
REVIEWS

RHOMÄERREICH UND GOTTESVOLK: DAS GLAUBENS-, STAATS- UND VOLKSBEWUSSTSEIN DER BYZANTINER UND SEINE AUSWIRKUNG AUF DIE OSTKIRCHLICH-OST-EUROPÄISCHE GEISTESHALTUNG. By *Endre von Ivánka*. Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1968. 167 pp. DM 28, paper.

Endre von Ivánka is a leading specialist in the field of late antiquity and early Christianity and has published several studies on Christian Platonism. The book under review represents a general historical evaluation of Byzantine civilization, the medieval cradle of Christian Hellenism, about which the author had published several short studies (listed on page 167). The book is actually an expansion of these previous, not very accessible articles.

The formation of Byzantine cultural self-expression is described by Professor von Ivánka as an integration of "sacralized imperialism," "ethical personalism," "Roman traditionalism," and "Christian universalism." The author's own philosophical and literary inclinations help him to illustrate a point which medieval historians often express in a more concise and drier formula: Byzantine civilization was Roman in political theory, Christian in religion, and Greek in language. In a helpful comparison between the Eastern and the Western medieval views of Christian society (pp. 97–103), he contrasts the Western universalism of a supranational papacy with the Constantinian imperial state of Byzantium, where church and state were inseparable in the life of a monolithic Christian "people."

This reviewer would not agree with the author's view of Byzantine civilization as a "synthesis between Antiquity and Christianity." Even if Greek antiquity did always represent a living reality in the minds of a very narrow elite of Byzantine humanists, it was abhorred by the vast world of monasticism, and Platonic philosophy was officially excluded from the programs of ecclesiastical schools. On this issue the history of Byzantine thought is a history of bitter polarity and conflict, and certainly no synthesis was ever reached.

The book also includes a short analysis of what the late Rumanian historian Nicolae Iorga called "Byzance après Byzance": the Christian ghetto inside the Turkish Islamic world, and Russia with Moscow, as a "third Rome." It finally concludes with a brief criticism of nineteenth-century Russian Slavophilism and its "ecclesiology," with, in the opinion of this reviewer, a rather unfair treatment of A. S. Khomiakov and his disciples, on the basis of a dogmatic *parti pris*.

In fact, it was perhaps unavoidable that a book covering the religious, social, and philosophical problematics of Eastern Europe from Constantine to the Russian Slavophiles would include some hasty generalizations and a priori judgments. It remains that Professor von Ivánka raises mostly the right questions; and the answers he suggests are often quite provocative. His book will be read with profit by students of modern Slavic history, who are so often unaware of the tremendous and lasting impact of Byzantine civilization upon Eastern Europe.

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