



Different faces of Byzantium

The attitudes towards Byzantium presented in Ivan Kireevsky, Alexey Khomyakov, and their social circle

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Abstract

I detect a specific attitude to Byzantium (“the Byzantine Enlightenment”) in Ivan Kireevsky’s Slavophile article “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe” (1852). I qualify this attitude as Byzantinocentrism. I take that as a focal point and, against this background, consider the image of Byzantium in Kireevsky and some thinkers of his social circle. It allows me to trace the most important lines of attitudes to Byzantium in the Russian historiosophical literature and opinion journalism of the nineteenth century. I detect two opposite lines in perceiving Byzantium in Kireevsky’s early social circle: the anti- and pro-Byzantine ones. The first line goes back to an anti-Byzantine message, characteristic of the epoch of Enlightenment. It found its manifestation in G. W. F. Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. I point to the traces of the implicit polemics with Hegel’s anti-byzantinism in Kireevsky and identify the context of these polemics in Arist Kunick. As well, I outline how these lines worked in Pyotr Chaadaev and Alexander Pushkin. Then I distinguish between how the image of Byzantium was presented, first, in Kireevsky’s earlier Slavophile article “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe” and, second, in his last article “On the Necessity and Possibility of the new Foundations for Philosophy” (1856). In the latter article, which sees Byzantium as bipolar, I find another view on Byzantium. I suggest that this view on Byzantium as a bipolar entity goes back to Alexey Khomyakov’s *Semiramis*. My point is that this difference in the views on Byzantium is paradigmatic and it reflects a division that was present in the Russian Slavophile-conservative milieu of that time. I suggest that this division stands behind another division within the same milieu, which was politically oriented, the one in relation to the Greek-Bulgarian ecclesiastical question. I analyze how both monopolar (Byzantinocentric) and bipolar views on Byzantium were reflected in the Greek-Bulgarian question as it was considered by Alexey Khomyakov and Terty Filippov. I find a context for developing Kireevsky’s attitude towards Byzantium in François Guizot’s historiosophic scheme as well.

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Introduction

In the middle of the nineteenth century—after the “Greek project” of Catherine the Great and before the advent of academic Byzantine studies in Russia—the image of Byzantium starts to play an important role in Russian culture. I use the word “image” because, when the topic of Byzantium was touched upon during this period, the authors used and discussed not so much Byzantium in its concrete historical content but rather the notion, which was loaded with ideological (in particular, political) content. In its turn, this ideological content carried in itself the connotations formed in the European culture earlier, in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, as well as those that had formed by the middle of the nineteenth century, corresponding to the needs of that time.

So, Byzantium played a central role in the flagship article of the key representative of the Slavophile movement, Ivan Vasilyevich Kireevsky’s “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe and its Relation to the Enlightenment in Russia” [*O kharaktere Prosveshcheniia Evropy i o ego otnoshenii k Prosveshcheniiu Rossii*], published in the first (and only issued) volume of the Slavophile almanac *Moskovsky sbornik* [*The Moscow Collection*] from 1852 (pp. 1–68).¹ Here Kireevsky maintained the idea of Byzantium as a civilization that embodied the perfect type of enlightenment (“*Prosveshchenie*”), in whose framework a perfect type of cognition can be realized. In this capacity, Byzantium, and the type of enlightenment represented by this civilization, is in fact presented in Kireevsky as the ideal “I” in respect to Russia, which inherited this type of enlightenment but has not embodied it fully yet.

Kireevsky’s “Byzantium” did not exist in a vacuum. There were several thinkers, including Kireevsky’s friends and ideological opponents (who did not exclude each other), who formulated various ideas of Byzantium, some of which made Kireevsky indignant, while others were attractive to him. I should mention that, in the public opinion of Kireevsky’s time, viewing Byzantium in dark tones prevailed (I will describe the sources for this further on). In Kireevsky’s social circle, the attitude towards Byzantium was far from idealized or outright negative. And this vision of Byzantium shared by Kireevsky was rather rare.

I know of only very few publications touching upon the image of Byzantium in the Russian culture of the nineteenth century, and those do not analyze the attitudes to Byzantium and their context in Slavophilism and Kireevsky in particular.

¹ In this edition, Kireevsky’s paper was published with censorship cuts. Without them, it was first published in Kireevsky (1911, pp. 174–222). Here, the full text was reconstructed by Michail Gershenzon on the basis of the article by Michail Venevitinov (1897).

Thus, John Meyendorff in his article “Byzantine Influence on Russian Civilization” does not notice Byzantinism, present in the Slavophile movement (Meyendorff 1977), at all, while Sergey Ivanov in his review of the image of Byzantium in the Russian culture from the epoch of ancient Rus up to Putin mentions only one sympathizer of the early Slavophilism: Feodor Tyutchev, and does not mention either Alexey Khomyakov or Ivan Kireevsky (Ivanov 2016 [on Tyutchev on p. 60]). Dmitry Obolensky in his essay (Obolensky 1966 [republished in: Obolensky 1971])² mentions (in passing) Kireevsky, as well as the other inspiration for my research, Timofey Granovsky, but his exposition of this material is very brief and not aimed at detailed analysis. In his extensive and rather detailed study of the image of Byzantium in Russian and Soviet intellectual traditions, Pablo Ubierna only briefly mentions the Slavophiles and Peter Chaadaev from their orbit (Ubierna 2006, pp. 187–188). Special studies on Russian Slavophiles and Westernizer mention the understanding of Byzantium in Kireevsky and his social circle only briefly, without analyzing the various lines of thought or taking into account the historical context (Christoff 1972, pp. 214–215; Gleason 1972, pp. 262, 337; McNally 1971, p. 100).

Byzantinocentrism of Ivan Kireevsky

But let me first touch upon the content of Kireevsky’s article “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe” in more detail. This work starts with polemics against the view that the Russian kind of enlightenment is completely defined by the tenets of modern enlightenment of Western Europe, in relation to which it stood at the position of pupils. Kireevsky points to Peter the Great as the most brilliant representative and implementer of this view, whose politics formed in Russia a social class that shared these convictions (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 249–250; Raeff 1978, p. 176). Kireevsky considers the fruits of this modern Western European (or simply European) enlightenment to be disappointing for people whose thought is based not just on the interests of this moment (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 250–251; Raeff 1978, pp. 176–177). The reason for this is the character of this enlightenment, characterized by its one-sidedness, cold analysis, abstract syllogistic thinking, insularity in one’s own experience, and intellect. This character of enlightenment was shaped in the course of the historical process, in the context of setting as absolute the specifics of the world perception of Western (Roman) medieval Christianity (still impregnated with a pre-Christian Roman mentality), which, owing to the schism of the churches and other reasons, developed one-sidedly in the West (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 257–258; Raeff 1978, pp. 181–182).

The collective mind of Europe, as Kireevsky states, has reached its own borders and the awareness of these borders in his time; it became certain that, for fully fledged thinking, other sources of knowledge are needed than those which thinking can discover in itself (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 252–253; Raeff 1978, pp. 177–178). According to Kireevsky, the figure of a philosopher accumulates the life and the

² I am grateful to Basil Lourié for drawing my attention to this publication.

consciousness of the people to whom he belongs (Kireevsky 1979, p. 252; Raeff 1978, pp. 177–178). In the case of the peoples of Western Europe, forming a spiritual unity, the figure which embodied in itself this awareness of its own borders by means of philosophy is Friedrich Schelling (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 270–271; Raeff et al. 1978, p. 191), and the corresponding philosophical system, in which philosophy reaches its borders, is Schelling's philosophy of the Revelation. Having reached its borders, Western philosophy is unable to develop any further on the basis of its foundations (Kireevsky 1979, p. 271; Raeff 1978, p. 191). Following this disappointment, caused by the very nature of Western European enlightenment, European man (both Western European and Eastern European, i.e., Russian) has lost faith in the abilities of reason and stands at the crossroads. He can either remain in the present, corrupting state, or return to the lost original purity of the fundamental origins (Kireevsky 1979, p. 253; Raeff 1978, p. 178).

According to Kireevsky, such purity is embodied in the alternative to the Western European type of enlightenment, the Byzantine one, and, accordingly, in the ancient Russian enlightenment, which is the continuation of the Byzantine one, for ancient Rus received Christianity from Byzantium and started its national culture from scratch, not being loaded with the element of the Antiquity (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 258–259; Raeff 1978, pp. 182–183). Although at the start of its enlightenment the level of education in Russia was equal to the West, the following development of Russian education took place not without obstacles. In the Russia of Kireevsky's time (the middle of the nineteenth century), according to his evaluation, the Western European type of enlightenment was too prevalent, while the Byzantine and ancient Russian type of enlightenment was barely manifested and presented mostly in a hidden form, which needed to be uncovered (Kireevsky 1979, p. 255; Raeff 1978, p. 180).

What are the specifics of the fundamental philosophical principles of this type of enlightenment? Kireevsky supposes that these are such principles that are built upon the teaching of the Byzantine Church fathers. We do not find many positive statements about the principles of the Byzantine and ancient Russian enlightenment in Kireevsky. As a rule, he points to the Byzantine–ancient Russian character of enlightenment and the corresponding way of thinking in a descriptive manner. Thus, he says that attention to the live, inner essence of things is characteristic for this type of enlightenment as opposed to the West's transfixion with rationality and external logical orderliness (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 260–261; Raeff 1978, pp. 183–184); completeness, the internal and the external are characteristic for it, as opposed to the Western one-sidedness and fragmentation of the powers of mind (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 288–290; Raeff 1978, pp. 204–206).

In addition, we can find in Kireevsky's remarks about the Byzantine type of enlightenment a historical–philosophical and a theological aspect: one of these remarks refers to the historical–philosophical opposition *Platonism–Aristotelianism*, the other to the ascetical practices of the Orthodox church.

So, firstly, according to Kireevsky, Byzantine Christianity, especially as it developed after the schism of the Churches, is internally connected with the philosophy of Plato and Platonism, for which completeness and harmony are characteristic (Kireevsky 1979, p. 272; Raeff 1978, pp. 191–192). Respectively, the theologians of

the Roman church gravitated towards Aristotle, dressing the truths of the Church tradition in Aristotelian garments (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 267–268, 271–272; Raeff 1978, pp. 188–189, 191–192), which led to the dominance of the Aristotelian, externally logical way of thinking, destroying the completeness of thought, in Western Modern European philosophy. Secondly, in his article “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe” soon after mentioning (in passing) the Palamite controversy of the fourteenth century and the emigration of Barlaam of Calabria to Italy, Kireevsky, contrasting the Roman and Byzantine churches, writes about the practices of inner concentration and collecting mind inside as characteristic for the Byzantine worldview. He mentions that these practices became known in the West in the fourteenth century, but were not understood (Kireevsky 1979, p. 274; Raeff 1978, p. 193). Obviously, here he means the Hesychast practices, discussed in the course of the Palamite controversy.

Kireevsky affirms that these principles of the Byzantine–ancient Russian enlightenment cannot be mechanically transposed to the present day. Modernity demands the development of enlightenment and philosophy on the material of the modern sciences and including the achievements of the Western enlightenment, but on the basis of the truths given in the Byzantine–ancient Russian type of enlightenment (Kireevsky 1979, p. 293; Raeff 1978, p. 207).

The attitude towards Byzantium expressed in Kireevsky’s “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe” presupposes certain significant references to the philosophical and historiosophical thought of his era. One of the most important of these is made to the historiosophical scheme of François Guizot, which Kireevsky followed, on the one hand, and with which he polemized, on the other.³

Development of Kireevsky’s historiosophy and the transformation of François Guizot’s scheme

Thus, Kireevsky followed Guizot, while developing his teaching about the three elements of the modern European enlightenment (this notion in Kireevsky’s vocabulary is an analogue of “civilization” in Guizot).⁴ Kireevsky had gone along with Guizot’s scheme in his early essay “The Nineteenth Century” (1832), where he suggested the idea of three elements contributing to the development of Western European enlightenment: (1) the contribution of the Christian religion, (2) the contribution of the barbarian peoples who destroyed the Roman Empire, and (3) the contribution of Ancient pagan culture (Kireevsky 1979, p. 91). According to the historiosophical scheme presented in “The Nineteenth Century”, the difference between Russian and Western European civilizations is that the Russian one was not fully based on the

³ About Kireevsky’s dependence on the historiosophical scheme of Guizot, as well as his polemics with it in his “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe”, see Evtuhov (2003). Cf. Gleason (1972, pp. 62, 108).

⁴ Cf. Müller (1966, p. 99) and Evtuhov (2003, p. 60).

third of the elements, to wit the Ancient pagan culture (Kireevsky 1979, p. 92). One can say that Kireevsky here still shares Guizot's Eurocentric intuition, according to which Europe, and France within Europe, is a pinnacle of civilizational progress (Guizot 1985, p. 57).⁵

In "On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe", written 20 years later, we find the same scheme inspired by Guizot based on the three components of European civilization. However, here, Kireevsky offers a more thoughtful formulation of the three elements that determine the distinctive character of the Western European enlightenment. These are: "the special form in which Christianity reached it; the special aspect of the civilization of the ancient world which it inherited; and, lastly, the special elements which entered into the formation of its political organization" (Kireevsky 1979, p. 256; Raeff 1978, pp. 180–181). Here, Kireevsky turns to Guizot's scheme in his reflections on the nature of the difference between the Russian and Western European types of enlightenment. However, his interpretation of it in "On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe" is quite opposite to that presented in "The Nineteenth Century". Indeed, in the latter, certain completeness is attributed to the Western European type of enlightenment, namely the completeness of the elements that make up this type of enlightenment, whereas the Russian type of enlightenment is associated with incompleteness since it lacks one of the elements (i.e., that of the Ancient pagan culture). In "On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe", the picture is reversed: here completeness is ascribed to the Russian enlightenment, while the Western European enlightenment is assessed in terms of one-sidedness and incompleteness. The source of completeness here is the Ecumenical, i.e., the Byzantine church. It was via communion with it, and therefore with the ecclesiastic fullness, that Rus adopted Christianity, while the Roman church, which dominated in Western Europe, being separated from the Byzantine church, according to Kireevsky, lost its fullness and became one-sided (its distinguishing feature was transformed into the exclusive form) (Kireevsky 1979, p. 257; Raeff 1978, p. 181).

Moreover, whereas in "The Nineteenth Century" Kireevsky had complained about the insufficiency of the Ancient pagan culture's contribution to the Russian civilization and considered this factor to be characteristic of the latter, in "On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe", one no longer finds such a maxim in Kireevsky. There he claimed that the Ancient culture was in fact inherited by the Russian enlightenment, although not directly, but through an intermediary of the Byzantine church.

Byzantium of Pyotr Chaadaev

The pronounced Byzantinocentrism of Ivan Kireevsky, presenting an internally holistic position, will serve me as a landmark and a starting point for studying different attitudes towards Byzantium (and their historical context), manifested in the

⁵ Cf. Evtuhov (2003, p. 57).

Russian historiosophical literature of the beginning/middle of the nineteenth century, which represents the context of Kireevsky's position. Those give us a picture, in which various lines intertwine, of both "pro-Byzantine" and "anti-Byzantine" character. I will start with the latter.

The obvious antipode for Kireevsky in this respect was Pyotr Chaadaev⁶ with his famous anti-Byzantine statement from the first of *The philosophical letters* [*Lettres philosophiques*], which was written in 1829–1830 in French and published in Russian in Issue 15, vol. XXIV, of the *Telescope* magazine in 1836. There Chaadaev expressed a position that was completely opposite to the Byzantinocentrist intuitions of Kireevsky: the Russian people experienced the essential influence of Byzantium, however Byzantium and its influence were something entirely negative. Chaadaev connected the unfortunate fate of Russia with the fact that "we went to miserable Byzantium, which those people profoundly despised for the moral code that was to educate us"⁷ (Chaadaev 1991, p. 331; transl. by Valentin Snow in Raeff 1978, p. 167, slightly changed). The opposite view was expressed by Chaadaev in his "Answer to the article 'On the rural Conditions' by Alexey Khomyakov" [*Otvet na stat'ju A.S. Homjakova "O sel'skih uslovijah"*] (Chaadaev 1991, p. 543), although contemporary commentators of Chaadaev's texts plausibly claim that it is rather ironic (Chaadaev 1991, pp. 745–746).

The negative view of Byzantine expressed by Chaadaev, which connects Byzantium and Byzantinism with moral corruption, has a long story, going back to the epoch of Enlightenment. Essential for this view was the fundamental multivolume work of the British historian Edward Gibbon *The history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire* (1776–1789), embracing the history of the Byzantine empire, which was considered by the author as the decay of the Roman one. The angle from which the author looked at Byzantium is evident already from the title of the book.

G. W. F. Hegel, Ivan Kireevsky, and Arist Kunick

Such a view (Marciniak, Smythe 2016, p. 5; cf. Arabatzis 2014, pp. 337–340) was also expressed by Georg W. F. Hegel in his *Lectures on the philosophy of history* [*Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*], which were well known in Russia⁸ (as was Gibbon's book). Hegel delivered his lectures on the history of philosophy in the University of Berlin in 1822, 1828, and 1830, and were posthumously published in their canonical and full form by his son Karl in 1840. In his lectures, Hegel pursues the thought of a reasonable principle, which is present in the changes taking place in the course of world history. Concerning the elements constituting history and manifested during its course, Hegel distinguishes the childhood period, corresponding to the Eastern world, the period of youth—the Greek world,

⁶ On the relationship between Chaadaev and Kireevsky, see Milyukov (1897, p. 304).

⁷ The original French text is «nous allions chercher dans la misérable Byzance... le code moral qui devait faire notre éducation» (Chaadaev 1991, p. 97).

⁸ Thus, Hegel's philosophy of history constitutes the important context for the historiosophy of Aleksey Khomyakov. Cf. Dmitriyev (2020, pp. 208–209).

the period of maturation—the Roman world, and the period of maturity—the German world. Hegel ascribes a modest place to Byzantium in this scheme and devotes only a few pages to it (the third chapter of the third section of the third part of the *Lectures*) (Hegel 1989, pp. 406–412). Sharing Gibbon’s view, Hegel considers Byzantium as the final stage of the Roman Empire and Byzantine history as the decline of the Roman one. Hegel thinks that the Christian idea could not find an adequate realization in the fading Roman society, i.e., in the society into which it was born. German civilization, which had entered the world arena, became such a society, suitable for the realization of the idea of Christianity. In this way, Byzantium in Hegel becomes excluded from the course of development of the World Spirit. More specifically, Hegel affirms that the Byzantine state is an example of Christianity remaining as an abstract principle, not manifested in the life of the people (Hegel 1989, p. 409). Probably following Gibbon, Hegel sees in the course of Byzantine history only moral corruption (Hegel 1989, pp. 408–409).

The view of Byzantium presented in Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* undoubtedly constitutes the significant polemical context for Kireevsky’s Byzantinocentrism. One can infer that Kireevsky was well acquainted with Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* from the fact that he refers to it in the work “On the Character of Enlightenment of Europe”, insisting that the philosophy of the Byzantine church fathers is a special kind of philosophy, different from all other schools of philosophy in its depth and richness, leading reason beyond the limits of intellect. According to Kireevsky, this Byzantine philosophy has not been appreciated by Western thinkers and is almost unknown to them. “At least no philosopher, no historian of philosophy mentions it, although in every history of philosophy we find long treatises on Indian, Chinese and Persian philosophy” (Kireevsky 1979, p. 272). It is here that I find a polemical reference to Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*: indeed, the first three sections of the first part of the *Lectures* are devoted exactly to India, China, and Persia (Hegel 1989, pp. 147–225).⁹

However, even before Kireevsky’s article, critical judgments of Hegel’s evaluation of Byzantium (and of the Slavs) in his *Lectures* were heard in Russian opinion journalism. German historian Arist (Ernst-Eduard) Kunick, who came to Moscow for the first time in 1839 and then became a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Russian history, published, thanks to his sympathizer Mikhail Pogodin, in Pogodin’s almanac *Moskvityanin* [*The Muscovite*] for 1841 a lengthy review of the German historical literature of the last two years.¹⁰ In this article, where he tries to play “the role of an impartial mediator between Slavonic and German science” (Lappo-Danilevsky 1914, p. 1460), Kunick touches upon the just published *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* by Hegel. He criticizes the germanocentrism of Hegel’s philosophy of history and his lack of appreciation for the Byzantine and

⁹ This fact has not been mentioned in the studies concerning the reception of Hegel’s philosophy in the Slavophiles, and Ivan Kireevsky I know, in particular, in the fundamental study by Dmytri Chyzhevsky (1934).

¹⁰ This article was written by Kunick in German (later, having lived in Russia for a while, Kunick started to write in Russian) and published in *Moskvityanin* in P. Pyaterikov’s translation.

Slavonic elements in the world history and development of Christianity. According to Kunick, Hegel's

main mistake consists in the fact that he, as a German, gives too much universal historical prominence to the tribe, from which he himself originates, and, in respect to the Christian period, describes the Germans as the only and main guardians of Christianity. Therefore the gradual rise of the Slavs and the Greek church, as well as their potential future significance remain covered from Hegel's view. (Kunick 1841, p. 128)

So, in Russian literature, the Hegelian Germanocentric scheme of the philosophy of history, which does not give any historical significance to Byzantium (and the Slavs), was first criticized by Arist Kunick (in 1841, almost immediately after the publication of the full version of Hegel's *Lectures*) and then, 10 years later, by Kireevsky.

One can detect the traces of this critique of Hegel's historiosophical scheme in further works by Kunick as well. They are seen in his famous speech "Why does Byzantium remain a puzzle in world history until now?" pronounced on November 11, 1853, in the Russian Academy of Sciences, a member of which he had become, and then published in its *Memoirs*. The appearance of this speech and the corresponding article can be connected with the position of Kunick as an ardent supporter of Byzantine studies in Russia, who helped start Russian academic Byzantine studies.¹¹ In this article, Kunick defends the view that the representation of Byzantine history and the cultures of Slavonic countries, dependent on it, as "additional articles in general history" is untrue. Kunick insists that the Byzantine–Slavonic peoples represent an organic part of medieval world history, as do the Roman and German peoples (Kunick 1853, p. 428).

I also note that the anti-Byzantine line I have highlighted above was very influential in the Russian historical literature and opinion journalism of the first half and middle of the nineteenth century. Besides Chaadaev, we can trace it, for example, in Alexander Herzen (in whose works anti-Byzantinism is expressed clearly and scattered throughout various texts), who was a close acquaintance of Kireevsky, or in the writer and publicist Alexander Milyukov, highly appreciated by Herzen's social circle (Polyakov 1952, p. 718). Milyukov in his *Essay on the history of Russian poetry* [*Ocherk istorii russkoj poezii*] (first edn, St Petersburg, 1847), arguing against the Slavophiles (Milyukov 1858, p. 7),¹² advocated the theory of the Norman influence on the origins and culture of ancient Rus; and correspondingly, he evaluated as fruitless and scholastic the Byzantine influence on the ancient Russian literature, as opposed to the Scandinavian one (Milyukov 1858, pp. 9–10, 15, 27, etc.).

¹¹ In particular, Kunick helped the foundation of the first in Russia (and existing until now) specialized academic periodical, devoted to Byzantium: the magazine *Vizantijskij Vremennik* [*The Byzantine Chronicles*]. See Lappo-Danilevsky (1914, p. 1472).

¹² I have had access only to the second edition of this book.

Byzantium of Alexander Pushkin

The nearest context of Kireevsky's Byzantinocentrism included a certain pro-Byzantine line. It manifested in the acknowledgement of the beneficial influence of the Greek language element on the formation of the Old Russian. This line is manifested in Alexander Pushkin (who was a member of the social circle of the young Kireevsky).¹³

But before touching upon this, I will outline the contours of historiosophy, to which Pushkin adhered, concerning Byzantium and its relationship with the Russian people. This historiosophy is expressed in Pushkin's text, which remained a draft and was published posthumously, "On the pettiness of Russian Literature" [*O nichtozhestve literaturny russkoj*] (the last version of the text being in 1834). The same ideas are also expressed in his letter to Chaadaev from October 19, 1836. In this letter, Pushkin thanks Chaadaev for the brochure the latter had sent to him. As it follows from the context, that was the volume of the *Telescope* with the first *Philosophical letter* by Chaadaev¹⁴ of which I have spoken above. Pushkin argues against Chaadaev's radical anti-Byzantinism and his viewing the fate of the Russian people as unfortunate because of its Byzantine legacy. In his letter to Chaadaev, Pushkin says that the schism between the Churches (and, accordingly, following the Byzantine version of Christianity by Rus) separated Russia from the West and the course of Western history with its dramas, but "we had our own destination". Pushkin does not take seriously Chaadaev's statements that "the source, from where we drew Christianity, was unclean, Byzantium was worthy of contempt and despised". According to Pushkin, Byzantium's mores did not have a substantial influence on Russia, but at the same time "we" took from Byzantium "Gospel and traditions" (Pushkin 1951, pp. 595–596), and Russian clergy, although in a modest measure, borrowed Byzantine education (Pushkin 1934, p. 432). All this is considered positive by Pushkin, as can be seen from the context.

The positive pole of this moderately positive attitude of Pushkin towards the Byzantine legacy in Russian culture manifested itself in his earlier deliberations about the Russian language as owing its beauty and expressiveness to the Greek language, which endowed it with these properties. Pushkin develops these thoughts in the article "On the Preface of Mr. Lémontey to the Translation of Ivan Krylov's Fables" [*O predislovii g-na Lemonte k perevodu basen I.A. Krylova*], published in *Moskovsky Telegraf* [*The Moscow Telegraph*] for 1825 (part V, issue 17). Pushkin sees the Russian language as fortunate, compared with European ones, because it was formed on the basis of the Greek: "As the material of literature, the Slavonic-Russian language is undeniably superior to all European ones: its fate has been very fortunate. In the

¹³ The correspondence between Pushkin and Kireevsky is published in Pushkin (1982).

¹⁴ The publishers of Pushkin's letter (Lev Modzalevsky, Irina Semenko, and Boris Tomashevsky) do not say in their commentaries which brochure is meant here, but from the date of Pushkin's letter and its content it follows beyond doubt that it is the 15th issue of the *Telescope* for 1836, in which the first *Philosophical letter* of Chaadaev was published.

eleventh century, the Ancient Greek suddenly opened to it its lexicon, treasury of harmony, granted to it the laws of its deliberated grammar, its beautiful turns, the majestic flow of speech [...]. Sonorous and expressive in itself, from hence it borrows flexibility and precision” (Pushkin 1951, 27).¹⁵

Thus, Pushkin’s attitude towards Byzantium and the status of its legacy in Russian culture seems to lie in the middle between the extreme poles of the positions of Kireevsky and Chaadaev. Unlike Chaadaev, who saw the historical unfortunateness of the Russian people in its reception of the Byzantine legacy as prevalent in its development, Pushkin sees in it rather the luck of the Russians. He is not frightened by the “dark side” of the Byzantines, for he acknowledges the freedom in the development of the Russian people, and stresses the lack of the determinism of the Russians by the Byzantine legacy, which is the basis of Chaadaev’s position. At the same time, unlike the later Kireevsky (whose Slavophile views Pushkin had not lived to know), Pushkin does not share the notion of higher spiritual connection and unity between Byzantine and Russia, and he leaves Russia free from Byzantium in this respect.

Two faces of Byzantium: Ivan Kireevsky and Alexey Khomyakov

So far, I have concentrated on Kireevsky’s attitude towards Byzantium, presented, as a holistic view, in his early keynote Slavophile work “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe”. This attitude is Byzantinocentric, and it sees Byzantium in only a positive light. Having taken this view as a focal point, I have outlined the context of Kireevsky’s Byzantinocentrism as it worked in his early social circle. However, in Kireevsky’s latest Slavophile work, “On the Necessity and Possibility of the new Foundations for Philosophy” [*O neobkhodimosti i vozmozhnosti novykh nachal dlja filosofii*], published in 1856, the year of his death, we find another, more pessimistic view on Byzantium. The difference in the views on Byzantium in these two works is paradigmatic, and it reflects a division in this respect, which was present in the Slavophile–conservative milieu of that time. In my opinion, this division in the view on Byzantium stands behind another division in the same milieu, which was politically oriented—the one in relation to the so-called Greek–Bulgarian ecclesiastical question.

First, I will touch upon the specifics of the later position of Kireevsky himself. Indeed, in his earlier “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe”, Kireevsky’s view of Byzantium was based on the philosophically loaded intuition. According to this intuition, the specifics of the Byzantine–Christian enlightenment stems from Platonism as a way of thought, for which harmony and wholeness are conspicuous characteristics (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 272, 274; Raeff 1978, pp. 191–193).¹⁶ Wholeness is presented in this work to be an essential attribute of Russian civilization as well, which is an heir to Byzantium (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 290–291; Raeff 1978, pp.

¹⁵ On Pushkin’s pro-Byzantine position expressed in his deliberations on the Russian language and the historical context of this position, see Vinogradov (1935, pp. 18–19 and note 1).

¹⁶ The presupposition for this view is Kireevsky’s position that the figure of a philosopher and theologian is a center of the folk’s organism, its head (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 252, 256).

206–207). There, Kireevsky does not mention any negative features of the Byzantine type of enlightenment.

Another view on Byzantium was expressed in “On the Necessity and Possibility of the new Foundations for Philosophy”, published four years later after “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe”. In this article, Kireevsky does not show such a sympathy towards Platonism, as we find it in “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe”, and here Platonism is not thought of as a way of thinking on which the Byzantine enlightenment was based. Correspondingly, Byzantium is presented in this work in a different way than before. Kireevsky’s view there is not philosophically, but historically, loaded. He opposes the world and the Church in Byzantium, and states that Byzantium, being a successor of the Roman Empire, continued to carry in itself its pagan character and did not become Christian. The paganism, inherited from Rome, was manifested in Byzantium in the character of the state power and public morals. For this reason, a Byzantine who is truly Christian had to be dead for the public life; real ethical and intellectual development could take place only in monasteries (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 323–325).

With this being said, we can see the difference in the views on Byzantium expressed in Kireevsky’s “On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe” and his “On the Necessity and Possibility of the new Foundations for Philosophy”. In the first case, Kireevsky connects Byzantium with the category of wholeness (transferred onto it from Platonism, which is its basis), while in the second case, Byzantium is pondered as a civilization, not whole in principle, but split up between the Christian spiritual constitute and the pagan one, dominating in the Byzantine state and society.¹⁷

In this last point, Kireevsky followed other senior Slavophiles as well. So, we find a similar view in Alexey Khomyakov. In his *Semiramis* [*Semiramida*] (written from the end of the 1830s to the beginning of the 1850s), Khomyakov draws a very pessimistic picture of Byzantine society. He insists that a Christian in Byzantium would care only about his personal salvation, for the state had lost any moral stance, and the Church, “having been deprived of all activity and protecting only the dead purity of dogma, lost the awareness of its own living force and the memory of its own lofty aim” (Khomyakov 1994, p. 465; English translation in McNally 1971, p. 100).

Here we can note that Kireevsky and Khomyakov used a similar discourse that presupposed the two poles—positive and negative—coexisting within the frames of the Byzantine civilization. However, they spoke differently about the institution of the Church: in Kireevsky, the negative image of Byzantium is not extended to the Church, while in Khomyakov’s rhetoric it is.¹⁸

Comparing the corresponding views of Kireevsky and Khomyakov, we can pay attention to the idea of the former that the Greeks brought enlightenment to the West

¹⁷ It can be mentioned that Peter Christoff in his fundamental work on Ivan Kireevsky pays attention to only one of the lines of Kireevsky’s attitude towards Byzantium that I have highlighted, the last one (Christoff 1972, pp. 214–215, cf. 145). At the same time, Abbott Gleason seems to notice only the first of them, i.e., the byzantinocentrist line of Kireevsky’s thought (Gleason 1972, pp. 262, 337).

¹⁸ In this regard, there is a familiarity between Khomyakov and Chaadaev. See McNally (1971, p. 100).

in the late Middle Ages. Indeed, one can see a certain hellenocentrist constituent in Kireevsky's byzantinocentrism. According to Kireevsky, the Greek pagan education, which gave birth to philosophy, overcame itself and turned into Christianity (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 304–305). Therefore, the Byzantine enlightenment was based on the Ancient Greek one, the foundation for which was Platonism.

In connection with this intuition, the theme of the beneficial influence of the Greek–Byzantine enlightenment of the West arises in Kireevsky's historiosophy. It suggests that the European West was enlightened by the Greek–Byzantines who came to the West after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople, and this had a beneficial influence upon the West. It brought about the destruction of the whole edifice of Western Scholasticism, although it was already too late for the cardinal reformatting of the way of thinking inherent to Western European civilization (Kireevsky 1979, pp. 258, 269; Raeff 1978, pp. 182, 190). As for Khomyakov, he did not share Kireevsky's hellenocentrism. Khomyakov's evaluation of the character of enlightenment of the West by the Byzantines after the fall of Constantinople was different: the educated Greeks, who came to the West after the dispersion, only accelerated the decay of the principles, which had already been ready to decay (Moscow Collection 2014, p. 294).

Two faces of Byzantium and the Greek–Bulgarian ecclesiastical question

The aforementioned duality manifested in Kireevsky's discourse about Byzantium, as well as the difference between Kireevsky's and Khomyakov's rhetoric about Byzantium, finds its reflection in the attitude towards the Greek–Bulgarian ecclesiastical question in Kireevsky's social circle. The Greek–Bulgarian ecclesiastical question concerned the movement for liberation from the dependence on the Greek clergy among the Orthodox Bulgarians, which brought about the Greek–Bulgarian schism (1872 [1860]–1945).¹⁹ The Slavophile milieu debates with regard to this issue were provoked by the publication of a series of articles by the Bulgarian public figure Hristo Daskalov in the journals *Russkaya Beseda* [*The Russian Talk*] and *Russkiy Vestnik* [*The Russian Messenger*], which were sympathetic to the Slavophiles. There, Dascalov defended the anti-Greek position of the Bulgarians and denounced the Greek church hierarchy, accusing it of craftiness and dishonesty. Daskalov's articles "The Revival of the Bulgarians, or the Reaction in European Turkey" [*Vozrozhdenie bolgar, ili reakcija v Evropejskoj Turcii*]²⁰ and "The Turkish Affairs" [*Tureckie dela*]²¹ were devoted to these matters.

Terty Filippov, who was a person close to Ivan Kireevsky, a translator, conservative columnist, and an official of the Holy Synod for special assignments, responded to the latter publication. Filippov's response to Daskalov's article was published

¹⁹ See Gerd (2014, pp. 69–83).

²⁰ *Russkaya Beseda*, II, book 10 (Daskalov 1858b, pp. 1–64).

²¹ *Russkiy Vestnik*, February, book 2 (Daskalov 1858a, pp. 245–265).

initially in the issue of *Moskovskie Novosti* [*The Moscow News*] of August 1858 under the title “Reply to Mr. D.”, and then anonymously as a pamphlet “Reply to the ‘Russian Messenger’ on the Bulgarian affairs” [*Otvét "Russkomu vestniku" po bolgarskim delam*] (Filippov 1858). There Filippov, admitting some difficulties in regard to the Greek church hierarchy, nevertheless sets himself the goal of defending it and vindicates the fairness of the state of affairs, whereby the Bulgarian church is governed by Greek hierarchs. Later, Filippov wrote some other papers, dealing with the Greek–Bulgarian ecclesiastical question, attempting to solve the same tasks.

It should be noted that Kireevsky’s personality had a special significance for Filippov. Kireevsky’s friendship and patronage, which lasted from the beginning of the 1850s until the latter’s death in 1856, were highly valued by Filippov, and he idealized Kireevsky’s image. The proof thereof can be found, for example, in the collection of Filippov’s articles, which he considered to be his magnum opus and published not long before his death in 1896. Filippov devoted this collection “to the immaculate memory of Ivan Vasilyevich Kireevsky”. In the preface, he noted that he had dedicated this collection in Kireevsky’s name because this name was a symbol of purity and chastity (Filippov 1896, VI). It is not surprising therefore that some features of Kireevsky’s historiosophy are also found in Terty Filippov.

Thus, in his work *Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory VI and the Greek-Bulgarian Discord* [*Vselenskij patriarh Grigorij VI i greko-bolgarskaja rasprja*], Filippov, speaking about the special significance of the Greek people, follows the philhellenist line.²² He points out that Greek people have twice played a leading role in the intellectual development of humanity (in the Antiquity and in the first centuries of Christianity). In this context, similarly to Kireevsky and in contrast to Khomyakov’s view, Filippov points out that the migration of the Greeks after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople contributed to the revival of European education (Filippov 1896, p. 14). This combination of hellenocentrism with such a construal of the Byzantine factor in the enlightenment of the West reveals Filippov as a reader of Kireevsky’s historiosophical works.

Khomyakov also took part in the polemics around the Greek–Bulgarian ecclesiastical question. It should be noted that the position of many senior Slavophiles on the Greek–Bulgarian question was severely pro-Bulgarian. It was permeated with indignation towards the Constantinople Patriarchate and Greek hierarchs, whose behavior appeared to the Slavophiles to be the embodiment of clericalism. Such was the position of Ivan Aksakov and Alexey Khomyakov. The latter’s reaction to the polemics on the Greek–Bulgarian question was expressed in his short editorial, published anonymously in *Russkaya Beseda* in 1859, related to Yury Destunis’ publication “A Voice of a Greek in Defense of Byzantium [Golos greka v zashchitu Vizantii]” from the same volume (Destunis 1859). Half of this article consists of a quotation from Khomyakov’s work from 1852 “A Few Words Concerning Ivan Kireevsky’s Article ‘On the Character of the Enlightenment in Europe...’” [*Neskol’ko slov po povodu stat’i I. V. Kireevskogo “O haraktere prosveshhenija Evropy...”*] published in the second volume of *Moskovskij sbornik*. In this article, Khomyakov formulated the

²² Cf. Gerd (2014, pp. 30–32).

program of understanding Byzantium, which would later be articulated in Kireevsky's article "On the Necessity and Possibility of the new Foundations for Philosophy", where Byzantium is depicted as a bipolar civilization, with positive and negative sides. According to Khomyakov, the merit of the Byzantine world for humanity consists in formulating the Orthodox teaching at the Church councils, which constituted a significant intellectual achievement. As for the dark side of Byzantium, it stemmed from its state structure, closed attitude towards the neighbors, and its public morals (Moscow Collection 2014, pp. 299–302).

In the above-mentioned editorial, published 7 years later, Khomyakov utterly and explicitly formulated this bipolarity. Notably, he speaks about the two opposite elements constituting the history of Byzantium: the Hellenistic–Christian and the Roman–state ones. In this editorial, to which Khomyakov was prompted by the discussion of the Greek–Bulgarian ecclesiastical question in the Russian press, he polemically discusses Filippov's article "Reply to Mr. D" and the position expressed in it, which was favorable to the Greek church and the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the ecclesiastical conflict between the Greeks and the Bulgarians. In this editorial, Khomyakov states that the dark face of Byzantium is manifested in his time as well, alluding to the Greek church hierarchy and its role in that conflict. Khomyakov contemptuously calls this line in Byzantine civilization "phanariocity" (*"fanariotstvo"*) (Khomyakov 1859), which Khomyakov opposes to the genuine Byzantine Orthodoxy.

In this way, the two views on Byzantium found in Kireevsky's works were reflected in the attitudes towards the Greek–Bulgarian ecclesiastical question manifested in the Slavophile–conservative milieu of his time. The first view, expressed in "On the Character of the Enlightenment in Europe", is helleno- and byzantinocentric; it considered the Byzantine civilization as a certain wholeness. A similar position, formulated, in my opinion, under the influence of Kireevsky, was presented in Terty Filippov, an apologist and defender of the Greek side in the Greek–Bulgarian conflict. Another view was given in Kireevsky's "On the Necessity and Possibility of the new Foundations for Philosophy". It presumed that Byzantine civilization was bipolar and had both light and dark sides. This view was shared by Khomyakov, who was Filippov's opponent with regard to the Greek–Bulgarian ecclesiastical question. In Khomyakov's interpretation, in the context of his response to the Greek–Bulgarian ecclesiastical question, this view included an anti-clerical constituent, which implied that the dark side of Byzantium encompasses the institution of the Church as well, while the corresponding view of Kireevsky did not imply so.

Conclusion

My view of the legacy of Ivan Kireevsky discerns a specific attitude towards Byzantium in his early Slavophile article "On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe" (1852), which I qualify as byzantinocentrist. In the present paper, first, I have taken this attitude of Kireevsky towards Byzantium as a focal point and, against this background, I have considered the image of Byzantium in Kireevsky himself, and in some thinkers of his social circle. This has allowed me to trace the most important

lines of attitudes towards Byzantium in the Russian historiosophical literature and opinion journalism of the nineteenth century.

Kireevsky's own attitude towards Byzantium was heterogeneous and changed over time. The context for it was provided by the historiosophical scheme of three components of a civilization by François Guizot: in his early work "The Nineteenth Century" (1832), Kireevsky referred to this scheme while attempting to formulate a peculiarity of Russian civilization as compared with the Western European one. In this work, such a peculiarity consists in the insufficient role of the element of the Antiquity, and thus, the Russian enlightenment is laden with connotations of incompleteness. In this respect, Kireevsky is moving in line with Guizot's Eurocentrism. However, in the work "On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe", written 20 years later, Kireevsky, using the same Guizot scheme, changes his views, and the Russian enlightenment is associated with completeness, which is contraposed to the one-sidedness of Western European enlightenment. However, this completeness for Russia is not of its own making, since its source is to be sought in the Byzantine Church and in the Byzantine civilization permeated with Platonism, from which the Russian enlightenment originates. It is within the framework of this new optics that what we call Kireevsky's byzantinocentrism arises.

I have identified two opposite lines in perceiving the image of Byzantium, which were present in Kireevsky's social circle. One of them can be called anti-Byzantine, the other pro-Byzantine. The first one goes back to an anti-Byzantine message, characteristic of the epoch of Enlightenment; it found its manifestation in G. W. F. Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, which became known in Russia soon after its publication. Furthermore, I have pointed to the traces of the implicit polemics with Hegel's anti-Byzantinism in Kireevsky's article "On the Character of Enlightenment of Europe" and identified the context of these polemics in the Russian historiosophical literature and opinion journalism of the nineteenth century. I have discovered such a context in the articles of Arist Kunick, a German historian who moved to Russia and made an academic career there.

This Enlightenment line in the Russian anti-Byzantinism (not yet induced by Hegel) was expressly manifested in Pyotr Chaadaev, for whom the topic of the kindred connection of Russian and Byzantine civilizations was acute and, one could say, traumatic—exactly because Chaadaev viewed this relation as the origin of the unfortunate fate of the Russian people and considered the "parent" culture, Byzantium, to be worthy of contempt. Such a standpoint was directly opposite to that of Kireevsky, for whom this connection was also evident, only for his part, he perceived it as fortunate. Alexander Pushkin, a close acquaintance of both Chaadaev and Kireevsky (in the pre-Slavophile period of the latter), also acknowledged this kindred connection between the two cultures and, much as Kireevsky later did, perceived it as fortunate and beneficial for Russia (i.e., we find a pro-Byzantine line in both of them). At the same time, Pushkin's view presupposed freedom and some independence of the Russians from the Byzantine legacy, which was opposite to Chaadaev's position. The difference between Pushkin and Kireevsky is that Kireevsky's byzantinocentrism included the idea of some higher spiritual connection between Byzantium and Russia, while Pushkin allowed for Russia's freedom from Byzantium in this regard.

In Kireevsky's latest Slavophile article, "On the Necessity and Possibility of the new Foundations for Philosophy" (1856), another, more pessimistic view on Byzantium is found. The divergence in the view on Byzantium between this article and his earlier Slavophile article "On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe" was paradigmatic and reflected a division in this respect, which took place within the Russian Slavophile-conservative milieu of that time. At the same time, this division in the views on Byzantium stood behind another, the politically oriented division within the same milieu—namely, the division with regard to the Greek-Bulgarian ecclesiastical question. Indeed, Kireevsky's earlier Slavophile position was helleno- and byzantinocentric. He had considered Byzantine civilization to be a certain wholeness. A similar position, formulated, in my opinion, under the influence of Kireevsky, was held by Terty Filippov, an apologist and defender of the Greek side in the Greek-Bulgarian conflict. Another view (which later was held by Kireevsky as well as by Khomyakov) presumed that Byzantine civilization was bipolar and had both light and dark sides. The proponent of this view, Alexey Khomyakov, at the same time was the opponent of Filippov as regards the Greek-Bulgarian ecclesiastical question. However, in Khomyakov's interpretation, in the context of his response to the Greek-Bulgarian question, this view included an anti-clerical constituent, while the corresponding view of Kireevsky did not.

The present paper has demonstrated not only the two-sided nature of the preeminent Slavophiles' attitude (as well as that of their milieu) towards Byzantium, but also the absence of any correlation between pro- and anti-Byzantinism, on the one hand, and the fact of belonging to Slavophiles or Westernizers, on the other. At the same time, it has revealed the heterogeneity of discourses and contexts within which the theme of Byzantium emerged in the Russian historiosophical literature and opinion journalism of the nineteenth century, considering that this or that context influenced the specifics of interpretation of this theme. So, one of such influential contexts is provided by the historiosophical scheme of Guizot. Following this scheme literally, early Kireevsky had still not paid much attention to Byzantium. Twenty years later, Kireevsky, employing the same scheme but changing his views, had drawn a byzantinocentric picture. However, this picture turned out to be too schematic and idealistic, and soon Kireevsky, under the influence of Khomyakov, corrected it in accordance with historical realities. Another context of understanding is constituted by the Hegelian historiosophical scheme, which disparages the Byzantine civilization. This scheme left its mark on Chaadaev's historiosophy. Finally, for Pushkin, such an important context consisted of the concern of the richness of language/culture.

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