**End of Summer Report**

My project is a historical research project. I intend to write an Honors Thesis about the cultural relationship between ancient Greece and the Byzantine Empire, and I used this time in FURSCA as a period to focus on and kick-start the thesis-writing process. My primary goal was to assemble a bibliography of sources and to read through as many of them as I could manage. There was a wide variety in sources, from ancient Greek histories to Byzantine music theorists to the scholarship of modern academics on those earlier sources. The second goal was to begin writing about my findings.

In many respects, my project has been a success on both fronts. I have read a great many sources and have identified yet more books and articles to read when I have the time after I finish the ones I am currently working on. The completed sources amount to five new articles and five new books, in addition to the ten sources from the term paper I initially wrote on the subject two years ago. I still have four articles and three or four books identified as future readings, as well. I have not done as much writing as I had initially expected to do. The writing that I have done has been focused on capturing the general ideas of my argument, both on the whole and in specifics examples. What follows is the most complete paragraph I currently have available:

The Byzantine Empire, spanning from the founding of Constantinople in A.D. 330 to the fall of the same to the Ottoman Turks in A.D. 1453, was the Eastern Roman Empire: a continuation of the Roman Empire which then became *the* Roman Empire after the fall of its western brother in the Fifth Century A.D. Despite the Roman imperial traditions and calling themselves Romans, the Byzantines were saturated with Greek culture. The geographical shift of the empire from Rome to Constantinople was accompanied by an increasing shift towards the Greek roots of the inhabitants. In music they followed ancient Greek musical theory. In aesthetics they took their inspiration from ancient Greek writers and artists. In war they fought more as Greeks than Romans. In all of these, there is a distinguishable trend wherein the Byzantines deliberately looked back to their ancient Greek ancestors and adopted certain of those cultural aspects for their own, adapting them to fit their new, Byzantine context. For the purposes of this paper, evidence of this focus shall be confined to the latter half of the empire’s history, from the Macedonian dynasty beginning in the 10th century until the Palaeologoi who ruled at the very end of the empire.

The above is part of my tentative introduction and while it will most likely be heavily edited before being printed as my final thesis draft, I am confident that it showcases the way I have approached my history so far. I could write a lot of high-minded words about why I want to write on this subject, but they would only be words and bound up in ego. More simply, I wished to write about a culture that is deeply connected with my own, and this is the great opportunity which has presented itself.

The importance of my project and my future plans are deeply intertwined. As I have stated above, this work is proceeding directly into my Honors Thesis. I plan on engaging in a directed study this fall, which will allow me to continue at full-steam on this project by having dedicated time for it within the school year. Having a solid writing sample on hand – even before having a completed thesis – will provide a great boost to my graduate school applications, both in the States and abroad, as the applications will be due before the thesis is completed, in some cases. As my ultimate goal is to become a professor of history, it is also important that I establish a record of good, solid scholarship early. I am also still somewhat undecided about where my focus will lie, so doing broad-topic research such as this will help me narrow down my interests moving forward. I mean that I could, hypothetically, spend the rest of my academic career studying, say, the ancient Greek influences on the Byzantine military, but I am not sure if I actually want to do that or not.

As a matter of the project’s personal significance, I have found an author whom I greatly enjoy (Anna Komnena and her *Alexiad*). As an academic interest, I have found that I especially enjoy the comparisons which I have been making between ancient Greek and Byzantine histories – such as comparing Anna Komnena to Herodotus and Thucydides. They are similar in many ways, and yet also fundamentally different at times. I will also admit that I have continually read less and less as my undergraduate years have gone by, but all the readings I have done this summer have rekindled my love for the books which started me on this path in the first place, as well as my passion for reading more generally.

I am very grateful to FURSCA and in particular the Robert M. Teeter Research Fellowship Endowment for making this part of my journey possible.