

the great wager, the constant struggle for its attainment is the great reality.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, John R.: *Language, Memory, and Thought* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1976).
- Angelakopoulos, A.: *To Epanastatiko Kenema tis Ergatikis Taxis (The Revolutionary Movement of the Workers' Class)* [URL Directory: <http://www.politikokafeneio.com/istoria/Files/epanastatiko130505.htm> – [epanastatiko270505.htm](http://www.politikokafeneio.com/istoria/Files/epanastatiko270505.htm)], May 2005.
- Asteriou, E. and Lambatos, G.: *He Aristeri antipolitefsi sten Ellada* (Athens: Filistor, 1995).
- Castoriadis, Cornelius: *He Fantasiaki Thesese tis Kenontias* (Athens: Rappas, 1981).
- *To epanastatiko provlema semera* (Athens: Ypsilon/Vivlia, 1984).
- *Synchronos kapitalismos kai epanastase*; trans. K. Kouremenos and A. Stinas (Athens: Ypsilon/Vivlia, 1987).
- *Oi omilies sten Ellada* (Athens: Ypsilon/Vivlia, 1990).
- *O thrymmatismenos kosmos* (Athens: Ypsilon/Vivlia, 1992).
- Emmanouilides, M.: *Aretikes diadromes O ellinikos trotskismos kai o B' Pagkosmios polemos* (Athens: Filistor, 2001).
- Falilgot, R. and Kauffer, R.: "Pablo: O teleftaios ton Moikanon", in Michel Raptis (Pablo), *He politike mou autoviographia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Athens: Ikaros, 2005).
- Paul Froelich, *Rosa Luxemburg: Her Life and Work* (London: Seldes, 1940).
- Guerin, Daniel: "Preface", Leon Trotsky, *Sur la deuxième guerre mondiale* (Brussels: Editions La Taupe, 1970).
- Joubert, Jean-Paul: "Revolutionary Defeatism", *Revolutionary History*, Vol. 1 No. 3 (Autumn 1988) (War and Revolution in Europe: 1939–1945) [available online at <http://www.revolutionary-history.co.uk/>].
- Kihlstrom, John F.: "Memory, Autobiography, History", online article based on piece appearing in a special issue of *Proteus. A Journal of Ideas* on the subject of Memory (Vol. 19, No. 2, Fall 2002) [URL: <http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~kihlstrm/rmpa00.htm>].
- Lenin, V.: *Collected Works*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974).
- Luxemburg, Rosa: *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism*, with new introduction by Bertram D. Wolfe (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1961).
- McConkey, James (ed.): *The Anatomy of Memory: An Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- Michael, S.: "Prologue to the second edition", Leon Trotsky, *He prodromene epanastase*, trans. T. Thomadakes and H. Rodite (Ekd. "Allage", 1984).
- Noutsos, P.: *He Sosialistike Skepse Sten Ellada: Apo sto 1875 Os to 1974*, Vol. 3 (Athens: Gnose, 1993).
- Paloukis, K. (2003), "He aristeri antipolitefsi sto KKE: Archeiomarxistes kai spartakistes", in C. Chatzeiosef (ed.), *Historia tes Elladas tou 20ou Aiona*, Vol. B2 (Athens: Vivliorama, 2003).
- Peat, Alice: Review of Agis Stinas, *Mémoires un révolutionnaire dans la Grèce du XXe siècle*, trans. Olivier Houdart, préface by Michel Pablo (Paris: La Breche, 1990), *Revolutionary History*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Summer 1990) [URL: <http://www.revolutionary-history.co.uk/>].
- Raptis (Pablo), M.: *He politike mou autoviographia*; 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Athens: Ikaros, 2005).
- Said, Edward W.: "Foreword", in R. Guda, and G. C. Spivak (eds), *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty: "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory A Reader* (Hemel Hempstead, UK: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993).
- Stinas, A.: *EAM-ELAS-OPLA: he "eidike apostole" tes ethnikes antistases sto deutero pankosmio imperialistiko polemo kai he symvole tes ste vvlrike katastrophe pou hen psychro proetoimazoun hoi demioi pou kyvernoun tous laous* (Athens: Diethnes Vivliotheke, 1984).
- *Anamneseis hevdomena chronia kato ap'te semaia tes sosialistikes epanastases* (Athens: Ypsilon/Vivlia, 1985).
- Trotsky, L.: *He prodromene epanastase*, trans. T. Thomadakes and H. Rodite (Ekd. "Allage", 1984).
- *He diarkes epanastase*, trans. K. Pittas (Ekd. Ergatike Demokratia, 1998).
- Wolfe, Bertram D.: "Introduction" to R. Luxemburg's (1961), *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1961).

# Byzantine Influence on Russia Through the Ages

Nonna Ryan  
Macquarie University

#### Introduction

The spread of Byzantine culture and its influence on regions beyond its immediate control was considerable and long lasting. From a Russian perspective, the most important legacy of the Byzantine Empire was its impact on the development of Russian society and culture, which followed the acceptance in the 10<sup>th</sup> century of the Orthodox religion by the ancestors of modern-day Russians. Through this impact Byzantine Christianity has had a profound and permanent effect on Russian civilisation.

This work will discuss the influence of Byzantine culture on the development of Russian architecture, music, language, literature, painting and sculpture from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. It is interesting to ask why one culture had such profound influence on so many aspects of another. Central to any answer is an appreciation of the interaction and changing relationships that have occurred between the Orthodox Church and the developing Russian State over the past one thousand years. We begin with a brief discussion of the history of pre-Christian Russia, describe the interaction of the Eastern Slavs with Byzantium and then trace some aspects of the development of the present-day Russian society.

#### Emerging Christianity in Pre-Christian Rus through contacts with Byzantium

The region that encompasses present-day Byelorussia, Russia, and Ukraine has been subjected to numerous invasions and turbulent clashes of disparate cultures throughout all of recorded history. Archaeological evidence indicates that the south-west (present-day Ukraine) was the cradle of what came to be known as Russian culture. Around 1000 BCE, the Cimmerians, a proto-Iranian people from the Black Sea Region, settled in the south, (present-day Ukraine). Around 700 BCE the Cimmerians were expelled by the Scythians who were in turn defeated by the Sarmatians in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. The Scythians and Sarmatians were closely related, both tracing their origins to Iran. The Sarmatians controlled much of what is now southern Ukraine and south-western Russia until they were overpowered around 200 by the Ostrogoths, who were a Germanic people from the north-west. Around 370 the Ostrogoths were driven west by the arrival from Central Asia of the savage Huns.

The Huns were followed by the Avars, who were a Central Asian people probably related to the Huns. Around 570 they moved on from Russia to occupy the Danubian provinces and the heartland of what had been Attila's empire. Although finally crushed

by Charlemagne in 791,<sup>1</sup> the migration of the Avars to north of the Balkans appears to have had a profound impact on the region. Before their arrival, the Slavs, who were located in central Europe north of the Danube, had begun migrating out of the area, perhaps because of population pressure. Evidence shows that the migration rate increased strongly after the arrival of the Avars and was possibly due to the oppressive actions taken by the Avars against the Slavs. Whatever the reason, the Slavs took part in rapid migrations into the Balkans, parts of what are now eastern Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and north-western Russia.

In the 9th century the strongest and most influential culture in the regions into which the Slavs had migrated was Byzantium. It spread to the whole of Eastern Europe and Western Asia. In the region that forms present-day Bulgaria, Serbia and Rumania, the whole foundation of the culture of the Slavs who lived there was Byzantine. In the region that forms present-day Russia and Ukraine the position was somewhat more complicated. Some historians believe that Russian culture consists of three parts. One an inherited pre-Christian Pagan component and two acquired components derived from the powerful influences of Christianity and Byzantium.

But Byzantium was by no means the only influence on the Eastern Slavs at this time. They were also in contact with many other peoples and cultures. In the late 9th century Scandinavian warrior-traders, the Varangians, took control of the major waterways from the Baltic to the Black sea. This resulted from an invitation in about 860 by the people of Novgorod to the Varangian Prince Rurik to become their ruler. In 882 Rurik's successor Oleg captured Kiev, where he was succeeded in about 912 by Rurik's son, Prince Igor. The Rurik dynasty was to survive as rulers of Russia until 1598.

By the 10<sup>th</sup> century in what is present-day Russia, the city-states of Novgorod, Pskov, Smolensk, Suzdal, Kiev and Vladimir had all been established with an elaborate pagan culture and active trading patterns. The main commerce for the Rus, as these people came to be known, lay with Byzantium and with the Greeks living on the northern shores of the Black sea. During this period the Rus were subject to frequent attack by nomadic Asiatic tribes such as the Khazars, Pechenegs and Polovtsians. Attacks and invasions from a number of different nations, and the rules of succession which existed in Russia at that time, made it impossible to form a united state and successfully defend it. The rules of succession decreed that on a prince-governor's death the State had to be split up among his sons, brothers and nephews. This system led to the formation of smaller and smaller states, many of which were in conflict with each other and all of them were vulnerable to external attacks.<sup>2</sup>

From about 800 Russia was increasingly exposed to Christianity from Byzantium, Bulgaria and Western Europe. As early as 846 the Arab geographer ibn Khordadbeq wrote in his monumental work the *Book of Roads and Countries* about Rus-Christians, who were trading with Byzantium and the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> According to Photius, Greek Orthodox missionaries were active in Rus in the middle of the 9th century, "about the same time as the original Christian mission to the Slavs in Greater Moravia in 862".<sup>4</sup> Orthodoxy existed in Russia before official adoption of Christianity in 988. Grand

<sup>1</sup> Tamara Talbot Rice, *Russian Art* (London. Penguin, 1949) p 20

<sup>2</sup> T. Talbot Rice, *Russian Art*, pp 25 - 26

<sup>3</sup> A. P. Novoseltsev, *The Eastern Slavs and Russia in the 9th-10th centuries* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, Moscow, 1965).

<sup>4</sup> Ihor Shevchenko *Byzantium and the Slavs*, Harvard Ukrainian Research Inc. USA 1991 pp 95-100

Princess Olga, the widow of Prince Igor, understood the importance of Christianity to the future of her people. She was baptised about 954 by Patriarch Theophilaktos with Emperor Constantine VII as her Godfather. This event is well documented in chronicles and church literature. A detailed description of Olga's first visit to Constantinople is given in Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus' (913-959) manuscript under the heading of "The Ceremonies of Byzantine Palaces".<sup>5</sup>

There is also more evidence of the existence of Christianity in Russia before Orthodoxy was proclaimed the official state religion:

- There is evidence of recorded small pockets of baptisms in Russia.<sup>6</sup>
- The apostle Andrew in the 1st century AD converted some Slavs to Christianity. The Primary Chronicles refer to the cross, which St. Andrew erected on the spot where Kiev was founded. The exact location is unknown, but it is generally believed that it was where Vsevolod built the Church of St. Andrew and an adjoining nunnery in 1086.<sup>7</sup>
- In 874 Askold, the ruler of Kiev, and a number of his people were converted to Christianity by Patriarch Ignatius of Constantinople.<sup>8</sup> In 861 Cyril, the Apostle of the Slavs, and his brother Methodius baptised about 200 families in the South of Russia. They evangelised the Slavs on the north shore of the Black Sea before Cyril's famous assignment as a missionary to Moravia.
- There had been Greek Orthodox missionaries in Kievan Rus in the mid 9th century, at the same time as the original Christian mission to the Slavs in Greater Moravia in 862.<sup>9</sup>
- There are references to some baptisms carried out under the auspices of Patriarch Photius in the second half of the 9th Century in Patriarch Photius's writings and in the biography of Patriarch Vasilij (Basil) of Macedonia.<sup>10</sup>
- Emperor Leo the Philosopher (886-911) also listed metropolitan churches under the auspices of Constantinople and among them some in Russia.<sup>11</sup>
- In 912 Emperor Leon showed Russian envoys the beauty and the wealth of the Byzantine rite.<sup>12</sup>
- There were large numbers of converts to Christianity during the times of Grand Princess Olga's rule, which no doubt was due to her

<sup>5</sup> Primary Chronicles, *Novgorod Chronicles* Early Slav manuscript known as Chronicle of Nestor. Primary Chronicle, compiled by monks in XI century.

<sup>6</sup> Kievo-Pyechersky *Chronicles of 1674*, Nikon Chronicles, 13th century

<sup>7</sup> This is the present site of the Church of St. Andrew.

<sup>8</sup> Ihor Shevchenko *Byzantium and the Slavs*, Harvard Ukrainian Research Inc. USA 1991 pp 93-100

<sup>9</sup> Dean S. Worth, "Language", in Nicholas Rzhevsky (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>10</sup> John Julius Norwich, *Byzantium, the Apogee* (Viking. Published by the Penguin Group, London, 1991

<sup>11</sup> Norwich, *Byzantium, the Apogee* pp 23-26.

<sup>12</sup> Ihor Shevchenko *Byzantium and the Slavs*, Harvard Ukrainian Research Inc. USA 1991 pp 92 - 101; Worth, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*.

own conversion to Christianity. She sought to influence her son Svyatoslav, but she was unsuccessful; Svyatoslav remained a committed pagan. There is also some evidence that the wooden cathedral Church of St Elijah (Iliya) in Kiev existed during Igor's rule (912–945) and probably even earlier. For a church to be referred to as a cathedral, points to the fact that there must have been either a resident or at least a visiting bishop, as well as some other churches.

- Mention is made in the Ipatyev chronicle of 882 of the wooden chapels of St Nicholas and of St Orina.
- During Igor's rule and later during the rule of his son Svyatoslav, all warriors, who were Christians, took their Oath of Allegiance at the Church of St Elijah. This also indicates that there was a large number of Christians among the ranks of the elite members of society, for whom a Christian cathedral was built for this rite of oath taking.<sup>13</sup>
- There was a wooden Church of St. Sofia in Kiev connected with Princess Olga in the middle 10<sup>th</sup> century.
- The Yakimov chronicles mention the rebuilding of the Church of the Transfiguration in Novgorod after Vladimir's baptism. This means that it must have been in existence before Christianity became the official religion. There were also five known and documented dioceses in Russia in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup>

#### Acceptance of Christianity by Prince Vladimir of Kiev

In the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century Prince Vladimir of Kiev, who was the grandson of Olga, succeeded in uniting under his rule a large part of southern and central Rus, which at that time was a wild and lawless area. His ambition was to build a great empire with an advanced and distinctive civilisation of its own. He realised that in order to achieve his aim he would have to bring a unity of purpose to his people. He believed the best way to do this in his principality was to establish one religion for all his subjects. The choice of religion was an important question at that time. According to the Nestor Chronicle, the early Slav manuscript, in order to choose a religion for his people, Vladimir sent envoys to the centres of each religion: Islam, Judaism and Christianity (Rome and Byzantium). Although the final split between Rome and Byzantium took place in 1054, severe differences already existed at the time Vladimir was making his choice. Envoys were instructed to bring back a report on merits and attractions of each religion. The envoys reported that they had never seen or heard anything as magnificent as they found in Constantinople; they thought they were in heaven while attending a church service there. There is some contradiction in the Chronicles on what turned Vladimir towards Orthodoxy. According to one account, he promised to be baptised if he won a battle against the Chersonese. According to another, he chose Orthodoxy because of the beauty of the Byzantine church service. Whatever his motivation, it can be assumed that politics, diplomacy and trade all played important roles. Vladimir realised the importance of the links which were already established with Byzantium.

<sup>13</sup> N. M. Nikolsky, *History of the Russian Church* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> N. N. Voyeykov, *Church, Russ and Rome* (Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983)

Commerce with Byzantium was crucial for him to fulfil his aspirations. Rome was very far off.

It is most likely that the evidence of the might of the Russians' Christian neighbours, such as Byzantium and the Empire of the Carolingians, which later became the Holy Roman Empire, prompted the acceptance of Christianity. The strong position of these Christian empires illustrated the might of the Christian God, which was obviously greater than that of the collection of pagan gods. To the pagan Rus this was evident from the wealth and the high standard of cultural development of their Christian neighbours. Prince Vladimir may have expected that by implementing a change in religion it would be also easier to establish a new set of rules and regulations among the general population at the same time. All the old social structures, which he no longer wanted, could be abolished together with the old faiths, and a single all-encompassing religion would replace the multitude of clan cults. The council or Veche, with its democratic-style powers, could be replaced with autocracy. One result of the acceptance of Christianity from Byzantium was that Russia inherited a Christian culture that had been developed over many centuries by ancient civilisations.

According to the Primary Chronicle, Vladimir had to persuade the population to accept the new faith. At first he destroyed all minor deities. Then he dragged to the river Dnepr the large wooden statue of Perun with its silver head and golden moustache and sent it floating down to the sea. This statue was previously erected by Vladimir himself and stood on a hill behind his palace in Kiev. He also had the other wooden deities destroyed. All inhabitants were commanded to take part in a mass baptism in the river Dnepr. After that Vladimir had churches built, priests appointed in all cities and towns and made the children from the upper classes of Kievan population learn to read and write.

The adoption of Orthodoxy by Vladimir for his people was complete in the sense that everything connected with the Russian Church followed the Byzantine pattern: the same ritual served both countries, and an entire ecclesiastical hierarchy was set up in Russia on Byzantine lines, headed by a Metropolitan whose appointment rested with the Patriarch of Constantinople. The ease of transition to and acceptance of Christianity can be attributed to a large extent to the way in which pagan beliefs were incorporated into Christian practices. The pagan elements in folk traditions remained vigorous long after the introduction of Christianity. The pagan calendar of seasonal feasts was so strongly established that after the conversion to Christianity the religious authorities had to take them into account and to make the Church festivals coincide with the pagan traditions. The old pagan gods have been forgotten, but many of the festivals and rites have remained to this day. The Church created its own method to express its mysteries and to impart information in a manner that would be understood and memorised by the largely illiterate congregation.

Vladimir's actions outraged Rome and alienated the Pope. This had the most far-reaching consequences because it virtually isolated Russia from Western Europe and while some level of commerce continued, cultural interaction was severely limited. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century some attempts were made to unite the Russian Orthodox and Catholic churches. In 1441 Metropolitan Isidor, representing Russian Orthodoxy at the Council of Florence, accepted unification with the Catholic Church. When he announced his decision in Moscow, his proposal was rejected, he was imprisoned and the Russian Orthodox Church was confined to its national boundaries. From the viewpoint of Western Europe, Russia became an even more remote place. So, just as the age of

Western European navigation of the oceans of the world that resulted in the discovery of new lands and new treasures was beginning, the Russians were isolating themselves from these momentous events.

Vladimir's conversion to Christianity was as much a political manoeuvre as a desire for a new faith. He realised that the country needed a unifying catalyst and he believed Byzantium offered the most advantages for Russia.<sup>15</sup> So in many ways his decision set the stage for the troubled course of interaction between Russia and Western Europe that continues to this day.

### **The decline of Kiev and the rise of Moscow**

The power and status of Kievan Rus appears to have reached its zenith under the rule of Yaroslav the Wise (1019-54) when Kiev was one of the most beautiful and wealthy cities in Europe. However the influence of Kiev declined rapidly because of the lack of cohesion among the princes, the increasing fragmentation of principalities resulting from the weak rules for succession and because of lack of natural defensive barriers. As Kiev declined, the cities of Novgorod, Susdal and Vladimir became cultural and artistic centres. In 1109 Andrew Bogoliubski sacked Kiev and made Vladimir the capital. Vladimir remained a powerful city until it was captured in the Mongol conquest in 1238.<sup>16</sup> Although the capital was transferred to Vladimir, the Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church remained in Kiev. Immediately after the fall of Kiev to the Tatar-Mongols in 1240, the Pope dispatched a Catholic bishop there. The response of the Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church was to move his See to Vladimir. The Crown and Church were reunited.

Moscow was founded by Yuri Dolgoruki in 1147 to serve as a trading centre between south-western and north-western Russia. The town was linked to the north by means of the rivers Oka and Upper Volga. After the waterway trade route was established Moscow became an important centre for Russian trade with Europe. The town rapidly became the premier city in Russia. Moscow's prosperity enabled Prince Ivan (nicknamed Kalita – "Money-Bag") to buy out some minor princes and to lay the foundation of Russian unity. In 1382 his grandson Dimitri had a victory over the Tatar-Mongols on the banks of the river Don. This gave Russians confidence in their ability to defeat the occupiers. In 1394 the Mongol leader Toktamish attacked and took Moscow. He looted and ravaged the city, but another Tatar-Mongol Tamerlane in turn attacked him before he had time to take full advantage of his victory. Dimitri's son, Vasili I, called upon Moscovites to defend their city. He promised them the protection of the icon of Our Lady of Vladimir. As soon as the icon arrived in Moscow from the city of Vladimir, Tamerlane withdrew his forces and left for Asia without any further fighting. Russia had started to break free from the Tatar-Mongol occupation which had lasted in total about 250 years when it finally came to an end towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The capture of Constantinople in 1453 by the Turks had a profound effect on the Russians and what they saw to be their future role in the world. When Ivan III came to the throne of Moscow in 1462 he was determined to create a strong Russia and to be the guardian and defender of Orthodoxy. He devoted a great deal of his attention and money to improving and beautifying the city. Ivan III was determined that Moscow's appearance should equal her new and very important role as Byzantium's successor. In

1472 Ivan III married Sophia Paleologus, niece of the last Emperor of Byzantium. He legalised the rule of hereditary succession to the throne and established Moscow as the Russian capital. This hastened the unification of Russian lands, which was completed in 1517, twelve years after his death. In 1472 he adopted for Russia the Byzantine crest of the double-headed eagle. Moscow became the only surviving independent Orthodox State giving it, in the opinion of some, legitimate grounds for claiming the title of the Third Rome.

### **Byzantine influence on Russian Culture**

Acceptance of Greek Orthodoxy brought with it much social and cultural change for the people of Russia. Orthodoxy affected most aspects of life and within all social divisions: the imperial court, aristocracy, military, bureaucracy, merchants and peasants and especially women. Orthodoxy influenced the Slav character through architecture, art, language and literature, music, customs, attire and even the diet, because people started to follow the church dietary rules. With the Holy Scriptures, Russia also received Greek literature, cultural and social customs as well as the Byzantine school of thought. Just as the clergy influenced the Greek society it now had a strong impact on the Russians.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Architecture*

Of course Orthodox priests came from Constantinople to baptise the people and preach the new religion. But there was also need for architects, since at that time there were very few buildings in Russia which could be used as churches for the new religion. Besides, now that Orthodoxy was the state religion, cathedrals had to have a grandeur befitting this status. Architects, painters and specialists in mosaics came from Constantinople to plan and construct the new buildings, but also to teach the Rus the skills required. Towns were laid out with patterns based on Constantinople; just as in Constantinople, in each new important town there was a Sancta Sophia, a Golden Gate and a palace. St. Sophia (built 1017-31), the Peshchersk (Caves) Lavra (1051) and St. Michael (1070-88) were the most important buildings in Kiev in the pre-Mongol period. Although designed by Greek architects they contained features new to Byzantine architecture. Much of this treasure was destroyed during the Second World War.

The beginnings of Novgorodian art were Byzantine. The Cathedral of Sancta Sophia, which was founded in 1045, was modelled on Constantinopolitan architecture. But the churches that followed were influenced by the indigenous wooden architecture. The Mongol invasion stopped just short of Novgorod, so from 1250, Novgorod was cut off from Byzantium. The Novgorod district was the only part of Russia, which remained free; the city became the centre of Russian art and thought, the home of a great school of religious paintings and the guardian of Russian culture.

#### *Art*

Until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, painting in Russia was virtually confined to religious subjects, which had to be depicted in the religious tradition. From the late 12<sup>th</sup> century the style of the Byzantine Renaissance is very evident in painting. First to flourish were the schools in Pskov and Novgorod and Vladimir-Suzdal who evolved their own styles but still owed much to the Byzantine form. As the power of Moscow increased so did the prestige of the Moscow school of fresco and icon painting. The ultimate pre-

<sup>15</sup> David Talbot Rice, *Byzantine Art* (London: Penguin, 1954), pp. 233-234.

<sup>16</sup> D. Talbot Rice, *Byzantine Art*, p 235.

<sup>17</sup> T. Talbot Rice, *Russian Art*, Chapter 16.

eminence of Moscow in this field owed much to Theophanes the Greek (1330-1405), who played an important role in the development of a distinctive style, which provided the foundation for local styles of painting. Theophanes continued to work in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, but even his style became more Russian in character (thin, sloping shoulders, delicate proportions, subtle colouring and great stress on rhythmical composition). After his death, a number of Russian painters came to prominence, among them an artist of outstanding ability, Andrew Rublev (1370-1430). Rublev worked with Theophanes on wall paintings in the Cathedral of the Annunciation in Moscow in 1405.<sup>18</sup> It was through the influence and teaching of Greek immigrants like Theophanes that a sound foundation was established in Russian painting, and it was on this basis that local styles were developed.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Literacy and Literature.*

There is some evidence of the existence of a Russian alphabet prior to the adoption of Christianity, but acceptance of Christianity can be considered as a decisive factor in the formation of early Russian culture and also the beginning of literacy after adoption of the new alphabet. The two brothers from Thessalonika, Constantine-Cyril (826-69) and Methodius (815-85), created the alphabet for the liturgical language Old Church Slavonic that was influenced by Greek models in vocabulary, phraseology, syntax and style, and was the common literary language of all the Orthodox Slavs. This act of adoption of Christianity not only played a key role in the development of literature but also meant that virtually all literary activity in Russia was in the hands of the church. The Old Russian literature was dominated by lives of the saints and Christian Slavic stories, with the first written masterpiece of Russian literature arising as a result of the song of praise of Prince Igor's campaign. The major works were either overtly religious in content or else bore a strong ecclesiastical imprint. This strict spiritual base would continue well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, giving rise to the famous religious writings of archpriest Avvakum, the first colloquial Russian works. He wrote interpretations of Holy Writ, epistles and his famous autobiographical Life, which was much admired for its power and style, and is now considered to be among the outstanding works of Russian literature of the 17 century.

#### *Music*

The music of the Russian Orthodox Church originally came to Russia from Byzantium, which did not allow the use of any musical instruments during the liturgy; this fact had enormous implications for the future development of Russian music. Singing in the Orthodox liturgy was a form of monastic unison chant performed by male choirs without accompaniment. Over time, the chant imported from Byzantium began to evolve independently to take on a distinctive Russian character. The two basic sources from which the Russian musical tradition has grown over the last one thousand years were the liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church and the folk tradition. These two streams complemented each other to provide a rich flow of melodic and emotional inspiration to many generations of composers. The 19<sup>th</sup> century produced Glinka, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and Tchaikovsky. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the same sources, liturgical and folk, continued to be essential ingredients of the music of

<sup>18</sup> T. Talbot Rice, *Russian Art*, p 238.

<sup>19</sup> D Talbot Rice, *Byzantine Art*, pp. 237-238.

Rachmaninov, Prokifiev and Shostakovich.<sup>20</sup> All of these composers have drawn on or been strongly influenced by traditions that can in part be traced back to Byzantium.

#### **Relationship between Church, State and dissent in Russia**

From the very beginning, the Russian church was closely associated with the princes; it was a strong and faithful ally of autocracy. The Church also had a strong impact on the structure of administration. In pagan times the main function of princes was the defence of their territory from external enemies. The Byzantine concept of a ruler's functions was much broader. As God's representative he was now also expected to look after the inner welfare of the society. The Prince was God's servant and as such was obliged to defend the weak, to be just and to protect his people from bad moral influences. The princes took council from the bishops, not just on religious matters, but often on secular issues. This close relationship between the ruler and the Church became a tradition in early Russian history.<sup>21</sup> Until Patriarch Nikon's church reforms in 1654, the clergy and rulers worked in partnership. The Russian Orthodox Church confined itself to its national boundaries. The tradition of church obedience to the state was established as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century the church's submission to the state was complete; a situation that was the source of extensive criticism from the Russian intelligentsia.

From the earliest days of the Kievan Rus, the chronicle records assemblies of elders called "Veche", called together for the purpose of law-giving. After the acceptance of Orthodoxy the church had important input into the deliberations of the Veche. However at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Peter the Great curtailed the power of the church and Catherine the Great completed the process. Peter's anticlerical attitudes may have been a result of having witnessed the attempts by Patriarch Nikon to humiliate his father Tsar Alexis. Subsequent monarchs revived the piety, but never returned power to the church. Orthodoxy continued to influence the people, customs and culture in a number of ways, but it did not interfere with the government and wielded little political power.<sup>22</sup> The Emperors became autocrats with supreme power and proclaimed themselves the anointed of God. They considered themselves answerable only to God. Among all the classes, from peasant to noblemen, religion played a prominent role and the nobleman's role on his estate was also that of an autocrat. He was, like his ruler, the public defender of the faith. It was his responsibility to see that churches were built in the villages; that religious instruction was given to the peasants and that the people practised their faith. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century all public servants had to produce certificates of proof that they had been to confession and communion annually. The Emperors were autocrats with supreme power to appoint and dismiss heads of the Church.

Right from the beginning the situation was somewhat different in Novgorod, which was a separate principality until 1478. The head of its Church was the Archbishop of Novgorod and Pskov. From 1156, the Novgorod "Veche" elected the candidate for this position and then the Metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia confirmed the appointment. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it was customary for the Veche to select three candidates. Their names were written on scraps of paper and placed on the altar of

<sup>20</sup> Orlando Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* (London: Penguin, 2002) pp175 - 179 and p280

<sup>21</sup> Figes, *Natasha's Dance. A Cultural History of Russia* (London: Penguin, 2002), pp. 175-179, 280.

<sup>22</sup> V. O Kluchevsky, *A course in Russian History* (St. Petersburg, 1902).

<sup>23</sup> G. V. Vernadsky, *Kievan Rus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948)

the St Sofia Cathedral. One of the names was then drawn out like a lottery, letting providence decide who the next Metropolitan would be. This method is still used by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in selecting Metropolitans. St Sofia cathedral was not just the major holy site of Novgorod, but also a symbol of the freedom and independence of Great Novgorod. All cultural and social activities of the inhabitants revolved around it and no major action such as war was ever undertaken without the blessing of the archbishop. Until the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Russian Orthodox Church functioned under the auspices of Byzantium. It was only in 1448 that it gained its independence and the position of Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia was not established until 1589. In 1550, at the Stoglav<sup>23</sup> Council of leading religious figures in Moscow, attempts were made to revise theological books. Tsar Ivan observed that the scribes copy books from inaccurate translations, and having copied them, do not correct them. Ivan was highlighting the dilemma of how to resolve the growing tension between those in the church who wanted a more faithful translation of the original Greek holy books and those who refused to depart from the texts as they had evolved to that time in the Russian translation and usage.

The Time of Troubles, the period of anarchy and Polish invasion at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was a difficult time for the church. But after the restoration of the Printing House (which had been destroyed during the unrest), it again became a centre for printing books and also a place of learning. Members of the Printing House began a re-examination of Greek texts and a comparison with the Russian translations. More than 500 manuscripts were brought from Greece and the study of them concentrated on the difference in rituals between the Greek and Russian churches. Certain changes were adopted: the word “truthful” was omitted from the eighth part of the Creed (“and in the Holy Spirit, God truthful and life-giving”), the form of address to God in the Lord’s prayer was changed, as was the spelling of Jesus’ name, hallelujah was sung three times instead of two and the priest walked around the altar to face the sun’s movement instead of moving with it, and three fingers were used to make the sign of the cross instead of two, which was the previously established practice in both Russia and Greece. It is clear that the matters that gave offence ritual and not religious philosophy, which emphasises the highly ritualistic nature of Orthodoxy at that time.

In the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Patriarch Nikon began to impose these changes in a stubborn and determined way, creating conditions that led to the Raskol (Schism). The 1654 council, which included Patriarch Nikon and Tsar Aleksis, agreed that the changes must be implemented and corrected books began to be printed. More than a quarter of the population from all social groups refused to accept the changes. This led to the formation of the Old Believers movement; they demanded that nothing be altered in the Russian service text or rituals. The struggle of the Old Believers took an extremely violent course especially under the leadership of Archpriest Avvakum (1620–82), who supported the Old Believers and was very much against the state-approved doctrine. He was imprisoned for his recalcitrance and during his incarceration produced some of the best Russian literature to that time. The price he paid for his heresy was to be burnt at the stake.

The Russian conservative tradition continued to shape the culture of empire-building in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A romantic notion of faith, customs and rituals formed the ideas and attitudes of numerous imperial officials, some scholars and military

<sup>23</sup> “sto” = 100, “glav” = chapter. The minutes of the meeting were written in 100 chapters.

officials. The Russian Orthodox heritage is deeply ingrained in Russian thought and culture. Russian religious writers and Slavophiles always considered Christianity as the historical engine, the foundation, and the spiritual movement, which formed the people’s spirit into a political organism.<sup>24</sup>

The end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was marked by religious revival, namely new Russian interactions with Catholic and Protestants. The influence of Joseph DeMaiste and the Jesuits was important at this time. In 1840 the Slavophile philosophers, Makary and Kireevsky, began to print literature which exerted a strong influence on the way in which Russianness was defined in terms of Orthodoxy and Slavic ancestry. The Russian Orthodox Church was important for Russian poets and artists. Most of the writers of The Golden age of Russian literature – Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Tiutchev, Aksakov, Leskov, Turgenev, Chehov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy – and many writers and philosophers of The Silver age of Russian literature, dealt with religious issues in complex and diverse ways. In the Optyna Pustyn, a monastic community near Kaluga, founded by P. Velichkovsky (1722–1794), the work of church elders flourished in a similar way to the spirituality at Mt Athos. A number of writers – Gogol, Konstantin Leontiev, Fedor Dostoevsky, Soloviev and Tolstoy – visited the monastery. In November of 1910 Tolstoy left home intending to go to Optyna Pustyn once more but he fell ill on the way and died. The monastery continued to function until the 1920s.

#### Russian spiritual renaissance

There was also to some extent a spiritual renaissance. One of the eminent theologians of the time was the priest Pavel Florensky (1882–1939), who did some outstanding work in philosophy, theology, in the sciences, humanities, as a mathematician, philologist, technical engineer, museum scholar and art historian. The clergy and the intelligentsia began a dialog at religious philosophical meetings: the first such meeting was held in 1901, and then was banned by the head of Holy Synod in 1903, but debates continued in the press. However, radical atheism became widespread in Russia and the subservient position of the church in the monarchical state did not help matters. Belatedly the Church tried to respond to the social upheaval and in August 1917 convened the first church council since the time of Peter the Great. Finally acting independently of the state, the council elected Patriarch Tikhon who until his death in 1925 continued a courageous defence of the interests of the church. In 1917 the intelligentsia and the church underwent persecution seldom seen in history.

After the 1917 revolution many churches were destroyed and priests executed or sent to concentration camps. During almost 70 years of repression and strong anti-religious propaganda, some Russians may have accepted Marx’s idea that “religion is the opiate for the people”. In the Soviet period the faith of the people did not disappear, it “went underground” and official new ideologies supplanted the old ones, but conservative notions about customs endured as an important part of the make-up of the new Soviet society. During the dark years of World War II (which is known in Russia as a Great Patriotic War), even Stalin understood the importance of religion for the people. He ordered the churches to be opened and the people allowed to pray. Prayer and a religious mood were also reflected in Russian literature and music of that time.

<sup>24</sup> I. S. Aksakov, *Slavianofil'stvo i zapadnichestvo*, Vol III (St. Petersburg, 1886)

This relaxation of religious practices did not last long. After the victory of 1945 the repression was as strong as before.

As a religious experience and as a way of life, Russian Orthodoxy has been described as “heaven on earth”,<sup>25</sup> which attempts to epitomise the effect of the Eastern Church’s elaborate ritual on the Russian Orthodox believer. It is believed that in Russian Orthodox worship the entire person and their senses are involved in piety to God and to the Russian Nation.<sup>26</sup> Religion is so synonymous with national identity that to say “Russian “ is often to say “Orthodox”, and religion has thus been described as the essence of the Russian soul.<sup>27</sup> This is primarily the result of a lack of international cohesion between the Eastern Churches after Byzantium’s decline, which led to the Orthodox community dividing along national lines.<sup>28</sup> The effect that this religious intervention has had on Russian society has been viewed both positively and negatively. Some argue that the Christian religion in Russia has been a driver of spirit and hope and a mechanism for survival during times of national crisis and religious persecution. This would mean that Russia’s religious focus has not only acted to shape but also to preserve Russian society and form it into a spiritually strong nation with a historical ethos of survival. It has also been argued that the Orthodox Church in Russia has been the ultimate conservative custodian of tradition.<sup>29</sup> Thus religion in Russia has also been perceived as a means of moulding Russia into a static and backward society that facilitates archaic modes of lifestyle and thought. Both arguments lead to the conclusion that religion has played a significant role in shaping Russian society into an Eastern Christian nation, with a particularly unique religious flavour.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union there was a powerful religious revival in Russia. A number of churches have been restored and some new ones are being built. Many Russians attend church: for them their religion is a part of their history, part of Mother Russia, part of the spiritual experience, religious beliefs, values, traditions and customs which have been part of their life for so long. The people preserved faith in Orthodoxy. The beginning of the new renaissance of Russian Orthodoxy can be witnessed after the 1988 celebration of the millennium of Christianity in Russia. It could be said that the strict adherence of the Russian Orthodoxy to church traditions helped it to survive the Tatar-Mongol conquest and subsequent 250 years of occupation, to withstand the reign of Peter the Great, to defeat Napoleon and Hitler and finally to manage to live through over seventy years of Soviet government.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> John McManners (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992)

<sup>26</sup> Stephen Godley and Phillip J Hughes, *The Eastern Orthodox in Australia Report prepared for the Australian Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1996).

<sup>27</sup> Figs, *Natasha’s Dance*, pp. 300-302.

<sup>28</sup> Figs, *Natasha’s Dance*, pp. 301 – 302.

<sup>29</sup> *Russian Traditional Culture*. Edited by Majorie Mandelstam Balzer. M.E. Sharpe Inc. 1992 UK McManners, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*.

<sup>30</sup> Figs, *Natasha’s Dance*

# *Landscapes / language-scapes: Οι αμφιβολογίες της όρασης. Με αφορμή την ελληνοαυστραλέζικη λογοτεχνία – και όχι μόνον.*

Μιχάλης Τσιανίκας  
*Flinders University*

## ABSTRACT

Title: *Landscapes/language-scapes: the amphilogicalities of vision. Starting with the Greek-Australian literature but not being limited by it.*

Mihalis Tsianikas

This paper examines various imaginative translations of the Australian, in particular, landscape through its verbal re-configurations in contemporary prose, poetry and autobiographical literature. Contemporary recognised Greek writers, like Antigone Kefala, S. Tsaloumas, Dim. Tzoumakas, S.S. Charkianakis and prose writers, known or unknown, like Katerina Kizilos or Olga Alfa, struggle with the process of re-framing and re-inventing the strange and alien landscape of Oceania into the familiar forms and the symbolic recognition that poetic language allows them to articulate. Vision and the other senses foreground the irregularities and the tribulations of such process; how can the sensory and the empirical become the ambiguous or polysemous significations of the poetic text? How can language shelter a vision of being which is beyond its capacity to transfix the ultimate meaning of such forms? Is it possible that the landscape which becomes a language-scape is, in the poetic world, a language-escape? Can language designate the ultimate fear and trembling in front of the mysterious natural flow which we encounter when look at the great unknown continents of our inner Australia?

\*

Μιχάλης Τσιανίκας, “Landscapes / language-scapes: Οι αμφιβολογίες της όρασης.  
Με αφορμή την ελληνοαυστραλέζικη λογοτεχνία – και όχι μόνον”,  
*Culture & Memory*. Special Issue of  
*Modern Greek Studies* (Australia and New Zealand), 2006: 291-308.