

## Byzantine Lead Seals Issued by State Officials in Ödemiş Archaeological Museum

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### Abstract

This study examines nine Byzantine lead seals in the Ödemiş Archeology Museum, dated to 8<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, which belong to central authorities in charge of military and financial affairs. Research on three of the seals have been recently published in an article about sicillographic materials in the Ödemiş collection. This article comprises of different suggestions and editing of the reading of the seals examined in the abovementioned article as well as analysis on the content of the six other unpublished seals in the Ödemiş collection.

**Keywords:** *Byzantine, Thrakesion, Ödemiş, Sicillography, Lead Seal*

### Ödemiş Arkeoloji Müzesi'ndeki Devlet Görevlilerine Ait Bizans Kurşun Mühürleri

### Özet

Bu çalışmada Ödemiş Arkeoloji Müzesi'nde yer alan, MS 8.-11. yüzyıllara tarihlenen, askeri ve mali işlerle ilgili merkezi yöneticilere ait dokuz adet Bizans kurşun mührü ele alınmaktadır. Mühürlerden üçü kısa bir süre önce, Ödemiş Arkeoloji Müzesi koleksiyonundaki sicillografik malzemeler içeren bir makalede yayımlanmıştır. Bu makaledeki bazı mühürlerin okunuşuyla ilgili farklı öneri ve düzeltmeler ile Ödemiş Müzesi'ndeki diğer yayımlanmamış altı adet Bizans kurşun mührü üzerine çözümlenmeler makalemizin içeriğini oluşturmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Bizans, Thrakesion, Ödemiş, Sicillografi, Kurşun Mühür*

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Ödemiş Archaeological Museum has eighteen Byzantine lead seals recorded in its inventory as of 2011. I started a research on these seals in June 2011 with the permission of the Directorate of Ödemiş Museum. In the same year, a library initiative on these seals was undertaken by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, and the preliminary report of this initiative was presented orally by the researcher of this article at the Dumbarton Oaks Institute as part of the "Numismatics and Sigillography Summer Program, 2011"<sup>1</sup>. This article examines nine seals in the museum collection that are dated to 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries and that belong to the Byzantine state officials. Research about six of these nine seals have not been published yet. Research on three of these seals was published by Ergün Laflı and Werner Seibt in February 2020<sup>2</sup>; we have suggestions and corrections in terms of reading some of these seals. Additionally, some unpublished seals, that Laflı and Seibt only sufficed to provide the inventory numbers and dimensions, will be identified in this article.

In the Ödemiş Museum, there are three Byzantine lead seals which are still unidentified given their poor physical condition, and one lead blank. In the same museum, five seals from the Roman period which are made of lead<sup>3</sup>, one coin<sup>4</sup> and an amulet<sup>5</sup> have been identified. Research about six of the Byzantine seals were presented in the medieval symposium in 2018<sup>6</sup>. These are seals that are categorized as imperial,<sup>7</sup> personal<sup>8</sup>, ecclesiastical<sup>9</sup>, monogramatic<sup>10</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Sencan Altınoluk, "Preliminary Catalogue of Byzantine Coins and Seals in the Collection of the Ödemiş Museum", Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Numismatics and Sigillography Summer Program, 25 July 2011, Washington DC.

<sup>2</sup> Ergün Laflı and Werner Seibt, "Seven Byzantine Lead Seals from the Museum of Ödemiş in Western Anatolia", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 44/1, Cambridge 2020, 21-39.

<sup>3</sup> Inv. nos. 2053, 2633, 2634, 2928, 2884.

<sup>4</sup> Inv. no. 2623.

<sup>5</sup> Ergün Laflı and Werner Seibt showed this amulet among the Byzantine lead seals at the Ödemiş Museum: Laflı, *The Museum of Ödemiş*, 34. This amulet with the Abraxas depiction (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD) was published by the current researcher: Sencan Altınoluk, "Batı Anadolu'dan İki Tılsımlı Objeler: Abrasaks" in: O. Tekin et al. (eds.), *Tarhan Armağanı. M. Taner Tarhan'a Sunulan Makaleler / Essays in Honour of M. Taner Tarhan*, İstanbul 2013, 13-14.

<sup>6</sup> Sencan Altınoluk, "Byzantine Lead Seals in the Ödemiş Museum: Their Contribution to Early and Middle Byzantine History", 22<sup>nd</sup> International Symposium on Medieval and Turkish Excavations and Research in Art History, 24-26 October 2018, İstanbul.

<sup>7</sup> Seal of Anastasius I (AD 591-418), [D(ominus) n(oster) A]nasta[sius p]erp(etuus) Aug(ustus), inv. no. 1854. Laflı, *The Museum of Ödemiş*, 26, no. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Seal of Ioannes, (ca. 8<sup>th</sup> century AD), obv., cruciform invocative monogram (type 5), Θεοτόκε βοήθει. Rev., inscription of four lines, τῷ σὺ δούλῳ Ἰωάννῃ, inv. no. 2009/7 (2949). Laflı, *The Museum of Ödemiş*, 34, not published in Laflı and Seibt but only inv. number and measurements.

<sup>9</sup> Seal of Bishop of Ephesus (11<sup>th</sup> century), obv., in the central circle, bust of the Virgin orans without the medallion of Christ. The sigla are not visible. Within a border of dots, an illegible circular inscription. Rev., in the central circle, between two crosses, bust of a bearded saint (St. John the Evangelist?), Blessing with his right hand and holding a decorated book in his left hand. Within a border of dots, a partly visible circular inscription, [...] ἐπιτοκίου Ἐφέσου, inv. no. 1882. Laflı and Seibt read the reverse legend hypothetically as Κω[νσταντῖνον] σκέποις ΦΕ..V. Laflı, *The Museum of Ödemiş*, 33, no. 7.

anonymous<sup>11</sup>. The capital letters of the seals in the catalogue in this article are written in “Athena Ruby” font and the Ancient Greek lowercase letters are written in the “New Athena Unicode” font prepared by the Dumbarton Oaks Institute. The types of the cruciform invocative monograms are defined according to the basic classification proposed by Laurent<sup>12</sup>.

The province of Ödemiş, about 120 km to the southeast of Izmir, was located in the region of Ancient Lydia, in the valley of Kaystros (Küçükmenderes), to the south of Tmolos (Bozdag, 2157 m), and in the Byzantine period it was located within the *thema* of Thrakesion<sup>13</sup>. The *thema* of Thrakesion, which included Ionia, Lydia, north of Karia and partly Phrygia regions in the beginning of the 8th century, probably got its name from Thracian soldiers who had settled in the region. It is known that the biggest city of this *thema* is Ephesus. Of Thrakesion, which gained great importance as a buffer zone against the Turks with the shrinking of the Byzantine Empire, what was left was only İzmir and its vicinity in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>14</sup>. The two important cities nearest to Ödemiş in the Roman Imperial period were Hypaipa (former Tapay/Datbey/Günlüce) and Dioshieron (Christoupolis/Pyrgion/Birgi). Hypaipa, a suffragan affiliated to the Ephesus Metropolitan in the 6th century, became a metropolitan see during the time of the Emperor Isaakios Angelos II (1185-1195); and was relegated back to the position of a suffragan in the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>15</sup>. The other suffragan, i.e. Dioshieron, which was affiliated to the Ephesus Metropolitan, was called Christoupolis from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Dioshieron appears on the seals under the name Pyrgion in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

As seen in other Anatolian museums, the location where the seals at the Ödemiş Museum are found generally not clear. The collection created through acquisitions does not include seals from Hypaipa or Dioshieron; however, it

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<sup>10</sup> Seal of Ioannes anthypatos (ca. 7<sup>th</sup> century AD), obv., cruciform monogram with a name, Ἰωάννου. Rev., cruciform monogram representing an office, ἀνθυπάτου, inv. no. 1882. Lafli, The Museum of Ödemiş, 28-29, no. 3; seal of stratelates (ca. 7<sup>th</sup> century AD), obv., monogram with a name? Rev., cruciform monogram representing στρατηλάτου, inv. no. 1831. Lafli, The Museum of Ödemiş, 27-28, no. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Anonymous (10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> centuries), obv., bust of the Virgin with the medallion of Christ, legend illegible. Rev., inscription of six lines, border of dots. Οὐ σφραγίς εἰμι [τ]ῆν γρα[φ]ῆν βλέπω[ν γυνώθει], inv. no. 2009/13 (3044). Lafli, The Museum of Ödemiş, 34, not published in Lafli and Seibt but only inv. number and measurements.

<sup>12</sup> Vitalien Laurent, *Documents de sigillographie byzantine, La collection C. Orghidan*, Paris 1952, pl. LXX.

<sup>13</sup> For the place of Smyrna and its surroundings within the *thema* of Thrakesion, see Jean-Claude Cheynet, “La place de Smyrne dans le thème des Thracésiens” in: T. Kolias – K. Pitsakis (eds.), *Aureus: Volume Dedicated to Professor Evangelos K. Chrysos*, Athens 2014, 89-112.

<sup>14</sup> Nicolas Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles*, Paris 1972, 348; Also see Ralph-Johannes Lilie, “Thrakien und Thrakesion”, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 26, Wien 1977, 7-47 for the *thema* of Thrakesion.

<sup>15</sup> Hierokles, *Synekdemos*, 659, 10.

is understood that the items in the collection do mostly originate from the Western Anatolia. It was determined that three of the seals belonged to the officers of the *thema* of Thrakesion. One of these seals belongs to the *strategos* Mikhael, who held the titles of *patrikios* (πατρίκιος) and imperial *protospatharios* (βασιλικός πρωτοσπαθάριος) (catalogue no. 2). The office of *strategos* was used for the commanders of the military units in the lands of *thema* in the 7<sup>th</sup> century<sup>16</sup>. The title of *patrikios* that appear together with Mikhael is one of the highest honorary titles of the aristocracy in the hierarchy of the Byzantium Empire<sup>17</sup>. This dignity, which remained important until the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, was given to the empire's important *strategoï*. It is understood that the owner of the seal is Mikhael Lakhanodrakon (762-792), the most famous *strategos* of the *thema*, a leading *iconoclast* and one of the loyal generals of Constantine V. The other high dignity that Mikhael held i.e. *protospatharios* (chief guard, chief sword bearer) indicates that he was one of the leading guards of the emperor. The holders of this dignity, who are entitled to join the Senate, would reside in the palace in Constantinople as long as the emperor does not give a duty in a province. The holders of the title *protospatharios*, who would also attend imperial feasts, had close personal contact with the emperor<sup>18</sup>. Constantine V entrusted this *thema*, an economically extremely important, arable, productive large land located in the west of Asia Minor and called the Asian province previously to Mikhael Lakhanodrakon, one of his most passionate supporters. Lakhanodrakon<sup>19</sup> was known for his tortures and exiles in the *thema* of Thrakesion, especially around Ephesus, during the iconoclasm in the second half of the 8th century. In 770, he gathered all the priests and nuns in *Thrakesion* in Ephesus and forced them to choose either to marry or to be blinded and exiled to Cyprus<sup>20</sup>. It is narrated that Lakhanodrakon sold all the monasteries under his administration with together with their sacred properties and scriptures, and he successfully fulfilled his duty to the point that no monks were left in his region. In addition, Lakhanodrakon, who has served as a *strategos* for sixteen years, fought with the Arab and Bulgarians to protect his region and has become a mythical historical

<sup>16</sup> Strategos (στρατηγός, plural στρατηγοί). *Strategoï* have over time become the administrative chiefs of the region in which they served; they have achieved a powerful position. In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, they became rulers of smaller areas with the reduction of *thema* lands. The widespread *strategos* office on lead seals from this period also shows that they lost their importance with the increase in the number of this office. For *Strategos*, see: *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium (ODB)*, Alexander Kazhdan et al. (eds.), 3 vols., Newyork 1991, 1964-1965.

<sup>17</sup> *Patrikios* (πατρίκιος) as a title, comes in a lower rank than *magistros* (μάγιστρος) and *anthypatos* (ἀνθύπατος). In 8<sup>th</sup>—10<sup>th</sup> centuries, *strategos* was used by authorities in the position of state governorship. The members of the *patrikios* class were the highest level senators. For *patrikios*, see *ODB*, 1600.

<sup>18</sup> For the title of *protospatharios* (πρωτοσπαθάριος), see Rodolphe Guiland, *Recherches sur les institutions Byzantines*, 2 vols, Amsterdam 1967, 99-131; *ODB*, 1748; John Bagnell Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* London 1911 27

character<sup>21</sup>. It is not surprising that a seal belonging to the most famous commander of the region, i.e. Lakhanodrakon, is found in the collection of Ödemiş Museum. Another *strategos* of Thrakesion, who has a seal in the collection, is Theodoros (catalogue no. 1). Theodoros also holds the title of imperial *spatharios*<sup>22</sup>. Within the same century as Lakhanodrakon did, Theodoros, too, served as a commander in the same *thema*. However, Lakhanodrakon's extraordinary popularity aside, the titles of *patrikios* and chief *spatharios* demonstrates that he was superior to Theodoros in terms of rank. Theodoros seals are found in Istanbul Archeology Museums and some other collections<sup>23</sup>; however, we do not come across his name on other sources.

In the Ödemiş collection, there is also the seal of an *ek prosopou* (ἐκ προσώπου) who served as deputy in 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries in *thema* of Thrakesion (catalogue no. 4). *Ek prosopou* has been a commonly used term for representatives of officers with various duties, especially in the Middle Byzantine Period (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries)<sup>24</sup>. When we consider *ek prosopou* in a certain *thema*, we can deduce that this title was used for a *strategos* or province officer. Similar to *strategos*, who was the highest military officer in the *thema*, *ek prosopou* was an officer commissioned directly by the emperor as a representative, undertaking duties such as handling requests and fulfilling imperial orders. However, in the empire hierarchy it is in a lower rank compared to *strategos*. In the event that the *strategos*, the biggest military ruler in the *thema* is absent for any reason, it is known that instead of another military official, the *ek prosopou* would take his place. Unfortunately, the name of this imperial representative in the Ödemiş seal is unknown because the first line of the seal is not visible. Another *ek prosopou* seal in the collection belongs to Constantine, who lived in circa 8<sup>th</sup> century (catalogue no. 3). This time while it is possible to see the name of the seal holder, the place of duty is not specified. It is impossible to say anything other than that Constantine was the person whom the Emperor commissioned as a deputy with an uncertain issue.

Anatolikon, located to the east of Thrakesion and one of the first *themas* established in Asia Minor, is represented with only a single seal in the collection. The *thema* of Anatolikon, which initially included the western and southern parts of Asia Minor, included Lykaonia, Pisidia, Isauria, much of Phrygia and a part of Galatia in the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thrakesion and Kibyrraiotai

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<sup>21</sup> Theophanes, *Choronographia*, 1, 445-446, 51; *Patrologia Graeca* 100, col. 1164-1165.

<sup>22</sup> In the 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, *spatharios*, which was used for the close guards of the emperor in the palace, lost its military content in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and turned into an honorary title only; It is understood that it lost its importance in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. For *spatharios*, see *ODB*, 1935-1936; Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System*, 112.

<sup>23</sup> See catalogue no. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System*, 46-47; Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, 342.

dissociated from the *thema* of Anatolikon as two new *themata* in the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century<sup>25</sup>. The name of the first *strategos* of Anatolikon appears in year 669. The Ödemiş seal that we dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century belongs to Mikhael Tornikes, the *protospatharios* and judge of the Hippodrome (κριτής τοῦ ἵπποδρόμου) and of the Anatolikon (catalogue no. 9). It is known that prior to 1028, a judge named Mikhael Tornikes served at a court in the Hippodrome<sup>26</sup>. It is plausible to think that he is the owner of the seal. We do not possess any other information about Mikhael Tornikes; however, we can say that his family had an important status in the Byzantine aristocracy. Apparently the family of Tornikoi (or Tornikioi)<sup>27</sup>, who is understood to be of Armenian and/or Georgian origin, settled in Constantinople in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century; undertook important roles in the political affairs of the Byzantine Empire until the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is known that some of the family members who have acquired a respectable position in the Byzantium served important duties in the civil government<sup>28</sup>.

Another seal that we are examining in this article belongs to Constantine, whom we encounter with titles of imperial chief guard and *epi ton oikeiakon* (ἐπὶ τῶν οικειακῶν) (catalogue no. 7). *Epi ton oikeiakon* is thought to have two different meanings in two different time periods, i.e. 873/4 and after 1030, and its content changed radically between these two dates<sup>29</sup>. *Epi ton oikeiakon*, which was used as a highly honorary title for the person in the emperor's private service towards the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, was arranged as a private office (*sekretion*) under the jurisdiction of *logothetes tou genikou* in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. A document from 994 shows that the *sekretion ton oikeiakon* existed in 972/73<sup>30</sup>, yet still not an independent department. This bureau manages state-owned properties and collects tax revenues. After 1030, it turned into a commission that was responsible for the acquisition and running of state land and an independent *sekretion* managing the financial affairs of the empire.

Another task related to the financial affairs of the state in the Ödemiş collection appears in the seal dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, which belongs to Theodoros, who bears the title of imperial *protospatharios* (catalogue no. 8). The title of *epi tou basilikou vestiariou*, which demonstrates Theodoros'

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<sup>25</sup> John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge 1997, 157; Agostino Pertusi, *Constantino Porfirogenito: De Thematis*, Vatican City 1952, 114-115.

<sup>26</sup> Peira 49, 4.

<sup>27</sup> ODB, 2096-2097.

<sup>28</sup> *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit (PLP)* 12, E. Trapp et al. (eds.), 15 vols., Vienna 1976-1996, 29114-29140.

<sup>29</sup> Nicolas Oikonomidès, "L'évolution de L'organisation Administrative de L'empire Byzantin Au XIe Siècle (1025-1118)", *Travaux et Mémoires* 6, Paris 1976, 136-137; Nicolas Oikonomidès, "Pour une nouvelle lecture des inscriptions de Skripou en Béotie", *Travaux et Mémoires* 12, Paris 1994, 486-489.

<sup>30</sup> Actes de Lavra I, 11. 15: καὶ γενικοῦ λογοθέτου οικειακῶς; see also, I, 56. 104-105: τελεῖν ὀφειλόντων τῶν μοναχῶν διὰ πόλεως εἰς τὸ τῶν οικειακῶν σέκρετον.

responsibilities for imperial treasury and storehouses, is also indicated on the seal. *Vestiarion* (βεστιάριον) is an office that was initially established in parallel to the office of *sakellion*<sup>31</sup> to supply the fleet and the army and store valuable equipment<sup>32</sup>. However, later on this office was also interested in monetary affairs. The imperial *vestiarion* received various payments, sharing them with *sakellion*. In the seal of Theodoros, the title of *primikerios* (πριμικήριος), which shows that he served at the highest level as a *vestiarion*, is also seen. Residing in the palace, *primikerioi* are usually eunuchs and it is known that they work under the emperor and hold duties in relation to certain public services<sup>33</sup>.

The last two seals we will mention belong to those involved in military missions. The first of these belong to Gregorios, a *tourma* (τούρμα) commander and the bearer of the title of imperial *spatharios* (catalogue no. 5). As per the new military regulations introduced in the 7<sup>th</sup> century in the Byzantine Empire, two to four garrisons, i.e. *tourmai*, comprised of civil and military major subdivisions, were formed in each *thema*. It is thought that there were around 2000 to 5000 soldiers in each *tourma* in between 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>34</sup>. *Tourma* commander, i.e. *tourmarkhes* (τουρμάρχης) Gregorios, who is not mentioned in the literature, does not have any other seal that we know of.

The holder of the other seal bears the title of *spatharios*. Since the first line on the backside of the inscription is damaged, the name of the owner cannot be read. Judged from the title *komes tes kortes* (κόμης τῆς κόρτης), we understand that this person is responsible for the inspection of the army as well as for the setting up of the tent of the emperor during an expedition (catalogue no. 6). Compared to the title of *tourmarkhes*, the title of the *komes tes kortes* is known to be a lower rank officer the in military hierarchy<sup>35</sup>. Although their jurisdiction is not clearly identified, since their seals were found in Ödemiş, we think that both officers were working in Western Asia Minor, possibly in the *thema* of Thrakesion.

## Catalogue

1. Theodoros, imperial *spatharios* and *strategos* of Thrakesion (8<sup>th</sup> century AD)  
Inv. no.: 2001-17 (2771)

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<sup>31</sup> *Sakellion* (σακέλλιον) refers to the imperial treasure.

<sup>32</sup> For the imperial *vestiarion*, see John Ebersolt, "Sur les fonctions et les dignités du Vestiarium byzantin", *Mélanges Diehl, II, Histoire*, Paris 1930, 81-89; Franz Dölger, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Finanzverwaltung, besonders des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig 1927, 27-31.

<sup>33</sup> For *Primikerios*, see *ODB*, 1719- 1720; Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, 126, 300.

<sup>34</sup> Warren T. Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army*, Stanford 1995, 97, 105.

<sup>35</sup> Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, 341.

Dia. 28 mm, th. 4 mm, wgt. 15.66g

Parallel: Vera Bulgurlu, *İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri'ndeki Bizans Kurşun Mühürleri*, İstanbul 2007, no. 191 name could not be determined; Jean-Claude Cheynet - Turan Gökyıldırım - Vera Bulgurlu, *Les Sceaux Byzantins du Musée Archeologique d'Istanbul*, İstanbul 2012, no. 3.129; John Ebersolt, *Sceaux Byzantins Du Musée de Constantinople*, Paris 1914, no. 534 (386) incorrectly stated that the name is Ioannes. John Nesbitt – Nicolas Oikonomidès, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art 3: West, Northwest, and Central Asia Minor and the Orient*, Washington DC 1996, no. 2:53; George Zacos – Alexander Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1, Basel 1972, no. 2462. Lafli, *The Museum of Ödemiş*, 30, no. 5 (this seal).

Obv.: Cruciform invocative monogram (type 5); in the quarters: ΤΩ-ΣΩ|ΔΘ-ΛΩ

Θεοτόκε βοήθει τῶ σῶ δούλω

Rev.: Inscription of five lines. Wreath border. +ΘΕΟΔ|ΩΡΩΒ,ΣΠ|.Θ/ΣΤΡΑΤ|. /ΤΟΝΘΡ|.ΚΗϚ

+Θεοδώρω β(ασιλικῶ) σπ[α]θ(αρίω) (καὶ) στρατ[ηγ](ῶ) τον Θρακησ(ίωv).  
Translation : Theotokos, protect your servant Theodoros, imperial *spatharios* and *strategos* of Thrakesion.

2. Mikhael, *patrikios* imperial *protospatharios* and *strategos* of Thrakesion (8<sup>th</sup> century AD)

Inv. no.: 1815

Dia. 24 mm, th. 7 mm, wgt. 16.62g

Parallel: Cheynet, *Les Sceaux Byzantins du Musée Archeologique d'Istanbul*, no. 3130. The same seal was previously described by Ebersolt, *Sceaux Byzantins Du Musée de Constantinople*, no. 531 (255) and was released in Bulgurlu, *İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri'ndeki Bizans Kurşun Mühürleri*, no. 190.

Similar: Nesbitt, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, no. 2:45; Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, no. 2189.

Obv.: Cruciform invocative monogram (type 8); in the quarters: ΤΩ-ΣΩ|ΔΘ-ΛΩ

Κύριε βοήθει τῶ σῶ δούλω.

Rev.: Inscription of five lines. Wreath border.

.ΙΧΔ|.ΛΠΑΤΡ.Κ|.Α/ΣΠΑΘΣ|.ΤΡΑ/ΤΩ|.ΘΡΑΚ

[+M]ιχα[ῆ]λ πατρ[ι]κ(ίω) [β](ασιλικῶ) (πρωτο)σπαθ(αρίω) (καὶ) [σ]τρα(τηγῶ) τῶ[v] Θρακ(ησίωv).

Translation: Lord, help your servant Mikhael, *patrikios*, *protospatharios* and *strategos* of the Thrakesion.

The letters in the first line on the back of the seal are hard to identify because they are broken and partially missing. Lafli and Seibt suggest, though with



suspicion, that the name of the owner of this seal was Leon<sup>36</sup>. The letters in the first line on the back are not visible; the first letter in the second line is given as T (tau). However, it is understood that the first letters on the back of the line are off flan. Therefore, we think that T given in this line as the first letter is actually the second letter and is actually Λ (lambda). In another example of the Ödemiş seal found in Istanbul Archaeological Museum collection, struck by the same *boulloterion*, it is understood that the first line is broken and the name of the seal holder is given as Mikhael with a question mark<sup>37</sup>. The first letter of the third line is read as Σ (kai).

In Lafli and Seibt's reading, the title of the owner was identified only as *protospatharios* instead of *basilikos protospatharios* because the first letter Β (beta) was not considered due to being off flan. In a similar specimen of the seal in the Dumbarton Oaks collection, this letter, which does not appear in our seal, is read as Β (beta), the first letter of β(ασιλικῶ)<sup>38</sup>. Therefore, we find it appropriate to complete the first letter of the third line, which is not seen in the Ödemiş seal, as Β. Lafli and Seibt stated that the fourth line starts with τρστ and that the T of the following word, i.e. τῶν, is not legible. However, we think that this line starts with [σ]τρσ, and uses an abbreviation mark of (ς) after Α (alpha), and then continues with τῶ. Lafli and Seibt suggest that Θρακησίων in the last line was abbreviated as Θρακ(η)σ(ίων) and that the letter than followed K (kappa) was C (Sigma). However, we suggest that the last line ends with the abbreviation sign (ς), which precedes Θρακ.

The idea that the owner of the seal is the famous Mikhael Lakhanodrakon is very plausible<sup>39</sup>. Indeed, *patrikios*, too, is among the titles Mikhael Lakhanodrakon holds.

### 3. Constantine, *ek prosopou* (ca. 8<sup>th</sup> century AD)

Inv. no.: 2009-10 (3041)

Dia. 21 mm, th. 6 mm, wgt. 12.20g

Obv: Cruciform invocative monogram (type 5 or 8) in wreath border; in the quarters: ..-CΩ|Δδ-ΛΩ

[Κύριε or Θεοτόκε βοήθει τῶ] σῶ δούλω.

<sup>36</sup> Lafli, The Museum of Ödemiş, 31-32 no. 6: Rev.: .....|ΤΠΑΤΡ.Κ|Α/ΣΠΑΘΣ.|ΤΡΑΤ.Ω|.ΠΑΚ. Transcription: [+ Λέων]τ(ι)(:) πατρ[ι]κ(ίω) (πρωτο)σπαθ(αρίω) (καί) [σ]τρατ(ηγῶ) [τ]ῶ[ν Θ]ρακ(η)[σ(ίων)]. Translation: Lord, help your servant Leon, *patrikios*, *protospatharios* and *strategos* of the Thrakesion.

<sup>37</sup> Cheynet, *Les Sceaux Byzantins du Musee Archeologique d'Istanbul*, 362 no. 3130.

<sup>38</sup> Nesbitt, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, no. 2:45.

<sup>39</sup> For other seals of Mikhael Lakhanodrakon, see K. M. Konstantopoulos, *Byzantiaka Molybdoboulla tou en Athenais Ethnikou Nomismatiku Mouseiou*, Athens 1917, no. 125; Vitalien Laurent, "Bulletin de sigillographie byzantine", *Byzantion* 5/2 (1929-30), 637 no. 9; Nesbitt, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, nos. 2.45-47; Gustave Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'Empire byzantin*, Paris 1884, 730 no. 1; Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, nos. 2189- 2190, 3145.

Rev.: Inscription of four lines. Wreath border.: K...|TANT̄.|N̄SEK...|..OΠ.  
K[ωνσ]ταντ[ίν]ω ἐκ [προσ]ώπ[ου].

Translation: Lord (or Theotokos), help your servant Constantine, *ek prosopou*.  
Not published in Laffl and Seibt but only inv. number and measurements<sup>40</sup>. For *ek prosopou* Constantine, see: Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, no. 1440.

4. Name, *ek prosopou* of Thrakesion (8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)

Inv. no.: 2009-4 (2945)

Diam. 25 mm, th. 6 mm, wgt. 14.50g

Obv.: Cruciform invocative monogram (type 5 or 8) in wreath border; in the quarters: ..-..|ΔΘ-ΛΩ

[Κύριε or Θεοτόκε βοήθει τῷ σῶ] δούλω.

Rev.: Inscription of four lines. Wreath border. ...|.ΚΠΡΟCΟ.|ΘΤΩΝΘΡΑ|ΚΙCΙΩΝ  
[... ἐ]κ προσώ[π]ου τῶν Θρακησίων.

Translation: Lord (or Theotokos), help your servant (name), *ek prosopou* of Thrakesion.

Not published in Laffl and Seibt but only inv. number and measurements<sup>41</sup>. The name of the seal holder could not be determined due to the absence of the first line, or no parallel or similar specimen could be found. For the 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries *ek prosopou* David in the *thema* of Thrakesion, see: Cheynet, *Les Sceaux Byzantins du Musee Archeologique d'Istanbul*, no. 3124.

5. Gregorios, imperial *spatharios* and *tourmarkhes* (8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)

Inv. no.: 2009-5 (2946)

Dia. 26 mm, th. 4 mm, wgt. 16.26g

Obv.: Cruciform invocative monogram (type 5); in the quarters:

ΤΩ-CΩ|ΔΘ-ΛΩ

Θεοτόκε βοήθει τῷ σῶ δούλω.

Rev.: Inscription of four lines. +ΓΡ..|ΟΡΙΩΒ/С.|ΑΘ/STΘΡ|ΜΑΡΧ

+Γρ[ηγ]ορίω β(ασιλικῶ) σ[π]αθ(αρίω) (καί) τουρμαρχ(η).

Translation: Theotokos, help your servant Georgios, imperial *spatharios* and *tourmarkhes*.

The parallel of this seal has not been found. Not published in Laffl and Seibt but only inv. number and measurements<sup>42</sup>.

6. Name, *spatharios* and *komes tes kortes* (ca. 8<sup>th</sup> century AD)

Inv. no.: 1818

Dia. 21 mm, th. 4 mm, wgt. 10.88g

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<sup>40</sup> Laffl, *The Museum of Ödemiş*, 34.

<sup>41</sup> Laffl, *The Museum of Ödemiş*, 34.

<sup>42</sup> Laffl, *The Museum of Ödemiş*, 34.

Obv.: Inscription of four lines in wreath border. ....|..Ϟ..|..ΤΟϞΩ|ΔΟΝΛΩ|+

Rev.: Inscription of five lines in wreath border. ....|.....|.ΠΑΘΑ|ΣΚΟΜΙΤ|ΙΚΟΡ/ [Κύριε ορ Θεοτόκε β]ο[ρήθη] τ(ῶ) σῶ δούλω [name] [σ]παθα(ρίω) (καί) κόμι(τι) τῖ(ς) κόρ(της).

Translation: Lord (or Theotokos), help your servant (name), *spatharios* and *komes tes kortes*.

The name of the seal holder on the reverse of the first line is completely missing. Laflı and Seibt stated that *basiliskos* (βασιλικός) could come before the *spatharios* (σπαθάριος)<sup>43</sup>. The fact that the office of *komes tes kortes* appears together with imperial *spatharios* rather than *spatharios* supports this idea<sup>44</sup>. Laflı and Seibt think that on the fourth line on the reverse of the seal the word κόμιτι is clearly written and that the articulus τῖς is not used. As is seen in the spelling of this office, it is more likely that the last letter on the fourth line and the first letter on the fifth line indicate the articulus τῖς).

7. Constantine, imperial *protospatharios*, *epi ton oikeaikon* (10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)

Inv. no.: 2009-15

Dia. 24 mm, th. 3 mm, wgt. 8.74g

Obv: St. Demetrios, standing facing; holding cross in r. hand. Inscription in two columns: Ο ΑΓ/ΔΗ|ΜΗΤΡΙΟϞ Circular inscription along border of dots: ΑΓΙΕ ΔΗΜΙΤΡΗ...

Ὁ ἅγ(ιος) Δημήτριος. Ἄγιε Δημιτρη [...].

Rev.: Inscription of six lines:

+ΚΩΝ|ΣΤΑΝΤΙΝ|ΩΡ/Α/ΣΠΑΘ/|ΣΕΠΙΤΟΝΝ|ΚΙΑΚΩ/Ε|.....

+Κωνσταντίνω βασιλικῶ (πρωτο)σπαθ(αρίω) (καί) ἐπὶ τον ὑκιακῶ(ν) ἐ(...).

Translation: St. Demetrios, (help your servant?) Constantine, imperial *protospatharios* and *epi ton oikeiakon*.

Not published in Laflı and Seibt but only inv. number and measurements<sup>45</sup>. The seal has no parallel or similar. The last line is illegible.

8. Theodoros, *primikerios*, imperial *protospatharios* and *epi tou basilikou vestiariou* (10<sup>th</sup> century AD)

Inv. no.: 2007-4 (2932)

Dia. 28 mm, th. 3 mm, wgt. 10.86g

Parallel: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, no. 1955.1.1342 Vitalien Laurent, *Le Corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin 2, L'administration*

<sup>43</sup> Laflı, The Museum of Ödemiş, 29-30 no. 4: Rev.: ....|.....|.ΠΑΘΑ|ΣΚΟΜΙΤ|ΙΚΟΡ/ Rev. transcription: [NN] σπαθα(ρίω) (καί) κόμιτι κόρ(της).

<sup>44</sup> For an example of the title of *protospatharios* that appear together with *komes tes kortes* on seals, see Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, nos. 2381, 2512.

<sup>45</sup> Laflı, The Museum of Ödemiş, 34.

*centrale*, Paris 1981, 360 no. 696. Not published in Laffl and Seibt but only inv. number and measurements<sup>46</sup>.

Obv.: Cruciform monogram: . - . - Θ - Ο - Ρ - Ω; between two borders of dots, circular inscription: +KVP..... Τ.....

+Κύρ[ιε βοήθει] τ[ῶ] σῶ δούλω] Θ[ε]ο[δ]ώρω.

Rev.: Inscription in five lines with decorations above and below. Circle of pellets within a double border of dots:

-∴-|+ΠΡΙΜ[ι]ΚΕΡ(ίω), Β(ασιλικῶ) (πρωτο)σ[πα]θ(αρίω) καὶ ἐ[πι] τοῦ Β(ασιλικοῦ)

Βε[σ]τι[α]ρί[ου].

Translation: Lord, help your servant Theodoros *primikerios*, imperial *protospatharios* and *epi tou basilikou vestiariou*.

9. Mikhael Tornikes, *protospatharios* and judge of the Hippodrome and of the Anatolikon (11<sup>th</sup> century AD)

Inv. no.: 2009-3 (2944)

Diam. 20 mm, th. 3 mm, wgt. 5.30 g

Obv.: Bust of the Virgin with both hands open in front of her. Border of dots.

Inscription: .Ρ - ..

[Μ(ήτη)]ρ [Θ(εο)ῦ]

Rev.: Inscription of five lines. Border of dots.

.....|.ΠΑΘ[SKP]|.ΠΤΞΙΠΠ|.ΤΩΤΟΡΝ|.ΝΑΤ

[+Μιχαήλ (πρωτο)σ]παθ(αρίω) (καὶ) κρ(ιτῆ) [ἐ]π(ι) τοῦ Ἰπποδρόμου] τῶ Τορν(ήκη) (τῶν) [Α]νατ(ολικῶν).

Translation: Mikhael Tornikes, *protospatharios* and judge of the Hippodrome and of the Anatolikon.

The first line of the reverse where the name is written is missing. However, based on a similar example in the Dumbarton Oaks collection dating to the same century, we think that the name Mikhael was on the first line<sup>47</sup>. Another seal of Mikhael Tornikes was found in Corinth excavations<sup>48</sup>. Not published in Laffl and Seibt but only inv. number and measurements<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Laffl, *The Museum of Ödemiş*, 34.

<sup>47</sup> Nesbitt, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, no. 86.31: obv., bust of a richly clothed saint. Ὁ ἅγιος [...]. Rev., inscription of six lines. Μιχαήλ πρωτοσπαθαρίω κριτῆ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰπποδρόμου καὶ τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν τῶ Τορνήκη.

<sup>48</sup> Gladys R. Davidson, *Corinth, vol. 12, The Minor Objects*, Princeton 1952, 327, no. 2819 (3674): Μιχαήλ τῶ Τορνήκη.

<sup>49</sup> Laffl, *The Museum of Ödemiş*, 34.

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Cat. no. 1 obv.



Cat. no. 1 rev.



Cat. no. 2 obv.



Cat. no. 2 rev.



Cat. no. 3 obv.



Cat. no. 3 rev.



Cat. no. 4 obv.



Cat. no. 4 rev.



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