

BYZANTINE LYDIA ACCORDING TO TWO NEW ECCLESIASTICAL MOLYBDOBULLAE*

Dr. Nilgün ELAM

Department of History, Faculty of Humanities, Anadolu University,
26470 Eskisehir/ Turkey
Email: nelam@anadolu.edu.tr

Abstract

In this paper, seals preserved in the Fethiye and Kütahya Museums in Turkey have been published. Inscriptions on these seals show that they belong to persons which could be identified with certain bishops who served in ecclesiastical posts in Lydia. The seals in question are: the seal of Theodosios, bishop of Attaleia of Lydia, Nicholas, bishops of Tralleis of Lydia.

Keywords: Byzantine seals, molybdobullae, Attaleia of Lydia, Tralleis of Lydia, Theodosios, Nicholas, bishop, Fethiye Museum, Kütahya Museum.

Lead seals (molybdobullae) were personal objects with which the Byzantines sealed their correspondence confirming the document. They are considered a significant type of historical evidence, because they provide valuable information about the history, prosopography, administration, as well as culture of Byzantine Empire. Despite the contribution of sigillographical data to (the writing of) the administrative and ecclesiastical history of all the regions of Byzantine Anatolia from various perspectives, sigillography is a new area of interest among historians in Turkey. In fact, the possibility discovering the unknown personage of Byzantine Anatolia, through the examination of the seals belonging to the members of different ranks of civil, military and ecclesiastical bureaucracy, suffice to underline the importance of this discipline. By using new data offered by lead seals, the historian is able to start filling the gap left by written sources, which do not cover all the periods of Byzantine history. The majority of the sigillographical material in the provincial museums in Turkey remains unpublished.

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documentation and study of previously unpublished seals associated with different regions of Byzantine Anatolia. I would like to thank the academic and administrative staff of these two institutions for their support during the progress of my project. I am also grateful to the directors of the two museums for kindly permitting me to work on the Byzantine seals: Mr. Hakkı Emirhan SÜEL, director of the Fethiye Museum, Mr. Metin TÜRKTÜZÜN, director of the Kütahya Museum. I would like to acknowledge the archaeologist and responsible for the sigillographical material in the Kütahya Museum Mr. Serdar ÜNAN for his friendly assistance.

This paper aims to make a contribution to the prosopography introducing two new sigillographical materials I have identified in the collections of two archaeological museums in Turkey and to evaluate their significance for Byzantine ecclesiastical prosopography. Of particular interest are two episcopal lead seals, presented here for the first time.



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1) Theodosios, bishop of Attaleia (of Lydia) (10th / 11th c.)

Fethiye Museum. Inventory no: 3489. Unknown provenance. D: 23 mm. W: 10 gr. Condition: Corroded and chipped at top on one side (obv.). No parallel(s). Unpublished.

Obverse: Virgin Mary with the Infant Christ (Panagia Hodegetria; showing that He is the way to salvation), wearing chiton and maphorion; standing in the act of blessing and holding the Infant on her left arm; her right arm is raised and gestures toward him. Both figures are in nimbed. Inscription in columns on both sides: Π[AN]A[Γ]I[A] O[Δ]H[Γ]H -- TP[I]A. Partly visible sigla: [MP]- Θ [V]: M(ήτηρ) Θ(εο)ῦ (Mother of God). The reading has been restored with reference to the better preserved parallels.



Reverse: Inscription of sixlines. Border of dots.

[ΚΕ] or [ΘΚΕ] R,θ,ΤΩCΩΔ|ΘΕΟΔΩCΙΩ|ΕΠ ΙCΚΟΠΩ|ΑΤΤ ΑΛΕΙ|ΑC

Κύριε or θεοτόκε βοήθει τῷ σῶ δούλῳ ἐπισκόπῳ Ἄτταλείας

Lord/Mother of God, aid yourservant,bishop of Attaleia

Attaleia(modern Yarıntepe) was one of the bishoprics in the ecclesiastical province of Lydia. Lydia had a Metropolitan Archbishopric at Sardes and suffragan dioceses for Philadelphia, Thyatira, Tripolis, Settae, Gordus, Tralleis, Silandus, Maeonia, ApollonosHierum, Mostene, Apollonias, Attale(i)a, Hyrcania, Bage, Balandus, Hermocapella, Hierocaesarea, Acrassus, Dalda, Stratoniceia, Cerasa, Gabala, Satala, Aureliopolis and Hellenopolis. Bishops from the various dioceses of Lydia were well represented at the Council of Nicaea in 325 and at the later ecumenical councils.¹

In the Notitia Episcopatum two bishoprics are listed as Attaleia: Attaleia of Pamphylia (modern Antalya), a suffragan of Pergē/Syllaion, which became a metropolis in 1084;²and Attaleia of Lydia a suffragan of Sardes, which remained a bishopric until the end of Byzantine Empire.³

Several bishops of the city can be documented through the Christian Council records. The bishop Symmachos (Σύμμαχος) participated in the Synod of Ephesus (449),⁴Dionysios (Διονύσιος) in the Council

1 M. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus in quatuor patriarchatus digestus: quo exhibentur ecclesiae, patriarchae, caeterique praesules totius Orientis*, vol. I, Parisiis, 1740, 859–898 and 1027–1028.

² V. Grumel, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarchat de Constantinople*, vol. I. *Les Actes de patriarches*, Fasc. II et III. *Les Regestes de 715 à 1206*, Paris, 1989, nos. 930 and 938; G. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, vol. I, Padova, 1988, 246–247, nos. 24.1.2 and 24.3.3.

³ J. Darrouzès, *Notitiae Episcopatum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Textecritique, introduction et notes*, Paris, 1981, passim, especially see for Sardes see Notitia 1, 204, line 11, 207, line 144, (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 2, line 164; Notitia 3, 235, line 200 (7th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 4, 253, line 154 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 5, 276, line 193 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 9, 297–298, line 90 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 10, 312–313, line 94 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 11, 342, line 6 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 12, 348, line 6 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 13, 355–356, line 99 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 14, 374, line 6 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 15, 380, line 6 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 16, 388, line 6 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 17, 393, line 6 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 18, 406, line 6 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); Notitia 19, 412, line 7 (7th in the list of the metropolitans); In Notitia 20, Sardes disappears and is replaced by Philadelphia: Notitia 20, 419, line 11 (6th in the list of the metropolitans); for Attaleia see Notitia 1, 208, line 160 (16th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics), Notitia 2, 220, line 180 (16th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 3, 235, line 216 (17th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 10, 104–105, line 17; Notitia 4, 253, line 170 (16th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 5, 276, line 209 (16th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 9, 297–298, line 106 (16th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 10, 312–313, line 118 (16th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 11, 342, line 6 (6th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 13, 356, line 116 (16th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft (RE)*, II, col. 2155 (1); V. Laurent, *Le Corpus des Sceaux de l'empire byzantin, L'Église de Constantinople. A. La Hiérarchie*, V/1, Paris 1963, 683–685; M.T. Tisdier, *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique (DHGE)*, vol. V, 1931, coll. 147–150; *Le Synecdemus d'Hierocles et l'Opusculé géographique de Georges de Chypre. Texte, introduction, commentaire et cartes*, ed. E. Honigmann, Bruxelles, 1939, 26, caption 669–670, lines 2–5; G. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, vol. I, 179–180, 181, 189, nos. 19.1.2, 19.5.3 and 19.26.3.

of Chalcedon(451),⁵Ioannēs (Ἰωάννης) in the Synodical meetings of Heraclea and Constantinople (520)⁶, Iosēph (Ἰωσήφ) in the second Synod of Nicaea (787)⁷ and Symeon (Συμεών) in the Fourth Synod of Constantinople (879).⁸ Lequien, adds inadvertently a Theodoros to the list of Lydian bishops who participated in the Synod of Ephesos (431), while Fedalto refers accurately to this prelate as the bishop of Attaleia in Pamphylia.⁹

Three bishops of the city are also attested through the sigillographical material: Gregorios, (11th c.),¹⁰ Anonymous (10th–11th c.),¹¹ Nicholas (1157).¹²

Thanks to the Fethiye seal the name of an unknown bishop can be added to the bishops-list of Attaleia and the gap can be narrowed.

2) Nicholas, bishop of Tralle(i)s [11th century (1050)]

Kütahya Museum. Inventory no: 15212. Unknown provenance. D: 21 mm. H: 3 mm. W: 4.85 gr. Condition: Chipped on the edges. Parallel(s): DO 58.106.135. Unpublished.

Obverse: Bust of St. Nicholas, facing, nimbated, bearded, with moustache; wearing pastoral vestments, holding Gospels in his left hand and raising right hand in benediction. Inscription in columns on both sides: Θ|ΝΙ|Κ|Ι|Ο|Λ, : ὁ ἅγιος Νικόλαος (St. Nicholas).



Reverse: Inscription of four lines. Border of dots. ΝΙΚΟ|ΕΠΙΣΚΟ|ΠΙ, ΤΡΑΛΕ|ΩΝ

Νικό(λαω) ἐπισκόπῳ Τρα(λ)λέων: to Nicholas, bishop of Tralle(i)s

Tralles/Tralleis or Tralle is a problematic name. There are two bishoprics of this name in Byzantine Anatolia. It is not possible to attribute the sigillographical material to each of them.

a) Tralle (modern Aydın) was a suffragan bishopric of Ephesos which was the Metropolitan Archbishopric of Asia. It appears as such in all Notitiae Episcopatum. The bishops of Tralleis are attested from the 5th to the 13th centuries.¹³

4 E. Honigmann, "The Original Lists of the Members of the Council of Nicaea, the Robber-Synod and the Council of Chalcedon," *Byzantion*, vol. XVI, no. 1 (1942-1943), 36.

5 *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum (ACO)*, vol. II.III.III, ed. E. Schwartz, Berlin-Leipzig, 1837, 106; vol. II.V, ed. E. Schwartz, 1836, 57.

6 Lequien confuses the Lydian Attaleia with Attaleia Pamphyliae based on the geographical name in signature of the prelate "Ioannes misericordia Dei episcopus Attaliensis" see M. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, vol. I, col. 888.

7 J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova Amplissima Collectio*, vol. XII, Venetiis, 1766, col. 1102D; vol. XIII, Venetiis, 1767, col. 389B.

8 J. D. Mansi, *Amplissima*, vol. XVII, Venetiis, 1772, col. 375E.

9 M. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, vol. I, 888; G. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, vol. I, 247, no. 24.3.3.

10 Nesbitt-Oikonomides, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art. West, Northwest, and Central Asia Minor and the Orient (DOSeals)*, vol. III, Washington, 1996, no. 101.1; V. Laurent, *Corpus*, vol. V/1, no. 874.

11 V. Laurent, *Corpus*, vol. V/1, no. 873.

12 V. Laurent, *Corpus*, vol. V/1, no. 875; V. Grumel, *Regestes*, vol. III, no. 1045.

13 V. Laurent, *Corpus*, vol. V/1, 186; P. Culerrier, "Les évêchés suffragants d'Éphèse aux 5e-13e siècles," *Revue des études byzantines*, vol. XLV (1987) 159-160 (with episcopal list); L. Zgusta, *Kleinasiatische Ortsnamen*, Heidelberg, 1984, 630ff; *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. III, Oxford, 1991, 2103-2104.

b) Tralles (Τράλλης or Τράλλων) of Lydia, a suffragan bishopric of Sardes close to the frontier with Phrygia).¹⁴ This name is considered to have a different etymology than Tralleis.¹⁵

The only way to distinguish two sees may be the spelling. But it is not always considered as a secure solution, because Τράλλεωνis also used for the bishopric of Lydia¹⁶ and similarly the form Sardeis/Sardes shows that there is no consistency between the uses of the first or third declension. One may only be sure if their see was Asia or Lydian Tralleis when they signed the acts of the Synods adding the name of the region specifically.¹⁷

The synodic records show us the names of only two prelates who functioned in the Lydian See:¹⁸the bishop Uranios who participated in the Synod of Constantinople (553)¹⁹and the bishop Michael who was present in the second Synod of Nicaea (787).²⁰A part of the episcopal personage is determined through the sigillographical data: Leo, bishop of Tralle(9thc.),²¹ Michael (monk and bishop of Tralleis) (11th c.),²² Nicholas, bishop of Tralleis(11th c.),²³Theophylactos, bishop of Tralleis) (11th c.).²⁴

How can we interpret this episcopal seal found near Kütahya, one of important cities of Phrygia Saloutariaior between modern Kütahya and the ruins of Tralleis, which is close to the border of Phrygian land, and sold to the city museum? I think it is plausible to derive the conclusion that there are two possibilities. The first possibility is that Nicholas had sent a letter to his counterpart in Phrygia. The second possibility is that he might have been in his seat in Tralleis or nearby.

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¹⁴ J. Darrouzès, *Notitiae*, index, s.v.

¹⁵ L. Zgusta, *Kleinasiatische Ortsnamen*, 632.

¹⁶ For Tralle(i)s see J. Darrouzès, *Notitiae*, Notitia 1, 207, line 151, (7th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 2, 220, line 171 (7th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 3, 235, line 207 (8th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 4, 253, line 170 (7th in the list of the bishoprics); Notitia 5, 276, line 200 (7th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 9, 297-298, line 97 (7th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 10, 312-313, line 103 (7th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics); Notitia 13, 356, line 107 (7th in the list of the Lydian bishoprics).

¹⁷ M. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, I, 695-698.

¹⁸ Hierocles, ed. E. Honigmann, 26, caption 670, line 3; M. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, vol. I, coll. 881-882; J. Darrouzès, *Notitiae*, 1-4, 7, 9-10, 13: 207, 220, 235, 253, 276, 297, 313, 356; G. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, I, no. 19.26.3.

¹⁹ *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum (ACO)*, ed. J. Straub, Berlin, vol. IV.I, 7, 1970, 229, caption 128, line 30.

²⁰ J. D. Mansi, *Amplissima*, vol. XII, col. 1102; vol. XIII, col. 389.

²¹ J. Nesbitt - N. Oikonomides, *DOSeals*, vol. III, no. 38.2.

²² J. Nesbitt - N. Oikonomides, *DOSeals*, vol. III, no. 38.3.

²³ J. Nesbitt - N. Oikonomides, *DOSeals*, vol. III, no. 38.4.

²⁴ K. M. Konstantopoulos, *Byzantiaka molyvdoboulla tou en Athenais Ethnikou Nomismatiku Mouseiou*, Athens 1917, no. 139b; V. Laurent, *Corpus*, vol. V/1, no. 266; V. Laurent, *Corpus*, vol. V/3, no. 1694; Nesbitt-Oikonomides, *DOSeals*, vol. III, no. 38.5.

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