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USE OF THE TERMS “BYZANTIUM” AND “BYZANTINE EMPIRE” DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

(Summary)

The prevailing consensus among scholars regarding the history of the Eastern Roman Empire asserts that the term “Byzantium” did not function as the name of the state until the mid-16th century. It is widely acknowledged that this designation, along with “Byzantine Empire”, was first introduced by the German historian and humanist Hieronymus Wolff in his “Corpus Historiae Byzantinae” in 1557. Some scholars go further to suggest that these terms were entirely coined in the 16th century. In recent years, the same information, perceived as an axiom, has been reproduced by professional historians and amateurs alike on television, in newspapers, or through social networks.

However, the author of this study challenges this established view, contending that historical sources from both the Early and High Middle Ages, centuries prior to the Modern Age, contain references to “Byzantium”, sometimes even as name for the Eastern Roman Empire. This thesis contradicts the commonly held belief and invites a reexamination of the terminology used to describe this influential historical entity.

Keywords: Eastern Roman Empire, Byzantium, Byzantine Empire, Hieronymus Wolf, state, historical sources.

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