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SOME UNPUBLISHED LEAD SEALS CONCERNING CRETE

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Among the seals of the Dumbarton Oaks collection there are five which concern Crete¹. These are the only ones, as far as I am aware, connected with Crete which have not yet been published. So their publication here will complete the *corpus* of the Cretan Byzantine seals which are known so far².

We do not know exactly where these seals were found, but the indications are that they originate from the vicinity of Constantinople. We connect them with Crete because the name of the island is mentioned in their inscriptions. Three of the seals belonged to lay officials, and two to ecclesiastics; one of the owners held a lay office as well as being a member of the clergy. Two or three of the pieces are noteworthy, for they display craftsmanship of quite good quality, besides the interest of the offices held by the persons to whom they belonged.

1. D.O. 77.34.48 (fig. 1)

Theodosios tractator

On the *obverse*, a standing military saint in orans position, wearing an ornate chlamys and chiton. In the field on either side, two stylized palm-trees. A border of dots.

On the *reverse*, an inscription in four lines :

+ ΘΕΟ
ΔΟCΙΟΥ
ΤΡ/ΚΡΗ
ΤΗC
+ Θεοδοσίου τρ(ακτευτοῦ?) Κρήτης

1. I wish to thank the Trustees of Harvard University and Prof. N. Oikonomides for permission to publish these seals.

2. For a catalogue of all the seals concerning Crete, see my paper «The Byzantine Seals of Crete», Second International Symposium of Byzantine Sigillography, Athens 16-17 May 1988 (forthcoming in *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography*, vol. II).

Date. 7th century.

Dimensions. 20 mm.

Preservation. Extremely fine.

Comments. It is tempting to read the abbreviation TP/ as TP(ΘΥΜΑΡΧΟΥ), which would make this Theodosios a turmarch of Crete. The implication then would be that Crete was a theme at that time. The date of the seal, however, is certain without any doubt and this makes it too early for such an official to exist. For this reason the abbreviation has been read as TP(ΑΚΤΕΥΤΟΥ). Alternatively, if Crete was part of a larger theme at that time, it is possible that the island formed one of the theme's turmae, in which case the existence of a turmarch of Crete would cause no problems.

Bibliography. For the problems of the administrative position of Crete during the period, see D. TSOUGARAKIS, *Byzantine Crete*, Athens 1988, Ch. IV. For other seals of tractators, see K. M. KONSTANTOPOULOS, *Βυζαντινά Μολυβδόβουλλα τοῦ ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἐθνικοῦ Νομισματικοῦ Μουσείου*, Athens 1917, nos. 1237, 1238; V. LAURENT, *La Collection C. Orghidan*, Paris 1952, no. 348. For the tractators in general, see A. H. M. JONES, *The Later Roman Empire*, p. 347, 395, 417. For palm-trees similar to the ones presented here, see ZACOS-VEGLERY, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, I, Basel 1971, no. 1283.

2. D.O. 58.106.4640 (fig. 2)

Theophanes asecretis, judge of Crete and the Cyclades

On the *obverse*, a bust of a military saint holding a spear in the right hand and a shield in the left. In the field on either side a vertical inscription : Ο ΓΕ — ΩΡΓΙ = ὁ (ἄγιος) Γεώργιος. Very fine execution.

On the *reverse*, an inscription in six lines :

ΘΕΟΦΑΝ,
ΑΧΗΚΡΗΤ,
ΚΡΙΘΗ ΚΡΗ
[Τ]ΗC S ΤΩΝ
[Κ]ΥΚΛΑΔ
ΩΝ

Θεοφάν(ει) ἀσηκρη̃τ(ις) κριτῆ Κρήτης (καί) τῶν Κυκλάδων

Date. 11th century.

Dimensions. 21.5 mm.

Preservation. Extremely fine.

Comments. The maritime theme of the Cyclades was created after 949 (N. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ, *Listes de préséance*, p. 361) and the theme of Crete in 961. Being an asecretis, Theophanes was a civil official, not a thematic (i.e. military) one. A judge could combine two or three different provinces, which formed one administrative unit. The military administration of the provinces (themes), however, remained separate.

Bibliography. For the seal of another judge of the Cyclades (11th century), see G. DAVIDSON, *Corinth XII. The Minor Objects*, Princeton NJ 1952, no. 2752. For the subdivisions of the administration and for the kritai, see Hélène AHRWEILER, *Recherches sur l'administration de l'Empire byzantin*, BCH 84, 1960, p. 83f. Cf. D. ZAKYTHENOS, *Μελέται*, EEBBS 25, 1955, p. 146.



1



2



3



4



5



3. D.O. 55.1.4833 (fig. 3)

Stephen metropolitan of Crete

On the *obverse*, a bust of a saint or of the Mother of God (unrecognizable because of damage). Extremely worn traces of an inscription around the border.

On the *reverse*, an inscription in four lines :

+CTE
ΦΑΝΜΗ
ΤΡΟΠΟΛ
ΚΡΗΤ

+ Στεφάν(ω) μητροπολ(ιτη) Κρήτ(ης)

Date. First half of the 11th century (second quarter).

Dimensions. 17 mm (field).

Preservation. Fine for the reverse. Chipped at the two exits of the string. Broken along the channel on the obverse.

Comments. Between 961 and 1204 there was only one metropolitan of Crete by the name of Stephen, who is mentioned on various occasions between 1027 and 1032. This person must have owned two different seals successively, because another seal mentioning Κύριε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δούλῳ Στεφάνῳ/μητροπολίτη Κρήτης is also known. Both should be considered as dated seals.

Bibliography. For mentions of metropolitan Stephen, see D. TSOUGARAKIS, *Byzantine Crete*, p. 214. His other seal in V. LAURENT, *Corpus*, V/1, no. 621 (and G. SCHLUMBERGER, *Sigillographie*, p. 201, no. 1).

4. D.O. 58.106.3294 (fig. 4)

Niketas ekprosopou of Crete

On the *obverse*, a bust of a saint. A vertical inscription in the left field : O T = ὁ (ἄγιος) Τ-[ίτος].

On the *reverse*, an inscription in five lines :

[+C]ΦΡΑ
[Γ, ΝΙ]ΚΗΤ
[ΑΕΚ]ΠΡΟC
[ΩΠ]ΤΗC
[Κ]ΡΙΤΗC

+Σφραγ(ις) Νικήτα εκπροσώπου τῆς Κρήτης.

Date. 11th century.

Dimensions. 21 mm.

Preservation. Extremely fine but one third is missing.

Comments. Unlike the previously mentioned Theophanes asecretis, Niketas must have been a thematic official belonging to the military hierarchy of the theme of Crete. Nothing is known about him, however.

Bibliography. For the functions of the ekprosopou, see Hélène AHRWEILER, *art. cit.*, p. 39f.; N. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΕC, *op. cit.*, p. 342. For another ekprosopou, not of the theme of Crete but of its dux, see H. GRÉGOIRE, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Asie Mineure*, Paris 1922, p. 74-75, no. 2268.

5. D.O. 55.1.4599 (fig. 5)

George protosynkellos and kommerkiarios of Crete

On the *obverse*, a bust of the Mother of God with the medallion of the Child on her chest. No inscription is visible.

On the *reverse*, an inscription in five lines :

ΓΕΩΡ
ΓΙΩΑ, CYN
ΚΕΛΩSKX
ΜΕΡΚΗΑΠΙ
ΚΡΗΤΙC

Γεωργίω (πρωτο)συνκέλω (και) κουμερκηαρί<ω> Κρήτις

Date. (? Late) 10th century.

Dimensions. 19.5 mm.

Preservation. Poor for the obverse; good for the reverse.

Comments. It is to be noted that this person combined a lay with an ecclesiastical office, and this is very rare. I am aware of only one more seal of a monk and synkellos who was also anagrapheus of Bulgaria (ZACOS, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, II, Berne 1984, no. 959, mid-11th century). Schlumberger mentions a 10th-century seal published by Mordtmann which had a cross on three steps and Κύριε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δούλῳ on the obverse, and on the reverse the inscription +ΓΕΩΡΓΙΩ Α'CΥΓΚΕΛ' (λω) S KXMEPKIAP' (τω) ΚΡΗΤΙC. If this is not a coincidence, which is highly improbable, then again as in the case of the metropolitan Stephen these two seals of a protosynkellos and kommerkiarios of Crete must have belonged to the same person.

Bibliography. G. SCHLUMBERGER, *Sigillographie*, p. 201; MORDTMANN, *Revue Archéologique*, 1877, II, p. 60.

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