

Learning about Byzantine seals

From bullae to **IPs**



TEACHER'S BOOK



MUSEUM
OF BYZANTINE
CULTURE

Learning about Byzantine seals

From bullae to **IPs**

Educational program for Secondary School students
Teacher's Book and Worksheets



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OF BYZANTINE
CULTURE



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Introduction

The present publication is addressed to the teachers of secondary-level education. It is connected to the educational program “Learning about Byzantine seals. From bullae to IPs”, based on the collection of lead seals of the Museum of Byzantine Culture. The program takes place in the galleries of the Museum and in the Educational Programs Room.

The purpose of this teacher’s book is to present teachers with the specific educational program and provide information about the lead seals, how they were made, their use and their prominent role as direct historical sources. The information about lead seals can enrich the teaching of history lessons at school.

The educational program

The program “Learning about Byzantine seals. From bullae to IPs” is addressed to the students of secondary education.

Learning objectives:

For students to gain information about:

- writing in Byzantium (who wrote? what materials did they use?)
- the organizational system of the administrative and ecclesiastic bureaucracy (assurance of privacy and validity of documents)
- the distribution system of the documents
- the creation and use of the lead seals
- the assurance of the privacy of correspondence and the authenticity of the signature via IP nowadays.

Pedagogical objectives:

For students to:

- exercise their critical thinking through discussion and observation
- compare the past with the present
- work in groups
- learn how to fold a Byzantine document and seal it with a seal made of clay
- create their own lead seal

The methods used to realize this program are the maieutic method through discussion, co-operation, the discovery process, the observation of objects and photos, filling out worksheets and finally the students' experience of participating in a creative workshop, where they learn how the documents were folded and sealed in the Byzantine Empire.

The program takes place in Gallery 4 "From iconoclasm to the splendor of the Macedonian and Komnenian dynasties" where the larger part of the collection of lead seals of the Museum of Byzantine Culture is exhibited. Lead seals are also exhibited in Gallery 7 "The twilight of Byzantium", whilst a document with the lead seal of the Patriarch of Constantinople Callinicus IV (1801-1809) is exhibited in Gallery 9 "Economopoulos Collection".

In the first part of the program, students through questions and discussion, using the maieutic method and the provided material, learn about the use and usefulness of the lead seals and the bureaucratic organization in the Byzantine Empire. Afterwards, they are separated into four groups and with four work sheets they discover and study lead seals owned by a) emperors, b) patriarchs, c) ekklesiastikoi officials of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and d) state officials. By studying lead seals, they extract information about their owners and the seals themselves as historical sources.

The second part of the program takes place in the educational programs room where students participate in the workshop of folding an official state document and its sealing process with clay. Finally, they print a "lead seal" souvenir using a 3D printer, one for each school section and each child takes a personal souvenir t-shirt and an iron-on stamp of the lead seal.

Nowadays...

An IP (Internet Protocol) address is a unique identifier, similar to a mailing address, associated with network activity (e.g., purchases, email delivery, television programs). In order to receive our post, it is crucial that our address is unique. The same applies for IP addresses.

Any device connected to a network gets an IP address, that is its own mailing address thanks to which it becomes possible to send and receive information from other connected devices. So, any device connected to the Internet (e.g. a PC, router, mobile phone, tablet, Playstation, network printer, large servers hosting websites) find, send and exchange information with other connected devices by using an IP address.

An IP address is associated with a particular location. When we are at home and we get connected to the Internet, we use the IP address of our house. Though if we read our emails at home in the morning and then give a glance to the news in a coffee shop, and then finally start work at the office, we will have used different IP addresses.

In the title of the program “*Learning about Byzantine seals. From bullae to IPs*” the term IP is used symbolically in order to indicate the passing from past to present, from the lead seals to non-material digital technology.

Teachers themselves

Alternatively, teachers can realize the program themselves. At school, teachers can discuss topics about the use of lead seals with students, based on the general information provided in this publication. Later, during the visit to the museum, after separating the students into four groups, they proceed to Gallery 4 and they use the work sheets, which are provided by the security staff during their arrival at the museum.

Don't forget to get in touch with the museum in order to book your visit.

Tel: 2313306422

Byzantine bullae-lead seals

Sealing the correspondence

All civilizations, since prehistoric times, had their own stamping tools, such as incised stone cylinders, seal stones and metal ring signets (fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Gold ring signet depicting a scene of preparation of a sacrifice. Mycenae, 15th cent. BC, National Archaeological Museum of Athens ©Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/ HCRMDO

During Byzantine times, apart from the above means (fig. 2) lead seals (In Greek: *molyvdo boula* or *bullae*) were used. Byzantines in this way ensured the confidentiality of correspondence, asserting at the same time the authenticity of the signature of the sender of the letter. Besides letters and documents, seals sealed commercial packages destined for export or passing through customs control. Additionally, sealing in Byzantine times asserted that letters, documents or *apokombia* (bags of coins) were not tampered with. Or, also, that a precious object, like a saint's relic was authentic and was not forged.

The majority of the seals are inscribed in Greek. However, Latin inscriptions are also found in early examples from the 5th to early 7th century. During the same period, bilingual seals are used that bear on the one side the name of the holder in Greek and on the other side the title and the office in Latin.

The majority of the seals were made of lead, although other materials were also used, such as gold, silver and wax. The extended use of lead during the Byzantine era is attributed to financial, as well as practical reasons; the limited value allowed its broad use, while its soft texture and its sustainability facilitated its production and circulation.



Fig. 2. Bronze ring signet, 6th cent. AD. It is incised around the perimeter with the sealing of “ΠΑΥΛΟΣ” (Paul) and a cross in the middle. Museum of Byzantine Culture, Gallery 2 © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

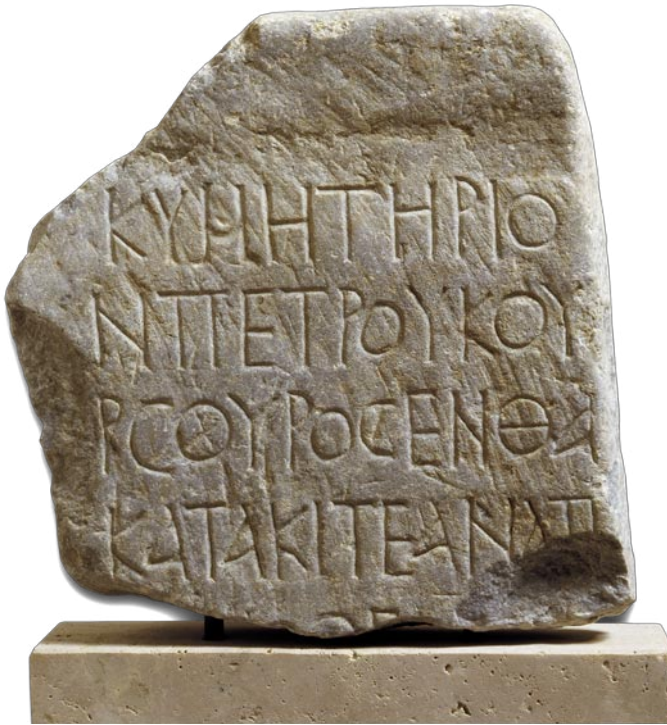
Gold seals were exclusively used by emperors and only for exceptionally high-level official documents that were called *chrysoboulla* in Greek, whereas *molyvdo boulla* (meaning lead seals in Greek) were employed for private correspondence.

Gold seals were initially issued probably during the reign of Basil I (867-886) and were made of solid gold. Their weight varied and was reckoned in the weight of gold coins (solidus), but mainly was in accordance with the receiver's importance. The book “On the Order of the Palace” written by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913-959) reports on all the officials that are to be corresponded with *chrysoboulla*; foreign rulers and the Pope should receive a gold seal to the weight of two gold coins, while the rulers of Armenia and the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem should receive a gold seal of three gold coins. Seals equal to the weight of four gold coins were used exclusively for the Arab Caliph of Baghdad. Gold seals have rarely survived, while even rarer are the silver ones that were issued for a short period by the despots of Epirus and Morea. On the contrary, wax seals were more common; though, only few of them have survived, as wax is a perishable material.

Imperial correspondence was in the hands of a strictly organized service located in the Holy Palace (*asecretēs*, *notarii*, *decani*). Its personnel, high-ranking officials with exceptional prestige, were individuals who enjoyed the absolute trust of the emperor.

A postman from Thessaloniki

For the distribution of letters and various packages the establishment of an organized postal network was required. *Cursus publicus*, the state service of transportation that was developed during the reign of Julius Augustus (1st cent. BC to 1st cent. AD) initially for military reasons, was run by postmen from the army and the palace. Their duty was on-time delivery of official documents that were sent by political or military officers across the empire. The postmen transported these with horses or mules that had to be changed on a regular basis. For this reason stations for the changing of animals/collecting goods (*mutationes*) and for resting/overnight stays were built along the routes (*mansiones*).

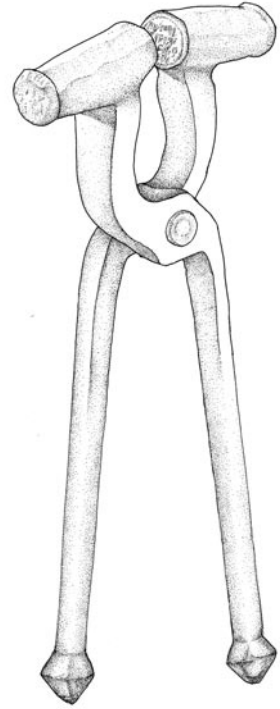


The existence of such a postman (*cursurus* in latin) is attested to by a marble funeral inscription belonging to a postman named Peter that is now displayed in the Museum of Byzantine Culture (fig. 3). The inscription gives information on the existence of an organized mail service in Thessaloniki during 5th-6th cent. ΚΥΜΗΤΗΡΙΟ/Ν ΠΙΕΤΡΟΥ ΚΟΥ/ΡΣΟΥΡΟΣ ΕΝΘΑ/ ΚΑΤΑΚΙΤΕ ΑΝΑΠ //[ΑΥΘ]ΗΣ Ο Ε[---] (Peter the postman lies in peace here)

Fig. 3. Marble funeral inscription of a postman, 5th cent. AD. Museum of Byzantine Culture, Gallery 2 © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

How were the lead seals made? How were the documents and packages sealed?

With the casting method, small round lead disks (sketch 1) were made in slate molds (sketch 2). The disks had a channel running through the middle, the "diavlos", through which a string, the merinthos, was passed, that tied and secured the document. During the early years, they stamped only one side of the disk with ring-seals, after heating it as to soften it, while the other side remained unsealed.



Sketch 3. Boulloterion
(designed by E. Theou)



Sketch 1. Lead disks
(designed by E. Theou)



Sketch 2. Slate molds for
producing lead disks
(designed by E. Theou)

In the 4th century AD, the boulloterion (sketch 3), an implement that permitted the simultaneous stamping of both surfaces of the lead disk, was invented. The boulloterion was shaped like pliers, with two crossed iron handles having hammer-shaped heads. On their inner side, they engraved the negatives of the inscriptions and the representations that would be imprinted on the lead seals during sealing process. Very few boulloteria have been preserved, as for security reasons they were destroyed upon the death of their owner. Also, when a public servant, owner of a boulloterion, retired or acceded to a higher office, the boulloterion was destroyed and they made another one for their new office.

The state documents written on only one side had to be folded in such a way as to form a small packet, like the modern-day postal envelope. They were then bound with merinthos, the two ends of which passed through the channel of the disk and were sealed under the pressure of the boulloterion. In this way the sealing of the document, ensured the secrecy

and the validity of the document since the string had to be cut for it to be opened. In the case that documents or letters were open or private, the seals served as a certificate of legality and validity. On the bottom blank part of the document there would be two open holes which the thread, embedded with the seal, passed through (fig. 4-5).



Fig. 4. Folded document with a lead seal ensuring its authenticity. Vlatades Monastery Collection



Fig. 5. Open letter of the Patriarchate Callinicus V with a recipient Apostolos Pappas from Demetrias, December 1805, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Gallery 9 © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

Chrysobulla (imperial documents granting privileges) were rolled up, but were left open, written only on one side. On the bottom the imperial gold seal was hanging through the silk merinthos that ensured the documents' authenticity.



Fig. 6. Miniature in a chrysobull from Monemvasia depicting emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328) handing the chrysobull to Christ © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Byzantine and Christian Museum

The usefulness of lead seals for the historian

Lead seals, which comprise valuable primary historical sources, are the object of the scholarly field of sigillography (from the latin *sigillum*). The many seals that have been preserved contribute to the study of the structure of the complex administrative system of the Byzantine Empire, to our knowledge about the development of the themes, as well as to the study of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and history of the church. At the same time, valuable information is obtained concerning Byzantine prosopography, genealogy, life and culture. Around 80,000 are estimated to have been preserved till the modern day. Held in major collections in Europe and America, most are of unknown provenance. There is a very important collection at Harvard University's Center for Byzantine Studies, Dumbarton Oaks. Another large and important collection was that of George Zacos in Basel, Switzerland, with most of this collection's seals coming from the coasts of the Sea of Marmara in Constantinople. Following the collector's death, parts of his collection were either sold off or donated. Part of the lead

seal collection of the Museum of Byzantine Culture is a donation from the collection of George Zacos.

Who used the seals?

Lead seals were used by most social classes. Their use, which was limited during the first centuries of the empire, was generalized after the 7th century and the emergence from the so-called “Dark Ages” of crisis and social-economic unrest.

During the prime period of the Macedonian and Komnenian dynasties, the empire required a complex administrative system with frequent communication via correspondence. The administration center was in Constantinople, from where imperial commands were issued and all reports by military and political officials in the provinces ended up. Seals sealed correspondence and the distribution of the official administrative service-related materials, as well as private documents written by officials who served in both the capital and the provinces.

Iconography

Early seals bear representations on both sides. Gradually, inscriptions were included in the form of the monograph, with seals with depictions of eagles appearing at the same time (fig. 7 and 8).

During the iconoclastic period, because of the religious conflict, the depiction of the cross on a terraced pedestal, accompanied by a religious invocation to the Holy Trinity, dominates. After the restoration of the icons in the 9th century, the cruciform monographs are enriched with an invocation to Christ (Jesus) or the Virgin (Theotokos), such as “God help” or “Virgin help”, accompanied by the name, titles, offices, place of origin and surname of the sender.



Fig. 7. Lead seal of Ioannis hypatikos with cross-shaped monograph (550-650) © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture



Fig. 8. Lead seal of Theodoros with a depiction of an eagle (end of 7th century) © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

In the iconography, the depictions of Virgin (Theotokos), Christ, or saints predominates. More rarely there are religious subjects, such as the Annunciation, the Transfiguration and the Dormition of the Virgin. State officials chose military saints, whose name they bore, such as Saint George, Saint Demetrios, Saints Theodoroi, and Archangel Michael. Frequently, behind the choice of a saint the local bonds are pointed out, a fact mostly observed on the seals of metropolitans. For example, the metropolitans of Thessaloniki chose Saint Demetrios, the metropolitans of Chalkidona Saint Euthimia.

In the mid-eleventh century the metrical inscriptions appeared, connected with the Macedonian Renaissance (9th -11th cent.) under the direct influence of classical Greece. Apart from the seals that bore the name and the title of their owners, there was also a large group of seals that were anonymous, with representations of the Virgin (Theotokos) and saints on both faces or with metrical inscriptions. According to scholars, these were most likely used by professional scribes who wrote letters for citizens who were illiterate.

Categories

Seals are divided in categories depending on their epigraphic and iconographic content. The following categories are indicatively presented below along with representative seals from the collection of the Museum of Byzantine Culture.

A. Imperial seals

They are not all that different iconographically from contemporary coins. The emperor sealed his documents with lead seals that depicted on the one side the Christ or the Virgin and on the other side his portrait (fig. 9, 10).

Lead seal of Tiberius III (698-705) *see worksheet 1*



Fig. 9. Lead seals of Tiberius III © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side the **Virgin Hodegetria** is depicted standing in the frontal pose wearing a chiton and **maphorion (veil)** and holding Jesus in her hands. To the right and left there is a cross.

On the back side emperor Tiberius III is depicted in bust length and in the frontal pose with long hair and short beard wearing a helmet with a crest on the top and **military attire**.

Lead seals of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (lit. the Purple-born) (913-959) *see worksheet 1*



Fig. 10. Lead seal of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side the type of Christ Pantocrator is depicted flanked by the initials IC XC (Jesus Christ). On the back side the portrait of Constantine VII is depicted holding the globus cruciger along with the inscription ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤ(ΙΝΟΣ) ΑΥΤΟ[ΚΡΑΤΩΡ] (Constantine emperor).

Constantine VII inserted in seals the term *αυτοκράτωρ* (emperor) in 945, after his predominance over the Lecapenos dynasty.

Lead seal of Basil II (976-1025)



Fig. 11. Lead seal of Basil II. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side Jesus in the type of Christ Emmanuel is depicted bust length flanked by the inscription IC XC Εμμαν[νουήλ] (Jesus Christ Emmanuel). On the back side the portrait of emperor Basil II is depicted with a short beard and moustache. He wears a crown with a cross and **prependoulia** in three rows, a **dibetesion** and **loros**. In the right hand he holds a **globus cruciger** and in the left **akakia**. Around the perimeter is the inscription [ΒΑΣΙΛ] ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤ[ΩΡ] (Basil emperor).

Lead seal of Michael VII Doukas (1071-1078)



Fig. 12. Lead seal of Michael VII Doukas © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

The front side shows Christ enthroned flanked by the inscription IC XC (Jesus Christ). On the back side emperor Michael VII is depicted standing in frontal pose, wearing a **crown** with a cross and **prependoulia**. He is dressed in a **dibetesion** and **loros**, holding a **labarum** and **globus cruciger**. Around the perimeter is the inscription +MIXA[HA A]YTOKPAT(O)P Q(M)AIQ(N) O ΔOYK(AΣ) (Michael Doukas, emperor of Romans).

Lead seal of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282)



Fig. 13. Lead seal of Michael VIII Palaiologos © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

The front side shows Christ standing in frontal pose flanked by the inscription IC XC (Jesus Christ). On the back side emperor Michael VIII standing in frontal pose wears a **crown** with **prependoulia** and imperial vestments (**dibetesion** and **chlamys**), and holds a **labarum** and **globus cruciger**. The hand of God in the act of blessing is seen emerging on the upper right. On the left and right in a vertical arrangement is the inscription M(I)X(AHA) [Δ]EΣ[Π]O[THΣ] O ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΟΣ (Despot Michael Palaiologos).

Michael VIII Palaiologos recaptured Constantinople in 1261, after the Latin conquest of 1204.

Lead seal of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328)

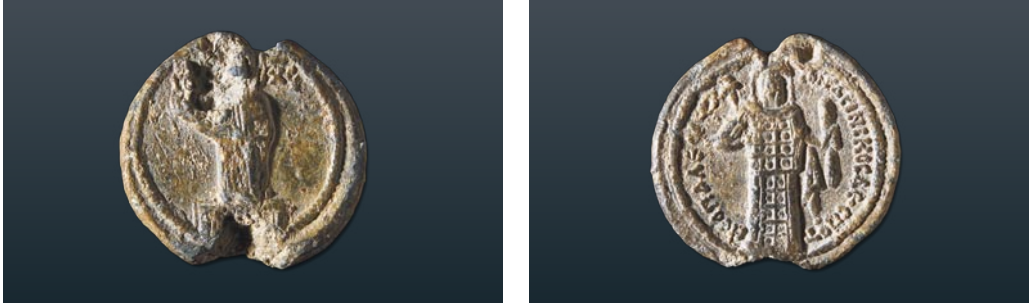


Fig. 14. Lead seal of Andronikos II Palaiologos, © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side Christ is depicted standing in frontal pose, blessing with the right hand and holding in the left a closed Gospel. Left and right reads IC XC (Jesus Christ).

On the back side emperor Andronikos II is depicted in frontal pose wearing a **crow**n with **prependoulia** and imperial vestments (**dibetesion** and **loros**). He also holds a **globus cruciger** in the right hand and **anexikakia** or **akakia** in the left hand. Around the perimeter it reads *ANΔΡΟΝΙΚΟΣ ΔΕΣΠΟΤΗΣ Ο ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΟΣ* (Despot Andronikos Palaiologos).

Empresses also employed their own personal seals, even when they did not themselves hold power. Nearly always the Virgin was depicted on the one side and the empress's portrait on the other side.

Lead seal of empress Theodora Doukaina Palaiologos (1259-1282)



Fig. 15. Lead seal of Theodora Doukaina Palaiologos © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the first side the **Virgin Platytera** (lit. wider than the Heavens) is depicted holding Christ in her hands, flanked by the inscription *MHP ΘV* (Mother of God).

On the back side empress Theodora wearing imperial vestments and a shaft (scepter) with a trefoil-shaped ending is flanked by the inscription ΘΕΟΔΩΡΑ ΕΥΣΕΒΕΣΤΑΘ ΑΥΤΟΥΣΤΑ ΔΟΥΚΑΙΝΑ Η ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΝΑ (The venerable Theodora Augusta Doukaina Palaiologos).

The seal belongs to Theodora, wife of Michael VIII Palaiologos, founder of the dynasty of Palaiologos and daughter of Ioannis III Doukas Vatatzes, emperor of the state of Nicaea that was founded by Byzantines after Constantinople's occupation by the Crusaders in 1204.

Lead seal of empress Irene Komnene Doukaina (1288-1317)



Fig. 16. Lead seal of empress Irene Komnene Doukaina © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the first side the Virgin Platytera (lit. wider than the Heavens) is depicted enthroned with Christ on her knees flanked by the inscription MP ΘV (Mother of God). On the back side empress Irene is depicted wearing imperial vestment, holding in the right hand a shaft (scepter) and a cross in the left hand raised to the height of the chest. On the left and right the seal bears the legend IPHNH, ΕΥΣΕΒΕΣΤΑΘ ΑΥΤΟΥΣΤΑ ΚΟΜΝΗΝΙ ΔΟΥΚΕΝΑ Η ΠΑΛΕΟΛΟΓΗΝΑ (Irene, venerable empress, Doukaina Palaiologos).

The seal belongs to the second wife of the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328). Yolande of Montferrat was married to Andronikos II Palaiologos in 1285, after the death of his first wife, Ann of Hungary, taking the name of Irene. She is associated with Thessaloniki not only because she was descended from the short-lived kingdom of Thessaloniki, founded after the Fourth Crusade, but also because she lived her last years there.

B. Patriarchal seals

Patriarchal seals provide us with valuable information about the continuously evolving official title of the bishop of Constantinople. Until the mid-ninth century, patriarchal lead seals bore the title bishop of Constantinople or Patriarch of Constantinople. After the church Schism in 1054, Patriarch Michael Cerularius (1043-1059) seeking to stress the ecumenical character of his church, rendered his title as Archiepiskopos (archbishop) of Constantinople, the New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch. Finally, Patriarch Kosmas I (1075-1081) added a reference to the divine origins of patriarchal authority, by the mercy of God Archiepiskopos of Constantinople, the New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch. This title continues unchanged today on the patriarchal seal in handwritten signatures.

In the Late Byzantine period, foremost during the Palaiologan dynasty (1261-1453), when the state had become more territorially restricted, the use of seals declined significantly. By the late end of 14th century, only the Patriarch of Constantinople continued to employ lead seals for his documents (patriarchal sigillia), a practice that has continued down to the present day.

Lead seal of Patriarch Photios (858-867, 877-886) *see worksheet 2*

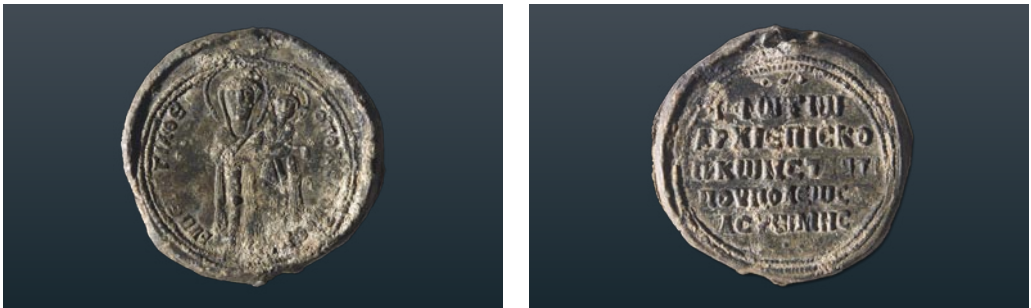


Fig. 17. Lead seal of Patriarch Photios © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the first side is the **Virgin Hodegetria**, whereas around the perimeter runs the inscription ΥΠΕΡΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΕ ΒΟΗΘΕΙ (Most Holy Mother of God, help). On the back side is the inscription +ΦΩΤΙΩ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠ(Ω) ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ Ν(Ε)ΑΣ ΡΩΜΗΣ (+ Photios, Archbishop Constantinople, New Rome).

The Patriarch Photios (858-886), coming into conflict with the Roman church, adopted a new phrasing of the title as Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, in order to demonstrate that Constantinople had the same rights as Rome.

Lead seal of Patriarch Michael I Cerularius (1043-1058) *see worksheet 2*

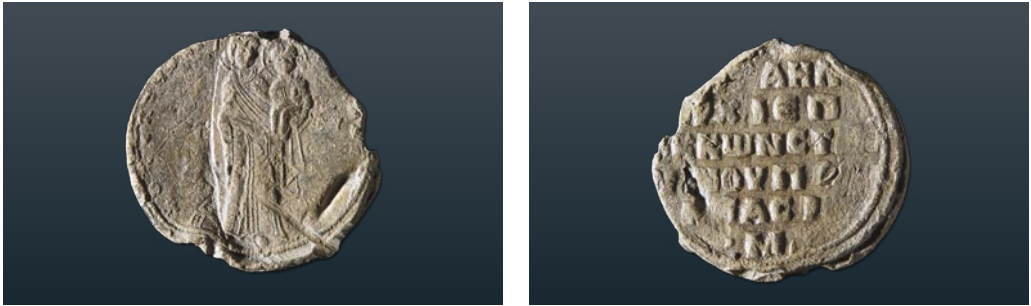


Fig. 18. Lead seal of Patriarch Michael I Cerularius © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side the **Virgin Hodegetria**, holding the Christ in her left hand. To the left and right the inscription is preserved {MP} ΘV (Mother God) and around the perimeter the inscription Θ(EOTO)KE BOHΘEI [TΩ] ΣΩ Δ[ΟΥΛΩ], (Virgin help your servant). On the back side there is a partially destroyed inscription [M]I[X]AHA [A]PXIEΠ[I]ΣK(ΟΠΩ) ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟ [Λ(ΕΩΣ)] ΝΕΑΣ Ρ[Ω]Μ(ΗΣ) (Michael Archbishop of Constantinople New Rome).

The owner of this seal was Patriarch Michael I Cerularius, whose name was linked with the definitive schism between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches in 1054. Thereafter, all patriarchal seals would carry the title “Ecumenical Patriarch”. Thus, this particular seal, which doesn’t bear this title, dates before 1054.

Lead seal of Patriarch Alexius I Studites (1025-1043)

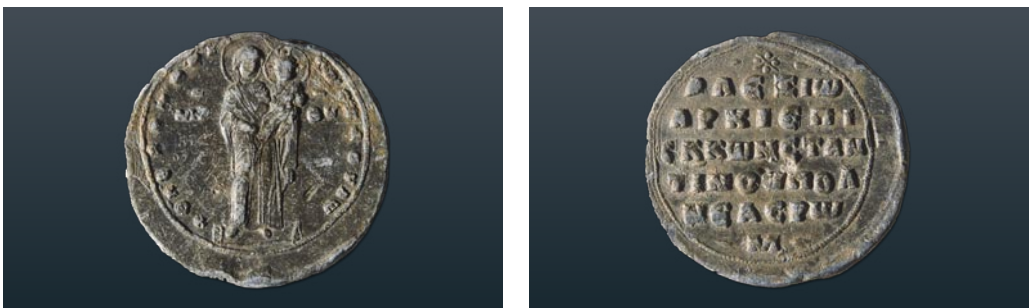


Fig. 19. Lead seal of Patriarch Alexius I Studites © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front is **Virgin Hodegetria**, holding the Christ in her arms. Left and right, we read the inscription MP} ΘV (Mother of God) and around the perimeter the inscription

Θ(ΕΟΤΟ)ΚΕ ΒΟΗΘΕΙ ΤΩ ΣΩ ΔΟΥΛΩ (Virgin help your servant). On the back ΑΛΕΞΙΩ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚ(ΟΠΙΩ) ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛ(ΕΩΣ) ΝΕΑΣ ΡΩΜ(ΗΣ), (*Alexius archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome*).

The emperor Basil II (976-1025), before his death, appointed Alexius Patriarch of Constantinople. At that time, he was abbot of the monastery of Stoudion, where the relics of Saint John the Forerunner were kept.

Lead seal of Patriarch George II Xiphilinus (1191-1198)



Fig. 20. Lead seal of Patriarch George II Xiphilinus © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front is **Virgin Platytera**, frontal on her throne, holding Christ in her arms. Left and right we read **MP ΘV** (Mother of God). The other side bears the inscription + **ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ ΕΛΕΩ Θ(ΕΟ)Υ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤ[Ι]ΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ ΝΕΑΣ [Ρ]ΩΜΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗΣ** (+George, by the grace of God, archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch).

George Xiphilinus was a high ranking official in the temple of Hagia Sophia before he ascended to the seat of Patriarch.

C. Church officials

Church officials, both higher and lower clergy, are attested to by their seals.

Lead seal of church official Eustathius, diakonos (deacon) and **patriarchal notary**. It was found on the balcony of Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki (10th century)



Fig. 21. Lead seal of Eustathius © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side a **patriarchal cross** on top of a terraced pedestal. On the edges of the inscription and the two horizontal antennas, four little crosses are formed. Around the perimeter of the seal, there is an inscription +K(YPI)E BOHΘEI TΩ ΣΩ ΔΟΥΛΩ (+God help your servant). On the back, lies the rest of the inscription +EΥΣΤΑΘΙΩ ΔΙΑΚΟΝΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧ(ΙΚΩ) Ν[Ο]ΤΑΡ(ΙΚΩ), (+Eustathios, diakonos and patriarchal notary).

Lead seal of the Ekdikoi of Hagia Sophia see worksheet 3



Fig. 22. Lead seal of the Ekdikoi of Hagia Sofia, 11th cent. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the first lead seal, on the front side Justinian offers the church of Hagia Sophia to the Virgin. In the center above and below the monument, we read ΑΓΙΑ ΣΟΦΙ[Α], (Hagia Sophia). Around the perimeter of the seal, we read the inscription ΥΠΕΡΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΕ ΒΟΗΘΕΙ, (Most Holy Mother of God, please help us). On the other side, the inscription continues in six verses ΤΟΙΣ ΘΕΟΣΕΒΕΣΤΑΤΟΙΣ ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΙΣ (ΚΑΙ) ΕΚΚΛΗΣΕΚΔΙΚΟΙΣ (God-fearing presbyters and ekklisekdikoi).

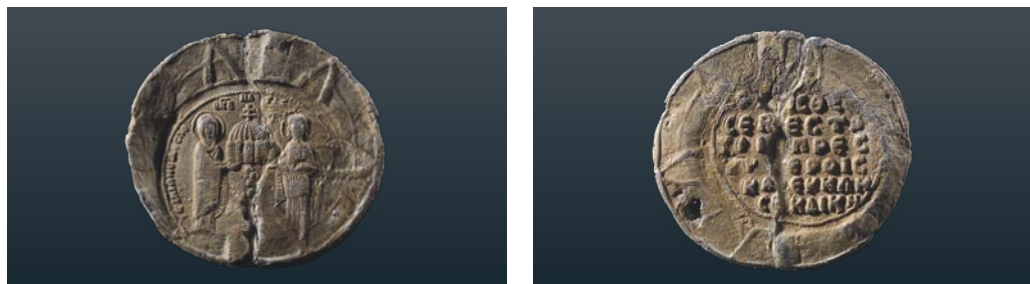


Fig. 23. Lead seal of the Ekdikoi of Hagia Sofia, 12th cent. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the second lead seal, on the back, Justinian offers a model of the church of Hagia Sophia to the Virgin. Above and below the monument the vertical inscription ΑΓΙΑ Σ[ΟΦΙΑ], (*Hagia Sophia*), left and right Θ(ΕΟΤΟ)ΚΕ (*Holy Mother of God*) and circularly [ΙΟ]ΥΣΤΙΝΙΑΝ(ΟΣ) ΔΕΣΠΟΤΙΣ (*Justinian Despot*). On the back the inscription Τ[Ο]ΙΣ ΘΕ[Ο]Σ ΕΒΕΣΤΑΤΟΙ[Σ] ΠΡΕΣΒΥ[Τ]ΕΡΟΙΣ ΚΑ[Ι] ΕΚΚΛΗΣΕΚΔΙΚΗ(Σ) (*God-fearing presbyters and ekklesekdikis*).

D. Officials

The seals of this category belong to officials involved in the public and military administration of the empire, as well as to officials working in the private guard of the emperor.

High officials, such as **kommerkiarioi**, had the exceptional privilege to depict the portrait of the emperor in their seals. In general, seals belonging to officials bear an invocation followed by the name, the honorific titles from lower to higher level and the ranks at the end. Strictly speaking, the rank held when the seal was issued or the highest one was mentioned at the end.

Lead seal of Romanos Diogenes, **patrikiος** and **strategos** (1010-1040) *see worksheet 4*

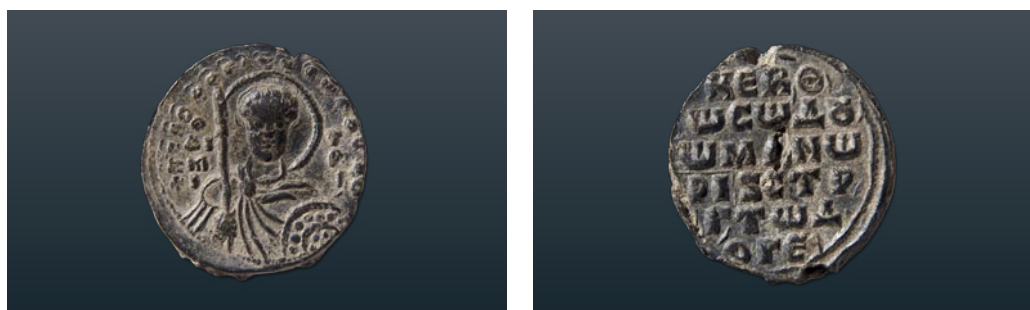


Fig. 24. Lead seal of Romanos Diogenes © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side Saint Demetrios is depicted in bust length, wearing military attire and holding a spear and a shield decorated with precious stones. On either side of the figure is the inscription Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΔΙ-ΜΙΤΡΙ(ΟΣ) (Saint Dimitrios). On the back side is the inscription +Κ(ΥΠΙ)Ε Β(ΟΗ)Θ(ΕΙ) [Τ-]Ω ΣΩ ΔΟΥ(ΛΩ) [Ρ]ΩΜΑΝΩ [Π(ΑΤ)]ΠΙ(ΚΙΩ) (ΚΑΙ) ΣΤΡ(Α)Τ(Η)Γ(Ω) ΤΩ Δ(Ι)ΟΓΕ(ΝΗ) (Lord, help your servant Romanos Diogenes, patrician and general).

The seal belongs to the later crowned emperor Romanos IV Diogenes, issued at the beginning of his career. After the death of Constantine X Doukas (1059-1067), his wife, Eudokia, came to power, acting as a regent to her three young sons. Being urged by the patriarch Xipholinus, Eudokia was married to Romanos, a general who was thus crowned emperor. In 1068 Romanos launched the war against Seljuk Turks that threatened Asia Minor. Despite initial successful expeditions, on August 26, 1071, the army led by Romanos was defeated by the forces of Arp Aslan near the Armenian city Manzikert, in the region of Lake Van. The emperor was taken prisoner, but after the peace treaty he was set free. After his return to the Byzantine capital he was arrested by his political opponents, he was blinded and died soon after. The defeat at the Battle of Manzikert had serious consequences for the empire. Seljuk Turks violated the peace treaty and in less than a decade most parts of Asia Minor were under their control.

Lead seal of Basil Xeros, vestarches and krites of the Peloponnese and Greece (11th cent.)



Fig. 25. Lead seal of Basil Xeros © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side inside a punched circle, Saint Markos on the left and Saint Theodoros on the right are depicted standing, in frontal pose, giving a blessing with their right hand. On the left and right is the inscription ΑΓΙΟΣ ΜΑΡΚΟΣ. Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ Θ[ΕΟ]Δ[Ω]Ρ(ΟΣ) (Saint Markos. Saint Theodoros). The back side bears the inscription +Θ(ΕΟΤΟ)ΚΕ Β(ΟΗ)Θ(ΕΙ) [Β]ΑΣΙΛΕΙΩ, [ΒΕ]ΣΤΑΡΧ(Η) (ΚΑΙ) [ΚΡ]ΙΤ(Η) ΠΕΛΟΠ(ΟΝ)[ΝΗ]ΣΟΥ (ΚΑΙ) ΕΛ[ΛΑ]Δ(Ο)Σ Τ]Ω ΕΗΡ(Ω) (Mother of God, help Basil Xeros, vestarches and judge of the Peloponnese and Greece).

The depiction of Saint Markos, that rarely appears in Byzantine seals, was popular in the Xeros family.

Lead seal of Nicholas Skleros, magistros epi ton deiseon (11th cent.)



Fig. 26. Lead seal of Nicholas Skleros © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side **Virgin Hodegetria** (lit. She who shows the Way) is depicted holding Jesus in her arms, flanked by the inscription *MP ΘΥ, Η ΟΔΙΓΗΤΡΙΑ* (Mother of God, the Hodegetria). Around the perimeter is another inscription *[ΣΦΡΑ]ΓΙΣ ΝΙΚΟΛ(ΑΟΥ) ΜΑΓΙΣΤΡ(ΟΥ) (ΚΑΙ) ΕΠΙ ΤΩ[Ν ΔΕΗΣΕΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΣΚΛΗΡ(ΟΥ)]* (Seal of Nicholas Skleros, the grandmaster of requests). On the back side Saint Theodore is depicted on the left and Saint Nicholas on the right. Saint Theodore, being a military saint, wears **military attire** and holds a spear and a shield. Saint Nicholas wears sacerdotal vestments, while between them is the inscription *[Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ] ΘΕΟΔΩΡ(ΟΣ)* (Saint Theodore).

The noble Skleros family included many political men and played a key role in the political affairs of the empire during 10th and 11th cent. According to the sources, some members of the Skleros family became governors of the Peloponnese and Greece. Magister Vardas Skleros, coming from the same family, was one of the most capable generals in the service of John I Tsimiskes (925-976).

Lead seal of Andronicus Dryonitis, *doux* of Thrace (13th cent.)



Fig. 27. Lead seal of Andronicus Dryonites © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side is **Christ Chalkites** flanked by the inscription **IC-XC** (Jesus Christ), while a vertical inscription reads **Ο ΧΑΛΚΙΤΗΣ** (The Chalkites). On the back side inside a punched circle a six-line inscription reads **+ΣΦΡΑΓΙΣΜΑ ΔΡΥΩΝΙΤΟΥ[Υ] ΑΝΔΡΟΝΙΚΟΥ ΔΟΥΚΟΣ ΤΕ ΤΩΝ ΘΡΑΚΗΣΙΩΝ** (Seal of Andronicus Dryonites, duke of Thrace).

The seal is of great historical value, since it belongs to the duke, governor of the theme of Thrace, one of the most important provinces of the empire.

Lead seal of Ioannis, *vestes*, *krites epi tou hippodromou* and *epi ton oikeiakon* (11th cent.)

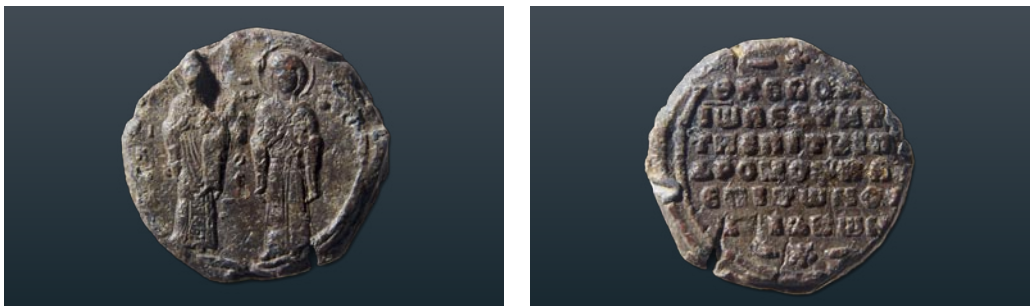


Fig. 28. Lead seal of Ioannis © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side the Virgin is depicted on the left and Saint Nicholas on the right. The vertical inscriptions **Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ** (Saint Nicholas) και **ΜΡ-ΘΥ** (Mother of God) appear on the left and in the center. The reverse side bears the invocation **Θ(ΕΟΤΟΚΕ) ΒΟΗ[Θ(ΕΙ)] ΙΩ(ΑΝΝΗ) ΒΕΣΤΗ ΚΡ[Ι]ΤΗ ΕΠΙ ΤΟΥ ΙΠΠ[Ο]ΔΡΟΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙ ΤΩΝ ΟΙΚ[Ε]ΙΑΚΩΝ** (Mother of God, help Ioannis, the *vestes*, hippodrome judge and head of public property).

Lead seal of Gregorios, spatharocandidatus and meizoteros tou chrysoklavou (11th cent.)



Fig. 29. Lead seal of Gregorios © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side is a bust of **Virgin Hagiosoritissa** turned three quarters towards the hand of God that is shown emerging on the left. On the left and right is the inscription **MP – ΘV** (Mother of God). The reverse side is inscribed with the invocation of **Θ(EOTO)KE B(OH)Θ(EI) ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙ(Ω) ΣΠΑΘΑΡ(Ο)ΚΑΝΔ(Ι)Δ(ΑΤΩ) (ΚΑΙ) Μ(Ε)ΙΖΟΤΕΡ(Ω) ΤΟΥ ΧΡ(ΥΣΟ)ΚΛΑΒ(ΟΥ)** (Mother of God, help Gregorios, the spatharokandidatos and the major of chrysoklavon).

Lead seal of Niketas Chalkoutzis, protospatharios and episkeptites of Meandros (11th cent.)

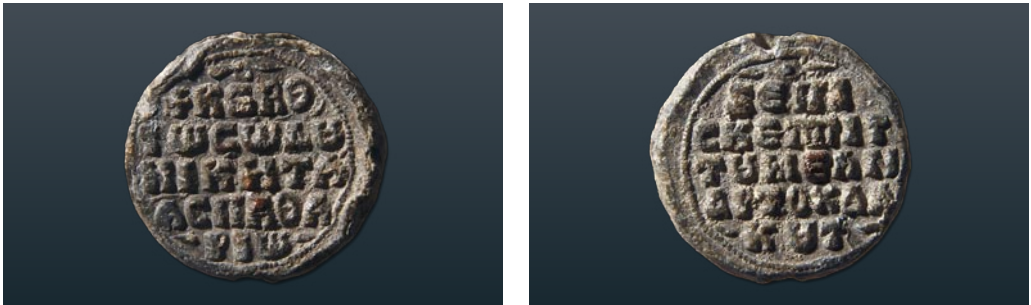


Fig. 30. Lead seal of Niketas Chalkoutzis © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side an invocation which continues on the other side reads + **Κ(ΥΠΙ)Ε Β(OH)Θ(EI) ΤΩ ΣΩ ΔΟΥ(ΛΩ) ΝΙΚΗΤΑ (ΠΡΩΤΟ)ΣΠΑΘΑΡΙΩ / (ΚΑΙ) ΕΠΙΣΚΕΠΤΙΤ(Η) ΤΟΥ ΜΕΑΝΔΡ(ΟΥ) ΤΟ ΧΑΛΚΟΥΤ(ΖΗ)** (Lord, help your servant Niketas Chalkoutzis, protospatharios and episkeptites of Meandros).

Among the Chalkoutzis family there were many administrators, military officers and politicians during 10th and 11th cent. Niketas was responsible for the Meandros valley in Asia Minor, a fertile agricultural district.

Lead seal of Niketas, **epoptes** of all the West and **anthropos tou Basilea** (11th cent.)



Fig. 31. Lead seal of Niketas © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side **Virgin Hagiosoritissa** is depicted turned three quarters to the left with her hands raised towards the hand of God which emerges in the upper left. On the left and right is the inscription *Η ΑΓΗΟΣΟΡΙΤΗΣΑ* (The Hagiosoritissa). The reverse side bears the invocation *+Θ(ΕΟΤΟ)ΚΕ Β(ΟΗ)Θ(ΕΙ) ΝΙΚΗΤΑ ΕΠΟΠΗΤΗ ΠΑΣΗΣ ΤΗ(Σ) ΔΥΣΕΩΣ (ΚΑΙ) ΑΝ(ΘΡΩΠ)Ω ΤΟΥ ΚΡΑΤΕΟΥ (ΚΑΙ) ΑΓΙΟΥ ΗΜΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ* (Mother of God help Niketas, epoptis of all the West and servant of our holy king).

Lead seal of Konstantinos vestarches, katepano of Melitine and anagrapheus (11th cent.) *see Worksheet 4*

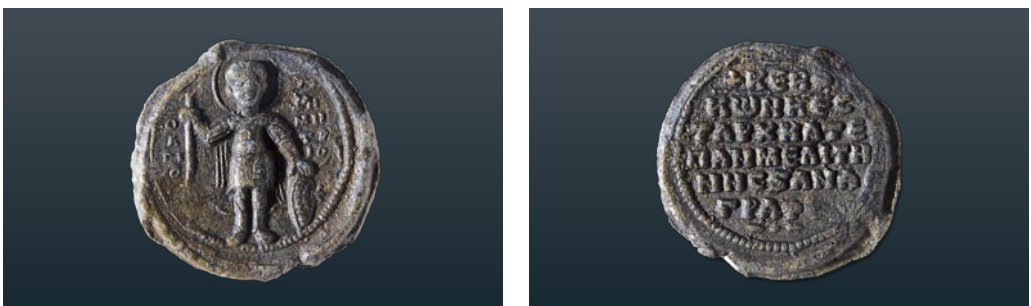


Fig. 32. Lead seal of Konstantinos © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side Saint Demetrios is depicted standing with **military attire**, holding a spear and a shield. To the left and right the inscription reads *Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ* (Saint Demetrios). On the reverse side in six rows reads the invocation *+Κ(ΥΡ)ΙΕ Β(ΟΗ)Θ(ΕΙ) ΚΩΝ(ΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΩ) ΒΕΣΤΑΡΧ(Η) ΚΑΤΕΠΑΝ(Ω) ΜΕΛΙΤΙΝΗΣ (ΚΑΙ) ΑΝΑΓΡΑΦΕ[Α]* (Lord, help Constantine vestarches, katapano of Melitine and anagrapheus).

This seal refers to the administrator of the theme of Melitine who held a military and political office.

E. Private individuals, members of noble families

Lead seals that are notable for their large size, quality and iconography are included in this category. Each of them narrates the story of a historical person who lived and was active in the empire.

Lead seal of Isaac Komnenodoukas (end of 12th cent.). It was found in the Castle of Platamonas



Fig. 33. Lead seal of Isaac Komnenodoukas © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side Saint George is depicted in full length wearing **military attire**. On the left and right in columns reads *Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ* (Saint George). On the reverse side an eight-line metrical inscription reads *ΚΟΜΝΗΝΟΔΟΥΚΟΠΑΙΔΑ [Μ]ΗΤΡΟΘΕΝ ΙΣΑΑΚΙΟ[Ν ΟΣ ΣΕ]ΒΑΣΤΟΚΡ[ΑΤΟΡΩΝ] [Θ]ΥΤΑΤΡ[Ο]ΠΙΑΙΣ ΓΑ[ΜΒ]ΡΟΣ Τ[Ε] ΜΑΡΤΥΣ ΜΕ Σ[Κ]ΕΠΙΟΙΣ* (Martyr protect Isaac who on his mother's side is a member of Komnenodoukas family and the son-in-law of a Sebastokrator).

Nephew of Manuel I Komnenos, Isaac Komnenodoukas, was a usurper governor of Cyprus, a tyrannical ruler from 1184 to 1191, the year that the island was captured by Richard I of England, Lionheart.

Lead seal of Alexios Komnenodoukas Palaiologos (1195-1203)



Fig. 34. Lead seal of Alexios Komnenodoukas Palaiologos © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

The metrical inscription of this seal consists of three normal twelve-syllable (dodecasyllables) verses that are divided into two semi-verses. ΑΛΕΞΙΟΥ ΣΦΡΑΓΙΣΜΑ ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟ[ΓΟΥ] ΚΟΜΝΗΝΟΔΟΥΚΩΝ/[Ε]Ε ΑΝΑΚΤΩΝ [Ο]ΣΦΥΟΣ ΤΟΥ [ΠΡ]ΩΤΟΠΑΝΣΕΒ[ΑΣΤ]ΟΥ ΣΥΝ ΥΠΕΡΤΑΤΩ (Seal of Alexius Palaiologos of the Komnenodoukas family descendant of kings most venerable of the venerable).

Lead seal of Theodoros Roupenios Sebastos (1102-1129)



Fig. 35. Lead seal of Theodoros Roupenios © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Museum of Byzantine Culture

On the front side are Saints Theodore. On the left and on the right reads Ο Α(ΓΙΟΣ) ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ (Saint Theodore). The reverse side bears a metrical inscription ΔΥΑΣ ΜΕ ΦΡΟΥΠΕΙ ΚΑΛΛΙΝΙΚΩΝ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΩΝ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΡΟΥΠΙΕΝΙΟΝ (Two of the finest martyrs guard me the venerable Theodore Roupenios).

Glossary

A

Akakia or anexikakia (Guilelessness or forbearance): A cylindrical pouch of purple silk containing a handful of dust and symbolizing the mortality of the emperors. Often used in iconography.

Anagrapheus (anagrapheas): Fiscal official who was responsible for the control and review of the land registry. In case someone did not pay ownership of land taxes he could proceed to seizure.

Anthropos tou basileos (The man of the king): With the term “anthropos” usually, it is referred to the entourage of a military official or a lower public official. In our case the man of the King is the royal attendant.

Apokombion (pl. abokombia): A pouch in which the emperor carried coins to distribute during feast days.

Asecretes: Highest level of imperial secretary.

C

Chiton (tunic): A short or long wool, linen or cotton cloth. It was part of the most common garment worn by the Byzantines, regardless of their social status or profession.

Chlamys (mantle): A long cloak fastened at the right shoulder with a fibula, so as to leave the right hand free. Regarding imperial vestments, chlamys is the long purple cloak worn by the emperor during coronation. Under the chlamys the emperor wore *dibetesion*.

Christ Emmanouel: Iconographic type according to which Christ is depicted beardless and young. It is related to the human nature of Christ which coexists with the divine one (two perfect natures in one being).

Christ Pantocrator (the Almighty): Iconographic type according to which Christ is depicted holding a Gospel in his left hand and performing a blessing with his right hand. It is related to His Omnipotence and Him being Ruler of All.

Christ Chalkites: Iconographic type according to which Christ is depicted standing on a podium, in frontal pose, with the attributes of Pantocrator. It is named “chalkites” after the image placed over the main entrance of Chalke Gate of the Great Palace in Constantinople.

Crown: the imperial insignia par excellence usually decorated with a cross on the top and *prependoulia* hanging on each side of the face.

D

Dekanos (pl. decani): A member of the imperial secretary. Dekanos was the designated messenger of the empress. While accompanying the emperor on expeditions, they were in charge of imperial correspondence.

Dibetesion: A long tunic. It was worn, belted, under the loros, or chlamys, by the emperor or high-ranking officials.

Doux: A political and military office, which was very prominent after 10th century. During the early Byzantine period, a doux was responsible for the borders, in charge of border garrison while after the 11th century, apart from military duties, the office gained economic and judicial responsibilities.

E

Ekdikoi: Ecclesiastical functionary that implemented decisions and imposed order. They defended the poor and the defenseless. They were also shouldered with assisting the diocese in its administrative duties and in the proper function of the church. A council of elders consisting of the *ekkesiekdikoi*, headed by the *Protekdikos*, was established in the temple of Hagia Sophia. The role of the council was very significant, given that it tried murderers, who had taken refuge in the church. It had a judicial role.

Epi ton oikeiakon: The office of “*epi ton oikeiakon*” appeared during the reign of Basil II (976-1025). It was of the highest administrative office. Its bearer was the commander responsible for all abandoned properties whose ownership passed to the state. This office was of great importance during the 11th century, as it was a source of significant income for the state. Apart from fiscal duties it also had judicial responsibilities.

Episkeptites: Administrator of imperial domains (the so-called *Episkepsis*), such as the imperial *ktemata*. Also, was responsible for public construction.

Epoptes: A financial official, responsible for supervising and controlling property registration in remote areas of the province. He was also responsible for the review of the land registry and the tax determination for each landowner, driving reductions (*sympathies*) or raises.

G

Globus cruciger: See *sphere*.

H

Hypatikos: Administrative official of high rank.

K

Katepano: Primarily was the military commander of a unit (*strategos*). During the 10th century, it became the designation of governors of major provinces, while in the 12th century it was downgraded to a local official.

Kommerkiarios (pl. kommerkiarioi): An official initially involved in the silk trade. During the 9th century the *kommerkiarios* was a public official, responsible for collecting the duty, *kommerkion*, a tax on merchandise. When this official was appointed by the emperor himself he was titled as a royal *kommerkiarios*.

Krites (judge): A judicial official.

Krites epi tou Hippodromou: A low ranking judicial official who held tribunals at the Hippodrome. The higher-ranking office was that of the *krites* of the *velum*, who held tribunals in a place where there were curtains.

L

Labarum: A silver cross which Constantine the Great made after divine intervention before his victorious battle against Maxentius outside Rome. Afterwards, they used the cross in every battle. Later it appeared as a flag with *Christogramma*.

Loros: An oblong piece of fabric decorated with precious stones. It was worn by both emperor and empress over the *dibetesion* on special occasions.

M

Magistros epi ton deiseon (Grandmaster of requests): The official who managed the citizens' requests addressed to the emperor.

The man of the king: With the term “man” usually, we are referring to the entourage of a

military official or a lower public official. In our case the man of the King is the royal attendant.

Maphorion: Estheta, the external garment covering the head and body of the Virgin.

Meizoteros tou chrysoklavou (Major of the chrysoklavarios): Head of the chrysoklavarioi, artisans working in the chrysoklavon, the workshop responsible for the production of gold bands used in emperor's formal vestments that was located in the palace.

Merinthos: The string that was attached within the seal and secured the sealed document. The quality of the string depended on the rank and the title of the seal owner. The merinthos in chrysoboulla (gold seals) was manufactured from purple silk.

Military attire (of the emperor): Official attire consisting of a helmet with a cross, a breastplate and a shield.

N

Notarios (pl. notarii): Secretary. Imperial **notarioi**, except for their secretarial duties, were charged with urgent duties, such as delivering letters to the emperor. The chief of the notarioi was called *protonotarios*.

P

Patriarchal notarios: A secretary who worked in the general patriarchal administration.

Patriarchal Cross: The type of the cross which bears a second, smaller horizontal antenna. It was probably not a real object, but a depiction with a symbolic value.

Patrikios: High ranking dignitary introduced by Constantine I as an honorific title without specific administrative duties. From 8th to 10th cent. the title was granted to governors and

generals, while it disappears after the 12th cent.

Prependoulia: Ornaments hanging from the crown.

Protospatharios: A title of high imperial rank working in the emperor's personal guard.

S

Scepter: A symbol of Roman consuls that was later adopted by the Byzantine emperor. The shaft was usually surmounted by an eagle, a cross or a labarum.

Spatharokandidatos: Spatharioi, protospatharioi and spatharokandidatoi were courtiers who belonged to the emperor's personal guard.

Strategos (general): A high-ranked military officer, governor of the *themata*. Being governor of a theme, a strategos had to report to the emperor.

Sphere: A symbol standing for the World (universe). In the cases where the sphere (globus) is surmounted by a cross it is called *globuscruciger* and in religious terms stands for the prevalence of Christianity. It is considered a religious emblem.

T

Thema/themata: Institution of the administrative organization of the Byzantine empire, implemented in the early 7th century during the reign of emperor Irakleios (575-641) that replaced the older and larger administrative units (eparchotites). The word "thema" initially meant an army corp. Its importance increased at the time of the first large Arabic assault (674-678). Gradually and till the 10th century, the term acquired military, administrative and geographical importance.

Vestarches: Title which initially referred to high-ranking generals.

Vestes: Title distinct from the title of vestarches, which refers to prominent generals during the 11th century.

Virgin Hagiosoritissa: Iconographic type of the Mother of God according to which she is depicted in full length turned in three quarters, either to the right or to the left with her hands raised in supplication to the hand of God that emerges in the upper. The iconographic type of Virgin Hagiosoritissa is often attested to in inscribed icons, coins and lead seals.

Virgin Hodegetria (She who shows the way): Iconographic type according to which the Virgin is depicted standing with Christ in her hands and turning slightly to the left.

Virgin Platytera (Wider than the Heavens): Virgin is usually depicted enthroned with Christ in her arms. Most of the times she is depicted standing with her hands open and slightly raised. The type is usually selected for the decoration of the arch of the Sanctuary (Holy Bema).

ORIGIN OF FIGURES

Fig. 1. National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Department of the Collections of Pre-historic, Egyptian, Cypriot and Near Eastern Antiquities

Fig. 2, 43, 5, 7-35. Photo archive of Museum of Byzantine Culture

Fig. 4. Vlatades Monastery

Fig. 6. Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens

Sch. 1-3. Efrosyni Theou, Marble Technician, Museum of Byzantine Culture

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