



The Reception of Byzantine Culture in Mediaeval Russia (Variorum Collected Studies Series)

Francis J. Thomson

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It is a truism that Russian culture is based upon the reception of Byzantine culture. However, the question of what was in fact received is the task that Professor Thomson has set in these studies, by means of a detailed examination of the corpus of translations. Down to the 17th century this corpus was essentially made up of works required for the liturgy and the monastic life. Few works of dogmatic theology and virtually no classical or philosophical works were translated, neither was a knowledge of Greek, which would have provided access to the originals, widespread. The result was an unreasoning adherence to ritual forms. Western ideas which began to penetrate into Muscovy in the 17th century were not absorbed by Russian culture but fundamentally reshaped it, and the result led to a schism within the Church. Russia today is Orthodox by religion, but Byzantine culture disappeared with Byzantium. A major section of addenda takes into account the advances in scholarship since the articles were first published.



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