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Africa and Sicily

The changes undergone by the administration of Africa after its incorporation in the Byzantine Empire in the sixth century do not present serious problems, even though details are lacking and questions can be raised concerning specific side issues of its administrative history. Its administration was modified by a law duly incorporated in Justinian’s Codex that reflects the intention of the legislator to reconstitute in Africa the ancient Diocletianic administrative system. The re-conquered lands were placed under the civil authority of a prefect, who resided in Carthage, and were divided in seven provinces, Zeugi Carthago (former Africa Proconsularis), Byzacium, Tripolis, Numidia, Mauritania I, Mauritania II, and Sardinia. Five ducats were created for the military protection of Africa, those of Tripolis, Byzacium, Numidia, Mauritania, and Sardinia. The new administrative system failed to serve its purpose of securing these countries and bringing stability. To the contrary, it proved insufficient for the defense of the African provinces, and by the end of the sixth century it was complemented by the creation of the exarchate. The exarch had supreme military command of the armed forces of his territory, and his jurisdiction soon expanded to include civil affairs and administration. The geographic work of


George of Cyprus, which dates from the seventh century, reflects further changes in the civil administration of Africa. The most important change was the division of the lands of the former province of Carthago between Byzacia and Numidia, which gave both provinces a long maritime front, Byzacia’s opening to the East and to the Libyan Sea, and Numidia’s opening to the North and the Tyrhenian Sea. Thus it appears that the civil territories adjusted to the territories that had been assigned to the duces. Some of these changes may be attributed already to the reign of Justinian I and their evolution is detectable in the sources.

In the end of the seventh century, Sicily and Africa were included in the warehouse institution. This is attested by one seal for each ἀποθήκη. The seal of the warehouse of Africa is dated in 673/4 and is one of the earliest seal examples with indicio dating. In charge were Mikkinas and Gregorios, who were also γενικοὶ κοµµερκιάριοι of the warehouse of Honorias in that same year. During that time the first Arab blockade of Constantinople was already under way and it is useful to recall at this point some of the main events. In Africa the Byzantines were defeated by the Arabs in 665. A few years later, the Arab leader Uqba undertook a campaign to the Byzantine-Berber mainland provinces. As a consequence, the Arabs were able to proceed a few years later to the foundation of Qayrawan (675), which became their base of operations in


4. DOSeals4 ,no6.2;BRANDES ,Finanzverwaltung,p.331andApp.I,no64.

5. http://epublishing.ekt.gr | e-Publisher: EKT | Downloaded at 26/01/2020 02:08:36 |
Africa. After that point there is no word in the sources about Africa (until 679/80), undoubtedly because the Arabs concentrated their efforts on the siege of Constantinople, which was being prepared in the beginning of the 670s. Theophanes records that the emir Fudhala attacked Cyzicus, were he wintered in 669/70. Arab fleets occupied ports of Cilicia and Lycia and the port of Smyrna in 671/2, thus creating naval bases and securing the narrow straights of the Aegean Sea for the sail to the Propontis. They finally took Rhodes and Cyzicus in 672/3. This advance of the Arabs on the waters of the capital greatly alarmed Constantine IV, who had already, in 671/2, ordered the construction of war ships that anchored in Kaisariou port. It is clear that it would have been very difficult for the Byzantines to deploy naval forces of the Aegean Sea — if, indeed, there were any. With the Arabs controlling the Aegean (and even landing on Crete in 675), the byzantine war fleet could have come only from the West. The seal of the apotheke of Africa, dated to 673/4, falls nicely into context. It is also useful to recall that no warehouse of Constantinople operated that year or in the following years. This means simply that the capital would not have supplied the navy with the necessary provisions.


7. Theophanes, p. 353. In 670 the Arabs once again attacked Carthage. Modern bibliography attaches the attack on Cyzicus to the raid on Carthage and the eighty thousand prisoners that Theophanis reports as taken by the Arabs in 668/9. See R.-J. Lilie, Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber [Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia, 22], München 1976, p. 74-75 (hereafter: LILIE, Reaktion); CHRISTIDES, Byzantine Libya, p. 43; PRINGLE, Defence, p. 47-48; STRATOS, Βυζάντιον V, p. 31-33; DIEHL, Afrique byzantine, p. 572-573. It appears that Fudhala retreated from Cyzicus in the spring of 670.


9. Theophanes, p. 353b-23. On the port of Kaisariou see R. Janin, Constantinople byzantine. Développement urbain et répertoire topographique [Archives de l’Orient Chrétien, 4A], Paris 21964, p. 227-228, 299, 363. This port is probably to be identified with the port of Theodosius in the Kaisariou district of Constantinople.

10. Theophanes, p. 354b. LILIE, Reaktion, p. 79.
11. It would have been impossible for Constantinople to become involved in procuring supplies for
Modern research has already pointed out that the Byzantine fleet was active in the western parts of the Empire in the last years of the reign of emperor Constas II. Zuckerman even asserted that the nauticatio tax imposed on the population of the West (Calabria, Sicily, Sardinia and Africa) by Constas II aimed at supporting the new naval command of Karavisioi. It appears that it is no longer possible to maintain the by now quasi-traditional view of Hélène Ahrweiler, that the naval unit of the Karavisioi was founded immediately after the Arab defeat in the waters of Constantinople in 678. Indeed, it seems that Constantine IV had the Karavisioi brought from the West and carried over to the Propontis from the ancient diolkos of Gallipoli. In the account of Theophanes it is also possible to detect data on the formation of what was, or became later, an imperial navy. Thus it is understood that in the period 672-678 the greater part of the naval forces of the empire was involved during the sailing period each year in daily warfare against the Arab navy in the Propontis. Unexpected support of this interpretation of the events comes from an independent source, the Miracula of Saint Demetrious. In the fourth Miracle of the second collection it is stated that the emperor could dispose of only 10 warships to send to the besieged by the Slavs Thessalonicians, because he was

the fleet at this time, but it is certain that a state granary (horreum) was anyway established at Kaisariou. See J. Haldon, Comes Horreorum – Komēs tēs Lamias, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies 10(1986) 203-210, here p. 203-209. The author, however, locates the Kaisariou in the ninth district of the capital. Also see the useful analysis (without any reference to the Kaisariou port) of P. Magdalino, The Maritime Neighborhoods of Constantinople Commercial and Residential Functions, Sixth to Twelfth Centuries, Dumbarton Oaks Papers 54(2001) 209-226, esp. p. 216. The warehouse of Constantinople began operating in 688/9. See below, note 43.

12. MARIA LEONTSINI, Κωνσταντίνος Δ’ (668-685). Ο τελευταίος πρωτοβυζαντινός αυτοκράτορας [ΕΙΕ/ΙΒΕ Μονογραφίες, 7], Αθήνα 2006, p. 150-153 (hereafter LEONTSINI, Κωνσταντίνος Δ’).


16. LEONTSINI, Κωνσταντίνος Δ’, p. 153-154. The bibliography on the Byzantine navy has recently expanded. However, this is not the appropriate place for a detailed account of it, because this issue is connected with the institution of the themes. Therefore I will come back to it in another study.

17. Cf. THEOPHANES, 353a=354c. According to the chronicler, this situation lasted for seven years. See the comments of STRATOS, Βυζάντιον V, p. 35-40; LAMPAKIS – LEONTSINI – LOUNGIS – VLYSSIDOU, Στρατεύματα, p. 234-236.
engaged in war with the Arabs. In this extract it seems that the name of the Karavisianoi navy is concealed under the expression οἵτινες τῶν καράβων (those from the karavoi)\(^{18}\).

In the context of the blockade of Constantinople by the Arabs it appears extremely significant that the warehouse of Africa is one of the two warehouses that functioned in 673 along with the apotheke of Honorias, which was also managed by Mikkinas and Gregorios. The apotheke of Africa is also one of the few that operated during the Arab blockade until 678, in a period when communication with the West was difficult. The other apothekei operated at Sebastopolis and in the provinces of Cilicia I, Armenia, Honorias, and Isauria\(^ {19}\). Indeed it has to be observed that the warehouses of Cilicia I and of Sebastopolis are dated up to 672/3, thus limiting the number of warehouses operating during the blockade to four, Africa included. This conclusion underlines the significance of Africa for the Empire. Not only was it a wealthy province, but it also possessed significant harbors and maintained a long maritime tradition\(^ {20}\). Its wide spreading commercial activities are manifest in the seal series of κοµµερκιάριοι. These seals were found in Carthage and date from early in the reign of Heraclius until 647. On them the name of a province appears for the first time. However, these early kommerkiarioi seals do not present any other characteristics of the seals of the later genikoi kommerkiarioi (such as indicio dating and specific reference to the apotheke)\(^ {21}\). The geographic term “Africa” used in the seal inscription of 673/4 refers to Carthage, capital of the former Africa Proconsularis, rather than to the large province of Byzacia. The same terminology is used in the narrative sources of Byzantium to refer to de-

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19. DO Seals 4, no 6.2, 74.3; ZV, no 149, 153, 154; DO Seals 1, no 86.1; WASSILIOU – SEIBT, Bleisiegel, no 147; BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 58, 59, 61, 64, 65. Cf. LEONTSINI, Κοµµερκιαρίων, p. 107-109, with a similar approach. The author, however, believes that the warehouse of Africa is connected with commercial activities. BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, p. 329, thinks that the seals dated to this period reflect the changes undergone by the fiscal system, which itself was part of a larger plan to overcome the difficulties that the presence of the Arabs created to the Empire.

20. CHRISTIDES, Byzantine Libya, p. 18 f.

21. MORRISON – SEIBT, Sceaux, no 1-16, esp. no 12 and 16 for the kommerkiarioi of Africa; BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, p. 309-312, who brings to attention some more conclusions depending on the interpretation of these seals.
velopments in the former province of Africa Proconsularis.

This African province forms the natural “extension” of Italy to the south. Sicily’s administrative history in particular is explicitly connected to its excellent geographic position in the Mediterranean. From that position the island provided good bases for any operation to Italy, Africa and the west Mediterranean. In 537, following ancient custom, Sicily was placed under the authority of a praetor and formed a separate ducat. The novel on appellate jurisdiction of Sicily’s civil disputes further states that the island was subject to the economic management of the comes sacri patrimonii per Italiam and was therefore considered as private property of the emperor. This confirms and underlines Sicily’s strategic position in the Mediterranean for the Empire’s claims in the West. More than a century later, the Byzantines put into operation Sicily’s warehouse. The corresponding seal apparently belonged to Kyriakos, who bore the title ἀπὸ υπάτων and served as γενικὸς λογοθέτης and γενικὸς κοµµερκιάριος of the ἀποθήκη of Sicily in 696/7. It has been plausibly suggested that the military unit of Sicily had already been elevated to thematic status and had been placed under the authority of a strategos. This event has been confined to the period 687-695. A list of the early strategoi has even been made out. It looks suspiciously as if the creation of the military units of Hellas (695) and Sicily were part of the same reform that was designed not only to facilitate maritime

22. PRINGLE, Defence, p. 49. The Byzantines at this time held on to Carthago, Numidia, and coastal towns up to Septem.
25. DO Seals 1, no 5.4; BRANDIS, Finanzverwaltung, p. 343-344. The name of the bearer is not clearly visible.
control of the Aegean and Adriatic Seas, but also to support the war in Africa. Moreover, the term “Sicily” carries with it a specific geographic-administrative connotation and signifies the military unit that was instituted there, as well as the civil administrative unit of this great island. This is a case parallel to that of Hellas.\(^{27}\) In this context, it is not a coincidence that the Sicilian warehouse functioned a year before the final conquest of Carthage by the Arabs (697/8). Thus, even though there can be no direct link of the warehouse to the military unit of Sicily, it is possible to associate it with the campaign of the Byzantines to recapture Africa.

The Arab conquest of Carthage evolved in two phases. At first, the Arabs took over and plundered Carthage thoroughly, the Arab governor Hassan bn. al-Numan al-Ghassani acting under specific orders by the caliph Abd al-Malik, whereby the population was forced to flee to Sicily and Spain. A Byzantine fleet under the direction of the patrician Ioannes drove them away and apparently the army managed to recapture some fortresses. But when the Arabs returned to the waters of Carthage with a powerful fleet, the Byzantines withdrew to Crete and called for reinforcements. Then, the entire operation fell through because of the revolt of the army. In the account of Theophanes these events are limited to one year only, the year 697/8\(^{28}\), but there is ground to believe that the first phase took place a few years earlier\(^{29}\), since the seal of the apotheke of Sicily is dated to 696/7\(^{30}\). If this warehouse was in any way destined to provide support for the Byzantine fleet and army\(^{31}\), then the Arab attack against Carthage must be dated before 696. The assumption that it was an event of 695 is therefore plausible. Considering that according to the sources the Arab prepa-

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29. Kaege, Muslim Expansion, p. 247-248, also dates the first capture of Carthage to 695/6.


31. The supply possibilities of Sicily have been excellently resumed in Lampakis - Leontsini - Loughis - Vlyssidou, Στρατεύματα, p. 248-252.
ration was huge, the capture of Carthage cannot be seen as the spectacular result of a usual Arab raid. This was an expedition targeting the remnants of Byzantine domination in North Africa, Carthage in particular, from which the Byzantines were able to sustain their presence in the numerous forts of the region, control sea traffic in the Western Mediterranean, and indeed influence the decisions of the local population, desert tribes included. In order for the Arabs to consolidate their dominion in North Africa, it was of the utmost importance to expel the Byzantines from Carthage.

So it becomes very clear that the Arab conquest of Africa is placed in the frame of expansionist policy adopted by the caliph Abd al-Malik after the battle of Sebastopolis\(^\text{32}\), which also included the consolidation of Arab power in Armenia. In Africa, after the Arab advance on the wealthy al-Djazirat chersonese in 679/80 and Uqba’s legendary campaign that reached the shores of the Atlantic, the Arabs were defeated by allied Byzantine-Berber forces in 683. Uqba was killed, Qayrawan was evacuated, and the Arabs retreated to Pentapolis\(^\text{33}\). Most Arab sources attach the attack on Carthage to the re-capture of Qayrawan, which they date to 697; a single source dates it to 693/4\(^\text{34}\). In any case, this is an event that took place either before 688, or — most probably — after 692\(^\text{35}\). In the 680’s the caliph had difficulties in the interior of the caliphate with the defection of the East and Arabia and, in addition, had problems imposing his rule in Syria, while the Byzantines maintained a steady and threatening military presence in the East. All this led Abd al-Malik to come to terms with the Byzantines. In 688 the peace treaty that had been signed by Const-

\(^{32}\) On the battle see the narrative of Theophanes, p. 365.

\(^{33}\) Christides, Byzantine Libya, p. 45-46; Kaegi, Muslim Expansion, p. 229-237, 243-244; Pringle, Defence, p. 48-49; Stratos, Βυζάντιον V, p. 28-31; Diehl, Afrique byzantine, p. 575-580. Stratos implies that this campaign could not have taken place after 678/9, because the Arabs were under treaty with the Byzantines. Kaegi asserts that the seizure of the Qayrawan region created for the Arabs a pretext for war, because it violated a pre-existing treaty signed in 678. Maria Leontsini is of the opinion (cf. Lampakis – Leontsini – Lounghis – Vlyssidou, Στρατεύματα, p. 164) that peace in Africa was achieved under Justinian II by a treaty different than that of 688.

\(^{34}\) Christides, Byzantine Libya, p. 47 and n. 146; Pringle, Defence, p. 49; Haldon, Byzantium, p. 69-70. Stratos, Βυζάντιον VI, p. 48, 88-89, notes that Abd al-Malik could not dispose of any forces for the siege of Carthage before 694 and thinks that Qayrawan was taken in 695.

\(^{35}\) Unexpected support of the analysis offered here comes from numismatics. It has been plausibly suggested that the mint of Carthage was moved to Sardinia in 692/3, it is therefore not irrational to consider that this precaution was due to the Arab mobilization. See Hendy, Studies, p. 422.
tine IV was ratified by Justinian II and Abd al-Malik. By 692, however, both parties were ready to resume hostilities in the East. Justinian II has been heavily blamed for the breach, but it is true that Abd al-Malik would have much more to gain if he combined his recent victories over his inner enemies with a victory over the Byzantines. Theophanes states clearly that the caliph needed a pretext, that Justinian II provided him with, and indeed in a way that chroniclers later used against him. In the emperor’s view, Abd al-Malik’s consolidation of power within the caliphate potentially threatened Byzantium’s dominion over Armenia. Thus it seems that the engagement in Sebastopolis was a one-way road for both the caliphate and the Empire. Theophanes’ account of the events holds the caliph accountable for the invasion and Justinian II for having provoked it, thus implying that open warfare could have been avoided. In this respect it is significant that neither the caliph, nor the emperor proceeded to actions that would prevent the outbreak of war. To the contrary, they both gave reasons for it. The emperor was certainly not anticipating defeat, but the caliph now had a formal justification to attack. In the aftermath of the battle of Sebastopolis, Byzantium’s position was compromised on all fronts: Armenia defected almost immediately, and Qayrawan was probably retaken at this time.

Theophanes reflects some of the opposition that Justinian II faced after the battle of Sebastopolis when he writes that the emperor was occupied with his building program. This was an unfair critique. It appears that Justinian II responded to the Arab expansion in the West with administrative measures, by instituting the themes of Sicily and Hellas. In the East the warehouses of Ar-

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37. THEOPHANES, p. 365 18-21: οὐκ ἐννοήσας, ὅτι τὸ σπουδαζόµενον αὐτοῖς ἦν παῦσαι τὴν τῶν Μαρδατίων ἐπαγωγήν, καὶ οὕτω δὲ δικαιοµένης εὐλόγου προφάσεως λῦσαι τὴν εἰρήνην δὲ καὶ ἐγένετο. According to the treaty of 688, the Mardaites, a tribe settled in the rugged north Lebanon territories, where supposed to be relocated in Byzantine grounds. This extract by Theophanes reveals that the Mardaites still remained in their land, but it is completely confused to allow a thorough commentary in this place. See HEAD, Justinian, p. 34-36; STRATOS, Βυζάντιον V, p. 46-51; IDEM, Βυζάντιον VI, p. 41-42.

38. PRINGLE, Defence, p. 49, suggests that Qayrawan was re-taken sometime between 686 and 688. However, the Arabs were then under treaty with the Byzantines. On the battle of Sebastopolis and its significance see LILIE, Reaktion, p. 107-110; HEAD, Justinian, p. 45-51; STRATOS, Βυζάντιον VI, p. 39-48.

menia I and IV were functioning normally even though both provinces were heavily stormed after 692. At the same time it appears that the military competence of the Empire was complemented with the institution of yet another army, that of the Thrakesion theme. Theophanes’ account of Justinian’s de-thronement presents Leontios’s coup as an act of personal retribution. Leontios had been imprisoned in 692, presumably after the defeat of Sebastopolis. Now, the recruitment of the Slavs of Bithynia for the battle against the Arabs was the emperor’s personal choice. The fact that in the following year the “andrapoda” were relocated to provinces all over Asia Minor implies that they still enjoyed Justinian’s trust in spite of the defection of the Slavs to the Arabs. This development leaves open questions about the true role of Leontios, who was probably commander in-chief of the army in the battle of Sebastopolis and was consequently held responsible for its outcome. In 695, however, after having spent three years in jail, he was suddenly recalled to service and was appointed στρατηγὸς of the newly created theme of Hellas. For a patrician who had served as στρατηγὸς of the Anatolikoi, the most important military regiment of the Empire, this was an unconcealed demotion. Contextual clues to the de-thronement of Justinian II, however, imply that there was general dissatisfaction among the aristocracy and the people with the measures of Justinian II. All this formed at least part of Leontios’ propaganda against Justinian II: the emperor was defeated at Sebastopolis, took harsh economic measures, particularly afflicting the upper classes and Constantinople’s inhabitants — in this conjecture the warehouse of the capital, which began to function in 688/9 may be of some significance—, and scorned the aristocracy, as was clear by his

40. ZV, 164 table 18/2; DO Seals 4, no 74.1; WASSIELLOU – SEIBT, Bleisiegel, no 149; BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 128, 131. On the Arab raids in Armenia I and IV, see LILIE, Reaktion, p. 110-112.
42. RAGIA, Geography I.1, p. 209-211.
43. THEOPHANES, p. 368-372; NIKEPHOROS, ch. 49; HEAD, Justinian, p. 92-96; STRATOS, Βυζάντιον VI, p. 78-82. Also see the comments of HENDY, Studies, p. 655. Leontios’ treatment of Armenia before 692 might well have been another reason for his imprisonment. After his operations there anti-Byzantine feelings were stronger than ever and led to its defection in 692/3. See STRATOS, Βυζάντιον VI, p. 34-37, 47-48.
44. THEOPHANES, p. 367-368; NIKEPHOROS, ch. 39. See the comments of HEAD, Justinian, p. 88-91.
45. The first seal of a genikos kommerkarios of Constantinople is securely dated to 688/9. See RAGIA, Geography I.2, p. 87-88.
treatment of Leontios. This is already enough information about one of the most obscure events of the period in discussion, and the developments in the West, on which no hints have been included in the sources, need not be added to the reasons for Justinian’s dethronement. In any case, the operation against Africa was on the way in the end of 695 and its capital Carthage soon fell to Arab hands. The new emperor Leontios failed to re-capture it and the army revolted in Crete. Theophanes’ argument that their rebellion was due to their shame is of no consequence. Rather, it may be suggested that it is to be attributed to their discontent at the leader of the campaign, who had previously been the emperor’s personal choice. In spite of all the anti-Justinianic propaganda, emperor Leontios had not only delayed to deploy the military forces of the Empire for the re-conquest of Africa, but also failed to accomplish it, while on the eastern front his failure to check Arab raids was blatant. Therefore he lost favor with the army and was dethroned (698).

**Some New Seals, a Note on “Kato Hexapolis”, and Later Seals of the vassilika kommerkia**

New seals that have been recently brought to light through auctions modify our lists to some extend. A seal belonging to the logothetes Kyriakos proves that the warehouse of Isauria and Lycaonia functioned in 696/7 under the emperor Leontios, and a seal of Synetos and Nicetas shows that the warehouse of Pamphylia and Pisidia operated in 713/4. J.-Cl. Cheynet published two new seals of στρατηγίας, of which the first is a parallel specimen of the seal of the Kibyrraiotai (739/40), and the second is a seal of the strategy of the Thrakesioi dated to 744/5. Moreover, Christos Stavrakos has recently brought to the attention of the scientific community a new seal which associates the διοίκησις of Hellas to the βασιλικὰ κοµµέρκια. The seal is dated to 737/8. From the year 736/7 comes one more seal of the vassilika kommerkia of the dioike-

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47. See Lilie, Reaktion, p. 112; Theophanes, p. 369.34 asserts that Leontios παντὸθεν εἰρήνηκώς διέµεινεν (“there was peace all over”), which is directly contradicted by the testimony of the Arabic sources. See Brooks, Arabs, p. 190; Stratos, Βυζάντιον VI, p. 87-88.
48. Cf. SBS 10 (2010) p. 161 no 3339, 163 no 2487 and 182 no 1314, 171 no 617 and 181 no 1303. The seal of Cilicia I and II, dating to 700-702, has already been noted in RAGIA, Geography I.1, Catalogue, V, 233, map 5.
49. Cheynet, Mise en place, p. 9 no 4, 5.
50. Stavrakos, Sammlung Kophopoulos, p. 6-8. By mistake the seal is published with the chronol-
sis of Andros. In a recent contribution I suggested that it might have been convenient for the vassilika kommerkia to function on the basis of the dioikesis. The seal of the vassilika kommerkia of the dioikesis of Hellas appears to confirm this hypothesis. So far these seals do not allow us to suppose that this was something more than a temporary adjustment of the vassilika kommerkia to the dioceses, applied only in the case of the islands and of Hellas.

In the 730s the institution of the vassilika kommerkia was fully developed. The resources of Hellas, of the islands of the Aegean Sea, of Thessalonica and of Mesembria, and of the provinces of west Asia Minor were mobilized. In this decade the vassilika kommerkia of the Kibyrraioi functioned at least once (739/40) and of the Anatolii at least twice (730/1, 736/7). In Pontus there operated the vassilika kommerkia of Kerasous (735/6, 738/9). The Armenian provinces and Cappadocia had long stopped being represented at the warehouse institution. In this context, the seal of the vassilika kommerkia of Kato (Lower) Hexapolis (741/2) seems to be out of place. In a previous study I accepted the view that this seal refers to the six cities of Armenia. There is, however, one more ancient Hexapolis, namely the Dorian Hexapolis of the wider Rhodes region. This Hexapolis comprised Cos, Cnidus, Halicarnassus and the three cities of Rhodes, i.e. Ialysus, Cameirus, and Lindus. The Byzantines apparently preferred in this instance to use this term because it signified a region wider than the term Chersonese, which indicated only the chersonese of Loyma and indeed appeared on a seal of 695-697. The use of ancient terms for denoting the detachment of certain regions from the preexisting administrative frame was common administrative practice in Byzantium. To this category falls not only the term Chersonese, but also the term Aigaion Pelagos, used for the

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first time in 711-713 for the islands north of the Cyclades\textsuperscript{57}. It follows that the function of a separate warehouse of Lower Hexapolis that would include the straights of the southeastern Aegean between Rhodes and Loryma, Cos and the chersonese of Halicarnassus, roughly the region of Caria that was later assigned to the Kibyrraiotai, would not be outside the provincial administrative practices of Byzantium at this time, and, as we shall see below, would make perfect sense against the historical background of the time. It should also be noted that the year 739/40, when the \textit{strategia} of the Kibyrraiotai appeared, was marked by a Byzantine attack against the Arab naval base of Damietta in Egypt\textsuperscript{58}.

After 745/6 the seals of the \textit{vassilika kommerkia} of Asia Minor become a rare occurrence. Only the \textit{vassilika kommerkia} of the Anatolikoi function until 776. Seals have been saved for the years 755/6, 758/9, 760/1, 773/4 and 776, portraying a fairly regular function of the institution\textsuperscript{59}. In the Balkans the warehouses of Mesembria, Thrake (and Hexamilion) and Thessalonica operated until 787/8, revealing once again a relative delay compared to developments in Asia Minor\textsuperscript{60}. After that year the sequel of the seals preserved, terminology, and titles of the owners change significantly. There are three different seal series\textsuperscript{61}. The first belongs to kommerkiarioi of Thessalonica and Hadrianople. All the seals, except for one, bear imperial effigy, and all bear \textit{indictio}. They are dated from 787 until 822/3. The last seal of Hadrianople is so far the last of the dated seals and is normally dated to the year 838/9, but according to this classification it might rather be dated to 823/4. This seal is also distinguished by the fact that its bearer was not a simple \textit{kommerkiarios} or \textit{hypatos} and \textit{kommerkiarios}, but a διοικητὴς and \textit{kommerkiarios}\textsuperscript{62}. The second series belongs to the \textit{vassilika kommerkia} of Thrace, dated to the opening years of the ninth century according to the \textit{indictio}, to which a seal of the \textit{vassilika kommerkia} of Thrace and Macedonia and a later seal of Develtos can be classified, even

\textsuperscript{57} DO Seals 2, no 65.1; Brandes, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 129. See RAGIA, Geography I.1, p. 221, n. 103; EADEM, Geography I.2, p. 102-104.

\textsuperscript{58} ZV, no 261; Brandes, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 234a; LILIE, Reaktion, p. 152; E. W. BROOKS, The Relations between the Empire and Egypt from a New Arabic Source, \textit{Byzantinische Zeitschrift} 22 (1913) 381-391, here p. 383.

\textsuperscript{59} See RAGIA, Geography I.1, Catalogue, VII, 236.

\textsuperscript{60} See RAGIA, Geography I.2, p. 108 and Catalogue, III, 112.

\textsuperscript{61} BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, p. 365-368. The author's classification of these late seals is different from that offered here.

\textsuperscript{62} ZV, no 277, 279 comments; DO Seals 1, no 44.5, & Brandes, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 265, 267, 275, 280.
though they are dated in the years 820/1 and 832/3 respectively. Lastly, a seal series of vassilikoi kommerkiarioi of Thessalonica, Thrace and Macedonia, and Sinope dates from 810/1 until 832/3. Three of these seals do not bear imperial effigy but only one is neither with portrait or indicio. For this reason it has been considered as private, non official seal of the holder. Of all these seals only the vassilika kommerkia of Thrace and Macedonia appear to be the direct continuator of the institution of the eighth century and they probably functioned on a thematic-territorial basis of the thema of Thrace and Macedonia — except for the vassilika kommerkia of Develtos, which replaced the vassilika kommerkia of Mesembria in the ninth century. Nonetheless, the twelve years that lapsed, between the last seal of the vassilika kommerkia of Thrace of 787/8 until the first seal of the ninth century rather indicate that the institution had ceased to operate for several years. The reasons for reinstating in the ninth century the vassilika kommerkia institution in north Balkan territories, while at the same time it had disappeared in Asia Minor, are not known, and anything we might suggest must remain a pure assumption. The kommerkiarioi or vassilikoi kommerkiarioi that appear after 787 point to an evolution of the function of the genikos kommerkarios, which had disappeared since the late 720s. The (vassilikoi) kommerkiarioi were not usually operating on a thematic-territorial basis — with a single exception, the vassilikos kommerkiarios of Thrace and Macedonia, who was in office in 831/2. They were based in cities, namely in Thessalonica, Hadrianople, and Sinope. The commercial significance of all these cities is well established. On Thessalonica and Hadrianople it can

63. ZV, p. 196, table 34, no 279a-b, 280a, 281, 282, 285a; DO Seals 1, no 43.17, 71.20; BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 268, 270, 271, 272, 274, 278.
64. ZV, no 1406, 1712, 2894; DO Seals 1, no 18.34, 35, 43.18; BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 273, 277, 279. HENDY, Studies, p. 655, thinks that the seal of Sinope reveals that this city had a strategic role for the theme of the Armeniakon similar to that of Sebastia, Coloeia; Camacha or Sebastopolis, but this is not proven for the year 832/3. Moreover, the seals of these warehouses of Armenia are dated quite early (see below, Catalogue, II). The seal of Sinope dates from more than a century later, and bears no imperial portrait.
65. RAGIA, Geography I.2, p. 90 and n. 21.
66. HENDY, Studies, p. 654 and n. 438, pointed out that there may be a connection of these late seals with military operations against the Slavs of Greece or even with the revolution of Thomas the Slav (821-823).
67. DO Seals 1, no 43.18; BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 277.
also be noted that they were thematic capitals. In this conjecture, however, we would be overextending to sustain that “Thessalonica” and “Hadrianople” in this time equal “theme of Thessalonica” and “theme of Macedonia” respectively. This would mean that the administration used in the ninth century different terms to signify specific units, even though it has been proven that the use of interchanging terminology was not practiced earlier. Rather, these kommerkiarioi served the needs of trade.

**Final Notes and Conclusions**

All indications we have point to the conclusion that the institution of the apothekai/vassilika kommerkia was of purely economic nature. The titles of the functionaries in charge — the genikoi kommerkiarioi — as well as the terminology used in seal inscriptions, portray a close relation to, or even dependence on, the economic services of the Empire, such as the dioikeseis (a fiscal periphery that facilitated the collection or taxes) or the genikon logothesion (the service that was responsible for taxation). This association has been closely examined recently by W. Brandes 69. We do need, however, to underline the fact that the ἀποθήκαι were functioning on a territorial basis, and this basis was not the thematic but the provincial territorial basis of Later Roman times. Wherever the preexisting administrative frame was not convenient, the Byzantines were quick to ignore it and create new warehouse/vassilika kommerkia units. This would mean most probably that preexisting infrastructures of the provinces were being used to serve the purposes set by the government for this in-

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69. Brandes, Finanzverwaltung, p. 298-300, 305-309, 312-329, with particular emphasis on the possible orientation towards catering for the army. Brandes believes that the title genikos kommerkiarios already betrays a connection to the genike trapeza, which initially belonged to the praetorian prefecture. At the end of the seventh century and in the eighth century two genikoi kommerkiarioi were genikoi logothetai at the same time, namely Kyriakos (696/7) and Theophanes (727/8). See Brandes, Finanzverwaltung, p. 343, 350. On the dioikeseis see F. Dölger, Beiträge zur byzantinischen Finanzverwaltung, besonders des 10. und 11. Jhs [Byzantinisches Archiv, 9], München 1927 (reprinted 1960), p. 70f. On the dioiketai see Brandes, Finanzverwaltung, p. 205 ff.; Haldon, Byzantium, p. 196-200.
stitution\textsuperscript{70}. In that case the abolishment of the previous provincial administrative system would be untimely. A strong indication about this is the fact that administrative practice always returned to established structures after it had with such ease dismantled entire provinces. Besides the Chersonese and the Lower Hexapolis, which normally belonged to Caria, this was also the case of Pylai and Sangarios river (Bithynia), of Chalkedon and Thynia (Bithynia), and of Dekapolis (Isauria), while it appears that the warehouses of Sebastopolis (Armenia II), Korykos (Cilicia I) and Syllaion (Pamphylia) functioned at least once separately from the provinces to which they belonged\textsuperscript{71}. So we are in a position to accept that the seals of the 	extit{apotheke/vassilika kommerkia} are the most official and valid sample of byzantine government practice in this time. The terminology that the state uses officially to project itself to society during its fiscal/administrative processes cannot be overlooked or disregarded. The seal inscriptions hold the evidence to the transition from the Late Roman provincial administrative model to the middle Byzantine model. These inscriptions make mention of \textit{ἐπαρχίαι} (provinces), regions/cities, \textit{διοικήσεις} (dioceses), and provinces of military regiments (not of themes), of \textit{στρατηγίαι} and of military regiments quite simply (such as that of Thrake and the Anatolikoi), thus revealing the \textit{apothekei/vassilika kommerkia} as one of Byzantium’s most flexible institutions in general\textsuperscript{72}.

Having established the institution’s territorial basis and flexibility, it is time to turn to some questions that arise from the geographic approach. Perhaps, the most important objection that one can raise about the significance of the \textit{apothekei/vassilika kommerkia} is the point of why, if the institution was so important, did it start from the East, thus burdening provinces lying at the center of violent confrontations between Byzantines and Arabs? If the institution was serving taxation purposes, then it makes no sense to tax the population of the border provinces that was exposed to Arab raids on a yearly basis, unless the \textit{apothekei} were indeed connected to the military regiments that were stationed there. Still, objections could be raised regarding the amount of provisi-

\textsuperscript{70} Such as installations, state warehouses, but also the administrative structures that were originally functioning framed against the ancient provincial organization, which was subject to radical changes since the middle of the sixth century. See Hendy, Studies, p. 627-631; Haldon, Byzantium, p. 196. Brandes, Finanzverwaltung, p. 292-293, assumes that the municipal \textit{horrea} were transferred to state administration with the dissolution of the municipal organization.

\textsuperscript{71} DO Seals 1, no 86.1; ZV I/1, 149 table 6/1, 158 table 13, no 157, 253; Cheynet, Seeaux, no 26; Brandes, Finanzverwaltung, App. 1, no 59, 68, 98, 140B, 177, 231.

\textsuperscript{72} Zuckerman, Studies, p. 128-129. Also see Cheynet, Mise en place, p. 4, 7-8, on the absence of the term \textit{thema} on seal inscriptions.
ons and supplies for the army that could be collected by way of taxation in a rough mountain province, such as Armenia IV, or Isauria\(^73\). Moreover, the catalogue of the seals classified by territory, which is attached below, makes clear that the warehouses were not operating regularly in each province. Indeed in some cases (e.g. Galatia, Pisidia) it appears that operation was very erratic, while in certain provinces the warehouses functioned on a yearly basis (e.g. Asia, Isauria, Cilicia) for a certain period of time, to continue somewhat irregularly after that. So far no rotation system can be established with any certainty, but groupings of provincial warehouses operating continuously for several years are easily detectable. One more problem that needs to be addressed is how much the terminology used on certain seals of the same period testifies to the specific distinction of the warehouse/vassilika kommerkia units of the provinces. The case of the warehouse of Isauria provides the best example of this problem. This warehouse, which functions almost without interruption since 676, is distinguished within a few years in the warehouse of the province, of Dekapolis, of the andrapoda of the province and of the andrapoda of Dekapolis\(^74\). Other similar examples come from Asia (warehouse of Asia and vassilika kommerkia of Asia for the years 695-697)\(^75\), and from the Anatolikois (vassilika kommerkia of the Anatolikois and of the provinces of the Anatolikois)\(^76\), while it is possible to extend this reasoning to other warehouses, e.g. of cities within certain provinces. I tend to believe that different geographic or administrative terminology indeed indicates a distinction among different warehouse/vassilika kommerkia units, which needs to be investigated further, especially when military forces are implicated.

An association between the military forces of the Empire and the warehouses is attested in seal inscriptions in the beginning of the eighth century. However, it is not proven that this association regards the territorial settlement of the army, which had taken place before that point. Even the first seals of the Armeniakoi (717/8) and the Anatolikois (736/7), that clearly implicate specific territories assigned to the armed forces of the Empire, make mention of the

\(^73\) Cf. RAGIA, Geography I.1, p. 199-200.

\(^74\) LAURENT, Bulletin p. 605, no 13 (Isauria and Dekapolis, 690-692); SBS 3 (1993) p. 181 no 2053 (Isauria); ZARNITZ, Siegel, no 2 (andrapoda of Isauria and Cilicia, 693/4); SEIBT – ZARNITZ, Bleisiegel, no 1.3.6 (Isauria and the andrapoda, in all probability dated to 694/5); CHEYNET, Sceaux, no 26 (andrapoda of Dekapolis, 696/7).

\(^75\) DO Seals 2, no 65.1 (Asia, Caria, Lycia, Rhodes and the Chersonese); LAURENT, Bulletin, p. 621, no 2 (vassilika kommerkia of Asia, Caria and Lycia).

\(^76\) After BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 212 (vassilika kommerkia of the Anatolikois, 730/1); DO Seals, no 86.37 (vassilika kommerkia of the provinces of the Anatolikois, 736/7).
provinces of these forces, thus indicating that the warehouses were still operating based on the ancient provincial organization. Inversely, one could argue that the specific reference to the armed forces of the empire on the same seals implies that the warehouses of those provinces were oriented towards serving military needs. It has already been noted that no seals of Armenia and Cappadocia are found dating to the period after 717/8. The warehouses of Lycania and Galatia did not function again after the end of seventh century and the provinces of the Anatolikoi appeared after the seals of Phrygia Salutaris stopped being struck, in 736/7. The provinces of south Asia Minor only stopped being represented at the vassilika kommerkia institution after the year 739/40, when the first seal of the strategia of the Kibyrraiotai appears; the western provinces disappeared after 741/2, to which the first seal of the strategia of the Thrakesioi is dated. This is a conclusion valid for the Opsikion as well, even though there is a time lapse of six years between the last seal of Bithynian provinces and the first seal of the provinces of the Opsikion (745/6). These seals of the warehouses of the provinces of the military regiments of the empire, or of the vassilika kommerkia of the strategai, which make no mention of the provinces, dating mostly from the 740s, clearly indicate that the institution’s operational basis shifted from the ancient provincial territorial organization to the territorial and military organization of the armed forces of the Empire.

The implications of this change are much more far-reaching than one would expect: it appears that the ancient provincial organization was finally abolished in the last years of the reign of Leo III. The last seal of the provinces of a military regiment is that of the Anatolikoi, dated in 736/7. In 737/8 dates the seal of the vassilika kommerkia of the dioikesis of Hellas, and in the next year there appears the strategia of Hellas. The year 738/9 then, the 6th indicio, was the year of the abolishment of the ancient civil province of Hellas, followed by the abolishment of other provinces all over the empire in the next years. In the 740s no more vassilika kommerkia of separate provinces/territories are saved, with only one exception, the vassilika kommerkia of Kato Hexapolis. If we accept the suggestion made above, that this comes from Hexapolis of Caria –

77. Cf. ZUCKERMAN, Studies, p. 128-132, who believes that this development took place much later. Also see CHEYNET, Mise en place, p. 3-4.
78. The reference is cited above, note 76.
79. ZV, no 261; CHEYNET, Mise en place, p. 9 no 5; BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 236.
82. STAVRAKOS, Sammlung Kophopoulos, p. 6-8; ZV, no 254; BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 232.
Rhodes (meaning the island of Rhodes with the Rhodian Peraia), then we would have to admit that it anticipates the incorporation of this region in the theme of the Kibyrraiotai. This conclusion explains perfectly why in 741/2 two regions were detached from their provinces (a part of Caria and an island until recently belonging to Nesoi) to function separately from the *vassilika kommerkia* of the *strategia* of the Thrakesion, which also operated that year. Similar examples come only from the north extremities of the theme of Thrace, referring namely to Mesembria. It is also necessary to underline the conclusion that the establishment of military regiments in certain ἐπαρχίαι, a development that is attested quite early in the beginning of the eighth century does not entail, or necessitate, the abolishment of the civil provincial organization. In other words, this intermediate stage between the ancient provincial organization and the new thematic organization of the provinces, roughly the period from ca. 717/8 to 738/9 is marked with the irreversible decline of the provinces as structures within the Late Roman geographic-administrative frame of the empire and with the growth of the military regiments that become in the end the territorially based military units that later sources so abundantly describe as themes. On the basis of the seal evidence this conclusion appears quite solid. However, it has to be underlined that it concerns those provinces where armed forces were established quite early, meaning Asia Minor, Thrace, Hellas, and Sicily. In the case of Thessalonica the homonymous theme was founded only after the abolishment of the *vassilika kommerkia* of the city, that is, after 783/4.

The only case that lies outside the frame described is that of the Opsikion. Its provinces are still attested in the seal of 745/6. At this point it is useful to recall that in the summer of 741, the count of the Opsikion, Artabasdos mounted a coup against the legitimate successor, Constantine V. During the civil war that followed the themes of the Anatolikoi, the Thrakesioi, and the Kibyrraiotai sided with the young emperor. The seals of Kato Hexapolis and of the *strategia* of the Thrakesioi testify to the mobilization of two of these military

84. See the observations of Zuckerman, Studies, p. 130.
86. Theophanes, p. 415a-26, 419b-16.
forces in the year 741/2, which coincided with the 10th *indictio*, beginning in September 741. Indeed it is a rare occasion to associate any of the *apothe-kai/vassilika kommerkia* seals with specific events, such as the outbreak of a revolt and the support offered to one of the rivals by the military regiments. It is worth noting that emperor Leo III was undoubtedly all too powerful to experience a strong resistance for the “reform” of 738/9. This is not true of his successor, Constantine V, who inherited the opposition together with the throne. Opposing political forces broke out against him shortly after the death of Leo III, and he had to deal with multiple conspiracies throughout his long reign. This might then be a reason why the Opsikion was treated differently in a set of reforms that certainly took place after 745/6 and affected its strategic role for the Empire and its operational effectiveness. However, this is already a different issue. For now it is enough to conclude that the emperor, who abolished ancient provincial administrative structures and gave rise to a new order in Byzantium, was Leo III, and that his son and heir to the throne, Constantine V, was the emperor who carried out and complemented the reforms.

**Sigillographic sources**

**CHEYNET, Sceaux**


**DO Seals**


87. Cf. CHEYNET, Mise en place, p. 10.


SBS Studies in Byzantine Sigillography


Stavrokos, Sammlung Kophopoulos Chr. Stavrokos, Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel der Sammlung Savvas Kophopoulos. Eine Siegelsammlung auf der Insel Lesbos [Βυζαντινος, Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization, 1], Turnhout 2010.


**Catalogue of the Seals of the Apothekai/Vassilika Kommerkia (ca. 650-832) Part 3: Regional Classification**

### I. Cappadocia

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>659-668</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>683/4 or 686/7</td>
<td>Cappadocia I and II</td>
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<tr>
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<td>696-698</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seal Range</th>
<th>Region(s)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>690/1</td>
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<td>694/5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>717/8</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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89. In this catalogue there are double or even triple entries concerning mostly central Asian provinces. This is due to the fact that their warehouses often functioned also with those of northwestern provinces (duly considered as Asian neighborhoods of Constantinople), of west Asian provinces, or of south Asian provinces. Publication references are cited here only for the newly published seals and for later seals that complete this presentation series of the warehouses/vassilika kommerkia. For the rest, the reader please be referred to the corresponding chronological classifications in the Catalogues in RAGIA, Geography I.1 and Geography I.2 under the specific years.
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659-668 Isauria
668-672 Cilicia I
676/7 Isauria
679/80 Either Ciliciae
681/2 Isauria
685-695 Cilicia I and II

90. JORDANOV, Collection, no 115. The editor retained the reading “Kerasous”.

http://epublishing.ekt.gr | e-Publisher: EKT | Downloaded at 26/01/2020 02:08:36 |
Either Ciliciae

690/1 Korykos and Cilicia
690/1 Isauria
690/1 Pamphylia with Pisidia
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691/2 Cilicia
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91. SBS 10 (2010), p. 172, no 617, and 181, no 1303. The seal belonged to the genikos logothetes Kyr-iaxos.
92. Also in SBS 10 (2010), p. 163, no 2487, and 182, no 1314.
94. CHEYNET, Mise en place, p. 9, no 5.
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691/2 or 695/6 Caria and Lycia
694/5 Andrapoda of Asia, Caria and Lycia
695-697 Asia, Caria, Lycia, Rhodes and the Chersonese
695-697 Vassiliki kommerkia of Asia, Caria and Lycia
696/7 Kapatiane and Lydia
713-715 Asia, Caria and Lycia
719/20 Lycia with Pamphylia and the littoral of Isauria
722/3 Lycia with Pamphylia and Pisidia
720-729 Lydia with Hellespont
721/2 Asia, Caria, all the Islands and Hellespont
725/6 Vassiliki kommerkia of Asia
727/8 Vassiliki kommerkia of Asia, Caria, and Hellespont

95. In SBS 5 (1998), p. 54 no 5; ZV, p. 196, table 34; Brandes, Finanzverwaltung, App I, no 252. This seal was republished very recently in Jordanov, Collection, no 99. It is normally placed in the year 755/6, the 8th indiction, but I have already suggested (RAGIA, Geography I.1, p. 236, n. 11) that it should be re-dated much earlier. The 8th indiction corresponds to the years 725/6 and 740/1. Of these chronologies the first is chosen because there would be, according to the analysis attempted above, no separate provincial warehouses after 739. On the contrary, if the placement in time of this seal is correct, then this would be the first seal of the reinstated by Leo III vassiliki kommerkia. It is quite interesting that Theophanes, p. 4044.6-4109.15, dates the financial measures of Leo III that afflicted Italy to this year. About the implications see Zuckerman, Studies, p. 85 f.; Brandes, Finanzverwaltung, p. 368 f.
VIII. Islands
687/8 Nesoi, with Caria and Asia
687-689 Cyclades Islands
688-690 Crete
690/1 Chios, Lesbos with Asia
695-697 Rhodes and the Chersonese with Asia, Caria and Lycia
696/7 Cyclades Islands
711-713 Aigaion Pelagos
713-714 Aigaion Pelagos
721-722 All the Islands with Asia, Caria and Hellespont
730-741 Vassilikakommerkia of Crete
730/1 Vassilikakommerkia of Melos
734/5 Vassilikakommerkia of the Islands of the Aigaion Pelagos
736/7 Vassilikakommerkia of the dioikesis of Andros
738/9 Vassilikakommerkia of Melos, Thera, Anaphe, Ios and Amorgos

96. It is up till now considered that this seal came from Armenia I, but in the present contribution I suggest that the seal inscription refers to the Rhodian Peraia. It is therefore classified here among the seals of west Asia Minor because the Chersonese of Peraia along with Cnidus and Halicarnassus belonged entirely to Caria.

97. CHEYNET, Mise en place, p. 9, no 4.
IX. Thessalonica
713 Thessalonica
723/4 Thessalonica
724/5 Thessalonica
726/7 Thessalonica
727/8 Thessalonica
734/5 Vassilikakommerkia of Thessalonica
737/8 Vassilikakommerkia of Thessalonica
737/8 Vassilikakommerkia of Thessalonica
738/9 Vassilikakommerkia of Thessalonica
738/9 Vassilikakommerkia of Salonica
740/1 Vassilikakommerkia of Thessalonica
742/3 Vassilikakommerkia of Thessalonica
746/7 Vassilikakommerkia of Thessalonica
755/6 Vassilikakommerkia of Thessalonica
773/4 Vassilikakommerkia of Thessalonica
778/9 Vassilikakommerkia of Thessalonica
783/4 Vassilikakommerkia of Thessalonica

X. Hellas and the West
673/4 Africa
696/7 Sicily
698/9 Hellas
730-741 Vassilikakommerkia of Hellas
736/7 Vassilikakommerkia of Hellas
737/8 Vassilikakommerkia of the dioikesis of Hellas

98. Jordanov, Collection, no 105, dates to the year 783/4 a seal mentioned by ZV, p. 196 table 34, and Brandes, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 261. The inscription so far remained unread, but Jordanov suggests that it should be read as τὰ βασιλικὰ κοµµέρκια τοῦ Εὐξείνου Πόντου. Even though this edition is an excellent one and provides very good photographs of the seals under discussion, it is my opinion that Jordanov’s reading is to be rejected, because the geographic term “Euxeinos Pontos” is extremely rare in the sources of the period and can have no administrative connotation. To this term, unlike terms so far examined (e.g. of provinces, cities, territories with specific characteristics), no territorial expansion can be assigned, which would serve the function of the vassilika kommerkia. Even the term “Aigaion Pelagos”, which would be the only equivalent of “Euxeinos Pontos”, bears with it a specific territorial and administrative connotation. See RAGIA, Geography I.2, p. 102-105.

100. DO Seals 1, no 5.4.
101. Stavrakos, Sammlung Kophopoulos, p. 6-8.
XI. Constantinople and Thrake

685-695 Constantinople
688/9 Constantinople
690/1 Constantinople
690/1 Mesembria
691/2 Constantinople
692/3 Constantinople
692/3 Constantinople
693/4 Constantinople
695/6 Constantinople with Hellespont
695/6 Vassilikakommerkia of Mesembria
696/7 Constantinople
698/9 Constantinople
698/9 Mesembria
700-702 Constantinople
700-702 Constantinople
700-702 Mesembria

Seventh-eighth c. Constantinople
713 Constantinople
713/4 Constantinople
713/4 Constantinople
713/4 Mesembria
715/6 Constantinople
718/9 Constantinople
720-729 Panion, Madytos and...
720/1 Constantinople
722/3 Constantinople
722/3 Mesembria
723/4 Constantinople
727/8 Constantinople
730-741 Vassilikakommerkia of Constantinople
730-741 Vassilikakommerkia of Thrake
730-741 Vassilikakommerkia of Mesembria
730/1 Vassilikakommerkia of Mesembria
732/3 Vassilikakommerkia of Mesembria
735/6 Vassilikakommerkia of Mesembria
736/7 Vassilikakommerkia of Mesembria
738/9 Vassilikakommerkia of Mesembria
741-750 Vassilikakommerkia of Mesembria with Thrake
747/8 Vassilikakommerkia of Thrake
747/8 Vassilikakommerkia of Mesembria
751-775 Vassilikakommerkia of Mesembria
751/2 Vassilikakommerkia of Thrake and Hexamilion
785/6 Vassilikakommerkia of Thrake
787/8 Vassilikakommerkia of Thrake
800/1 Vassilikakommerkia of Thrake
801/2 Vassilikakommerkia of Thrake
802/3 Vassilikakommerkia of Thrake
810/11 Vassilikakommerkia of Thrake
820/1 Vassilikakommerkia of Thrake
832/3 Vassilikakommerkia of Develtos

103. DO Seals 1, no 71.20; ZV, no 280a; BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 270.
104. ZV, p. 196, table 34; no 281, n. 4; BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 271.
106. DO Seals 1, no 43.17; ZV, no 282; BRANDES, Finanzverwaltung, App. I, no 274.
ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η ΓΕΩΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΠΑΡΧΙΑΚΗΣ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗΣ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΙΑΣ (ΠΕΡ. 600-1200): Ι.3. ΟΙ ΑΠΟΘΗΚΕΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΦΡΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΣΙΚΕΛΙΑΣ, ΤΕΛΙΚΕΣ ΠΑΡΑΤΗΡΗΣΕΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΣΥΜΠΕΡΑΣΜΑΤΑ

Η παρούσα εργασία χωρίζεται σε τρία μέρη. Το πρώτο ασχολείται με τις αποθήκες Αφρικής και Σικελίας. Η αποθήκη Αφρικής λειτούργησε το 673/4 και θεωρείται ότι μπορεί να ενταχθεί στο πλαίσιο της βυζαντινο-αραβικής αντιπαράθεσης κατά τη διάρκεια του αποκλεισμού της Κωνσταντινούπολης (674-678). Η αποθήκη Σικελίας λειτούργησε λίγα χρόνια αργότερα, το 696/7, και μπορεί να συνδεθεί με την εκστρατεία των Βυζαντινών για την ανακατάληψη της Αφρικής που τελούσε υπό τις διαταγές του πατρικίου Ιωάννη.

Στο δεύτερο μέρος παρουσιάζονται και σχολίζονται νέες σφραγίδες των αποθηκών και των βασιλικών κομμερκίων που χρονολογούνται από τα τέλη του 7ου αι. ως τη δεκαετία 740 που δημοσιεύθηκαν πρόσφατα. Αναθεωρείται η άποψη, σύμφωνα με την οποία η σφραγίδα της Κάτω Εξάπολεως (741/2) προέρχεται από την επαρχία Αρμενίας Α΄. Προτείνεται αντιθέτως ότι αυτός ο σπάνιος γεωγραφικός όρος αναφέρεται στην αρχαία Δωρική Εξάπολη, δηλαδή στις πόλεις της Κω, Αλικαρνασσό, Κνίδου, και της Ρόδου (Ιαλυσός, Κάκιος, Λίνδος). Τέλος, παρουσιάζονται οι σφραγίδες που σχετίζονται με τον θεσμό των αποθηκών/βασιλικών κομμερκίων και χρονολογούνται μετά το 787/8.

Το τρίτο και τελευταίο μέρος της μελέτης είναι αφερεμένο σε γενικά συμπεράσματα από την γεωγραφική επισκόπηση της επαρχιακής διοίκησης από τα τέλη του 7ου αι. ως τα μέσα περίπου του 8ου αι. Επισημαίνονται προβλήματα που προκύπτουν από την ερμηνεία και το περιεχόμενο που έχει δώσει η νέτερη έρευνα στον θεσμό των αποθηκών/βασιλικών κομμερκίων και πιστοποιείται ότι η περίοδος περ. 717/8-738/9 ήταν η περίοδος μετάβασης από το παλαιότερο υποερευνητικό σύστημα επαρχιακής διοίκησης στο νέο σύστημα «θεματικής» διοίκησης των επαρχιών. Τη μελέτη συμπληρώνει κατάλογος των αποθηκών των επαρχιών του Βυζαντινού χρόνου, οι
οποίες κατατάσσονται πλέον κατά περιφέρειες και διευκολύνουν την κατανόηση των συμπερασμάτων της παρούσης εργασίας.

ΕΦΗΡΑΓΙΑ