



**Faculty of Arts
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THE POPULACE IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE DURING THE MIDDLE BYZANTINE AGE (FROM THE 9th TO THE END OF THE A.D. 12th CENTURIES)

By

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Abstract

The Populace in Byzantine Empire during the Middle Byzantine Age (from the 9th to the end of the A.D. 12th Centuries)

Byzantine Society is divided into three general classes: High Class (Aristocracy), Middle Class, and Low Class (the Populace). All these classes included many different groups. The life differed in them according to their social case. The Populace were made an importance in Byzantine society through their role in social, economic, political, and religious life. But the historical chronographies ignored Populace role in setting up the social tissue for Byzantine society. Because of all these interrelated events, I selected the subject of the study, in addition to this there are many motives:

- Populace role in social motion between classes of Byzantine society. for example, many of Populace became emperores in Byzantine Empire.
- Spreading many of social diseases in Byzantine society between Populace, all these affected Byzantine society socially and culturally.
- Populace's great role in economic activities as they assumed the greatest load from taxes and military services. Also they had important role in industries, crafts, trade, agriculture, and pasture.
- Populace role in revolutions that broke out during the middle Byzantine age against Byzantine Emperors, according to the nation's right of choosing the Byzantine Emperor.
- Populace shared in many of religious heresies that opposed Byzantine government and church, as Iconoclast, Paulicians, and Bogomils. These heresies shaken general staff in society during the middle Byzantine age.

The study is divided into five chapters. It's proceeded by an introduction, a study about the most important sources of the study. Then it's followed by conclusion, the appendices and the references:

- The first chapter is called: "***Ethnic and class stracture of Byzantine society***". It discusses the stocks and races that lived in Byzantine Empire, and How these stocks were divided to three general classes.
- The entitle of the second chapter is will be: "***Populace and Social Life***". It discusses Byzantine family role, ceremonies, feasts, instruments of entertainment that Populace shared in, social diseases in Byzantine society between Populace, and philanthropy institutions in Byzantine society that introduced their services to the poor from Populace.
- The third chapter is called: "***Populace and Economic Life***". It discusses Populace's importance in Byzantine economic activities, such as agriculture, pasture, industries, trade or hunting and fishing, in addition to taxes.
- The entitle of the fourth chapter is will be: "***Populace and Political Life***". It discusses political activities that Populace shared in, revolutions that broke out by them, and their protecting of Empire frontier.

- The fifth chapter is called: “*Populace and Cultural and Religious Life*”. It discusses spreading of education and culture among Populace. It discusses popular and religious beliefs that Populace thought. Also it discusses their role in heretic activities in Byzantine Empire, finally it discusses Populace role in Byzantine monastic life.

Finally, I found many results during my search in this study:

- Populace practiced their social life according to predominance of Byzantine society.
- Byzantine Populace lived in dirty districts. They suffered from rarity in food, water and clothes. This made a load to feed poor on philanthropy institutions in Byzantine society.
- Byzantine Emperors invited Populace to share the rest of Byzantine groups their ceremonies and entertainments in theatre and Hippodrome. Emperors thought this would make the Populace forget poverty and distress, so that Emperors avoided their revolutions.
- Byzantine farmer cases declined, because Byzantine governments took sides with Aristocracy, so Byzantine army broke down and Byzantine Empire declined by Latins in 1204 A.D./ 600 A.H.
- Byzantine governments made their priority to foreign citizens, and gave them privileges against Byzantine traders. In addition to Byzantine governments confined Populace traders by punishments and taxes, this led to declining Byzantine trade.
- Byzantine Populace played important role in political life, sometimes shared in choosing Emperors, or deposed them from thrones. Also Byzantine Populace played important role in defending the Byzantine Empire against foreign dangers.
- Byzantine Populace admitted themselves in many heretic activities that opposed Byzantine Orthodoxy to achieve some material and political advantages.