

A Matrix for Wax Seals of Iakobos, Metropolitan of Gotthia, from Mangup

In the spring of 2016 the most successful collector of Byzantine and Russian seals from the territory of Old Rus and the Crimea, Oleksii Sheremetiev, acquired a very interesting seal-matrix discovered at the footstep of Mangup (Dory, Theodoro), the center of the medieval principality of Gotthia on the Crimea, for the Sheremetiev's Family Museum of Historical and Cultural Rarities in Kyiv¹.

The field of this copper alloy matrix for wax seals² (Figure 1) is divided into an inner circle (diameter 22 mm) with a figure, separated by a line of dots from the circumscription in the exterior segment (diameter 5 mm)³.

The Greek circumscription starts at the top with a cross and is easily readable (see Figure 2):

+ ΟΗΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ : ΓΟΤΘΙΑΟΙΑΚΩΒΟΣ
+ Ὁ μητροπολίτης Γοτθία(ς) ὁ Ἰάκωβος.

¹ Coll. Sheremetiev, MC-2471.

² We are not well informed about the sealing in wax in the Byzantine Empire, but it must have been of some importance, esp. since the 11th century. Cf. N. Oikonomidès, *Quelques remarques sur le scellement à la cire des actes impériaux byzantins (XIII^e-XV^e s.)*, *Zbornik Filozofskog Fakulteta - Beograd* 14.1 (1979) 123-128. — W. Seibt - M. L. Zarnitz, *Das byzantinische Bleisiegel als Kunstwerk. Katalog zur Ausstellung*, Wien 1997, p. 19. — W. Seibt, *Ein Blick in die byzantinische Gesellschaft. Die Bleisiegel im Museum August Kestner*, Rahden (Westfalen) 2011, p. 19.

³ An arrangement like that was also common on seals, matrices and signet rings in neighboring Bulgaria during the 13th and 14th centuries, cf. I. Jordanov, *Korpus na sred-novekovnite Bŭlgarski pečati / Corpus of the Medieval Bulgarian Seals* [Pliska-Preslav 12], Sofia 2016, no. I 8, fig. 352-353 (Chrysobull of Tsar Constantine Asen, 1257-1277); no. I 11, fig. 361 (Chrysobull of Tsar Ivan Shishman, 1371-1395); no. III 4 (seal die of Raphael, 14th c.); no. IV 2, fig. 373 (signet ring of Vitomir, 14th c.); no. IV 5, fig. 376 (signet ring of Dobroslav, 13th-14th c.); no. IV 6, fig. 377 (signet ring of Kaloyan, 13th c.) etc.

There is not a single ligature, but some letters have a special shape, e.g. the My, which is near to the “Palaeologan” style, or the Alpha with a hasta at the top to left, or the Tau with small vertical hastae at the ends of the horizontal bar. The Beta is closed. Also the three dots in the middle of the legend are remarkable. The legend does not start with the name or with the word *σφοαγίς*, but with the office of metropolitan, an unusual beginning. After the Alpha of *Γοθία* the abbreviation mark is missing.

In the central circle there is a male bust, the hands raised in the gesture of praying (*orans*). The person is not nimbated and there is not any identifying inscription. The figure is bearded, but the forehead is bold (similar like the face of St. Paul). The omophorion (in form of an Ypsilon) is decorated with crosses, especially the one in the middle is very prominent.

The identification of this figure is a problem. One possibility would be a St. Iakobos, and there are already four saints of this name more or less known in Byzantine iconography. The patriarch Iakobos, the apostle Iakobos the Elder (Major), the son of Zebedaios and brother of the apostle Ioannes, who was later on especially venerated in Spain (Santiago de Compostela), and Iakobos, the brother of the Lord (Adelphotheos), the first bishop of Jerusalem, are represented by other iconographical types. Some similarity could exist with the less known hermit Iakobos (Asceta) from Palestine, who appears bearded, the hands upraised in prayer, but normally kneeling in a sarcophagus⁴.

Another possibility could be the representation of the metropolitan himself. In Western tradition⁵ there are many examples where bishops are depicted on their seals, though on Byzantine seals that was extremely rare. In the West busts of bishops were only in the beginning quite common, in the centuries of the matrix bishops were normally portrayed enthroned⁶. But in East and West there are also other attributes of a bishop included, not only the omophorion, in Byzantium the right hand of the bishop is normally blessing and the left one holds the Gospels. The question remains open, perhaps the hermit from Palestine would be first choice.

⁴ Cf. *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. VII: *Ikonographie der Heiligen. Innozenz bis Melchisedech*, ed. W. Braunfels, Rom 1974, p. 22-41. For the problem of the identification of Iakobos Adelphotheos with the apostle Iakobos Minor, see l.c. 47-51.

⁵ In late Byzantine time many influences were crossing on the Crimea, Byzantine, Western, Armenian, Mongol, Turkish etc. Gothia was not part of the Byzantine empires of Constantinople or of Trapezunt, but the dynasts were behaving like Byzantine ones and Byzantine culture was dominant, though the country came shortly before the middle of the 13th century under Mongol dominion. Since that time also the Latin Church sent catholic missionaries to Gotthia.

⁶ Cf. e.g. E. Kittel, *Stempel* [Bibliothek für Kunst- und Antiquitätenfreunde 11], Braunschweig 1970, 389-412.

The principality of Gotthia in mountainous Crimea had a separate archbishop since the 6th century, who was promoted to the rank of a metropolitan either near the end of Michael VIII Palaiologos († 1282) or in the beginning of Andronikos II's reign, perhaps ca. 1275, though the sources mention the first metropolitan only for 1317/1318. For the 14th century six metropolitans are known, but till now no Iakobos is mentioned. The seal stems probably from the later 13th or from the first half of the 14th century. In this period only Sophronios is documented for the year 1319 and Petros for the year 1347⁷.

⁷ Cf. J. Preiser-Kapeller, *Der Episkopat im späten Byzanz. Ein Verzeichnis der Metropolitani und Bischöfe des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel in der Zeit von 1204 bis 1453*, Saarbrücken 2008, p. 135-139.

Werner Seibt

Η μήτρα της κήρινης σφραγίδας του μητροπολίτη Γοθθίας Ιακώβου από το Mangup

Η μήτρα της κήρινης σφραγίδας του μητροπολίτη Γοθθίας Ιακώβου που βρέθηκε στο Mangup, την έδρα της μητρόπολης, είναι κατασκευασμένη από κράμα χαλκού και ενσωματώθηκε το 2016 στην ιδιωτική συλλογή Sheremetiev (Κίεβο). Το πεδίο της μήτρας έχει διάμετρο εικοσιεπτά χιλιοστά (27 mm) και αποτελείται από έναν εσωτερικό κύκλο και έναν εξωτερικό δακτύλιο. Στον τελευταίο κατανέμεται η ακόλουθη επιγραφή:

+ QHHTPOΠOΛITHC : ΓΟΤΘΙΑΟΙΑΚΩΒOC

+ Ὁ μητροπολίτης Γοθθία(ς) ὁ Ἰάκωβος.

Τα περισσότερα γράμματα της επιγραφῆς ανταποκρίνονται παλαιογραφικά στο στυλ της Παλαιολόγειας εποχῆς.

Ο κύκλος φέρει προτομή δεομένου επισκόπου (χωρίς φωτοστέφανο): ιδιαίτερα τονίζονται οι πτυχές του ωμοφορίου του. Πρόκειται είτε για απεικόνιση του κατόχου της σφραγίδας, που ὁμως δεν συνηθίζονταν στο Βυζάντιο σε αντιδιαστολή με τη Δύση, είτε για τον Ιάκωβο τον Ερημίτη εκ Παλαιστίνης, ο οποίος παριστάνεται στη Βυζαντινὴ τέχνη επίσης δεόμενος και με γενειάδα, ἀλλά συνήθως γονατιστός μπροστά σε σαρκοφάγο.

Η ηγεμονία της Γοθθίας, στο υψίπεδο της χερσονήσου της Κριμαίας, με έδρα την πόλη Δόρτυ/Θεοδωρῶ, πέρασε λίγο πριν τα μέσα του 13^{ου} αιώνα στην κυριαρχία των Μογγόλων, ωστόσο η βυζαντινὴ ἐπίδραση εξακολουθοῦσε να υφίσταται στην περιοχή. Περί το 1275, ο εκεί διατελών αρχιεπίσκοπος αναβαθμίστηκε σε μητροπολίτη. Ο Ιάκωβος έδρασε ως μητροπολίτης Γοθθίας είτε τον ὕστερο 13^ο αιώνα είτε το ἄμισό του 14^{ου} αιώνα.



Figure 1. The copper alloy seal matrix.



Figure 2. A modern wax imprint.