



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15688/jvolsu4.2020.6.12>

UDC 94“04/14”:929.651
LBC 63.3(0)4-9

Submitted: 12.08.2020
Accepted: 02.12.2020

**THREE UNPUBLISHED BYZANTINE LEAD SEALS
FROM WESTERN ASIA MINOR
(WITH AN APPENDIX ON AN AMULET FROM IZMIR)**

Ergün Laflı

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, İzmir, Turkey

Maurizio Buora

Societa Friulana di Archeologia odv, Udine, Italy

Abstract. This paper presents three formerly unpublished Byzantine lead seals and an amulet that were examined in the archaeological museum of İzmir (nos. 1, 3 and figs. 5a–b) and Akhisar (no. 2) in western Turkey. They date from the 7th to the 13th century AD. The seal of a Manuel *apo hypaton* (no. 1) reveals the relations between the court of Constantinople and the city of Smyrna in the 7th century AD. Another one of Ioannes *hypatos spatharios* (no. 2) comes from Akhisar (8th century AD). No. 3 is dated to the 11th and 12th centuries AD. A lead amulet at the appendix part (figs. 5a–b), which perhaps originates from the Early Byzantine period, bears the name of Sabaōth.

Key words: Byzantine lead seals, amulet, *apo hypaton*, hypatos and imperial spatharios, Sabaōth, sigillography, Byzantine period, İzmir, Akhisar, Western Asia Minor, Turkey.

Citation. Laflı E., Buora M. Three Unpublished Byzantine Lead Seals from Western Asia Minor (With an Appendix on an Amulet from İzmir). *Vestnik Volgogradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Seriya 4. Istorija. Regionovedenie. Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* [Science Journal of Volgograd State University. History. Area Studies. International Relations], 2020, vol. 25, no. 6, pp. 160-167. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15688/jvolsu4.2020.6.12>

УДК 94“04/14”:929.651
ББК 63.3(0)4-9

Дата поступления статьи: 12.08.2020
Дата принятия статьи: 02.12.2020

**ТРИ НЕОПУБЛИКОВАННЫЕ ВИЗАНТИЙСКИЕ СВИНЦОВЫЕ ПЕЧАТИ
ИЗ ЗАПАДНОЙ МАЛОЙ АЗИИ
(С ПРИЛОЖЕНИЕМ, ВКЛЮЧАЮЩИМ АМУЛЕТ ИЗ ИЗМИРА)**

Эргюн Лафлы

Университет Докуз Эйлюль, г. Измир, Турция

Маурицио Буора

Фриульское археологическое общество, г. Удине, Италия

Аннотация. В статье представлены три ранее не опубликованные свинцовые печати и амулет, которые были изучены в Археологическом музее Измира (№ 1, 3 и рис. 5a–b) и Акхисара (№ 2) в Западной Турции. Они датируются VII–XIII веками. Печать Мануила, апоипата, (№ 1) раскрывает отношения между константинопольским двором и Смирной в VII веке. Еще одна печать – Иоанна, ипата и императорского спафария (№ 2), – происходит из Акхисара (VIII в.). Печать № 3 датируется XI–XII веками. Свинцовый амулет в приложении (рис. 5a–b), который, вероятно, относится к ранневизантийскому времени, носит на себе имя Саваоф. Э. Лафлы провел анализ и критику печатей, в то время как М. Буора разработал каталог.

Ключевые слова: византийские свинцовые печати, амулет, апоипат, ипат и императорский спафарий, Саваоф, сфрагистика, византийский период, Измир, Акхисар, Западная Малая Азия, Турция.

Цитирование. Лафлы Э., Буора М. Три неопубликованные византийские свинцовые печати из Западной Малой Азии (с приложением, включающим амулет из Измира) // Вестник Волгоградского государственного университета. Серия 4, История. Регионоведение. Международные отношения. – 2020. – Т. 25, № 6. – С. 160–167. – (На англ. яз.). – DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15688/jvolsu4.2020.6.12>

Introduction

The number of lead seals in the eastern world is estimated at about 80,000, most of which remain as unpublished [11, p. 150]. Our contribution is to present three of these unpublished ones in two Turkish museums (fig. 1). Only few seals of the archaeological museum of Izmir have already been published and the ones in the depot of courtial antiquities are not known in scholarly literature. Their dating varies mostly from the seventh to the 13th centuries A.D. Most of these seals do not have good conservation conditions. They include the names of dignitaries of the Byzantine Empire (*apo eparkhon, patrikios* and *strategos* etc.) and also of an empress. In the collection of the archaeological museum of Izmir there is a lead amulet of particular interest which was inserted in an appendix part and bears the name of Saba'oth, one among the different names of the Hebrew god.

Catalogue¹

No. 1

The lead seal of Manuel *apo hypaton* (figs. 2a–b).

Depository and provenance: Archaeological museum of Izmir, in the depot of courtial antiquities, accession no. 2016.861.4. It was given to the museum by the Second Civil Court of First Instance in Izmir in 2016 before of which it was belonging to a private collection in the surrounding of Izmir.

State of preservation: Damaged on border. Corrosion.

Measurements: Diameter 20 mm and field diameter 15 mm.

Transcription – Obverse: Wreath border.

+ M-
2 ANOY-
HA

Reverse: Wreath border.

A P O
2 YPAT-
ON

Transliteration: + Μανουήλ ἀπὸ ὑπάτων.

Translation: *Of Manouel(ou), one of the hypatoi.*

Sigillographical comments: Ἀπὸ ὑπάτων corresponds to the rank class of the former consuls, *consularis* in Latin, later occasionally also *exconsul* or similar². It was also a name for certain senatorial provincial governors of *provinciae inermes*, as in *Notitia Dignitatum* well attested in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. But it also became more and more a title, especially in the seventh century A.D., from which our seal originates. In this specific case of the seal from Izmir, it is uncertain whether it is an office or a title.

Comparandum: There are a number of seals of *apo hypaton* in the Dumbarton Oaks and Fogg Collections, mostly dating to the seventh century A.D. [14, p. 110], but a Manuel with the title ἀπὸ ὑπάτων is so far unknown otherwise. In the Dumbarton Oaks Collection a very similar unpublished lead seal with the accession no. DO 58.106.1622 is housed³.

Dating: Seventh century A.D.

No. 2

The lead seal of Ioannes *hypatos* and imperial *spatharios* (fig. 3).

Depository: Museum of Akhisar, Byzantine Thyatira, in a display case in the hall of small finds.

State of preservation: Damaged on border. Corrosion.

Measurements: Diameter 22 mm and field diameter 16 mm.

Transcription – Obverse: Cruciform invocative monogram with inscription in the quarters; wreath border.

Θεοτόκε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δούλω.

Reverse: Inscription in four lines, with cross above and below.

+ΙΩ-
2 ANNH VΠ-
ΑΤΩ C ΒΑΣ-
4 ΙΛΙΚΩ CΠ-
ΑΘΑΡΙΩ

+ Ἰωάννη ὑπάτω ς (καὶ) βασιλικῶ
σπαθαρίω

Translation: *Mother of God, help your servant John, hypatos and imperial spatharios.*

Sigillographical remarks: Ὑπατος, consul, was a senatorial dignity and σπαθάριος was an imperial title, as there were also active *spatharioi* at the imperial court in Constantinople⁴. Throughout the sixth to the ninth centuries A.D. there is an ample sigillographical evidence of functionaries bearing this the title, usually attached to mid-level administrative and fiscal posts, but the title *hypatos* lost its importance over time. Both in imperial and ecclesiastical administration many dignitaries named with the common name John (properly Ioannes) are known by the Byzantine world.

Comparandum: A very similar lead seal with the accession no. DO 47.2.873 in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection in Washington, DC and a further one in the private collection of Yavuz Tatuş in Izmir [5, no. 5.46] are housed (*cf.* the latter publication also for the reference of a similar seal in the corpus of Zacos – Veglery, *i.e.* [16]).

Dating: It is noteworthy that in the seventh century A.D. we often find the title of *hypatos* and *spatharios* combined [4, p. 23]⁵. The type of invocation of the obverse and the titling, however, correspond to the examples of the eighth-ninth century A.D.

No. 3

The lead seal of Romanos IV, Eudokia, Michael VII, Constantios and Andronikos (figs. 4a–b).

Depository and provenance: Archaeological museum of Izmir, in the depot of courtial antiquities, accession no. 2017.33.123.1. It was given to the museum by the 33. Civil Court of First Instance in Izmir in 2018 before of which it was belonging to a private collection in Izmir.

State of preservation: Corrosion. Otherwise well preserved.

Measurements: Diameter 30 mm and field diameter 28 mm.

Transcription – Obverse: Three full-length figures: in the center, Christ bearded wearing a tunic and himation and standing on a dais. He has a nimbus cruciger. With uplifted arms he places a cross-topped crown on the bearded head of the emperor Romanos on the left and a crown with three triangular projections on the head of Eudokia on the right. Romanos wears a loros and holds his right hand before his chest and a globus cruciger in his left hand. Eudokia wears a loros and holds her left hand before her chest and a globus cruciger in her right hand. At left and right of Christ's head, sigla: IC-XC: Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς Χ(ριστό)ς. Circular inscription. Border of dots.

ΡΩΜΑΝ ΕΥΔΟΚΙΑ

Ῥωμαν(ός) (καὶ) Εὐδοκία.

Reverse: Three full-length figures, all of whom stand on daises. In center, Michael VII, taller than his brothers, standing, wearing a crown with a cross and a loros, and holding a labarum in his right hand and an akakia in his left. He is flanked by the shorter, beardless figures of Constantios on the left and Andronikos on the right. Each wears a crown with a cross and a loros. Constantios holds a globus surmounted by a trefoil ornament in his right hand and an akakia in his left. Andronikos holds an akakia in his right hand and a globus surmounted by a trefoil ornament in his left. Circular inscription. Border of dots.

Ῥωμανός καὶ Εὐδοκία.

2 Κων(σταντίος). Μ(ι)χ(αήλ).
[Ἀνδ(ρόνικος).]

Translations: *Romanos and Eudokia. Constantios. Michael. Andronikos.*

Sigillographical remarks: On coins, Michael VII and his brothers appear on the obverse, convex side, while Christ, Romanos, and Eudokia are portrayed on the reverse, concave side. On the seals, lacking any indicator of which side is which, it is conventional to reverse the order, placing the figure of Christ on the obverse. Perhaps forgery (?).

The seals and coins of Romanos's reign are the most cluttered examples from the whole Byzantine period. During Romanos's reign, Constantine's third son, Andronikos, was associated in rule, and on his seals and coins the nominal senior emperor appears vastly outnumbered by the family of Constantine X. Romanos and Eudokia appear either side of Christ, who blesses them. On the reverse the three sons of Constantine X are shown

in their imperial regalia. Although interpretation of the seals follows the convention of placing the senior emperor on the obverse, the sides are reversed when considering the coins, the concavity of which allows us to determine which was the top die.

Comparanda: [9, no. 82.3; 1, p. 72–75, nos. 128–136; 16, no. 93a].

Dating: The era of Romanos IV Diogenes, *i.e.* A.D. 1068–1071.

Appendix

A lead amulet for Sabaōth from Izmir (figs. 5a–b).

Depository and provenance: Archaeological museum of Izmir, in the depot of courtial antiquities, accession no. 2016.861.3. It was given to the museum by the Second Civil Court of First Instance in Izmir in 2016 before of which it was belonging to a private collection in the surrounding of Izmir.

State of preservation: Damaged on border. Corrosion.

Measurements: Max. diameter 13 mm.

Description: The lead object was an amulet and there was a loop for hanging on neck or somewhere else. Such amulets were worn by Christians of different beliefs, not necessarily gnostics.

Transcription: On the obverse side CABAΩ(Θ) (Σαβαώθ; Sabaōth / zebaot) in the centre and on the reverse side IAΩ (Ἰαώ) in the lower part.

Sigillographical comments: This amulet belongs to the circle Ἰαώ, Σαβαώθ (in Hebrew צבאות, plural of צבא), which is one of the archontic powers (CG II, I ApocJohn 11.30; 12.20). These names are multitudinously attested and invoked in magical literature, especially on amulets [8, p. 105–106]. Sabaōth was an epithet of Jewish god in his role as protector of the Israelite army, usually translated (alongside YHWH or Elohim) as “the lord of hosts” [6, p. 186]. It also means hosts or armies. In the gnosticism it is the name of one of the seven chief archons in the Ophite cosmogony.

Comparanda: This category of small amulets is scarcely studied. Campbell Bonner published a book (1951) and two additional articles (1951 and 1954) on magical amulets, with particular reference to the British Museum collections [2; 3]. Twenty-five years ago, Jeffrey Spier wrote a paper on the amulets recognizing that a large number of pendant-amulets are

attributable to the Early Byzantine period. Sometimes the names Ἰαώ Σαβαώθ are associated with the image of the οὐροβόρος, a symbolic depiction of a serpent or dragon eating its own tail [3, p. 150]. The mention of Ἰαώ, Σαβαώθ appears first time on a face of a bronze pendant-amulet which is now housed in the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem [12, p. 46, fig. 1]. The invocation of divine and angelic names such as Iao, Sabaōth, Adonai or archangels was already an ancient tradition in pagan magic, ultimately derived from a former Jewish practice [13, p. 49].

Dating: Possibly Early Byzantine period.

Conclusion

These three seals presented above range from the seventh to the 13th century A.D. and provide even just a bit evidence on the Byzantine dignitaries in Asia Minor. The lead amulet at the appendix part (figs. 5a–b), which originates perhaps from the Early Byzantine period, bears the name of Sabaōth that remains as a unique evidence for western Asia Minor.

ENDNOTES

¹ Nos. 1, 3 and figs. 5a–b from the Archaeological Museum of Izmir were studied with an authorization granted by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Directorate of the Monuments and Museums on April 13, 2010 and enumerated as B.16.0.KVM.0.13.04.00-155.01.(TA10.B81)-77614. The necessary documentation was assembled between June 2010 and May 2017. We would like to thank to Mrs Zuhar Küçükgüney and Ms Necla Okan (both from the Archaeological Museum of Izmir) for their assistance during the study of these objects.

No. 2 from the Museum of Akhisar was studied with an authorization granted by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Directorate of the Monuments and Museums on June 4, 2007 and enumerated as B.16.0.KVM.200.11.02.02.14.01.222.11.(TA07.40/A)-116546. The necessary documentation was assembled between August 2007 and May 2016.

² *On ἀπὸ ὑπάρτων* *cf.*: [7, p. 395].

³ We would like to thank to Professor Werner Seibt (Vienna) who kindly provided this information.

⁴ *Cf.* for these titles: [10, p. 297–298].

⁵ Furthermore, in the auction made by Μὲνζ Zentrum, sale no. 96 (10–12 September 1998) a lead seal of an Ioannes *hypatos* and protospatharios was sold, *cf.* [15, p. 184, no. 1340].

ПРИЛОЖЕНИЕ



Fig. 1. Places in Asia Minor and elsewhere referred to in the text (by S. Pataci, 2018)



Figs. 2a–b. The lead seal of Manuel *apo hypaton*. Archaeological museum of Izmir, accession no. 2016.861.4

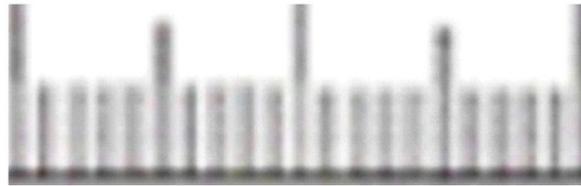
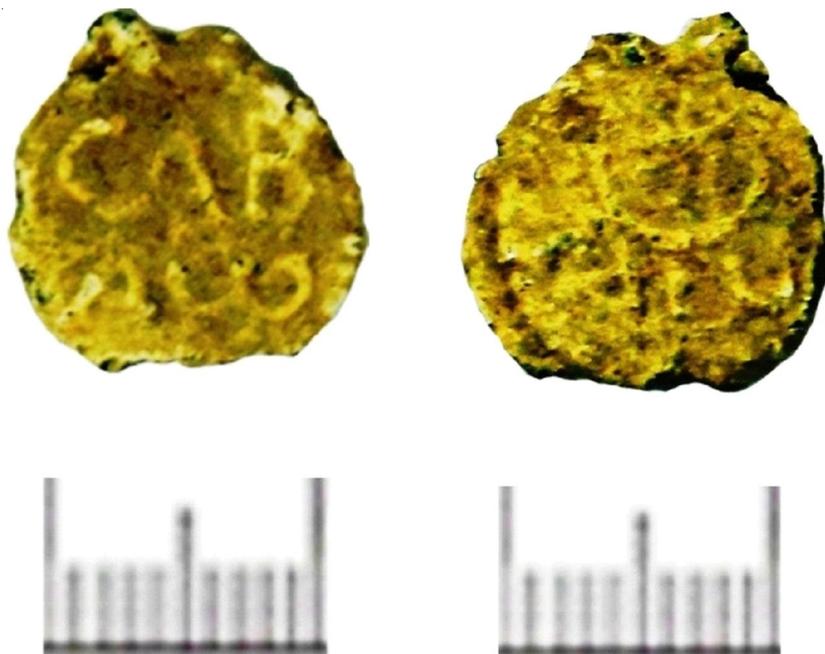


Fig. 3. The lead seal of Ioannes *hypatos* and imperial *spatharios*. Museum of Akhisar



Figs. 4a–b. The lead seal of Romanos IV, Eudokia, Michael VII, Constantios, and Andronikos. Archaeological museum of Izmir, accession no. 2017.33.123.1



Figs. 5a–b. A lead amulet for Sabaōth. Archaeological museum of Izmir, accession no. 2016.861.3

REFERENCES

1. Sokolova I.V. *Gosudarstvennyy Ermitazh. Pechati vizantiyskikh imperatorov. Katalog kollektsii* [The State Hermitage Museum. Byzantine Imperial Seals. The Catalogue of the Collection]. Saint Petersburg, Izd-vo Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha Publ., 2007. 120 p.
2. Bonner C. Amulets Chiefly in the British Museum. *Hesperia. The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, 1951, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 301-345. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/146801> (accessed 1 November 2020).
3. Bonner C. A Miscellany of Engraved Stones. *Hesperia. The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, 1954, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 138-157. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/146693> (accessed 1 November 2020).
4. Bury J.B. *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century: with a Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015. 186 p.
5. Cheynet J.-C. *Les sceaux byzantins de la collection Yavuz Tatlıs*. Izmir, Private edition, 2019. 464 p.
6. Erharter H. Sabaoth. Buchberger M., ed. *Das Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche (LThK)*. Vol. 9: *Pearson bis Samuel*. Freiburg im Breisgau, Verlag Herder, 1999. P. 186.
7. Haldon J.F. *Byzantium in the Seventh Century. The Transformation of a Culture*. Cambridge; New York, NY, Cambridge University Press, 1990. xxviii, 486 p.
8. Mastrocinque A. Perseus and Sabaoth in magic arts and oriental beliefs. Suárez de la Torre E., Pérez Jiménez A., eds. *Mito y Magia en Grecia y Roma*. Barcelona, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Libros Pórtico, 2013, pp. 103-116. (Supplementa MHNH, Estudios de astrología, magia y religión antiguas; vol. 1).
9. Nesbitt J., Morrison C. *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art. Vol. 6: Emperors, Patriarchs of Constantinople, Addenda*. Washington, DC, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2009. xii, 234 p. (Dumbarton Oaks Collection Series).
10. Oikonomidès N. *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles. Introduction, texte et commentaire*. Paris, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1972. 403 p. (Le monde byzantin).
11. Seibt W. The Civil Administration of Byzantine Iberia According to the Seals. **ისტორიანი / Istoriani (Festschrift Roin Metreveli)**. Tbilisi, გამომცემლობა არტანუჯი (Gamomcemloba Artanuji), 2009, pp. 150-157.
12. Spier J. Medieval Byzantine magical amulets and their tradition. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1993, vol. 56, pp. 25-62. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/751363> (accessed 1 November 2020).
13. Spier J. An antique magical book used for making sixth-century amulets? Dasen V., Spieser J.-M., eds. *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*. Florence, Sismel – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2014, pp. 43-66. (Micrologus' Library; vol. 60).
14. Stephenson P. The Serpent Column Fountain. Shilling B., Stephenson P., eds. *Fountains and Water Culture in Byzantium*. Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 103-129.
15. Wassiliou-Seibt A.-K. Catalogue of Auctions (2002–2006). *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography*, 2010, vol. 10, pp. 155-196.
16. Zacos G., Veglery A. *Byzantine Lead Seals. Vol. 1, pt. 1, nos. 1–1095. Imperial Seals, Vth to XVth Centuries; Non-imperial Seals, VIth to IXth centuries*. Basel, J.J. Augustin, 1972. xxxiv, 704 p.

Information About the Authors

Ergün Laflı, Doctor, Professor, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Arkeoloji Bölümü, Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Oda No A-418, Tınaztepe/Kaynaklar Yerleşkesi, Buca, TR-35160 Izmir, Turkey, elaflı@yahoo.ca, <http://deu.academia.edu/ErgunLAFLI>, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4722-5018>

Maurizio Buora, Doctor, Societa Friulana di Archeologia odv, Via Micesio 2, Torre di Porta Villalta, I-33100 Udine, Italy, mbuora@libero.it, <https://independent.academia.edu/MBuora>, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5746-8312>

Информация об авторах

Др Эргюн Лафлы, профессор классической археологии, факультет литературы, кафедра археологии, Университет Докуз Эйлюль, Oda No A-418, Tınaztepe/Kaynaklar Yerleşkesi, Buca, TR-35160 г. Измир, Турция, elaflı@yahoo.ca, <http://deu.academia.edu/ErgunLAFLI>, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4722-5018>

Др Маурицио Буора, Фриульское археологическое общество, Via Micesio 2, Torre di Porta Villalta, I-33100 г. Удине, Италия, mbuora@libero.it, <https://independent.academia.edu/MBuora>, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5746-8312>