

The article discusses the forms of plague through the eyes of the contemporaries of the first pandemic known in historiography as "Justinian's Plague". The Latin authors of the 6th-8th centuries did not provide detailed descriptions of the previously unknown disease and limited themselves to brief mentions of the pestilence outbreaks in various areas of the Mediterranean. Following the laws of the genre of chronicle narrative (chronicles), they could only state the fact of the spread of a major epidemic in the known world, refraining from emotional remarks. The Greek writings of the 6th century contain more detailed descriptions of the plague symptoms, which allows us to largely restore the course of the disease as it was seen by late antique physicians. Procopius of Caesarea and Evagrius Scholasticus's reports are based on the description of external symptoms, followed by the identification of key terms that describe patients' general condition. The first cycle of the pandemic (mid 6th century) was distinguished by early attempts to study the plague in the texts. They were accompanied by intricate and often contradictory speculations of contemporaries, with the subsequent identification of three forms of plague in the patients in Constantinople and the eastern provinces. 50 years later (in the third cycle), the Greek authors already distinguished five forms of the disease with a strict definition of the accompanying symptoms and the absence of panic, which had been noticeable in the previous period. The analysis of narrative sources allows us to conclude that late antique and early medieval authors did not know the pneumonic form of plague, in contrast to the Black Death era. For comparison, in the XIV century. Byzantine authors referred to the symptoms of the Black Death in similar terms, and used the same literary devices to describe the devastation of Constantinople and Greece. For the first time, the pulmonary form is singled out separately only in the 14th century: in the "Histories" of John Kantakuzen, in the letters of Demetrius Cydonis and Nicephorus Grigora. Thus, the conclusion is made about the gradual accumulation of general knowledge about the clinical picture of Justinian's Plague among late antique physicians, whose works prominent representatives of Greek and Latin historiography of the 6th-8th centuries relied on.

Article keywords: Plague of Justinian, Latin historiography, Greek historiography, pneumonic plague, first pandemic cycle, third pandemic cycle.