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Sommario/riassunto	The papers in this volume derive from the 28th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, held for the Society for the promotion of Byzantine Studies at the Univesity of Birmingham in March 1994. Virtually from the time of their first foundation, the monastic communities of Mt Athos assumed a central position in the world of Orthodox Christianity. The spiritual, and political and economic influence of the Holy Mountain soon transcended the boundaries of the Byzantine empire within which it lay, to take on a supra-national importance and become one of the pillars of Orthodoxy after the fall of the empire. For the historian, the significance of Mt Athos is enhanced by the fact that its archives contain the most substanial body of Byzantine documentation to have survived the Middle Ages, and its libraries, treasuries and buildings have preserved much that has elsewhere been lost. These archives are now largely edited, and investigation of the art and

archaeology is yielding substantial evidence. The papers in this volume, by an international set of scholars, embody the fruits of this research. Starting from Athos itself, they embrace the whole phenomenon of Byzantine monasticism, dealing with questions of asceticism, authority, community, economy, enlightenment, fortification, hesychasm, liturgy, manuscripts, music, patronage, scandal, spirituality, and women (to take an alphabetical sample). Together these papers provide a coherent and immediate view of scholarship in the field.
