSIAN THEME IN THE GREEK “NEO-BYZANTINE” PROJECT

Aleksey Kamenskikh

DOI: 10.17846/CL.2020.13.1.187-196

Abstract: KAMENSKIKH, Aleksey. *Constructing the Image of Byzantium in the 20th Century: the Russian Theme in the Greek “Neo-Byzantine” Project*. The article examines a specific form of cultural reception. Since the end of the First World War a group of Greek intellectuals (Photis Kontoglou and Nikos Pentzikis in iconography and painting, Dimitris Pikionis in architecture, Basil Tatakis, John Romanides, Christos Yannaras, and John Zizioulas in their philosophical and theological writings) elaborated the forms of manifestation of the principle, which may be characterised as “Neo-Byzantinism”. Author of the article points to the fact that some of the above-mentioned Greek intellectuals found the detailed development of philosophical, theological and artistic aspects of this model in the works of Russian religious philosophers and Byzantinists of the 19th and 20th c. Greek authors “recognised” in the works created by the representatives of “the Third Rome” the cultural model appropriate for “the Second Rome”, perceiving this model as their *own*.

Author of the article seeks to shed some light on the most interesting moments of such perception and – as far as it goes – to describe some key principles of this play of reciprocal reflection of Russian and Greek cultural identities.

Keywords: *patterns of national mythology, Byzantium, Russian philosophy, Greek «Neo-Byzantinism», Pavel Florensky, Leonid Ouspensky, Photis Kontoglou, Basil Tatakis, Christos Yannaras*

Abstrakt: KAMENSKIKH, Aleksey. *Konštrukcia obrazu Byzancie v 20. storočí: ruská téma v gréckom neobyzantskom projekte*. Autor skúma špecifickú formu kultúrneho prijatia. Koncom prvej svetovej vojny skupina gréckych intelektuálov (Photis Kontoglou a Nikos Pentzikis v ikonografii a maliarstve, Dimitris Pikionis v architektúre, Basil Tatakis, John Romanides, Christos Yannaras a John Zizioulas vo svojich filozofických a teologických spisoch) spracovali formy prejavu princípu, ktorý možno charakterizovať ako neobyzantinizmus. Autor článku poukazuje na skutočnosť, že niektorí z vyššie uvedených gréckych intelektuálov našli podrobný vývoj filozofických, teologických a umeleckých aspektov tohto modelu v dielach ruských náboženských filozofov a byzantológov z 19. a 20. storočia. Grécki autori rozoznávajú v spisoch, ktoré vytvorili predstavitelia Tretieho Ríma, kultúrny model vhodný pre Druhý Rím a vnímajú tento model ako *svoj vlastný*.

Autor článku objasňuje najzaujímavejšie okamihy takéhoto vnímania a – pokiaľ je to možné – popisuje niektoré kľúčové princípy tejto hry vzájomnej reflexie ruskej a gréckej kultúrnej identity.

Kľúčové slová: *vzory národnej mytológie, Byzancia, ruská filozofia, grécky „neo-byzantinizmus“, Pavel Florensky, Leonid Ouspensky, Photis Kontoglou, Basil Tatakis, Christos Yannaras*

„Eidetic Byzantium” in Russian and Modern-Greek Historical Imagination

Nations, as well as individuals, build and sculpt in history their own images – as a rule, focusing on one or another pattern. Such patterns — ideal-semantic constructs that serve as a kind of guiding lines in the constitution of one’s own national and cultural identity, — are themselves an independent and very interesting class of objects for historical research. The mechanisms of such “image-building” were brilliantly described by Benedict Anderson in his “Imagined Communities” (Anderson 1983). For Russia, since the time of the “Legend of the princes of Vladimir”, a special place among such “patterns” was occupied by the image of the Second Rome, Byzantium.¹ Over the last five centuries, this image has undergone numerous metamorphoses in the Russian cultural and political imagination; its significance for the constitution of the Russian identity has sometimes been overshadowed (for example, in the reign of Peter I), then grew – for example, during the time of the Catherine’s the Great “Greek project”. The image of Byzantium became the most important for the Russian political imagination in the last period of the empire’s existence – since the middle of the 19th century to 1917. In this period by efforts of the Slavophiles, Konstantin Leontiev², and a group of brilliant Russian historians - Byzantinists, built the “Eidetic Byzantium” – a kind of model, which should serve as a pattern for organization of Russian statehood, church, and culture.

In general, the history of metamorphoses which the image of “the Second Rome” underwent in the texts of the thinkers of “the Third Rome” has been researched well enough.³ Unfortunately, one cannot say the same about the understanding of a role which this “pattern of the Eidetic Byzantium” constructed by the Russian philosophers, historians and theologians at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, has played and is continuing to play in the genesis of one of the most significant variants of national and cultural identity of the contemporary Greeks.

Since the end of the First World War one may observe a very interesting tendency in various fields of the Greek culture, a tendency which may be determined in a first approximation as “Neo-Byzantinism”. It manifested itself in renewed interest to Alexandros Papadiamantis’ novels and stories, in architecture of Dimitris Pikionis, in iconography and painting of Photis Kontoglou and Nikos Pentzikis, in philosophical and theological works of Basil Tatakis, and then, since the ’60s – in writings of John Romanides, Christos Yannaras, and John Zizioulas (Yannaras 2006, 251-308; Larionov 2012). Shortly, the main idea of this cultural tendency might be expressed in such a way: Greece is not an ordinary nation, its identity cannot be structured according to the model of an ordinary neo-European national state (surely, in spite of just this process actually proceeds during the 20th century). The “Neo-Byzantinists” have found the basic principle of Greek culture in *the Byzantine Orthodoxy* as a supra-territorial and, moreover, supra-ethnic cultural model.

It seems to be important that some of the above-mentioned Greek intellectuals find the detailed development of philosophical, theological and artistic aspects of this model in the works of Russian religious philosophers and byzantinists of the 19th and the 20th century – from the early Slavophiles, like Ivan Kirejevsky and Aleksey Khomyakov, up to Russian emigrate authors like George Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky and Leonid Ouspensky. It seems significant that Greek authors “recognize” in writings created by the representatives of “the Third Rome” the cultural model appropriate for “the Second one”, perceiving this model as their *own*.

¹ Surely, Russia was not alone in its claim to the status of the heir to Byzantium – it suffices to recall the coat of arms of the Austrian Habsburgs.

² See, first of all, his article “Byzantinism and the Slavs” (Leontiev 1885, 81-193). See also a study on Konstantin Leontiev’s “Byzantinism” carried out by Andrey Teslya (Teslya 2014, 162-195).

³ The observation of the key moments of this process, from the time of Sophia Paleologue until our days, Sergey A. Ivanov, a Russian researcher of Byzantium, gives in his public lecture (Ivanov 2009).

In our article we would like to shed some light on the most interesting moments of such perception and – as far as it goes – to describe some key principles of this play of reciprocal reflection of Russian and Greek cultural identities.

Photis Kontoglou and Russian Philosophy of Icon

“The Neo-Byzantine movement” might be understood, to some extent, as a form of reaction on failure of the Greek cultural and political project that had its beginning in the revolution of 1821 and the tragic result in destruction of the Greek communities in the Asia Minor in 1923 and in Constantinople after 1955. From the very beginning of the Greek revolution the struggle against the Ottoman Empire had distinctly *national* character; its aim was the foundation of the national state of the Greeks, not the restoration of the Byzantium in some form.⁴ It was not accidental that the founders of the Kingdom of Greece called themselves not *the Romaioi* (or *the Christianoi*), as did the Byzantine Greeks whose identity was established by the consciousness themselves as the Orthodox Christians and heirs of Rome, but *the Hellenes*. As most of national political projects, the idea of future Greek national state had its perspective and retrospective aspects. The first, a quasi-Napoleonic irredentist Μεγάλη Ιδέα, “the Great Idea”, supposed the reunification all the parts of the scattered Greek nation in one political whole. The new state, with Constantinople as a capital, ought to embrace all the territories of the Balkans, the Archipelago, Asia Minor and the North shore of the Black Sea. The second, “retrospective” aspect of the project, presupposed reinterpretation of the image of Byzantine Empire which was perceived now not in its real polyethnic and multi-linguistic manifoldness but first of all as *the state of the Greeks* (Livaniou 2008, 259-261; Anderson 1983, 71-72).⁵ Some key points of attempts to realize this project were: establishment of the Kingdom of Greece (1832), “the Bulgarian schism” and a series of Greek-Bulgarian conflicts (from ’60s of XIX c.), failed intervention in Odessa (1918–1919) and the tragic endpoint – downfall of the Pontic Greek communities, massacre in Smyrna and all “the Asia Minor catastrophe” (Μικρασιατική καταστροφή) in 1922–1923.⁶

Maybe it is no accident that *Photis Kontoglou* (Φώτης Κόντογλου, 1895–1965), in 1922 a young painter and a teacher who was to become one of the most influential figures of “the Neo-Byzantine” movement, was among more than one and a half million Greeks having been departed from the Asia Minor. By that time Ph. Kontoglou had experience of studying at the Athens School of Fine Art, travelling in Western Europe, working in Paris as a book illustrator. But, as his biographer Nikos Zias writes, “the tragedy of Greek Asia Minor has a tremendous effect on him, separating him radically from the West, on the one hand, and, on the other, making him feel responsible for the continuation, even in another space, of the long-lived tradition which had withstood the dissolution of the Byzantine Empire and survived for four centuries and was now in danger of being completely lost as it had been uprooted from its own place...”.⁷ In the

⁴ Sure, I mean here only the prevailing tendency, the most significant among the Greek population of the Peloponnese and the Central Greece. Ideas of the so called Phanariots, rather influential in the 18th century and at the first stage of the Greek national struggle, were up to the middle of the XIX c. pushed to the sidelines, together with the Phanariots themselves. See: (Papachristou 1992; Sowards 1996).

⁵ It is not wonderful that development of this nationalistic tendency provoked the split within millet-i Rûm, the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire: the Bulgarians, for example, began to see in the Orthodox episcopos and in the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople himself the ethnic Greeks predominantly (Gerd 2006, 239-307).

⁶ See: (Řoutil – Košťálová – Novák 2017, 98-112, 311-338; Sowards 1996, lecture 6 and 14).

⁷ Nikos Zias’ text is cited in translation of Helen Mathioudakis. See: (Zias 1975).

spring of 1923 the painter visited the Mount Athos and his artistic career took a new direction: “Experiencing a kind of holy intoxication on Athos, [Kontoglou] set about copying wall-paintings and icons and made it his task to unravel the secrets of Byzantine art, while at the same time he painted the Athos landscape, the monasteries and their monks, and wrote short tales brimming over with life and poetry” (Zias 1997, 15).

In the following years Kontoglou restores wall paintings and creates numerous frescos and icons on wood in tens of churches along all Greece, he works at the Byzantine Museum of Athens, at the Coptic Museum in Cairo, manages the Byzantine Museum in Corfu, and writes numerous works on hagiographic heritage of Byzantium. By efforts of Fotius Kontoglou and his pupils “Neo-Byzantine” style has become predominant in contemporary Greek iconography.

It is important to note, for the aims of our article, that the “methodological horizon” for Kontoglou’s views on the phenomenon of Orthodox icon was formed to a large extent by the writings of Leonid Ouspensky – Kontoglou’s friend, a Russian icon-painter, historian of icon and a lecturer of iconography at the Orthodox institute of St. Dionysius in Paris. In 1948 Kontoglou supervised the Greek translation of Ouspensky’s brochure “L’Icône, Vision du Monde Spirituel” (Ouspensky 1948; Doolan 2008, 13). Some scholars note the influence of Ouspensky’s works on Kontoglou and they emphasize that «the bulk of Kontoglou’s writings were published *after* this encounter with the writings of Ouspensky» (Freeman 2009, 33). It is important to be noted that through Ouspensky’s writings Kontoglou was affected *by the whole tradition* of Russian philosophy and theology of icon, elaborated in the first decades of the 20th century in the writings of Eugene Trubetskoy (Trubetskoy 1916a, Trubetskoy 1916b), Paul Florensky (Florensky 1967; Florensky 1972; Florensky 1998, 341-448), and Sergiy Bulgakov (Bulgakov 1931).⁸

Actually, a contemporary reader of Kontoglou’s writings on iconography⁹ encounters with the concepts known for him from Bulgakov’s “Icon and Veneration of Icons” or, especially, from “Iconostasis” of P. Florensky (though, perhaps, some of these concepts are treated in Kontoglou’s works in simplified and strictly polemic mode). Bulgakov, Florensky and Kontoglou suggest that Byzantine iconography was not a stepping-stone on the way to the innovations of the Italian Renaissance, but the highest point in development of religious art. Its essence is symbolic realism. Renaissance art has the immanent, naturalistic and illusionistic character (which expresses itself, for example, in use of the “direct” linear perspective that makes a spectator the central point of the world; in use of natural phenomena like clouds and sunrays for presentation of the divine, and so on); and developed in a close connection with the philosophical rationalistic immanentism of its time. Unlike to “modern”,¹⁰ or Renaissance art, Byzantine iconography intends to present the transcendent spiritual world (and, as a visible image of the invisible, an icon is “a window” in this world); this art has the liturgical and *anagogical* character (Kontoglou 1964). Absence of linear perspective and shadows in Orthodox iconography, transformed proportions of human bodies do not mean lack of skill of icon-painters. These stylistic features of *hagiographia* (along

⁸ It is true, that although one may find numerous references on the works by Evgeniy Trubetskoy and Sergiy Bulgakov already in the early Ouspenskiy’s works on theology of icon, the references on the works of Paul Florensky appeared only in the second edition of Ouspenskiy’s “La Théologie de l’icône dans l’Église orthodoxe” (Ouspenskiy 1980), after the first Florensky’s posthumous works on philosophy of icon, “Reversed Perspective” (Florensky 1967) and “Iconostasis” (Florensky 1972), were published in the Soviet Union. So, I should recognize, that Potius Kontoglou could hardly know P.Florensky’s philosophy of icon. Similarity of both authors’ views on phenomenon of the Orthodox icon may be interpreted as independent development of close ideas from congenial basis.

⁹ For example, (Kontoglou 1964).

¹⁰ Kontoglou explores the terms “modern” and “naturalistic” as synonymous. So, he may speak about “Hellenistic modernism” and “modernism” of Baroque icons as relative phenomena.

with all other means and forms of Orthodox liturgical art) lead a human to experience of the alive reality which is not a continuation of this immanent space (hence the absence of direct perspective), to the world where shadows do not exist and where each creature undergoes "the beautiful transformation".

As a moment not of conceptual dependency but rather of congeniality of Kontoglou's and Florensky's positions we may note a specific relation of these authors to art of avant-garde. Both authors find a kind of similarity between traditional Christian art and avant-garde artistic searching in a negation of naturalism and aspiration to the invisible.¹¹

Basil Tatakis: "Philosophy of Byzantium has not yet uttered its final word"

Another point of specific reception by a Greek intellectual of the Russian intellectual tradition as a modus of the Byzantine one (and hence, by-turn – the reason for declaration about "the vital force of the Byzantine spirit"), we find in the last chapter of the famous "Byzantine Philosophy" of *Basil Tatakis* (Βασίλειος Ν. Τατάκης, 1897 – 1986). The book of B. Tatakis was published at first in 1949 in French as a supplement volume of Émile Bréhier's series "Histoire de la philosophie". In his work B. Tatakis undertook the pioneering attempt to study the history of Byzantine philosophy in its entirety over one thousand years. Before that Byzantine philosophy was considered by professional historians of philosophy as a far periphery in relation to the main way of philosophical movement, "an aberrant offshoot of Western philosophy, a storehouse for the treasures of Hellenism, which from the 13th through the 15th century, would, when needed, nourish Western thought" (Bréhier 2003, viii). Enormous number of philosophical sources was not published and waited for their study in manuscript libraries all over the world. Tatakis has entered in scientific use a large amount of almost unknown texts. He succeeded to present Byzantine philosophy as an autonomous discipline, distinct from Christian theology. He initiated an approach in which theories and arguments of Byzantine thinkers began to be taken philosophically seriously; their writings were no longer simply studied as works of the past of mainly antiquarian or historical interest, but rather were studied as philosophical works on their own merit. As a brilliant historian of ancient philosophy, B. Tatakis shows the ways, different from the Western ones, in which classical heritage of Platonism and Aristotelianism was accepted and interpreted by medieval Byzantine authors.

Now "Byzantine Philosophy" of Tatakis is considered by specialists as a classical book on the subject; it opens the chronological lists of historiographic surveys of contemporary studies in Byzantine philosophy¹² and in many aspects remains its scientific value. But in the framework of our paper the last chapter of the monograph – "*Byzantium after Byzantium*" – is of the main interest.

Summing up all the previous chapters, Basil Tatakis concludes that it has been able to demonstrate that traditional for European history of philosophy estimation of the role of Byzantium as *only* a mediator in transition of scientific and philosophic ideas in diachronic

¹¹ Cf. paraphrase of Plato. Phaedr. 247b-e in Florensky's "Iconostasis" (Florensky 1972, 89) in the relation of both forms of non-naturalistic art – church and avant-garde. No accident the conference devoted to Florensky in Venice, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, 3-4.02.2012, was titled "Paul Florensky – between icon and avant-garde". On the other side, some signs of "avant-garde past" may be traced in Kontoglou's paintings. As Nikas Zias supports, some features characteristic for the "Byzantine" style of Kontoglou ("lack of perspective and consequently the lack of a third dimension, ... the absence of a single light source, and the use not of tonal gradation, but of color contrasts that often serve to complement one another") were acquired by the painter during "his exposure to Modern Art in Paris" (Zias 1997, 16).

¹² See, for example: (Ierodiakonou 2002, 7, 285; Zozul'ak 2016).

(from Antiquity to Renaissance) and synchronic (from the Persians, Arabs and Chinese to the West Europeans) plans is incorrect. Yes, Byzantium has created in the realm of thought the especial type of intelligence that contributed to the formation of Arabic philosophy and Western Scholasticism. It played the important role in the blossoming of Italian Renaissance. But historical role of Byzantine intellectual tradition is not confined by active influence on the Western and Eastern neighbours during the Middle Ages. The most interesting B. Tatakis' statement is that Byzantine philosophy has outlived the fall of Byzantine Empire; Byzantium "*has continued to exist in our time*" (Tatakis 2003, 264). The cultural model framed by Byzantium was preserved by the Greek Church and affected the Turks themselves who organized their own empire on this model. Moreover as a cultural, spiritual structure, it may be transmitted through any spatial borders and really became the inner basis for many national cultures of Slavic and Eastern world: so, "Czarist Russia, molded by Byzantium, remained, in all facets of its life, the true image of fallen Byzantium until the dawn of the 20th century" (Tatakis 2003, 264).

Tatakis asserts that without the study of Byzantium "it is totally impossible for one to delve into the intimate and most essential aspirations of the Neo-hellenic and Slavic spirit, the spirit of all Orthodox people". He recognizes the "brilliant description" of tragedies of these (Slavonic? Neo-hellenic? Byzantine?) souls in the works of Dostoevsky; he emphasizes the statement of Ivan Kireyevskiy, an early Slavophile of the 19th century, that the future Russian philosophy will be based upon the ecclesiastical writers of Byzantium. Moreover, Tatakis finds expression of the same spiritual intention in philosophical searching of Nicolay Berdyaev.¹³ Having recognized Russian philosophers of the 20th century as rightful heirs of their Byzantine ancestors Basil Tatakis optimistically concludes: "we can safely maintain, therefore, that the philosophy, or rather the spirituality, of Byzantium has not yet uttered its final word" (Tatakis 2003, 265).¹⁴

Christos Yannaras: non-dimensional place of community

In conclusion of the paper, we would like to discuss some Russian connotations of "the Byzantine idea" in the works of the group of eminent Greek theologians and religious philosophers belonging to the "generation of '60s" – *Christos Yannaras* (Χρήστος Γιανναράς, b. 1935), *John Romanidis* (Ιωάννης Σ. Ρωμανίδης, 1927 – 2001), *John Zizioulas* (Ιωάννης Ζηζιούλας, b. 1931) and *Nellas Panagiotis* (Νέλλας Παναγιώτης, 1936 – 1986). These authors (sometimes referred to as "the Neo-Orthodox") perhaps may be considered the most interesting representatives of contemporary Christian thought. High philosophic level, theological boldness, fusion of intellectualism with a strict emphasis on practical, alive character of Christian κήρυγμα are those features of their works which help to the Orthodox tradition in Greece in the second half of the last century to become attractive for many young people. Michel Stavrou, in his foreword to French translation of Yannaras' "Elements of Faith", notes among factors that determined intellectual formation of these Greek theologians the publishing of numerous modern-Greek translations of the works created by the Russian emigrate authors, representatives of a movement called "the neo-patristic synthesis" – Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, John Meyendorff (Yannaras 1989, 12-14).¹⁵ Christos

¹³ "It is easy to recognize that this spirituality is none other than Byzantine" (Tatakis 2003, 264).

¹⁴ We may add that Émile Bréhier, head of the publishing project "Histoire de la philosophie" and an eminent scholar, in his preface to "Byzantine Philosophy" completely accepts Tatakis' view on Russian religious philosophers ("that ecumenical movement of which Russia had so many representatives around 1900") as bearers "of an autonomous and sturdy spiritual structure, one that resists historical disasters and is captured so well by the title of this book's final chapter: "Byzantium after Byzantium"" (Bréhier 2003, ix, x).

¹⁵ It is to be noted that these contacts between Russian theologians and young Greek intellectuals in many

Yannaras also mentions in his autobiography that in 1968 he arrived in Paris, already being familiar with the writings of Russian emigrant theologians and religious philosophers (Yannaras 1995, 90). Yannaras met and conversed with Paul Evdokimov (the last representative of the first generation of Russian emigrants in Paris), he was friendly with Nicolay Lossky (Jr.), Peter Struve, Michael Evdokimov, Boris Bobrinskiy, O. Clément. But the most significant and important event survived by him during the communication with the members of Russian Orthodox community in Paris (in the end of '60s already mainly francophone) was not connected with some doctrines or theoretical constructions; the discovery which has changed his life was that of social kind, it was especial type of community united by the Eucharistic event – the Orthodox parish.

This ecclesiastic reality of Christian parish that can be realized in any place and among any people becomes the main object of Yannaras' philosophical research and theological care. Here, by the way, we meet again with the image of ideal Byzantium found by a Greek among the Russians.¹⁶

Conclusion: Contemplating the image of the “Second Rome” through the prism of the “Third Rome”

If we take advantage of the proposed by Aleida Assmann distinction between the “canon” and the “archive” of cultural memory (Assmann 2008), we may interpret the Greek “neo-Byzantine project” as a form of protest of “archival” contents of cultural memory (and those versions of cultural and national identities, which were based on these contents of cultural memory marginalized by “canon”), against the version of the “canon” essentially discredited after “the Asia Minor catastrophe” of 1922–1923.¹⁷ In this capacity the proponents of «neo-Byzantinism» are quite comparable with Russian Slavophiles of the first half of the 19th century. “Typological” similarity (defending by “Neo-Byzantinists” the uniqueness of their own “Hellenic”, or “Romaic” national project in relation to the “Western” one; a demonstration of these differences – in religion, art, ethical and social attitudes¹⁸) is supplemented here with “meaningful”: both the early Slavophiles and the Greek “neo-Byzantinists” find the foundation for such a uniqueness in the heritage of Orthodox Byzantium. Cultural and historical “rehabilitation” of Byzantium turns out to be, in such a way, an indispensable condition for substantiating the significance of their own – Russian or Greek “neo-Byzantine” project.

By efforts of numerous historians and Byzantologists, religious philosophers and theologians, such “rehabilitation” of Byzantium – creation a fulgent “eidos of Byzantine culture” – was implemented in Russia almost a century earlier than in Greece. This determined the specific optics

cases became immediate and personal. So, John Zizioulas between 1960 and 1964 in Harvard did his doctoral research under Georges Florovsky. John Romanides is also a pupil of Florovsky (Romanides 1980).

¹⁶ Cf. Yannaras' philosophical reflection on οὐ-τόπια, in “Person and Eros”: the event of personal presence of Christian community is performed in some “non-dimensional place”, and therefore might be realized anywhere (Yannaras 2008, 126-128). Cf. also John Romanides' concept of “Ρωμηόσυνη” (“Romanhood”) as extra-territorial and extra-ethnic essence of Greek national identity: (Romanides 1975).

¹⁷ This rivalry of different “versions” of Greek national and cultural identity manifests itself during the 20th century in many forms, among others – in competition of dimotiki based on conversational dialects dating back to medieval Byzantine Greek and atticized katharevousa.

¹⁸ One of the most striking examples of this kind of text is Ch. Yannaras' recent work “Orthodoxy and the West: Hellenic Self-Identity in the Modern Age” (Yannaras 2006) whose author shows the struggle of the “Greek” and the “Western” principles in Greek culture from 1453 to the '60s of the last century.

of representatives of the Greek neo-Byzantine movement in the 20th century: contemplating the image of the “Second Rome” through the prism of the “Third Rome”.

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SUMMARY: CONSTRUCTING THE IMAGE OF BYZANTIUM IN THE 20TH CENTURY: RUSSIAN THEME IN GREEK "NEO-BYZANTINE" PROJECT. Since the end of the First World War one may observe a tendency in various fields of the Greek culture. This tendency may be determined in the first approximation as "Neo-Byzantinism". It manifested itself in renewed interest to Alexandros Papadiamantis' novels and stories, in architecture of Dimitris Pikionis, in iconography and painting of Photis Kontoglou and Nikos Pentzikis, in philosophical and theological works of Basil Tatakis, John Romanides, Christos Yannaras, and John Zizioulas. Shortly, the main idea of this cultural tendency might be expressed in such a way: Greece is not an ordinary nation, its identity cannot be structured according to the model of an ordinary neo-European national state. The "Neo-Byzantinists" have found the basic principle of Greek culture in *the Byzantine Orthodoxy* as a supra-territorial and, moreover, supra-ethnic cultural model.

It seems to be important that some of the above-mentioned Greek intellectuals find the detailed development of philosophical, theological and artistic aspects of this model in the works of Russian religious philosophers and byzantinists of the 19th and 20th c. – from the early Slavophiles, like Ivan Kirejevsky and Aleksey Khomyakov, up to Russian

emigrate authors like George Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky and Leonid Ouspensky. It seems significant that Greek authors “recognize” in writings created by the representatives of “the Third Rome” the cultural model appropriate for “the Second Rome”, perceiving this model as their *own*.

Author of the article sheds some light on the most interesting moments of such perception and – as far as it goes – to describe some key principles of this play of reciprocal reflection of Russian and Greek cultural identities.

Kamenskikh Aleksey Aleksandrovich, PhD (Candidate of Sciences)
National Research University Higher School of Economics
Department of Humanities (Perm)
38 Studencheskaya str.
614070 Perm
Russia
kamen.septem@gmail.com