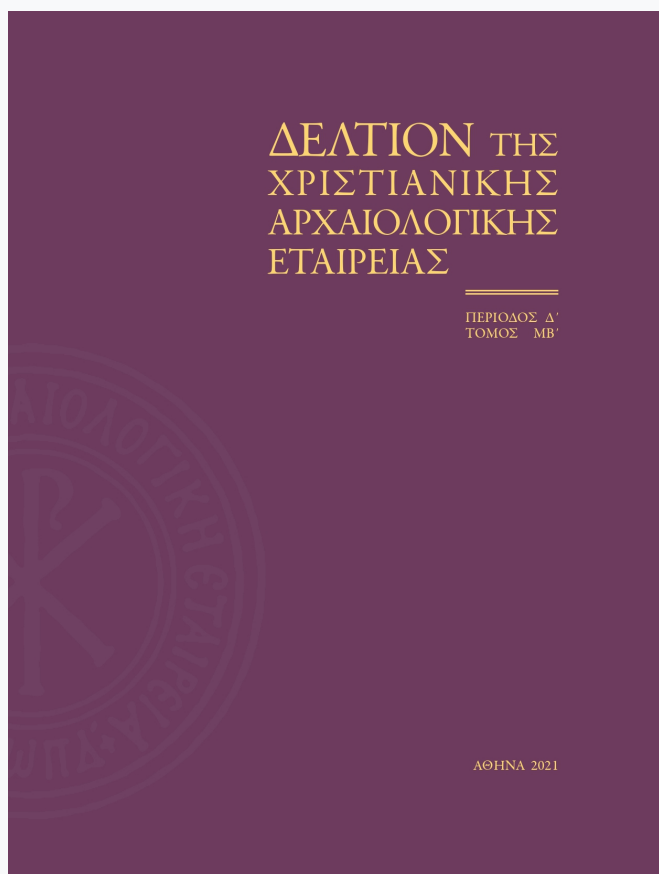


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Byzantine lead seals from Rhodes, Greece. I. Excavation finds

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BYZANTINE LEAD SEALS FROM RHODES, GREECE I. EXCAVATION FINDS

Στην παρούσα μελέτη εξετάζονται εννέα μολυβδόβουλλα που προέρχονται από ανασκαφές της Ρόδου ή αποτελούν τυχαία ευρήματα με ακριβή τόπο εύρεσης. Η δημοσίευση και η ένταξή τους σε ένα ευρύτερο πλαίσιο, σε συσχέτισμό με τα συννευρήματα, παρέχει νέα ιστορικά στοιχεία για την εκκλησιαστική ιστορία του νησιού και για τη σχέση του με την υπόλοιπη βυζαντινή επικράτεια.

In this article nine lead seals are published from Rhodes, Greece. They were found in excavations or are random finds of exact known provenance. By placing them in a wider context and co-examining them with the other finds from the excavations, the publication of the seals offers new historical data concerning the ecclesiastical history of the island and its position in the Byzantine Empire.

Λέξεις κλειδιά

Βυζαντινή περίοδος, μολυβδόβουλλα, ανασκαφικά ευρήματα, Ρόδος.

Keywords

Byzantine period; lead seals; excavation finds; Rhodes.

Rhodes, the largest island of the Dodecanese complex in the SE Aegean, has always been a nodal point for the handling of commodities between East and West. The excavations at the capital of the island have revealed one of the best structured cities, with three natural harbours (out of the five that existed in the Classical and Hellenistic period), that lies at the same place since the city was established in 408 BC. In the Byzantine period, Rhodes was the capital of the Province of the Islands (*Provincia Insularum*) and from the 8th century on, it belonged to the Cibyrrhaiote *theme*.¹

Most of the sigillographic finds from the island's excavations, numbering just a few specimens, have not been published; some of them are simply mentioned in the annual reports of excavations ("Χρονικά" Αρχαιολογικού Δελτίου), others in articles. Unfortunately, not all the seals presented in this study have been traced in the depots of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese. The significance of the seals that are either found in excavations or are random finds at a certain area, will be more

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** This small article presents part of the material I studied during my stay in Washington, D. C., as a fellow of the Summer School on Byzantine Sigillography and Numismatics of Dumbarton Oaks in 2015. I would like to thank the Institution for granting me the opportunity to study in their rich collection and for the warm hospitality. I would like to thank Eric Mc Geer (who also read the manuscript and kindly edited the English text) and Jonathan Shea for their valuable help and for introducing us to the magical world of sigillography. My warmest thanks are also due to Dr Maria

Michaelidou, Director of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese, for the permission to study the material; to Professor Christos Stavrakos and to my dear friend and colleague Dr Vangelis Maladakis, who read the draft and made valuable comments, and to the anonymous reviewers for their apt remarks. A second article examining the rest of the sigillographic finds of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese in Rhodes is under preparation and will follow in due course.

¹ M. Grant, *History of Rome*, London 1979, 116, 122, 140, 165. C. I. Papachristodoulou, *Ιστορία της Ρόδου από τους προϊστορικούς χρόνους έως την Ενσωμάτωση της Δωδεκανήσου* (1948), Athens ²1994, 95, 110.

than obvious. Lead seals studied in the frame of archaeological contexts give us valuable historical information concerning the links between their owners and the location where they were found.² Their publication as a whole, apart from making them known to the scientific

community, is meant to clarify aspects of the island's long history. The seals will be presented in chronological order and some comments will follow the catalogue by way of conclusion.

CATALOGUE

1. Kyros bishop, 6th century (?)

Dimensions: Diam.: 0,023 m.

Provenance: Medieval town of Rhodes, Theseos street, unidentified church.

Actual Location: Unknown.

Bibliography: Unpublished.

Mention: Y. Psarri, “Νεότερα στοιχεία από την ανασκαφική έρευνα ανώνυμου βυζαντινού ναού στην οδό Θησέως στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου”, *15 χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου, Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου*, I, Athens 2007, 468.

On Theseos street, *intra muros*, during the excavation of an unidentified ruined church, a lead seal was found in 1997. The bilateral seal was KYP/OYEPH/CKO/ΠIOY (Κύρου επισκόπου). The seal dates from the 6th century, and the bishop has been identified with the bishop of Karpathos and Kasos Kyros³, mentioned in the dedicatory

inscription of the mosaic pavement of the basilica of St Anastasia at Arkasa, Karpathos⁴. The dating is substantiated by the nine numismatic finds of the older phase of the excavated church, dating from the second half of the 6th up to the beginning of the 7th century⁵. Two parallels, as for the given description, belong to the Dumbarton Oaks Collection⁶ and one from Lamboussa/Kyreneia, Cyprus⁷. The dimensions not only of the Rhodes specimen (0,023 m.) and that of Cyprus (0,022 m.), but also of the specimen at Dumbarton Oaks, BZS.1958.106.249 (0,028 m.), are similar; the sealed surface of the latter could potentially fit in a smaller seal, such as the first. It is to be

² Concerning the significance of lead seals when found in excavations, see respectively J.-Cl. Cheynet – C. Morrisson, “Lieux de trouvaille et circulation des sceaux”, *SBS* 2 (1990), 105-136 [= J.-C. Cheynet, *La société byzantine. L'apport des sceaux*, 1, (Bilans de Recherche 3), Paris 2008, no. 1, 85-112]. A. Avramea – M. Galani-Krikou – G. Touratsoglou, “Μολυβδόβουλλα με γνωστή προέλευση από τις συλλογές του Νομισματικού Μουσείου Αθηνών”, *SBS* 2 (1990), 235-272. C. Stavrakos, “Δύο αδημοσίευστα μολυβδόβουλλα από την Σπάρτη. Παρατηρήσεις σχετικές με τη διακίνηση των βυζαντινών σφραγίδων στη Μεσαιωνική Λακεδαίμονα (8ος-12ος αιώνας)”, *Festschrift für Gunter Prinzing. Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie. Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur* (Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik 7), Hrsg. von L. Hoffmann, Wiesbaden 2005, 349-370. I. Koltsida-Makri, “Μολυβδόβουλλα από ανασκαφές και γενικότερα γνωστής προέλευσης στον ελλαδικό χώρο”, *Ἡπειρόνδε, Proceedings of the 10th International Symposium of Byzantine Sigillography (Ioannina, 1-3 October 2009)*, eds Ch. Stavrakos – B. Papadopoulou, Wiesbaden 2011, 244.

³ Psarri, “Νεότερα στοιχεία”, op.cit. (see Cat. no. 1), 468, has proposed this identification. It is noteworthy, though, that there is another, contemporary known bishop also named Kyros, the one of Phasis in Kolchis (Lazike), later patriarch of Alexandria (from 631). See *PMBZ* 2, 4213 (Kyros).

⁴ For the mosaics of St Anastasia in Arkasa, see G. Jacopich, *Edifici bizantini di Scarpanto. Mosaici ed iscrizioni*, Rodi 1925, 29, fig. 33. S. Pelekanidis (assist. by P. I. Atzaka), *Σύνταγμα τῶν παλαιοχριστιανικῶν ψηφιδωτῶν τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, I, Νησιωτικὴ Ἑλλάς, Thessaloniki 1974, 60, pl. 21γ. G. Kiourtzian, “Corpus des inscriptions chrétiennes de Karpathos”, *CahArch* 58 (2021), 77-78, who dates these mosaics of Kyros precisely in 555. For Karpathos in Early Christian times see A. Katsioti, “Quelques jalons pour une histoire de l'art sur l'île de Karpathos de l'époque protobyzantine au X^e siècle”, *CahArch* 58 (2021), 55-72. I would like to thank G. Kiourtzian and A. Katsioti for the permission to use their articles before their publication.

⁵ They consist, among others, of coins of Justin II, Mauricius, Heraclius and Constans II. Psarri, “Νεότερα στοιχεία”, op.cit. (see Cat. no. 1), 468. A.-M. Kasdagli, *Coins in Rhodes from the monetary reform of Anastasius I until the Ottoman conquest (498-1522)*, Oxford 2018, 189.

⁶ V. Laurent, *Le Corpus des sceaux de l'Empire byzantin*, V/1: *L'Église*, Paris 1963, no. 972. For the other, see <https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1947.2.306/view> (last retrieved June 12th, 2021).

⁷ D. Metcalf, *Byzantine Lead Seals from Cyprus* (Cyprus Research Centre Texts and Studies of the History of Cyprus XLVII), Nicosia 2004, no. 437.

hoped that future examination will show whether they belonged to the same *bulloterion* or not.

2. Theodore, 6th century

Dimensions: Diam.: 0,024 m.

Provenance: Rhodes, Chimarras Street, Chatziandreou plot.

Bibliography: Unpublished.

Mention: AD 24 (1969), B2 Chronika, 467 (E. Kollias).

In 1969, during the excavation of the great basilica of the city of Rhodes, at Chimarras Street, a lead seal was found in a tomb of the middle aisle (tomb A).

Obverse: On its obverse it had the bust of a bearded saint, probably St Theodore, with his head turned to the right, within a border of dots⁸.

Reverse: The reverse presented a monogram, deciphered as Θεοδώρου⁹.

The seal has not yet been traced, thus we cannot reach a conclusion about the exact type that it followed and its precise dating¹⁰.

The (unfinished) excavation of Chatziandreou plot, at the junction of Chimarras with Pavlou Mela Street, took a number of years. It revealed a huge three-aisled Early Christian basilica with a transept, with three ambiguous building phases, the last being Justinianic¹¹. It was assumed that the building was abandoned in the 7th

century, and then stripped down to its foundations. To judge from both the pottery and the coins found in the church¹², the seal cannot be later than the second half of the 6th century.

3. John bishop of Leros, 6th-7th century



Inventory: Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese, MB 497.

Dimensions: Diam.: 0,024 m.

Provenance: Rhodes, Chimarras Street, Damianos plot.

Actual Location: Byzantine Exhibition, Grand Master's Palace.

Bibliography: M. Michaelidou, "Συμβολή στην ιστορία της επισκοπής Λέρου", *Δωδεκρον* 14 (1991), 211-220. E. Kollias – Th. Archontopoulos – A.-M. Kasdagli – A. Katsioti – M. Michaelidou – A. Nika – E. Papavassiliou – M. Sigala – K. Kefala, *Η Ρόδος από τον 4ο αιώνα μ.Χ. μέχρι την κατάληψή της από τους Τούρκους (1522)*, *Παλάτι Μεγάλου Μαγίστρου* (exhibition catalogue), Athens 2000, 85 fig. 99 (picture of the obverse, accidentally printed upside-down).

Obverse: Inscription of three lines preceded by a crosslet. Wreath border.

+ |ΙΩΑΝ|ΝΟΝΕ|ΛΑΧ
Ἰωάννου ἐλαχίστου

Reverse: Inscription of three lines preceded by a crosslet. Wreath border.

+ ΕΠΙΣΚ|ΟΠΟΥ
ἐπισκόπου Λέρου

Translation: (Seal of) John, most humble bishop of Leros.

⁸ Excavation Diary no. 33, p. 214.

⁹ AD 24 (1969), B2 Chronika, 467 (E. Kollias).

¹⁰ We have traced numerous seals of the same type. See, for example, two specimens of Dumbarton Oaks, the 7th century Θεοδώρου BZS. 1958.106.3011 <https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1958.106.3011/view> (last retrieved June 12th, 2021) and the sixth-seventh century Θεοδώρου BZS.1958.106.3051: <https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1958.06.3051/view> (last retrieved June 12th, 2021). Even though their description is the same, their features are completely different.

¹¹ For the mosaics of the basilica, see N. Zarras, "Early Byzantine Mosaic Pavements from the Chatziandreou Basilica ('Great Basilica') in Rhodes", *Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνη στα Δωδεκάνησα κατά την Ύστερη Αρχαιότητα. Πρακτικά Ημερίδας στη Μνήμη του Ηλία Κόλλια*, *Eulimene* 2, eds N. Zarras – M. Stefanakis, Rethymnon 2014, 81-104. For comments and more recent literature, A. Katsioti, *The Lamps of Late Antiquity from Rhodes, 3rd-7th centuries AD*, London 2017, 12-13.

¹² Justin II (565-578) and Maurice (589-590), see: Katsioti, *Lamps*, op.cit. (n. 11), 13. For the coins of the plot, see Kasdagli, *Coins*, op.cit. (n. 5), 170.

Parallel: A close parallel, in terms of the similar arrangement, is the seal of John, bishop of Samos (BZS.1947.2.411)¹³.

This seal of great importance for local history was found near the Chatziandreou plot basilica, in the excavation of Damianos plot. No other seals mentioning Ioannis, bishop of Leros have been published, but a bishop of the same name took part in the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 553. This will have been our Ioannis or one of his successors, so the seal sheds light on the history of the island during early Byzantine times.

The Damianos plot, like the Tzedakis one, is very close to the great basilica of Chimarras Street. Both witnessed extensive use in Late Antiquity. The Damianos plot in its earlier phase consisted of a complex of vaulted units, both above and beyond ground level, cut in the soft rock of the area and supplied with stairs and arched doorways, as well as the remains of a large structure¹⁴. The numismatic finds, consisting of coins of Anastasius I (491-518), Maurice (582-602) and Heraclius (610-641)¹⁵, do not exclude the possibility that we are dealing with a seal that belonged to one of the successors of the aforementioned Ioannes, as Michaelidou has already pointed out¹⁶.

4. George *Stratelates* (?), end of 6th – beginning of the 7th century



Dimensions: Diam.: 0,023m. Thick.: 0,003m.

¹³ J. W. Nesbitt – N. Oikonomides, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, 2, Washington, D. C. 1994, no. 44.15.

¹⁴ Katsioti, *Lamps*, op.cit. (n. 11), 11.

¹⁵ Kasdagli, *Coins*, op.cit. (n. 5), 162, 169.

¹⁶ Michaelidou, “Συμβολή”, op.cit. (see Cat. no. 3), 217.

Provenance: Medieval town of Rhodes, Menekleous Street, Minatsis plot.

Actual Location: Depots of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese, Rhodes.

Bibliography: Unpublished.

For the excavation, see: A. Nika, “Οικόπεδο Μηναστή, οδός Μενεκλέους”, *AD* 47 (1992), B2 *Chronika*, 674-675. Eadem, “Οικόπεδο Μηναστή, οδός Μενεκλέους”, *AD* 48 (1993), B2 *Chronika*, 571-572.

Obverse: Cruciform monogram. Indeterminate border.
Γ - Ε - Ι - Ο - Ρ - Β - Ω

Γεωργίου

Reverse: Cruciform monogram. Wreath border.

Α - Η - Λ - Ο - Σ - Τ - Β

στρατηλάτου (?)

Translation: (Seal of) George *stratelates*.

Parallels: The closest parallels to our seal are in the Dumbarton Oaks collection (BZS.1955.1.79 and BZS.1955.1.96). The interpretation of the monogram has been thoroughly discussed in the presentation of those seals¹⁷.

Stratelates at this time was either a relatively high military commander (yet under the *strategos*), but more often only a title¹⁸.

¹⁷ This seal is similar to BZS.1955.1.96, though on the other seal, the *O* is explicitly figured (in ligature with a *v*) on the top of the reverse monogram. If the reverse is supposed to read *στρατηλάτου*, the *ρ* is missing. If it is supposed to be an additional name in the genitive (*Αναστασίου* or *Ιουστινιάνου*), the *H* would have to be a *N*, a one stroke difference. With the given letters, again, *ἀνγουσῆς* is a possible but unlikely guess. Of all the options thus possible, Zacos' reading (of BZS.1955.1.96, G. Zacos – A. Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, I, Basel 1972, no. 340) of *stratelates* seems the most likely, with a missing *P*. See <https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1955.1.79> (last retrieved June 12th, 2021). Cf the monogram in J.-Cl. Cheynet, *Les sceaux byzantins de la collection Yavuz Tatiş*, Smyrna 2019, no. 5.109.

¹⁸ V. Laurent, *Le sceaux byzantins du Médaillier Vatican*, Vatican 1962, 63. N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles*, Paris 1972, 263, 273, 308, 332, 334. A.-K. Wasiliou-Seibt, “From magister militum to strategos: the evolution of the highest military commands in early Byzantium (5th-7th c.)”, *Mélanges Jean-Claude Cheynet*, eds B. Caseau – V. Prigent – A. Sopraca [= *TM* 21/1 (2017)], 789-802. Cf. E. Laflı – W. Seibt, “Five byzantine lead seals of the seventh century A.D. from Marmaris in Caria (Southwestern Turkey)”, *Αντιχαρίσματος επιφωράγαις*.

The Minatsis plot at Menekleous Street is adjacent to the medieval church of Agios Spyridon and the Early Christian basilica of the Archangel Michael (Demirli Mosque), with numismatic evidence of the 6th and 7th century¹⁹. In the Minatsis plot, a lamp from the 7th century was found with a coin of Constans II (668). The area yielded more coins of this era²⁰. Thus, the seal can be dated at the end of the 6th or the beginning of the 7th century, which corroborates the date of the rest of the finds of the excavation, dated at the same period.

5. Isidoros metropolitan of Rhodes, end of the 7th century



Inventory: Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese, MB 3333.

Dimensions: Diam.: 0,0265 m. Thick.: 0,004 m. Weight: 17,1 gr.

Provenance: Theologos, sanctuary of Apollo Erethimios, close to the basilica.

Actual Location: Depots of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese, Rhodes.

Bibliography: N. Mastrochristos, “Βυζαντινό μολυβδόβουλλο από το ιερό του Ερεθιμίου Απόλλωνος στον Θεολόγο Ρόδου”, *Ερεθίμια. Διαμόρφωση και ανάδειξη του ιερού του Ερεθιμίου Απόλλωνος στον Θεολόγο Ρόδου*, ed. P. Triantaphyllidis, Rhodes 2015, 187-190. For the excavation, see all the articles and bibliography in the aforementioned volume.

Obverse: Inscription in four lines, starting with a crosslet. Wreath border.

+ΘΕΟ|ΤΟΚΕΒΟ|ΗΘΙΙCΙ|ΔΩΡΩ

+Θεοτόκε βοήθη<ε>ι Ἰσιδώρῳ

Reverse: Cross on the top, inscription in three lines. Wreath border.

+|ΜΗΤΡΟ|ΠΟΛΙΤΗ|ΡΟΔΩ

+ Μητροπολίτη Ρόδου.

Translation: Theotokos, help Isidoros, metropolitan of Rhodes.

The seal most probably belonged to Isidoros, the only known metropolitan of Rhodes bearing this name²¹, who participated in the Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 680/1²². He attended the Council after the tenth session, i.e. in 681 (it began on the 7th of November of 680²³), and he signed for himself and on behalf of the bishops under him the letter that the Council addressed to Pope Agathon²⁴. No other details are known about him, such as when he was enthroned or the year of his death.

Inscriptions on bilateral seals were very popular from the 6th till the 13th century²⁵. The type of the letters

²¹ For the catalogue of the metropolitans of Rhodes, see *ΘΗΕ* 10, “Ρόδου Μητροπόλις”, 819-820 (E. I. Konstantinidis) and G. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientis*, I, *Patriarchatus Constantinopolitanus*, Padua 1988, 203-205.

²² I. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, XI, Graz 1960, 672D. R. Riedinger, *Die Präsenz und Subskriptionsliste des VI. Ökumenischen Konzils (680/81) und der papyrus Vind. G.3*, Munich 1979, especially 22-25. *PMBZ* 2, 3491 (Isidoros). E. I. Konstantinidis, *Συμβολή εις την ἐκκλησιαστικὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς Δωδεκανήσου*, Athens 1968, 32. Papachristodoulou, *Ιστορία της Ρόδου*, op.cit. (n. 1), 238.

²³ A. N. Stratos, *Τὸ Βυζάντιον στὸν Ζ' αἰῶνα*, V, *Κωνσταντῖνος Δ' (668-687)*, Athens 1974, 123. Riedinger, *Die Präsenz*, op.cit. (n. 22), 11-12 note 30.

²⁴ Ἰσιδωρος ἐλέει θεοῦ ἐπίσκοπος τῆς Ῥοδίων μητροπόλεως τῶν Κυκλάδων νήσων ὑπὲρ ἑμῶν καὶ τῆς ὑπ' ἐμὲ συνόδου ὁμοίως ὑπεσημνήμην. R. Riedinger (ed.), *Concilium universale Constantinopolitanum tertium (Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum II/2, 1-2)*, Berlin 1990-1992, 893. The information is provided also by T. Evangelidis, “Ἐκκλησία Ρόδου”, *ΕΕΒΣ* 6 (1929), 163-164, without reference. It is worth noting that this letter was compiled by the Council after the last, 18th session of September 16th, 691. See also J. F. Haldon, *Byzantium in Seventh Century. The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge 1997, 315-316.

²⁵ See, for example, I. G. Leontiades, *Μολυβδόβουλλα του Μουσείου Βυζαντινού Πολιτισμού Θεσσαλονίκης* (Βυζαντινά Κείμενα και Μελέται 40), Thessaloniki 2006, 40, 71.

A tribute to Prof. Ivan Gordanov's 70th anniversary, Shumen 2019, 350-351.

¹⁹ From Justin I (518-527) till Constans II (641-668), see Kasdagli, *Coins*, op.cit. (n. 5), 180. Katsioti, *Lamps*, op.cit. (n. 11), 14.

²⁰ Katsioti, *Lamps*, op.cit. (n. 11), 15 notes 107-108.

concurr with an early dating²⁶, as does the use of the dative case in the supplication (Ρόδω instead of Ρόδου), a convention that appears around the end of the 7th or the beginning of the 8th century²⁷. Similarities with other seals, for example the one of *Theodotos monk and general logothetes*²⁸, dated before 695²⁹, support and restrict our dating to the last twenty years of the 7th century³⁰.

This is the only lead seal that has been found during a systematic excavation in the countryside of Rhodes. The excavations of the past twenty years at the Sanctuary of Apollo Erethimios near the Village of Theologos have brought to light a very important Hellenistic temple and several buildings, including the ruins of an Early Christian basilica³¹.

6. Sergios *apo hypaton*, second half of 7th century



Dimensions: Diam.: 0,022 m. Thick.: 0.004 m. Weight: 13,13 gr.

Provenance: Rhodes, Chimarras Street, Tzedakis plot.

Actual Location: Byzantine Exhibition, Grand Master's Palace.

Bibliography: Unpublished.

Mention: Kollias et al., *H Ρόδος*, op.cit. (see Cat. no. 3), 85 no. 4. Also: I. H. Volanakis, "Συμβολή στην έρευνα των παλαιοχριστιανικών μνημείων της Δωδεκανήσου", *Δωδεχρον* 12 (1987), 79, where the name of *Sergios* is mentioned, but

not his title. For the excavation, see: M. Filimonos, "Οι κόπεδο Τζεδάκη, οδός Χειμάρας", *AD* 42 (1987), B2 Chronika, 587-589. Y. Nikolaidou, "Ανασκαφή Τζεδάκη στη Ρόδο. Ένα ελληνιστικό εργαστήριο", *Ρόδος 2400 χρόνια. Η πόλη της Ρόδου από την ίδρυσή της μέχρι την κατάληψη από τους Τούρκους (1523)*, Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου, I, Athens 1999, 259-262.

Obverse: Inscription of two lines, a cross above and below. Indeterminate border.

+|C E P|F I D|+

Σεργίου

Reverse: Inscription of three lines, cross on the top. Grained border.

+|A P O|H P A|T O.

ἀπὸ ὑπάτω[v]

Translation: (Seal of) Sergios apo hypaton.

Parallel: Metcalf, *Cyprus*, op.cit. (n. 6), no. 165.

The cross placed at the end of the inscription is used mainly from the last quarter of the 7th until the middle of the 8th century, while the ligature δ is attested until the same period. Thus, the seal can be assigned to the years between the second half of the 7th and the beginning/middle of the 8th century³².

By the 6th century, *apo hypaton* (ex-consul) became a honorific title and seems that thereafter it declined in importance³³. It is interesting that, among others³⁴, the written sources mention a certain Sergios *apo hypaton*, who was *vir gloriosissimus*, *apo hypaton* and *patrikios*; he was one of the laymen who attended the Third Council of Constantinople (the Sixth Ecumenical Council) in

²⁶ For example, N. Oikonomides, *Byzantine Lead Seals* (Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection Publications 7), Washington, D. C. 1985, 19.

²⁷ Leontiades, *Θεσσαλονίκη*, op.cit. (n. 25), 35.

²⁸ Zacos – Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, I, op.cit. (n. 17), no. 1064A.

²⁹ N. Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals*, Washington, D. C. 1986, no. 23.

³⁰ Mastrochristos, "Βυζαντινό μολυβδόβουλλο", op.cit. (see Cat. no. 5), 189.

³¹ P. Triantaphyllidis (ed.), *Ερεθίμια. Διαμόρφωση και ανάδειξη του ιερού του Ερεθιμίου Απόλλωνος στον Θεολόγο Ρόδου*, Rhodes 2015.

³² That is the reason why we believe that BZS.1947.2.1746, the seal of a Sergios *apo hypaton* at the Collection of D.O. dating clearly from the 6th-7th century, does not belong to the same person.

³³ ODB 2, "Hypatos", 963-964 (A. Kazhdan). Only the *hypatoi* were mentioned in Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance*, op.cit. (n. 18), 325. For a discussion of the title, see D. M. Metcalf, "An Imperial Initiative in the Time of Tiberius III (698-705). Ἀπὸ ὑπάτων and ἀπὸ ἐπάρχων", *Όλοκότινον. Studies in Byzantine Numismatics and Sigillography in Memory of Petros Protonotarios*, eds E. G. Papaefthimiou – I. P. Touratsoglou, (Bibliotheca of the Hellenic Numismatic Society 10), Athens 2013, 167-171.

³⁴ PMBZ 4, 6545 (Sergios *apo hypaton*), 6641 (Sergios *apo hypaton* and *chartoularios*).

680 and 681; he attended only those sessions at which the emperor himself was present (one to eleven and eighteen) and is named third in the list of laymen present on those occasions³⁵, as mentioned in Riedinger and Mansi. He is styled *Σεργίου τοῦ ἐνδοξοτάτου ἀπὸ ὑπάτων πατρικίου*; the old Latin version printed in Riedinger called him “Sergio glorioso ex consule Patricio”³⁶.

The Tzedakis plot at Chimarras Street, nearby the great basilica of the city of Rhodes (see n. 2 above), has yielded remains from various periods, including an Early Byzantine secular building with mosaics, and floors laid with shaped stones and pebbles. The numismatic evidence consists of coins of emperors Justin II (565-578), Maurice (585-602), Heraclius (610-641) and Constans II (641-668)³⁷. In addition, contemporary examples of Asia Minor and “Samian-style” lamps have been found in the excavation³⁸. The seal must therefore be placed most probably in the second half of the 7th century.

7. Constantine *chartouarios*, 6th – beginning of the 8th century



Inventory: Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese, MB 3336

Dimensions: Diam.: 0,016 m. Thick.: 0,002 m.

Provenance: Medieval town of Rhodes, Ippoton Street, Villiers mansion.

Actual Location: Depots of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese, Rhodes.

Bibliography: Unpublished.

Obverse: In four lines the inscription:

ΚΩΝ|CTAN|TINO|V

Κωνσταντίνου

Obverse: In four lines the inscription:

ΧΑΡ|ΤΟΝΛ|ΑΡΙΟΝ

Χαρτουλαρίου

Translation: (Seal of) Constantinos *chartouarios*.

Chartouarioi were special civil dignitaries in imperial (and other) service; they could be employed in quite different duties³⁹. The bilateral seal can be dated from the late 7th till the mid 8th century. Other seals of Constantine *chartouarios* have also been published. They belong to the same period, but present different typology⁴⁰.

The seal was found during the restoration at the so-called Villiers mansion, which now houses the offices of the Ephorate of Antiquities at Ippoton Street (Street of the Knights), in the embankment under the building. Villiers mansion is inside the Early Byzantine fortress and almost leads onto P31 Street, one of the widest and most important avenues of the city⁴¹.

³⁹ For the *chartouarioi*, see: Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, op.cit. (n. 18), 310, and W. Seibt, “The Seal of a *Chartouarios* from Mangup”, *Byzantine and Rus’ Seals. Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Rus’-Byzantine Sigillography*. Kyiv, Ukraine, 13-16 September 2013, eds H. Ivakin – N. Khrapunov – W. Seibt, Kiev 2015, 33-35, with literature.

⁴⁰ Zacos – Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, I, op.cit. (n. 17), 778 (dat. 650-750). Also: W. de Gray Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, V, London 1898, no. 17579, on the obverse appears a cruciform monogram and on the reverse the name and the title; C. Sode – P. Speck, *Byzantinische Bleisiegel in Berlin*, II, Bonn 1997, no. 234, with cruciform monograms on both sides.

⁴¹ E. Kollias, “Η παλαιοχριστιανική και βυζαντινή Ρόδος. Η αντίσταση μιας ελληνιστικής πόλης”, *Ρόδος 2400 χρόνια. Η πόλη της Ρόδου από την ίδρυσή της μέχρι την κατάληψη από τους Τούρκους (1523)*, Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου, II, Athens 2000, 302-308. Ch. Giakoumaki, “Η ανασκαφική έρευνα στην ιπποτική οικία Τζεμ στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου. Η συμβολή της στην αποκατάσταση και την εξελικτική πορεία της αρχαίας οδού P31 από την αρχαιότητα έως σήμερα”, *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στα νησιά του Αιγαίου. Διεθνές Επιστημονικό Συνέδριο, Ρόδος, 27 Νοεμβρίου – 1 Δεκεμβρίου 2013*, III, ed. P. Triantaphyllidis, Mytilini 2017, 429-442.

³⁵ Riedinger, *Concilium* II 2. 14, line 22, 26, line 23, 36, line 4, 46, line 27, 160, line 25, 170, line 18, 180, line 22, 190, line 19, 262, line 19, 278, line 19, 400, line 19, 752, line 18 (= Mansi XI 209, 217, 221, 229, 317, 321, 328, 333, 380, 388, 456, 625). *PMBZ* 4, 6538 (Sergios).

³⁶ Riedinger, *Concilium* II 2. 15, line 21, etc. (= Mansi XI 210, etc.).

³⁷ Kasdagli, *Coins*, op.cit. (n. 5), 175.

³⁸ Katsioti, *Lamps*, op.cit. (n. 11), 11.

8. Symeon metropolitan of Rhodes, 11th century



Inventory: Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese, MB 3625

Dimensions: Diam.: 0.021 m.

Provenance: Filerimos, Middle Byzantine church of the Virgin Mary, north of narthex (random surface find during grass cutting).

Actual Location: Depots of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese, Rhodes.

Bibliography: Unpublished.

Obverse: Bust of the Virgin *dxiokratousa* holding Christ. On either side the sigla:

Μ-ΘΥ:

Μήτηρ Θεοῦ. Border of dots.

Reverse: Inscription of six lines, a decoration above. Border of dots.

- ∙ - |ΘΚΕΡ,Θ,|CVMΕΩΝ|Τ,ΕΛΑΧΙC|Τ,ΜΡΟΠΟ|ΛΙΤ,ΡΟ|-Δ-

Θεοτόκε βοήθει Συμεὼν τῷ ἐλαχίστῳ μητροπολίτῃ Ῥόδου

Translation: Theotokos, help Symeon, most humble metropolitan of Rhodes.

Parallel: *DO Seals* 2, op.cit. (n. 10), no. 54.4. <https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1958.106.62/view>. Laurent, *Corpus* V/1, op.cit. (n. 6), no. 699 (slightly different reading).

This is not the only published seal of Symeon metropolitan of Rhodes. An identical specimen is contained in the Dumbarton Oaks collection (BZS.1958.106.62). As noted in the commentary⁴², the first 12th-century Niketas⁴³ is listed in the *Synodikon* four places after Symeon,

⁴² <https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1958.106.62> (last retrieved June 12th, 2021).

⁴³ J. Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire", *TM* 2 (1967), 113.

a fact that would place the latter in the second half of the 11th century⁴⁴.

The church of the Virgin Mary belongs to the cross-in-square four-columned type, and has a contemporary narthex. The Italian excavation was never completely published. Indications as to its dating come from the typology itself, suggesting a range from the late 10th to the middle of the 11th century⁴⁵. P. Papanikolaou proposes a dating to the late 11th century⁴⁶, which agrees with the dating of the lead seal that was discarded outside the narthex.

9. Leon Pegonites, 11th-12th century



Inventory: Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese, MB 505.

⁴⁴ Laurent placed him ca. 1050. His reasoning, however, was based on an erroneous date for the metropolitan of Rhodes John, see: E. Vranoussi, *Βυζαντινά έγγραφα της Μονής Πάμμου*, I, *Αὐτοκρατορικά*, Athens 1980, 11.

⁴⁵ For the church, see A. Orlandos, "Βυζαντινά καὶ μεταβυζαντινά μνημεῖα τῆς Ῥόδου", *ABME* 6 (1948), 70-72. M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, "Ἡ ἐκκλησία τῆς Παναγίας τοῦ Κάστρου τῆς Ῥόδου", *AD* 23 (1968), A Meletai, 230, 238 note 39. K. Gallas, *Rhodos: eine der sonnenreichsten Inseln des Mittelmeeres: Ihre Geschichte, Kultur und Landschaft*, Köln 1984, 231-232. M. Rocco – M. Livadiotti, "I monumenti bizantini e medievali sul monte Fileremo", *La presenza italiana nel Dodecaneso tra il 1912 e il 1948. La ricerca archeologica, la conservazione, le scelte progettuali*, eds. M. Livadioti – G. Rocco, Catania 1996, 269-270. E. Papavassiliou, "Μεσοβυζαντινὴ σαροκοφάγος ἀπὸ τὸν Φιλέρημο Ῥόδου", *Χάρις Χαίρε. Μελέτες στη μνήμη της Χάρης Κάντζια*, II, Athens 2004, 231. S. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent*, New Haven – London 2010, 296-297.

⁴⁶ P. Papanikolaou, *Ecclesiastical Architecture in the Countryside of Hospitaller Rhodes (1309-1522). The Monuments as sources of Regional Social History* (Phd Diss. in progress), King's College London.

Dimensions: Diam.: 0,022 m. (fragment missing in lower part).

Provenance: Medieval town of Rhodes, Agisandrou Street, Pektsmetzis plot.

Actual Location: Byzantine Exhibition, Grand Master's Palace.

Bibliography: E. Papavassiliou – Th. Archontopoulos, “Nouveaux éléments historiques et archéologiques de Rhodes à travers des fouilles dans la ville médiévale”, *CorsiRav* XXXVIII (1991), 343. A. Katsioti – Th. Archontopoulos, “Το παρεκκλήσιο της οικογένειας των Αρμενόπουλων στη Ρόδο και η τέχνη του τέλους του 12ου αιώνα στα Δωδεκάνησα”, *Ρόδος 2400 χρόνια*, II, op.cit. (n. 41), 385, pl. 156γ.

Obverse: Bust of St Theodore. Inscribed:

ΘΘΕ. - ..Ρ..

(Ἄγιος Θεόδωρος)

Reverse: Dodecasyllabic metrical inscription in 5 lines.

Τ...Ν|ΚΕΠΟΙΣ|ΛΕΟΝΤΑ|ΤΟΝΠΙΓΟ|ΙΤ..

Τ[ήρω]ν [σ]κέποις Λέοντα τὸν Π(η)γο[ν]ίτην

Translation: Oh Teron, protect Leon Pegonites.

Parallel: V. Bulgurlu, “Seals from the Kadikalesi/Anaia excavation”, *Ἠπειρόνδε. Proceedings of the 10th International Symposium*, op.cit. (n. 2), 286-287.

The seal belongs to Leon Pegonites, who was a *πρωτο-σπαθάριος καὶ στρατηγὸς τῆς Πρεσθλάβιτζας* and dates from the end of the 11th or the beginning of the 12th century⁴⁷. Seals of the same person can be found in many publications⁴⁸, with the closest parallel to ours, however, coming from the Kadikalesi/Anaia excavation.

⁴⁷ Katsioti – Archontopoulos, “Το παρεκκλήσιο”, op.cit. (see Cat. no. 9), 385, pl. 156γ. For the family, see also C. Stavrakos, *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel mit Familiennamen aus der Sammlung des Numismatischen Museums Athen*, Wiesbaden 2002, no. 209. A.-K. Wassiliou-Seibt, “Gelesenes und geschriebenes. Zur Interpretation byzantinischer Bleisiegel aus Bulgarien. Der Familienname Pegonites”, *Proceedings of the International Symposium, Dedicated to the Centennial of the Dr. Vassil Haralanov, Held in Shumen in September the 13th-15th 2007*, Shumen 2008, 133-136. Eadem, “Der Pegonites auf byzantinischen Siegeln und in anderen schriftlichen Quellen”, *Realia Byzantina*, eds S. Kotzabassi – G. Mavromatis, (*Byzantinisches Archiv* 22), Berlin – New York 2009, 303-319.

⁴⁸ G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'Empire byzantin*, Paris 1884,

On lead seals, St Theodore is one of the most common warrior saints⁴⁹, especially among military officials of the eastern regions of the empire⁵⁰; he is usually inscribed without an epithet⁵¹. Both his epithets, *Teron* (the Recruit) and *Stratelates* (the Commander or General) appear in the 10th century⁵².

The seal was found in the excavation of the Pektsmetzis plot at Agisandrou Street, in the medieval town of Rhodes, in a tomb of the narthex of a cruciform chapel dating from the Middle Byzantine period. The church, as noted in an inscription in the wall paintings, was donated by members of the Constantinopolitan family

692. V. Laurent, *Les bulles métriques dans la sigillographie byzantine*, Athens 1932, no. 498. I. Jordanov, *Corpus of Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria*, II, *Byzantine Seals with Family Names*, Sofia 2006, no. 584. J. W. Nesbitt – N. Oikonomides, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, 1, Washington, D. C. 1991, no. 78.4 (BZS.1951.31.5.860). There are two more specimens at the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, BZS.1958.106.3079 and BZS.1947.2.1247). A.-K. Wassiliou-Seibt, *Corpus der byzantinischen Siegel mit metrischen Legenden*, 2, *Siegellegenden von Ny bis inclusive Σφραγίς* (Wiener Byzantinische Studien 28/2), Wien 2016, no. 1798. I. Jordanov, *Seals of Byzantine Administration in Bulgaria (971-1118)*, Shumen 2019, 114-115, 123 nos 138-145.

⁴⁹ J. A. Cotsonis, “The contribution of Byzantine lead seals to the study of the cult of the saints: (sixth-twelfth centuries)”, *Byzantion* 75 (2005), 383-497 [=J. A. Cotsonis, *The Religious Figural Imagery of Byzantine Lead Seals II. Studies on Images of the Saints and of Personal Piety*, Abingdon – New York, 2020, 110-119]. See also: J. Shea, *Politics and Government in Byzantium. The Rise and Fall of the Bureaucrats*, Bloomsbury 2020, 26.

⁵⁰ J.-C. Cheynet, “Le culte de Saint Théodore chez les officiers de l'armée d'orient”, *Byzantium, State and Society: In Memory of Nikos Oikonomides*, eds A. Avramea – A. Laiou – E. Chrysos, Athens 2003, 137-153 [= J.-C. Cheynet, *La société byzantine. L'apport des sceaux*, 1, (Bilans de Recherche 3), Paris 2008, no. 12, 307-322].

⁵¹ Of the 747 examples of Theodore's image found among the published collections, only 15 occur with the epithet *Teron* and 26 with that of *Stratelates*. <https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1958.106.2970> (last retrieved June 12th, 2021).

⁵² Cotsonis, “The contribution”, op.cit. (n. 49), 112. For his epithets, see also N. Oikonomides, “Le dédoublement de S. Théodore et les villes de Euchaita et Euchaneia”, *AnBoll* 104 (1986) 330-335. Chr. Walter, “Theodore, Archetype of the Warrior Saint”, *REB* 57 (1999), 185-189. Idem, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition*, Aldershot 2003, 44-66. I. Drpić, “The Serres Icon of Saints Theodores”, *BZ* 105/2 (2012), 646-652. J. Haldon, *A Tale of Two Saints. The Martyrdoms and Miracles of Saints Theodore 'the Recruit' and 'the General'*, Liverpool 2016, 1-17.

of the Armenopouloi, and its murals are dated to the late 12th century⁵³. The excavation is one of the richest in numismatic finds of the whole medieval town, yielding numerous coins from the 11th and 12th centuries⁵⁴. The lead seal brings evidence of links between Leon Pegonites and the owner from the Armenopouloi family, or someone else related to the chapel.

Conclusions

Nine lead seals have been presented in this small study. Since this group consists of only a part of the lead seals of Rhodes, let us make remarks and draw some preliminary conclusions. Two of the seals were not examined closely, but were placed in the context of their excavations, while parallels were sought, and a dating was proposed for each one of them. One of the nine (Cat. no. 2) offers only the name (*Theodoros*) of the owner and hence no assumptions can be made concerning his rank. The other titles of administration attested in our examples are those of *στρατηλάτης*, *ἀπὸ ὑπάτων*, *χαρτουλάριος*, and the ones deriving from Leon Pegonites' (Cat. no. 9) seal, though not mentioned on it, are *πρωτοσπαθάριος* και *στρατηγός*.

Four out of nine seals are ecclesiastical. Two belong to bishops; one presumably of Karpathos (Cat. no. 1), and one of Leros (Cat. no. 3). Two are of metropolitans of Rhodes (Cat. nos 5 and 8), Isidoros (7th century) and Symeon (11th century), the latter already known from published sigillographic material. The metropolis of Rhodes retained its rank throughout the centuries, but the number of its suffragans varied⁵⁵. Other seals of metropolitans that have been published in the past are of an anonymous holder of that rank⁵⁶, Epiphanius

(8th century)⁵⁷, George (8th-9th century)⁵⁸, Ioannis (9th-10th century)⁵⁹, and the aforementioned Symeon in the Dumbarton Oaks collection.

The seals of Rhodes prove the links between Rhodes and other parts of the Empire. Apart from Karpathos (if the proposal is correct) and Leros, islands that belong to the complex of the Dodecanese and are in proximity to Rhodes, the one of Leon Pegonites confirms the correspondence with the Northern provinces, namely the one of *Πρεσθλάβιτζα*. Thus, Rhodes is placed among the places that Leon corresponded with, along with Anaia (Kadikalesi) in Asia Minor, opposite Samos, where the closest parallel of our specimen was found.

All the specimens were found in places of archaeological importance. Chimarras Street, where the large basilica of the city was located, contained three seals (Cat. nos 2, 3 and 6) dating between the 6th and the late 7th century. In excavations of the medieval town, four specimens (Cat. nos 1, 4, 7 and 9) dating from the 6th to the 12th century came to light. That means that three seals were found in the western and four in the central section of the Early Byzantine city of Rhodes⁶⁰. The ones found in the countryside (Cat. nos 5 and 8) originated from plots connected with ruins of churches. All in all, from the total of nine specimens, five are found in ruins of churches or in proximity to them (Cat. nos 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 9).

The significance of the seals of known provenance lies in the fact that they can be placed in a context, offering important historical information, while the dating can be corroborated by the rest of the finds of this context. Scarce as they may be, the seals that are random finds as opposed to those found in a specific excavation, or even within a wider area, nevertheless offer important information. For Rhodes, such examples are the seals published more than a century ago (1909-1910) by Niketas D. Chaviaras.

⁵³ Katsioti – Archontopoulos, “Το παρεκκλήσιο”, op.cit. (see Cat. no. 9).

⁵⁴ Katsioti – Archontopoulos, “Το παρεκκλήσιο”, op.cit. (see Cat. no. 9), 385 note 64. Kasdagli, *Coins*, op.cit. (n. 5), 182-183.

⁵⁵ See Laurent, *Corpus* V/1, op.cit. (n. 6), 528. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientis*, op.cit. (n. 21), 203-205. E. Malamut, *Les îles de l'empire byzantin, VIIIe-XIIe siècles*, 2 vols (Byzantina Sorbonensia 8), Paris 1988, passim, esp. 242-244, 281-283, 300, 323, 325, 359, 365, 506. Gouillard, *Synodikon*, op.cit. (n. 43), 113, 278-279. *ODB*, 3, “Rhodes”, 1791-1792 (T. E. Gregory).

⁵⁶ N. D. Chaviaras, “Ἀνέκδοτα μολυβδόβουλλα”, *JIAN* XII (1909-

1910), no. 2. The author transcribes the seal without dating it.

⁵⁷ V. Laurent, *Le Corpus des sceaux de l'Empire byzantine*, V/3: *L'Église*, Paris 1972, no. 1746 (misread as Συλλίου) and corrected in no. 1770. Zacos – Vegliery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, I, op.cit. (n. 17), no. 1874. Nesbitt – Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Seals at Dumbarton Oaks*, 2, op.cit. (n. 13), 147 no. 54.2.

⁵⁸ K. M. Konstantopoulos, *Βυζαντινὰ μολυβδόβουλλα τοῦ ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἐθνικοῦ Νομισματικοῦ Μουσείου*, Athens 1917, no. 145. Laurent, *Corpus* V/I, op.cit. (n. 6), 697.

⁵⁹ Laurent, *Corpus* V/I, op.cit. (n. 6), no. 698.

⁶⁰ Katsioti, *Lamps*, op.cit. (n. 11), 11-15.

Unfortunately, the objects have not been tracked down among the others of his collection, which in the 1970's was donated to the Archaeological Museum of Symi. Chaviaras, though, published the material citing the provenance of each one of the eight seals⁶¹. In addition, two specimens of the Numismatic Museum of Athens came from Rhodes⁶². In the Byzantine exhibition of the Palace of the Grand Masters in Rhodes there are two more specimens, one of the Byzantine Emperor John V Palaiologos (1341-1391) and a Hospitaller specimen⁶³, which will be examined in due course along with the rest of the material made over to the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese⁶⁴.

⁶¹ Seven from Rhodes and one from Astypalaia. See Chaviaras, “Ἀνέκδοτα μολυβδόβουλλα”, op.cit. (n. 56). These published seals were used as examples in Cheynet – Morisson, “Lieux de trouvaille et circulation”, op.cit. (n. 2).

⁶² One is of Γεώργιος καὶ Θεοφύλακτος, γενικοὶ κομμερκιάριοι ἀποθήκης Ἀσίας καὶ Καρίας and the other of Σοφρόνιος, ἄρχων Ρόδου: Avramea – Galani-Krikou – Touratsoglou, “Μολυβδόβουλλα με γνωστή προέλευση”, op.cit. (n. 2), nos 78, 79. A copy of the first is exhibited, along with the others, in the Palace of the Grand Masters [Kollias et al., *Η Ρόδος*, op.cit. (see Cat. no. 3)].

⁶³ Kollias et al., *Η Ρόδος*, op.cit. (see Cat. no. 3), 85, nos 6, 7.

⁶⁴ The rest of the material consists, mainly, of miscellaneous

ADDENDUM

After this study was submitted, I was informed that an early lead seal of a *stratelates* was found in the excavation of an Early Christian coastal settlement in the Niko-laidis plot at Kiotari (Asklepeion) in southern Rhodes⁶⁵. The publication of this extremely interesting seal, bearing witness to military correspondence, will contribute to the study of the history not only of the site, but also of the countryside of the island in Early Byzantine times.

specimens, either confiscated by the authorities, or random finds of unknown provenance. Their study is still in progress.

⁶⁵ For the excavation, see mention: Katsioti, *Lamps*, op.cit. (n. 11), 21. The seal will be published, along with the rest of the finds, by the excavation team.

Illustration credits

Cat. nos 1, 2, 4-7: Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese. Cat. no. 3: Excavation project of the Faculty of Archaeology – University of Ioannina and 22nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities.

ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΑ ΜΟΛΥΒΔΟΒΟΥΛΛΑ ΑΠΟ ΤΗ ΡΟΔΟ Ι. ΑΝΑΣΚΑΦΙΚΑ ΕΥΡΗΜΑΤΑ

Η Ρόδος, το μεγαλύτερο νησί της Δωδεκανήσου, ανέκαθεν αποτελούσε κέντρο διαμετακομιστικού εμπορίου λόγω της στρατηγικής θέσης της πάνω στους εμπορικούς δρόμους που συνέδεαν Ανατολή και Δύση, Βορρά και Νότο. Οι ανασκαφές της πρωτεύουσας, στο βορειότερο σημείο του νησιού, αποκάλυψαν μια από τις καλύτερα οργανωμένες πόλεις της κλασικής και ελληνιστικής εποχής, με συνεχή κατοίκηση από την ίδρυσή της, το 408 π.Χ., έως σήμερα.

Τα περισσότερα από τα σφραγιστικά ευρήματα που προέρχονται από ανασκαφές, είναι αδημοσίευτα· ορισμένα έχουν μνημονευθεί στα «Χρονικά» του Αρχαιολογικού Δελτίου και άλλα σε άρθρα. Δυστυχώς, δεν κατέστη δυνατόν να εντοπιστούν όλα τα μολυβδόβουλλα στις αποθήκες της Εφορείας Αρχαιοτήτων Δωδεκανήσου. Παρ' όλα αυτά παρουσιάζονται και όσα λανθάνουν με βάση τις περιγραφές στις εκάστοτε μνείες, αναζητήθηκαν τα παράλληλα και επιχειρήθηκε η χρονολόγηση και η ερμηνεία τους.

Συνολικά εξετάζονται εννέα μολυβδόβουλλα, τα οποία παρουσιάζονται με χρονολογική ακολουθία: επισκόπου Κύρου του 6ου αιώνα; (Κατ. αριθ. 1)· Θεοδώρου του 6ου αιώνα (Κατ. αριθ. 2)· Ιωάννου επισκόπου Λέρον του 6ου-7ου αιώνα (Κατ. αριθ. 3)· Γεωργίου στρατηλάτου του 6ου-7ου αιώνα (Κατ. αριθ. 4)· Ισιδώρου μητροπολίτου Ρόδου του τέλους του 7ου αιώνα (Κατ. αριθ. 5)· Σεργίου από υπάτων του δεύτερου μισού του 7ου αιώνα (Κατ. αριθ. 6)· Κωνσταντίνου χαρτουλαρίου του 7ου-8ου αιώνα (Κατ. αριθ. 7)· Συμεών μητροπολίτου

Ρόδου του 11ου αιώνα (Κατ. αριθ. 8)· Λέοντος Πηγονίτη του 11ου-12ου αιώνα (Κατ. αριθ. 9).

Τρία διαφορετικά διοικητικά αξιώματα (στρατηλάτης, από υπάτων, χαρτουλάριος) μνημονεύονται στο σύνολο. Τέσσερα από τα εννέα είναι εκκλησιαστικά, με δύο εξ αυτών να ανήκουν σε επισκόπους και δύο σε μητροπολίτες. Όλες οι σφραγίδες προέρχονται από γνωστές αρχαιολογικές θέσεις. Ας αναφερθεί ότι περίξ της μεγάλης βασιλικής της πόλεως Ρόδου (οδός Χειμάρρας) βρέθηκαν τρία μολυβδόβουλλα και στη μεσαιωνική πόλη τέσσερα. Πρόκειται για τους σημαντικότερους τομείς κατοίκησης της πόλης κατά την Ύστερη Αρχαιότητα, γνωστούς από τις σωστικές ανασκαφές των τελευταίων δεκαετιών. Δύο μολυβδόβουλλα προέρχονται από την υπαιθρο της Ρόδου, τον Φιλέρημο και τον Θεολόγο, αμφότερα σχετιζόμενα με ερείπια εκκλησιών.

Η σημασία των σφραγίδων που προέρχονται από ανασκαφές, είναι προφανής, καθώς εντάσσονται σε ένα ευρύτερο πλαίσιο, συσχετίζονται με τα συνεννήματα και προσφέρουν σημαντικές ιστορικές πληροφορίες. Ακόμα και εκείνα των οποίων είναι γνωστή μόνο η ευρύτερη περιοχή εύρεσης, αποτελούν σημαντική πηγή ιστορικής γνώσης. Ανάλογα παραδείγματα με προέλευση από τη Ρόδο έχουν παλαιότερα δημοσιευθεί. Η επικείμενη συνολική πραγμάτευσή τους αναμένεται να προσθέσει νέα στοιχεία για το νησί και τη θέση του στη βυζαντινή αυτοκρατορία.

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