

ABSTRACT

The basic aim of the thesis is to investigate whether the Romans of the East (Byzantines) during the 6th to the 8th centuries were interested in the Latin west and the imperial rule over it.

In the first part of the work, the various discourses concerning the origins of the Justinianic conquest or reconquest of Africa and Italy articulated in the contemporary sources are identified and evaluated; the only one which cannot be shown or supposed to have been officially articulated is the discourse of a source of Pseudo-Zachariah Scholasticus which makes African and maybe also Italian exulants complaining in the imperial court about the local rulers responsible for the Vandal and Gothic wars. After some other preliminary studies (e.g. concerning the so-called problem of Theoderic's constitutional position), it is concluded that the emperor Justinian was not interested in an ideologically founded restoration of the empire, but made the western wars because of his contacts with western aristocrats.

In the second part of the thesis, the presentation of the Justinianic western wars and western events or realities in the works of the Byzantine historians from Marcellinus Comes and Procopius to Theophylactus Simocatta (the 6th to the early 7th centuries) is investigated and an attempt is made to explore their opinion of these problems. The appropriate general conclusion seems to be that the historians, nor even Procopius or Agathias, did not criticize the idea of ruling the west, but presented Justinianic western achievements mainly in the terms of the triumphal discourse, thus basically ignoring restorative or other particularities of the western wars, and were not really interested in the west as such and in the realization of its conquest and rule. The reason was maybe the lack of personal contacts with the Westerners. This situation can hardly have changed in the next period to the end of the 8th century, unfortunately lacking contemporary Byzantine historians, and it originated probably already in the 5th century.