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თბილისი

THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION OF BYZANTINE IBERIA ACCORDING TO THE SEALS

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It would be a quite hopeless task to search for new literary historical texts, but there is a large bulk of source material till now more or less neglected by many Byzantine and other historians of the Middle ages, Byzantine lead seals. From some estimated 80.000 bulls much is still now unpublished, much is more or less well published, but even the published material can in many cases offer more and better information than achieved till now, as in the last decennia Byzantine sigillography saw an enormous progress. Specialists are nowadays able to establish lists of officers on certain posts in a chronological order (partially based on relative chronology), which is e.g. of great value for the reconstruction of the provincial administration of the Byzantine Empire.

In the Festschrift for Natela Vačnadze I studied the seals and other sources for the military commanders of Byzantine Iberia from 1000 till the 70s of the 11th century.¹ So this time I would like to rework the seals of the civil administration. To start with, some pieces mention a judge or *krites* (till now there is no mention of a praetor).

1) The earliest seems to be an Athenian seal of John Asekretis and judge of Iberia, that we date ca. 1020/1040 (fig. 1).²

On both sides only script:

+ ΘΚΕ – ΡΟΗΘΕΙ – ΤΩ ΧΩ ΔΥ-ΛΩ ΙΩ /

ΣΠΑΘ, -ΚΑΝΔΔ, ΑC, -ΚΡΗΤ, Σ ΚΡΗ-Τ, ΙΡΗΠΙΑ,.

Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δούλῳ Ἰω(άννη) σπαθ(αρο)κανδ(ι)δ(άτω) ἀσ(η)κρητ(ις) (καὶ) κριτ(ῆ) Ἰβηρίας(ς).

As ornaments there is a pearl between horizontal lines above and under the reverse-legend. The ligature of O and Y in the 3rd line of the obverse seems to be a transitional type, which helps to narrow the dating.

¹ W. Seibt, Das byzantinische Militärkommando "Iberia" (in print).

² Athens, Numismatic Museum 177α, edited by Konstantopoulos.

2) The second seal belongs to the Fogg collection, today in Dumbarton Oaks.¹ I would like to date it 1030/1050 (fig. 2).

On the obverse a bust of the Virgin, the hands before the breast, the type of "minimal orante",² with the usual sigla MP / ΘV.

The reverse with quite small letters: + ΘΚΕ Ρ,Θ, - ΡΑCΙΑ, CΠΙΑ-Θ,ΚΑΝΔΔ, ΑC.-ΚΡΗΤ, Σ Κ.-Τ, ΙΡΗΠ,.

Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθει Βασιλ(είω) σπαθ(αρο)κανδ(ι)δ(άτω) ἀσ[η]κρητ(ις) (καὶ) κ[ρι]τ(ῆ) Ἰβηρ[ι]α(ς).

Basileios was Spatharakandidatos and Asekretis, just as John above; his function is only partially readable, but I think with the editors that Krites should be preferred to Kurator. Under the legend an ornament as in no. 1.

3) Nearly contemporaneous is the seal of Michael Lizix, also Asekretis and judge of Iberia, but without mentioning a title. The seal from the second Zacos collection is now in Dumbarton Oaks³ (fig. 3).

On the obverse a high quality bust of the archangel Michael in imperial garments, with sceptre in the right hand and perhaps a crucifer globe in the left. Traces of the sigla MX – AX.

The reverse is partially damaged, but can be reconstructed without problems:

. ΚΕ .. – . W C W Δ, ΜΙ-. ΑCΗΚΡΗΤ, - . ΚΡΗΤ, ΙΡΗ-ΠΙΑC ΤΩ ΛΙ-ΖΙΚΙ.

[+] Κ(ύρι)ε [β(οή)θ(ει) τῷ σῷ δ(ούλῳ) Μι[χ(αήλ)] ἀσηκρητ(ις) [(καὶ)] κριτ(ῆ) Ἰβηρίας τῷ Λίζικι.

Here we have the family name Lizix. We know only one homonymous Michael Lizix, who was Protoproedros. On the obverse the Theotokos Hodegetria Dexiokratusa⁴ standing, with the reverse legend: ΘΚΕ – ΡΟΗΘ, Μ^x – ΑΑΕΔΡΟ – ΤΟΝ ΛΙ-ΖΙΚ,.

Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθει Μ(ι)χ(αήλ) (πρωτοπρό)εδρο(ν) τὸν Λίζικ(α).

The seal is now in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg,⁵ and was published by Schlumberger,⁶ who read erroneously ΤΟ ΜΑΙΖΙΚ.. at the end. As this seal is quite later (late 11th-early 12th cent.) we must not combine these two persons. But, as the editors of the American seal pointed out, there was a Lizix Asekretis, to whom Psellos dictated a pittakion. That could be the person of our seal, before or after his delegation to Iberia.

¹ E. McGeer – J. Nesbitt – N. Oikonomides (†), Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art. Vol. IV: The East. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C. 2001, (further on cited as DOSeals IV), nr. 75.2 (dated to the 11th century).

² This term was created by Herbert Hunger, cf. H. Hunger, Zur Terminologie der Theotokosdarstellungen auf byzantinischen Siegeln. Aachener Kunstblätter 60 (1994) (= Festschrift für Hermann Fillitz) 136.

³ DOSeals IV, nr. 75.4. (dated to the 11th century).

⁴ For the epitheta of the representation of the Virgin on Byzantine seals cf. e.g. W. Seibt, Die Darstellung der Theotokos auf byzantinischen Bleisiegeln, besonders im 11. Jahrhundert. Studies in Byzantine Sigillography (1). Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C. 1987, 35-56.

⁵ M-6057.

⁶ G. Schlumberger, Sigillographie de l'empire byzantin. Paris 1884 (reprint Turin 1963) 681.

4) A little bit younger is the seal of a Basileios, who was Protospatharios of the Chrysotriklinos and a member of the judges of the Hippodrom, when he was delegated for some time as judge of Iberia (fig. 4). The seal was in the last collection of Zacos, who edited it in his second volume.¹ On the obverse a bust of St. Nicholas, with his name, but without an invocation. The reverse reads:

... - .ACIA... - .CΠAΘ, EΠI . - XPTKA, KPIT, . - TU IΠI, ΔP, S - THC IRH-P, A.,

[+ K(ύρι)ε β(οή)θ(ει) B]ασιλ[είω (πρωτο)]σπαθ(αρίω) ἐπὶ [τ(οῦ)] Χρ(υσο)(τρι)κλ(ίνου) κριτ(ῆ) [ἐ(πὶ)] τοῦ ἱππ(ο)δρ(όμου) (καὶ) τῆς Ἰβηρ(ι)α(ς).

This Basil seems to be different from his homonymous predecessor.

So one can see that the titles of the judges are relatively modest, a hint, that the members of the establishment were not very fond of this post so far from the capital – on the other hand the post of the Katepano or Dux of Iberia was one of the most important in the army, so the members of the high military aristocracy tried to achieve it.

5) Quite problematic is a seal's type of a judge of themata outside Iberia, who had nevertheless – at least for some time – special duties in Iberia, ca. 1030/1055 (fig. 5 and 6). There were two exemplars in the former Zacos collection, both donated to the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris² and edited by J.-Cl. Cheynet.³ On the obverse a bust of St. Nicholas, with the sigla of his name and the usual invocative inscription around the head of the saint.

The combined transcription of the reverse legend reads: IW – CΠAΘPK, -ΔΔO KPIT, - XAAΔ, ΔEP-ZHN, S XAP-TUA, TU H-RHP,K, C.- . C..

I would propose to transcribe:

Ἰω(άννη) σπαθ(α)ρ(ο)κ(αν)δ(ι)δ(άτ)(ω) κριτ(ῆ) Χαλδ(ιας) Δερζην(ῆς) (καὶ) χαρτουλ(αρίω) τοῦ (Ἰ)βηρ(ι)κ(ου) σ[τ(ρατοῦ) (δ)] Σ[άγ(ος)].

The name John is clear, the title Spatharokandidatos also, and this man was surely judge of Chaldia and Derzene (the Byzantine thema could have been larger than the old Armenian district Derjan at the sources of the Euphrates, south of Chaldia), and chartoularios of something that has to do with Iberia. Cheynet thought about χαρτουλάριος τοῦ ἰβηρικοῦ σεκρέτου, but that does not work with the traces of the letters. I myself thought from the beginning about a chartularios τοῦ ἰβηρικοῦ στρατοῦ.⁴ Immediately afterwards Cheynet doubted this interpretation.⁵ There is no question that the decisive word starts with Sigma; the following letter is damaged, but one can see an upper horizontal line, primarily hinting to Tau. In the last line only Sigma (or eventually Epsilon) is sure. Before that there was one letter, presumably a big one, perhaps Omega; after the

Sigma the top of a letter is visible, we think about Alpha, Lambda or Delta; then again a relatively long line at the top, perhaps Tau or Gamma.

Sagos and Sagopulos are rare but documented family names. On a seal in the Hermitage¹, first published by Pančenko,² partially corrected by V. S. Šandrovskaja,³ is mentioned a John Sagos (I would prefer τ(ῶ) Σάγω at the end instead of Σάγῶ) as Protospatharios of the Chrysotriklinos and (perhaps) notarios (fig. 7). On the obverse a bust of St. Nicholas as on our type. Pančenko was surely wrong in dating the seal to 12th-13th cent., Šandrovskaja corrected to 11th cent. I think about the middle of the 11th cent. There is a possibility that both seals come from the same man, but that is not for sure.⁴

Perhaps we should also mention the seal of a contemporaneous judge, who was probably called John, and who was Spatharokandidatos and Krites of Chaldia and Derzene as our John above, also with a bust of St. Nicholas on the obverse (fig. 8).⁵ Perhaps also this John could be identical with our judge, but John is a very common name and many civil officers chose St. Nicholas as patron of their seals in this time.

A well known note in Skylitzes tells us that Constantine Monomachos changed the status of the ἰβηρικὸς στρατός, whose members became subjugated to taxes instead of the formal obligation to render military services.⁶ The man in charge of organizing this task was Leon Serblias. Skylitzes does not inform us about his concrete office and honorary title, but from Kekaumenos we learn that he was Anagrapheus of Iberia and Mesopotamia,⁷ exactly the officer who controlled and surveyed the estates and fixed the taxes to be paid for. Presumably these activities were taking place before 1048, because they were interpreted as one of the causes for the invasion of the Seljuks this year. Perhaps it started after the war with Great Armenia and Abu'l Aswār – as a result of the low efficiency of the Byzantine army, where the government had certainly attributed an important role to the "Iberikos stratos", but it is always problematic if someone has to fight against relatives.⁸ We don't know if John Sagos(?) was active before, during or after this reorganization; but perhaps he was even closely operating with Serblias.

¹ G. Zacos, *Byzantine Lead Seals II*, compiled and edited by J. W. Nesbitt. Bern 1984, 387.

² BnF 1796f.

³ J.-Cl. Cheynet, *Sceaux de la collection Zacos (Bibliothèque nationale de France) se rapportant aux provinces orientales de l'Empire byzantin*. Paris 2001, 72-74, no. 37 a and b.

⁴ W. Seibt, *Review of DOS IV 75: BZ 96* (2003), 752.

⁵ J.-Cl. Cheynet, *Review of DOS IV 75: REB 62* (2004), 301.

¹ M-2336.

² B. A. Pančenko, *Kollekcii Russkago Archeologičeskago Instituta v Konstantinopole. Katalog molivdovulov*. IRAIK 8 (1903) 222f., nr. 56.

³ V. S. Šandrovskaja, *Popravki i dopolnenija k „katalogu molivdovulov“ B. A. Pančenko*. VV 38 (1977) 106, Nr. 56.

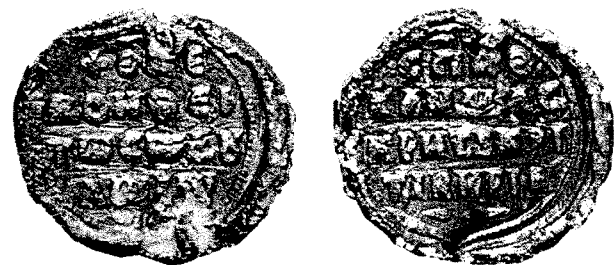
⁴ For the name Sagopulos in the 11th cent. cf. Ch. Stavrakos, *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel mit Familiennamen aus der Sammlung des Numismatischen Museums Athen*. Wiesbaden 2000, 342, Nr. 225 (esp. Michael Sagopulos, Protospatharios and Mystographos, 2nd half of the 11th century).

⁵ DOS IV 61.6.

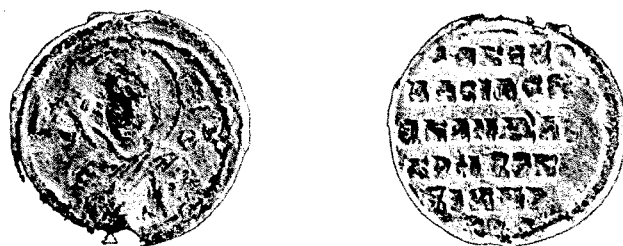
⁶ Skyl. 476, 51-53.

⁷ Kekaumenos 86,2f. (Spadaro); 168, 30f. (Litavrin 2003): 'Απελθὼν εἰς Ἰβηρίαν καὶ Μεσοποταμίαν ... ὁ Σερβλίας ἀναγράψασθαι ... For the Anagrapheus see Dölger, *Finanzverwaltung* 82f. 88.

⁸ And the majority of the habitants of Byzantine Iberia were Armenians!



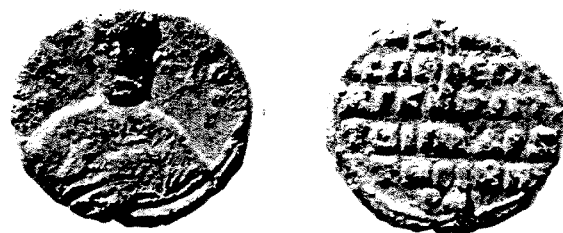
1



2



3

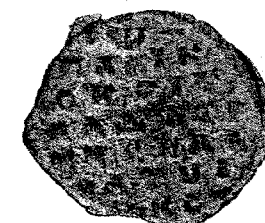


4

All photos 3:2.



5



6



7



8



9

All photos 3:2.

6) The last seal to be discussed here mentions an officer of a part of Iberia; it comes again from a Zacos collection, now in Dumbarton Oaks¹ (fig. 9). It is known since more than 20 years, the best publication is in the Dumbarton Oaks catalogue.² Here we learn that Michael Kataphloros was imperial Kurator of Mantzikert and "Inner Iberia". In "Österreich II"³ we dated it to the 2nd quarter of the 11th cent., but it can be a little bit later also, so I propose now 1030/1060.

On the obverse a bust of St. Nicholas as usual. The reverse reads:

... R,Θ, - TW CW ΔU, - MIX, R, KUPAT, - MANZHK, EPT, - . T, ECW HBIP, - . KAT.ΦAP.,

[+ K(ύρι)ε] β(οή)θ(ει) τῷ σῶ δοῦ(λφ) Μιχ(αήλ) β(ασιλικῷ) κουράτ(ορι) Μανζικ(ι)έρτ(ε) [(καί)] τ(ῆς) Ἑσω Ἰβ(ί)ας [τ(ῶ)] Κατ(α)φλ(ά)ρ(ω).

The imperial Kurator was in charge of the imperial estates in a special district. Manzikierte is of course the well known city north of Lake Van, the modern Malazgirt on the river Murat / Arsanias / Aracani. This town resp. fortress was conquered in 969 by the Byzantines, who destructed the fortifications and withdrew afterwards. During the first usurpation of Bardas Skleros (976-979) the emir of Chleat (Ahlat) and Martyropolis, the Kurd Bād, took possession of this region and refortified Mantzikert. He became an ally of Skleros during his second usurpation in 987.⁴ Soon after the death of Bād (990/991)⁵ Davit' Kouropalates occupied Mantzikert, that became Byzantine after the death of Davit' in 1000 as part of the Katepanate Iberia. We may assume that the former personal possessions of the emirs became an imperial Kuratoria, not only in and around Mantzikert but in the whole region. To me there is no question that "Inner Iberia" in this case means Apahunik' and perhaps also neighbouring regions as e.g. Hark'. Even if the seal comes from a time after the unification of Megale Armenia with Iberia in 1045 this new region did not belong to "Eso Iberia".⁶

There were at least two synchronic Michael Kataphloros, a military man, who is surely different from the Kurator, and a civil officer, who was Protospatharios of the Chrysotriklinos and Mystolektes in the third quarter of the 11th cent.⁷ Perhaps he could be identical with the Kurator at a later stage of his *cursus honorum*. But as there is script on both sides of the seal, we have no sigillographic criteria to unify both of them.

¹ D.O. 58.106.5502.

² DOSeals IV 75.3.

³ A.-K. Wassiliou-W. Seibt, Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel in Österreich, 2. Teil: Zentral- und Provinzialverwaltung (Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Byzantinistik II/2 = Denkschriften d. Phil.-hist. Klasse d. ÖAW 324). Wien 2004, p. 89.

⁴ Cf. W. Seibt, Die Skleroi. Eine prosopographisch-sigillographische Studie (Byzantina Vindobonensia 9). Wien 1976, 46. 51.

⁵ Cf. E. Honigmann, Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 363 bis 1071 nach griechischen, arabischen, syrischen und armenischen Quellen (Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae 3). Brüssel 1935, 154.

⁶ For these problems cf. e.g. V. P. Stepanenko, Michail Kataflor, imperatorskij kurator Mancikerta i "Vnutrennej Iverii". ADSV 1998, 176-192, yet some of his conclusions are not convincing.

⁷ Wassiliou – Seibt, Österreich II (as in n. 3), 61.

Just in time to be mentioned in a short addendum a Russian colleague published a new seal in the State Hermitage in St. Peterburg,¹ where a Michael Grammatikos presents himself also as "Kurator of Inner Iberia".² On the obverse a bust of the Theotokos in the type of "minimal orante".³ For the dating we would prefer the second quarter of the 11th century. I am sorry to say that the interpretation of the office of the "Kurator of Inner Iberia" in this article is totally erroneous.

სამოქალაქო ადმინისტრაცია ბიზანტიის იპერიკში საგაყდავევის მიხედვით

ვერნერ ზაიბტი

რეზიუმე

სტატია ყურადღებას ამახვილებს სიგელოგრაფიულ წყაროებზე ბიზანტიის იპერიის სამოქალაქო ადმინისტრაციის ისტორიისათვის. ადმინისტრაციული და სამხედრო ერთეული არსებობდა 1000 წლიდან ადრეულ 1080-იან წლებამდე. ჩვენ ვიცით იპერიის ოთხი მოსამართლის ბეჭდის შესახებ: იოანე სპათაროკანდიდატოსის და ასეკრეტის (1020/1040), ბასილეს სპათაროკანდიდატოსის და ასეკრეტის (1030/1050), მიქაელ ლიზიქსი ასეკრეტისი (1030/1050) და ბასილეოს ქრისოთრიკლინოსის პროტოსპათაროსი და იპოდრომის მოსამართლეთა წევრი (1040/1060). პრობლემური ბეჭედი, რომელიც ამჟამად პარიზში ინახება, ახსენებს იოანე საგოსს (?), ქალდიის სპათაროკანდიდატოსს და მოსამართლეს დერზენეს, როგორც „იპერიის არმიის“ ქარტულარიოსს (1030/1055).

ტერმინი „შიდა იბერია“ მიქაელ კატაფლორისის ბეჭდებზე, როგორც მანციკერატის და შიდა იპერიის იმპერიული კურატორისა (1025/1050) ინტერპრეტირებულია, როგორც მანციკერტი და მისი მეზობელი რეგიონი, განსაკუთრებით აპაჰუნიკი.

¹ M-6733.

² V. S. Šandrovskaja, Michail Grammatik, kurator „Vnutrennej Iverii“. ADSV 38 (2008) 90-95. A figure of low quality on p. 95.

³ As on our seal no. 2.