


The Byzantine Lead Seals at the Pera Museum


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The Pera Museum, a prominent cultural initiative of the Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation, provides the public with access to high-quality, large-scale programs and services in culture and arts. Since 2005, Pera Museum has become a leading and distinguished center for culture and arts in Türkiye. The museum houses the Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation's three permanent collections: The Orientalist Paintings Collection, The Kütahya Tiles, and Ceramics Collection, and The Anatolian Weights and Measures Collection. The founders, Suna and İnan Kıraç started collecting weights and measuring equipment in the 1980s to promote research on the metrology and the socio-economic history of Anatolia. The collection comprises 8,117 objects used for measuring weight, length, and volume in every economic field, such as land measurement, commerce, architecture, jewelry making, shipping, and pharmacy.¹ The collection also houses lead tesserae, coins, and seals, which are complementary to the research on weights and measures.²

The sigillographic collection of the Pera Museum, which is treated in this article, comprises 17 items. They were all acquired by the Pera Museum in 2006 and 2007. Their findspot is unknown. They are unpublished, apart from three lead seals (nos. 1, 8 and 10). Many of them are unique since no other parallels have been published so far. All the items are Byzantine lead seals dating between the second half of the 7th century and the 13th century.

Byzantine lead seals were mostly associated with the administration; they were used chiefly as authenticators of documents and official letters, although they were likely also used for private correspondence. Ten of the seventeen Byzantine lead seals of the Pera Museum sigillographic collection mention the dignities and the offices of their owners and date between the second half of the 7th century and the 1050s. These offices range from the lower rank of a simple notary (no. 5) up to the highest office of the emperor himself (no. 9). There is only one seal related to the ecclesiastical administration, issued by a bishop (no. 2). Noteworthy are the seals of Georgios

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¹ Oğuz Tekin published catalogues of the weights in the collection in two volumes. The first volume covered 635 Greek and Roman weights whereas the second volume covered 742 weights. See Tekin 2013 and Tekin 2015.

² Hélène Willemart donated the collection of her late husband historian Pierre Willemart in 2007. 553 coins and 3 seals were published in a catalogue prepared by the Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation. See Tekin 2009.

(no. 6), who has the uniquely attested office of an *imperial apothekarios*, as well as the 11th-century seal of Pharasmanes Apokapes, member of a prominent Byzantine family of Armenian descent, by whom no other seals have been published so far.³

Another group of seals is formed by the specimens presented under nos. 11-14 and possibly also no. 17, which mention only the name or the surname of their owner. These were not necessarily issued by private people (i.e., without any dignity or office) but were most probably used in private correspondence. There were officials who preferred to issue more personal seals, without mentioning some or any of their offices and dignities, with which they authenticated their official documents.⁴ This practice increased from the 11th century to the point that most offices and dignities, aside from the most prominent ones, eclipsed Byzantine lead seals in the 12th century. All the seals of this group were issued between the second half of the 11th century and the 13th century. Finally, there are two more iconographic seals (nos. 15-16) depicting on both sides holy figures without inscriptions that would identify their owner. Different reasons have been proposed for the existence of such seals, from simple modesty, which is the only reason explicitly expressed in the case, for example, of the figural seal of the empress-mother Anna Dalassene, ca. 1081, to particular cases such as seals used by public scribes issuing documents for illiterate people, or for safeguarding the identity of the sender of a letter.⁵

A. Seals with offices and/or titles (listed chronologically)

1) Georgios, apo eparchon (third quarter of 7th century)

Inventory no: PMS 480, donated by H el ene Willemart in 2007.

D: 29 mm W: 11.30 g.

Ed. Tekin 2009, cat. no. 531.

Parallel(s): no known parallels



Obverse: Inscription in three lines. Border of dots: +|ΘΕΟΤ|ΟΚΕΒ|ΟΗΘΙ

Reverse: Inscription in four lines. Border of dots: .|ΓΕΩ|ΡΓΙΔΑ|ΠΟΕΠΡΑ|ΧΟΝ

³ The seal was briefly examined in Tekin 2009, no. 532.

⁴ Such as Theodoros Klados, *protospatharios epi tou maglabiou* and *ek prosopou*, who undersigned a fiscal document with his full titlature but used a seal with bilateral religious imagery. The document has survived to our day with the attached lead seal still hanging from it (see Actes d'Iveron I, no. 1).

⁵ Cotsonis 2020, 3-6.

Θεοτόκε βοήθει // Γεωργίου ἀπὸ ἐπράχον (*sic!*)

Θεοτόκε βοήθει Γεωργίῳ ἀπὸ ἐπάρχων

Theotokos, help Georgios, apo eparchon

Invocations on the legends of Byzantine lead seals begin slowly from the middle of the 7th century. However, the rest of the legend (name, dignity, and/or office), was still formulated in the genitive case, even if the verb βοηθέω needs an objective in the dative. Dative appeared in the late 7th century and dominated after ca. 700. A simple cross as a decorative element above the inscription is encountered on some seals of the mid-7th century. All these elements can also be found on the seals of Baanes, *koubikouarios* and *imperial chartouarios* (ca. 668), which are also epigraphically close to our seal.⁶ For this reason, we would preferably date this seal to the third quarter of the 7th century.

There are quite a few lead seals documented Georgios, *apo eparchon*. However, none of them bears the same features as our seal and thus we cannot offer an identification.⁷ *Apo eparchon* (i.e., “ex-prefect”) was a medium-ranking senatorial dignity that disappeared by the middle of the 8th century.⁸

2) Ioannes, bishop (late 7th century)

Inventory no: PMA 1879, donated by the Kıraç Family in 2006.

D: 22 mm W: 8.10 g.

Parallel(s): Giresun Archaeological Museum 9129 (ed.: Elam 2021, 693).



Obverse: Bust of the Theotokos, holding a medallion of Christ in front of her chest, flanked by crosslets (only the one on the right is preserved). A cross on the right side of the bust. Wreath border.

Reverse: Inscription in five lines. Wreath border.

+|ΘΕΟΤΟ|ΚΕΒΟΗ|ΘΕΙΩΑΝ|ΝΗΕΠΙC|..ΠΩ

⁶ Zacos – Veglery 1972, no. 1086. Baanes should be identified to the homonymous recipient of a letter of Pope Vitalian in 668, who had the same dignity and office, see Schieffer 1991, 28 and 30.

⁷ Specimens closely resembling ours were published in Zacos – Veglery 1972, no. 817 (seal with bilateral inscription but with no invocative formula), in Schlumberger 1884, 509 (no. 6) and in Spanu – Zucca 2004, no. 18 (seal with bilateral inscription but in the dative).

⁸ Nichanian 2013, 605-607.

Θεοτόκε βοήθει Ἰωάννη ἐπισ[κό]πῳ

Theotokos, help Ioannes, bishop

The crosslet on the obverse with widened arms is also met in the above-mentioned and also almost contemporary seal of Baanes, *koubikouarios* and *imperial chartouarios* (ca. 668). The use of the dative and the epigraphy of the inscription suggests dating in the last quarter of the 7th century. The parallel seal which was found near Kerasous on the Black Sea Coast, may be an indication of the location of the see of Ioannes around that region.

3) Niketas, ek prosopou (third quarter of the 8th century)

Inventory no: PMA 1874, donated by the Kıraç Family in 2006.

D: 22 mm W: 8.30 g.

Parallels: DO BZS.1955.1.1336, BZS.1955.1.1337, and BZS.1955.1.1338 (ed. Zacos – Veglery 1972, no. 1564)



Obverse: In center, cruciform invocative monogram of βοήθη. Circular inscription beginning with a cross between indeterminate borders: †.....ΤΡΙΑC

Reverse: Inscription in four lines beginning with a cross. Indeterminate border.

†NH|KHTAE|KΠPΩC|ΩΠΩ

[+ Παναγήα] Τριάς (βοήθη) // + Νηκήτα ἐκ προσωπω

Παναγία Τριάς βοήθει Νικήτα ἐκ προσωπου

All-holy Trinity, help Niketas, ek prosopou

There is also a seal of different type, with a cruciform invocative monogram of the type Laurent V, attributable to the same functionary (see ed. Zacos – Veglery 1972, no. 2239). Invocations to the Holy Trinity are rarer compared to invocations to the Theotokos or the Lord and almost all of them appear in the 8th century, usually around the middle of this century. They have been connected with Iconoclasm.⁹ The cruciform invocative monogram of the verb βοήθει alone, when not flanking the portrait of Theotokos,¹⁰ is also attested exclusively in the same period.¹¹

⁹ Auzépy 2014, 11-13.

¹⁰ It is attested for example on the imperial seals until Leon V (813-820) (see Zacos – Veglery 1972, no. 48) but also elsewhere in the early 8th and the early 9th century (ibid, nos. 1327-1348).

The epigraphy of the inscription is characteristic of the second half of the 8th century. For all these reasons we would confine the dating of our seal to the third quarter of the 8th century.

Ek prosopou means literally “representative” and was a state official. He was usually appointed in provinces (or even in Constantinople in case of the absence of the emperor) to oversee imperial/state affairs or to replace a *strategos*, who happened to be absent during a certain period.¹²

4) Leon, protonotarios (late 8th/ early 9th century)

Inventory no: PMA 1868, donated by the Kıracı Family in 2006.

D: 26 mm W: 20.3 g.

Parallel: former G. Zacos collection (ed. Zacos – Veglery 1972, no. 2133 A)



Obverse: Cruciform invocative monogram of Κύριε βοήθει. In the quarters ΤΩ-ΩΛ|ΔΘ-ΛΩ.

Reverse: Inscription in four lines. Border of dots.

+ΛΕΟΝ|ΤΙΠΡΩ|ΤΟΝΟΤΑ|ΡΙΩ

Κύριε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δούλῳ Λέοντι πρωτονοταρίῳ.

Lord help your servant Leon, protonotarios

This kind of epigraphy is common on seals issued around the end of the 8th century and the beginning of the 9th century.¹³ As *protonotarios*, Leon, was either the head of the chancery of certain ministries in the central administration (such as the *genikon logothesion*), or the main civil official in a certain province (*thema*) before the appearance of the *krites* in the late 9th century.

5) Stratonikos, notarios (second half of 9th century)

Inventory no: PMA 1872, donated by the Kıracı Family in 2006.

D: 23 mm W: 8.90 g

¹¹ For example, the seal of Athanasios, *hypatos*, again with an invocation to the Holy Trinity: Zacos – Veglery 1972, no. 1425. Elsewhere: *ibid.*, nos. 1553 and 2534.

¹² The office of *ek prosopou*, its capacity, the evolution of its responsibilities, and the prosopography of its officials, is the subject of the doctoral dissertation of Maria Teresa Catalano at the University of Cologne.

¹³ For example, the seals of Nikephoros, the later emperor, as *genikos logothetes*: Zacos – Veglery 1972, no. 2224.

Parallel(s): no known parallels



Obverse: Cruciform invocative monogram of Θεοτόκε βοήθει (Laurent type V). In the quarters
 ΤΩ – CΩ | ΔΣ – ΛΩ

Reverse: Inscription in four lines. Border of dots.

+CTP|ATONI|KWNOT|AMHN

+ Στρατονίκω νοτ(αρίω) ἀμήν

Θεοτόκε βοήθει τῷ σῶ δούλῳ Στρατονίκω νοταρίῳ. Ἀμήν.

Theotokos, help your servant Stratonikos, notarios. Amen.

Until the middle of the 9th century, the abbreviation signs are usually larger (the size of a letter) and curved. Smaller and straight abbreviation signs, such as the one observed here at the end of the third line, appear in the second half of the 9th c. The older cruciform invocative monograms, which dominated in the 8th and 9th centuries, such as the one we have here of the type Laurent V, disappeared also in this period. The epigraphy (particularly the form of Ω and O, and the ligature for the word ἀμήν) also suggests a dating in this period. The first name Stratonikos is very rare; the sealer is not known by any other seal or source.

6) Georgios, imperial apothekarios (last third of 9th century)

Inventory no: PMA 1867, donated by the Kiraç Family in 2006.

D: 22 mm W: 7.6 g.

Parallel: DO BZS.1947.2.425



Obverse: A patriarchal cross mounted on a base of three steps. Within concentric borders of dots, a circular inscription beginning at seven o'clock: +ΚΕΒΟΗΘΗΤΩCΩΔΟΝΛ

Reverse: Inscription in four lines beginning with a cross. Border of dots.

· · · | +ΓΕΩ|ΡΓΙΩΡ|ΑΠΟΘΗΚ|ΑΡΙΩ| · · ·

+ Κύριε βοήθη τῷ σῶ δούλῳ // + Γεωργίῳ βασιλικῷ ἀποθηκαρίῳ

Κύριε βοήθει τῷ σῶ δούλῳ Γεωργίῳ βασιλικῷ ἀποθηκαρίῳ

Lord help your servant Georgios, imperial apothekarios

The epigraphy and the type of decoration (patriarchal cross deprived of any fleurons and surrounded by a dotted border) suggest a dating in the last third of the 9th century.

The *apotheke* was a warehouse where goods were stored. Georgios was in charge of an imperial *apotheke*. In the 7th and the 8th centuries, there was a whole system of state *apothekai* associated with the institution of the *kommerkiarioi*, who were possibly responsible for the supply of the army and collected tax in kind. However, as soon as a more stable system was created in the 9th century through the thematic *protonotarioi* and *chartoularioi* who were attached to each provincial district army division, the role of *kommerkiarioi* changed to that of low-rank tax collectors.¹⁴ There were now special officials and particular treasuries and warehouses responsible for the storage of state goods: for grain (*horreiaroi* and the *komes* of Lamia), for military equipment (*exartistai*), and for precious garments and jewelry (*epi tou bestiariou*). We would be inclined to consider that the warehouse, where Georgios was in charge, was one for goods destined for the imperial household or produced by the private domains of the emperor. Since *apothekarios* is not attested in the contemporary lists of precedence, he must have been an inferior official, subordinate either to the *megas kourator* (responsible for the private properties of the emperor) or the *epi tes trapezes* (responsible for the procurement of goods for the imperial table). The *apothekarios* is mentioned by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogenetos as responsible for providing wine for the emperor and the high-ranking officers, while on the campaign, while the *kouratores* and the thematic *protonotarioi* were meant to provide other kinds of foodstuff. The whole process of the procurement of goods for the imperial table during a campaign was supervised by the *epi tes trapezes* and his immediate subaltern, the *domestikos of the hypourgia*.¹⁵

7) Symeon, imperial protospatharios (first half of 10th century)

Inventory no: PMA 1878, donated by the Kıracı Family in 2006.

D: 23 mm. W: 7.70 g.

Parallel(s): no known parallels

¹⁴ On the role of the *kommerkiarioi* and the *apotheke* see lately Brubaker – Haldon 2011, 682–705 (particularly 701–705 for the 9th century and beyond the period that primarily concerns us here) and Ragia 2013.

¹⁵ Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos equates the *apothekarios* with the imperial private (*βασιλικός οικειακός*) *kellarios* mentioned in the same paragraph and believes that he is either identical or a subordinate to the *pinkernes* (the ‘imperial cup-bearer’), who appears around this period for the first time, see Haldon 1990, 102–104; 200.



Obverse: Patriarchal cross mounted on a base of three steps, with fleurons rising to the lower crossbar. Traces of a circular inscription beginning at seven o'clock. [...]ΤΩCΩΔ..

[Κ(ύρι)ε βοήθει] τῷ σῷ δ[ούλ(ω)]

Reverse: Inscription in five lines beginning with a cross. Border of dots.

+CV|ΜΕΩΝΡΑ|CΙΛΕΙΚ,Α|CΠΑΘΑ.|.Ω

Κύριε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δούλῳ Συμεὼν βασιλικ(ῶ) (πρωτο)σπαθα[ρί]ω

Lord, help your servant Symeon, imperial protospatharios

Fleurons begin to flourish at the bottom of patriarchal cross decorations on lead seals appear at the base of patriarchal crosses on the obverse of lead around 900 and progressively rise higher after ca. 950. This chronological frame accords well with the date indicated by the epigraphy of the inscription of this seal to the first half of the 10th century.¹⁶ In the beginning of the 10th century, imperial *protospatharios* is still a high dignity, that allows entry into the Senate and is usually conferred upon governors (*strategoï*) in the provinces (*themata*) or medium-ranking ministers in the central administration.¹⁷

8) Leon (?), megas kourator of the domains of the empress (mid-10th c.)

Inventory no: PMA 6702,

donated by the Kıracı

Family in 2006.

D: 22 mm W: 4.80 g.

Ed. Cheynet 2008, 242-243

Parallel(s): no known parallels



¹⁶ See as similar the seal of Stephanos, *imperial klerikos* and *kourator* of the *basileopator* (i.e., of Romanos I Lekapenos after his coup and before his coronation as an emperor, thus the seal was issued in 919-920): Zacos – Veglery 1972, no. 291.

¹⁷ See the range of officials who could bore this title in the *Taktikon Benešević* (ca. 934-944): Oikonomides 1972, 249-251.

Obverse: Cruciform invocative monogram of Κύριε βοήθει (Laurent type X). Dotted crosslets in the four quarters. Border of dots. Along the circumference inscription starting at 12 o'clock, preceded by a crosslet. +ΛΞΘ[...]Ω

Reverse: Inscription in five lines. Border of dots.

+ΚΕΜΕ|.ΚΟΝΡΑΤ|.Ρ,ΤΩΝΑΥ|.ΔΥΝΤΙΑ|.ΤΗΜ,Τ,

Κύριε βοήθει Λέο[ντι] (?) ...ω κὲ με[γ(άλω)] κουράτ[ο]ρ(ι) τῶν αὐ[γ]ουστια[κ(ῶν)] κ]τημ(ά)τ(ων)

Lord help Leon (?), ... and megas kourator of the domains of the empress

The circular inscription on the obverse contained the first name, the dignity or less possible another office, however, it is hardly readable today. In view of the traces of the first three letters, the owner's name may have been Leon. The remaining letters of the circular inscription are not preserved, but the last letter is omega. Considering the available space, we expect here a dignity or even another office, which must have ended in -os (since the last letter is an omega). This type of obverse decoration, a cruciform invocative monogram with little crosslets in the four quarters and a circular inscription, can be also found on the seal of Theophanes, a powerful *parakoimomenos* active between 941 and 946.¹⁸

Leon was the chief administrator (*kourator*) of the private domains (*ktemata*) of the empress (*augousta*; adj. *augoustiakos*). The individual scattered estates (*episkepseis*) of the empress were administered by the local *episkeptitai* who were under the orders of the *megas kourator*. Other *kouratores* were appointed to oversee the domains belonging to the emperor (also a *megas kourator*) or to other important institutions and officials, such as the Great Church, the imperial workshops (*ergodosia*), the state silk industry (*kourator tes metaxes*) or the *logothetes of the dromos*.¹⁹ The domains of the empress were self-administered by *kouratores* since at least the reign of Tiberios I (578-582).²⁰ The earliest sigillographic reference dates to the second half of the 8th century,²¹ while by the beginning of the 10th century, this *kourator* had acquired the hon-

¹⁸ Zacos 1984, no. 1085; Oikonomides 1986, no. 64.

¹⁹ Nikolaos, *kouboukleisios* and *kourator* of the Patriarchate (ed. Laurent 1965, no. 1622); Michael, *imperial spatharios* and *kourator* of the imperial workshops (*ergodosia*) (ed. Zacos 1984, no. 236); Theophilos, *hypatos* and *kourator* of the silk (ed. Laurent 1965, no. 651); Theodoros, *kourator* of the *logothetes of the dromos* (ed. Zacos – Vegler 1972, no. 2422).

²⁰ Jus Graecoromanorum, I.12.a, ed. Zepos, 20: κουρατῶρων τῶν θείων ἡμῶν ἢ τῆς εὐσεβεστάτης βασιλίδος οἴκων.

²¹ DO BZS.1958.106.3891: Anonymus, *imperial praisipos* (?) and *kourator* of the empress (*augousta*) (ed. Zacos – Vegler 1972, no. 3218). The dignity was read by the editors as either *imperial nipsistarios* or *imperial praisipos*. Based on the high-quality photo now available on the online lead seals catalogue of Dumbarton Oaks, the reading *nipsistarios* should be rejected, on account of the first visible letter of the dignity at the end of the second line, which is either a Λ or a Π. Likewise, the reading *imperial logothetes*, proposed now by the editors of the online catalogue, is somehow problematic, as this is a high-ranking office very rarely attested, and only before the emergence of the various *logothetai*-ministers of the central administration (*genikos logothetes*, *logothetes of the dromos*, etc.), see Brandes 2002, 180-198 and 235-238.

orary epithet *meγas* ('grand'), which had accompanied so far only the chief *kourator* of the state domains.²²

9) Emperor Konstantinos IX Monomachos (1042-1055)

Inventory no: PMA 1875, donated by the Kiraç Family in 2006.

D: 34 mm W: 38.8 g.

Parallel(s): no known parallels



Obverse: Bust of Christ Emmanuel wearing a tunic and himation. He offers a blessing with the right hand and holds in the left a book with a cover ornamented in the center with two pellets. He has a nimbus cruciger; each arm contains a decoration consisting of five pellets. Sigla at left and right: Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς [Χ(ριστός)]. Circular inscription in the upper half of the disk. Border of dots. +Ε... - NOV.. : Ἐ[μμα]νου[ήλ].

Reverse: Half-length representation of Konstantinos IX bearded, wearing a crown with a cross and pendilia, and a loros. He is shown holding a long cross scepter in the right hand and a globus cruciger in the left. Circular inscription. Border of dots.

...N. - ΤΟC...

[Consta]n[tinos] [au]toc[rator] or [au]toc[rat(or) R(o)m(aion)]

Konstantinos, autokrator (Romaion?)

Constantine, emperor (of the Romaioi?)

Although the name of the emperor is hardly preserved on the reverse of the seal, this is the standard portrait of the emperor Konstantinos IX Monomachos (1042-1055). Several similar lead seals with the same traits have been published elsewhere. Some of these contained the phrase 'of the Romaioi' in his imperial title, however, this is not clear on our seal.²³ Konstantinos IX Monomachos was the third and last husband of Empress Zoe, the rightful heir to the Byzan-

²² Seibt 1978, no. 77.

²³ Thirteen specimens are preserved in the Dumbarton Oaks collection, see Nesbitt 2009, no. 73. See also Zacos – Veglery 1972, no. 79b; Seibt – Zarnitz 1997, no. 1.1.6. Although, there are several types, most of them contain little differences among them. In most details our seal is closer to Nesbitt 2009, no. 73.11, however, it is still not a parallel.

tine throne after the death of her father Konstantinos VIII (1025-1028). Konstantinos IX Monomachos married Zoe in 1042 and remained emperor until his demise in 1055, even after the death of Empress Zoe in 1050. In any case, both Konstantinos IX and his predecessors associated with Zoe, Romanos III Argyros (1028-1034), Michael IV (1034-1041), and Michael V (1041-1042), portrayed only themselves on their coinage and seals, without empress Zoe.²⁴

10) Pharasmanes Apokapes, patrikios and anthypatos (1050s)

Inventory no: PMS 486, donated by H el ene Willemart in 2007.

D: 28 mm W: 15 g.

Parallel: Leu Web Auction 9 (7-8.9.2019), no. 1354; Classical Numismatic Group 78 (14.5.2008), no. 1896.



Obverse: Half-length bust of the Virgin Episkepsis, nimbate, orans, with a medallion of Christ in her chest; sigla on either side: $\bar{M}\bar{P}-\bar{\Theta}\bar{V}$.

Reverse: Inscription in six lines. Border of dots.

+ | $\Theta\bar{K}\bar{E}\bar{R},\bar{\Theta}$ |. $\omega\sigma\omega\Delta\theta\lambda$ |. APACMANH | ΠΡΪΑΝΘΝΠΑ | ΤΟΤΩΑΠΟ | ΚΑΠΗ

+ $\Theta(\epsilon\omicron\tau\acute{o})\kappa\epsilon \beta(\omicron\eta)\theta(\epsilon\iota) [\tau]\bar{\omega} \sigma\bar{\omega} \delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda(\omega) [\Phi]\alpha\rho\alpha\sigma\mu\acute{\alpha}\nu\eta \pi(\alpha\tau)\rho\iota(\kappa\acute{\iota}\omega) \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\upsilon\pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron \tau\bar{\omega} \acute{\Lambda}\rho\omicron\kappa\acute{\alpha}\pi\eta$

$\Theta\epsilon\omicron\tau\acute{o}\kappa\epsilon \beta\omicron\eta\theta\epsilon\iota \tau\bar{\omega} \sigma\bar{\omega} \delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omega \Phi\alpha\rho\alpha\sigma\mu\acute{\alpha}\nu\eta \pi\alpha\tau\rho\iota\kappa\acute{\iota}\omega \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\upsilon\pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega \tau\bar{\omega} \acute{\Lambda}\rho\omicron\kappa\acute{\alpha}\pi\eta$

Theotokos, help your servant Phrasmanes Apokapes patrikios anthypatos

There is one more slightly earlier lead seal from this individual, where he styled himself with only the dignity of *patrikios* and the office of *strategos*.²⁵ Pharasmanes Apokapes was the son of Michael Apokapes and brother of Basileios Apokapes, a prominent Byzantine official until his death in 1083 of Armenian descent. He is mentioned in the testament of Eustathios Boilas with the dignity of *bestarches* in 1059.²⁶ Ten years later the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes appointed

²⁴ For the types of coinage of emperor Konstantinos IX, see Grierson 1973, 733-737.

²⁵ Sales Catalogue: Gert Boersema, no. 6201.

²⁶ Lemerle 1977, 59.

Pharasmanes, then with the dignity of *bestes*, as governor of Hierapolis. Michael Grünbart, who has studied the family of Apokapai concluded that there were two contemporary individuals named Pharasmanes in the same family since the dignity *bestarches* is higher than *bestes*.²⁷

Initially, the dignities *bestes* and *bestarches* were not assigned on their own, but in combination with the dignities of either *magistros* or *patrikios*. The *Taktikon Escorial* testifies them with the following order: *magistros* and *rhaiktor* – *magistros* and *bestes* – *magistros* (with no additional dignity attached) – *patrikios* (eunuch) and *bestarches* – *patrikios*, *praipositos* and *bestes* – *patrikios* and *praipositos* (without *bestes*) – *patrikios* (eunuch) and *rhaiktor* – *patrikios* (eunuch) – *patrikios* (non-eunuch) and *bestes*. Since *patrikios* and *bestarches* ranked above *patrikios* and *bestes*, it has been assumed that the dignity *bestarches* outranked *bestes*. The Byzantine system of dignities was complex, and the changes effectuated from time to time increase our confusion. For example, a eunuch with just the dignity *patrikios* outranked an *anthypatos patrikios* in the Kletorologion of Philotheos (date: 899). In the same *taktikon*, *magistros* outranked *rhaiktor*, but this had changed by the 930s in favour of *rhaiktor*, while in *Taktikon Escorial* *rhaiktor* could only follow, like *bestes* and *bestarches*, the dignities of *magistros* and *patrikios*.²⁸ This is not the place to solve the complexities of the Byzantine system of dignities. Unfortunately, there is no case where we can definitely see a promotion from *bestes* to *bestarches* or vice versa in this period (third quarter of the 11th century). It suffices to remark, however, that there are several cases where the dignity *bestes* outranked the dignity *bestarches* when they were both combined with *magistros* or *patrikios*, in exactly this period.²⁹ Therefore, it is not unlikely that the order had changed, and someone could get promoted from *bestarches* to *bestes*. The same happened to the dignities *anthypatos* and *patrikios*, whose usual order changed in the 1030s in favour of *patrikios* (i.e., *patrikios anthypatos*).³⁰

Although one should not exclude the existence of a first cousin of Pharasmanes Apokapes in 1069 with the dignity of *bestes*, we prefer to identify them as the same person. In any case, the dignities *patrikios* and *anthypatos* are lesser than *bestes*, as documented by the career of Michael Attaleiates.³¹ Therefore, this seal should be dated before 1059 when Pharasmanes is attested as *bestarches* and his elder brother Basileios Apokapes as *magistros*. Since the depiction of Theoto-

²⁷ Michael Attaleiates, *History*, 91; Grünbart 1998, 45.

²⁸ Oikonomides 1972, 143, 245, 263.

²⁹ Such as Michael Bourtzēs, *magistros*, *bestes*, *bestarches* and *doux* of the Anatolikoi (see Campagnolo-Pothitou – Cheynet 2016, no. 109; Leon Skleros, *magistros*, *bestes*, *bestarches* and *krites* of the Aigaion Pelagos (several of his seals have been published; see lately Cheynet – Gökyildirim – Bulgurlu 2012, no. 3.69); Michael, *patrikios*, *anthypatos*, *bestes*, *bestarches* and *stratitikos logothetes* (Laurent 1981, no. 546). I do not know any cases in which *bestarches* preceded *bestes* when they are mentioned together. There is, however, one case where we can see Nikephoros Batatzēs, first as *magistros*, *bestarches*, *doux* and *praïtor* of Aigaion Pelagos and then as *magistros*, *bestes* and *doux* of all West (Shandrovskaja 1977, 111 no. 241 and Nesbitt – Oikonomides 1991, no. 1.21). Most likely his appointment over all the western provinces followed his tenure as *doux* only of Aigaion Pelagos, and thus the acquisition of the dignity *bestes* occurred later than the dignity of *bestarches*.

³⁰ On this see Karagiorgou – Charalampakis – Malatras 2016, 279 note 66.

³¹ Michael Attaleiates was *patrikios* and *anthypatos* in 1072 (*Diataxis of Attaleiates*, ed. Gautier, 17) and by 1079 he had been promoted to *magistros* and *bestes* and before 1081 to *proedros*. See Cheynet 1983.

kos in the Episkepis style is attested only after the middle of the 11th century³² and the seal epigraphically belongs to the third quarter of the 11th century, we would confine its dating to the 1050s.

B. Seals containing only names (listed alphabetically)

11) Anthimos (second half of 11th c.)

Inventory no: PMA 1873, donated by the Kiraç Family in 2006.

D: 17 mm W: 4.90 g.

Parallel(s): no known parallels



Obverse: Inscription in three lines. Above and below the inscription, crosslet flanked by dashes.

- + -|ΛΟΓΟΥΣ|ΣΦΡΑΓΙΖΩ|- + -

Reverse: Inscription in four lines. Above the legend, crosslet flanked by dashes. Double border of dots.

- + -|ΣΓΡΑ|ΦΑΚΤΗ|ΑΝΘΙ|ΜΟΥ

Λόγους σφραγίζω καὶ γραφὰς τοῦ Ἀνθίμου

I seal the words and the writings of Anthimos.

The legend is metrical and forms a simple dodecasyllable. The name Anthimos is rare and can be encountered primarily among ecclesiastics. No other seal can be ascribed to this Anthimos.

12) Gregorios (?) (13th c.)

Inventory no: PMA 1877, donated by the Kiraç Family in 2006.

D: 22 mm. W: 6.30 g.

Parallel(s): no known parallels

³² Seibt 1987, 53.



Obverse: Bust of St. Georgios, nimbate, facing, holding a spear in his right hand and a shield in his left hand. Sigla: Ⓞ – ΓΕ: Ὁ ἅγιος Γε(ώργιος). Border of dots.

Reverse: Inscription in five lines. Border of dots.

ΛΟΓΕ|ΣΚΕΠΟΙΣ|..ΝΟΙΚΕΤΗΝ|ΣΟ...|ΓΩΡ

Λόγε σκέποις τὸν οἰκέτην σου [Γρη]γώρ(ιον) (?)

Logos (= Christ), may you shelter your servant Gregory!

The reading of the first name is not certain but at present we cannot offer an alternative.

13) Leon Mosele (?) (late 11th/early 12th century)

Inventory no: PMA 6701, donated by the Kıraç Family in 2006.

D: 16 mm W: 5.20 g.

Parallel(s): no known parallels



Obverse: Inscription in four lines. Border of dots.

ΣΦΡΑ|ΓΙΣΛΕΟΝ|ΤΟΣ.ΜΟ|ΣΙΛ.

Reverse: Inscription in five lines. Border of dots.

ὈΝΗ|ΓΡΑΦΗ|ΔΕΙΚΝΥ|ΣΙΤΗΝΑ|ΞΙ..

Σφραγίς Λέοντος [τ(οῦ)] Μοσιλ[έ] (?) // οὗ ἡ γραφή δείκνυσι τὴν ἀξίαν

Seal of Leon Mosele, whose writings show his office.

The reading of the surname is not clear, but the rest of the inscription is quite straightforward. The family name Mosele is attested in the 11th century and could be spelled differently: Mouselem, Mousoulem, Mosele. The Mosele was an illustrious family of Armenian origin attested since the late 8th century. The first known member of this family, Alexios Mouselem, was declared strategos of the Armeniakoi by the rebelled soldiers of the *thema* in 792 and the following year he was blinded by the emperor Konstantinos VI. A homonymous member of the family was married to a daughter of the emperor Theophilos (829-842) and rose to the high dignity of *kaisar*. Almost a century later the Mosele family is still in a prominent place: a third Alexios Mosele was commander of the imperial fleet (*droungarios ton ploïmon*) and had the dignity of *magistros*. His son, Romanos Mousele, had the high dignity of *magistros* and was active under Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos (944-959) and Romanos II (959-963). He was related (either as a son or as a nephew) to the emperor Romanos I Lekapenos (920-944). The family is still encountered in the 11th century, although its position is less prominent than earlier. Two more members of the Mosele family are known, both bearing the first name Ioannes. One of them is attested as an imperial notary [11th c. (last third)].³³ The other is attested by a metrical seal dated to the 11th/12th century.³⁴

14) Niketas ... (second half of 11th century)

Inventory no: PMA 1871, donated by the Kiraç Family in 2006.

D: 17 mm. W: 1.70 g.

Parallel(s): no known parallels



Obverse: Bust of a beardless, nimbate, facing saint

Reverse: Inscription in four lines. ΘΚΕ..|ΤΩCΩ..|ΝΙΚΗ..|.....

Θ(εοτό)κε β(οή)θει τῷ σῷ δούλῳ Νικήτῃ ...

Theotokos, aid your servant Niketas ...

There was at least one more line containing either the surname or a dignity/office of Niketas.

³³ This seal is in the collection of the Numismatic Museum at Athens. See Konstantopoulos 1917, no. 432a; Laurent 1981, no. 208; Stavrakos 2000, no. 183.

³⁴ This seal is preserved in the Dumbarton Oaks collection (BZS.1951.31.5.2375). See Wassiliou-Seibt 2011, no. 1040.

Other lead seals

15) Iconographic seal (10th-11th c.)

Inventory no: PMA 1869, donated by the Kırac Family in 2006.

D: 15 mm W: 2.20 g.

Parallel(s): no known parallels



Obverse: Bust of Archangel Michael holding a scepter in his right hand and the globus in his left. Inscription: \bar{M} -X: Μιχαήλ. Border of dots.

Reverse: Bust of a nimbate beardless saint holding a cross in front of his chest. The identifying inscription is unclear.

16) Iconographic seal (11th c.)

Inventory no: PMA 1866, donated by the Kırac Family in 2006.

D: 25 mm. W: 8.50 g.

Parallel(s): no known parallels



Obverse: Bust of St Theodoros facing and nimbate, holding a spear in the right hand and a shield in the left hand. The identifying inscription is only discernible on the right side: ... - $\omega|\Delta|O|P$; [Θ ἄ(γιος) Θε]ώδορος(ος)

Reverse: Bust of a male saint facing and nimbate with the facial traits of St Nikolaos, blessing with his right hand and holding a book with the left hand. Unclear identifying inscription.

17) Unidentified (late 11th century)

Inventory no: PMA 1870, donated by the Kırac Family in 2006.

D: 22 mm W: 4.80 g.

Parallel(s): no known parallels



Obverse: Bust of St. Nikolaos, facing, nimbate; wearing pastoral vestments, blessing with his right hand, and holding a book in his left hand. Vertical identifying inscription on either sides: Ο|Ν|Ι|Κ|Ο – Λ|Α|Ο|C. Border of dots.

Reverse: Inscription in four lines. Border of dots.

[...] κρίσεις καὶ (?) πράξεις φύλατε

(Saint) guard the decisions and the acts of ...

The legend is likely metrical. The first line, which has not been preserved, must have contained the name of the owner of the seal, which, according to the metrical rules, was trisyllable or even tetrasyllable (if no definite article is included: i.e., τὰς κρίσεις). It is also not unlikely that the legend begins with the adjective ὁμωνύμου, meaning then that the sealer was homonymous to St Nikolaos. The verb φύλαττε has been mistakenly written with just one Tau.

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Pera Müzesi'ndeki Bizans Kurşun Mühürleri Özet

Pera Müzesi kurşun mühür koleksiyonu, 7. yüzyılın ikinci yarısından 13. yüzyıla kadar tarihlenen üç kurşun mühür (no. 1, 8 ve 10) dışında, yayınlanmamış 17 parçadan oluşmaktadır. Pera Müzesi koleksiyonundaki 17 Bizans kurşun mühründen 10'unda sahiplerinin rütbe ve makamlarından bahsedilmektedir. Bu makamlar basit bir notarios'luktan (no. 5) en yüksek makam olan imparatorluk makamına (no. 9) kadar uzanmaktadır. Kilise yönetimiyle ilgili sadece bir mühür vardır, o da bir piskopos tarafından bastırılmıştır (no. 2). İmparatorluk *apothekarios*'u gibi benzeri bulunmayan (unique) makama sahip olan Georgios'a ait olan mührün (no. 6) yanı sıra bugüne kadar başka hiçbir mührü yayınlanmamış olan Ermeni kökenli önemli bir Bizans ailesinin üyesi olan Pharasmanes Apokapes'e ait olan 11. yüzyıla ait mühür dikkate değerdir. Bir diğer mühür grubu ise sadece sahibinin adı ya da aile adının belirtildiği örneklerden (no. 11-14 ve muhtemelen no. 17) oluşmaktadır. Tüm bu parçalar, 11. yüzyılın ikinci yarısı ile 13. yüzyıl arasındaki döneme tarihlenmektedir. Koleksiyonda, her iki yüzünde de sahibinden bahsedilen herhangi bir yazıt bulunmayan, kutsal figürlerin tasvir edildiği iki ikonografik mühür (no. 15-16) ve son olarak 11. yüzyılın sonuna tarihlenen tanımlanamayan bir mühür (no. 17) daha bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Bizans Kurşun Mühürleri; Pera Müzesi; Bizans Sigillografisi; Suna ve İnan Kıraç Vakfı; Konstantinos IX Monomachos; Pharasmanes Apokapes; Leon Mosele; imparatoriçenin topraklarının megas kourator'u.

The Byzantine Lead Seals at the Pera Museum

Abstract

The collection of lead seals of the Pera Museum consists of 17 unpublished pieces, except for three lead seals (nos. 1, 8, and 10) which are dated from the second half of the 7th century to the 13th century. Ten of the seventeen Byzantine lead seals of the Pera Museum collection mention the dignities and the offices of their owners. These offices range from the lower rank of a simple notary (no. 5) up to the highest office of the emperor himself (no. 9). There is only one seal related to the ecclesiastical administration, issued by a bishop (no. 2). Noteworthy are the seals of Georgios (no. 6), who has the uniquely attested office of an imperial *apothekarios*, as well as the 11th-century seal of Pharasmanes Apokapes, member of a notable Byzantine family of Armenian origin, by whom no other seals have been published so far. Another group of seals consists of the specimens (nos. 11-14 and possibly also no. 17) where only the name or the surname of their owner is mentioned. All these pieces are dated to the period between the second half of the 11th century and the 13th century. In the collection, there are two more iconographic seals (nos. 15-16) depicting on both sides holy figures without any inscription that mentions their owner, and finally, an unidentified seal (no. 17) (dated to the end of the 11th century).

Keywords: Byzantine Lead Seals; Pera Museum; Byzantine Sigillography; Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation; Konstantinos IX Monomachos; Pharasmanes Apokapes; Leon Mosele; megas kourator of the domains of the empress.