

HISTORY 607.02

THE LATER BYZANTINE EMPIRE (843-1453)

The Ohio State University Winter Quarter 1998

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Class Web Site: <http://www.acs.ohio-state.edu/history/isthmia/teg/hist60702>

Required Texts:

George Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, rev. ed.

Michael Psellus, Fourteen Byzantine Rulers.

The Later Byzantine Empire, 843-1453 (collection of readings).

A Chronology of Later Byzantine History.

Ostrogorsky and Psellus are available at SBX; the Readings and Chronology are available at Cop-Ez in the basement of Bricker Hall (the Chronology is also available on-line at the class web site, so you need not purchase this if you do not wish to).

Course Description

This course covers the history of the Byzantine Empire from the end of Iconoclasm (843) to the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks (1453). The primary goal of the course is to promote an understanding of Byzantine civilization in its historical setting; thus, we will try to understand the "mind-set" of the Byzantines and how they reacted to the world around them. The Byzantines developed a unique civilization, one that was different from that of their classical Greek and Roman ancestors and different from that of their contemporaries in the medieval West. Historiographically, Byzantium has been generally misunderstood and often maligned. This course will present the Byzantine achievement in a positive light and allow the student to draw his/her own conclusions about the value of the Byzantine tradition.

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

January 5 BYZANTIUM IN THE NINTH CENTURY

Ostrogorsky, pp. 186-209

January 12 MICHAEL III AND THE MISSION TO THE SLAVS

Ostrogorsky, pp. 210-60

Readings I: Life of Constantine the Philosopher

January 19 THE MACEDONIAN DYNASTY

Ostrogorsky, pp. 260-298

January 26 LIFE IN THE TENTH CENTURY

Readings III: Liudprand

February 2 THE APOGEE OF BYZANTINE POWER

Ostrogorsky, pp. 298-315

Readings II: Digenes Akrites

Readings IV: Russian Primary Chronicle

Psellos, pp. 27-49

February 9 THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Ostrogorsky, pp. 316-50

Psellos, pp. 87-187; 350-66

February 16 ALEXIOS KOMNENOS AND THE FIRST CRUSADE

Ostrogorsky, pp. 351-417

Readings V: Anna Komnena, Alexiad

February 23 THE FOURTH CRUSADE

Ostrogorsky, pp. 418-44

Readings VI: Villehardouin, Memoires

March 2 THE GREAT AFTERMATH

Ostrogorsky, pp.444-65

March 9 THE END OF THE EMPIRE

Ostrogorsky, pp. 466-572

Class Attendance and Participation: Students will be expected to attend class every day and to take part in discussion.

Examinations: There will one mid-term examination on Monday, February 9. Details on the comprehensive final exam will be provided later.

Term Paper: All students are required to submit a term paper, due at class time on March 13. Undergraduate papers should be 5-10 pages, graduate papers 10-30 pages in length. Papers should be prepared according to normal scholarly standards (footnotes or endnotes, bibliography, etc.). All students are advised to select a topic of their choice as early as possible, preferably in consultation with the instructor. The following are some **suggested** topics (there are many others that you may come up with):

Psellos as an historical source

Economic and political aspects of the Schism of 1054

Byzantine attitudes toward the Crusades and/or Crusaders

Western settlers in Byzantine lands after 1204

Anna Komnena as an historical source

Byzantine relations with Symeon of Bulgaria

Constantine VII as a historical figure

The Book of Ceremonies as an historical source

The conversion of Vladimir of Rus

The collapse of the empire in the 11th century

The "diversion" of the Fourth Crusade

Byzantine relations with Genoa

Byzantine relations with the Turks, 12-15th centuries

Women saints in later Byzantium

Trade in Byzantium

Relations between Byzantines and Venetians

The Duchy of Naxos

The Empire of Trebizond

The Despotate of Epirus

Mt. Athos as a cultural bridge between Byzantium and the Slavs

Life in a Byzantine village

The Byzantine heritage in SE Europe

The theology of Hesychasm

Plethon as a cultural figure

Monasticism at Meteora in the 14th century

Term papers should focus on a specific **question** (why did something happen? how did it happen? who was to blame? etc.) rather than simply presenting a "report." In most cases the topics suggested above are too broad and they will need to be cut down to make a proper term paper. A good place to begin your research is with

the Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, and there are now many good resources available on the Internet. Late papers will be subject to a substantial reduction of grade.

Grades: Grading will be at the discretion of the instructor, but the following is a rough guide to how the final grade will be determined:

Mid-term Examination 20%

Final Examination 40%

Term Paper 30%

Class Participation, etc. 10%

Academic Misconduct: All students should be aware that plagiarism, or any other kind of academic dishonesty, is a serious offense and can result in penalties, including failure in the course and dismissal from the University. All work in this course must be your own, and dishonesty of any kind cannot be tolerated.