

History 607.01

Early Byzantine Empire, A.D. 330-843

Autumn Quarter 1997

Instructor: Professor Timothy E. Gregory, 365 Dulles Hall. Office Hours: Monday 9:30-10:30, Monday and Wednesday 2:30-3:30, and by appointment at other times. Telephone 292-1949 (office), 292-2674 (department), 291-4015 (home). E-mail: gregory.4@osu.edu

Web Site for the Course: <http://www.acs.ohio-state.edu/history/isthmia/teg/hist60701>

Required Texts:

Averil Cameron The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity

George Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State

Procopius, Secret History

The Early Byzantine Empire (a book of readings, available only at Cop-Ez)

A Chronology of Early Byzantine History (outline history of the period,

available only at Cop-Ez in the basement of Bricker Hall)

The first three books are available only at SBX.

Course Description:

This course is designed as an introduction to early Byzantine civilization and history, A.D. 330-843. In it we will trace the transformation of the ancient world and the emergence of a distinctly medieval Byzantine civilization. We will observe the growth and triumph of Christianity and its transformation into a world religion. We will examine critically the myths concerning the "fall of the Roman empire" and the typical evaluation of Byzantium. We will attempt to understand Byzantine civilization through the eyes of the Byzantines themselves, examining their values and comparing them with those of our own. In this regard, we will seek to gain insight into the religious sensitivities of the Byzantines and how Byzantine Christianity expressed important transcendent ideas. We will also investigate relations between Byzantium and its neighbors and pay special attention to the military developments that influenced the course of history in this crucial period. The Byzantine Empire represents a fascinating, although little-known chapter in the history of mankind. This course is designed to explore some aspects of that civilization and to expose you to challenging new ideas.

Class: Class will normally meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 10:30 to 11:50AM.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

(Note that for best results readings should be completed at the beginning of each week; that will allow us to make best use of class time. Students should regularly consult the class Web Site, since it will contain announcements, links to further information, and hints for studying.)

September 25 INTRODUCTION

Ostrogorsky, pp. 1-21

Readings 1 (Mango)

September 29..... THE AGE OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

Ostrogorsky, pp. 22-50

October 6 THE FOURTH CENTURY

Cameron, pp.12-56

October 13 THE FIFTH CENTURY

Ostrogorsky, pp. 51-68

Cameron, pp. 57-103

October 20 THE AGE OF JUSTINIAN

Ostrogorsky, pp. 68-78

Cameron 104-151

Readings 2, 5 (Procopius & Brown)

Procopius, Secret History

October 27 COLLAPSE OF THE EARLY BYZANTINE SYNTHESIS

Ostrogorsky, pp. 78-86

Cameron, pp. 152-200

Readings 3-4 (Lives of Daniel and Theodore)

November 3 HERACLIUS AND THE RISE OF ISLAM

Ostrogorsky, pp. 87-109

Readings 6: 8-23

November 10..... ICONOCLASM I

Ostrogorsky, pp. 110-146

November 17 ICONOCLASM II

Ostrogorsky, pp. 147-175

November 24CHALLENGE FROM THE WEST

Ostrogorsky, pp. 175-186

December 1TOWARD A NEW SYNTHESIS

Ostrogorsky, pp. 186-209

Student Responsibilities

Examinations: There will be one Mid-Term Examination, on October 27, and a Final Examination.

Class Project: All students will be expected to complete a class project.

I. This may take the form of a **paper** on one of the following topics:

Procopius: Write a paper in which you "solve" the discrepancy between Procopius' treatment of Justinian in the Secret History and in his other works. What accounts for the difference and which picture is correct (or more correct)?

Theophanes: Write a paper in which you evaluate Theophanes as an historian. What are his sources and what are his biases and shortcomings? To what degree can his account be trusted? In the end do you think he is a "good" historian?

or

Another topic of your choosing on early Byzantine history. Topics should be approved by the instructor at an early date and they should be analytic rather than merely factual; that is, papers should seek to solve a problem rather than simply reporting on a phenomenon. Students who are interested may be able to make use of actual archaeological data from the period in their project.

Undergraduate papers should be between 4 and 8 pages in length and do not need bibliography or footnotes; graduate student papers should be 15-30 pages in length and should include bibliography and footnotes.

II. Alternatively, students may wish to do a **project utilizing the Internet** (creation of web materials, Internet bibliography, etc.). One possibility (for 2-3 people maximum) is to help maintain the class Web Site.

Class projects are due at class time on December 1. Late projects will be subject to a considerable reduction in grade. To maximize your success, consult with the instructor at an early date and make sure the project is a viable one. Internet projects will probably require that you either put your work on the Web or that you deliver some report or other tangible product to the instructor. Projects will be graded on the basis of a)

imagination, b) accuracy, c) insight, and d) care and effectiveness of preparation.

Grades:

Grading will be at the discretion of the instructor, but the following provides a rough indication of the values assigned the various parts of the course:

Mid-Term Examination 25%

Class Project 30%

Final Examination 35%

Participation 10%

Grades in this course are **not** mechanically curved. Everyone can get an A and everyone can fail.

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 will not be tolerated.