

**DOI: 10.7596/taksad.v6i4.1171**

**Citation:** Bolgov, N., Bolgova, A., Ryabtseva, M., Lopatina, M., & Semecheva, E. (2017). An Investigation on an Early Byzantine Higher School in Russian Historiography. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(4), 268-276. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v6i4.1171>

## **An Investigation on an Early Byzantine Higher School in Russian Historiography**

**Nikolai N. Bolgov<sup>1</sup>, Anna M. Bolgova<sup>2</sup>  
Marina L. Ryabtseva<sup>3</sup>, Marina Yu. Lopatina<sup>4</sup>, Elena A. Semecheva<sup>5</sup>**

### **Abstract**

This article deals with the main approaches and achievements in the Russian studies of *Late Antiquity* in-between period from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. The current literature has an attempt to highlight the activities of leading scientists and their works as well as the activities of various regional schools on studying the higher schools of the Early Byzantium. The authors of the article came to the conclusion that there are some difficulties with the terminology in Russia, also there is no common understanding of this transitional time and many specialists prefer to work with narrow-focused material. Furthermore, there remains a ‘format’ of antiquists, Byzantinists and medievalists what makes integrative researches more difficult. To reveal these issues, the current study investigates the academic bibliography.

**Keywords:** Late Antiquity, The Middle Ages, Early Byzantium, History, Historiography, Russia, Byzantinists, Medievalists, Antiquists, Regional schools, Higher school.

<sup>1</sup> Belgorod State University 85 Pobedystreet, Belgorod, 308015, Russia, E-mail: [bolgov@bsu.edu.ru](mailto:bolgov@bsu.edu.ru)

<sup>2</sup> Belgorod State University 85 Pobedystreet, Belgorod, 308015, Russia.

<sup>3</sup> Belgorod State University 85 Pobedystreet, Belgorod, 308015, Russia.

<sup>4</sup> Belgorod State University 85 Pobedystreet, Belgorod, 308015, Russia.

<sup>5</sup> Belgorod State University 85 Pobedystreet, Belgorod, 308015, Russia.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is a wide-spread stereotype that almost all inhabitants of the empire in early Byzantine period were literate, but it is almost unknown where and how they studied. Indeed, there are no special sources of that kind survived, however, if you try to get information about schools, education and upbringing from the vast corpus of late antiquity (Early Byzantine) works, you will get a quite representative result, especially referring to a 'higher school'.

In this work, we will not specify terminology. Conditionally and with a certain degree of modernization we will follow the accepted usage of basic terms: 'professor', 'student', 'higher school'.

It should be noted that we know about the primary and secondary levels of education in the Early Byzantium really very little. Therefore, the most part of our analysis of historiography deals with a 'higher school'.

## **SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY**

The sources of the research are works of modern Russian historians –researchers of late antiquity and the Early Byzantium. Today the period of late antiquity is one of the most urgent and poorly studied problems in historical science. The history of Byzantium was traditionally studied in Russian historiography in indissoluble connection with the history of the South Slavs.

Methodological basis: principles of objectivity and historicism in context of the theory of local civilizations.

Methods: content analysis, comparative historical method, analysis and synthesis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The general scheme of the educational system in Early Byzantium is now presented as follows:

Primary and secondary education focused mainly on the level of grammar and the elements of rhetoric.

Higher education consisted of the following stages:

- Rhetoric; natural sciences; special (medical, legal) schools;
- Philosophy (classical);

- Christian theology.

One school could have all these stages in a full-time profile (Caesarea, Gaza) but much more often schools were focused on one specific subject. It is also possible to trace a certain evolution in the organization of schools throughout the period of late antiquity: there is a movement from ancient schools being entirely built around the personality of scholar towards Christianization (adding superstructure of the teaching of theology in existing schools) and nationalization (the Imperial 'University' of Constantinople). Russian historiography in this topic is poor. Pre-revolutionary authors did not practically consider the history of the early Byzantine school purposely. Due to the confessional traditions, Christian schools, their origin and evolution were mainly studied at that time. V.V. Plotnikov (2011) prepared a two-volume study on the history of the Christian school and its relationship with classical ancient education. A.P. Dyakonov (1913) studied the history of theological schools. Special attention was paid to the Alexandria School of Pantaenus-Clement-Origen of the third century. The history of the school itself as institution at that time was not much separated from the history of school as a direction of theological thought.

In the postwar period there was published only a general essay of the Byzantine school history as a whole, although, the author was one of the most outstanding Russian and world Byzantologists A.P. Kazhdan (1972).

The first special essay on the history of early Byzantine school was prepared by Z.R. Samodurova (1984). In the format of an academic publication on the general history of Byzantine culture, this essay could be considered as quite exhaustive, however, it has only outlined a range of problems which requires special development. In fact, this essay is remaining the only special historical work of a professional Byzantologist on this topic. In the same edition, an essay on the history of law schools was given by E.E. Lipschitz (1984), and the state of the natural sciences, including teaching of them, is touched upon in an essay by the very same Z.R. Samodurova (1984).

An important step forward was the publication of a single issue in Ivanovo in 2002 - the textbook "Byzantine School" by I.V. Krivushin and E.S. Krivushina (2002). Despite the fact that the whole history of Byzantium is considered here, the volume is extremely small (only 45 pages) what is equal to three chapters of the three volumes of 'the Byzantine Culture', being compiled together. Thus, the degree of development of problems through this issue has increased slightly. However, the format of the tutorial did not presume an exhaustive depth of development.

From now onwards the development of this problem is being concentrated in Belgorod and Yaroslavl, and in a form of exception in Nizhny Novgorod by Goltseva (2005). The first of late years general article on the history of education in Byzantium (throughout its whole history) was prepared by the priest A. Ognev (2007). After that two candidates of science theses (Ph.D. theses) were defended: the first one about Clement of Alexandria (as a scholar of School of Alexandria too) by I.V. Zaitseva (2011) and the second one about the genesis of Christian theological schools by O.A. Manohina (2013). Both works continue the subject and some approaches of pre-revolutionary national science to a certain extent. At a new level, the appeal to these topics seems to be quite justified.

Monastic schools for example of Gaza began to be studied by Y.V. Manohin (2014). The relationship between monastic and rhetorical schools of Gaza was partly touched upon by A.V. Kurbanov (2014).

In recent years the development of the problems of the individual schools history began quite active: the school of Caesarea by I. Vashcheva (2005), A.M. Bolgova (2015), of Berite by N.N. Bolgov (2013); by N.N. Bolgov, A.M. Bolgova (2013) and especially of Gaza by A.M. Bolgova (2012) which remained significant corps of writings. The school of Berite shows us a sample of law school, and schools of Caesarea and Gaza the 'full-time profile' ones - from grammar and rhetoric to Christian theology. Although there were no single historical works on the philosophical schools of late antiquity, such as of Athens.

The study of the individual scholar's activities becomes an important independent section: Libanius, Themistius by N.N. Bolgov (2014), Hypatia by O. Eliseeva (2013), Procopius of Gaza by A.M. Bolgova (2014), Choricus by A.M. Bolgova (2011), N.N. Bolgov, A.M. Bolgova, (2013) and also teachers-grammarians by A.M. Bolgova, O. Eliseeva (2012) – each of them are worthy of special attention.

Libanius as itself represents a very significant figure in the history of the late antiquity (Early Byzantine) culture, perhaps the most important one for the history of the Early Byzantine school. However, he was not rewarded with a special monograph in Russian science. His pedagogical activity in the Rhetorical School of Antioch was touched upon in articles by S.P. Shestakov accompanying the translation of his speeches (Libanius, 1912-1916), and also in a chapter of G.L. Kurbatov's book (1991). Only at the beginning of the XXI century a number of works about the scholar was made by T.B. Perfilova (2004 (a)); Bolgova, Sbitneva (2009).

Furthermore, in recent years the study of legislative activities of emperors and state policy on education especially of the emperor Julian began by A.M. Bolgova, O. Eliseeva (2012 (a)); O. Eliseeva (2012).

At the present time contiguous themes are being developed by historians of pedagogy, first of all by V.G. Bezrogov (2008). However, with all the closeness to the subject, the methodological approaches of representatives of these scientific disciplines are slightly different.

The immediate chronological forerunners of the topic under our consideration are works of I.V. Tsvetaev (1902; 1887-1888; 1893) - for the pre-revolutionary period of historiography, and sufficiently numerous works by T.B. Perfilova (2003 (b); 2005; 2004 (b); 2003 (a)) - for the current period. Some of these works are related to late antiquity on chronology and connected with the problems we are considering most closely. However, the researcher's approaches are a sort of "culturological" according to her own assessments and for historical research seem to be a little "cursory".

A certain attention to Christian theological schools was also given by modern philosophers and theologians by V. Savrey (2011; 2012 (a); 2012 (b)), however, due to the confessional tradition of national science they studied these schools as directions of thought, and not as educational centers.

## **CONCLUSION**

This bibliographic research reveals that:

- a. The several periods are allocated in the study of the history of Early Byzantine higher school in national science.
- b. Prerevolutionary authors did not practically consider the history of the early Byzantine school purposely.
- c. In the postwar period there was published only a general essay of the Byzantine school history as a whole, the author was A.P. Kazhdan.
- d. The modern national historiography on education in the Early Byzantium discloses the following aspects of this problem:
  - The history of law schools, teaching of the natural sciences;
  - The history of education in Byzantium as a whole;

- The development of the problems of the individual schools history (the schools of Caesarea, of Berite, of Gaza);

- The study of the individual scholars activities.

Thereby, the national historiography on education in the Early Byzantium has made a significant progress in recent years. However, there have been made no special works on the history of medical schools, the school of Athens, the University of Constantinople, activities of other scholars and etc. These directions are to be developed in the nearest future.

## REFERENCES

Bezrogov, V. (2008). Traditions of apprenticeship and the institute of school in ancient civilizations [*Traditsiiuchenichestva i institutshkoly v drevnikhsivilizatsiyakh*]. Moscow: PIM.

Bolgov, N. (2013). Latin law school in the late antique Berite. In: Materials of the International youth science forum [*Latinskayayuridicheskayashkola v pozdneantichnomBerite*] “Lomonosov-2013” [electronic resource]. Moscow: MAKSS Press.

Bolgov, N. (2014). Themistius and His Works in the Context of Cultural Continuity. In: *Tractusaevorum*, 1 (2): 175-184.

Bolgov, N. & Bolgova, A. (2013). The Crossroads of Epochs and Cultures: Choricus of Gaza as a mirror of continuity. In: *L'Ecole de Gaza: espace litteraire et identite culturelle dans l'Antiquite Tardive*. Paris: College de France, pp. 2-3.

Bolgov, N. & Bolgova, A. (2013). The late antique Berite in Phoenicia and its law school [*PozdneantichnyyBerit v Finikii i ego yuridicheskayashkola*]. In: State and society: interaction and opposition [*Gosudarstvo i obshchestvo: vzaimodeystviye i protivostoyaniye*]. Voronezh, pp. 306-311.

Bolgova, A. (2011). Rhetorician Choricus and school of Gaza [*RitorKhorikiy i Gazskayashkola*]. In: Belgorod State University Scientific Bulletin. Series: History. Political science. Economy. Computer science [*Nauchnyyevedomosti BelGU. Istoriya. Politologiya*]. № 7 (102). Iss.18, pp. 65-71.

Bolgova, A. (2012). From scholia to catena: Christianization of comments on the text in school of Gaza [*Otskholiy k katenam: khristianizatsiyakommentariyev k tekstam v Gazskoyshkole*]. In: Belgorod State University Scientific Bulletin. Series: History. Political science. Economy. Computer science [*NauchnyyevedomostiBelGU. SeriyaIstoriya. Politologiya.Ekonomika.Informatika*]. № 7 (126). Iss. 22: 74-78.

Bolgova, A. (2014). Procopius of Gaza: rhetorician and theologian [*ProkopiyyGazskiy: ritor i bogoslov*]. In: Issues of history, philology, culture [*Problemyistorii. filologii. kultury*]. № 2, pp. 101-107.

Bolgova, A. (2015). School of Caesarea as a phenomenon of the transition period from antiquity to Byzantium [*Kesariyskayashkolakakfenomenperekhodnoyepokhiotantichnosti k Vizantii*]. In: Pedagogy and education in the system of scientific knowledge [*Pedagogika i obrazovaniye v sistemenauchnogoznaniya*]. Belgorod, pp. 84-88.

Bolgova, A. & Bolgov, N. (2014). Studying the rhetoric school of Gazain recent years [*IzucheniyeGazskoyshkolyritoriki v posledniyegody*]. In: Belgorod State University Scientific bulletin. Series: History. Political science. Economy. Computer science [*Nauchnyyvedomosti BelGU. Seriya Istoriya. Politologiya. Ekonomika. Informatika*]. № 21 (192). Iss. 32, pp. 43-46.

Bolgova, A. & Eliseeva, O. (2012a). Julian legislation on schools and its ideology [*ZakonodatelstvoYuliana o shkolakh i ego ideologiya*]. In: Mediterranean world in antiquity and the Middle Ages: cross-cultural communication in historical space and time. XIII reading in memory of Professor N.P. Sokolov [*Sredizemnomorskiymir v antichnuyu i srednevekovuyepokhi: kross-kulturnyyekommunikatsii v istoricheskomprostranstve i vremeni. XIII chteniyapamyatiprofessora N.P. Sokolova*]. Nizhny Novgorod, pp. 55-58.

Bolgova, A. & Eliseeva, O. (2012b). Teachers-grammarians of the late antique Greek East [*Uchitelya-grammatikipozdneantichnogogrecheskogoVostoka*]. In: Belgorod State University Scientific bulletin. Series: History. Political science. Economy. Computer science [*Nauchnyyvedomosti BelGU. Seriya Istoriya. Politologiya. Ekonomika. Informatika*]. № 13 (132), 23: 32-39.

Bolgova, A. & Sbitneva, Yu. (2009). Rhetorical education in roman East in IV cen., and school of Libanius [*Ritoricheskoyeobrazovaniyena Rimskom Vostoke v IV v. i shkolaLibaniya*]. In: Classical and Byzantine tradition [*Klassicheskaya i vizantiyskayatradsitiya*]. Belgorod, pp. 134-136.

Dyakonov, A. (1913). Types of higher theological school in Ancient Church of III-VI centuries [*Tipyvysheybogoslovskoyshkoly v DrevneyTserkvi III-VI vv.*]. SPb (printed).

Eliseeva, O. (2012). Julian's law on schools: ideology, politics and direction [*ZakonYuliana o shkolakh: ideologiya. politika. napravlennost*]. In: Karazin readings (historical science) [*Karazinskichitannya (istorichninauki)*]. Kharkiv.

Eliseeva, O. (2013). Hypatia, her school and gender approach in studying the history of education and science [*Gipatiya, eyeshkola i gendernyyepodkhod v izucheniistoriiobrazovaniya i nauki*]. In: Youth for Science [*Molodezh – nauke*], 1: 62-65.

Goltseva, O. (2005). Secular and spiritual educational centers in Early Byzantium (IV-VII centuries) [*Svetskiye i dukhovnyyepobrazovatelnyyetsentry v RanneyVizantii (IV-VII vv.)*]. In: Our Anabasis [*Nash Anabasis*], 2: 22-27.

Kazhdan, A. (1972). Byzantine school. In: Historical issues [*Vizantiyskayashkola. In: Voprosyistorii*], 7, 209-214.

Krivushin, I. & Krivushina, E. (2002). Byzantine school [*Vizantiyskayashkola*]. Ivanovo.

Kurbanov, A. (2014). Sophists and monks of Gaza in VI century (by the example of "Correspondence of Barsanuphius and John of Gaza"). In: Classical and Byzantine tradition [Gazskiyesofisty i monakhi v VI veke (naprimere «PerepiskiVarsanufiya i IoannaGazskikh»). In: Klassicheskaya i vizantiyskayatradsitsiya]. Belgorod, pp. 185-190.

Kurbatov, G. (1991). Early Byzantine portraits [Rannevizantiyskiyeportrety]. Leningrad: LSU.

Libanius. Orations (n.d.). 1912-1916. In 2 vols. Kazan: lithograph of the imperial university.

Lipshitz, E. (1984). Law schools and development of legal science. In: Byzantine culture. IV - first half of the VII century [Yuridicheskoyeshkoly i razvitiyeppravovoyнауки. In: KulturaVizantii. IV – pervayapolovina VII vv]. Moscow, pp. 358-370.

Manokhin, Ya. (2014). Continuity of educational traditions of early Byzantine higher theological schools in monastic school of Gaza. In: Classical and Byzantine tradition [Preyemstvennostobrazovatelnykhtraditsiyrannevizantiyskiyevysshikhbogoslovskikhshkol v Mona sheskoyskhole Gazy. In: Klassicheskaya i vizantiyskayatradsitsiya]. Belgorod, pp. 190-194.

Manokhina, O. (2013). History of theological education in Early Byzantium: synopsis of PhD thesis [Istoriyabogoslovskogoobrazovaniya v RanneyVizantii]. Belgorod, pp. 24.

Ognev, A. (2007). The system of education in the Byzantine Empire. In: World of Byzantium [Sistemaobrazovaniya v Vizantiyskoyimperii. In: Mir Vizantii]. Belgorod, pp. 116-121.

Perfilova, T. (2003a). "Universities" of the Roman Empire (historiographical and methodological aspects of the problem). In: Yaroslavl Pedagogical herald [«Universitety» Rimskoyimperii (istoriograficheskiye i metodologicheskiyeaspektyproblemy). In: Yaroslavskiy pedagogic heskiyvestnik], 3, 25-35.

Perfilova, T. (2005). "Scholar" and "scholarship" in the Roman Empire: on the question of priority areas of the late antique science. In: Science and school [«Uchenyy» i «uchenost» v Rimskoyimperii: k voprosu o prioritnykhnapravleniyakhpozднеantichnoynauki. In: Nauka i shkola], (3), 34-37.

Perfilova, T. (2003b). Education in the Roman Empire: historiographic aspects of the problem (XVIII - early XX century.) [Obrazovaniye v Rimskoyimperii: istoriograficheskiyeaspektyproblemy (XVIII - nachalo XX v.)]. Yaroslavl: pub. Outfit of YaSPU.

Perfilova, T. (2004b). Higher professional education in the Roman Empire: the training of doctors [Vyssheyeprofessionalnoyеobrazovaniye v Rimskoyimperii: podgotovkavrachey]. Yaroslavl: pub. Outfit of YaSPU.

Perfilova, T. (2004a). "Wandering" sophists in the cultural space of the province (by example of the biography of Libanius). In: News of TheHerzen State Pedagogical University of Russia. Social and humanitarian sciences [Stranstvuyushchiye» sofisty v kulturnomprostranstveprovintsii (naprimerebiografiiLibaniya). In: Izvestiya Rossiyskogogos. Pedagogic heskogo universitetaim. A.I. Gertsena. Obshchestvennyye i gumanitarnyyenauk], 4(7), 7-15.

Plotnikov, V. (2011). The history of Christian enlightenment in its relationship with ancient Greco-Roman education. In 2 vols [*Istoriyakhristianskogoprosveshcheniya v ego otnosheniya k drevneygreko-rimskoy*] Moscow: Librocom.

Samodurova, Z. (1984). Natural Sciences. In: Byzantine culture. IV - first half of the VII century [*Estestvennonauchnyyeznaniya. In: KulturaVizantii. IV – pervayapolovina VII vv*]. Moscow, pp. 408-431.

Samodurova, Z. (1984). Schools and education. In: Byzantine culture. IV - first half of the VII century [*Shkoly i obrazovaniye. In: KulturaVizantii. IV – pervayapolovina VII vv*]. Moscow, pp. 478-503.

Savrey, V. (2011). School of Alexandria in the history of philosophical and theological ideas [*Aleksandriyskayashkola v istoriifilosofsko-bogoslovskoymysli*]. Moscow: ComKniga.

Savrey, V. (2012a). School of Alexandria in the history of Christian ideas [*Antiokhiyskayashkola v istoriikhristianskoymysli*]. Moscow: MSU.

Savrey, V. (2012b). Cappadocian school in the history of Christian ideas [*Kappadokiyskayashkola v istoriikhristianskoymysli*]. Moscow: MSU.

Tsvetaev, I. (1893). Higher schools of ancient Romans Schools of rhetoric. In: Russian herald. [*Vyshshiyeshkolydrevnikhrimlyan.Shkolyritorov. In: Russkiyvestnik*].

Tsvetaev, I. (1902). From the life of higher schools of the Roman Empire. In: Issues of Philosophy and Psychology [*IzzhiznivysshikhshkolRimskoyimperii. In: Voprosyfilosofii i psikhologii*] year XIII, book 62 (II), pp. 954-1030; year XIII, book 63 (III), pp. 1091-1136.

Tsvetaev, I. (n.d.). 1887-1888. Grammar schools of ancient Romans. In: Russian herald. [*1887-1888. Grammaticheskoyeshkolydrevnikhrimlyan. In: Russkiyvestnik*].

Vashcheva, I. (2005). Education in Caesarea Palestinae in the III and first half of the VII century [*Obrazovaniye v KesariiPalestinskoy v III – pervoypolovine VII vv*]. In: Current problems of historical science and creative heritage of S.I. Arkhangelsky [*Aktualnyyeproblemyistoricheskoyнауки i tvorcheskoyenaslediye S.I. Arkhangelskogo*]. Nizhny Novgorod, pp: 72–80.

Zaitseva, I. (2011). Ancient heritage in the ideas and activities of Clement of Alexandria: synopsis of PhD thesis [*Antichnoyenaslediye v ideyakh i deyatelnosti Klimenta Aleksandriyskogo*]. Belgorod.