
REVIEWS

BYZANTINE CHRISTIANITY: EMPEROR, CHURCH AND THE WEST.

By *Harry J. Magoulias*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1970. x, 196 pp. Paper.

This book may be best described as a series of four essays with no central theme. Its purpose is quite obvious: to provide students with accessible material on Byzantine civilization. But whether the material offered will have the desired intellectual effect is a question open to doubt. The first essay, "Byzantine Christianity and the Imperial Cult," is clear enough. That the Byzantine emperor, whatever the mode of his election, was the representative of Christ on earth and responsible to him alone was an idea formulated very early after the triumph of Christianity, and it obtained down to the end of the empire. Not so clear, however, are the two essays that follow. The one, "Byzantine Christianity and the Heresies," consists to such an extent of definitions of heresies that it will bore most students. The other, "Byzantine Christianity and Mysticism," may be more interesting to students, but the language of mysticism will probably elude them, for it is difficult to understand without some knowledge of the problems of reality. The best essay and the one likely to prove most useful is the fourth and last, "Byzantine Christianity and the West." The narrative is clear, the problems are well elucidated, and translations from Greek texts that are not easily available are included. In writing this essay Magoulias, without ignoring Latin sources, drew so heavily on the Greek sources that his discussion of the antagonism between Byzantine and Western Christianity and its catastrophic effects on the former may appear biased, though it is not. If the book is to be used in any way connected with the classroom, it should be used for this essay.

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THE SLAVS: A CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE SLAVONIC PEOPLES.

By *Roger Portal*. Translated from the French by
Patrick Evans. New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1970. xix, 508 pp.
\$15.00.

The present volume is an English translation of Professor Portal's *Les Slaves: Peuples et nations* published in 1965. Because it has not been brought up to date, the book is for the most part ten years old, although there are some references to the early 1960s. The approximately 450 pages of text are accompanied by 27 maps, 27 tables, 47 illustrations, and a special section of some 40 plates. The French original, it might be noted, had many more illustrations, including some in color. The text is followed by a brief bibliography, a glossary, chronological tables, and an index.

Portal undertakes the heroic task of presenting in a single volume the histories and cultures of all, or almost all, the Slavic peoples. He pays much more attention to the Russians than to the others, but he does issue regularly their allotments, be it only a pauper's allotment at times, to the rest. The undertaking is made much more difficult by the absence of a common theme and of fundamental interconnec-