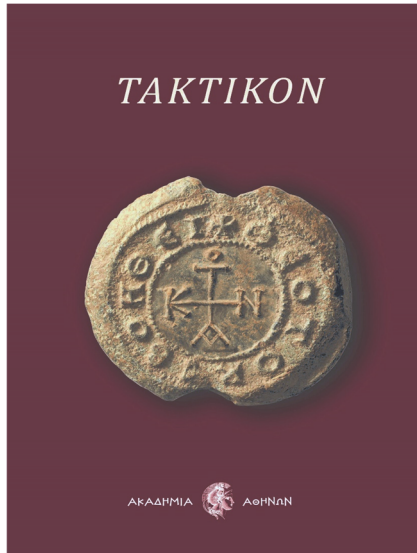


Review of: Olga Karagiorgou – Pantelis Charalampakis – Christos Malatras (eds.), *TAKTIKON. Studies on the Prosopography and Administration of the Byzantine themata*, Academy of Athens: Research Centre for Byzantine and Post-byzantine Art 2021 (900 p., 638 coloured photos, 241 B&W photos, 6 coloured maps. ISBN: 978-960-404-392-7)



This volume presents the first results of the *TAKTIKON* research project on the prosopography and administration of the Byzantine themata (the large administrative divisions of the Byzantine State), which is being realized at the Academy of Athens by Olga Karagiorgou (Project instigator and director), Christos Malatras and Pantelis Charalampakis (Scientific collaborators), as well as the papers of a one-day International Workshop organized in the framework of the same project. Combining evidence from sigillographic and non-sigillographic sources, the *TAKTIKON* project aims to shed light on various aspects of the thematic administration of the Byzantine State between the 7th and the 13th centuries (origins, geographical extent, subdivisions, structure, duration, causes of decline, etc.), which have puzzled researchers for a long time.

The project relies on evidence from a variety of sources (historiography, epistolography, hagiography, military manuals, epigraphy, monastic archives), but most of the information comes from the molybdoboulla (seals), the lead disks that the officials used to secure and authenticate their official or private correspondence, which bears iconographic motifs and inscriptions with their name, title(s), office(s) and area(s) of jurisdiction. All this evidence is critically examined for the creation -for the very first time- of reliable chronological catalogues of all the Byzantine thematic officials arranged according to theme, administrative sector (military, civil, ecclesiastical) and office. These catalogues offer an unparalleled insight into the prosopography and administrative structure of each theme, revealing at the same time important information on the history of Byzantine institutions, the political and social history of Byzantium (hierarchies, professional mobility, nepotism, personal ambition, religious sentiments, literacy, linguistics), as well as Byzantine art (iconography). The present volume addresses more specifically the theme of Hellas, as well as three of the earliest and largest themes in Asia Minor: the Opsikion, the Anatolikoi and the Kibyrraiotai. The *TAKTIKON* volume includes a total of 18 studies, arranged in four parts:

Part I [*TAKTIKON: a new manual for the “atriklines” of Byzantine History*, p. 63-108] includes the introductory chapter entitled “Another TAKTIKON?” where the director of the *TAKTIKON* project (Olga Karagiorgou) describes its objectives and methodological principles, examines some of the basic questions concerning the institution of Byzantine themes (first appearance, structure), suggests some answers based on the results discussed in the volume, and presents the homonymous online database designed specifically for the project, citing indicative examples of the Prosopographic and the Molybdoboullon Cards included in it.

Part II [*The thematic administration on the evidence of sigillographic and other sources: some case studies in the TAKTIKON*, p. 113-600] includes a study on the use of the terms 'Eoa/Anatole' and 'Anatolikoi' in Byzantine texts (Anastasia Kontogiannopoulou), as well as extensive studies on the corpus of the strategoi of Hellas (Olga Karagiorgou) and the prosopography and administrative

structure of Opsikion (Christos Malatras), the Anatolikoi (Christos Malatras) and the Kibyrraiotai (Pantelis Charalampakis), based on the data provided by sigillographic and non-sigillographic sources. The four studies concerning the strategoi of Hellas and the three Asia Minor themes are accompanied by extensive appendices that present for the first time detailed catalogues in chronological order of all thematic officials by theme and office, as well as a description of the 1110 thematic molybdobulla directly related to this research. These molybdobulla were gathered through a survey of a total of 94 published and unpublished sigillographic collections in 17 countries (79 collections in state museums and 15 private collections; an autopsy was carried out on 18 of the 94 collections), and a meticulous study of all relevant publications, including catalogues (printed and online) presented by more than 40 auction houses (see “Acknowledgements”, p. 15-19). The result of this research is reflected in the number of thematic officials known to us for the themes of Hellas, Opsikion, Anatolikoi and Kibyrraiotai before and after the publication of the *TAKTIKON* volume (2021), as shown in the table below.

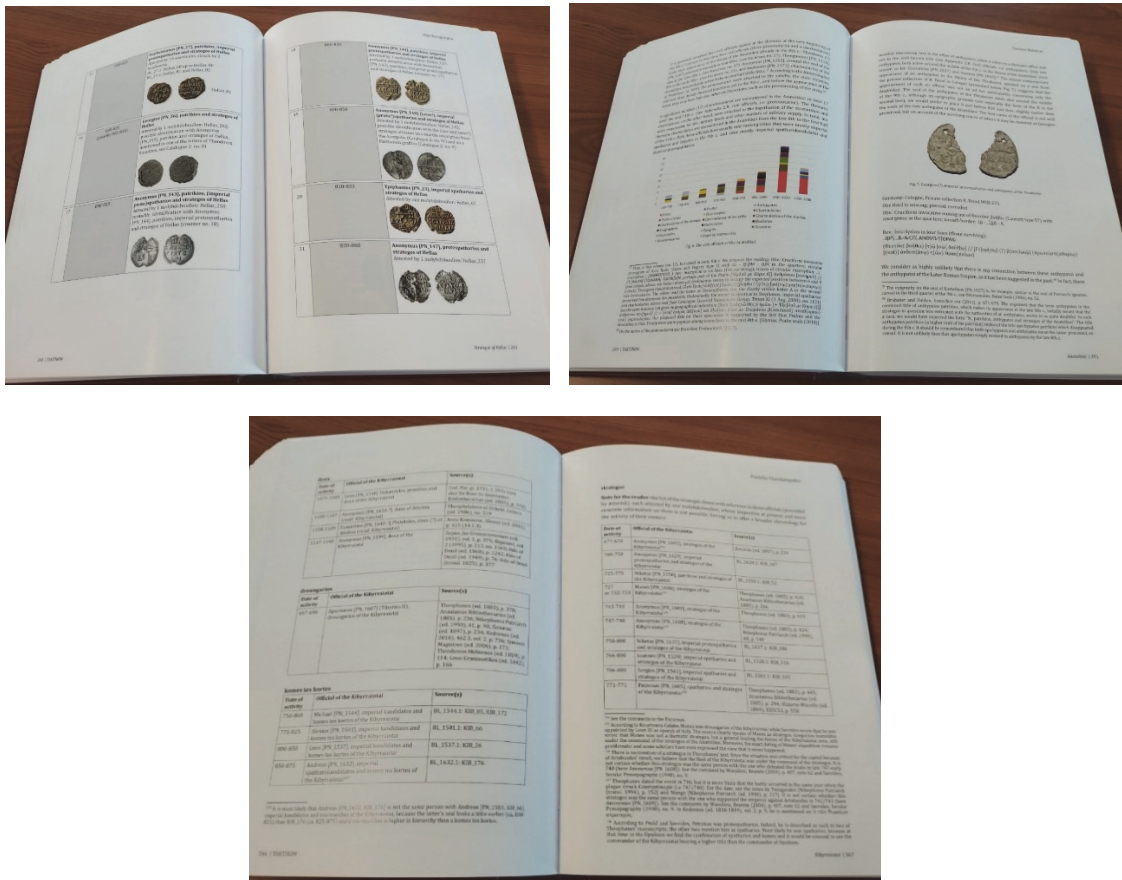
	Hellas	Opsikion	Anatolikon	Kibyrraioton
Number of known thema officials before (black) and after (red) the publication of <i>TAKTIKON</i> (2021)	169 There is no previous study available	83 / 166 For an earlier study, see. <i>Η Μικρά Ασία των θεμάτων</i> , Athens 1998, pp. 163-200.	129 / 228 For an earlier study, see. <i>Η Μικρά Ασία των θεμάτων</i> , Athens 1998, pp. 69-111	99 / 145 For a previous study, see. <i>Tabula Imperii Byzantini</i> 8 (2004), pp. 407-413
Number of seals registered in <i>TAKTIKON</i> (2021)	284 (10 seals found at auction houses=3.52%)	277 (39 seals found in auction houses=14%)	364 (70 seals found in auction houses=19.23%)	188 (15 seals found at auction= 7.97%)

Part III [*Unpublished molybdoboulla relevant to the administration of Byzantine Asia Minor*, p. 605-772] includes the articles by Nikolaj Alekseienko (Correspondents of Byzantine Cherson: new sigillographic evidence), Oleksandr Alforov (Lead seals of Eustratios Chrysoberges from the territory of the Rus’), Vera Bulgurlu (A selection of unpublished lead seals from the Museum of Milet/Miletos, Turkey), Jean-Claude Cheynet (two studies: a. Sceaux parisiens inédits des thèmes des Anatoliques, de l’Opsikion et des Cibyrrhéotes, and b. Sceaux des thèmes des Anatoliques, de l’Opsikion et des Cibyrrhéotes dans la collection Savvas Kofopoulos, Lesbos), Nilgün Elam (Thematic molybdoboulla from the collections of eleven archaeological museums in Turkey), Esra Güzel Erdoğan and Vivien Prigent (Sceaux d’officiers de l’armée provincial conservés au musée archéologique d’Adana), and Elena Stepanova (Seals of the theme of the Kibyrraiotai from the Hermitage Museum collection). The authors in Parts III and IV of the volume discuss more than 230 Byzantine lead seals (in their overwhelming majority previously unpublished), kept in private and state collections in Bulgaria, France, Greece, Russia, and Ukraine, which are relevant to the administration and prosopography of Byzantine Asia Minor. The volume begins with a vote of thanks to colleagues and institutions in 18 countries for their help and support during this research (p. 15-19), as well as an extensive bibliography including 742 entries (p. 21-58). It concludes with summaries of the papers in Greek and English (p. 821-837), brief biographies of

the authors (p. 839-845), two extensive catalogues of thematic and non-thematic lead seals discussed in the volume (p. 847-888), and two indexes: one for proper names and one for place names and administrative areas (p. 889-899). The *TAKTIKON* volume was among the publications of the Academy of Athens presented at the Book Fair of the 24th International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Venice and Padua, 22-27 August 2022). In May 2023, the volume received the “Vaso Penna” International Award, presented annually to the best publication in the field of numismatics and sigillography of Byzantium and the Latin-occupied areas of Greece and Cyprus, which has been published in the last five years (from 1-1-2018 to 31-12-2022) and has been submitted to the relevant call of the Christian Archaeological Society, Athens (ChAE), see http://www.chae.gr/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=160:prokiriksi-vraveiou-afi-eromenou-sti-mnimi-tis-vasos-penna&Itemid=286&lang=el

All awards and proceeds from the sales of the volume are used to enable the further expansion and development of the *TAKTIKON* Research Project. The publication of the *TAKTIKON* volume was kindly supported by the «Janet Zacos Foundation for the Study of Byzantium» (Geneva), the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, the Capuano Insurance Brokers S.A., Eurolife FFH and Generali Hellas.

Murat KEÇİŞ*



Indicative pages of the *TAKTIKON* volume

* Prof. Dr. Murat Keçiş, Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi, Faculty of Letters, Department of History / Medieval History (muratkecis@mu.edu.tr; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9776-3976>).