

Hist 600.001, Fall 2012: Women, Men & Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium

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This 600 Seminar will explore conceptions of gender in the Medieval Roman Empire from the 6th to the 12th centuries. Medieval ideas about proper behavior for men and women differed significantly from those of our society. Understanding the constructions of gender in the Byzantine world therefore can provide a highly illuminating contrast. Byzantine constructions of gender are particularly interesting because of the lasting influence of ancient Greek culture on medieval thought and society. Medieval authors interacted constantly and unpredictably with their classical heritage, particularly when attempting to valorize or castigate the behavior of contemporary women and men. The practice of voluntary eunuchism further complicates Byzantine conceptions of gender. Scholarly opinion is divided about whether eunuchs constituted a third gender or were a special case of maleness in Byzantium. What is clear is that correct performance of gender roles was considered as a key indicator of an individual's virtue in Byzantine society. Therefore understanding Byzantine conceptions of gender is integral to understanding that society.

Students will learn about the process of conducting academic research in history and writing original research papers. They will complete several short writing assignments and a 17-20 page research paper.

Assessment In Brief:

Class discussion 10%

2 Article Reviews, 10% each

Research Paper Project 70%:

 Research topic and question, 5%

 Secondary Source Bibliography 5%

 Primary Source Bibliography 5%

 Source Analysis Essay 5%

 Bibliographic Essay 5%

 Draft Paper 10%

 Presentation of Research results 5%

 Final Research paper, 30%

Article Reviews & Presentations

You will be responsible for writing and presenting reviews of two articles in the “Article Review Option” column. Your in-class presentation should be 3-5 minutes in length and your review should be 3-5 pages long. A review & presentation should contain a) a brief executive summary of the content and argument b) an assessment of the article’s quality based on the rubrics in the Research Paper Grading Criteria.

Week	Topic	Common assignments	Common Reading	Article Review Options
1) 9/6	Byzantine History Introduction			
2) 9/13	Justinian & Theodora / Argumentative Paragraph		<i>Prokopios: The Secret History</i> James, Liz <i>Women, Men & Eunuchs</i> , introduction	
3) 9/20	Understanding Justinian & Theodora	article analysis IN CLASS	Kaldellis' Introduction; Brubaker, Leslie, "The Age of Justinian: Gender and Society." Evans, J.A.S. "The 'Nika' Rebellion and the Empress Theodora."	Fisher, Elizabeth. "Theodora and Antonia" 1984. Foss, Clive. "The Empress Theodora" Brubaker, Leslie. "Sex, Lies & Textuality"

4) 9/27	Eunuchs / Paper Structures		Ringrose Katherine "Reconfiguring the Prophet Daniel: Gender, Sanctity, and Castration in Byzantium." Barber, Charles. "Homo Byzantinus?"	Tougher, Shaun. "Byzantine Eunuchs: An Overview." Tougher "Images of Effeminate Men" Ringrose, Katharine. "Eunuchs as Cultural Mediators." Ringrose "Living in the Shadows." Sideris, George "Eunuchs of Light"
5) 10/4	Psellos / Secondary Research		Psellos <i>Chronographia</i>	Papaioannou, Eustratios "Michael Psellos' Rhetorical Gender." Galatariotou, Catia. "Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender."
6) 10/11	Empresses & Power / Primary Source Research	Topic Question	Vinson, Martha. "Gender and Politics in the Post-iconoclastic Period"; Neville, Leonora. "Strong Women and Their Husbands in Byzantine Historiography."	Herrin, Judith "Women and the Faith in Icons in Early Christianity." Cormack, Robin. "Women and Icons, and Women in Icons."
7) 10/18	Kekaumenos/Digenis	Secondary Source Bibliography	Jeffreys, Elizabeth. <i>Digenis Akritis</i>	Galatariotou, Catia. "Open Space / Closed Space: The Perceived Worlds of Kekaumenos and Digenes Akrites."; Magdalino, Paul. "Honour Among Romaioi"
8) 10/25	Anna's Authorship	Primary Source Bibliography	Anna Komnene Alexiad	Howard-Johnston, James. "Anna Komnene and the Alexiad." Macrides, Ruth. "The Pen and the Sword" Reinsch, Diether Roderich. "Women's Literature in Byzantium? The Case of Anna Komnene."

9) 11/1			Choniates	Hill, Barbara. "Actions Speak Louder Than Words: Anna Komnene's Attempted Usurpation."; Gouma-Peterson, Thalia. "Engendered Category or Recognizable Life" Goumla-Peterson "Gender and Power" Garland, Lynda "Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women"; Garland ""The Eye of the Beholder"
10) 11/8		Source analysis Essay		
11) 11/15		Bibliographic Essay		
12) 11/22	Thanksgiving Vacation			
13) 11/29		Progress reports		
14) 12/6	Draft Peer Review	Draft		
15) 12/13	Research Presentations	Research Presentations		

Research Paper Final Draft Due : **Tuesday December 18th, 12 noon.**

Bibliography of Articles for Common Readings & Article Reviews

- Brubaker, Leslie. "Sex, Lies and Textuality: The Secret History of Prokopios and the Rhetoric of Gender in Sixth-century Byzantium." In *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900*, 83–101. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- . "The Age of Justinian: Gender and Society." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, 427–447. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Cormack, Robin. "Women and Icons, and Women in Icons." In *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, 24–51. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Evans, J.A.S. "The 'Nika' Rebellion and the Empress Theodora." *Byzantion* 54 (1984): 381–3.
- Fisher, Elizabeth. "Theodora and Antonia." In *Women in the Ancient World. The Arethusa Papers*, 287–313. Albany, 1984.
- Foss, Clive. "The Empress Theodora." *Byzantion* 72 (2002): 141–176.
- Galatariotou, Catia. "Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 9 (May 1984): 55–94.
- . "Open Space / Closed Space: The Perceived Worlds of Kekaumenos and Digenes Akrites." In *Alexios I Komnenos*, 302–328. Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1996.
- Garland, Lynda. "Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women: A Further Note on Conventions of Behaviour and Social Reality as Reflected in Eleventh and Twelfth Century Historical Sources." *Byzantion* 58 (1988): 361–393.
- . "'The Eye of the Beholder': Byzantine Imperial Women and Their Public Image from Zoe Porphyrogenita to Euphrosyne Kamaterissa Doukaina (1028-1203)." *Byzantion* 64 (1994): 19–39, 261–313.
- Gouma-Peterson, Thalia. "Engendered Category or Recognizable Life: Anna Komnene and Her Alexiad." *Byzantinische Forschungen* 23 (1996): 25–34.

- . “Gender and Power: Passage to the Maternal in Anna Komnene’s Alexiad.” In *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, 107–124. London: Garland Publishing, 2000.
- Herrin, Judith. “Women and the Faith in Icons in Early Christianity.” In *Culture, Ideology and Politics. Essays for Eric Hobsbawm*, 56–83. London: Routledge, 1983.
- Hill, Barbara. “A Vindiction of the Rights of Women to Power by Anna Komnene.” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 23 (1996): 45–53.
- . “Actions Speak Louder Than Words: Anna Komnene’s Attempted Usurpation.” In *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, 45–62. New York: Garland Publishing, 2000.
- Howard-Johnston, James. “Anna Komnene and the Alexiad.” In *Alexios I Komnenos*, edited by Margaret Mullett and Dion Smythe, 232–302. Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1996.
- Macrides, Ruth. “The Pen and the Sword: Who Wrote the Alexiad?” In *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, edited by Thalia Gouma-Peterson, 63–81. New York: Garland, 2000.
- Magdalino, Paul. “Honour Among Romaioi: The Framework of Social Values in the World of Digenes Akrites and Kekaumenos.” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 13 (1989): 183–218.
- Neville, Leonora. “Strong Women and Their Husbands in Byzantine Historiography.” In *The Byzantine World*, 72–82. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Papaioannou, Eustratios N. “Michael Psellos’ Rhetorical Gender.” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 24 (2000): 133–146.
- Reinsch, Diether Roderich. “Women’s Literature in Byzantium? The Case of Anna Komnene.” In *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, 83–105. New York: Garland, 2000.
- Ringrose, Katharine. “Eunuchs as Cultural Mediators.” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 23 (1996).
- . “Living in the Shadows: Eunuchs and Gender in Byzantium.” In *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*, 85–109. New York, 1994.
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- Sideris, George. “‘Eunuchs of Light’: Power, Imperial Ceremonial and Positive Representations of Eunuchs in Byzantium (4th-12th Centuries).” In *Eunuchs in Antiquity and Beyond*, 161–176. London: The Classical Press of Wales and Duckworth, 2002.

- Tougher, Shaun. "Byzantine Eunuchs: An Overview, with Special Reference to Their Creation and Origin." In *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, 168–184. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.
- . "Images of Effeminate Men: The Case of Byzantine Eunuchs." In *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, 89–100. London: Longman, 1999.
- Vinson, Martha. "Gender and Politics in the Post-iconoclastic Period: The Lives of Antony the Younger, the Empress Theodora, and the Patriarch Ignatios." *Byzantion* 68 (1998): 469–515.
- . "Romance and Reality in the Byzantine Bride Shows." In *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900*, 102–120. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- . "The Christianization of Sexual Slander: Some Preliminary Observations." In *Novum Millennium: Studies on Byzantine History and Culture Dedicated to Paul Speck*, 415–24. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.

Research Paper Grading Criteria

Quality of Writing

1 The introduction explains what the paper will be about and why it is worth reading.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

2 The organization of the paper is indicated so that the reader always knows how each section pertains to the argument.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

3 The prose is clear and accurate. (The sentences mean what you want them to).

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

4 There are no errors in grammar or proofreading.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

5 Citations to primary and secondary material are adequate.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

6 The style and format of the footnotes and bibliography is correct.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

Quality of Research

7 The research presented is sufficient to support the argument. (You did enough research to prove your point).

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

8 The paper displays a thorough understanding of the topic's background and scholarship surrounding the issue. (You read enough to understand the topic).

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

9 The paper displays nuanced understanding of the primary and secondary sources read. (You understood what you read).

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

10 The paper uses the most pertinent and appropriate primary and secondary literature. (You read the right things).

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

11 The argument is grounded in primary historical documentation.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

Quality of Argumentation and Historical Thought

12 The paper has a clear thesis that motivates the content of the paper.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

13 The argument of the paper is coherent and internally consistent.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

14 The thesis is proven by the argument of the paper. The argument is ultimately convincing.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

15 The argument of the paper is the most sensible possible interpretation of the evidence. (You did not ignore other obvious explanations or evidence).

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

16 The paper displays historical insight and perception.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

17 The paper displays creativity of thought and original ideas.

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much

Each criterion is worth 5 points, except #7, 12, 13, and 14 which count twice because they are more important. The maximum score is 105. The following scale converts the score to a letter grade:

91-105 = A

85-90 = A-

78-84 = B+

68-77 = B

60-67 = B-

40-60 = C