

Foreword

The current collective volume contains thirteen papers that were held at the international symposium “Byzantine War Ideology Between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion” in Vienna, May 19–21, 2011. The subject of this symposium was closely related to the research project “Holy War? A Study on Byzantine Perceptions and concepts of War and Peace from the late eleventh to the early thirteenth century” hosted at the Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies of the University of Vienna and financed through a three-year research grant (2008–2011) by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF)¹.

As opposed to the project’s subject, the papers were purposefully not subdued to any chronological limitation. By allowing the participants to offer new insights into the topic with regard to different periods between the sixth and the fifteenth century and to issues that were not chronologically constrained, we were hoping for fruitful and inspirational influence on our further work in the project. We are pleased to say that this expectation was largely met. In this respect, we have to thank all participants for holding insightful presentations on various aspects of the research topic and – with a few exceptions²– for submitting their papers for publication in the symposium’s volume.

The volume aspires to shed more light on certain aspects of the interrelation and interaction of imperial ideology and religious ethic on Byzantine war policies, as well as on the attitude of the *homo byzantinus* towards war and peace. The papers touch upon a wide range of problems referring to the major issues of the religious character of Byzantine wars, the relationship between Roman political ideology and social reality with regard to war and peace, and the general attitude of eastern Roman society towards warfare.

Walter E. Kaegi in his paper offers a reevaluation of the respects in which the Emperor Heraclius conducted or planned a ‘holy war’ against the Sassanian Empire and eventually the Muslim Arabs on the basis of contemporary Greek and Armenian as well as later Arabic sources. Primarily on the basis of western sources Panagiotis Antonopoulos analyzes the role of the Italian expedition of Constans II for both Byzantium and the Lombard Kingdom as well as the Roman Church. Warren Treadgold attempts to weigh the importance of Iconoclasm in the motivation of the revolts of Kosmas against Leo III and Artavasdus against Constantine V. Olof Heilo discusses the meaning of the term “holy warrior” (*martyr* or *šahīd* respectively) in the “Akritic” borderland as the reflection of a chiefly social phenomenon.

Athanasios Markopoulos offers a deep and detailed analysis of two speeches addressed to soldiers in the field, which are ascribed to Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos. Stergios Laitzos examines the military terminology of the *Res gestae Saxonicae* of Widukind of Corvey and its widespread spectrum of meanings. Ioannis Stouraitis attempts to analyze the conceptions of war and peace in the *Alexiad* of Anna Comnena in light of the ideological-political discourse of the Byzantine élite of the mid-twelfth century. Evangelos Chrysos argues that the Emperor Manuel I in 1176 did not intend to lead a crusade against the Seljuks, but that he sought what was essentially a reconquest of Byzantine territory. On the basis of Niketas Choniates Doretta Papadopoulou clarifies that the Byzantines in the thirteenth century defined the “Latin” foe less on the basis of national or religious grounds and much more via moral criteria. Efstratia Synkellou examines the structures of Byzantine ‘war ideology’ in the Late Byzantine period, particularly the changes this ideology

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² Taxiarchis Koliass informed us that, due to lack of time, he had to postpone the publication of his paper “The Byzantine Emperor as Warrior” for the near future. Paul Stephenson, who kindly accepted our last-minute invitation to participate in the symposium, held a presentation on the subject “Nicholas the Monk and former Soldier”. The written form of this paper appeared short afterwards: P. STEPHENSON – B. SHILLING, Nicholas the Monk and former Soldier, in: Byzantine Religious Culture. Studies in Honor of Alice Talbot, ed. D. SULLIVAN – E. FISCHER – ST. PAPAIOANNOU. Leiden – Boston 2012, 421–438.

underwent due to the effect of political developments and the new status quo of the empire that resulted from them.

The volume is concluded with two contributions that deal with issues of diachronic perspective. Christos G. Makrypoulias presents the first preliminary results of a comprehensive study which shows that the proportion of militia involved in the defense of cities (and here even the demes), but also in the campaigns of armies which were for the most part composed of professional or theme soldiers, was considerably higher than has previously been assumed in scholarship. Athina Kolia-Dermizaki offers an overview of the debate within Byzantine Studies of the ideas “holy war”, “crusade” and “jihād”, which since the appearance of her study on the same subject two decades ago has been conducted quite vigorously, and underpins her argumentation in defense of her initial thesis.

This very short overview of the papers’ content is intended to demonstrate their thematic variety. We strongly hope that the presented results will not only be well received in the research-field of war ideology in the premodern era, but will also contribute to the latter’s further development.

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