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BYZANTINE “JUST” WAR
AND IMPERIAL
INTERESTS
IN THE BALKANS DURING
THE TENTH CENTURY

As a state, the Byzantine Empire survived on the European political scene for more than a millennium. One of the strengths responsible for this longevity was its military system which, despite the changes and reforms that was carried out during the centuries, descended directly from the glorious Roman legions of emperor Augustus, or at least Diocletian.¹ On the other hand, the sources imply that Byzantium was also a civilization where humanity and other Christian virtues were constantly glorified, while war and warfare often condemned and presented as one of the greatest evils. Torn apart between the Christian ideal of *φιλανθρωπία* and the need for security, the Byzantines, who wanted to present themselves as highly religious people, had to find some way to morally justify warfare and taking away human life. For them war posed as the worst of all evils, and this view was constantly repeated throughout the Byzantine history in number of military tactics, hagiographies and chronicles.² This dualism in the society that emerged from Roman traditions and Christian values strongly influenced the Byzantine view towards war and warfare. Essentially, it represented a contradictory fusion of Roman militant ideology and Christian pacifistic and *philanthropic* ideals. The interaction among these two different ideological views led to the creation of a unique military concept that fully and unconditionally supported the pacifist ideal, but at the

¹ For the development of the byzantine army: Warren Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army 284-1081*, (Stanford University Press), 1995.

² The anonymous author in his work *On Strategy* implies that “...war is a great evil and the worst of all evils.” For more details: On Strategy, 4.9-14, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. and trans. George T. Dennis, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae Vol. XXV*, (Washington D.C., 1985), 21.

same time justified the existence of a powerful and effective military system.

The way out of this paradox was found in the political philosophy written by Eusebius of Caesarea. Established during the first half of the IV century and supported by the Christian church, the Byzantine Empire was portrayed as an earthly reflection (*μίμσις*) of the Kingdom of Heaven and its ruler as God's representative on Earth, *ισαπόστολος* - equal to the Apostles, guardian of the Church and the one true faith, defender of all Christians. According to this "official" ideology, the Byzantines perceived themselves as the "Chosen People" and their state as universal "Christian Empire" that fought for its survival against the enemies that surrounds it.³ This established and generally accepted Byzantine self-image and their role in the world was constantly emphasized and repeated throughout the Imperial cult, military triumphs and everyday church liturgies, portrayed as a divine struggle against the dark forces.⁴ Evidence that there was such a tendency in the Byzantine society for depiction of the events is the statement of Leo VI (886-912) outlined in the preface of his *Taktika*.⁵

³ More details about the political philosophy shaped by Eusebius of Caesarea in: Norman H. Baynes, "Eusebius and the Christian Empire", *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*, (Greenwood Press, 1974), 168-172.; Hélène Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin*, (Presses Universitaires de France, 1975), 13. For the formation and development of the Byzantine political thought: David M. Nicol, "Byzantine political thought", *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought (c.350 - c.1450)*, ed. J. H. Burns, (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 52-53. For the role of Eusebius and his impact on the Byzantine imperial ideology see in: John Haldon, "Ideology and Social Change in the Seventh Century: Military discontent as a barometer", *Klio* 68, (Berlin, 1986), 156. Also in: John Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World 565-1204*, (UCL Press, London, 1999), 25. See also: George Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor and the Hierarchical World Order", *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 35, No.84, (Maney Publishing, 1956), 2-5.; *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. Cyril Mango, (Oxford University Press, 2002), 206-207.; Жилбер Дагрон, *Цар и Првосвештеник*, (Clio, Београд, 2001), 166.

⁴ John Haldon, *Byzantium at War AD 600-1453*, (Osprey Publishing, 2003), 73-74. Also: Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 23. About the triumphal entry and ceremonial parade in honor of the victories by the Byzantine emperors in the Ninth century see: Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, C.725-884, ed. and trans. John Haldon, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae Vol. XXVIII*, (Wien, 1990).

⁵ He suggests that the Byzantines like all other people are "...honored by the image and word of God, all man ought to embrace peace and foster love for one another instead of taking up murderous weapons in their hands to use against their own people. But since the devil, the killer of men from the beginning, the enemy of our race, has made use of sin to bring men to the point of waggng war against their own kingdom it becomes entirely necessary for men to wage war making use of contrivances of the devil, developed through men and, without flinching, to take their stand against those nations that want war...With everyone embracing his own safety, peace will be cherished by all and will become a way

The main problem that emerged for the Byzantines in their attempt to justify warfare was actually how to incorporate the image of their rulers as devout Christians, *philanthropists* and pacifists, with the need of maintaining a powerful military force and waging frequent wars against numerous enemies that surrounded the state. The solution that the imperial authorities had come can be seen in *Taktika* of Leo VI, where not only the Byzantine attitudes towards war and warfare are portrayed, but also in a way the basic principles of their military ideology. According to Leo, the Byzantines had always embraced the peace "...for our own subject, as well as for the barbarians, because of Christ, the emperor and God of all. If the nations also share these sentiments and stay within their own boundaries and promise that they will not take unjust action against us, than you too refrain from taking up arms against them. Do not stain the ground with the blood of your own people or that of the barbarians...But if our adversary act unwisely, initiate unjust hostilities, and invade our territory, then you do indeed have a just cause, inasmuch as an unjust war has been begun by the enemy. With confidence and enthusiasm take up arms against them. It is they who have provided the cause by unjustly raising their hands against those subject to us. Take courage then. You will have the God of justice on your side. Taking up struggle on behalf of your brothers, you and your whole force will be victorious." He further emphasizes: "...always make sure that the causes of war are just. Only then take up arms against men who act unjustly"⁶

This excerpt succeeds in only a few sentences to outline and highlight the general attitudes of warfare that were established in the Byzantine society somewhere in the late Ninth and the beginning of the Tenth century, a result of a long-term historical development, under which the *basileus* of Constantinople could begin with hostilities. According to these ideological principles, the Byzantine Empire should not wage war against other nations, regardless whether they were infidels, pagans or Christians, except when those same nations have initiated the aggression. Only then, according to their beliefs, they had a "just" reason to begin with military activities. This clearly suggests that the Byzantines only approved of wars whose purpose, according to their point of view, was the protection of the Empire, the Christian people and the one true faith, although the interpretation of these goals could vary so that the offensive wars (and

of life." For more details: *The Taktika of Leo VI*, proem.4., ed. and trans. George T. Dennis, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae Vol. XLIX*, (Dumbarton Oaks, 2010).

⁶ *Taktika*, II.30-31. See also: George T. Dennis, "Defenders of the Christian People", *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy P. Mottahedeh, (Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), 38.

aggressive in its essence), might be easily justified.⁷ However, even with such an established ideological framework, the sources report that a certain difference existed in the so-called “just” wars that depended on the origin of the enemy who committed the act of aggression. Although according to the previously stated belief that the Byzantines were reluctant to fight against other people, the *Taktika* suggests that from a political and ideological point of view the Byzantine authorities were the least willing to fight against Christians. It should be avoided as much as possible.⁸ But if there was need for military activities against them, in the same military manual a tendency can be noticed for their more substantial “justification”.⁹

The reason why the Byzantine elite developed and established such an attitude regarding the warfare against other Christian nations can be located in the role that, according to the political philosophy of Eusebius of Caesarea, the Byzantine state and its ruler had on Earth. As a supreme guardian of the Church and Christian faith, but also a protector of Christians, any military actions by the Byzantine emperor against its own *protégés* without a solid political and ideological reason would be completely contradictory to his role given by God. At the same time, such an aggressive action would undermine his position as humane ruler and legitimate defender of the Christian people, not only among his own subjects that would reluctantly look on these military campaigns, but also among other nations in the Christian world. But when all other actions have failed to bring results, and the Christian enemies still continued to pursue injustice towards God's representative on Earth - the Byzantine emperor, then, according to Leo VI, he possessed a “just” cause to take up arms and fight against them.

⁷ Not that the Byzantines – soldiers, officers and governments, disliked warfare and violence. They could be, and were, as bloodthirsty, aggressive and merciless as any of their various enemies. For more details about the byzantine aspects of “just” wars see: A. Laiou, "On Just War in Byzantium", *To Hellenikon: Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis Jr.*, Vol I, eds. S.Reinert, J. Langdon and J. Allen, (New Rochelle, N.Y., 1993), 153-174. Also: Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 16, 25-26.; Dennis, "Defenders of the Christian People", 37.; Warren Treadgold, "Byzantium, The Reluctant warrior", *Noble ideals and Bloody Realities*, eds. C. Niall and M. Yazigi (Brill-Leiden, Boston, 2006), 209-210.

⁸ “Since the Bulgarians, however, embraced the peace of Christ and share the same faith in him as the Romans...we do not think of taking up arms against them.” See: *Taktika*, XVIII.42. Also: Treadgold, "Byzantium, The Reluctant warrior", 212.

⁹ That is quit explicitly mentioned in the *Taktika*. In 894, a war started against the Bulgarians because, according to Leo VI, they had broken „...the oath [given] to Christ or God...” In the upcoming battle the Byzantines used the Hungarians who “...decisively defeated them in three engagements, so that the Christian Romans might not willingly stain themselves with the blood of the Christian Bulgarians.” See: *Taktika*, XVIII.40.

Only a few decades after this concept of “just” war was put in a written form, a turbulent period had begun for Byzantium on the Balkans. From the military and political aspect, the Tenth century was a time of significant ups and downs that went from one extreme to another. From peaceful coexistence with the other political entities and temporary establishment of imperial hegemony to a full-scale total war that led the Byzantine administrative system in the Balkans on the verge of disintegration.¹⁰ In both situations the imperial government had taken numerous military actions. From strategic and tactical perspective they were not just defensive, aimed at protecting the imperial territory, but also offensive campaigns carried out without any prior provocation from the enemy. In accordance with the previously stated ideological principles of the Byzantine warfare these aggressive military activities had to be politically and ideologically justified.¹¹ Additional reason that necessitated even more this need for justification was the fact that the enemies were Christians and part of the *oikoumene* – the civilized world, where according to Byzantine belief the Emperor of Constantinople was its supreme leader.¹²

During the first decades of the Tenth century the situation in the Balkans was that of a protracted war, waged between Byzantium and Bulgaria. The long struggle with Simeon (893-927) that began after the break of the peace agreement, where the two opposing sides from a legal and political point of view were convinced that they were right, ended as a conflict for hegemony not only in the Balkans, but also in the *oikoumene*.¹³ In accordance with the “official” byzantine ideology about the role of the

¹⁰ For more details about the events on the Balkans during the Tenth century: Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine state and Society*, (Stanford University Press, 1997), 471-534. See also: John V. A. Fine Jr, *Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1983), 142-181.; Георгије Острогорски, *Историја Византије*, (Београд, 1966), 253-294.

¹¹ According to Leo VI, the aggressive warfare and unnecessary bloodshed should be condemned. See in: *Taktika*, II.30.

¹² For more details about the Byzantine concept of world order: Георгије Острогорски, „Византиски цар и светски хиерархијски поредак“, *О веровањима и схватањима Византинца*, (Београд, 1969), 238-277. Or: Ostrogorsky, “The Byzantine Emperor”, 1-14.

¹³ For the Byzantine-Bulgarian war during the first decades of the Tenth century see: Jonathan Shepard, “Equilibrium to expansion (886-1025)”, *The Cambridge history of the Byzantine Empire*, ed. Jonathan Shepard, (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 505-506.; Jonathan Shepard, “Bulgaria: the other Balkan empire”, *The New Cambridge Medieval History Vol. III c.900-c.1024*, ed. Timothy Reuter, (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 574-576.; Treadgold, *History of the Byzantine state*, 471-479.; Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 142-157. About Simeon’s character: Johnatan Shepard, “Simeon of Bulgaria - Peacemaker”, *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe*, ed. Jonathan Shepard, (Ashgate Variuorum), 2011.

Empire and the position of its ruler in the *oikoumene* (where Simeon was in fact seen as an integral part of its hierarchical order), the Byzantines were convinced about the righteousness of their own action and perceived the Bulgarian aggression as a “tyranny”, an unlawful and illegal act of usurpation against the legitimate God-given rule of the *basileus*, a defection of the subject from its rightful master.¹⁴ The war that Byzantium waged with Samuel Kometopoulos (976-1014) in the last decades of the Tenth century was politically “justified” in the same way. The establishment of Samuel’s state after the subjugation of Bulgaria in 971 was regarded by the imperial authorities as a rebellion (*ἀποστασία*).¹⁵ This political justification gave Basil II (976-1025) legitimacy before his own subjects, but also among foreigners, with the help of all possible means, including military, to re-establish order (*τάξις*) in the Balkans that has been set in 971 with the integration of Bulgaria within the Byzantine Empire.¹⁶

By perceiving the political steps of its adversaries in this manner the Byzantine government possessed a “just” reason which, from ideological point of view, allowed them to take military actions that could essentially be offensive and highly aggressive, such as the campaign of 917 directed against Simeon,¹⁷ or the expedition of John I Tzimiskes (969-976) in 971 which ended with the submission of the Bulgarian state.¹⁸ According to

¹⁴ *Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople Letters*, trans. Rommily H. J. Jenkins and L. G. Westernik, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, Vol. VI*, (Dumbarton Oaks, 1973), 27-35.; Romani Lacapeni *Epistolae*, *Гръцки извори за Българската История Том IV*, ред. Иван Дуйчев, Михаил Войнов и др., (София, 1961), 301-302. Simeon’s activities were characterized by the Byzantines as unjust acts committed on the Christians. See: *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*, 408.13-14, ed. I. Bekker (*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, (Bonnae, 1838)). From the original: Продолжателъ Феофана, *Жизнеописния Византийских Царей*, пер. Я. Н. Любарского, (Санкт-Петербург, 1992), 169.

¹⁵ Ioannis Scylitzae, *Synopsis Historiarum*, XIII.5, XVI.11, ed. I. Thurn, (Berlin, 1973). From the original: John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History 811-1057*, trans. John Wortley, (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 246, 312. See also: Ioannis Geometrae, *Гръцки извори за Българската История Том V*, ред. Иван Дуйчев и др., (София, 1964), 317-318.; Ioannes Zonaras, *Гръцки извори за Българската История Том VII*, (София, 1968), 185.

¹⁶ For the Byzantine politics of reintegration in the Balkans at the time of Basil II and the various means he used to achieve this goal see: Dragan Gjalevski, “Byzantine politics of “sword and letter” – the case of Samuel”, *Journal of History*, XLVIII/1, (Skopje, 2013), 63-75.

¹⁷ For the byzantine campaign of 917: *Theophanes Continuatus*, 389.10-19. From the original: Продолжателъ Феофана, *Жизнеописния Византийских Царей*, 162. Also: Leo Grammaticus, *Гръцки извори за Българската История Том V*, ред. Иван Дуйчев и др., (София, 1964), 161.

¹⁸ More details about the campaign of John I Tzimiskes in 971: Leo Diaconus, 128.1-157.23., ed. Hasii, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, (Bonnae, 1828). From the

Nicholas I Mystikos, patriarch of Constantinople from the beginning of the Tenth century, the totally unprovoked attack of 917 on Bulgaria¹⁹ was politically justified by the alleged accusation, which had been presented to Simeon in a letter, that "...the Bulgarians had a plan for the complete looting and plundering of our [imperial] territory." He points out that the military campaign was carried out because of the renouncement that the Bulgarians have made from the existing truce and the subsequent negotiations with the Pechenegs in order to achieve that goal, which was "...a hint that they no longer prefer to adhere to the existing agreement."²⁰ Because the violation of the truce represented an action of a "tyrant" and usurper, according to the political conviction of the Byzantines, the steps they have taken afterwards against Bulgaria were more than just.

Same as the campaign of 917, the military operation of John I Tzimiskes during 971 was politically justified. Its aim was to prevent further aggression by the Russians against God's representative on earth - the Byzantine emperor. But in this case "justification" was much easier, because the enemy himself gave the reasons. Svyatoslav, leader of the Russians, willingly violated the military alliance with Byzantium and attacked the imperial territory in the Balkans.²¹ But what makes this political and ideological step more than needed, even necessary, was the objective of Tzimiskes expedition. For it to succeed, the imperial army had to penetrate deep into Bulgarian land,²² which proved fatal several times in the past. In fact, from the beginning of the Ninth century almost every Byzantine attempt to intervene militarily in Bulgaria, or to subdue it, ended with a catastrophic defeat.²³ For the Byzantines these military setbacks were

original: *The History of Leo the Deacon*, trans. M. T. Rice and D. F. Sullivan, (Dumbarton Oaks, 2005), 175-201.; Ioannis Scylitzae, XIII.9-18, XVI.11. From the original: John Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 281-294. Also: Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkans Frontier*, 51-55.; Florin Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages (500-1250)*, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 239-240.; Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 187-188. About the aspects of the imperial propaganda in the sources that are connected with the campaign of John I Tzimiskes: Anthony Kaldellis, "The original source for Tzimiskes' Balkan campaign (971 AD) and emperors classicizing propaganda", *Byzantine and Modern Greek studies Vol.37 No.1*, (University of Birmingham, 2013), 35-52.

¹⁹ In correspondence with the Bulgarian ruler Nicholas failed to point out one single valid and reliable aggressive action that Simeon have taken against Byzantium after the conclusion of the truce.

²⁰ *Nicholas I*, 59.

²¹ About the military alliance between Byzantium and Russia see: Leo Diaconus, 63.6-14, 77.4-78.10. From the original: *Leo the Deacon*, 111-112, 128-129.

²² Leo Diaconus, 130.19-131.12. From the original: *Leo the Deacon*, 177-178.

²³ The greatest military disaster that Byzantium had suffered from the Bulgarians was in 811 when the imperial army together with the emperor Nicephorus I (802-811) was surrounded in the mountain gorges and utterly destroyed. See in: *The Chronicle of Theophanes*

perceived as God's anger, a punishment for their sins. According to this belief (that had existed among the elite and probably the populace), only when they return to the path of righteousness and gain the mercy of God, success would once again attend Roman arms.²⁴ And from the Byzantine perspective, political justification of offensive and aggressive warfare could actually achieve just that.

In his *History* Leo the Deacon informs us that there was a strong anxiety among the imperial officers, and with certainty among the ordinary soldiers, from the idea put forward by emperor John I Tzimiskes for a military campaign in Bulgaria, deep into enemy territory,²⁵ where their predecessors in the past suffered several severe defeats. The author of the *Taktika* in one passage clearly indicates that the political "justification" of warfare and the concept of "just" war were intended to suppress the anxiety that could occur among the members of the armed forces before the battle. This concept was supposed to point out that during an aggressive military campaign, and the battles that followed, God's justice was on the side of the Byzantines and therefore, "...God will become benevolent and will fight along with our armies. The men will be more enthusiastic, holding the shield of justice before them, with the realization that they are not initiating injustice but are warding off those committing unjust acts."²⁶ It can be assumed that such or similar ideological justification for the upcoming war was used by the imperial authorities not only during the expedition of John I Tzimiskes in Bulgaria, but also in the military campaigns of Basil II in the Balkans, because many of his military operations were extremely offensive

Confessor, Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813, trans. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, (Clarendon Press, 1997), p.490-492.

²⁴ From that point of view a very strong imprint on the public opinion in the Byzantine society left the defeat of the emperor Nicephorus I in 811 where most of his army and himself, were killed by the Bulgarians. About the influence that this defeat had on the byzantine beliefs see: John Wortley, "Legends of the Byzantine disaster of 811", *Byzantion XLIX*, (Bruxelles, 1979), 533-562. See also: Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival 780-842*, (Stanford University Press, 1988), 175.; Mark Whittow, *The Making of Byzantium 600-1025*, (University of California Press), 1996, 136.; Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society*, 23, 25.

²⁵ "But to the commanders and taxiarchs at any rate these words [spoken by the emperor about an offensive campaign] seemed to be ill-timed recklessness and purposeless harshness verging on senseless insanity, to recommend thoughtlessly that the Roman forces proceed in to foreign territory by a precipitous path full of cavernous hiding places." For more details: Leo Diaconus, 131.13-17. From the original: *Leo the Deacon*, 178.

²⁶ *Taktika*, XX.169.

and aggressive, aimed towards objectives that were deep inside Samuel's state.²⁷

Although the idea was to maintain the impression in the Byzantine society and beyond of the Emperor as righteous and peaceful Christian ruler guided by the principles of *philanthropy*,²⁸ it can be noted from the sources that, at least in the Balkans, during the Tenth century the political “justification” of war had also another, more tangible purpose. The survived written correspondence of Nicholas Mystikos that attests of his attempts to influence and pacify Simeon, where the Bulgarian ruler is often referred as a “tyrant” and his actions as an act of usurpation, thus “justifying” the next steps of the imperial government, leads to the conclusion that this ideological concept was probably one of the diplomatic means by which the Byzantines were trying to maintain, or improve, the current international position of the state, but also believed that with its help they could establish some political advantage over the opponent in the ongoing peace negotiations.²⁹ Furthermore, the aforementioned paragraph in the *Taktika* according to which the military forces would come to “...the realization that they are not initiating injustice but are warding off those committing unjust acts...”, clearly states and shows that this idea was also used by the imperial authorities for more practical objectives: raising morale, courage and enthusiasm of the troops before the upcoming military campaigns or battles. But the sources do not give any concrete example how and in what way this ideological concept was spread among the soldiers. In this context military manuals can provide a kind of solution. They report how the army commanders were “obligated” before the beginning of the campaign, or the imminent battle, to give a speech to their troops in order to raise or maintain their combat readiness. So, it can be assumed that the idea of “just” war was probably spread, and the soldiers inspired, through that same speech.³⁰ Of course, it's necessary to mention that the justification of the upcoming

²⁷ About the military campaigns of Basil II see: *Ioannis Scylitzae*, XVI.25, XVI.30, XVI.36. From the original: John Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, 326, 328, 333.; Виктор Р. Розен, *Император Василий Болгаробойца, Извлечения из Лѣтописи Яхъи Антиохійскаго*, (Санкт Петербург, 1883), 34.22-26.

²⁸ More details about the concept of *philantrophia* see: Lawrence J. Daly, “Themistius’ concept of *Philantrophia*”, *Byzantion XLV*, (Bruxelles, 1975), 22-40.

²⁹ The Bulgarian ruler in these letters that were part of the diplomatic activities of Byzantium aimed towards the establishment of peace (as the Byzantines perceived it) in the Balkans is named in accordance with the principle of political “justification”. He is a “tyrant”, so essentially his activities are viewed as unjust and illegitimate, in stark contrast to the order in the *oikoumene*, or the civilized world, where the *basileus* of Constantinople is the supreme ruler. For more details: *Nicholas I*, 31-35.

³⁰ About the various aspects of importance and the necessity of speech by the army commander see: *Taktika*, II.12, XII.57, XIII.4, XIV.101, XX.110, XX.217.

warfare was not expressed in a direct way by the military commanders, and it seems that, when needed, it was done more subtly depending on the elocutionary skills of the speaker.³¹

Established at first as an imperial propaganda with an intention to maintain the ideological image of the Emperor of Constantinople as a righteous and peaceful Christian ruler, both in times of peace and while waging wars, the political “justification” of war and warfare gradually gained other functions that were more tangible and practical. Besides its internal use for raising the morale, courage and enthusiasm of the imperial troops - both soldiers and officers, before the upcoming military campaigns or battles, this concept was actually one of the diplomatic means that the Byzantine Empire utilized in the Balkans during the Tenth century in order to maintain its supreme position in the *oikoumene*, to overcome the long political and military conflict with Bulgaria, and later with Samuel, and to achieve its interests and objectives, more specifically to impose, at least temporarily during this century, its hegemony over the entire territory of the peninsula.

³¹ According to Leo the Deacon, before he launched the Bulgarian campaign John I Tzimiskes gave a speech to the officers in the imperial army. By highlighting the Roman descent of Byzantines, the Emperor actually laid a claim on Bulgaria and emphasized that in the past its lands were part of the Empire, thus justifying the invasion that followed. For more details: Leo Diaconus, 131.19-132.14. From the original: *Leo the Deacon*, 178-179.

Драган ЃАЛЕВСКИ

ВИЗАНТИСКАТА „ПРАВЕДНА“ ВОЈНА И ИМПЕРИЈАЛНИТЕ
ИНТЕРЕСИ НА БАЛКАНОТ ВО ТЕКОТ НА X ВЕК

- резиме -

Иако било оформено како империјална пропаганда со намена да ја одржи пред јавноста идеолошката претстава за императорот од Константинопол како праведен и мирољубив христијански владетел, и во време на мир, но и додека водел војни, сепак политичкото „оправдување“ на војната и на војувањето имало и други намени кои биле многу поопипливи и практични. Покрај неговата внатрешна употреба за подигнување на моралот, храброста и на ентузијазмот на империјалните трупи пред претстојните воени походи или битки, овој концепт бил и еден од мноштвото средства што Византиската Империја ги применувала на Балканот во текот на X век за да ја одржи врховната позиција во *екумената*, да го надмине долгиот воено-политички конфликт со Бугарија, а подоцна и со Самуил, но и да ги оствари сопствените интереси и цели, поточно да ја наметне, барем привремено во текот на овој век, својата хегемонија на целата територија на полуостровот.