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'Just War' and 'Holy War' in the Middle Ages

*Rethinking Theory through the Byzantine Case-Study**

Abstract: The current paper examines the issue of medieval war ethics from the perspective of the Byzantine case-study. The starting-point is a critical approach to the theoretical understanding and the methodological employment of modern analytical concepts, such as 'war ideology' and 'holy war', in the study of war ethics in the late antique, early and high medieval period. The main goal is to circumscribe the modern theoretical distinction between 'just war' and 'holy war' and to demonstrate the applicability and the limits of its heuristic employment in the analysis of medieval source material. The first part contains a discussion of theoretical approaches to the terms 'war ideology', 'just war' and 'holy war'. The second part is subdivided in two chapters: The first chapter attempts a historical re-evaluation of the religious discourse of the Byzantine sources through the prism of the proposed theoretical model. The second chapter contains an analysis of the socio-political role of peace discourse in the justification of imperial war policies.

Byzantine war ideology was the subject of a conference held in Vienna in May 2011[1]. Among many interesting issues raised during the sessions was the issue of terminology and, in particular, the question as to whether Byzantinists should be sceptical towards the employment of certain terms, such as 'ideology' or 'holy war', in the analysis of Byzantine attitudes towards war and peace in order to avoid the danger of methodological anachronism. To my view, this debate stresses the issue of conceptual obscurity regarding our understanding of modern analytical terms and the consequent need for a content-related analysis and definition of such terms by the formulation of a sound methodological approach to the socio-political phenomena war and peace in the Byzantine era. The aim of this paper is to propose a concrete theoretical framework by re-approaching the definition of key-terms and then to demonstrate its applicability to the research of medieval sources based on a comparative approach to the case-study of Byzantium.

1. THEORETICAL ISSUES

Historical scrutiny of a society's socio-political and religious views on war and peace can hardly preclude the employment of certain analytical terms such as 'war ideology', 'just war' and 'holy war' as part of the effort to gain a better insight into a society's mechanisms of conceptualization. Beginning with the circumscribed term 'war ideology', scepticism towards the employment of this modern concept in the analysis of medieval and in particular Byzantine source information seems to me to be justified only if our understanding of the generic term 'ideology' is arbitrarily confined to certain monolithic definitions which bear a negative or restrictive meaning[2]. Instead, a compre-

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[1] For the papers of the symposium see: Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion, eds. J. Koder – I. Stouraitis (*Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften* 452). Vienna 2012. I would like to thank Walter E. Kaegi and Evangelos Chrysos whose comments during the symposium provided inspiration for the theoretical part of the current paper. Also, I am grateful to all participants in the doctoral seminar of Claudia Rapp for their insightful comments and questions on the subject. For stylistic and other useful suggestions I thank my friend and colleague Zachary Chitwood.

[2] For instance, the understanding of ideology as a rigid worldview (see E. Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method. London 1982, 86), or as simply dominant forms of thought of a ruling class or group (see J. B. Thompson, Studies in the

hensive understanding of the generic term understands 'ideology' as sets of changeable ideas which are employed to posit, explain and justify means and ends of organised social action, in particular political action[3]. Moreover, it relates the term to questions of power within society and regards it as a means that helps to distinguish between those interests and power conflicts that are at any given time fairly central to a whole social order, and those which are not[4]. In this regard, 'ideology' becomes a concept with close relation to social reality; a relation which refers to the relationship between ideas and their effects on society with regard to social and political functions as well as political actions[5].

Based on this comprehensive approach to the generic term, the circumscribed term 'war ideology' can then be understood as focusing the concept on the sets of ideas and beliefs which people employ to posit, explain and justify means and ends of military action[6]. With regard to the given social differentiation within Byzantine society, the circumscribed concept can be employed to help to distinguish the predominant from rival conceptions regarding the socio-political role of warfare and its dialectical relationship with the conceptions of peace within the social totality, based on the principle that a dominant or ruling ideology[7] is in continuous negotiation with the ideologies of its subordinates, taking into account the latter's needs and aspirations and thus reflecting the oppositional ideologies which threaten its own forms[8].

In my opinion, the aforementioned understanding of 'war ideology' not only does not bear the danger of methodological anachronism by its employment in the analysis of medieval source information, but rather helps to redirect the focus of research away from the apparent gap between reported ideas and socio-political reality towards the actual role of those ideas in promoting certain socio-political actions; that is, towards the effect of certain political, ethical and religious ideas on conceptions of war and peace and, consequently, on the formation of those legitimizing mechanisms that enable or hinder the resorting to military action.

Next to 'war ideology', the concepts of 'just war' and 'holy war' have a central role in the comparative analysis of medieval war ethics. As opposed to the generic term 'holy war' which is a modern European invention, the broadest (and analytically most weak) definition of which refers to a form of justification of warfare by providing religious legitimization[9], the concept of 'just war' is not modern and demonstrates considerable differentiation with regard to its development from ancient into modern times. According to James Turner Johnson 'just war tradition is a major moral tradition of Western culture, shaped by both religious and non-religious sources and taking shape in both religious and non-religious norms within that culture'[10]. Modern conceptions of 'just war' are

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Theory of Ideology. Cambridge 1984, 4) or as 'false consciousness' (see K. Marx – F. Engels, Werke, Band 3. Berlin 1969, 46–49).

[3] M. Seliger. Ideology and Politics. London 1976, 11.

[4] T. Eagleton, Ideology: An Introduction. London – New York 1991, 7–10.

[5] Seliger, Ideology 11.

[6] For the introduction of the analytical term 'Kriegsideologie' in the research of Byzantine conceptions of war and peace see I. Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden in der politischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz (*Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber*, *Ergänzungsband* 5). Vienna 2009, 35–36.

[7] According to Eagleton, Ideology 45: "What we call a dominant ideology is typically that of a dominant social bloc, made up of classes and fractions whose interests are not always at one; and these compromises and divisions will be reflected in the ideology itself."

[8] For this principle of ideology analysis see Eagleton, Ideology 45; cf. P. W. Rose, Divorcing ideology from Marxism and Marx from ideology: Some problems. *Arethusa* 39/1 (2006) 101–103.

[9] J. T. Johnson, Ideology, Reason, and the Limitation of War. Religious and Secular Concepts, 1200–1740. Princeton 1975, 9–11.

[10] J. T. Johnson, Historical Roots and Sources of the Just War Tradition in Western Culture, in: Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions, eds. J. Kelsay – J. T. Johnson. Westport, CT 1991, 3.

based on natural-law causes and circumscribed by the norms of international law, whereas medieval approaches to the justification of warfare relied extensively on religious legitimization as well[11]. In this respect, it has been plausibly pointed out that medieval and late medieval 'holy war' conceptions were analogous and not antithetical to medieval just war thinking[12].

Be that as it may, present-day approaches which employ the modern analytical term 'holy war' (or the term 'war for religion' or even 'religious war'[13] as an equivalent of 'holy war') to denote medieval warfare, the legitimization of which contained elements of religion, but the main cause for which was not religious, seem to me to broaden the content of the concept to the point where it becomes analytically toothless[14]. In this way, the application of the term hardly promotes a better insight into medieval war ethics for various reasons. First, it deprives the concept of 'holy war' of one of its fundamental attributes, namely religious difference as the principal motive for resorting to military action. Second, it carries a certain amount of bias stemming from present-day views and concerns with regard to the socio-political role of religion, for it ignores the fact that the religious element had an overall predominant position within medieval peoples' political sphere and mentality and, consequently, within all aspects of social life and societal action, from which the legitimization of warfare could not have been excluded. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that elements of religion can be found in the justification of almost every medieval war, but not all medieval wars were principally justified through a religious cause, that is, were motivated by religious difference.

The author of a recent paper on Byzantine warfare asserts with regard to the much-debated issue of 'holy war' in Byzantium:

"Les byzantinistes se sont longtemps glorifiés que Byzance n'ait connu ni le concept ni le pratique de la «guerre sainte». C'est vrai, dans la mesure où il n'y avait pas à Byzance d'idéologie de la conquête répondant à une finalité religieuse, pas de système institutionnel qui la liât au rachat des fautes. Mais à Byzance comme en Occident, le plan humain et le plan divin ne sont pas distinct, et moins que jamais au VIIIᵉ siècle. Les Byzantins avaient si clairement conscience que la guerre s'inscrivait dans l'économie divine qu'ils n'avaient pas besoin de le théoriser. Ainsi, les souve-

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[11] R. Firestone, Jihad. The Origin of 'Holy War' in Islam. New York 1999, 15. On the history of the modern term 'holy war' see F. W. Graf, Sakralisierung von Kriegen: Begriffs- und problemgeschichtliche Erwägungen, in: Heilige Kriege. Religiöse Begründungen militärischer Gewaltanwendung: Judentum, Christentum und Islam im Vergleich, eds. K. Schreiner – E. Müller-Luckner (*Schriften des Historischen Kollegs* 78). Munich 2008, 17–23.

[12] L. Walters, The Just War and the Crusade: Antitheses or Analogies? *Monist* 57/4 (1973) 587–591.

[13] In present-day scholarship, the broadest definition of the term 'religious war' (Religionskrieg) refers to warfare, in which the religious element plays some role by the motivation, the goals or the way military action is performed; cf. J. Burkhardt, Religionskrieg, in: Theologische Realenzyklopädie, Bd. 28. Berlin – New York 1977, 681. K. Repgen, Was ist ein Religionskrieg? *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 97 (1986) 336–342, has argued, however, that the term 'religious war' refers not to the motivation, but only to the legitimization of warfare by religion and concerns European wars of the early modern times, in particular of the sixteenth century, in which the justice of the military action was defined through religious law. Therefore, the term is not applicable for medieval warfare, such as the Crusades. For the resonance of Repgen's definition among the scholars of early modern history cf. Graf, Sakralisierung von Kriegen 14–17.

[14] On such a vague approach to the concept's theoretical content see Firestone, Jihad 16. A good critical position towards such approaches to the definition of 'holy war' is provided by Graf, Sakralisierung von Kriegen 6–7, 10–12 who points to the problem of theoretical obscurity with regard to the content of the term 'holy war' and in particular to the question of the interpretation of the religious element in warfare: "Zeichnet sich ein 'Religionskrieg' also dadurch aus, daß eine oder mehrere Parteien ihre Kriegsgründe und –ziele entscheidend auch in religiöser Sprache artikuliert? Aber droht dann nicht nahezu jeder Krieg zum 'Religionskrieg' zu werden, weil das existentiell Außerordentliche, Dramatische des Krieges und die mit ihm konstitutiv verbundene Gewalt- und Todespräsenz es den (oder zumindest manchen) Beteiligten nahelegen, ihre Kriegsmotive vor allem Kriegserfahrungen auch in religiösen Deutungsperspektiven zu artikulieren? Wer in den Krieg zieht, will in aller Regel den Sieg davontragen, und deshalb versichert er sich gern höheren himmlischen Beistands. Gerade ethnologische Untersuchungen über populäre Frömmigkeit in diversen modernen Kriegen haben gezeigt, daß Kriegserfahrung viel spontane Alltagsreligiosität stimuliert. Konfrontiert mit unerträglichen Schrecken und den grausamen Tod der vielen, hofft man auf 'Alliierte im Himmel'."

rains isauriens ont conçu toute leur politique sur le modèle de l'Ancien Testament pour calmer la colère divine et retrouver la voie de la victoire. Dès lors, toute guerre fout pour eux un signe divin et donc une guerre sainte. La lecture moderne, qui tente de distinguer les plans humains et divins et dénie à la guerre byzantine sa dimension religieuse, est anachronique."[15]

Although such an approach would probably be regarded as balanced by many Byzantinists, it actually consists of a serious contradiction. The author vigorously dismisses as anachronistic any effort to distinguish between religious and non-religious causes for engaging in war in Byzantium due to the intertwinement of religious and secular spheres; at the same time though, he does not hesitate to employ the modern term 'holy war', which conceptually relies on exactly this distinction, in order to denote the religious dimension of all Byzantine warfare. The outcome of this contradiction is an oversimplified approach to war ethics which produces an overall mystifying and vague understanding of the content of the concept 'holy war', the main attributes of which remain unclear.

If we are to judge from the initial argument, according to which the Byzantines cannot be regarded to have had a concept of 'holy war' («guerre sainte»), as far as they did not justify expansive warfare in religious terms, then 'holy war' seems to be understood by the author as an analytical term, which denotes a concept of justification for resorting to military action principally based on a religious cause, i.e. on religious difference. This is not anymore the case though, in the following lines where all warfare fought by the Byzantine imperial state, especially from the eighth century onwards, is vaguely defined as holy war (guerre sainte, without quotes in the original text) based on the fact that for the Byzantines religious and secular spheres were intertwined and war was considered to be an action inscribed in the divine 'oikonomia'. Here, 'holy war' is not anymore an analytical term related to war ethics and principally defined by a religious war cause, i.e. religious difference, but it is vaguely – and, for that matter, fairly anachronistically – applied to denote the overall sacralization of the imperial state's public sphere, making practically any war against any enemy (i.e. also Christian) of the 'sacred' empire a holy war in the sense of a religious task[16].

In view of this, the key in order to avoid anachronisms in present-day approaches to medieval war ethics seems to me to be the dismissal of a popularized employment of the term 'holy war' as a generic description of the religious element in medieval warfare, which deprives it of its status as an analytical tool of conceptualization regarding the role of religion in a medieval society's *ius ad bellum*[17]. For instance, if we are to judge from the information provided by the Byzantine sources, warfare not only was not considered a religious task or, for that matter, an instrument of religion by the Byzantines, but its preponderant image was that of a necessary evil and an unavoidable

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[15] M. Nichanian, De la guerre «antique» à la guerre «médiévale» dans l'empire romain d'orient, in: Guerre et Société au Moyen Âge, Byzance – Occident (VIIIe – XIIIe siècle), eds. D. Barthélemy – J.-Cl. Cheynet (*Collège de France – CNRS Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Monographies* 31). Paris 2010, 39.

[16] The argument that the intertwinement of secular and religious spheres made all Byzantine warfare a kind of 'holy war' is problematic and has an oversimplifying character. For instance, according to this reasoning we could also regard warfare in Ancient Rome or in the pre-Christian period of the Roman Empire as a type of 'holy war', if we consider that priests and religious rituals (see *jus fetiale*) were also employed to secure God's aid in battle or that the sacralization of the public sphere was very intense, since the Emperors that commanded warfare presented themselves not just as chosen by God, but as gods. Nevertheless, in present-day historical research Roman warfare is not considered to represent a type of 'holy war'– quite rightly so to my view. On the sacralization of Roman warfare see E. Flaig, 'Heiliger Krieg'. Auf der Suche nach einer Typologie. *Historische Zeitschrift* 285/2 (2007) 272–276; cf. F. H. Russel, The Just War in the Middle Ages. Cambridge 1975, 6.

[17] Medieval conceptions of 'just war' did not equally include notions of protection of civilian population and prohibition of atrocities. The modern elaborated doctrine of 'just war', including both the *ius ad bellum* and the *jus in bello*, begun to be formulated in the late medieval times; cf. Johnson, Historical Roots 15–16. On Byzantine approaches to the *jus in bello*, see E. Chrysos, Nomos polemou, in: Just War in Byzantium (9th – 12th c.) (*National Hellenic Research Foundation/Institute for Byzantine Research, International Symposia* 4). Athens 1997, 201–211.

sin[18]. Nevertheless, the sacralization of warfare was always present against any enemy of the imperial state, Christian or non-Christian. As a result, if we are to avoid a biased, anachronistic approach to the role of religion in the Byzantine war ethic, we should not impose upon the Byzantines an understanding of all warfare as a war for religion, i.e. a religious task which for the vast majority of them would have been inconceivable.

Instead, a strict employment of the 'holy war' as an analytical term in a heuristic manner, the main criterion of which is religious difference as the primary cause for resorting to and justifying military action, can help us to decode the actual role of religion in the Byzantine *ius ad bellum* in a comparative perspective with other contemporary societies as well as with modern times. In this way, we can overrule the obscurity caused by the extensive intertwinement of secular and religious spheres (as well as of secular and religious justice) within early medieval societies and the relevant equal propagation as just of both warfare, the principal motive of which was religious difference, as well as warfare for which the principal motive was not the religion of the enemy, although the source and the content of justification was not the same in both cases[19].

To make this point clearer, we should bear in mind that the perception of the role of the religious element in the justification of warfare was not the same in all medieval cultures. Moreover, the medieval norms of legitimization for the engagement in war were predominately moral – ideological and not legal, whereas no clear terminological distinction between a 'just war' and a 'holy war' existed[20]. In this light, the modern distinction provides a conceptualization based on certain interrelated analytical dichotomies such as non-religious vs. religious cause for resorting to military action, rational vs. irrational conception of justice referring to the primacy of statecraft over religion or vice versa in the *ius ad bellum*, and finally life-affirming vs. life-destructive approach to the employment of military means[21].

If we take these analytical criteria as a starting-point, then the attestation of 'just war' or 'holy war' conceptions within a medieval society's *ius ad bellum* is automatically disconnected from the existence of a linguistic equivalent of the concept's term. This means that from an analytical point of view the term *bellum justum* or the term 'dikaios polemos', which exist in Latin and Greek medieval sources and which entertained variable contents in different historical periods and within different cultures, can refer to but do not *a priori* signify the existence of a 'just war' concept, since not every medieval war propagated as just meets the criterion of a non-religious cause of justification[22].

Similarly, the absence of a linguistic equivalent for the term 'holy war' cannot automatically exclude the existence of 'holy war' conceptions, since the justification of many wars in medieval times has been principally based on religious difference, and religion was perceived and propagated as the principal cause for engaging in warfare. The case of the Crusades to the Holy Land provides a good paradigm, since in the eyes of a great part of the contemporary western society these were just wars,

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[18] On this *locus communis* in present-day research on Byzantine views on warfare see e.g. J. F. Haldon, Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World 565–1204. London 1999, 22–25.

[19] Johnson, Historical Roots 6, points out that within Western culture the idea of holy war or ideological war is historically and thematically a special extreme conception within just war tradition, arising when religion or ideology transforms the definition of the categories of the *ius ad bellum*.

[20] Graf, Sakralisierung von Kriegen 7–10.

[21] Cf. the discussion in L. Steffen, Holy War, Just War. Exploring the Moral Meaning of Religious Violence. New York 2007, 182–263.

[22] For instance, in the Augustinian thought about the *bellum justum* a war that is waged at God's command is considered legitimate and justified; see Sancti Aurelii Augustini Quaestionum in Heptateuchum libri VII (*Corpus christianorum, ser. lat.* 33, *pars* 5). Turnholt 1958, VI 20; cf. Russel, The Just War 19–20; Johnson, Ideology 81; R. Dyson, St Augustine of Hippo. The Christian Transformation of Political Philosophy. Norfolk 2005, 128–129; J. M. Mattox, Saint Augustine and the Theory of Just War. London – New York 2006, 47–49.

the just cause of which though was principally defined by the idea of religious difference and divine will. This aspect made the justification concept of crusade ambiguous among its contemporaries, fuelling voices of critique within the same as well as within its neighbouring Byzantine society[23].

The aforementioned dichotomy non-religious vs. religious can be further circumscribed through the dichotomy natural law (related to the notions of political entity and statecraft) vs. divine will (overruling the notion of statecraft) with regard to the main cause which justifies, i.e. motivates, the resorting to military action. In the first case, the cause of a war is principally defined by a rationalized human ethic which relates socio-political axioms such as defence or liberation (reconquest) to a political entity and the relevant notion of statecraft. In the second case, religious difference abrogates political axioms and boundaries, and legitimizes the waging of warfare for the killing or the subjugation of religious enemies through the transcendent will of a divine power[24]. As already argued above, the universal perception of God in medieval times as the ultimate source that defined the justice of all things and, consequently, of all warfare as well[25], means that reference to God could be – and was indeed – made also in wars, the principal propagandized cause of which was not defined through religious difference.

In this light, the main way to distinguish differentiated approaches to the role of religion in a medieval society's *ius ad bellum* is to look for source evidence according to which:

1) The religious difference of the enemy was perceived and propagated as the justifying cause for the use of armed force against him irrespective of the latter's relation and attitude to a society's political structures.

2) The actual role of religion in legitimizing the resorting to military action was indeed secondary, subjugated to a rationalized justice which emancipated the *ius ad bellum* from the divine power's transcendent arbitrariness.

The fundamental difference is that a justification concept based on religious difference provides on an ideological level unrestrained potential for resorting to military action, since warfare can be arbitrarily initiated and justified against anyone who is characterized as an enemy of God, religion, and religious 'orthodoxy'[26], even though the real purpose of the war does not have to be, and is usually not, exclusively religious. Instead, a non-religious or political justification concept refers to warfare which is principally justified not because of but independent of the enemy's own religion, even though its cause can very well be perceived and propagandized as dear to God within the framework of a medieval 'theocratic' mentality. Thus, it restrains ideologically the potential for resorting to military action through aims and concerns primarily related to a political entity, making the role of the religious element marginal in the *ius ad bellum*, since the latter is employed only to entrench the rationalized, politically predefined justice of the cause and not to overrule it.

The theoretical distinction between 'just war', in which the scope of military action is ideologically restrained through the notion of statecraft, and 'holy war', in which the scope of military action

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[23] On critical voices within the western society see E. Siberry, Criticism of Crusading, 1095–1274. Oxford 1975, 156f.; on Byzantine reactions to the crusade concept see P. Lemerle, Byzance et la croisade, in: Relazioni del X Congresso Internazionale di Scienze Storiche, III: Storia del Medioevo. Firenze 1955, 595–620 (= Idem, Le Monde de Byzance: Histoire et Institutions. London 1978, VIII); A. Laiou, The Just War of Eastern Christians and the 'Holy War' of the Crusade, in: The Ethics of War. Shared Problems in Different Traditions, eds. R. Sorabjbji – D. Rodin. Oxford 2006, 30–43; I. Stouraitis, Jihād and Crusade: Byzantine positions towards the notions of 'holy war'. *Byzantina Symmeikta* 21 (2011) 17–62.

[24] Cf. Steffen, Holy War 235–242.

[25] For this idea in the Latin West see R. Schieffer, Iudicium Dei. Kriege als Gottesurteile, in: Heilige Kriege. Religiöse Begründungen militärischer Gewaltanwendung 219–220, 222f. (cf. n. 11 above).

[26] According to Johnson, Historical Roots 6, the idea of 'holy war' refers to the definition of the highest values of a culture in terms of religion or other transcendent ideology and to the justification of unlimited means of war as appropriate responses to threats to those values.

is ideologically unrestrained due to divine command, alludes to the theoretical distinction between 'absolute war' and 'real war' made by Carl von Clausewitz. According to this distinction, warfare in its ideal form refers to continuous military action for the total extinction of the enemy; pragmatic warfare, on the other hand, refers to military action, the scope of which is limited through certain political aims and concerns[27]. In this regard, the notion of 'holy war' could be considered to align ideologically with the notion of 'absolute war', since it motivates and justifies unlimited waging of warfare for the final triumph of one's own religion over the followers of other religions or heresies. Conversely, the concept of 'just war' is fully aligned with the concept of 'real war', since its 'naturally' restrained goals predetermine a limited scope of military action.

According to Clausewitz however, the realization of 'absolute war' is not possible among civilized peoples. The objective restrictions provided by the complexity of political and social structures allow only for 'real war' to be waged, that is, warfare dependent upon, and therefore constrained by, political aims and concerns as well as practical matters, such as time and space[28]. In this regard, the political implementation of the ideal aspect of 'holy war', that is, continuous warfare for the total destruction or subjugation of the religious enemy, is also subordinate to the socio-political restrictions of 'real war' as long as 'holy war' takes place within the framework of civilized societies. Consequently, on an empirical level no actual distinction can be made between 'just' and 'holy war' based on the distinction limited vs. unlimited waging of warfare; the tangible distinction concerns the ethical – ideological role of religion in providing justification for resorting to military violence, i.e. in the *ius ad bellum* of medieval societies.

A good example for this is provided by the Muslim notion of war for religion. The inherent idea of the Qur'an that God commanded the believers to wage warfare against the infidel until the latter were converted, eliminated or, alternatively, subjugated (via a poll tax) to Islamic law provided a starting-point for the configuration of the medieval Muslim doctrine of expansion, which divided the world in two spheres, the 'area of Islam', dar al-Islam, and the 'area of war', dar al-Harb[29]. The ideological core of this doctrine was defined by divine arbitrariness which legitimized and promoted continuous warfare for the subjugation of the whole world to the Muslim rule within the framework of an apocalyptic tradition propagating the final triumph of religion[30]. However, the political implementation of the Muslim concept of religious warfare was *a priori* constrained by socio-political and practical matters, which made the waging of continuous jihād impossible[31]. Therefore, next to the 'area of Islam' and the 'area of war' existed also the area of those with whom the Muslims had concluded a treaty or made truce, dar al-Sulh. This enabled a – from an ideological point of view

[27] Carl von Clausewitz, Vom Kriege, ed. W. Hahlweg. Bonn 1980, I 1, 6, I 2; P. Kondylis, Θεωρία του πολέμου. Athens ²1998 (= Theorie des Krieges. Clausewitz, Marx, Engels, Lenin. Stuttgart 1988), 21f.

[28] On the distinction between 'absolute war' among uncivilized peoples and 'real war' among civilized peoples see Clausewitz, Vom Kriege I 1, 3, I 1, 23, I 2, I 3, VIII 2. The transition from the 'absolute' wars of the 'uncivilized' peoples to the 'real' wars of 'civilized' peoples refers not to a transition from an 'unreal' into a 'real' situation but to the historic-cultural transition from human conditions, which make the realization of warfare in its absolute form possible, to human conditions which do not allow for the waging of continuous warfare to the final elimination of the enemy; cf. Kondylis, Θεωρία του πολέμου 27–39.

[29] D. Cook, Understanding Jihad. Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 2005, 19–21; M. Khadduri, War and Peace in the Law of Islam. Baltimore 1955, 52–54; A. Th. Khoury, Was sagt der Koran zum Heiligen Krieg? Gütersloh 1991, 13–16.

[30] Cook, Understanding Jihad 22–25.

[31] On the various views on development and the time of institutionalization of the concept of *jihād* in the Muslim world, see Ch. F. Robinson, The Rise of Islam, 600–705, in: New Cambridge History of Islam, vol. I, ed. Ch. F. Robinson. Cambridge 2010, 190–195; M. Bonner, Jihad in Islamic History. Princeton 2006, 119f.; F. M. Donner, Muhammad and the Believers. Cambridge, MA 2011, 82–88; Idem, Umayyad Efforts at Legitimation: the Umayyads' Silent Heritage, in: Umayyad Legacies: Medieval Memories from Syria to Spain, eds. A. Borrut – P. M. Cobb. Leiden 2010, 189–191; Cook, Understanding Jihad 32–48; P. L. Heck, Jihad Revisited. *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32 (2004) 95–128; Firestone, Jihad 43f.; H. Kennedy, The Great Arab Conquests. Philadelphia 2007, 50.

only temporary – peaceful coexistence with the infidel during the process of expansion of Islamic law through the force of arms, subjugating thus the idea of unlimited war against the infidel to the socio-political and strategic restrictions of 'real war'[32].

A differentiated case is the crusade concept[33]. The movement of the First Crusade was generated by the idea of helping the eastern Christian imperial state of Constantinople, i.e. the Byzantines, to reconquer their lands from the infidel Seljuk Turks[34]. This idea was gradually elaborated then into a concept which stressed as its main goal of the war the liberation of Holy Land and Christians in general, particularly the stateless Christians of Palestine, from the rule of the infidel, thus disconnecting the life-affirming idea of liberation/reconquest from the political entity Byzantine (i.e. Roman) Empire or any other political entity for that matter[35]. This elaborated concept of crusade contained elements of a rational cause (liberation from foreign rule), but within a strictly religious, transcendent context (believers vs. infidels, Holy Land)[36]. The mass perception within western Christian society about oppressive rule over the so-called Holy Land was not understood in political, but instead in exclusively religious terms, thus making the cause of the war principally religious[37].

The starting-point for the transformation of crusade into a type of 'holy war' was Pope Urban II's speech at Clermont, which granted the phenomenon of crusading warfare its crucial religious attributes. The ecclesiastical leader justified his call for war as God's command (*deus vult*) and raised the idea of absolution through warfare (*remissio peccatorum*) as a justifying cause, an ethical motive for waging war. In this way, he overruled on an ideological level all restrictions, which the life-affirming axiom of (political) liberation imposes upon warfare to make crusade a justification concept based on the life-destructive, irrational notion of subjugation or elimination of infidels or heretics[38]. As a

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[32] Cook, Understanding Jihad 21. For the peace-agreements between the Caliphate and the Byzantine Empire from the middle of the seventh to the middle of the eighth century see A. Kaplony, Konstantinopel und Damaskus. Gesandschaften und Verträge zwischen Kaisern und Kalifen 639–750. Berlin 1996.

[33] On crusade ideology, see indicatively C. Erdmann, Die Entstehung des Kreuzzugsgedankens (*Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Geistesgeschichte* 6). Stuttgart 1935, 284–325; H. E. Mayer, Geschichte der Kreuzzüge. Stuttgart 1965, 15–46; E. O. Blake, The formation of the 'Crusade Idea', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 21 (1970) 11–31; R. H. Bainton, Christian attitudes toward war and peace. A historical survey and critical re-evaluation. Nashville ²1983; P. Rousset, Histoire d'une idéologie. La croisade. Montreux 1983; J. Riley-Smith, The First Crusade and the idea of crusading. Philadelphia 1986; A. Becker, Papst Urban II. (1088–1099), Teil 2: Der Papst, die griechische Christenheit und der Kreuzzug (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Schriften* XIX/2). Stuttgart 1988, 272f.; E.-D. Hehl, Was ist eigentlich ein Kreuzzug? *Historische Zeitschrift* 259 (1994) 297–336; H. E. J. Cowdrey, The Reform Papacy and the Origins of the Crusades, in: Le concile de Clermont de 1095 et l'appel à la croisade (*Collection de l'ecole française de Rome* 236). Rome 1997, 65–83; R. Hiestand, "Gott will es!" – Will Gott es wirklich? Die Kreuzzugsidee in der Kritik ihrer Zeit (*Beiträge zur Friedensethik* 29). Stuttgart – Berlin – Köln 1998, 5–16; J. Flori, La guerre sainte. La formation de l'idée de croisade dans l'Occident chrétien. Paris 2001; J. Møller-Jensen, War, Penance and the First Crusade. Dealing with a 'Tyrannical Construct', in: Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology, eds. T. M. S. Lehtonen – K. V. Jensen (*Studia Fennica Historica* 9). Tampere 2005, 51–63.

[34] On this see the exhaustive analysis in Becker, Papst Urban II. 333–385.

[35] This is made evident by the intensive efforts of the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos to convince the leaders of the First Crusade to take oaths of allegiance to him in order to ensure that the territories they were going to recover would be put again under imperial rule. On the Crusader oaths see R.-J. Lilie, Byzantium and the Crusader States 1096–1204, transl. by J. C. Morris and J. E. Ridings. New York 1993, 7–28; J. H. Pryor, The oaths of the leaders of the First Crusade to Emperor Alexius I Comnenus: fealty, homage – pistis, douleia. *Parergon, Bulletin of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, n. s. 2 (1984) 111f.; J. Shepard, When Greek meets Greek: Alexius Comnenus and Bohemond in 1097–1098. *BMGS* 12 (1988) 227–241.

[36] On the content of the idea of liberation in the thoughts of Pope Urban II see Riley-Smith, The First Crusade 17–18.

[37] The religious context is also made emphatically evident, if we consider the propagated notion of the First Crusade as an armed pilgrimage; see Erdmann, Kreuzzugsgedanke 306f.; Riley-Smith, The First Crusade 22.

[38] On this elaboration of the crusade concept cf., e.g., the preaching of St Bernard of Clairvaux regarding the Second Crusade, in which he called for the extermination of the infidel and defined the killing of the religious enemy as malecide; Bernard von Clairvaux, Sämtliche Werke lateinisch/deutsch, ed. G.B. Winkler, vol. I–IX. Innsbruck 1990–1998, I 269–281; Idem, III 890–893 (Letter

result, crusade evolved into a generic concept of war for religion which could be, and was indeed, employed in the course of history to justify warfare on religious grounds in order to protect or expand the Christian religion against infidel or heretic enemies beyond the context of political entities[39].

2. THE BYZANTINE CASE-STUDY

Based on the aforementioned theoretical framework, the methodological approach to the Byzantine 'war ideology' can be demarcated through two central questions:

1) Did a concept of justification of warfare based on religious difference and divine will, i.e. a Byzantine type of 'holy war', ever became preponderant within the war ethic of the Byzantine imperial state?

2) Was the ideological disposition of state and society in Byzantium bellicose or non-bellicose?

These two questions are interrelated, since present-day approaches, which have rejected the existence of a Byzantine notion of 'holy war', employed as a justifying argument the image of the non-bellicose Byzantines who principally disliked warfare and sought to avoid military action[40]. On the other hand, scholars who have argued for the existence of a Byzantine type of 'holy war' at the same time did not dissent from the mainstream image of Byzantine society as a society that idealized peace and therefore preferred diplomatic over military means[41]. Both approaches call for reconsideration. On the one hand, the absence of a notion of 'holy war' from a politically organized society's ruling ideology does not necessarily interrelate with the absence of an offensive disposition of the state. On the other hand, the existence of a justification doctrine which legitimizes the waging of warfare due to religious difference hardly aligns with ideological mechanisms which disfavour the waging of warfare for the sake of peace.

2.1. Religious Discourse In Byzantine Warfare

The issue of a Byzantine notion of 'holy war' has drawn a great deal of attention in the last twenty years or so with the focus of the debate being set on the question of interpretation of religious rhetoric and symbolism in Byzantine wars[42]. Although the central role of the religious element in the legitimization of Byzantine warfare is generally acknowledged, there are two dissenting schools

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457). For the elaboration of the concept of crusade into a transcendent ideology of destruction of the infidel, see Bainton, Christian attitudes toward war and peace 44–45.

[39] The Albigensian Crusade against the heretic Cathars and the Baltic Crusades initiated both by Pope Innocent III are demonstrative cases for the broad application of the crusade concept, which provided justification of warfare on religious grounds, thus providing a – from an ideological point of view – unlimited scope of military action against any enemy of God for the final triumph of religion, cf. J. A. Brundage, The Crusades: A Documentary Survey. Milwaukee, WI 1962, 184–185; Laiou, The Just War of Eastern Christians and the 'Holy War' of the Crusade 38. For a detailed overview of Crusades, the goal of which was not the Holy Land, see J. Riley-Smith, The Crusades: A History. New Haven – London 2005, 161f.

[40] E.g. see V. Laurent, L'idée de guerre sainte et la tradition byzantine. *Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen* 23 (1946) 72, 86, 92; G. T. Dennis, Defenders of the Christian People: 'Holy war' in Byzantium, in: The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World, eds. A. Laiou – R. P. Mottahedeh. Washington, D. C. 2001, 37.

[41] E.g. A. Kolia-Dermitzaki, Το εμπόλεμο Βυζάντιο στις ομιλίες και τις επιστολές του 10ου και 11ου αιώνα. Μία ιδεολογική προσέγγιση, in: Just War in Byzantium (9th – 12th c.) 213, 238.

[42] For an analytical presentation of the relevant bibliography before the 1990's see A. Kolia-Dermitzaki, Ο βυζαντινός «ιερός πόλεμος». Η έννοια και η προβολή του θρησκευτικού πολέμου στο Βυζάντιο (*Historical Monographs* 10). Athens 1991, 15–26 (with English summary). For an overview of the bibliography of the last two decades on the issue of 'holy war' in Byzantium, see Stouraitis, Jihād and Crusade 11, n. 1; A. Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Holy War" In Byzantium Twenty Years Later: A Question of Term Definition and Interpretation, in: Byzantine War Ideology Between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion (122–123). The most important works and theses are cited over the course of the paper.

of thought with regard to its interpretation. The one relates the employment of religious rhetoric, religious symbols and religious services in a number of Byzantine wars against infidel enemies to a justification concept, in which religion was the principal cause for engaging in war; a Byzantine type of 'holy war'. The other argues that the ideological instrumentalization of religion within Byzantine war ethic was fully subordinate to the overall Roman notion of statecraft and had nothing to do with a justification concept based on religious difference. These two different approaches point to the core of the aforementioned theoretical discussion regarding our understanding of the analytical concepts 'just' and 'holy war' and their applicability within a medieval context.

The first methodological approach is confronted with certain problems in the Byzantine case. First of all, the source evidence demonstrates that the employment of religious rhetoric and symbolism on the battlefield for the motivation of the soldiers as well as the religious services in army camps and before battle were by no means confined to warfare against non-Christian enemies. For instance, Heraclius who is often cited as a Byzantine proponent of 'holy war' against the infidel due to the intense sacralization of his wars against the Persians[43], extensively employed religion to underpin the legitimacy of his rebellion against the Emperor Phokas. The source information about the outfitting of the ships that carried his soldiers with icons of the Mother of God and other relics leaves no doubt about the intensive propagation of divine intervention on behalf of his army in a civil war, the discourse of which was primarily political (tyranny) and not religious (religious difference)[44].

In the Byzantine campaign of 917 against the Christian Bulgars, Byzantine priests are reported to have brought relics outside the walls of Constantinople to bless the soldiers and justify their marching against fellow Christians[45]. The sources highlight the motif of a war fought for the protection of the Christians (*sic*) against the Bulgars, alluding thus to the Byzantine ideal of the chosen 'Christian nation' within the framework of warfare, the justification of which was clearly not based on religious difference[46]. Taking the reported religious element into account, it can hardly be asserted that no priests accompanied the Byzantine army in this campaign or that no religiously loaded exhortations were addressed to the army before battle to make soldiers believe that God aided their task. This argument is strengthened by the mentality presented in a letter of Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos to Symeon of Bulgaria, in which the former emphasizes that, if the Bulgars did not stop their attacks against the empire, the Byzantine army would march against them with the alliance of God[47].

The well known case of Basil II leading his army against the rebellious Roman soldiers of Bardas Phokas in the battle of Abydos (April 989) holding the icon of the Mother of God in his hands is also indicative[48]. The divinely ordained Roman Emperor sought to justify his military action against his seditious subjects though reference to religion, the main source of legitimization of his political rule. The employment of the religious symbol in this case had nothing to do with religious difference, but was fully subordinate to the overall sacralised notion of Byzantine, i.e. Roman, statecraft. The rebel was considered a tyrant, that is, a 'heretic' in terms of the political system. The fact that this

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[43] E.g. see H. Ahrweiler, L'idéologie de l'empire byzantin. Paris 1975, 22; Kolia-Dermitzaki, Ο βυζαντινός «ιερός πόλεμος» 165–186.

[44] Georgios Pisides, Heraclias 2, 14–16, in: Giorgio di Pisidia. Poemi: I. Panegirici epici, ed. A. Pertusi (*Studia Patristica et Byzantina* 7). Ettal 1959, 252; cf. Theophanes 298, 15–18 (De Boor); Symeon Logothetes 108, 7, 36–40 (156 Wahlgren).

[45] On a commentary on the campaign's political background, see P. Stephenson, Byzantium's Balkan Frontier. A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204. Cambridge 2000, 22–23.

[46] Theophanes Continuatus 388, 13–17, 388, 23–389, 4 (Bekker); cf. Scylitzes, 202, 71–203, 86 (Thurn); Georgios Monachos Continuatus 880, 18–881, 9 (Bekker); Pseudosymeon 723, 13–724, 1 (Bekker).

[47] Nicolaus Patriarcha Constantinopolitanus Epistulae 331, 89–92 (197 Jenkins – Westerink); cf. a similar statement in a letter of Theodoros Daphnopates to Symeon, Théodore Daphnopatès, Correspondance, ed. J. Darrouzès – L. G. Westerink. Paris 1978, 5, 159–163.

[48] Michael Psellos, Chronographia I 16, 1–5 (I 26 Impellizzeri).

political system was believed to represent God's will did not make religion the main argument of warfare. Within this ideological framework, the same Emperor attributed then a few decades later the victorious end of his offensive campaigns against the Christian Bulgars, which were justified as a reconquest of former Roman territories, to God's help[49].

The reports of the sources on the siege of Constantinople by the Byzantine army of the rebel Thomas the Slav provide a further argument for the reconsideration of the suggested interpretation of the religious element in wars against non-Christian enemies as a separate religious concept of justification. According to the sources, the defending emperor Michael II set his military standard on the roof of the Blachernai Church, while his son Theophilos, accompanied by priests, carried pieces of the victorious holy cross together with the shroud of the Theotokos (Mother of God) around the walls to animate the spirit of the soldiers in a fight against Christian-Romans[50]. If the religion of the enemy was not the justifying cause for engaging in this war, then the sacralisation of the struggle can only be attributed to the imperial power's effort to entrench the justice of the political – rational cause of defending the imperial city and the political authority of the legitimate Emperor against the army of the illegitimate tyrant.

Taking this into account, it is methodologically dubious and ill-founded to assert that the defenders of Constantinople during the two Arab sieges of 674–678 and 717/8 perceived similar religious rituals and symbols differently due to the different religion of the enemy, although they equally engaged in a defensive war to protect the imperial capital and consequently the Emperor's autonomic rule against an attacking enemy. In all three cases, justification for resorting to warfare was principally provided by the natural law of defence within the framework of medieval statecraft. The fact that God was equally propagated to support in the course of battle the righteous defenders of the city both against their Christian and non-Christian enemies demonstrates that in the Byzantine mentality religion was not instrumentalized to motivate the resorting to warfare against enemies of the faith, but was employed to entrench the justice of a rationalized cause predefined by the natural-law of the political entity's defence.

The presentation of these selected examples is intended to demonstrate that religiously loaded ideas, such as God's Chosen People, Christian 'nation', struggle on behalf of God for the sake of the Christian Empire, God's alliance or favour on the battlefield, God-led army etc., which Byzantine authors extensively employed to articulate the legitimacy of military action, were not exclusively related to warfare against non-Christian enemies[51]. In this regard, the question arising is: If all Byzantine warfare, defensive and offensive, fought on behalf of the political entity Roman Empire contained elements of religious legitimization through reference to God's favour and aid on the battlefield irrespective of the enemy's religion, can we define it as a type of 'holy war'? If yes, then we have to consider whether such a vague application of the concept, which deprives it of its main attribute, that is, religious difference as a defining cause for engaging in warfare, is methodologically sound and insightful.

Most importantly though, the aforementioned evidence suggests that present-day theories about an alleged Byzantine type of 'holy war' fought against the infidel are clearly confronted with a methodological impasse. Probably the most serious flaw of those theories is that they are retrospectively

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[49] H. Gelzer, Ungedruckte und wenig bekannte Bistumsverzeichnisse der orientalischen Kirche II. *BZ* 2 (1893) 44; cf. Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden 325–326.

[50] Genesios II 5, 43–49 (28 Lesmüller-Werner – Thurn); cf. Theophanes Continuatus 59, 6–19 (Bekker); Scylitzes 34, 78–85 (Thurn).

[51] On the general employment of the religious element in Byzantine wars cf. N. Oikonomides, The Concept of "Holy War" and Two Tenth-century Byzantine Ivories, in: Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honour of G.T. Dennis, S.J., eds. T. S. Miller – J. Nesbitt. Washington, D. C. 1995, 67–68; Haldon, Warfare 21–27.

inclined to downplay or ignore the fact that religion was also systematically employed to entrench the political legitimacy of warfare against Christian enemies, in order to interpret the religious element as indicative of a justification concept based on religious difference when the Byzantines fought against non-Christian enemies. Thus, they actually impose upon the Byzantines a differentiated conceptualization of the role of the religious element in the justification of warfare against non-Christians, although the sources do not testify a transformation of the basic principles that defined the Byzantine *ius ad bellum*, that is, a change in the hierarchy between statecraft and religion by the justification of military action due to the religion of the enemy.

In this regard, the argument that the sources provide more information on the religious element in wars against non-Christian enemies can hardly be considered as sound evidence of a separate religious concept of justification[52]. Apart from the fact that the greatest enemies that attacked or occupied imperial territories were non-Christians (Persians, Arabs, Turks) and the majority of Byzantine wars had to be fought against them, religion was an integral and – in comparison to the present-day – more important part of a medieval society's collective identity. Therefore, its central role in the process of distinguishing between the 'us' and the 'other', i.e. delineating the outside group, the 'enemy', was inevitable within an imperial society lacking of a solid ethnic or, for that matter, national identity; especially, when that enemy was strongly self-designated through his own religion. Considering this, I would suggest that the instrumentalization of the religious element in the legitimization of wars against Christian enemies or in civil wars is more important for a conceptual insight into the role of religion in the Byzantine war ethic.

A further methodological problem is posed by the nature of the sources, since the argument about the alleged Byzantine type of 'holy war' relies on a dubious method to measure the extent and intensity of religious rhetoric in the reports of different kinds of sources[53]. With respect to that it is important to consider that the most loaded religious utterances regarding warfare are preponderantly reported in texts such as sermons, poems or harangues, in which the literary reproduction of biblical motifs dominates and rhetorical excess is the norm. Now, this is by no means to say that rhetorical topoi have no ideological value. However, the significance of such rhetoric regarding the actual function of the religious element in the Byzantine *ius ad bellum* has to be carefully scrutinized for it not to lead to misinterpretations. For instance, not the same gravity can be attributed to the biblical utterances of an intellectual poet, whose primary goal was to provide a literary laudation of a successful campaign, with the statements of a military treatise which aimed to deal technically and informatively with the issue of justification of warfare.

Furthermore, we cannot always be sure about the actual content of religiously loaded harangues which are reproduced in histories or chronicles. It is difficult to figure out whether and to what extent the intellectual author in Constantinople re-constructed or even invented the reported speech by employing his own rhetorical skills[54]. Such a manipulation of the content of the speech, which obviously made the narration stylistically more attractive for the well educated readers to whom it was addressed but deviated from what the general had actually said to his soldiers on the battlefield,

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[52] The intense sacralization of Byzantine civil warfare provides a strong counter-argument; cf. I. Stouraitis, Bürgerkrieg in ideologischer Wahrnehmung durch die Byzantiner: Die Frage der Legitimierung und Rechtfertigung. *JÖB* 60 (2010) 154f.

[53] On this methodological critique see Oikonomides, Holy War 63; I. Stouraitis, Methodologische Überlegungen zur Frage des byzantinischen "heiligen" Krieges. *BSl* 67 (2009) 272–273.

[54] A good example is provided by Theophanes Continuatus and Leo the Deacon who both report on the harangue of Nikephoros Phokas to his soldiers in front of the walls of Chandax in 961. The two versions demonstrate important deviations with regard to the content, the most interesting of which is that in Theophanes Continuatus' version an allusion to a spiritual reward is reported, whereas in Leo the Deacon's version no similar mention is testified, cf. Theophanes Continuatus 478, 7–18 (Bekker); Leo Diaconus 12, 5–16 (Hase).

may have been for the author nothing more than a rhetorical exercise, an exhibition of his rhetorical skills[55]. As such, it is not necessarily indicative of a war ethic that was defined by an old-testamentary perception regarding the role of God and religion in the justification of warfare. In this regard, it is worth considering that the wars against non-Christian enemies were from a literary point of view the only adequate field for an intellectual author to apply his rhetorical skills and knowledge of the Bible in order to stylistically enrich his text, since biblical motifs regarding God's alliance in battle did not refer to enemies of the same religion.

The preponderant perception regarding God's role in war in all Byzantine sources is that God aids the righteous warriors who struggle to protect or restore the territories of the divinely protected Roman (i.e. Byzantine) Empire[56]. God or the Theotokos (Mother of God) are consistently presented to help or lead the Byzantine armies to victory in battles against Christian and non-Christian enemies all the same, since both had to be fought back as long as they had by any means harmed the empire's territorial integrity. Within this framework of sacralization of warfare on behalf of the territories of the imperial state, the role of religion in the legitimization of military action was clearly circumscribed, as the early tenth-century military treatise 'Tactica' of Emperor Leo VI makes evident.

The 'Tactica' is the most theorizing Byzantine text concerning the Byzantine *ius ad bellum* and provides us with an analytical insight into the role of, and the hierarchical order between, statecraft and religion in the Byzantine justification mechanisms for resorting to military action. The most important evidence of the book is the declaration that for the imperial government the only just cause for engaging in war was the enemy's invasion in the territories of the Roman imperial state[57]. In this case, we are dealing with a clear deviation from the main schema of the pre-modern western just war tradition, an innovation with regard to medieval conceptions of 'just war'. The author of the book employs exclusively natural law (territorial defence of a political entity) to define the just cause for resorting to military action long before its theoretical introduction into the western 'just war' tradition through Francisco de Victoria and Hugo Grotius in the sixteenth and seventeenth century respectively[58].

This idea of territorial integrity was further employed to define in strictly political – territorial terms the Byzantine notion of retaking things wrongly taken (reconquest – liberation of former Roman territories) within the framework of Roman just war tradition[59]. Based on the conception that the just cause for engaging in war could only be the natural law of defence of the political entity's territory, the author defines then the role of religion in the Byzantine war ethic by declaring that, when the cause of the war is just, God may become an ally of the soldiers on the battlefield and lead them to victory[60]. In this light, the 'Tactica, written at a time in which religion was intensively employed to

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[55] Demonstrative in this regard is the case of Niketas Choniates who enriches his historical narrative with an exhortative speech of the Crusader King Louis VII to his soldiers before a battle against the Muslims in the course of the Second Crusade, in which the Byzantine author reproduces the crusade concept of indulgence, see Nic. Choniates, 69, 3–70, 23 (Van Dieten). As Herbert Hunger has shown the speech is nothing more than a construction of the author in form of a rhetorical exercise; H. Hunger, Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner (*HdA* XII 5/1). Munich 1978, 438 [= Βυζαντινή Λογοτεχνία. Η λόγια κοσμική γραμματεία των Βυζαντινών, τόμ. Β´. Athens 1997, 276–277]; cf. A. Kolia-Dermitzaki, Die Kreuzfahrer und die Kreuzzüge im Sprachgebrauch der Byzantiner. *JÖB* 41 (1991), 187, n. 90; Stouraitis, Jihād and Crusade 35–40.

[56] Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden 304–326; for a different view cf. Kolia-Dermitzaki, Ο βυζαντινός «ιερός πόλεμος» 146–340.

[57] Leonis VI Tactica II 29–31, in: The Taktika of Leo VI. Text, translation and commentary, ed. G.T. Dennis (*CFHB* XLIX). Washington, D.C. 2010, 34–37.

[58] Johnson, Historical Roots 16–20.

[59] A. Laiou, On Just War in Byzantium, in: To Hellenikon. Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis Jr., vol. I, eds. S. Reinert – J. Langdon – J. Allen. New Rochelle 1993, 153–177; Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden 304–361, 268–280; cf. also the last part of this paper.

[60] Leonis VI Tactica XX 58, XX 169, Epil. 14–17 (556, 594, 624 Dennis). Cf. Stouraitis, Jihād and Crusade 19–22.

underpin the legitimacy of imperial warfare, can be argued neither to testify to a Byzantine concept of war for religion nor to contain two distinct approaches to the justification of warfare, concerning a religious and a non-religious concept.

The author of the book provides a clear image of the circumscribed role that God and the divine 'oikonomia' played in the Byzantine concept of 'dikaios polemos' (= just war). According to that circumscription, the Byzantine *ius ad bellum* was fully subjugated to the rational criteria of natural law related to the overall idea of Roman imperial statecraft. The religious element functioned as the main semantic means which denoted the justice of the secular – political cause (territorial defence or restoration of the political entity) for engaging in war within the framework of the homo medievalis' inclination to attribute all justice to God. The clear message of the 'Tactica' is that the Byzantine ruling élite perceived and propagated warfare as an instrument of political – territorial sovereignty, the waging of which could not be arbitrarily authorized on behalf of God due to religious difference. Based on this Byzantine insight into the role of the religious element in warfare, it is easier to understand the mentality which, for instance, at the same time enabled Heraclius to propagate through speeches and religious symbols the idea that God was supporting his cause and leading his soldiers to victory both against the infidel Persians as well as the 'tyrannical' Christian Roman Emperor Phokas.

To my knowledge, none of the present-day views on a Byzantine type of 'holy war' has provided source evidence of those Byzantine wars, in which the principal cause overruled the political entity's territorial integrity and was primarily based on religious difference and the relevant idea that God ordained the killing or, for that matter, the subjugation of the infidel because of their faith[61]. The first theoretical approach to religious warfare in Byzantium has argued that the Byzantine type of 'holy war' was a sub-concept of the Byzantine just war concept of restoration, since only certain offensive wars for the reconquest of Roman territories from infidel enemies qualify as a Byzantine type of 'holy war'[62]. This theory was dealt with scepticism from within as an elaborated approach asserted that there is no reason to exclude warfare for the defence of current imperial territory against infidel invaders from the Byzantine notion of war for religion, since on an ideological level Byzantine offensive wars against infidels were equally justified through the prerogative of defence, referring to the territorial integrity of the broader Roman Oecumene[63].

To my view, both arguments demonstrate the deficiencies of the methodological approach which regards the ideological instrumentalization of religion in warfare as *a priori* evidence of a type of 'holy war'. Both theories argue for a religious concept of justification of war against the infidel, although the justifying argument for this warfare was ideologically founded on the political axiom of preserving or restoring the territorial integrity of the Roman imperial state, as they admit. In other words, we are dealing here with an obscure theoretical approach that employs the terms 'holy war' or war for religion to define a justification concept, in which neither religious difference nor religious law defined the just cause for resorting to military action.

The first of the aforementioned approaches practically suggests that the resorting to offensive warfare against non-Christian enemies has the retrospective potential to be regarded as 'holy war' due to the different religion of the enemy, although these wars were initiated and justified by the same

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[61] The only Byzantine reference which seems to come closer to such a conception is found in a poem of Theodoros Prodromos about Ioannis II Komnenos' campaign against the Turks in 1139–1140, the main cause of which though was the reconquest of Roman territory. The poet presents God not just as aiding the army on the battlefield, but as the one motivating the Emperor to take up arms in order to avenge the Christians against the barbarians (*sic*); see Theodorus Prodromus, Carmina historica XV 29–30 in: W. Hörandner, Theodoros Prodromos, Historische Gedichte (*WBS* 11). Vienna 1974; cf. Kolia-Dermitzaki, Ο βυζαντινός «ιερός πόλεμος» 330–331.

[62] Kolia–Dermitzaki, Ο βυζαντινός «ιερός πόλεμος» 32–33, 385–386, 401.

[63] T. M. Kolbaba, Fighting for Christianity. 'Holy war' in the Byzantine Empire. *Byz* 68 (1998) 209.

political axiom of Roman reconquest as the wars against Christian adversaries, for the legitimization of which the Byzantines equally employed their religious values. A critical question in this case pertains to whether a medieval state could have excluded religion as an integral part of its collective identity and culture from the values which had to be highlighted within the framework of defence or liberation of the political entity's territories against a foreign people of a different religion; especially when the latter's approach to warfare was principally defined through its own religion. A further critical point regarding the issue of hierarchy between statecraft and religion by the justification of military action in Byzantium pertains to the fact that the Byzantines did not perceive and propagate the faith of foreign peoples as a justifying cause for engaging in war against them, when the latter had not occupied former Roman territories[64].

These questions become methodologically even more insightful, if we regard the second elaborated approach to the alleged Byzantine doctrine of 'holy war', which attributes this status also to wars for the defence of the imperial state's current territory against non-Christian enemies. In this case, it is indeed asserted that for the soldiers of the imperial army motivation and justification for engaging in war against non-Christian invaders did not principally stem from the need for defence, both territorial and self-defence against the armed attack of the enemy, but from religious difference, i.e. from the idea that God ordained the killing of the infidel due to their faith. The fact that the employment of the religious element did not exclusively relate to religious difference, since religious exhortations and symbolism were equally instrumentalized in defensive wars against Christian invaders as well as in 'Roman' (i.e. Byzantine) civil wars, seems to be easily overruled in this case by the modern historian's retrospective categorization of enemies in religious and non-religious. Moreover, such an approach seems to me, deliberately or not, to practically exclude religion from the cultural values which can be highlighted and defended in a 'just war'[65].

The aforementioned theoretical flaws with respect to the decoding of the role of religion within Byzantine war ethic are made emphatically evident, if we regard the only case of a Byzantine Emperor who seems to have had in mind a justification concept of warfare based principally on religious difference. This case is documented by a non-Byzantine source which reproduces a letter of the Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas to the Caliph al-Muti. Even though the poem can hardly be considered to represent an accurate reproduction of the letter's content, it still offers interesting information on the emperor's war mentality at the time. Nikephoros Phokas is presented to have declared his intention to invade Muslim territory as far as Mecca and beyond to conquer the whole Caliphate and eliminate Islam through the expansion and establishment of the Christian religion[66]. In this case, we are dealing with a clear deviation from a concept of justification based on a political entity's territorial integrity. The just cause of the war is principally religious and overrules the notion of statecraft related to the political entity Roman Empire, since it stems from the idea of destruction of the religious enemy and promotion of the own religion.

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[64] In comparative perspective, it is important to point out that in the biblical wars of the Jews the perception that the people of Israel had to fight against those attacking them as both enemies of Israel and God was complemented by the perception that they were also obliged to wage war against the enemies of God at His command; see Flaig, ‚Heiliger Krieg‘ 278. In Byzantine thinking instead, no war was to be waged against non-Christians as long as they did not attack and harm the territorial integrity of the Roman Empire, even though they were regarded as infidel barbarians; cf. Laiou, The Just War of Eastern Christians and the 'Holy War' of the Crusade 33; Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden 249–250.

[65] The discourse of 'secular' just war tradition in medieval times cannot be considered to preclude the protection and preservation of higher values, such as ideology, religion and culture; cf. Johnson, Historical Roots 6.

[66] On the content of the poem and its relevance to the emperor's letter, see G. Grünebaum, Eine poetische Polemik zwischen Byzanz und Bagdad im X. Jahrhundert. *Analecta Orientalia* 14 (1937) 43–64. Cf. Regesten der Kaiserkunden des Oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453 bearbeitet von F. Dölger. Teil I: 2. Halband, Regesten von 867–1025. Zweite Auflage neu bearbeitet von A. E. Müller unter verantwortlicher Mitarbeit von A. Beihammer. Munich 2003, 127–128 (Reg. 707i).

The obvious contrast between the justification concept of the 'Tactica' based on the rationale of territorial integrity, the justice of which is amplified through wishful reference to God's consensus and aid on the battlefield against any enemy, and Phokas' conception, in which justification for resorting to military violence is based on the arbitrary and irrational religious idea of devastation of the infidel enemy, draws, to my view, a clear methodological line between a notion of war for religion and a medieval notion of the 'just war' concept, the religious elements of which are due to the prominent role of religion in all aspects of medieval people's social life and action. It can be no coincidence that the dissenting notion of a 'holy war' against the infidel as presented in this source is related to the only Byzantine emperor who tried (but failed) to institutionalize the concept of the warrior-martyr, a matter to which I shall come back later.

All the aforementioned observations regarding the role of the religious element in Byzantine war ethic take us back to the initial issue pertaining to whether we should view all Byzantine warfare as representative of a type of 'holy war' or whether Byzantine wars of defence and reconquest should be regarded to represent a medieval type of the 'just war' concept. A sound methodological approach to this issue within the framework of the aforementioned circumscribed understanding of the term 'holy war' has to begin with asking whether the sources provide evidence that the Byzantines differentiated between rational and irrational conceptions with regard to the function of religion within the *ius ad bellum*. In this regard, interesting information is provided by Byzantine positions towards the biblical idea that warfare could be a divinely ordained task and the relevant conception of spiritually meritorious death in battle. These positions are highlighted within the framework of Byzantine reactions to the Muslim and the Latin conceptions of 'holy war' as well as to Nikephoros II Phokas' warrior-martyr concept.

The Byzantine antithesis to a justification concept based on religious difference is first made evident by Theophanes the Confessor and Niketas Byzantios in the ninth century, when they both condemn the absurdity of the Muslim approach to warfare, in which according to the authors' view God commands the killing of the enemy and rewards the warriors that kill or are killed in battle against the enemy with a place in Heaven[67]. Leo VI in the 'Tactica' also alludes critically to the Muslim conception of divinely ordained warfare, when he attributes to the Muslims the idea that God rejoices in warfare; an idea which he rejects by choosing to highlight a biblical quotation according to which God disperses the warmongering peoples[68]. Similarly, Constantine Porphyrogennetos derides Mohammed as a madman and deluded – pointing thus clearly to the irrationality of the latter's ideas – for promising his followers a life in the hereafter for killing or being killed in warfare[69]. Ioannis Scylitzes demonstrates a rationalized approach to the relation between warfare and religion when he reports on Nikephoros II Phokas' appeal to the Byzantine Church for the recognition of fallen soldiers as martyrs and condemns the Emperor's intention to make the salvation of the soul exclusively dependent on death in the battlefield and nothing else[70].

Skylitzes' critique is reproduced by Michael Glykas in the twelfth century, whereas Ioannis Zonaras also makes a sceptical reference to Nikephoros II Phokas' tendency to relate everything to warfare and highlights the Patriarch's brave reaction against the Emperor's intention to establish a

[67] Theophanes 334, 17–26 (De Boor); cf. Georgius Monachus 699, 8–702, 9; Niketas von Byzanz, Schriften zum Islam I, griechisch-deutsche Textausgabe von K. Förstel (*Corpus Islamo-Christianum*). Würzburg – Altenberge 2000, 192, 334–345. On analytical approaches to these positions cf. D. Krausmüller, Killing at God's command: Niketas Byzantios' Polemic against Islam and the Christian Tradition of Divinely Sanctioned Murder. *Al Masāq* 16 (2004) 165–167; Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden, 333–335, 337; Idem, Jihād and Crusade 14–15.
[68] Leonis VI Tactica XVII 105 (476, 511–512 Dennis).
[69] De administrando imperio 14, 28–31 (78 Moravcsik – Jenkins).
[70] Scylitzes 274, 62–65 (Thurn).

cult of warrior-martyrs[71]. Niketas Choniates employs in a rhetorical manner in the concluding lines of his work the same biblical quotation as Leo VI about God dispersing the warmongering peoples, alluding to the Crusaders that had sacked Constantinople[72]. At the beginning of the thirteenth century Constantine Stilbes criticizes the Latins for promoting an image of warfare as a stand-alone means for the salvation of the soul[73]. Finally, Matthaios Blastares argues in the fourteenth century for the correct employment of St Basil's canon for the rejection of Nikephoros II Phokas' appeal to the Church, providing thus a further indication that the idea of spiritually meritorious death in battle was antithetical to the Byzantine rationale[74].

All the aforementioned evidence raises a further issue. Although Byzantine authors did not hesitate to employ Old Testament motifs in order to present God as an aide and leader of the armies on the battlefield against all enemies of the empire, at the same time they eagerly condemned the Old Testament idea that God could be perceived as ordaining the waging of warfare and the relevant conception that war could become a means to achieve the remission of sins and eternal life. This differentiated attitude towards the Old Testament conceptions of God's role in warfare is to my view demonstrative of the preponderant perception regarding religion's role in the Byzantine *ius ad bellum*. Representatives of both imperial and clerical Christianity did not hesitate to adopt and propagate the biblical idea that God led to victory those fighting for a just cause against any enemy of the imperial state, Christian or non Christian, because this idea could align with a rationalized conception of justice, in which God and religion did not function as the justifying cause for resorting to military action. Instead, the idea that God ordained, i.e. arbitrarily justified, the waging of warfare against other people (even if they were infidel), for which he granted the believer-warriors absolution or even sanctification, was rejected as irrational and antithetical to Byzantine reasoning.

This argument seems to be partially contradicted by source information about exhortations made to soldiers before battle, in which the reward from God was highlighted. Present-day theories on a Byzantine type of 'holy war' have eagerly highlighted the – admittedly – few reported cases as strong evidence of the existence of a Byzantine type of 'holy war'[75]. A more sober approach has suggested that such exhortations to the soldiers of the imperial army should rather be considered as indicative of the different attitude of an Old Testament in tone imperial Christianity and a New Testament in tone clerical Christianity towards the issue of sacralization of warfare[76]. In this light, the main methodological question pertains to whether the source information demonstrates that such exhortations were exclusively related to warfare against the infidel; a question which also concerns the degree of connection between the spiritual reward and the participation in warfare in Byzantine thinking.

The first evidence of a relevant exhortation in the sources is found in the text of Theophylaktos Simokattes who reports on the speech of general Justinian to his soldiers in the battle of Melitene

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[71] Michael Glycas 572, 5–10 (Bekker); Zonaras III 506, 9–19 (Büttner-Wobst). On the debate about Zonaras' thesis towards Nikephoros Phokas's appeal see H.-G. Beck, Nomos, Kanon und Staatsraison in Byzanz (*Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte* 384). Vienna 1981, 26–29; Kolia-Dermitzaki, Ο βυζαντινός «ιερός πόλεμος» 134–141; Stouraitis, Jihād and Crusade 52–57.

[72] Nic. Choniates 654, 57–655, 65 (Van Dieten).

[73] Constantine Stilbes 77, 270–275, in: J. Darrouzès, Le mémoire de Constantin Stilbès contre les Latins. *REB* 21 (1963).

[74] G. A. Ralles – M. Potles, Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων τῶν ἁγίων καὶ πανευφήμων ἀποστόλων, καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν οἰκουμενικῶν συνόδων, καὶ τῶν κατά μέρος ἁγίων, vol. I–VI. Athens 1854–1855, VI 492.

[75] Kolia–Dermitzaki, Ο βυζαντινός «ιερός πόλεμος» 355–359; Kolbaba, Fighting for Christianity 212.

[76] On the distinction between an Old Testament imperial Christianity and a New Testament clerical Christianity in Byzantium see G. Dagron, Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium. Cambridge 2003, 84–104 (particularly 97–98). On the potential implications of such a distinction regarding a differentiated perception of God's relation to warfare within Byzantine society, see P. Stephenson, Imperial Christianity and Sacred Warfare in Byzantium, in: Belief and Bloodshed: Religion and Violence across Time and Tradition, ed. J. K. Wellman, Jr. Lanham, MD 2007, 81–93.

in 575. According to the author, the general exhorted his soldiers to have no fear of death, which he referred to as a brief sleep compared to the day that is to come, and mentioned a recompense for the souls of the dead, which would not be equal but would exceed the weight of their gift, alluding thus to eternal life[77]. The second source that provides such evidence is Theophanes the Confessor, which is based on Georgios Pisides' information about the wars of Heraclius against the Persians. In his speech to the soldiers in the beginning of his campaign in 624 the Emperor is reported to have said that the danger is not without recompense, but it leads to eternal life[78]. In another speech the following year, he claimed: 'May we win the crown of martyrdom so that we may be praised in the future and receive our recompense from God'[79]. The 'Tactica' of Leo VI is the third source which bears evidence of an exhortative message to the soldiers on the battlefield, which included reference to a spiritual merit. The Emperor instructs his generals that in the exhortations addressed to the soldiers before battle reference to 'God's reward because of their faith' should be made[80]. A fourth report on that concept exists in Theophanes Continuatus, in a speech that Nikephoros Phokas held to his soldiers in front of the walls of Chandax in 961. Among other things, the domestikos of the scholae is reported to have said to his soldiers that the 'undertaken danger is not without recompense', an allusion to spiritual merit[81]. Finally, the fifth source is a letter of the Patriarch Michael Autoreianos (1208–1214) to the Emperor Theodoros I Laskaris (1205–1222), in which the ecclesiastical leader promises remission of sins to the soldiers that would die in battle[82].

An initial observation concerns the extremely small number of sources and reports. If we were to accept that the concept of indulgence was ideologically predominant within Byzantine society and was systematically employed by imperial Christianity to motivate and justify the waging of warfare against infidel enemies, then Byzantine authors seem to have done everything in their power to hide it from us. Certainly, this scarcity of information may be attributed to various factors that concern the religious disposition of Byzantine historians towards warfare as well as their ability and potential to get access to detailed and accurate information about events on the battlefield; however, it is still indicative. The case of the Patriarch Michael Autoreianos has been shown to be a striking exception with regard to the general attitude of clerical Christianity towards warfare, which has to be attributed to the particular ideological and political context of the period after the events of 1204 that motivated the head of the Byzantine Church to adopt the papal prerogative of granting remission of sins and employ it to motivate warfare not against the infidel Muslims, but against the Christian – although from a Byzantine point of view by that time heretic – Latins[83]. Therefore, I would like to focus here on the other four cases which precede the events of 1204 and seem to be particularly interesting.

With the exception of the 'Tactica', the other three reports refer each to a concrete battle or campaign in which a general or emperor propagated the idea of a spiritual reward for soldiers in order to exhort his army to fight bravely. In this regard, it is important to note that none of those three cases refers to warfare that was principally justified through the religious axiom that God had ordained the waging of warfare against the infidel due to their religion. General Justinian and Emperor Heraclius

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[77] Theophylactus Simocatta Historiae III 13, 5–7, 20 (De Boor); cf. M. Whitby – Mary Whitby, The history of Theophylact Simocatta. An English Translation with Introduction and Notes. Oxford[2] 1997, 92–94.

[78] Theophanes 307, 3–13 (De Boor).

[79] Georgius Pisides, I 279 (Pertusi); Theophanes 310, 27–311, 2 (De Boor).

[80] Also in the chapter about the Arabs, he emphasizes that the struggle against the enemy takes place among other things also on behalf of the salvation of the soul; Leonis VI Tactica XII 57, XVIII 127 (248, 410–411, 484, 221–622 Dennis).

[81] Theophanes Continuatus 478, 14–15 (Bekker).

[82] N. Oikonomides, Cinq actes inédites du patriarche Michel Autôreianos. *REB* 25 (1967) 119, 70–74.

[83] On the particularities of this case see N. Oikonomides, Cinq actes inédites 113–145; Beck, Staatsraison 34–35; Kolia–Dermitzaki, Ο βυζαντινός «ιερός πόλεμος» 358, n.32.

both engaged in a defensive war against the Persians that had attacked and occupied imperial terri-tory[84], whereas the Emperor Romanos II sent his army to Crete to recover former Roman territory from the Muslims. The justifying cause for resorting to military action was provided in all cases by the enemy's armed attack or occupation of imperial territory respectively, whereas the propagation of God's recompense to the soldiers was part of the rhetorical exhortations made on the battlefield in order to strengthen their morale. This shows that the Byzantine conception of God rewarding the righteous soldiers did not stem from an irrational concept of justification for engaging in war (divine order, destruction or subjugation of the infidel), but was related to a purposeful instrumentalization of religion as an animating factor within the framework of a rational concept of justification subordi-nated to the notion of statecraft (defence or liberation of imperial territory)[85].

Bearing this in mind, it is particularly interesting to emphasize that the 'Tactica' of Leo VI, the only source which points to a systematic employment of such exhortations on the battlefield – at least from this Emperor's reign onwards, provides strong indication that exhortative utterances regarding a reward from God were not related to a concept of war for religion against the infidel. The author's instructions to the generals about the exhortations that had to be made to the soldiers before battle are included in a section of the book, which is not explicitly related to war against non-Christian enemies, i.e. the Muslims, but refers to warfare against any enemy of the empire[86]. This argument is further underpinned by the fact that God's recompense is carefully related to the soldiers' good faith, i.e. piety, with no mention made to the killing of infidels or death in battle against them[87].

The strongest evidence though that in the Byzantine mentality the idea of divine recompense to the soldiers was by no means explicitly related to a religious concept of war fought against the ene-mies of the Christian faith is provided by the only undeniable Byzantine proponent of war for reli-gion, the Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas. In his unsuccessful appeal to the Byzantine Church for the recognition of fallen soldiers as martyrs the emperor explicitly asked for all fallen soldiers in all wars to be granted martyr-status[88]. The fact that Phokas did not choose to relate martyrdom to the religion of the enemy, although he was a proponent of the idea of a war for the expansion of the Christian religion in the Caliphate as shown above, demonstrates the absence of a generic categorization of the enemy in religious terms within Byzantine mentality. The emperor's appeal represented an innova-tion with regard to common Byzantine beliefs, according to which all righteous fighters that lost their

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[84] On the most debated issue of the ideology of Heraclius' campaigns against the Persians see the balanced approach of W. E. Kaegi, Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium. Cambridge 2003, 126; cf. also Y. Stoyanov, Defenders and Enemies of the True Cross. The Sasanian Conquest of Jerusalem in 614 and Byzantine Ideology of Anti-Persian Warfare (*Österreichische Akade-mie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte* 819). Vienna 2011, 25–44, 60–74.

[85] This subjugation of the religious element to the notion of Roman statecraft is strikingly evident in the speech of Heraclius to his soldiers, in which he primarily states that they are called to fight for the protection of the autonomous rule of the Roman state, making thus clear that the principal justifying and motivating cause for engaging in war was not the religion of the enemy but the attack of a foreign and impious people at the political and territorial integrity of the Roman Empire; see The-ophanes 307, 3–13 (De Boor).

[86] On the ideological and political agenda of Leo VI who did not only have the Arabs in his mind as enemies of the empire when he was writing the 'Tactica', see S. Tougher, The Reign of Leo VI (886–912). Politics and People (*The Medieval Mediterra-nean* 15). Leiden – New York – Köln 1997, 172–183; Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden 178–191.

[87] In this regard, it is particularly important to take into account that for the Byzantines any enemy, Christian or non-Chris-tian, attacking imperial territory was regarded as impious and an enemy of God, based on the idea that God favoured peace and dispersed the warmongering people, cf. Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden 308–310; Idem, Methodologische Überlegungen 279–282.

[88] Scylitzes 274, 62–64 (Thurn); Zonaras III 506, 13–19 (Büttner-Wobst); cf. also Zonaras' comments on the canon of St Basil in: Ralles – Potles, Σύνταγμα IV 131–132; Michael Glycas 572, 5–10 (Bekker); Mathaios Blastares, in: Ralles – Potles, Σύνταγμα VI 492.

lives in warfare against any enemy of the empire were considered pious Christians that had died for a righteous cause and therefore had not been deprived of their right to eternal life[89].

Phokas' effort to establish a cult of warrior-martyrs during his reign proves beyond any doubt that until his time the Byzantine Church did not recognize fallen soldiers as martyrs. With regard to that, if we were to accept that imperial Christianity, as opposed to the mentality of clerical Christianity, had managed to establish a *de facto* preponderant mentality of warfare against the infidel as a means of religion through which fallen soldiers gained absolution and the status of a martyr, since the time of Heraclius or, alternatively, since the early tenth century[90], then we have to question Phokas' motive to bring this subject to the judgment of the Church in a period, in which his ecclesiastical policy did not favour any consensus with the high-ranking clergy[91]. It seems highly unlikely that the Emperor intended to jeopardize the popularity of a *de facto* established conception through a possible rejection by the Church. Thus, the only plausible way to interpret his appeal is to regard it as an attempt to achieve through the approval of the Church the diffusion and establishment among the mass population of a new concept, the resonance of which was until then confined to a certain highly militarized faction around the Phokas family in the eastern provinces.

This concept represented an elaborated innovation of the already existing and broadly accepted idea that the pious Christian soldiers who died on the battlefield were not excluded from heaven as murderers due to the killing of the enemies. The prevalence of the latter idea within eastern Christian mentality is demonstrated in the comments of the twelfth century canonist Ioannis Zonaras on the canons of St Basil and St Athanasios regarding penitential chastisements for the soldiers. The canonist's point is that the Church did not impose penitential punishments upon the Christian soldiers fighting to defend themselves or to liberate those captured by the enemies; instead, their task was considered as socially praiseworthy, a point which reflects the universal attitude of Byzantine authors towards the killing of the empire's enemies[92].

In this light, I think that the common understanding and the social function of the idea of God's recompense to the soldiers needs to be disconnected from an alleged Byzantine type of 'holy war' fought by imperial Christianity against the infidel. Two further facts demonstrate that the Byzantine idea of God's recompense to the soldiers was not related to a socially and religiously established perception of sanctification, i.e. martyrdom, due to the religious character of warfare: First, Byzantine sources provide no tangible evidence for an established cult of soldier-martyrs within Byzantine society, neither on a local nor on a broader level. Second, the same authors who report on the idea of divine recompense or make wishful equations of soldiers with martyrs in their texts at the same time firmly reject as irrational the Muslim idea that God could reward the believers with eternal life for the participation in warfare against infidel enemies.

For instance, Theophanes the Confessor, a monk and representative of the New Testament mentality of clerical Christianity shows no sign of irritation when he reports on Heraclius utterances about eternal life and the martyr's crown in the latter's speeches to Byzantine soldiers[93]. At the same time

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[89] On the function of the ecclesiastical 'oikonomia' in Byzantium with regard to the forgiveness given to the soldiers for killing the enemy on battlefield, see Stouraitis, Methodologische Überlegungen 284–285.

[90] On the theory about the preponderance of such perceptions within the army see G. Dagron – H. Mihăescu, Le Traité sur la Guerilla de l' Empereur Nicephore Phokas (963–969). Paris 1986, 284–287.

[91] On the ecclesiastical policy of Phokas see R. Morris, The Two Faces of Nikephoros Phokas. *BMGS* 12 (1988) 105–111.

[92] Ralles – Potles, Σύνταγμα IV 131–132.

[93] Stephenson, Imperial Christianity 87, rightly observes that the resonance of Heraclius' exhortations among his soldiers must be approached with caution. In this respect, the fact that Theophanes, a representative of clerical Christianity, had no problem to reproduce a rhetoric referring to eternal life and the martyr's crown also calls for a cautious interpretation regarding the author's and his readers' understanding of this war as a war for religion. Cf. also Flaig, ‚Heiliger Krieg' 295, who notes that

though, he is eager to denigrate the Muslims for their heretical belief[94] that a person could gain eternal life through killing or being killed in battle against (religious) enemies – a belief which had its roots in the Old Testament perception of warfare. Although the author is well known for reproducing his sources fairly uncritically, the fact that he had no problem reporting on both ideas in his work is an indication that his understanding of the Byzantine idea of God's recompense to the soldiers did not relate with an understanding of participation in warfare as a means of absolution. In this regard, a further plausible suggestion is that Heraclius' wishful reference to the martyr's crown was reported by the author and perceived by his readers as nothing more than a rhetorical parallelism aiming to praise the soldiers for their difficult task by comparing them with the ultimate Byzantine role model for extraordinary acts, the athlete of Christ, the martyr[95].

This is even clearer in the case of Constantine Porphyrogennetos. In his harangue to the army of the East, which by language was rather addressed to high-ranking officers than to common soldiers, the emperor was willing to compare the wounds of soldiers with the wounds of martyrs. In his political treatise *De administrando imperio* though, he was prompt to condemn as absurd the Muslim perception of indulgence and martyrdom through warfare. Comparing the emperor's positions in both cases, it becomes evident that he did not subscribe to the idea of spiritually meritorious death in battle and that he rather meant his reference to the martyrs as an honouring comparison, aiming to strengthen his officers' morale[96].

In this regard, I think that an effort to decode the common soldiers' understanding of such exhortations before battle – although difficult due to the absence of common people's statements – has to begin with the assertion that the Byzantine concept of recompense from God was not related to an effort of the imperial government to establish a social view of warfare against the infidel as a religious means for salvation or, for that matter, martyrdom. Texts written by representatives of both the imperial and clerical Christianity all the same demonstrate that the Byzantines' image of warfare was configured through the interaction of religious ideas about war being an evil thing and a sin with political ideas following the raison d'état, which represented imperial warfare as an unavoidable action for the protection of the empire's territorial integrity, promoting it thus to a fully legitimate and praiseworthy social task[97]. Consequently, the imperial power's initiative to propagate the idea of God's recompense before battle has to be interpreted through the prism of ideology analysis, according to which an ideological message from the top-down has to take into account and be adjusted to the beliefs and concerns of those to whom it is addressed in order to be successful.

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the utterance about the attainment of the martyr's crown is reported to have been expressed in a wishful and not in a confirmative manner.

[94] The author of the Chronographia defines Mohammed's movement as a heresy, thus demonstrating that his comments on the Muslim religious approach to warfare should be situated within the theological discourse between Byzantines and Muslims regarding the interpretation of the one God of the Scriptures; see Theophanes, 334. 18 (De Boor). That killing in battle was an important part of this theological discourse becomes evident in the theological controversy between Niketas Byzantios and a Muslim theologian, cf. n. 67 above. On the term 'believer' in the Qur'an, which initially seems to have referred to all those that believed in the one God of the Scriptures, see F. M. Donner, Umayyad Efforts at Legitimation 190–191.

[95] The role model within Byzantine society until the late eleventh century was not that of the warrior fighting the enemies of the faith, but that of the holy man and the martyr. Under the Comnenian dynasty this role-model was complemented – at least within the framework of the ruling élite – by that of the heroic warrior; cf. A. Kazhdan, The aristocracy and the imperial ideal, in: The Byzantine aristocracy IX to XIII centuries, ed. M. Angold (*BAR international series* 221). Oxford 1984, 50f.

[96] On a commentary of the two harangues of Constantine VII to the army of the East, see E. McGeer, Two Military Orations of Constantine VII, in: Byzantine Authors. Literary Activities and Preoccupations. Texts and Translations dedicated to the Memory of Nicolas Oikonomides, ed. J. W. Nesbitt. Leiden – Boston 2003, 111–138.

[97] The interaction of these ideas is demonstrated in the prologue of Leo VI's Tactica, see Leonis VI Tactica Prol. 4 (2, 25–4, 36 Dennis); cf. also Byzantine Treatise on Strategy 20, 9–17 (Dennis).

With respect to that, it is worth coming back to the 'Tactica' once more, since this text reflects the main concerns and aims of the imperial power regarding the propagation of the idea of divine recompense as a means for the psychological support of the army before battle. In this case, we are not dealing with dubious rhetorical utterances but with a manual, the instructions of which are written in a simple language in order to transmit clear messages[98]. The particular instructions given about the message of the heralds' exhortative speeches before battle are important, because in this case the reported ideas represent imperial propaganda addressed not to the high-ranking officers, but to the simple soldiers. If we consider that propaganda aims at persuasion[99], that is, at the Emperor's effort to make the soldiers fight bravely for his interests, then the role of the heralds was to make the soldiers identify with the cause of defence or liberation of territories by presenting ideas which did not only refer to material motives, but were also adjusted to the soldiers' moral needs, that is, took into consideration the latter's ethical fears and aspirations.

In this light, the fact that the author of the book does not make divine recompense dependent upon the killing of infidels, or any other enemies, but on the soldiers' piety is demonstrative of the imperial government's awareness of the common soldier's mentality with regard to warfare. Byzantine soldiers feared death and, as Christians, wished for a place in Heaven, whereas their participation in warfare was not dependent upon and motivated by a religious ethic which promoted the idea that the killing of infidel enemies was a religious means for the salvation of the soul. Therefore, it seems plausible to suggest that exhortations with such content were mainly meant to function as an ideological response to the common Christian soldiers' inherent fears that participation in warfare and the killing of enemies – especially Christian enemies I would argue – might exclude them from heaven.

For the same reasons, purification of the soldiers' souls before battle through fasting and prayers, which was by no means confined to battles against the infidel[100], was not intended to grant warfare the status of a purifying act, but rather to free soldiers from the inherent fear that war was an impious situation in which they could die as sinners. This also explains why the author of the book does not instruct the heralds to refer to martyrdom due to death in battle; a striking omission, if we were to accept that the 'Tactica' reflects imperial Christianity's ideological agenda, which as opposed to clerical Christianity purposefully promoted a view on warfare as a means for sanctification.

Therefore, the evidence of the 'Tactica' should rather be regarded as indicative that the employment of exhortations with a religious content before battle should not be related to a religious concept of warfare against non-Christians. Similar exhortations were probably employed before every important battle against a powerful enemy, Christian or non-Christian, in an effort to secure the efficiency of the imperial army though psychological support that was in the first place responding to the awareness of the common soldiers' ethical fears[101].

All aforementioned evidence points to the main difference in the instrumentalization of religion for the promotion of military violence in the Byzantine, the Latin and Muslim war ethics respectively. This difference was determined by the antithesis rational vs. irrational approach to the role of God and religion in the *ius ad bellum*. Both in the Muslim as well as in the Latin types of 'holy war' the

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[98] The author of the book declares in the beginning of the text that he paid no heed to linguistic or rhetoric excellence, but his main concern was clarity of expression and simplicity of style; see Leonis VI Tactica Prol. 6 (7 Dennis).

[99] G. Jowett – V. O'Donnell, Propaganda and Persuasion. London [4]2006, 7: "Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist".

[100] G. Dennis, Religious Services in the Byzantine Army, in: Eulogema: Studies in Honor of Robert Taft S.J., ed. E. Carr = *Studia Anselmiana* 110 (1993) 107–117.

[101] On soldiers deserting the army to become monks see J.F. Haldon, Byzantine Praetorians. An administrative, institutional and social survey of the opsikion and the tagmata, c. 580–900 (*Poikila Byzantina* 3). Bonn 1984, 326–328.

idea of salvation stems from the prerogative that the enemy is primarily defined through his religion and his destruction through military means is justified as God's will. Indulgence is propagated in these cases as a principal motive for resorting to warfare. Moreover, in Muslim society the concept of shahid was broadly diffused through the hadith and the Qur'an, thus functioning *a priori* as a justifying religious cause for engaging in warfare against the infidel and promoting a mass participation in it for the sake of religion[102]. In western Christian society, the idea of remission of sins was publicly pronounced by the Pope with the aim to motivate mass participation in crusading warfare and entrench the propagated idea that the waging of war against the infidel in foreign territories far away from the soldiers' own homes was a task ordained by God. Conversely, the idea that God ordained and justified the destruction of the enemies of the faith was not entertained and propagated by the Byzantine ruling élite as a just cause for engaging in war. Moreover, the source evidence demonstrates that neither the imperial power nor the Church ever undertook an effort for the mass propagation of the idea that participation in warfare against the infidel could be a means for the salvation of the soul or, for that matter, for sanctification.

To sum up, the proposed theoretical approach to the analytical concept of 'holy war' and its employment in the analysis of Byzantine source material demonstrates that the instrumentalization of religion in the Byzantine war ethic was not related only to warfare against the infidel and therefore is not indicative of a justification concept based on religious difference. The notion of a 'holy war' against infidel enemies for the promotion of religion remained a rival idea within the Byzantine imperial state's ruling ideology, the resonance of which was rather marginal and confined to small groups or individuals in certain periods[103]. In this regard, no such distinction can be attested as imperial Christianity's 'holy war' and clerical Christianity's 'just war' in Byzantium[104]. Byzantine warfare

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[102] There are certain objections to be raised, both in terms of ideology and structures, against the argument that the imperial power intended to emulate the Islamic military model (on this argument see mainly G. Dagron, Byzance et la modèle islamique au Xe siècle. À propos des Constitutions Tactiques de l'Empereur Léon VI. *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* 127 [1983] 219–243; cf. Stephenson, Imperial Christianity 91). First of all, the employment of religious rhetoric and symbols on the battlefield by the Byzantines precedes the rise of Islam. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that Leo VI only needed to look back to Heraclius' concept of sacralization and not to copy the Muslims in order to provide a clear ideological frame for a systematic instrumentalization of the religious element in Byzantine warfare. Moreover, the different political and economic structures of the Byzantine tributary state neither favoured nor promoted mass voluntary participation of the male population in warfare. The development of the Byzantine army in the course of the tenth century into an army that predominately consisted of field units of well-paid and trained indigenous and foreign mercenaries clearly demonstrates that the 'Tactica' were not intended to set in motion a process of emulation of Muslim military structures. On an ideological level then, I would suggest that the emphasis on the religious element in the exhortations addressed to the Byzantine soldiers before battle, which the treatise of Leo VI introduces in an institutional manner, represents rather a response to, than an emulation of, the ideological practices of the enemy. This mentality of reaction is also made evident in the Rhetorica militaris on which Leo VI obviously draws; cf. I. Erani, Discorsi di guerre (*Paradosis* 17). Bari 2010, 47–49.

[103] With respect to that, the argument of G. Dagron about a frontier mentality of 'holy war' can certainly be considered to apply for the period, in which Nikephoros Phokas was leading the army of the East and his mentality came close to be promoted to the empire's ruling ideology due to his rise on the throne. However, the differences between the war ethic of Nikephoros Phokas and that of the 'Tactica', as presented above, hardly provides evidence that Phokas' religious concept of justification stemmed from the 'Tactica'; on this argument see G. Dagron, Byzance et la modèle islamique 219–243; Dagron – Mihăescu, Guerilla 147–149, 284–287. Moreover, it is unlikely that this mentality was popular beyond the limits of a highly militarized group of people around the Phokas' family and that it represented the main ideological trend within Byzantine society. This argument is supported by the fact that Nikephoros Phokas, albeit very successful in the war against the infidel, was a rather unpopular emperor due to his financial and ecclesiastical policies and was finally murdered at the peak of his military successes (on Phokas' unpopularity see Morris, The Two Faces of Nikephoros Phokas 111–112). This development hardly speaks for a society which was dominated by an ideology of religious militarism, since the existence of such an ideology makes success in warfare against the enemies of God the primary means of legitimation of the rulers divinely ordained authority.

[104] For instance, the argument that the Byzantine clergy was inclined to a pacifist stance following the early Church Fathers, in particular Basil of Caesarea, whereas the emperors' approach was distinctly militaristic (cf. Stephenson, Imperial Christian-

was, from a modern point of view, sacralised on the whole due to the inherent sacralization of the Christian Roman Empire within the framework of the obscure distinction between secular and religious spheres in a medieval imperial state. The reason why the Byzantine ruling élite did not make the crucial step towards the development of a type of 'holy war' (i.e. warfare, the waging of which is principally justified through religious difference and the relevant idea of the final triumph of a particular religion over other religions or heresies through warfare) seems to me to be related to the fact that, as both the Islamic and Latin paradigms suggest, such religious concepts of legitimization for resorting to military violence are developed when the need of a state's or a society's ruling élite for military expansion cannot be motivated and justified through secular prerogatives related to a political entity. The final part of this paper aspires to shed more light on this assertion.

2.2. Peace discourse in Byzantium: Defence Distorted

As already argued above, the absence of a conception of 'holy war' within a society's war ethic does not automatically signify the absence of an offensive, i.e. bellicose, disposition, especially with regard to that society's ruling class. Present-day approaches to the Byzantine war policies were predominately marked – at least until the late twentieth century – by the cliché of the ideologically non-bellicose Byzantine Empire, which systematically sought to avoid the waging of warfare[105]. The extensive use of diplomatic means in the confrontation with various enemies[106] along with the fact that the emperors of Constantinople were more often in a position to defend than to expand the current borders of their territorial rule throughout the empire's history extensively contributed to the consolidation of such a view on Byzantium[107].

The image of the non-bellicose Byzantines seems, however, not really to hold out against the undeniable fact that after the loss of the Western part of the Roman Empire in the fifth century the Eastern Roman imperial state executed three major efforts for a systematic territorial expansion of the imperial rule based on the imperial prerogative of 'reconquista'. With regard to the extensively contracted post-seventh century imperial state in particular, the source evidence proves that in the period from the mid-eighth to the beginning of the eleventh century the emperors of Constantinople quasi doubled their territories and the number of their subjects[108]. In addition to that, in the period from the seventh to the twelfth centuries seventy-one revolts took place within the limits of imperial

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ity 84) needs careful reconsideration. The canon of St. Basil can hardly be considered to reflect a pacifist stance, since it did not *a priori* reject warfare. It rather legitimized the waging of warfare by Christian soldiers when this was fought on behalf of prudence and piety, that is, on behalf of the Christian Roman Empire. The proposed penitential chastisement for the soldiers had an advisory and not compulsory character, and it was primarily meant to remind that the killing of the enemy on the battlefield, even though justified, was not a pious act; cf. Stouraitis, Jihād and Crusade 54–57 with further bibliographical notes. On the non-pacifist stance of the early Christians see Johnson, Historical Roots 8–10.

[105] The most notorious statement in this regard belongs to one of the most prominent Byzantinists of the twentieth century Hans Georg Beck, who asserted that the Byzantine Empire was a state that disliked warfare and sought to prevent potential military threats through every possible diplomatic means, regarding warfare always as the last resort; H. G. Beck, Senat und Volk von Konstantinopel. Probleme der byzantinischen Verfassungsgeschichte (*Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte* 6). Munich 1966, 29; for a similar approach cf. L. Brehier, Le monde byzantin II. Les institutions de l' empire byzantin. Paris 1949, 281.

[106] On Byzantine diplomacy see S. Lampakis – M. Leontsini – T. Lounghis – V. Vlysidou, Byzantine Diplomacy: A Seminar, transl. by N. Russell. Athens 2007; Byzantine Diplomacy, Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990, ed. J. Shepard – S. Franklin (*Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies* 1). Aldershot 1992.

[107] This overall view is still fuelling approaches to Byzantine wars of reconquest as wars of defence which aligned with the alleged non-bellicose image of the Byzantines; see, for instance, W. Treadgold, Byzantium, the Reluctant Warrior, in: Noble Ideals and Bloody Realities. Warfare in the Middle Ages, eds. N. Christie – M. Yazigi. Leiden – Boston 2006, 213–223.

[108] W. Treadgold, A History of the Byzantine State and Society. Stanford 1997, 570.

authority, many of which resulted in a civil war[109]. These facts can hardly be considered indicative of ideological mechanisms that principally discouraged the use of armed force[110]. In this regard, two methodological issues seem to call for reconsideration in the Byzantine case. The first concerns the critical reassessment of the approach that relates the employment of diplomatic means by the state with a non-bellicose disposition. The second concerns the reconsideration of the socio-political content of the idea of liberation, i.e. reconquest, in the context of a medieval imperial state.

Beginning with the issue of diplomacy, the recent state of research is defined by two differentiated approaches. The first can be summarized by the argument that the extensive use of diplomatic means by the imperial state should be primarily attributed to political, strategic and economic constraints and had little to do with an inherent cultural or ideological disapproval of warfare as a means of politics[111]. The second came as a response to the first, seeking to rehabilitate the balance between ideological disposition and raison d'état by pointing to the 'undeniable Byzantine preference to peaceful, instead of warring means for the resolution of political conflict'[112].

To my view, these two approaches point to a differentiated theoretical understanding of the interrelation between warfare, politics and the notion of peace. The main question to pose in this respect pertains to whether diplomacy and warfare should be *a priori* considered to denote antithetical means related to antithetical ideological dispositions with regard to a state's political discourse of peace. If we consider that the Byzantines pragmatically employed both diplomacy and warfare to serve their political interests within the framework of the imperial raison d'état, then an approach which regards the employment of diplomatic means to denote the Byzantine state's non-bellicose ideological disposition in the field of politics seems to me to rely, deliberately or not, on an ideal antithesis between war and peace, i.e. armed conflict and diplomacy, as political phenomena. In this antithesis warfare is latently deprived of its status as a means of politics and is rather equated with the end of policy-making as opposed to diplomacy which is considered as the exclusive means of politics that are equated with the absence of warfare, i.e. with peace. However, such an ideal antithesis does not really apply on the level of political ideology, if we consider that civilized societies purposefully employ warfare in a restrained form in order to achieve individual political aims that are identified with an individual perception of political peace. Warfare can thus by no means be understood as the end of politics, but simply as an alternative means of conflict resolution within the field of politics, i.e. a product and a means of policy-making and, consequently, also of peace-making[113].

Taking this into account, it becomes evident that from an ideological point of view diplomacy and warfare may represent the two sides of the same coin, since they can be equally perceived and propagated as legitimate means of a foreign policy, the ideological disposition of which is not necessarily peace-loving and peace-making in the sense of being renunciative of all warfare in ideal terms or of offensive warfare in real terms, since it may very well identify peace-making with the political aim of territorial expansion. In this regard, it is no coincidence that the extensive use of diplomatic means by the Byzantine imperial state refers almost exclusively to efforts made to avoid attacks on the – at

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[109] On Byzantine civil wars see W. E. Kaegi, Byzantine Military Unrest 471–843. An Interpretation. Amsterdam 1981; J.-Cl. Cheynet, Pouvoir et contestation à Byzance (963–1210) (*Byzantina Sorbonensia* 9). Paris 1990; F. Winkelmann, Quellenstudien zur herrschenden Klasse von Byzanz im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert (*BBA* 54). Berlin 1987, 33–94; Treadgold, Byzantium, the Reluctant Warrior 230–233.

[110] The non-bellicose image of the Byzantine state was first contested by J.F. Haldon, Blood and Ink: Some observations on Byzantine attitudes towards warfare and diplomacy, in: Byzantine Diplomacy 281–295.

[111] Haldon, Blood and Ink 281–295.

[112] E. Chrysos, Ο πόλεμος έσχατη λύση, in: Byzantio – Kratos kai Koinonia. Mneme Nikou Oikonomide. Athens 2003, 543–545.

[113] Kondylis, Θεωρία του πολέμου 43–44.

any time – current imperial territory or to regulate relations with other medieval states or peoples, the territories of which were not claimed by the Byzantine emperor. For the defence of the empire's – at any time – current borders tributary agreements with potential invaders were usually less expensive than the waging of warfare making thus military action pragmatically the least preferable resort[114].

Instead, the restoration of the *pax byzantina* through the reconquest of former Roman territory could hardly be achieved with diplomatic means, promoting thus a war of reconquest as an 'unavoidable' means of 'peace-making' through an ideological complex of legitimating mechanisms, as we shall see below. Moreover, in the context of internal strife a rebel that initiated a war against the emperor aiming at his dethronement hardly perceived and propagated any other means to be more justified and adequate for the restoration of internal peace, identifiable with his personal rise to the throne, besides warfare. Different political aims and military potential in each case promoted a different conception of peace and therefore a different political means for its realization[115].

The theoretical reassessment of diplomacy as a political means, the employment of which does not manifest any inherent ideological preference of the Byzantine imperial state for the employment of non-military means in conflict resolution, raises the question about the causal relation between peace and war within Byzantine political ideology, that is, the effect of the set of ideas and beliefs, which defined the contents of Byzantine peace, on the configuration of legitimating mechanisms for the justification of offensive military action. In this regard, a methodological approach that highlights the continuous propagation of the political and religious prerogative of peace in the Byzantine sources as an *a priori* evidence of a generic non-bellicose disposition of the Byzantine imperial state is also problematic.

Such an approach points to a theoretical background that considers the idea of peace to have a monolithic function within the field of politics, promoting exclusively the avoidance of warfare. Such a monolithic function seems, however, to refer to an ideal, 'absolute' form of peace as a situation fully immune of any kind of conflict, which does not really identify with the empirical peace, the realization of which takes place within the field of politics[116]. Empirical peace can be defined as a situation free of war, i.e. of military violence, but not as a situation free of conflicts, and in particular those conflicts which lead to preparations for war and to the waging of warfare[117]. This theoretical schema, as presented in Clausewitz's thought, provides a good starting-point for a better insight into the instrumentalization of the idea of peace by the legitimization of offensive military action through the Byzantine ruling élite.

Next to the idea of peace as the ultimate value, as opposed to warfare[118], the Byzantine sources testify also to the idea that warfare is a (political) means to protect, i.e. restore, peace. The latter idea is legitimized within the Byzantine discourse of peace through the axiom of defence which promotes an image of warfare as *ultima ratio*, an unavoidable necessity[119]. From an ethical point of view, defence denotes, as a natural-law cause, a reaction to an opponent's aggressive action, making thus manifest the latter's ideological and political intention to wage warfare and distort peace. Thus, it 'naturally'

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[114] Haldon, Blood and Ink 284; N. Oikonomides, Το όπλο του χρήματος, in: War in Byzantium (9th – 12th c.) 261–268; cf. also Chrysos, Ο πόλεμος έσχατη λύση 545f.

[115] T. Lounghis, Byzantine Diplomacy, in: Lampakis – Leontsini – Lounghis – Vlysidou, Byzantine Diplomacy 18, insightfully denies an *a priori* interrelation of diplomacy with a peaceful ideological disposition: "… when the state is strong, it is also aggressive, in which case, although diplomacy does not of course disappear entirely, it occupies a relatively small place in foreign policy. Conversely, diplomacy constitutes a large part of a state's concerns and activity, and is relied upon to avert impending disaster, when the state feels compelled to avoid war by whatever means it can".

[116] Kondylis, Θεωρία του πολέμου 44.

[117] Kondylis, Θεωρία του πολέμου 46.

[118] Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden 230–231.

[119] Leonis VI Tactica Prol. 4 (2, 25–36 Dennis).

legitimizes the employment of warring means by the defending party within the ethical discourse of peace as an inevitable means for the restoration of the socio-political peace which existed previous to the war initiated by the enemy. However, this seems to not always be the case with the axiom of 'reconquest'. The offensive character of a war of reconquest should not be *a priori* narrowed down to the political and tactical aspect of warfare, but may very well reflect its ethical – ideological aspect.

In Byzantium, the waging of offensive warfare was consistently justified through the imperial prerogative of liberation – reconquest of Roman territories and restoration of Roman imperial rule over their populations respectively. Byzantine authors' ideological approach to the justification of offensive warfare, in particular during the three phases of systematic reconquest (6th, 10th and 12th century), is defined by idioms such as ἀνάληψις, ἀνάκτησις (recovery), ἀνασῴζω (to recover), ἐλευθερία (liberation), ἐλευθερόω (to liberate), ἀνταπόδοσις (rendering), ἐκδίκησις (vengeance), ἐκδικέω (to avenge), the aim of which is to manifest a reaction and to semantically assign aggression to the opponent. In the language of historiographical and political texts, reconquest becomes thus on an ideological level identifiable with or, better said, an equal of defence; a fact that corresponds with the ruling élite's need for ethical legitimization of offensive warfare within the religious-political discourse of peace-maintenance.

A striking example of the ideological equation of war of reconquest with war of defence for the sake of peace can be attested in a sermon written by Arethas bishop of Caesarea in the autumn of 901. In this sermon, held in the presence of Emperor Leo VI on the occasion of a successful military campaign that had achieved the recovery of the fortress Phasianē from the Muslims in Mesopotamia[120], the bishop justifies the campaign of reconquest by emphasizing that the emperor did not order the army to advance there where it had no right to be, but rather to those places which were once under Roman rule and were allowed to be shepherded by its Iron rod[121]. Then he goes on to define the emperor's rule as peace-making[122]. Considering that this speech was held within the same period and political context in which the 'Tactica' was written, it is demonstrative of those ideological mechanisms which facilitated a distortion of the life-affirming concept of defence by the justification of offensive warfare.

The key in order to decode the obvious antithesis between the justification concept of the 'Tactica', in which an enemy's attack on imperial territory is considered the only just cause for war, and the justification concept of Arethas' speech, in which offensive warfare for the acquisition of territory under foreign rule is legitimized in the name of statecraft and peace, is to reassess the societal function of the Byzantine idea of political ecumenism and its effect on the interrelation between the idea of territorial integrity and political peace. Recent research has tried to shed more light on the various and ambiguous contents of the term Oecumene in Byzantium[123]. It cannot be doubted, however, that the belief about the Byzantine emperor's right to rule over a broader Roman Oecumene was an inherent, diachronic attribute of the so-called 'Kaiseridee', which defined the Byzantine political system's ideological approach to foreign policy[124]. This belief seems to have been characterized by certain rigidity with regard to its main features, i.e. monocracy, exclusiveness and a claim over a terri-

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[120] R. H. J. Jenkins – B. Laourdas – C. A. Mango, Nine Orations of Arethas from Codex Marc. gr. 524. *BZ* 54 (1947) 14–15.

[121] Arethas, Scripta Minora II 62.33.14–15 (Westerink).

[122] Arethas, Scripta Minora II 62.34.5 (Westerink).

[123] Cf. the papers in the collective volume Byzantium as Oecumene, ed. E. Chrysos (*National Hellenic Research Foundation/ Institute for Byzantine Research, International Symposia* 16). Athens 2005.

[124] O. Treitinger, Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell. Vom oströmischen Staats- und Reichsgedanken. Darmstadt 1956, 158–167; cf. J. Koder, Die räumlichen Vorstellungen der Byzantiner von der Ökumene (4. bis 12. Jahrhundert). *Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 137/2 (2002) 25–31.

tory which, especially after the seventh century, expanded far beyond the actual limits of imperial authority[125]. This rigidity has to be attributed to the strong Roman consciousness of the Byzantine ruling class – above all of the state élite – which did not allow for an ideological reassessment of the Roman emperor's position within the Roman world, even though the evident gap between belief and geopolitical reality was increasing asymmetrically after the late sixth century.

This evident gap should, however, by no means lead us to disregard the ideal of political ecumenism as a simple rhetorical topos, an ideological remnant of former glory, and to discredit its function and effect on the state's socio-political reality. Arethas' sermon is only one of the sources that provide tangible evidence of the crucial function of the propagated idea of Roman ecumenical rule within Byzantine foreign and, in particular, war policies. Apart from the prevalence of the ecumenical ideal in the rhetorical sermons of the imperial court, the notion that the legitimate territorial limits of imperial rule were extending far beyond the current territorial limits of the imperial state is also made evident in non-rhetorical writings from the tenth to the twelfth centuries, which were written with a certain political agenda. Constantine Porphyrogennetos refers in his political treatise to the radical territorial contraction of the empire in the time of Heraclius[126] and makes a clear distinction between the current territory under imperial authority and the broader territory, in which Roman power once extended[127]. Kekaumenos, a member of the provincial élite of the eleventh century, is aware of the former extension of the Roman Empire's borders, which he relates to the military policies of former Roman Emperors in order to highlight the reasons for the empire's contraction and military weakness in his times[128]. Anna Komnene does not hesitate to declare that her father would have rightly reconquered all the territories of the known world, which were once under Roman rule, had the circumstances of his time not hindered him in undertaking that endeavour[129].

All the aforementioned examples demonstrate the dialectical relation of the ideal of Roman ecumenism with the political – as well as religious – perception of peace, the peace-making image of the Christian-Roman imperial power, the political axiom of Roman territorial integrity, and the natural-law of defence by the process of legitimizing the resorting to military action within the framework of a strongly religious and as non-bellicose propagated political mentality. The adherence of the notion of Roman ecumenical rule to the notion of a broader geographical area of former Roman rule promoted a notion of an archetypal territorial integrity, the 'defence' of which through means of war could be legitimized within the religious-political discourse of peace[130]. This notion had two socio-political effects:

1) It overruled any ethical restrictions for the waging of warfare by the members of the ruling élite, which could be posed by the new political and cultural conditions that had occurred in former imperial territories especially after the extensive territorial contraction of the empire during the seventh century.

2) It practically provided the imperial power with the ideological potential to justify offensive warfare at will in the period after the seventh century, since the immediate areas of expansion for the

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[125] T. M. Fögen, Das politische Denken der Byzantiner, in: Pipers Handbuch der politischen Ideen, Bd. 2: Mittelalter. Munich 1993, 49–50; Koder, Ökumene 29–30; G. Schmalzbauer, Überlegungen zur Idee der Ökumene in Byzanz, in: Wiener Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik: Beiträge zum Symposion Vierzig Jahre Institut Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien im Gedenken an Herbert Hunger (Wien, 4.–7. Dezember 2002), ed. W. Hörandner – J. Koder – M.A. Stassinopoulou (*BNV* 24). Vienna 2004, 408–419; on an alternative approach, see T. Lounghis, Die byzantinische Ideologie der "begrenzten Ökumene" und die römische Frage im ausgehenden 10. Jahrhundert. *BSl* 56 (1995) 117–128.

[126] De thematibus, Prolog. 1, 20–21 (Pertusi).

[127] De administrando imperio, Prooim. 23–24, 48, 22–25 (46, 226 Moravcsik – Jenkins).

[128] Cecaumenus, Strategicon §88 (298, 3–14 Litavrin).

[129] Anna Komnene VI 11, 3 (193, 7–24 Reinsch – Kambylis)

[130] Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden 201–208.

imperial state in East and West lied far within the notional limits of the Roman territorial Ecumene[131].

In this regard, the fact that the Byzantine imperial state had to fight more defensive wars and did not pursue a continuous counter-attack to expand the Emperor's territorial rule to its outmost notional potential can by no means be interpreted in ideological terms and attributed to a peaceful ideological disposition of the imperial power that promoted a defensive attitude and rejected offensive policies. This was rather a result of the fact that the propagated notion of Roman ecumenical rule could, and did, not have a deterministic function by the configuration of the aims of imperial war policies within the post-seventh century geopolitical context[132]. This means that the political discourse of the notional limits of the broader Roman Oecumene, the exact length of which could vary according to each author's taste and geographical knowledge, was not intended to provide real political limits and aims, but rather to function as an ethically and politically legitimizing point of reference of the ruling élite's – at any time – geopolitically realistic aims within the framework of the continuation of the Roman imperial culture. These realistic aims were constrained and defined through domestic and foreign socio-political conditions as well as practical–strategic aspects (space, time, resources) which made the waging of continuous expansive warfare for the reconquest of the whole former Roman world practically impossible.

This insight into the societal role of the idea of Roman ecumenical rule suggests that, instead of hypothesizing whether the imperial government's rigid adherence to that ideal within the post-seventh century geopolitical context was simply the result of political antiquarianism and rhetorical rigidity or, for that matter, a 'schizophrenic' approach to political reality, we should rather focus on the fact that the propagation of that ideal was the only way to bridge the ethical chasm between the political need for offensive, i.e. expansive, warfare and the axiomatic religious view on war as an evil thing, which could only be justified as an inevitable act of defence.

Since Church and religion were the main ideological apparatuses at the disposal of the imperial state[133] that could provide broader ideological legitimization of warfare, the main motive for which was the economic and power-political profit, the ecumenical ideal had to be maintained as an indispensable attribute of eastern Roman imperial ideology in order to provide those arguments that assigned imperial offensive warfare the ethical nimbus of *ultima ratio*, and thus secure religious legitimization and, in particular, the consensus and support of the Church for the imperial power's expansive policies. This takes us back to the question about the main ideological function of religion and Church in warfare, which is closely related to the issues of socio-political structure and collective identity in Byzantium.

The panegyrics and other orations at the imperial court, as well as the political treatises and historiographical texts, in which the ideal of political and territorial ecumenism was consistently propagated along with all other attributes that constituted the imperial office's charismatic character, were addressed to and circulated within the empire's ruling class, from which the emperor and the ruling élite normally stemmed[134]. This systematic propagation points therefore to the imperial office's need to keep the ruling class well assimilated to that ideal; even more so, since this class was not a

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[131] P. M. Strässle, Krieg und Frieden in Byzanz. *Byz* 74 (2004) 123–126; Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden 249–260.

[132] On the role of the Byzantine political 'oikonomia' regarding occasional refinements of the ideological claim of exclusive ecumenical rule, see Schmalzbauer, Überlegungen zur Idee der Ökumene in Byzanz 415–419.

[133] On the ideological role of the Church in Byzantium with regard to war policies, see Haldon, Warfare 8–9; on the general role of the Church as an ideological apparatus in medieval times cf. L. Althusser, Ideology and ideological state apparatuses, in: Lenin and Philosophy and other essays. New York – London 1971, 151–152.

[134] On the demarcation of ruling élite and ruling class within Byzantine society see J.F. Haldon, Social Élites, Wealth, and Power, in: A Social History of Byzantium, ed. J.F. Haldon. Oxford 2009, 170–174.

closed aristocratic caste but, especially between the mid-seventh and the late-eleventh century, it was regularly subjected to renewal due to both vertical social mobility as well as growing dependency upon the imperial office in Constantinople[135]. Considering that the wars of reconquest aimed at the appropriation of more land and revenues, from which the imperial government and members of the service élite were primarily to profit, the consistent purposeful assimilation of the ruling class to the ideal of Roman ecumenism reflects the imperial state's concern to ideologically entrench and secure the support of those sources of political power that were essential for the realization of expansionary war policies.

In this light, the next question raised pertains as to whether, and to what extent, the imperial government needed to pursue the legitimization of its offensive war policies beyond the limits of the ruling class in order to be in position to realize them. With respect to that, it is important to take into consideration that Byzantine society was characterized by a hegemonic structure, in which the imperial government, i.e. the state élite, had the control over the army, the leadership of which was entrusted to members of the ruling class. The fact that this army consisted to a great extent of soldiers of humble status recruited among the masses of the empire's lower strata can hardly be considered as evidence that these masses shared the same ideology and concerns with the ruling élite with regard to the policies of liberation, i.e. expansion; especially, if we bear in mind that the empire's lower strata was forced to carry the fiscal burden of offensive warfare, but did not share in its profits[136]. In view of this, some reconsiderations on the socio-political function of the army in Byzantium seem appropriate before answering the question posed above; particularly, if we consider that present-day approaches to this issue in general have often been, deliberately or not, fairly biased by concerns and features which apply to modern national states and national identities respectively but hardly correspond with the structural features of a medieval tributary state and its subjects' collective identity[137].

The main motive of the common people in Byzantium for joining the imperial army – be it through conscription, hereditary or voluntary enlistment – consisted in a mixture of coercion and economic need, and was hardly a matter of ideological assimilation to the ideals of the imperial state[138]. In other words, people of humble origin did not join the emperor's army due to a broadly shared and preponderant belief that they had to serve the interests of their state and protect or, for that matter, liberate the territories of a broader *patria communis*. They did so either because they had little other choice or because they were seeking to secure a well-paid job and potentially a better social status[139]. In this respect, it is misleading to view the imperial army as a product of the ideological assimilation of the mass population to the ideals and interests of the imperial state. It was rather a distinct social group, the common members of which were to be assimilated to those ideals after they had enlisted; the extent of that assimilation being dependent upon their position and the kind of service they were asked to fulfil[140]. Similarly, the imperial power's objective was not to create an army of the people for the people but, primarily, to maintain well organised field units of regular soldiers, both indigenous

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[135] Haldon, Social Élites 179f.; Idem, The State and the Tributary Mode of Production. London 1993, 110f.; on the Comnenian aristocracy see A. Kazhdan, Aristocracy and the imperial ideal, in: The Byzantine Aristocracy 50f.; A. Kazhdan – A. W. Epstein, Change in Byzantine culture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. California University Press 1990, 104f.; P. Magdalino, The Empire of Manuel Komnenos 1143–1180. Cambridge 1993, 180f.

[136] Haldon, Warfare 145–146.

[137] On a relevant critical remark cf. L. Brubaker – J.F. Haldon, Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680–850: A history. Cambridge 2011, 723.

[138] On the terms of enlistment cf. Haldon, Warfare 256.

[139] On the social status of the soldiers cf. Haldon, Warfare 126–128, 259–260.

[140] N.-C. Kutraku, La Propagande Impériale Byzantine. Persuasion et Réaction (VIIIe – Xe siècles). Athens 1994, 350f.; Brubaker – Haldon, Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era 26–29.

and foreign, who would primarily serve the interests of the imperial power and secondarily those of the empire's masses, only to the extent to which the latter happened to overlap with the former[141].

In this regard, a reassessment of the socio-ideological connotations of the alleged reform of the so-called 'theme system' is also necessary, since this particular military structure has been regarded to reflect the emergence of a quasi-national army of native peasant-soldiers in the Byzantine Empire[142]. In the present state of research, it is a *locus communis* that the theories about a purposeful military reform in the reigns of Heraclius or Constans II, which aimed to create an army of indigenous peasant-soldiers devoted to the defence of their lands, have been a fallacy. The 'themata' did not exist as military and administrative units before the mid-eighth or, most probably, the early ninth century[143]. Moreover, the apparent deterioration of a large part of the soldiers of the provincial field units into a 'semi-professional' status of sedentary peasant-militia, concentrated on regional defence and partly financed by resources of the soldiers' households – mainly the land – in the period after the mid-seventh century, was a result of the extraordinary political, economic and military conditions imposed upon by the Arab conquests[144]. As such, it can hardly be regarded to reflect the imperial power's intention to re-organize its army on the basis of sedentary units of peasant-soldiers attached to the defence of the empire's inland.

Moreover, a closer look at imperial military policies from the mid-eighth century onwards, when the status of a military and economic emergency caused by the Arab expansion begun to fade away, makes evident that such an army model did not really align with the imperial power's intention and potential to maintain a strong hold over provincial territory through a system of civil and military officials who depended upon the emperor for their position[145]. The high provincialization of the armies due to the tactical demands of universal defence in Asia Minor and the consequent deviation from the model of 'professional' soldier during the turbulent period from the mid-seventh century onwards had caused a decentralization of military power, which by the mid-eighth century had *de facto* undermined the political power of the emperor and the function of the centralized imperial state. The response of the imperial power to that development, as soon as the political and economic potential was there, can be attested in the military policy of the Isaurian dynasty, in particular of Constantine V, which clearly aimed to reassert imperial control over the individual armies of the provinces through the re-introduction of élite units of full-time soldiers under the direct commando of the emperor. At the same time, it set in motion a slow process of 're-professionalization' of the provincial army that would serve better the needs of imperial war policies, both defensive and offensive[146].

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[141] For instance, one should not forget that the army functioned as a repressive apparatus of the imperial state, which secured the collection of taxes, maintained internal order on behalf of the imperial government and carried out the compulsory transfer of peasant populations from one part of the empire to the other according to the interests of the central power; on such functions of the army cf. Haldon, Warfare 255, 257; Idem, Military Administration and Bureaucracy: State Demands and Private Interests. *BF* 19 (1993) 47–50.

[142] Ahrweiler, L'idéologie politique 32–36; P. Lemerle, Byzance au tournant de son destin, in: Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantine. Paris 1977, 271; I. Karayannopoulos, Το Βυζαντινό Κράτος. Athens 1983, 68.

[143] C. Zuckerman, Learning from the enemy and more: Studies in "Dark Centuries" Byzantium. *Mill* 2 (2005) 125f.; J.-Cl. Cheynet, La mise en place des thèmes d'après les sceaux: Les stratèges. *SBS* 10 (2010) 1–14; Brubaker – Haldon, Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era 723–755, esp. 744f.

[144] On this see mainly J. F. Haldon, Recruitment and Conscription in the byzantine Army c. 550–950. A Study on the origins of the stratiotika ktemata (*Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte* 357). Vienna 1979, 66–79; R.-J. Lilie, Die zweihundertjährige Reform: Zu den Anfängen der Themenorganisation im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert. *BSl* 45 (1984) 27–39, 190–201.

[145] Haldon, The State and the Tributary Mode of Production 194–196.

[146] Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden 66–109, 138–156.

The measures of Nikephoros I (802–811), which probably reflect the actual starting-point of the 'themata', as it has been recently suggested[147], did not relate to an army model of peasant-militia units devoted to the defence of their region, although they certainly promoted a closer connection between the soldiers of the provincial army and their communities. They were, in the first place, intended to face the problem, which had persisted since the late seventh century, of bad equipment and low fighting quality of the provincial units by making the financing of the soldiers a collective obligation of the fiscal community. Therefore, they rather reflect the imperial power's ideological and political tendency to maintain field units of well equipped and trained regular soldiers that would not simply cover the needs of regional defence[148].

This tendency is further reflected in the diachronically positive attitude of the imperial state towards the fiscalization of military service, which related to the state's ability to maintain units of full-time soldiers dependent upon the imperial power for their income and which was extensively employed from the tenth century onwards[149]. In this regard, the mid-tenth-century imperial legislation for the protection of the so-called military lands does by no means reflect the culmination of the army model of native peasant-militia, but rather the imperial power's need to maintain the power stand-off between the imperial office and the ruling class, the 'dynatoi', by securing control over the appropriation and distribution of surplus, through which the by that time predominately 'professional' army was financed.

In this respect, it can be justifiably argued that the imperial government's political disposition and main concern after the turbulent period from the mid-seventh to the mid-eighth century was not to create a quasi-national army of native peasant-soldiers, which would be ideologically and operationally orientated towards the defense of a concrete 'homeland', but to maintain the control over those economic resources, mainly the taxation of the land, which enabled the maintenance of field units of regular soldiers, indigenous and foreign, capable of both preserving the strong hold of imperial power over the territories under its authority as well as adding more to them, when the pragmatic conditions were favourable. Such field units enabled the gradual restoration of imperial rule over a large part of lost territories in the period after the late eighth century, a process which culminated in the late tenth century.

In view of all this, and bearing in mind the fact that the imperial government never based its offensive war policies on a model of mass voluntary participation of the empire's male population in its offensive campaigns[150], it becomes evident that the ruling élite did not really need to motivate the society's masses or, for that matter, to secure their consensus in order to gather strong armies for an engagement in an offensive war of reconquest. The decision-making for resorting to offensive warfare and its ethical–ideological justification took place within the framework of the ruling élite which had the economic and ideological control over a – by medieval standards – fairly professionalized

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[147] Brubaker – Haldon, Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era 744–755.

[148] Leo VI purposefully instructs the generals in the 'Tactica' that they should select among the thematic soldiers those who were financially well off and whose households had the ability to fully equip and arm them, so that they would be able to devote themselves to their military service; Leonis VI Tactica IV 1 (46, 5–11 Dennis).

[149] P. Lemerle, The agrarian history of Byzantium: from the origins to the 12th century. The sources and problems. Galway 1979, 125; J. F. Haldon, Military service, military lands and the status of soldiers: current problems and interpretations. *DOP* 47 (1993) 28 (with extensive bibliography on the matter of the military lands); Idem, Warfare 124–125; Brubaker – Haldon, Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era 745–746; Dagron – Mihăescu, Le Traité sur la Guérilla 267.

[150] Leon VI points to exactly this differentiation when he presents his view on the Arab model of voluntary participation in campaigns in his treatise, cf. Leonis VI Tactica XVII 122 (482, 592–598 Dennis). On the Muslim armies of the *thughūr* in the borderland with Byzantium in the tenth century, see E. McGeer, Sowing the Dragon's Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century (*DOS* XXXIII). Washington, D.C. 1995, 230–232. On the system of the thughūr cf. M. D. Bonner, Aristocratic Violence and Holy War. Studies in the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine Frontier. New Haven 1996, 43–106.

army, the loyalty and the morale of which was extensively dependent upon regular and generous compensation from the emperor[151]; the masses were fully excluded from this process.

Religious ceremonies before the departure of the army or military triumphs after a victorious campaign were certainly intended to provide public legitimization and consensus for imperial war policies[152]. Such public legitimization referred, however, predominately to the population of Constantinople and occasionally to some major provincial centres; therefore, it can hardly be seen as a means to achieve universal consensus among the provincial masses or, for that matter, as evidence that the imperial war policies were pragmatically dependent upon such a consensus[153]. In addition to that, one should bear in mind that the symbolic violence embodied in glorious military triumphs, besides euphemizing the legitimacy of the emperor's military operations and the participation of the masses in his successes, was also a means to remind the common people in whose hands real power lay.

Broader public legitimization of a campaign among parts of the provincial population was probably effected to a certain extent through the presence of priests who accompanied the army on campaign along with religious symbols (e.g. the cross or icons of the Mother of God). The common people's close relation to the Church and their assimilation through the Christian liturgy to the idea that God supported the task of the Emperors against invaders for the sake of peace[154] must have secured a general image of imperial wars against both Christian and non-Christian enemies as justified, especially within the framework of local defense.

It is, however, questionable to what extent the instrumentalization of religion in offensive campaigns within the framework of symbolic power did manage to assimilate common people and make them identify with the expansive goals of imperial policy. The fact that the author of the 'Tactica' instructs the general to avoid camping within the empire's territories while on campaign in order to avoid dissension between the local population and the army[155] should be viewed as an indication that the lower strata, particularly on the empire's periphery, could hardly understand itself as actively supporting the imperial army's action when these did not concern its pragmatic need for local defense[156]. This suggests that on an ideological level the religious idea of God's peace as propagated in the church related for the vast majority of the common people rather with their lived peace in their locality than with the imperial ideal of the *pax byzantina*.

A good insight into the discrepancy of attitudes towards imperial warfare regarding the common people of the provinces and the ruling élite is provided by the life of Saint Antony the Younger, a text written in the second half of the ninth century by an anonymous, most probably provincial, author. The author presents the saint to have successfully prevented an attack by an Arab naval force at the coastal town Attaleia in south-western Asia Minor when he was deputy-governor (ek prosopou) there in the 820's. During negotiations with the Arab commander who justified the attack as retali-

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[151] For the high wages of the tagmata and the extra payments during offensive campaigns, see Haldon, Byzantine Praetorians 308f.; Idem, Warfare 127–128.

[152] M. McCormick, Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West. Cambridge 1986, 131–259.

[153] Inscriptions in public sight, which contained references to God's help in warfare against invaders, provide further evidence for the role of religion in configuring common people's perception of warfare as a justified act. Such inscriptions referred, however, almost exclusively to defensive warfare and the protection of local societies against foreign attack, cf. F.R. Trombley, War, Society and Popular Religion in Byzantine Anatolia (6th–13th centuries), in: Byzantine Asia Minor, ed. St. Lampakis (*National Hellenic Research Foundation/Institute for Byzantine Research, International Symposia* 6). Athens 1998, 118–133.

[154] R. Taft, War and Peace in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy, in: War and Peace in Byzantium 17–32, esp. 28–31; cf. McCormick, Eternal Victory 237–240.

[155] Leonis VI Tactica, IX 2–3 (154, 9–16 Dennis).

[156] On civilians as combatants in Byzantium and their role in the defence of their cities, see Ch. Makrypoulias, Civilians as Combatants in Byzantium: Ideological versus Practical Considerations, in: Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion 109–120.

ation measure for the campaigns of the Roman army in Syria the saint refuted the argument. He is presented to have stated that the population of the town cannot be made responsible for the deeds of the Roman Emperor's army, since 'the emperor of the Romans commands whatever he wants to his officers and this must be done. He sends fleets and arms his forces to fight against those who resist his own power irrespective of whether we consent or not'[157].

Even though the factuality of the narration can be disputed, the choice of discourse by an author writing in a provincial context and obviously for a different audience from the one of the historio-graphical sources reveals a provincial mentality on warfare that had nothing to do with the homo-genizing Constantinopolitan discourse in which the imperial army was consistently presented as the army of all Roman people that fought to defend and restore the territories of an empire that was universally regarded as a *patria communis*. The Roman emperor and his army are here viewed and presented as a remote power and his political instrument respectively, acting in their own right, for their own interests that hardly aligned or were perceived as common with the interests and concerns of the common provincials[158].

The fact that the discourse of ecumenism and the relevant claim of the restoration of imperial rule over former Roman territories cannot be regarded as a universal ideal of the Byzantine society, i.e. as an inherent part of the ideology or collective identity of the empire's masses, and therefore it did not represent a collective societal aim or concern, relates directly to the question of the life-affirming con-tent of the Byzantine wars of reconquest that were justified through the political axiom of territorial defense. In other words, it refers to the extent to which the stated cause of political liberation of territo-ries corresponded with the need of the populations of those territories to be politically or, for that mat-ter, culturally re-integrated into the Roman imperial order and social structure through means of war.

The historiographical texts of the Constantinopolitan intellectual élite, which mainly reproduce the imperial propaganda of justified restoration, also provide some interesting indications in this regard. A demonstrative case is Procopius' report on Belisarius' attempt to liberate Naples during Justinian I's 'reconquista'. The leader of the Roman Emperor's army is reported to have announced as the main cause of the offensive campaign the liberation of Italy's population from 'foreign' Gothic rule[159]. By the siege of Naples, however, the inhabitants of the city decided not to accept Belisarius' call for liberation, but to fight alongside their new rulers, the Goths, against the Roman Emperor's army[160]. Striking in this case is that the inhabitants of the city as well as of Italy in general – with the exception of those of Rome – were not referred to as Romans that had to be liberated, but as Ital-ians[161]. The people of Naples, instead, argued that the emperor's army should not fight against a small city of Roman population with a Gothic guard[162].

From the imperial point of view, the justification of military action seems in this case to have relied on the argument of 'Romanitas' of the territories and not of the population, which as long as it was not under imperial rule was not recognized as Roman. From the point of view of the inhabit-ants of Naples conversely, their 'Romanitas' had a different content from the political 'Romanitas' of the imperial government of Constantinople, which neither justified *a priori* imperial warfare for

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[157] A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου Ἀντωνίου τοῦ Νέου, in: Sylloge palaistiniakes kai syriakes hagi-ologias, vol. I. St. Petersburg 1907, 186–216.

[158] Cf. R.-J. Lilie, The Byzantine-Arab Borderland from the Seventh to the Ninth Century, in: Borders, barriers and ethnogene-sis. Frontiers in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, ed. Fl. Curta (*Studies in the Early Middle Ages* 12). Turnhout 2005, 19.

[159] Procopius, De bellis V 8, 12–18 (II 40, 21–41, 25 Haury – Wirth).

[160] E. Chrysos, The Roman Political Identity in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, in: Byzantium, Identity – Image – Influ-ence. XIX International Congress of Byzantine Studies, University of Copenhagen, 18–24 August 1996, ed. K. Fledelius. Copenhagen 1996, 11–12.

[161] Procopius, De bellis V 8, 13 (II 41, 1 Haury – Wirth).

[162] Procopius, De bellis V 8, 7–11 (II 40, 2–20 Haury – Wirth).

the re-conquest of their city nor functioned as an inherent motive for them to fight against their new rulers for their political rehabilitation into the Roman imperial order. Their attitude towards war and peace was defined by concerns which obviously did not necessarily make Gothic rule less preferable in their eyes than Roman imperial rule[163].

A further interesting case is the source information on the well-known incident of the lake Pousgousē near Ikonion during the smaller-scale Comnenian reconquista, when Ioannis II Komnenos sought to recover control over the lake's islets and their population in the year 1142. The historian Ioannis Kinnamos reports that the emperor attributed great importance to the possession of the lake, but the Romans (*sic*) who lived on its islets were not willing to yield to him, for by long time and habit they shared the same views with the Turks[164]. The other historian of that period, Niketas Choniates, reports that the Christians (*sic*) of the lake had allied with the neighbouring Turks of Ikonion, with whom they had developed bonds of friendship and commercial ties. Therefore, they looked upon the Romans as their enemies and refused to submit to the emperor, for habit reinforced by time had become stronger than race and religion. The Emperor asked them to remove themselves from the lake which was an ancient Roman possession and go over to the Turks, if so they wished, but since he could not convince them he was obliged to wage war against them[165].

The two historians have a differentiated approach to the ideological discourse of reconquest in this case. In Kinnamos' text the population of the lake is referred to as Romans, although they were not within the actual limits of Roman imperial rule, the politeia. In this case, the author seems to adopt an attitude which did not consider 'Romanitas' to refer exclusively to territories outside the actual limits of imperial rule. Choniates, on the other hand, chooses to identify the population as Christians and only the territories as Roman. In this passage, the designation Christian cannot be taken to stand for Roman (i.e. Byzantine) as it is often the case in Byzantine sources, since the author emphasizes that those Christians looked upon the Romans as enemies, thus distinguishing them clearly from the Roman army and the subjects of the Roman emperor. In this regard, Choniates' approach to the issue of reconquest is similar to Belisarius' approach with the inhabitants of Naples as reported by Procopius, according to which there were no Romans, but only Roman territories, outside the territorial limits of imperial authority.

Both cases provide evidence of a preponderant political mentality due to which the Roman identity of populations outside the territorial limits of imperial authority was absent as a motivating and justifying argument on behalf of the Byzantine ruling élite for waging a war of reconquest. This political agenda, which is complemented by the reports of both Kinnamos and Choniates on the refusal of the populations of the lake Pousgousē to submit to and fight along with the Roman emperor's army against the Seljuk Turks, provides an interesting insight into the role of collective identity in warfare within the socio-political framework of territorial empire. Irrespective of the fact that the source information hardly provides sound evidence as to whether the inhabitants of the lake's communities were self-designated as Romans, Christians or simply through their local identity by that time, their allegiance to the 'foreigners' Seljuk Turks and resistance to the 'indigenous' Roman army demonstrate that the imperial discourse of Roman reconquest did not overlap with the attitudes and concerns of the indigenous population of former Roman territories.

If nothing else, these reports of the sources demonstrate that the politico-cultural dichotomy Romans vs. barbarians or the religious dichotomy Christians vs. infidels[166], both of which were pre-

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[163] On the diverging identities and allegiances of Italy's indigenous population, see Chrysos, Roman Political Identity 12–13.

[164] Ioan. Cinnamus 22, 4–22 (Meineke).

[165] Nic. Choniates 37, 14–38, 12 (Van Dieten).

[166] The fact that the Christian communities of the lake Pousgouse were not willing to accede to and fight along with the Christian army of the Emperor against the infidel Turks provides a further argument against present-day theories that consider the religious motive for engaging in war against the infidel as predominant within the Christian masses of the empire's eastern

ponderant within the ideological discourse of imperial war of reconquest as this is made evident in the ceremonial and historiographical text production of the Constantinopolitan élite, should not be *a priori* taken to reflect the ideology and the socio-political concerns and allegiances of the mass populations in the areas of reconquest. The attitude of the common people of the small lake communities in central Asia Minor shows that the content of their peace was not defined by the ideals of the Roman imperial politeia, which were reflected in the restoration of Roman imperial rule, but from the habitus created through the coexistence and socio-economical interaction with the 'barbarian' and 'infidel' Seljuk Turks, the new rulers of the area[167]. Apparently, from their point of view the Roman army was not there to restore peace and liberate them from a foreign suppressive rule – in both political and religious terms – but represented simply another suppressive rule, that of the Roman emperor of Constantinople, which had come to distort their lived peace.

Choniates' remark that the habit of coexisting with the Turks was proven stronger than race (genos) and religion is nothing less, to my view, than a strong indication of the ideological discrepancy between the Byzantine (i.e. Roman) ruling class, the vested interests of which in the imperial office of Constantinople dictated its ideological assimilation to imperial ideals such as Roman peoplehood and Christian 'nation' (ethnos), and the masses on the imperial state's geopolitical periphery. It strengthens thus the aforementioned arguments about the socio-political function of the imperial army within the framework of territorial empire and deconstructs the ideal image projected through texts mainly produced by the Byzantine political and intellectual élite about the Byzantine Oecumene as a notional *patria communis*, the inhabitants of which were ideologically assimilated and politically-culturally adherent to the superior Roman political culture[168].

Both aforementioned cases provide an explanatory argument with regard to the overall absence of Roman identity as a justifying argument in source reports on wars of reconquest. The ideological axiom about the 'defence' of the territorial integrity of an archetypal Roman Oecumene referred to the relation of the imperial power of Constantinople with certain territories and not necessarily with the populations of those territories, the ethnic and political allegiances of which had undergone significant changes from the fifth century onwards. The main reason for this should be looked for in the actual content of 'Romanitas' which did not have the function of a solid ethnic or, for that matter, national identity among the empire's mass population that could determine a political-cultural adherence of indigenous populations of lost Roman territories to the political entity Roman politeia.

The state élite in Constantinople seems not to have been unaware of this, if we are to judge from some indications provided by the military treatise 'Tactica'. In the only part of the work, as already argued in the former part of the paper, that refers to an almost direct transmission of an ideological message from the *top-down* (imperial power – common soldiers), that is, the exhortations which the heralds should address to the whole army before battle, 'Roman' identity is fully absent as an unifying argument that could motivate the common fighters of the 'Roman' imperial army. Although the

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provinces; especially, if we consider that the reign of Ioannis I Komnenos has been characterized as a period, in which the alleged Byzantine doctrine of 'holy war' was reintroduced and dominated the ideological discourse of Byzantine-Turkish warfare; on the latter argument see Kolia-Dermitzaki, Ο βυζαντινός «ιερός πόλεμος» 330f; cf. Magdalino, The Empire of Manuel Komnenos 420–421. A similar absence of a 'holy war' spirit against the Muslims among the provincials is also evident in the aforementioned passage from the life of St Antony the Younger; cf. the insightful commentary in Lilie, The Byzantine-Arab Borderland 19.

[167] On Byzantine-Turkish co-existence in Anatolia see Magdalino, The Empire of Manuel Komnenos 123–132; N. Necipoğlou, The Coexistence of Turks and Greeks in Medieval Anatolia (Eleventh–Twelfth Centuries). *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 5 (1999/2000) 58–76.

[168] On a present-day view on Byzantine society as a society of quasi-egalitarian citizenship, the Roman identity of which had the solid characteristics of a national identity within the framework of political transformation of empire into a pre-modern Nation-State see A. Kaldellis, Hellenism in Byzantium. The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition. Cambridge ²2009, 42f.

'Romanitas' of the politeia (state) and the army is constantly highlighted in the rest of the book, which was addressed to high-ranking army officials, in the passage with the exhortations meant for the common soldiers on the battlefield the word Roman appears – quite curiously – not a single time[169].

According to the author of the work, the various messages before battle should include a mention of God's reward to the soldiers for their faith as well as to the reward from the emperor. They should also be encouraged to fight on behalf of God and the entire people (ethnos), which in this context clearly does not allude to the Roman but to the Christian people[170]. There is not a single word about a fight for the sake of the Roman politeia or, for that matter, the Romans. The only highlighted motive to fight for the Roman imperial power is the material reward, a point which demonstrates the mentality of a 'professional' army of mercenaries, the loyalty of which was extensively dependent upon their salary[171]. A further suggested motive was the freedom of the brothers of the same faith, i.e. the Christians, as well as in case of a defensive operation the protection of wives, children and the 'homeland'. The careful juxtaposition of the word 'patris' with the reference to the family members of the soldiers indicates that it was rather intended to allude to the hometowns or villages of the soldiers rather than to a greater fatherland, the ecumenical empire.

The priorities set by the author with regard to the ideological messages that should persuade the soldiers to fight bravely are thus clear-cut. It was not 'Romanitas' as a common solid identity defining allegiance to the superior political order of the Roman politeia that would effectively unite the humble soldiers in a common cause, but religion and the ideal bonds of family and local allegiance[172]. Taking into account that the employment of such religious exhortations along with the employment of religious symbols on the battlefield was evidently not confined to wars against non-Christian enemies and therefore cannot be attributed to a transcendent ideological discourse of 'holy war' against the infidel, then the emphasis on Christian identity should rather be related to the imperial power's need to face the problem of diverging allegiances, ethnic and local, within the framework of imperial structures in its effort to create a notion of common identity in warfare; a diachronically fundamental element for the efficiency of the army on the battlefield[173]. Therefore, it reflects the imperial propaganda's sophistication and readiness to adjust its ideological messages to those values that were common among the empire's masses, from which a large part of the army stemmed[174].

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[169] Leonis VI Tactica XII 57 (248, 411–250, 420 Dennis).

[170] Cf. Leonis VI Tactica XVII 19 (444, 108 Dennis), where the author refers to the 'nation' of the Christians (ethnos Christianon).

[171] This mentality of a professional army, the loyalty and motive of which was extensively relying on material rewards is equally evident in the harangue of Constantine VII to the army of the East in the year 950, a text that has been considered to bear evidence of the alleged Byzantine type of 'holy war'. The author of the text follows the ideological principles of the 'Tactica' in reassuring the soldiers that they would enjoy both God's support and the emperor's reward for fighting bravely in the just war against the empire's enemies; for the Greek text see H. Ahrweiler, Un discours inédit de Constantin VII Porphyrogénète. *TM* 2 (1967) 399, 83–96; cf. McGeer, Two Military Orations, 114–116; Laiou, The Just War of Eastern Christians and the 'Holy War' of the Crusade 39–40.

[172] For that reason, Leo VI instructs the generals in the Tactica to put soldiers tied by family bonds or with common local origin together in the same division; see Leonis VI Tactica XX 160 (592 Dennis). On nuclear family as the point of reference regarding social ties in Byzantium, see A. Kazhdan – G. Constables, People and Power in Byzantium. An introduction to modern Byzantine Studies. Washington, D.C. 1982, 33.

[173] The substitution of 'Romanitas' by 'Christianitas' as a the salient identity on the battlefield against the empire's enemies (both Christian and non-Christian) should be rather seen as a strong indication that the self-designation 'Roman', which is considered common for all the inhabitants of the empire, can hardly be regarded to reflect a common identity that had the attributes of a solid ethnic or, for that matter, national identity and could serve as a unifying point of reference beyond the limits of the empire's upper class, especially among the emperor's common subjects on the provincial periphery. On warfare as the situation, in which ethnic or national identities and the sense of patriotism related to them are made more salient than usually, cf. A. Smith, National identity. London 1991, 27.

[174] On the preponderant role religion in the configuration of popular attitudes towards warfare in Byzantium, see Trombley, War, Society and Popular Religion, *passim*.

In view of this socio-political context, it becomes obvious that the imperial discourse of 'just war' of liberation regarding the empire's former eastern provinces in the tenth century, which had been under Muslim rule for over three centuries, could be ideologically rationalized only through reference to the liberation of churches and monasteries, the only institutional element of the imperial state that existed beyond its actual limits of authority and could function as tangible proof of the 'Romanitas' of the lands[175]. Furthermore, the argument about the liberation of Christian brothers was the only one that could create a bond between the soldiers of the imperial army and a part of the population living in the territories beyond the actual limits of the state. In the same way, the reconquest of Bulgar territories from the Rus under Ioannis I Tzimiskes was propagated as liberation of Roman lands, but also as liberation of the Christian-Bulgars from foreign rule, although this expansive war was actually also fought against the autonomous Bulgarian rule that preceded the occupation of the territory by the Rus[176].

In this regard, the 'Christianitas' discourse was fully subjugated to and defined through the notion of the archetypal territorial extension of the Roman imperial state. For the imperial power and the ruling élite, the Roman politeia existed only within the territorial limits of imperial authority consisting of the imperial government and its subjects. Religion, conversely, existed also beyond those limits within the territories of the broader Roman Oecumene and could function as a central argument in the political legitimization of warfare as well as in the demarcation of the enemy group, especially when the rule over former Roman territories was not Christian and the 'foreign' enemy could be better distinguished through religious belief. Within the territorially defined discourse of imperial reconquista, the political or ethnic allegiances of the populations of the territories under claim were quite indifferent to the expansive plans of the imperial power. As soon as the imperial rule was restored by force over lost territories the inhabitants, 'indigenous' and 'foreign', received all the same the legal status of the Roman emperor's subject becoming thus full members of the tributary state[177]. The most striking evidence of that disposition is provided by the interest of the Byzantine ruling élite in re-conquering territories under Bulgar rule, in which the political and cultural identity of the population had radically changed since the Bulgar-Slavic invasion of the sixth and seventh centuries, or in annexing Armenian territories and populations in the East in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries[178].

The aforementioned socio-political context provides thus a clear image of the role of religion in Byzantine warfare, which, albeit clearly marginal with regard to the *ius ad bellum*, was central in the legitimization of military violence, contributing thus decisively to the realization of imperialistic policies. The Byzantine church provided legitimization and spiritual-psychological support in all wars fought on behalf of the imperial state within the archetypal limits of the Roman Oecumene without having to dissent from the religious axiom that war was not a religious task or, for that matter, to yield to religious militarism. On the other hand, the imperial power was in a position to fully instrumentalize religion to entrench the legitimacy of its political goals and to create a solid feeling of common identity in warfare within the framework of Roman imperial structures without allotting to the Church an equal share of power with regard to war and foreign policy-making.

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[175] Stouraitis, Krieg und Frieden 313–314.

[176] Leo Diaconus 136,18–20, 157, 23–158, 1 (Hase).

[177] On the legal status of the Roman Emperor's subjects since the late Roman period cf. Chrysos, Roman Political Identity 9f.

[178] On the non-peaceful character of these annexations see, for instance, the detailed information about Basil II's invasion of Tayk in 1021 in the chronicle of Aristakes of Lastivert who reports on the killing and the destruction of the indigenous population; Aristakes de Lastivert, Rècit des malheurs de la nation arménienne, transl. H. Berberian – M. Canard. Bruxelles 1973, 13–15.