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THE MYSTERIOUS SEAL OF ALEXIOS KOMNENOS FROM TAMATARCHA

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The mysterious seal of Alexios Komnenos from Tamatarcha⁴

This research concerns the unique seal of a Byzantine aristocrat named Alexios Komnenos found in Tamatarcha (modern Taman'), which has only one parallel from Trebizond. The authors explain the meaning of images on the seal (the resurrection on its obverse and St George leading a warrior by the hand on its reverse) as an ideological program of the restoration of Byzantine power over Jerusalem. The warrior representing Alexios Komnenos is identified not as Alexios I Great Komnenos of Trebizond (as usual), but as Alexios, son of the Emperor John II Komnenos, and the seal is re-dated from 13th to 12th century. Its find on the Taman' peninsula corresponds with Byzantine political activity in this region.

Keywords: Byzantium, Taman', sigillography, Medieval History, Trebizond, Jerusalem

JEL Classification: Z

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⁴ The results of the project *Eastern and Western Europe in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period: historical and cultural commonalities, regional peculiarities and the dynamics of interaction*, carried out within the framework of The Basic Research Program of the National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow) in 2014, are presented in this work.

Byzantine molybdo boulla found in the territory of mediaeval Tamatarcha (Old-Russian Tmutorokan, Taman' city-site) have become an objective reality in recent years, when their number put this Greek city in third place in the northern Black Sea area after Cherson and Sougdaia. Only nine seals were known at the beginning of the twenty-first century (seven of them originated from Nikolai Likhachev's collection), and four of them were published in 1930 and 1991. In recent years, more lead seals from Taman' were issued by Elena Stepanova (from the State Hermitage Museum collection), Konstantin Smychkov (from his private collection), and Victor Chkhaidze (excavated at Taman' and from private collections).

The number of seals has reached 96. Most of the Tamatarcha seals belonged to imperial civil officers, administrators, church hierarchs, and private persons, indicating the town's role as a trade, military-administrative, and ecclesiastical centre on the frontier between the Greek and barbarian worlds.

In this work the speech about the unique lead seal probably coming from Taman will go.

Diameter of the seal is 39 mm, and it weighs 44.85 g; this molybdo boullon is known only from photographs. The seal was sold May 18, 2011 at an auction of Classical Numismatic Group⁵; later it was auctioned by Freeman & Sear⁶. According to some reports, the seal was found on the Taman' Peninsula (Krasnodar District, Russia): the authors received digital photos made before its cleaning and restoration. In this regard, one of the authors published the seal⁷, not knowing about the auctions.

Obv. Resurrection / Descent into Hell. In the center Christ, in a tunic and girded himation, barefoot, rises trampling broken V-shaped gates of Hell; the loops of the gates fall down. Christ carries in his left hand a six-pointed patriarchal cross and in the right hand holds a kneeling figure in a tunic (Adam), to which left stands a smaller figure in a dress with folded hands (Eve). On the right side near to a wall (representing the sarcophagus) are two figures in ceremonial clothes and crowns with pendants; the first holds his hands folded in prayer (kings David and Solomon). To the left over Christ's halo and figures runs a five-row inscription: ΗΑ|ΓΙ|ΑΑΝΑ – ΣΤΑ|ΣΙΣ = Ἡ ἅγια Ἀνάστασις.

Rev. Two figures. A full-length saint with a halo, beardless, in a warrior tunic, girded with a sword on the right side; the left arm is raised and holds an object (or is raised in some gesture), feet apart. In his right hand the saint holds the left elbow of the full-length man with a beard and mustache, dressed in a warrior tunic and high cone-shaped helmet with a spike and protection for

⁵ *Classical Numismatic Group Auction 87*. An Internet & Mail Bid Sale. Closing Wednesday, May 18, 2011. P. 234. № 1313. <http://www.cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=184776>.

⁶ <http://www.freemanandsear.com/displayproduct.pl?prodid=6821>.

⁷ Чхаидзе В. Н. Моливдовул Алексея I Великого Комнина // Семнадцатая Всероссийская нумизматическая конференция. Тезисы докладов. Москва, 2013. С. 40-42. 37-39. Рис. 1.1.

the neck and the nape. In his right hand he holds on his shoulder a sword edge up; his feet point to the right. An inscription is between the figures: $\text{OAGEOPIIOTI} = \text{Ὁ ἅγιος Γεώργιος}$, another to the right of the warrior: $\text{ALEIOTIKOIMNI} = \text{Ἀλέξιος ὁ Κομνηνός}$.

Only one similar molybdoboullon is known, however, stamped by another pair of matrices and much more elegant. It was found in 1963 on the Acropolis of Trebizond. Until 1972 it was owned by Aquila Millas, then kept in the collection of Zakos, and in October 1998 sold at Spink auction⁸. At the moment it belongs to the collection of the Numismatic Museum in Athens⁹. Its diameter is 39 mm, diameter of the mirror is 30 mm, it weighs 45.63 g, which corresponds exactly to our seal.

But there are also some differences. The figures on 2011 seal take much more space than on 1963 seal, so the composition seems to be tight: it has almost no free space. The carver could not even fit the whole image into the frame: the head of Eve extends beyond it. The figure of Christ is elongated vertically. Two figures on the reverse are closer together, to the left of the saint a lot of space remains. The gesture of the warrior holding his sword is completely unnatural, and the later is much smaller and thinner than on the 1963 seal. The proportions of the figures are distorted, the faces are puffy, with big noses, round eyes; the lines are sharp, rough, deep, which creates the impression of a more relief image. There are some differences in inscriptions' composition.

Iconography. As noted by Kartsonis, the beginnings of the iconography of Resurrection / Descent into Hell with Christ, "dragging" Adam (the so called second type) remains unclear¹⁰, but in 11th century it became the most popular variant of this scene, and its spread can be demonstrated by mosaics and frescoes of Katholikon of Hosios Loukas in Phocis, St. Sophia in Kiev, and Karabaş Kilise in Cappadocia.¹¹ On the mosaic of Hosios Loukas (1020-1030s)¹² Adam and Eve are located on the right (from the perspective of the viewer) of Christ, and the kings are on his left. However, on the fresco of St. Sophia (1030s; north arm of the cross) Adam and Eve are on the left of Christ¹³, as on our seals. Examples of the later iconography such as the fresco of Karanlık Kilise in Göreme (Cappadocia, beginning of 12th century)¹⁴, the mosaic in Torcello (Italy, ca. 1130)¹⁵ as well as a fresco in Mirozh Monastery in Pskov (1130–1140s)

⁸ *SPINK Auction 127. Byzantine Seals from the Collection of George Zacos. Part I.* London, Wednesday 7 October 1998. P. 48-49. № 93.

⁹ BE 762/1998: *Koltsida-Makre I. New Acquisitions of Byzantine Lead Seals in the Athens Numismatic Museum Collections // Studies in Byzantine Sigillography. Vol. 9.* München; Leipzig, 2006. P. 13. № 3.

¹⁰ *Kartsonis A. Anastasis. The Making of an Image.* Princeton, 1986. P. 205.

¹¹ *Ibid.* P. 213.

¹² *Ibid.* P. 83.

¹³ *Логвин Г. Собор Святої Софії в Києві.* Київ, 2001. С. 242. Илл. 185.

¹⁴ *Jolivet-Levy C. L'arte della Cappadocia.* Milano, 2001. Tav. 87.

¹⁵ *Andrescu I. Torcello. I. Le Christ Inconnu. II. Anastasis et Jugement Dernier: Têtes Vraies, Têtes Fausses // Dumbarton Oaks Papers. Vol. 26.* Washington, 1972. P. 183-223.

belong to the next century.¹⁶ A fresco in Panagia Arakiotissa in Lagoudera (Cyprus, 1192) and a mosaic in St. Mark in Venice belong to the end of the 12th century.¹⁷

A similar composition can be noted on a miniature in Gospel Vat. Urbin. gr. 2 (1122, f. 260)¹⁸, as well on several other miniatures, in particular, in the lectionary from Megiste Lawra on Mount Athos (11th c.)¹⁹, the Codex Ebnerianus from the Bodleian Library (UK) and Cod. Marc. gr. Z 540 (both from the beginning of 12th c.)²⁰, and in a 12th century manuscript from Freer Gallery of Art in Washington²¹. A tetrptychos epistyle in Sinai Monastery²², where the Resurrection is represented in the same iconography is also dated to the 12th century.

From the works of applied art we note an enamel icon on Gospel cover in Siena (10–11th cc.)²³ and a gold reliquary icon from the end of 12th century in the Moscow Kremlin Museums (there are additional figures of John the Baptist on the right, and Abel on the left)²⁴, as well as Pala d'Oro in Venice of Constantinopolitan origin from the middle of 12th century²⁵ and images on the gates of San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome (1070), of Trani Cathedral (end of 12th c.)²⁶, and of Suzdal Cathedral (end of 12th–first third of 13th c.; Adam and Eve are to the right of Christ).²⁷ A six-figure composition (with John the Baptist on the right) is presented by a steatite icon from the second half of 12th–beginning of 13th century in the Moscow Kremlin.²⁸

Among the simpler objects we note a bronze medal, published by Schlumberger, with a scene of the Crucifixion on the obverse and of the Resurrection on the reverse: the kneeling figures of Adam and Eve are represented on the right of Christ.²⁹ On another lead medal Adam and Eve are on the left of Christ; on the reverse is an equilateral cross with divergent rounded ends.³⁰ Also known is a lead pilgrim ampulla in Berlin with the Crucifixion and the Resurrection in a five-figure iconography similar to our seal, dated to 12th century.³¹ Another ampulla in

¹⁶ История русского искусства. Том 2/1. Отв. Ред. Л. И. Лившиц. Москва 2012. С. 238. Илл. 276.

¹⁷ Toesca P. Die Mosaiken von San Marco. Milano; Wien, 1957. Taf. 31.

¹⁸ Stornajolo C. Miniature delle Omilie de Giacomo monaco (Cod. Vatic. Gr. 1162) e dell'Evangelario Greco Urbinate (Cod. Vatic. Urbin. Gr. 2). Roma, 1910. Min. 90.

¹⁹ Kartsonis A. Anastasis... Pl. 80.

²⁰ Furlan I. Codici Greci illustrati della biblioteca Marciana, II. Milano, 1979. Fig. 7.11.

²¹ Studies in East Christian and Roman Art by Walter Dennison, Swarthmore College, and Charles R. Morey, Princeton University. New York, 1918. P. 45-53.

²² Holy Image, Hallowed Ground. Icons from Sinai. Ed. By R. Nelson and K. Collins. Los-Angeles, 2006. P. 172. Pl. 20.3.

²³ Schlumberger G. Un empereur byzantin au dixième siècle, Nicéphore Phocas. Paris 1890. P. 23.

²⁴ Византийские древности. Произведения искусства IV–XV веков в собрании Музеев Московского Кремля. Москва, 2013. С. 185-189. № 25.

²⁵ Il Tesoro di San Marco. Ed. R. Cambiaghi. Milano, 1986. P. 53.

²⁶ Mende U., Hirmer A. I. Die Bronzetüre des Mittelalters: 800–1200. München, 1983. P. 97. Abb. 8. Taf. 156.

²⁷ For the photo see: http://www.pravoslavie.ru/gallery/image82_16381.htm.

²⁸ Пуцко-Бочкарева М. Н. Стеатитовый рельеф из кремлевского Благовещенского собора // Византия и Русь. Памяти Веры Дмитриевны Лихачевой. 1937–1981. Москва, 1989. С. 100-105; Византийские древности... С. 280–283. № 71.

²⁹ Schlumberger G. Mélanges d'archéologie byzantine. Monnaies, médailles, méreaux, jetons, amulettes, bulles d'or et de plomb, poids de verre et de bronze, ivoires, objets d'orfèvrerie, bagues, reliquaires, etc. Paris 1895. P. 29-30. № 9.

³⁰ Ibid. P. 30. № 10.

³¹ Kötzsche L. Zwei Jerusalem Pilgerampullen aus der Kreuzfahrerzeit // Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte, 51/1. München; Berlin, 1988. P. 13-32. Abb. 3-4, 8-10.

Cleveland from the same time bears on its reverse an image of the Holy Sepulcher.³²

Religious function³³ may have lead bulls with the Resurrection on its obverse and St. Theodore³⁴, an unknown saint warrior³⁵, an full-length unknown saint (apostle ?) with a book³⁶, a full-length saint³⁷, or a bust of unknown saints³⁸ on its reverse. The artifacts with the Resurrection on their obverse and the Assumption³⁹ or the Crucifixion⁴⁰ on their reverse have an explicit pilgrim-memorial character. Let us indicate also a missed bull from Notre-Dame de France in Jerusalem with the Resurrection (the number of figures is unclear) and an inscription "Holy Resurrection" on its reverse.⁴¹

Five-figure iconography of Resurrection with Christ, "drawing" Adam, occurs in a number of Byzantine seals from 11–12th centuries.⁴² Among the few private seals are those of Romanos

³² Pitarakis B. Lead Flasks and Pilgrimages after the Crusades // Prof. Dr. Işın Demirkent Anısına. In Memory of Prof. Dr. Işın Demirkent. Istanbul, 2008. P. 396-397. Fig. 1; *Idem*. New Evidence on Lead Flasks and Devotional Patterns // Crusader Jerusalem to Byzantium, Byzantine Religious Culture. Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot (The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies And Cultures, 400–1453. Vol. 21). Leiden, 2011. P. 241, 244, 261. Fig. 3.

³³ See: Степанова Е. В. Древнерусские анонимные печати XII–XIII вв. и их византийские прототипы // Христианская иконография Востока и Запада в памятниках материальной культуры древней Руси и Византии. Памяти Татьяны Чуковой. Санкт-Петербург, 2006. С. 90-97; Степаненко В. П. Евлогий – филактерии – моливдовулы // Память в веках: от семейной реликвии к национальной святыне. Sacrum Et Profanum (V). Севастополь, 2012. С. 185-192.

³⁴ 2 examples, both linked to Russia: 1). State Hermitage, M-12526: Янин В. Л., Гайдуков П. Г. Актовые печати Древней Руси X–XV вв. Том III. Печати, зарегистрированные в 1970–1996 гг. Москва, 1998. С. 62. № 347а; Bulgakova V. Byzantinische Bleisiegel in Osteuropa. Die Funde auf dem Territorium Altrußlands (Mainer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik). Wiesbaden, 2004. P. 147-148. № 1.6.11; Чукова Т. А. Иконография Христа, Божией матери и святых на древнерусских металлических актовых печатях X–XV вв. // Христианская иконография Востока и Запада в памятниках материальной культуры Древней Руси и Византии. Санкт-Петербург, 2006. Рис. 1.16; Шандровская В. С. Византийские печати эрмитажной коллекции со сценами «Распятие» и «Сошествие во Ад» // Византия в контексте мировой культуры. Труды Государственного Эрмитажа. Том LXIX. Санкт-Петербург, 2013. С. 426. Илл. 13 (she thinks this seal is unpublished); 2). Алфьоров О. Молівдовулы київських князів другої половини XI — кінця XII століття (за матеріалами сфрагістичної колекції О. Шереметьєва) // Сфрагістичний щорічник. Том II. Київ, 2012. С. 57. № 13.

³⁵ Янин В. Л., Гайдуков П. Г. Древнерусские вислые печати, зарегистрированные в 2004 г. // Новгород и новгородская земля. Вып. 19. Новгород, 2005. С. 106. № 347аа.

³⁶ Jordanov I., Zhekova Z. Catalogue of Medieval Seals at the Regional Historical Museum of Shumen. Shumen, 2007. P. 180-181. № 509; Jordanov I. Corpus Of Byzantine Seals From Bulgaria, 3. Sofia, 2009. P. 757. № 2450.

³⁷ Münz Zentrum Rheinland: № 1072: Catalogue auctions, 2002–2006 // Studies in Byzantine Sigillography. Vol. 10. München; Leipzig, 2010. P. 175-176.

³⁸ Archelological Museum, Istanbul, № 655 (688): Bulgurlu V. Bizans Kurşun Mühürleri. İstanbul, 2007. P. 237, № 321; Cheynet J.-C., Gökylürüm T., Bulgurlu V. Les sceaux byzantins du Musée Archéologique d'Istanbul. Istanbul, 2012. P. 589. № 6.95; Archelological Museum, Istanbul, № 657-340: *Ibid.* P. 964-965. № 11.129.

³⁹ 1). Κωνσταντόπουλος Κ. Μ. Βυζαντιακά μολυβδόβουλλα ἐν τῷ Ἑθν. Νομισμ. Μουσείῳ Ἀθηνῶν // Journal international d'archeologie numismatique. Tome septième. Athènes, 1904. P. 310. № 774; Лухачев Н. П. Историческое значение итало-греческой иконописи. Изображения Богоматери в произведениях итало-греческих иконописцев и их влияние на композиции некоторых православных русских икон. Санкт-Петербург, 1911. С. 140. Рис. 324; Πέννα Β. Εικονογραφικά βυζαντινῶν μολυβδόβουλλων: Ο αυτοκράτορας, η εκκλησία, η αριστοκρατία // Δελτίον ΧΑΕ. 20. Αθήνα, 1999. Σ. 270. Εικ. 18; 2). Catalogue auctions, 2002–2006... P. 177 (Münz Zentrum Rheinland, Sale 131 (11 January 2006)). № 1042.

⁴⁰ 1). Szemioth A., Wasilewski T. Sceaux byzantins du Musée de Varsovie. Deuxième partie // Studia Źródłoznawcze, Commentationes. 14. Warszawa; Poznań, 1969. P. 77. № 76; 3 lead seals from State Hermitage: 2). M-8248: Шандровская В. С. Сфрагистика // Искусство Византии в собраниях СССР. Каталог выставки. Ленинград, 1977. С. 142. № 776; *Idem*. Византийские печати... С. 427-428. Илл. 15; 3). M-4719: *Idem*. Сфрагистика... С. 143. № 780; Cotsonis J. Narrative Scenes on Byzantine Lead Seals (Sixth – Twelfth Centuries): Frequency, Iconography and Clientele // Gesta. XLVIII. № 1. 2009. P. 70. Fig. 12; Шандровская В. С. Византийские печати... С. 428. Илл. 16; 4). M-4714: *Ibid.* С. 427. Илл. 14; Archaeological museum Sofia: 5). № 51: Jordanov I. Corpus, 3... P. 757. № 2451; *Idem*. The Collection of Medieval Seals from the National Archeological Museum Sofia. Sofia, 2011. P. 86. № 175.

⁴¹ Germer-Durand J. Sceau byzantin de l'Église de Saint-Sépulchre // Échos d'Orient. IV. Paris, 1900–1901. P. 267-268; *Idem*. Un musée palestinien. Notice sur le Musée archéologique de Notre-Dame de France à Jérusalem. Paris [1907]. P. 25-26. Fig. XLIV; Лухачев Н. П. Историческое значение... С. 35. № 3; Laurent V. Le Corpus des sceaux de l'Empire Byzantin. Tome V, 2: L'Église. Paris, 1965. P. 398-399. № 1566.

⁴² Comp.: Cotsonis J. Narrative Scenes... P. 65.

(11–12th cc.)⁴³, John Arbantinos (12th c.)⁴⁴, Ioannes Kamateros (12th c.)⁴⁵ and a seal with a damaged inscription.⁴⁶ A three-figure Resurrection, where Adam and Eve are on either side of Christ, is also known on a seal of patrikios Georgios.⁴⁷

Basically the iconography of Resurrection in sphragistics is linked with Jerusalem. So, this scene is placed on the seals of the Orthodox Patriarchs of Jerusalem⁴⁸: Euthymios (Grumel: after 1083; Gill: 1096–15 July 1099)⁴⁹, Simeon II⁵⁰ (Grumel: 1092–1099; Gill: 1084–1096) and John⁵¹ (according to the sequence of the patriarchs it would be John VIII, Grumel: ca. 1098–1106/1107). Another seal with the name of John, but with a completely different inscription bears a similar image of the Resurrection, but with only two figures: Jesus and Adam⁵². Five-figure iconography of the Resurrection is known also on the molybdoboulla of the clergy of Holy Zion and of Holy Church (11–12th cc.), with different inscriptions on their reverse⁵³.

⁴³ State Hermitage, M-10441: *Шандровская В. С.* Сфрагистика... С. 143. № 779; *Idem.* Византийские печати... С. 425. Илл. 11.

⁴⁴ State Hermitage, M-8250: *Schlumberger G.* Sigillographie de l'Empire Byzantin. Paris, 1884. P. 619. № 2; *Šandrovskaja V. S., Seibt W.* Byzantinische Bleisiegel der Staatlichen Eremitage mit Familiennamen, I. Teil. Sammlung Lichačev – Namen von A bis I. Wien, 2005. P. 43–44. № 24; *Шандровская В. С.* Византийские печати... С. 424–425. Илл. 10.

⁴⁵ DO. 58.106.4478: *Jordanov I.* Corpus Of Byzantine Seals From Bulgaria, 2. Byzantine Seals with Family Names. Sofia, 2006. P. 174. № 5.

⁴⁶ State Hermitage, M-4712: *Панченко Б. А.* Каталог моливдовулов (Отдельный оттиск из ИРАИК 1903, 1904, 1908 гг.). София, 1908. С. 58–59. № 146 (150); *Шандровская В. С.* Византийские печати... С. 424. Илл. 9.

⁴⁷ *Laurent V.* Sceaux byzantins // *Échos d'Orient.* 29. Paris, 1930. P. 330–332. № VIII.

⁴⁸ Datings after : *Traité d'Études Byzantines.* Publié par Paul Lemerle avec le concours de A. Bataille, A. Dain, V. Grumel, R. Guiland, V. Laurent, A. Mirambel. I. La chronologie par V. Grumel de l'Institut Français d'Études Byzantines. Ouvrage publié avec le concours du Centre National de la recherche scientifique (Bibliothèque Byzantine publié sous la direction de Paul Lemerle). Paris, 1958. P. 452–453; *Gill M.* A History of Palestine, 634–1099. Cambridge, 1997. P. 455.

⁴⁹ Collection H. Seyrig, № 738: *Zacos G.* Byzantine Lead Seals. Vol. II. Bern, 1984. P. 69. № 61; *Cheyne J.-C., Morrisson C., Seibt W.* Les sceaux byzantins de la collection Henri Seyrig. Paris, 1991. P. 172. № 251; *Cheyne J.-C.* La société Byzantine. L'apport des sceaux. Paris, 2008. p. 24. Fig. 29. On a seal of his predecessor Sophronios II (1059–1076/83) a simplified composition with the Resurrection is placed (seal's image is not published): *Laurent V.* Le Corpus. V,2... P. 394. № 1562. On another seal of Sophronios is a strikingly different composition of the Resurrection : Christ going to the right and lifting from the grave Adam staying in front of him: *Idem.* Un sceau inédit du patriarche de Jérusalem Sophrone II trouvé à Winchester // *The Numismatic Circular.* Vol. LXXII. London, 1964. P. 49–50; *Idem.* Le Corpus. V,2... P. 394–395. № 1563; *Grierson P.* Byzantine seals // *The Winchester mint and coins and related finds from the Excavations of 1961–71.* Oxford, 2012. P. 684–687. Fig. 2. A similar composition is represented on a molybdoboullon of Patriarch Athanasios (12th c.): *Laurent V.* Le Corpus. V,2... P. 458. № 1565bis.

⁵⁰ Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Münzkabinett, 775/1922: *Ibid.* P. 396–397. № 1564; *Seibt W., Zarnitz M.-L.* Das byzantinischen Bleisiegel als Kunstwerk. Katalog zur Ausstellung. Wien, 1997. P. 180–181. № 5.1.1.

⁵¹ 1). Archelological Museum, Istanbul, № 146 (139): *Ebersolt J.* Sceaux Byzantins du Musée de Constantinople // *Revue Numismatique.* Vol. XVIII. Paris, 1914. P. 389. № 460 (139) (without image; attributed to John VII, 964–966); *Лухачев Н. П.* Датированные печати Византии // *Известия Российской Академии Истории материальной культуры.* III. Л., 1924. С. 215 (without image; attribution repeted); *Laurent V.* Le Corpus. V,2... P. 393–394. № 1561 (without image; attribution repeted); *Bulgurlu V.* Bizans Kurşun... P. 175. № 203 (attributed to John IX, ca. 1157 г.); *Cheyne J.-C., Gökyıldırım T., Bulgurlu V.* Les sceaux... P. 537–538. № 6.14 (in the title an indication on John VII, but below attributed to John IX); 2). Collection H. Seyrig, № 678: *Zacos G.* Byzantine Lead Seals...P. 69. № 60 (attributed to John VII); *Cheyne J.-C., Morrisson C., Seibt W.* Les sceaux... P. 173. № 252 (prefer an attribution to John IX).

⁵² Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, № 1182: *Schlumberger G.* Monuments byzantins inédits // *Florilegium ou recueil de travaux d'érudition dédiés à Monsieur le marquis Melchior de Vogüé à l'occasion du quatre-vingtième anniversaire de sa naissance.* Paris, 1909. P. 567. № 17 (attributed to John VII, 964–966); *Laurent V.* Le Corpus. V,2... P. 397–398. № 1565 (attributed to John VIII).

⁵³ «*Of saint Zion and of life-bringing Sepulcher*»: 1). Ancienne collection Longuet: *Ibid.* P. 399–400. № 1568; 2). Collection G. Zacos: *Zacos G.* Byzantine Lead Seals...P. 226. № 402a; *SPINK Auction 132.* Byzantine Seals From the Collection Of George Zacos, Part II With Ancient And Gaulish Coins. London, Tuesday 25 May 1999. P. 48. № 226; 3). Archelological Museum, Istanbul, № 657–339: *Cheyne J.-C., Gökyıldırım T., Bulgurlu V.* Les sceaux... P. 538–539. № 6.15; «*Of saint and life-bringing Sepulcher*»: 4). Collection H. Seyrig, № 559: *Laurent V.* Le Corpus. V,2... P. 399. №№ 1567; *Cheyne J.-C., Morrisson C., Seibt W.* Les sceaux... P. 173–174. № 253; «*Of saint Zion and of saint Sepulcher*»: 5). Collection G. Zacos: *Zacos G.* Byzantine Lead Seals...P. 226. № 402b; «*Of saint Zion and of [...] patriarch John*»: 6). Jerusalem, Department of Antiquities and Museums, № 39.703: *Rahmani L. Y.* On Some Medieval Antiquities from the Holy Land // *Israel Exploration Journal.* Vol. 21.

However, this iconography has been used most actively by Latin Patriarchs of Jerusalem: Fulcher (1146–1157)⁵⁴, Amaury de Nesle (1157–1180)⁵⁵, Heraclius, (1180–1191)⁵⁶, an anonymous monk (Haymarus (?), 1194–1202)⁵⁷, Albert (1205–1214)⁵⁸, and Giroldus (1225–1238).⁵⁹

Borg justified the opinion that these images on the seals refer to a lost mosaic of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem⁶⁰, the existence of which is attested by John of Würzburg (ca. 1165) and Theodoricus (ca. 1172)⁶¹. It could be a reproduction in turn of a mosaic from the middle of 11th century⁶² in the apse of Rotunda, which was demolished by the Crusaders for the construction of the tribunes⁶³. A "reflection" of the Rotunda mosaic in painting is supposed in a miniature from Egerton Psalter 1139 in British Museum (the so-called "Psalter of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem", dated probably to 1130s)⁶⁴. According to Kuehnel, thanks to the existence of this mosaic, the image of the Resurrection became very characteristic in Crusader iconography.⁶⁵

Representation of a holy warrior with a sword on his right shoulder is not uncommon in

№ 1. Tel Aviv, 1971. P. 57-58. № 3 (links to the same patriarch, to whom belonged the seal from Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, № 1182).

⁵⁴ 1 exemplar: *Schlumberger G., Chalandon F., Blanchet A.* Sigillographie de l'Orient latin. Paris, 1943. P. 75. № 8 bis; *SPINK Auction 132...* P. 20. № 144.

⁵⁵ 1). State Hermitage, M-8146: *Лухачев Н. П.* Моливдовулы греческого Востока. К XVIII международному конгрессу византинистов (Москва, 8–15 августа 1991 г.). Составитель и автор комментариев В. С. Шандровская (Научное наследство. Том 19). М., 1991. С. 172-173. Табл. L11X.13; *Шандровская В. С.* Сфрагистика... С. 143. № 781; Она же. 2013: 425-426, ил. 12; 2). Numismatic Museum, Athens, BE 750γ/1999: *Schlumberger G., Chalandon F., Blanchet A.* Sigillographie... P. 76-77, № 10; *SPINK Auction 132...* P. 20. № 145; Koltsida-Makre I. New Acquisitions... P. 12. № 2; 3-4). Collection G. Zacos: *SPINK Auction 132...* P. 20-21. №№ 146-147; 5-6). Fogg 2937 and D.O. 70.21: *McGeer E., Nesbitt J., Oikonomides N.* Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art. Vol. 5. The East (continued), Constantinople and Environs, Unknown Locations, Addenda, Uncertain Readings. Washington, 2005. P. 41. № 19.3a-b; 7). Collection Chandon de Briailles: *Schlumberger G., Chalandon F., Blanchet A.* Sigillographie... P. 77. № 11 bis; 8-9). Jerusalem, Department of Antiquities and Museums, №№ 71.5078 и 33.1072: *Rahmani L. Y.* On Some Medieval... P. 55-57. №№ 1-2; 10). The lead seal at the Act from archive of the Maltese award of St. Ioann: Codice diplomatico del sacro militare ordine Gerosolimitano oggi di Malta... In Lucca, 1733. Ttab. III.35; *Schlumberger G., Chalandon F., Blanchet A.* Sigillographie... P. 76. №№ 9, 10; 11). The lead seal at the Act of Henry the Lion 1172 г., Wolfenbüttel, Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv: Origines Gvelficae... Tome III. Hannoverae, 1752. P. 516. Taf. 1 ad P. 31; *Schlumberger G., Chalandon F., Blanchet A.* Sigillographie... P. 77. № 11; *Kötzsche L.* Zwei Jerusalemer... P. 25. Abb. 17.

⁵⁶ 1 exemplar: *Schlumberger G., Chalandon F., Blanchet A.* Sigillographie... P. 77-78. № 12. Tab. I.9.

⁵⁷ 1). Collection H. Seyrig, № 734: *Cheyne J.-C., Morrisson C., Seibt W.* Les sceaux... P. 248. № 389; 2). Collection G. Zacos: *SPINK Auction 132...* P. 21. № 148; 3). Archaeological Museum, Warsaw, PMA/V/6298/53: *Woloszyn M.* Vor Władysław von Warne. Polen und die Kreuzfahrerstaaten. Ein archäologischer Beirtag // Eurika. In honorem Ludmilae Donchevae-Petkovae. Sofia, 2009. P. 158. Abb. 3.1; 4). Lead seal at collection Robert E. Hecht, it is sold at auction CNG Triton 11 in January 2008: <http://www.cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=115622>.

⁵⁸ 1 exemplar: *Schlumberger G., Chalandon F., Blanchet A.* Sigillographie... P. 78. № 14. Tab. 13.13.

⁵⁹ 1 exemplar: *Ibid.* P. 79. № 17.

⁶⁰ *Borg A.* The Lost Apse Mosaic of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem // The Vanishing Past. Studies of Medieval Art, Liturgy, and Metrology Presented to Christopher Hohler (British Archaeological Reports International Series 111). Oxford, 1981. P. 7-12.

⁶¹ *A History of the Crusades. The Art and Architecture of the Crusader States.* Edited by H. W. Hazard. Wisconsin, 1977. P. 117-118; *Pringle D.* The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. A Corpus. Vol. III. The City of Jerusalem. New York, 2007. P. 20-21.

⁶² Watch: *Ousterhout R.* Rebuilding the Temple: Constantine Monomachus and the Holy Sepulchre // Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians. Vol. 48. № 1 (March). Berkeley, 1989. P. 66-78.

⁶³ *A History of the Crusades...* P. 117-118.

⁶⁴ *Buchthal H.* Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. With Liturgical and Palaeographical Chapters by Francis Wormald. Oxford; New York, 1957. P. 4, 23; *Kötzsche L.* Zwei Jerusalemer... P. 21. Abb. 13; *Folda J.* Queen Melisende's Psalter // The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A. D. 843–1261. Washington, 1997. P. 392-394. № 259; *Woloszyn M.* Vor Władysław... P. 162. Abb. 4.

⁶⁵ *Kühnel B.* Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century. A Geographical, an Historical, or an Art Historical Notion. Berlin, 1994. P. 49-50.

Byzantine art. On an ivory triptych from State Hermitage (10th c.) we see one of the 40 Martyrs of Sebasteia with a sword on his right shoulder⁶⁶. A fresco from Çavuşin (Cappadocia, 963-969) shows these martyrs as the emperor's guardians, also with swords on their right shoulders.⁶⁷ On a Cappadocian fresco from Direkli Kilise in Ikhlara Valley (976–1025) St. Mercurios is represented in the same way⁶⁸.

St. Demetrius is on objects of 11th century in the same pose: on a steatite icon from the Louvre⁶⁹ and on a relief Deesis in Mayer van den Bergh Museum (Antwerp) with Sts. Nestor, Demetrius and Procopius.⁷⁰ There are other examples of such images of holy warriors on Byzantine icons, mural paintings and glyptics.

Gunaridis finds a prototype for the image of a holy warrior with a sword on his shoulder in the second half of 11th century on the seals of John, nobelissimos, protovestiarios and the great domestikos of Scholae of the East (his identity is debatable), where Archangel Michael is represented with a sword on his shoulder and a scabbard in the other hand⁷¹; on one seal he stands on the right of St. Demetrius⁷². However, as noted by the authors of the Catalogue of seals of Dumbarton Oaks⁷³, the image of the Archangel is close to the portraits of Isaak I Comnenos (1057–1059) with a sword on his coins⁷⁴ and fewer on his seals⁷⁵. According to Michael Attaliates and Skylitzes Continuatus, the contemporaries claimed that Isaac by using such an image he alludes to the fact that he received the power not from God, but by his sword.⁷⁶

On the other hand, as Bank thought, Archangel Michael with a sword on his shoulder was firstly placed on the seals by Nicephorus Botaniates⁷⁷. According to Kotsonis, from 122 seals

⁶⁶ Grotowsky P. L. Arms And Armour Of the Warrior Saints. Tradition And Innovation In Byzantine Iconography (843–1261) (The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies And Cultures, 400–1453. Vol. 87). Leiden; Boston, 2010. Fig. 19.

⁶⁷ Parani M. G. Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture And Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries) (The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies And Cultures, 400–1453. Vol. 41). Leiden; Boston, 2003. P. 153-154; Grotowsky P. L. Arms And Armour... Fig. 59.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* Fig. 36

⁶⁹ Банк А. В. Прикладное искусство Византии IX–XI вв. Очерки. Москва, 1978. Рис. 78; Parani M. G. Reconstructing... Pl. 126.

⁷⁰ Walter C. The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition. [Aldershot 2003]. P. 97. Pl. 47.

⁷¹ Печать D.O. 47.2.1085: Laurent V. Le Corpus des sceaux de l'Empire Byzantin. Tome II: L'administration centrale. Paris, 1981. P. 504-505. № 938; Nesbitt J., Oikonomides N. Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art. Vol. 3. West, Northwest, and Central Asia Minor and the Orient. Washington, 1996. P. 174. № 99.6.

⁷² Печать D.O. 58.106.3248: Laurent V. Le Corpus. II... P. 504. № 937; Nesbitt J., Oikonomides N. Catalogue... P. 174-175. № 99.7.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Grierson P. Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and the Whittemore Collection. Vol. III/II. Washington, 1993. P. 759-760, 762. Pl. L13. 2.1, 2.4, 2.5.

⁷⁵ Zacos G., Vegler A. Byzantine Lead Seals. Vol. I. Basel, 1972. P. 77-78. № 86a-c (bust of the emperor with a sword on his right shoulder and an orb in his left hand).

⁷⁶ Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae. Editio emendatior et copiosior, consilio B. G. Niebuhrii C. f. instituta, auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae continuata. Michael Attaliota. Bonnae 1853. P. 60³⁻⁵; Τσολάκη Ε. Θ. Η Συνέχεια της Χρονογραφίας του Ιωάννου Σκυλίτζη (Ioannes Scylitzes Continuatus) (Ίδρυμα Μελετών Χερσονήσου του Αίμου 105). Θεσσαλονίκη, 1968. Σ. 103¹⁻⁴. On the idea of this image see: Kazhdan A., Epstein A. W. Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London, 1985. P. 115-116; Cheynet J.-C. La société Byzantine... P. 303-305.

⁷⁷ State Hermitage, M-8090: Банк А. В. Прикладное искусство Византии... С. 130; published in: Лухачев Н. П. Моливдовулы греческого Востока... С. 99. Табл. L13. № 2; Шандровская В. С. Сфрагистика... С. 135. № 698. Comp.:

with the image of Archangel Michael, dated to 11–12th centuries, only 9 represent him in a military vestment.⁷⁸ Here, among other things, we could note new seals of Michael, the archon and doukas of Tamatarcha, where the Archangel is depicted with great skill.⁷⁹

However, with a sword on his right shoulder and a sheath in his left hand Archangel Michael was depicted appearing to Joshua before the capture of Jericho. The earliest examples date to the 10–11th centuries: the “Joshua scroll” (10th c.)⁸⁰, the Cross of St. Michael (11–12th cc.)⁸¹, bronze doors from San-Michele on Monte Gargano (Apulia, 1076)⁸² and a fresco from St. George on Chalki (11–12th cc.)⁸³. This iconography is also well known later⁸⁴.

In the same way Archangel Michael was represented on cameos: on one artifact of 10–11th centuries⁸⁵ and on the monuments of 13–15th centuries⁸⁶. On 14 cameos representing Archangel Michael, known to Wenzel, his images repeat the same iconography of a holy warrior.⁸⁷

Thus, the image of the holy warrior with a sword on his right shoulder (and sometimes with a scabbard in his left hand) appears in Byzantine art in the 10th century. More often it is associated with Archangel Michael. In the mid-11th century this iconography was used in his images by Isaac I of Comnenos, and from this time it began to be used on seals.

We can suppose that Alexius Comnenos ordering his image in a form associated with the Archangel Michael provoked an association of him as military commander with Archangel Michael, the head of the heavenly armies. On the other hand, one can also see here the connection with the Palestinian theme, as in the case of Resurrection (see above): it could presume the Archangel’s assistance to Joshua in the capture of Jericho, which is located in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Gunaridis tried to justify the idea that the image of a warrior next to a saint symbolizes the owner's claim to the imperial throne, citing examples of two seals. The first represents John, the

Karagiorgou O. „ἀπὸ Λάμπης λαμπτήρα φωσφόρον ἐπιδημήσαι τοῖς βασιλείοις προεδήμανον” (Attaleiates XII 9–10, p. 175). On the way to the throne: the career of Nikephoros III Botaniates before 1078 // HYPERMACHOS. Festschrift für Werner Seibt zum 65. Geburtstag. Wien, 2008. P. 125; *Valeriev I.* Unpublished seal of Nikephoros Botaniates as a proedros and doux of Antioch // Pontica. Tome XLIII. Constanța, 2010. P. 427. № 22.

⁷⁸ *Cotsonis J.* The Contribution of the Byzantine Lead Seal to the Study of the Cult of the Saints (Sixth – Twelfth Century) // Byzantion. Tome LXXV. Bruxelles, 2005. P. 440, 445.

⁷⁹ *Алфьоров О. А.* Печатка Михаїла, архонта і дуки Матрахи та всієї Хазарії з колекції О. Шереметьєва // Международный коллоквиум по русско-византийской сфрагистике «Сфрагистический меридиан: КИЇВ – КОРСУНЬ/ΧΕΡΣΩΝ – ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ». Киев; Севастополь, 2013: С. 29-31. Рис. 1; *Степаненко В. П.* Архонт и дука Тмутаракани в конце XI века // ΧΕΡΣΩΝΟΣ ΘΕΜΑΤΑ, 01: «империя» и «полис». Севастополь, 2013. С. 157. Сопр.: *Янин В. Л., Гайдуков П. Г.* Древнерусские вислые печати, зарегистрированные в 1997 г. // Новгород и новгородская земля. Вып. 12. Новгород, 1998. С. 340. № 28а. Рис. 4.

⁸⁰ *Лазарев В. Н.* История византийского искусства. Москва, 1986. Табл. 98.

⁸¹ *Габелић С.* Византијски и поствизантијски циклуси Арханђела (XI–XVIII век). Преглед споменика. Београд 2004. С. 34. № 28.

⁸² *Ibid.* С. 26. № 13.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 32. № 27.

⁸⁴ Watch: *Idem.* Циклус арханђела у византијској уметности. Београд, 1991. С. 73-82; *Idem.* Византијски... С. 68. № 73; С. 70. № 76; С. 74. № 81; С. 86. № 92; С. 96. № 106.

⁸⁵ *Банк А. В.* Прикладное искусство... Рис. 116; *Parani M. G.* Reconstructing... P. 154. Pl. 165.

⁸⁶ Византийские древности... С. 234-235. № 40; С. 244-245. № 45.

⁸⁷ *Wentzel H.* Kameen, Realexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst, 3. Stuttgart, 1978. Sp. 921.

son of Alexios I Komnenos and of Augusta Irene, in imperial vestments next to a holy warrior (1092–1093)⁸⁸. On the other seal John Doukas Angelos (1237-1244), dressed in a royal vestment, is represented next to St. Demetrius, who is putting his hands on his shoulders against a background of the city wall of Thessaloniki⁸⁹.

The exact purpose of quite numerous finds with the image of John Komnenos next to a holy warrior is not clear: Laurent considered them imperial tokens, Grierson as lead coins issued in 1092, while, according to his observation, St. Demetrius has replaced on the emission of Thessaloniki the image of Christ, which is represented on Constantinopolitan coinage⁹⁰. One can only agree with the assumption that they manifest the status of the heir to the throne.

Meanwhile, the iconography of a saint conducting a living man by the hand is extremely rare⁹¹. In Byzantine painting the earliest example of this kind occurs, as far as we know, on a miniature in a manuscript from St.-Petersburg (RNB gr. 291), which is part of the Gospel Sinait. gr. 172, written in 1067. A two-folio miniature represents on the left Theodoros Gavras (later doukas of Chaldia), blessed by Christ, and on the right his first wife Irene, who the Virgin leads by the hand to Christ⁹². Slightly less than one and half centuries separates this miniature from a fresco in Studenica monastery (1208–1209, repainted in 1568), representing the Mother of God, who leads Simeon Nemanja to Christ on a throne⁹³. Next chronologically is a similar scene from the church in Mileševo (shortly before 1228), which represents Stefan Vladislav⁹⁴. Very close to the latter is the composition of a miniature from Gospel Iviron 5⁹⁵ (here, however, between the Virgin and Christ stands St. John Chrysostom), which has a controversial dating – from 1230–1240's until the last third of the 13th century. A fresco in Porta Panagia in Thessaly (about 1289) represents a monk (possibly sebastokrator John Komnenos Angelos Doukas), who is led by an angel to the Virgin⁹⁶.

⁸⁸ Laurent V. Documents de sigillographie Byzantine. La collection C. Orghidan. Paris, 1952. P. 306. № 687; Ζήκος Ν. Βυζαντινά μολυβδόβουλλα του Μουσείου Κομοτηνής // Studies in Byzantine Sigillography. Vol. 2. Washington, 1990. P. 179-180. № 11.

⁸⁹ Zacos G., Vegler A. Byzantine Lead Seals... P. 105-106. № 115.

⁹⁰ Grierson P. Byzantine Coins. Berkeley; Los-Angeles, 1982. P. 219, 225. Pl. 60. № 1035.

⁹¹ Watch: Djurić S. Svetitelj zagrļaj – istorija teme do XII veka // Годишник на Софийския университет «Св. Климент Охридски». Център за славяно-византийски проучвания «Иван Дуйчев». 88 (7). София, 1999. С. 85-94; *Idem*. Svetitelj zagrļaj u slikarstvu vizantijskog sveta od XII do XIV veka // Годишник на Софийския университет «Св. Климент Охридски». Център за славяно-византийски проучвания «Иван Дуйчев». 88 (7). София, 1999. С. 95-103.; we thank A. S. Preobrazhenskiy for consultation on this topic.

⁹² Spatharakis I. The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts. With 182 Illustrations (Byzantina Neerlandica 6). Leiden, 1976. P. 59-60. Ill. 27-28; Искусство Византии... С. 40-41, № 492; The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai. The Illuminated Greek Manuscripts. Volume One: From the Ninth to the Twelfth Century. Kurt Weitzmann and George Galavaris. Princeton (New Jersey), [1990]. P. 80-83. № 29. Fig. 224-225; Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art. Edited by Maria Vassilaki. [Milano, 2000]. P. 162. Ill. 104.

⁹³ Hamann-Mac Lean R., Hallensleben H. Die Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien vom 11. bis zum frühen 14. Jahrhundert. Bildband. Giessen, 1963. Abb. 73.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* Abb. 83.

⁹⁵ Spatharakis I. The Portrait... P. 84-87. Ill. 53-54.

⁹⁶ Kalopissi-Verti S. Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece. (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse. Denkschriften, 226. Band. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für die Tabula Imperii Byzantini. Bd. 5.) Wien, 1992. P. 31, 40, 99. № B5. Pl. 85-86.

We can note also two similar frescoes. The first is in the church of Panagia Forbiotissa in Asinou (Cyprus, 1105-1106), where the Virgin introduces to Christ ktetor Nicephorus, however, she does not lead him by the hand, but keeps her left hand on the model of the church in his hands.⁹⁷ On the mural in Dečani, St. George introduces kneeling George Ostrousha Pechpal to Christ, placing his hand on his shoulder⁹⁸.

We know also anonymous stamanoi probably minted in Thessalonica, where on one side is represented a double-headed eagle or St. Demetrius and on the other Christ, leading an Emperor by the hand.⁹⁹ These coins are dated to 14th century.

However, already in 12th century emperors have minted coins with double images, where the emperor is staying on the left and on the right are represented Christ, the Virgin or a saint, in some cases, crowning the emperor, and in other cases both figures hold a cross with a flag staff. On the coins of John II, St. George in a military vestment stands to the right of the emperor¹⁰⁰. The coinage of Manuel I represents the emperor and St. Theodore holding a labarum by the staff¹⁰¹. On another coin Manuel and the Virgin hold a cross, almost touching each others' hands. On the coins of Isaac II, the emperor and Archangel Michael also hold a cross¹⁰². On coins of Alexios III the emperor holds a cross together with St. Constantine in a ceremonial vestment¹⁰³.

St. George, represented on the reverse of our molybdoboullon was the most popular saint on the seals of Komnenoi from the beginning of the dynasty¹⁰⁴. At the same time he was placed on the coins of John II Komnenos.

Summarizing, we can assume that the image of the Resurrection / Descent into Hell, in addition to references to Jerusalem, apparently plays also another, symbolic role. On the significance of this triumphal scene, for example, Grabar, drawing analogies between the iconography of the Resurrection and the late Roman idea of an emperor-restorer, says it represents the liberator of the people from the power of a tyrant¹⁰⁵.

On the other hand, the iconography of the reverse is so unique for seals, which, in combination with the Resurrection on the obverse, force us to see in the seal of Alexios a complicated ideological program. One can agree with the hypothesis that being led by St. George indicates his status of heir of the throne. Further, the representation of Alexios as Archangel

⁹⁷ *Stylianou A. J.* The Painted Churches of Cyprus. Treasures of Byzantine Art. 2nd ed. Nicosia (s.a.). Fig. 57.

⁹⁸ *Walter C.* The Cycle of Saint George in the Monastery of Dečani, Дечани и византијска уметност средином XIV века. Уредник В. Ђурић. Београд, 1989. P. 355. Fig. 1.

⁹⁹ *Bendall S.* A Private Collection of Palaeologan Coins. London, 1988. № 318.1 (with an eagle), № 319.1 (with St. Demetrius). We thank for consultation M. N. Butyrskiy.

¹⁰⁰ *Wroth W.* Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum, II. London 1908. Pl. LXVII. № 12; Pl. LXVIII. №№ 1-2.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* Pl. LXIX. №№ 9-11; Pl. LXX. №№ 1-2.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* Pl. LXXI. №№ 16-17; Pl. LXXII. № 1.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* Pl. LXXII. №№ 15-16.

¹⁰⁴ *Cheyne J.-C.* L'iconographie des sceaux des Comnènes // Siegel und Siegler. Acten des 8 Internationalen Symposions für Byzantinische Sigillographie / Berliner Byzantinistische Studien. Band 7. Frankfurt-am-Main, 2005. P. 53-67.

¹⁰⁵ *Grabar A.* L'Empereur dans l'art byzantin. Recherches sur l'art officiel de l'Empire de l'Orient. Paris, 1936. P. 248-249.

Michael may indicate his high rank in the military hierarchy and the exclusivity of the military tasks facing the commander.

Dating and attribution. Publishers of the Spink auction catalog date the seal to 12th century and think that the identification of its owner is impossible, since the name Alexios was very popular in the family Komnenoi (Varzos book indicates more than two dozen Komnenoi with this name).¹⁰⁶

However in 1998 the owner of 1963 seal was identified by Karpov as Alexios I Great Komnenos, first emperor of Trebizond (1204-1224).¹⁰⁷ This hypothesis has been developed by Gunaridis.¹⁰⁸ The later believes that the image of the warrior near to the saint symbolizes owner's claim to imperial throne. Gunaridis considers that among Komnenoi were two such pretenders with the name Alexios: the founder of Constantinopolitan dynasty and the founder of Trebizond Empire. Dismissing the first possibility Gunaridis finds a prototype for the image of the warrior with a sword on his shoulder on a seal – from the second half of 11th century – of John, nobelissimos, protovestiaros and great domestikos of scholae of the East. In addition, according to the researcher, this molybdoboullon of Alexios could have had an impact on the composition of the seal with the image of the Virgin Θεοσκέπαστος, which bears on its reverse an image of St. George and St. Theodore, while George holds in his right hand a naked sword on the shoulder and a scabbard in his left hand.¹⁰⁹ Following the inscription this seal was associated with the monastery of Trebizond, and, as Gunaridis suggests, the seal of the founder of Trebizond Empire was taken here as a model.

In the images on the Alexios seal Gunaridis sees a certain ideological program: Saint George (one of three holy warriors represented on Komnenoi seals) emphasizes the role of the owner as a military commander, while the Resurrection reflects the idea of salvation and political resurrection of Byzantine Empire.

This hypothesis was further supported and reinforced by additional considerations. Cheynet also sees in the image of the Resurrection a hint of a "resurrection" of Byzantine Empire.¹¹⁰ Karpov connects this image with the capture of Trebizond by Alexios and with his becoming emperor in April 1204: Easter, the feast of Resurrection, was on April 25 this year, while the feast of St. George was on April 23.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ *SPINK Auction 127...* P. 48-49. № 93.

¹⁰⁷ Γουναρίδης Π. Ένα μολυβδόβουλλο του Αλεξίου Α' Μεγαλοκομνού, Βυζαντινά Σύμμεκτα. 13. 1999. Σ. 248; Καρпов С. П. Образование Трапезундской империи (1204–1215 гг.) // Византийский временник. Том 60. Москва, 2001. С. 27.

¹⁰⁸ Γουναρίδης Π. Ένα μολυβδόβουλλο... Σ. 248-258. Εικ. 1.

¹⁰⁹ *Laurent V. Le Corpus.* V.2... P. 212-213. № 1295; other example and bibliography see in: *Лихачев Н. П. Моливдовулы греческого Востока...* С. 95. № 10. Таб. LXII.

¹¹⁰ *Cheyne J.-C. L'iconographie...* P. 64. Fig. 7. № 3.

¹¹¹ *Καρпов С. П. История Трапезундской империи.* Санкт-Петербург, 2007. С. 109.

The attribution of this molybdoboullon to Alexeios I Great Komnenos allows us to date it only to the time immediately after the occupation of Trabzon. Otherwise it is inexplicable that there are no titles (cf. the seals, attributed to his brother David, where the latter is called "king's grandson" on one and "porphyrogennitos" on the other) and the addition of "Great" to the family name, which was noted already in a remark in the Psalter Vatopedi 760 about the death of David on December 13 of the year 6721 (1212).¹¹² But by such a dating it is difficult to see in the bearded warrior the young Alexios, who was 22 years old at the capture of Trabzon.

The attribution of Alexios Komnenos seal to the founder of Trebizond Empire seems to be a "vicious circle" : if the owner of the seal was Alexios I of Trebizond, then the images represent a "revival of the Empire", and if we could speak here about *σομε* symbolism of the "restoring of the Empire", it means that the owner of this seal is Alexios I of Trebizond. At the same time the capture of Trabzon could be hardly considered as a "revival of the Empire". In addition, the researchers did not explain the reasons, while the scene of the Resurrection in the Byzantine sphragistics is predominantly associated with Jerusalem.

As the Karpov points out, citing Byzantine historiographical tradition, "the transfer of power to Komenoï on Pontus took place peacefully."¹¹³ He also points out the very modest size of the army which took Trebizond. According to Georgian historian Basil Esozmodzvari, a "small army" sent by the Georgian Queen Tamar played a major role in this event.¹¹⁴ Against this background the seal's emphasis on military issues looks overstated.

Alexios himself, as indicated by Karpov, did not leave the city and its suburbs after this, and did not participate in the military enterprises of his brother David towards Nicaea and Constantinople.¹¹⁵ Thus, also here the emphasis of military aspects of Alexios' activities and his hypothetical claim to Constantinopolitan throne are not backed by his actions.

Finally, the link of the feast of Resurrection and of St. George, when Alexios allegedly took Trebizond, remains a guess. We know only that he entered the city in April¹¹⁶, nothing more.

We have already noted that according to Gunaridis, the molybdoboullon of Alexios Komnenos had an impact on the iconography of seals in 13–14th centuries, which were connected with the monastery of Panagia Theoskepastos in Trebizond. These seals have the image of St. George and St. Theodore, while St. George has on his shoulder the blade of a naked

¹¹² *Idem.* У истоков политической идеологии Трапезундской империи (О происхождении титула ΜΕΓΑΣ ΚΟΜΝΗΝΟΣ) // Византийский временник. Том 42. Москва, 1981. С. 103.

¹¹³ *Карпов С. П.* История... С. 96.

¹¹⁴ Карлис Цховреба. История Грузии. Тбилиси, 2008. С. 316-317.

¹¹⁵ *Карпов С. П.* История... С. 98.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* С. 94.

sword held in his right hand and a scabbard held in his left hand¹¹⁷. In this regard, let us call attention to a cameo of late 11th–early 12th centuries from the Cabinet des médailles (Paris), which has images of St. George with a spear in his right hand and on the left side of St. Demetrius with a sword on the shoulder¹¹⁸. Thus, if the image of two saints on the seals with Virgin Θεοσκέπαστος imitates the seal of Alexios Komnenos, then only in the most general features, as an idea, and it can have other prototypes, for example, in the Byzantine glyptics. Furthermore, the attribution of these seals to Trebizond can not be considered as proven, as indicated by Laurent.

Thus, the hypothetical attribution of the Trebizondian seal to Alexios I Great Komnenos evokes a number of questions. However, another proposal for its attribution is possible. The owner of the seal can be Alexios Komnenos (born in 1106 — co-emperor from – 1122 – died in 1142)¹¹⁹, the son and co-ruler of emperor John II (1118–1143). Firstly, Alexios was supposed to inherit the throne, and Gunaridis' hypothesis about the meaning of warrior's image next to the holy warrior is suitable also in this case. Secondly, the declaration of co-regentship of John, his father, as mentioned above, was noted by the release of coins or tokens, where next to the heir a holy warrior is represented. Thirdly, the iconography of a warrior with a naked sword on his right shoulder was introduced into coinage by Isaac Komnenos, whose grandnephew was John II.

Now let us turn our attention to another circumstance. St. George was placed on the coins of John II next to the emperor, symbolizing his military concerns.¹²⁰ We can assume that the image of St. George on the seal also refers to John II. Then the meaning of the composition is as follows: St. George (figuratively – the emperor) leads his co-ruler and heir Alexios, who is represented as Archangel Michael. Leads him where? It could explain the image on the reverse.

Let us remember that in Gospel Vat. Urbin. gr. 2¹²¹, where the coronation of John II and Alexios by Christ is represented (f. 19), there is another miniature depicting the Resurrection / Descent into Hell (f. 260) with an iconography similar to our seals. Meanwhile the meaning of this scene on the seal can be directly connected with Jerusalem and those plans on this score of Alexios' father John.

¹¹⁷ 1). State Hermitage, M-8012: *Schlumberger G. Sigillographie...* P. 292; *Лихачев Н. П. Историческое значение...* С. 53. Рис. 86; С. 26. Табл. VII.9; *Idem. Моливдовулы греческого Востока...* С. 95. Табл. LXII. № 10; *Шандровская В.С. Сфрагистика...* С. 165. № 1034; 2). *Laurent V. Les sceaux byzantins du Médaillier Vatican. Vatican, 1962. P. 178-179. № 170; 3). Idem. Le Corpus. V,2...* P. 212-213. № 1295; 4). *Szemioth A., Wasilewski T. Sceaux byzantins...* P. 76. № 74.

¹¹⁸ *The Glory of Byzantium: Arts and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261. Ed. by H. C. Evans, W. D. Wixom. Washington, 1997. P. 178. № 132. According to a kind communication of I. A. Sterligova this cameo should be dated to early Palaeologian time.*

¹¹⁹ *Βαρζός Κ. Η γενεαλογία τῶν Κομνηνῶν. Θεσσαλονίκη, 1984. Σ. 339-348. № 74.*

¹²⁰ *Kazhdan A., Epstein A. W. Change in Byzantine...* P. 116; *Hendy M. F. Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire 1081–1261. Washington, 1969. P. 437. Pl. 10. №№ 1-6.*

¹²¹ *Stornajolo C. Miniature...* Min. 83.

Alexios himself died during the campaign of John to Antioch, the consequence of which, according to John Kinnamos, was the transfer of Cilicia, Antioch, Cyprus and Attalia into possession of another of the emperor's sons Manuel¹²². According to other testimony, a later one and of unknown origin, Alexios had become emperor in Rome, Andronicus the ruler of Jerusalem, and Isaac with Manuel had to reign in Constantinople¹²³: Schreiner and Lilie doubt that John's plans are presented here correctly.¹²⁴ However, after Alexios' death John still attempted to obtain from Fulk, the king of Jerusalem, permission to enter Jerusalem with armed forces, which, as noted by Lilie, would make him recognize Byzantine suzerainty.¹²⁵ Thus, the plans of John, apparently, included an attempt to establish his authority over the Crusaders in Jerusalem. In these circumstances it becomes clear that the appearance on his heir's seal of an "emblem" of this city in combination with the military theme repeatedly reinforced and with another possibly Palestinian reference: the appearance of Archangel Michael to Joshua.

Historical context. We do not know that the influence of the emperors of Trebizond extended beyond the Crimean coast or on the Asian shore of Bosphorus. It seems that in this they did not follow the policies of their predecessors in Constantinople, by whom a northeast vector was clearly important, though not paramount.

On the contrary, Manuel Stravoromanos speaks about improving Alexios I Komnenos' authority on the shores of the Cimmerian Bosphorus.¹²⁶ From a letter of Theophylact of Ohrid in summer 1103, we know that the doukas of Trebizond Gregory Taronites had repulsed an attack of the Melitenian Sultan Danishmend, who was collecting tribute from "the Greek cities around Pontos between the river Tanais and the lake Meotis."¹²⁷ Half a century later caviar and salted fish was brought to Constantinople from exactly these places.¹²⁸

Perhaps evidence of the creation in the late 11th century of a major administrative-territorial unit, which included a part of the Crimea, Matracha and Zikhia, are the seals of archon Michael

¹²² Ioannis Cinnami Epitome rerum ab Ioannes et Alexio Comnenis gestarum ad fidem codicis Vaticani recensuit A. Meinecke (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae). Bonnae, 1836. P. 22-23 (I.10); on the campaign see: *Lilie R.-J.* Byzantium and the Crusader States 1096–1204. Oxford, 1993. P. 135-138.

¹²³ *Schreiner P.* Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken (CFHB, Vol. XII/1-2). 1. Teil. Einleitung und Text. Wien, 1975. P. 58 (№ 6); *Idem.* Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken (CFHB, Vol. XII/1-2). 2. Teil. Historischer Kommentar. Wien, 1977. P. 2. 164-166; P. 3. 19.

¹²⁴ *Lilie R.-J.* Byzantium... P. 137-138.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Gautier P.* Le dossier d'un haut fonctionnaire d'Alexis I^{er} Comnène, Manuel Straboromanos // *Revue des Études byzantines.* Tome 23. Paris, 1965. P. 190; *Litavrin G. G.* A propos de Tmutorokan // *Byzantion.* Tome 35. Fasc. 1. Bruxelles, 1965. P. 221-234.

¹²⁷ Theophylacte d'Achrida. *Lettres / Introduction, texte, traduction et notes par P. Gautier, membre de l'Institut français d'Etudes byzantines (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae. Series Thessalonicensis. Vol. XVI/2).* Thessalonique, 1986. P. 427-429. № 81; *Kazhdan A.* Some Little-Known or Misinterpreted Evidence about Kievan Rus' in Twelfth-Century Greek Sources // *Harvard Ukrainian Studies.* 7. Okeanos: Essays presented to Ihor Ševčenko on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students. 1983. P. 345.

¹²⁸ *Eustathii Thessalonicensis De emendanda vita monachica.* Recensuit germanice vertit indicibusque instruxit Karin Metzler (CFHB XLV). Berolini et Novi Eboraci, 2006. P. 80. Cap 66.

(7 seals originating from Kerch, Sudak and possibly Constantinople are known¹²⁹); on two seals from the Sheremetiev Museum in Kiev he is named "archon and doukas of Matracha and all the Khazars",¹³⁰ which may indicate a certain stage in the formation of a new administration in the region. Michael usually, but with insufficient arguments, was identified with Russian prince Oleg Svyatoslavich.¹³¹ Judging by the discovery of a 11–12th century seal of sebastos Michael Doukas (ca. 1061-1108/18)¹³², an interest in Zikhia also showed some higher representatives of the Byzantine State.

Nicephorus Vasilaki in an invective against his opponent Bagoas in mid 12th century writes that the father of the latter has recently visited the "barbarians of Bosporus" near "wet Maeotis".¹³³ John Tsetses, an author of the same period, in his "Iambic verses" mentions "the land of Matrachoi".¹³⁴

Rhetor Michael in his speech to Manuel Komnenos in 1153 argues that the troops of the emperor could appear to "the north of Maeotis lake".¹³⁵ In conciliar decree of 1166 emperor Manuel was called, among other names, "of Zikhia".¹³⁶ In a chrysoboulos to the Genoese from October 1169 Manuel allowed them to trade throughout the Empire, except "Russia and Matracha"¹³⁷; in April 1192 this grant was confirmed by Isaac Angelos.¹³⁸ Publication of these acts was preceded by visits to Constantinople of the hierarch of Matracha, which is noted in the councils on March 10, 1169¹³⁹ and in September 1191.¹⁴⁰ Konstantinos Pegonites, an addressee

¹²⁹ 1). *Banescu N.* La domination byzantine à Matracha (Tmutorokan), en Zichie, en Chazarie et en «Russie» à l'époque des Comnènes // Bulletin de la Section Historique de l'Académie Roumaine, XXII. Fasc. 2. Bucarest, 1941. P. 57-77; *Янин В. Л.* Актовые печати Древней Руси X–XV вв. Том I. Печати X – начала XIII в. Москва, 1970. С. 26-29, 171. № 29; *Zacos G., Veglery A.* Byzantine Lead Seals... P. 1475; *Bulgakova V.* Byzantinische Bleisiegel... P. 238-239. № 3.2.1.2.a; 2). *Янин В. Л., Гайдуков П. Г.* Древнерусские вислые печати, зарегистрированные в 1997 г. ... С. 340. № 29-2. Рис. 32; 3). *Idem.* Древнерусские вислые печати, зарегистрированные в 2002 г. // Новгород и новгородская земля. Вып. 17. Новгород, 2003. С. 353. № 29-3; 4-5). *Idem.* Древнерусские вислые печати, зарегистрированные в 2003 г. // Новгород и новгородская земля. Вып. 18. Новгород, 2004. С. 141. № 29-4-5; 6). *Stepanova E.* New finds from Sudak // Studies in Byzantine Sigillography. Vol. 8. München; Leipzig, 2003. P. 129-130. № 12; *Bulgakova V.* Byzantinische Bleisiegel... P. 239-240. № 3.2.1.2.b; *Степанова Е.В.* Печати из Судака (к вопросу об интерпретации) // Сугдейский сборник. Вып. II. Киев; Судак, 2005. С. 542-543. Рис. 1.8; 7). *Булгакова В. И.* Сигиллографический комплекс порта Сугдеи (материалы подводных исследований 2004–2005 гг.) // Сугдейский сборник. Вып. III. Киев; Судак, 2008. С. 321-322. № 40.

¹³⁰ 1). *Альфьоров О. А.* Печатка Михаїла... С. 29-31. Рис. 1; 2). *Янин В. Л., Гайдуков П. Г.* Древнерусские вислые печати, зарегистрированные в 1997 г. ... С. 340. № 28a. Рис. 4.

¹³¹ Criticism watch: *Kazhdan A.* Some Little-Known... P. 353.

¹³² *Лухачев Н. П.* Материалы для истории русской и византийской сфрагистики, 1. Труды музея палеографии. Вып. I. Ленинград, 1928. С. 141-144. Табл. LI.1; *Bulgakova V.* Byzantinische Bleisiegel... P. 102-105. № 1.4.5; *Чаудзе В. Н.* Моливодовулы адресантов Матархи VI–XII вв. // Международный коллоквиум по русско-византийской сфрагистике «Сфрагистический меридиан: КИЇВ – КОРСУНЬ/ΧΕΡΣΟΝ – ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ». Киев; Севастополь, 2013. С. 41. Рис. 5.

¹³³ *Nicephori Basilacae Oraciones et epistolae.* Rec. A. Garzya. Lipsiae 1984. P. 100.

¹³⁴ *Ioannis Tzetzae Historiarum variarum Chiliades.* Graece. Textum ad fidem duorum codicum Monacensium recognovit, brevi adnotatione et indicibus instruxit Theophilus Kiesslingius... Lipsiae, MDCCCXXXVI. P. 515¹⁵¹; *Kazhdan A.* Some Little-Known... P. 347.

¹³⁵ *Regel W.* Fontes rerum byzantinorum. Fasc. 1. Petropoli, 1892. P. 152; *Kazhdan A.* Some Little-Known... P. 346-347.

¹³⁶ *Mango C.* The Conciliar Edict of 1166 // *Dumbarton Oaks Papers.* Vol. 17. Washington, 1963. P. 316-330; *Kazhdan A.* Some Little-Known... P. 347-348.

¹³⁷ *Ius Graeco-Romanum. Novellae Constitutiones.* Edidit C. E. Zachariae von Lingenthal, D. J. U. Dominus in Grosskmehlen. Pars III. Lipsiae, 1857. P. 496; *Kazhdan A.* Some Little-Known... P. 347.

¹³⁸ *Miklosich F., Müller J.* Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana, I-VI. Vienne 1860–1890: III. 35.

¹³⁹ *Ivris Graeco-Romani tam canonici quam civilis Tomi duo.* Iohannis Levnclavii...nunc primum editi... Tomus primus. Francofurti, MDXCVL. P. 283.

of Michael Choniates, before 1182 collected the taxes "close to the Hyperboreans", "on the other side of the strait," and often "visited klimata of Pontos," that is, according to the hypothesis of Kazhdan, carried out his activities on the Asian Bosphoros.¹⁴¹

In our opinion, the seal from Taman' is an imitation of the Byzantine seal of Alexios Komnenos, still known in a single copy (from Trebizond). These seals are so different in the technique and artistic skill of carvers, that there is no possibility that their owner could be one and the same person.

The owner of the seal from Trebizond was identified by Karpov and Gunaridis as Alexios I Great Komnenos, the founder of Trebizond Empire, and this attribution has been accepted by many experts in Byzantine sphragistics. Despite a certain *opinio communis* developed on this issue in the scientific community, their arguments seem to be insufficient, as they are based largely on unproven judgments.

We identify the owner of the seal from Trebizond with Alexios Komnenos, co-regent with his father John II: this possibility was not considered by Gunaridis among those Alexioi from Komnenoi family, who aspired to the Byzantine throne. Moreover, as we have tried to show above, the iconography of the images (both the Resurrection / Descent into Hell and a warrior with a sword on his shoulder) tends more towards the end of 11–12th century than to the later times.

As an explanation of the underlying ideological reason for putting the scene of the Resurrection / Descent into Hell we suggest that it was supposed to reflect the plans of John II Komnenos to establish the Byzantine suzerainty over Jerusalem, in what was, apparently, for the active participation of his eldest son and co-ruler.

Such an attribution correlates well with the character of this iconography, which is linked, on one hand, with Jerusalem and, on the other hand, has triumphant nature. Moreover, it is possible to propose a very close analogy to it in Gospel Vat. Urbin. gr. 2, the creation of which was provoked by the coronation of Alexios.

The appearance of the seal of Alexios Komnenos, son of John, in the Northern Black Sea corresponds to the image of the Byzantine policy in this region in the first half of 12th century. At this time, Byzantium had stable interests in the areas of Matracha, Maeotis and Tanais defending them through military force, civil administration and the ecclesiastical clergy.

¹⁴⁰ Ανάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς σταχυολογίας... ἐκδιδόμενα ὑπὸ Α. ἀπαδοπούλου-Κεραμέως. Τόμος δεῦτερος. Ἐν Πετροπόλει, 1894. Σ. 364-365.

¹⁴¹ Michaelis Choniatae Epistulae. Recensuit F. Kolovou (CFHB XLI). Berolini et Novi Eboraci, 2001. P. 5-6. № 3; Kazhdan A. Some Little-Known... P. 348-353.

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