



23<sup>rd</sup>

International Congress of  
BYZANTINE STUDIES  
Belgrade, 22-27 August 2016

Thematic Session of Free Communication:

## BYZANCE APRÈS BYZANCE – PART 1

Chairs: Hediye Melek Delilbaşı, Aleksandar Fotić

---

**Natalia Ziablitsyna,**

*Surroundings of Sophia Palaiologina: The Influence on the Russian Theological Thought*

**Aleksandar Fotić,**

*Hilandar's Monks from Kalamaria Metochion in the Service of *vigla* (17<sup>th</sup> C.)*

**Nikita Khrapunov,**

*Through Travellers' Eyes:*

*The Discovery, Interpretation, and Sacralization of Byzantine Crimea, 1783-1827*

**Anca Mihaela Sapovici,**

*The Parenetic Works within the Romanian Culture: Between Tradition and Innovation*

**Andrii Domanovskyi,**

*Byzantium after Byzantium in Ukrainian Perception*

**Jeroen Geurts,**

*The Pope and the Patriarchs.*

*The Lifting of the Schism in Cuba and the Saving of the Byzantine Identity*



Andrii Domanovskyi

---

### *Byzantium after Byzantium in Ukrainian Perception*

Notwithstanding certain achievements in the study of the Byzantine influence on Ukrainian history, the Ukrainian humanities (history, philosophy, political science, etc.) have so far been unable to offer a properly Ukrainian vision of Byzantium and the Byzantine cultural and civilizational heritage. The Ukrainian perception of the Byzantine myth has been relinquished unconditionally to the talons of the Russian imperial discourse. In the view of most Ukrainian intellectuals the Byzantine component of Ukrainian history still remains an entirely negative experience, and it is often related as something external, imperial and anti-democratic, formulaic, pharisaic and anti-Ukrainian.

In the Ukrainian perception of Byzantium, the Russian imperial myth of Moscow as the Third Rome dominates entirely, and, having received and accepted the Russian view of Byzantium, Ukraine has only two strategies to choose from: either to acknowledge herself as part of Russia and share in the latter's imperial vision of Byzantium, or, rejecting the Russian imperial project, to build an identity of her own, interpreting Byzantium and the Byzantine heritage as something essentially alien, negative, and external, as something that should be gotten rid of as soon as possible. Characteristic in this sense are the references to Byzantium, Byzantine heritage and its traits by the leading Ukrainian public intellectuals.

Meanwhile, outside the Russian vision of Byzantium, there exists a variety of other, sufficiently productive approaches. Such is, for instance, the Western European view, within which we can clearly distinguish the peculiarities of the national schools of such "great historiographical powers" as Germany, Great Britain, and France. Or there is the American view (and the United States is also, without a doubt, a "great historiographical power," in the sense that it explores the entire span of world history, from the primitive society in all corners of the globe and the early civilizations to the contemporary history of every country of the modern world and all the various modern social groups and aspects of life). Within the limits of the possible, the Russian Empire also strove to be a "great historiographical power," the Soviet Union became one for a time, and the present-day Russian Federation is making the last-ditch effort to maintain this status. Concerning Byzantium, both the Russian Empire of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and the Russian Federation of the present had/have a special sentiment, experiencing it as part of their own history, which has inevitably and strongly empowered the Byzantine studies in the context of the study of Russian history.

Some countries that in no way can be counted among the "great historiographical powers" – Greece, Serbia, or Bulgaria – also have proven capable of developing their own visions of Byzantium and its heritage within their national historiographies (we will not now dwell on the question of why, in what context, and for what reasons the study of Byzantium developed in such remote and separated from the Byzantine heritage countries). It would appear that visions of Byzantine history akin to the Serbian or Bulgarian should have emerged in the Ukrainian intellectual space, but Ukraine's continuing in the gravitational intellectual pull of the Russian state, eventually made the differentiation and formulation of an independent Ukrainian vision of the history of Byzantium and the significance of its heritage impossible.