

Look over the extract addressing the statement below. Can you spot any errors? How would you improve this?

Assess the impact of Western European influence on Russian culture in the period of 1613-1855.

Similarly to Peter the Great, Catherine the Great was also influenced by Western Europe and further westernised Russian culture. Catherine took inspiration from Enlightenment thinkers and established with the philosophes, namely Voltaire and Diderot. She desired for Russia to be seen as cultural and no more backward. Catherine the Great was a patron of the arts and under the empress, there was an unprecedented spending spree brought thousands of Old Master paintings, sculptures, furniture, silver, porcelain, and engraved gems to Russia (1).

With such an extensive art collection, Catherine commissioned Yury Felten to build an extension to the Winter Palace, and later French architect Jean-Baptiste Vallin de la Mothe built a second extension, which acted as galleries for Catherine.

Furthermore, Catherine commissioned for an exact replica of Raphael's Vatican Loggias for the Winter Palace, and there was a "building binge" in Russia, with Catherine hiring many European architects. As we can see, Catherine was inspired by Western Europe and brought a cultural renaissance to Russia. In addition to being patron of the arts, Catherine sponsored "a wide programme of translations into Russian", which works included "the best that France could offer, selections from the Encyclopédie, Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois*, works by Corneille, Racine, Voltaire, Mably, and many of Rousseau's writings".

As we can see, Russian culture was influenced by Western Europe. But, the "most cultured nobles and non-nobles could read the classics of the French and German Enlightenment in the original languages" (2) and the uneducated peasant class couldn't read these new translated works anyway.

1. Susan Jaques, *The Empress of Art: Catherine the Great and the Transformation of Russia*, (London: Pegasus Books), 1.
2. Isabel de Madariaga, "Catherine the Great" from *Enlightened absolutism: reform and reformers in later eighteenth-century Europe*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990).

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When was it published?

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