

Abstract

The present thesis deals with the Byzantine Empire at the beginning of the 13th century. The text concentrates on events following the conquest of Constantinople by the crusader army in 1204 and the response of Byzantine elites to the new political reality. The main attention is paid to Theodore I Laskaris and his actions concerning the emerge of Empire of Nicaea. The Nicene Empire is compared to the Empire of Trebizond and the Despotate of Epirus. The purpose of the thesis is to analyze differences of these state units and their relation to the political and cultural tradition of the Byzantine Empire as well as to determinate main elements of the Byzantine statehood. The significant amount of both continuity of social processes and cultural traditions within the Byzantine society is emphasized. The Empire of Nicaea is evaluated as an integral and important part of the history of the Byzantine Empire.