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**CIRCULATION OF BYZANTINE LEAD SEALS AS A  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOCATION OF MEDIEVAL  
BITOLA**

The medieval history of the town of Bitola, in addition to the archaeological research and the processing of medieval written sources are obtaining new information and making use of less exploited scientific disciplines such as sigillography. The study of Byzantine lead seals comprises the important names and titles of the representatives of Byzantine authorities, as well as members of military and ecclesiastical hierarchy. Several seals that have been recently found in the Yeni-mosque in Bitola, then one in the surroundings of Heraclea Lyncestis, another one at the Mordthmann collection and finally in the Museum of Ioannina bring forth new views on the medieval episcopal see on the Dragor River. These seals witness the predominantly least clarified period that follows after the fall of Tsar Samuel's empire and the Byzantine reclaiming of Pelagonian region and continue all the way through the long rule of the Komnenian dynasty.

The Byzantine chronicler John Skylitzes describes the events after the death of Tsar Samuel in October 1014, when the Byzantine emperor Basil II set out with his army to eliminate the newly crowned emperor Gabriel Radomir. He headed from Mossynopolis to Thessalonike and marched through Vodena, following the Via Egnatia road. After arriving in the Valley of Pelagonia with swift action he set alight the imperial palace of Gabriel Radomir in Bitola (*ἐν Βουτελίῳ*). However, because of the hastiness of the military actions, the Byzantine army left the fortress untouched, and left for the conquest of the fortresses of Prilep and Stupeion.<sup>1</sup> In 1015 Samuel's son Gabriel Radomir crowned himself emperor and Bitola became in a way his second capital (*βασίλεια*), a term that for Skylitzes doesn't simply signify the capital, but has a wider meaning.<sup>2</sup> Still the town of Ohrid remained the main ecclesiastical and imperial seat,

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<sup>1</sup> *Византијски извори за историју народа Југославије*, (Ј. Ферлуга, Б. Ферјанчић et alii) vol.3, (1966), 112; *Ioannis Skylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn, CFHB 5, Berlin 1973, 461; В. Flusin, J-C Cheynet, *Jean Skylitzes: Empereurs de Constantinople*, Paris 2003; В. Златарски, *История на българската държава през средните векове*, т.1, София 1971, 704-707.

<sup>2</sup> Ѓ. Заимов, *Битолски надпис на Иван Владослав самодържец български*, София 1970, 109. This term has a wider meaning in Skylitzes and does not signify only the

while Bitola was one of the “inner fortresses” inside the empire, and a kind of central base for the guiding of military operations.<sup>3</sup> Bitola remained as such during the reign of his cousin John Vladislav, who after executing Gabriel took over the crown and was the last autocrat of the Kometopouli dynasty.<sup>4</sup> The fortified stronghold on the river Dragor remained a “second capital” for John Vladislav as well, for the suburbs of Ochrid had already been taken over by the Byzantine army, but without the upper fortress.<sup>5</sup> In this period Bitola was the headquarters for the directing of military actions, simply because of the excellent strategic crossroad on the Via Egnatia where the directions towards Ochrid, Prilep, Thessalonike, Železnik and Moriovo intersected. From this period originates the marble block known as “the Bitola slab” which was found under the doorstep of the main entrance during the demolishing of the Sungur Çavuş-bey mosque in 1956. This mosque was first erected in 1435 after the Ottoman conquest in 1385.<sup>6</sup> According to this palaeographic monument set by emperor John Vladislav, the fortress of Bitola was reconditioned on older foundations in the period between October 1015 and the spring of 1016.<sup>7</sup> But after the death of emperor John Vladislav in a battle at Dyrrachion in 1018, the municipal aristocrats of Morosdvisd, Liplyan and Pelagonia travelled to the fortress of Mossynopolis in order to surrender the towns to the Byzantine emperor Basil II “the Bulgar-slayer” as an ultimate act of obedience. The voluntary surrender safeguarded the Bitola fortress and the town from destruction. The region of Pelagonia was placed in the newly constituted Byzantine theme of Bulgaria whose central military fortress on the Kale of Skopje was governed by the Byzantine governor, the katepano David Areianites.<sup>8</sup>

According to the reforms of the ecclesiastical institution determined by the Second Chrysobull published by Basil II in 1025, the bishop of Bitola was appointed as a suffragan of the archbishop of Ohrid, thus receiving a diocese that included Pelagonia, Prilep, Debrešte and Veles, with fifteen clerics and fifteen serfs.<sup>9</sup> According to the research done by T. Tomoski, who analyzed the

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capital. Under the notion of “basileia” were understood strongholds in which the rulers resided during the various military actions. Such main fortifications in the region of Pelagonia were in Bitola, Prilep and Setina.

<sup>3</sup> Т. Томоски, Како топонимот Манастир се наложил за втор назив на градот Битола, *Македонија низ вековите, градови, тврдини, комуникации*, Скопје 1999, 463-466.

<sup>4</sup> P. Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-slayer*, Cambridge 2003, 28-31.

<sup>5</sup> C. Holmes, *Basil II and the governance of empire (976-1025)*, Oxford 2005, 500.

<sup>6</sup> Р. Михајловски, ‘Градот Битола/Манастир по османлиското освојување во 1385’, *Patrimonium. Мк*, том 12, 205-211.

<sup>7</sup> Ѓ. Заимов, *Битолски надпис на Иван Владослав самодържец български*, София 1970, 33-34; В. Мошин, Битољска плоча из 1017 године, *Македонски јазик*, 17 (1966) 51-61.

<sup>8</sup> С. Пириватрић, *Самуилова држава, обим и карактер*, Београд 1997, 120-129; S. Antoljak, *Samuel and his State*, Skorje 1985, 115-125; R. Mihajlovski, Byzantine lead seals found during the archaeological excavations in 2009 at the fortress of ‘Kale’, *Macedonian numismatic journal*, *Македонски нумизматички гласник*, 5 (2009) 145-157.

<sup>9</sup> И. Снегаров, *История на Охридската архиепископия*, том. 1, София 1924, 162. According to this document one can conclude that Pelagonia and Bitola in this period

text of the chrysobull “it is obvious that in the case of the bishop of Bitola after the name of Bitola the word ‘in (Pelagonia)’ itself was not used.” Actually this points out that the place Pelagonia was a part of the bishopric that had its seat in Bitola. To the Byzantine ecclesiastical administration, Pelagonia was the successor of the bishopric of Heraclea, which in certain documents is named as “of Pelagonia”.<sup>10</sup>

For the Byzantine military and tax administration the rich region of Pelagonia and the crossroad on the Via Egnatia were of vital importance and an imperial tax collector, known as a kourator was appointed in Bitola, one that originated from the circles close to the emperor.

The kouratores in this period have the function of fiscal and judicial administrators of the emperor. The above-mentioned Byzantine lead seals propose themselves as important additional epigraphic documents that fill in the gap in the history of Bitola and its surroundings after the death of the last emperor John Vladislav. Listed below with a sigillographic analysis:



Fig. 1 The seal of Petar, the kourator

Сл. 1 Печат куратора Петра

**1. The seal of Peter (Pardo), Kourator of Bitola and Gyavato.** In 2007 Werner Seibt published a seal from the collection of the Museum of Ioannina in Epirus under the title: “A mysterious lead seal from the beginnings of the eleventh century at Ioannina: kourator of Bitol(a) and Igiv(atou)”.<sup>11</sup> (Fig. 1, The seal of Peter) The preserved bilateral seal has inscriptions on both sides that are flanked with a circular line of dots. It originates from the first half of the eleventh century. On the aversé it has a damaged inscription in four lines that can be read:

were two separate places that were near each other.

<sup>10</sup> Т. Томоски, *Butella civitas Pelagoniae, Македонија низ вековите, градови, тврдини, комуникации*, Скопје 1999, 291.

<sup>11</sup> W. Seibt, Ένα μυστηριώδες μολυβδόβουλο των αρχών του 11. αιώνα στα Ιωάννινα: ΚΟΥΡΑΤΩΡ ΒΗΤΟΛ(ΗΣ) ΚΑΙ ΗΓΙΒ(ΑΤΟΥ), ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΣ Β', Πρακτικά του Δεύτερου Συμποσίου για τη Νικόπολη (11-15 Σεπτεμβρίου, Πρέβεζα 2007, 583-586 (with the entire asserted bibliography).

+ ΚΕΡΘΤΟCΟΔΟΝΛΟΠΕΤΡΟΑΠΑΘ

+ Κ(ύρι)ε β(οή)θ(ει) τ(ῶ) σ(ῶ) δούλω Πέτρω (πρωτο)σπαθ[αρίω].

On the reverse the inscription continues in four more lines:

ΚΒΚΥΡΒΗΤΟΛΣΗΓΙΒΑ.ΤΟΠΑ.

κ(αί) Β(ασικικῶ) κουρ(άτορι)Βητόλ(ης) καὶ Ἥγιβά(του) τῶ Πά(ρδω)

In translation the inscription goes as follows:

O Lord, help your servant Peter (Pardo), protospatharios and imperial kourator of Bitola and Gyavato.

The seal belongs to the imperial kourator, protospatharios Peter (Pardo), who was the chief financial administrator of Bitola and of the road fortification of Gyavato. Peter was sent as an officer from the imperial suite in order to control the Gyavato Pass on the Via Egnatia highway, as well as for the administration of finances in Bitola in the period between 1018 and 1030. On this seal the Church-Slavonic name of Bitola is mentioned, which is already the third instance beside the chronicle of John Skylitzes when the palace of Gabriel Radomir is mentioned in 1015, and after the mention on the slab of John Vladislav in 1016. From the inscription on the seal one can see that his seat was in the town of Bitola and not in the military stronghold of Pelagonia, which leads to the conclusion that they were two separate fortified locations.

It is especially important that the inscription on the seal mentions the pass of Gyavato on the Via Egnatia, being a strategic pass leading towards Prespa and Ochrid. The Gyavato pass was controlled from the nearby road station, the fortress Castra-Nicaea, (or the ancient Parembolē), whose ruins are preserved between the modern villages of Dolenci and Kažani, as well as the fortified station on the mountain pass of Gyavato.<sup>12</sup>

The last name of the kourator Peter (Pardo) is difficult to read, but according to W. Seibt it can be read as Pleures or Pleusos as well, who had the rank of protospatharios of the imperial suite. From the Pardo family another member named John is known, who in the eleventh century was a kourator of Antioch.<sup>13</sup> Usually, the kouratores or episkeptitai came from Constantinople and were representatives of the highest fiscal and judicial organs in the provinces, especially in the territories that were taken over in the time of Basil II and that were assigned to the imperial estates. The degree of importance that kouratores had in

<sup>12</sup> F. Papazoglou, *Les Villes de Macédoine à l'époque Romaine*, Athens, Paris 1988, 268-270; R. Mihajlovski, *Ante Pacem at Heraclea Lyncestis: from Constantine to Justinian, Niš and Byzantium*, vol. 5, 179-189. The roadside fortress of Nicaea (ancient Parembolē) under the Gyavato Pass was a small ecclesiastical and military centre, which is testified by the basilicas at the locality 'Suvi livadi' and the village Ramna, as well as the fortifications in the vicinity of the villages Dolenci and Gyavato. The local choroepiskopos Dionysios and the Heracleian bishop Quintilius were participants at the council of Chalcedon in 451.

<sup>13</sup> Seibt, *op. cit.*, 586.



Fig. 2 The seal of Michael Saronites

Сл. 2 Печат дукса Михајла Саронита

Byzantine administration in the eastern provinces speaks the fact that during the uprising of Nikephoros Phokas and Nikephoros Xiphias in 1022, four kourotres were killed in the areas where the uprising spread.<sup>14</sup>

**2. The seal of Michael Saronites, magistros and doux.** The second seal is a rare example that originates from a private collection. As an accidental finding the seal was discovered during the digging of the vineyard situated a few hundred meters west from the theater of Heraclea, in the foot of the hill Kordu. It was first published at the Congress of numismatics in Brussels in 1991<sup>15</sup> and completely published in 2000 in REB.<sup>16</sup> (Fig.2 The seal of Michael Saronites) This seal is an archaeological indication for the strategic importance of Heraclea and Pelagonia during the uprising of George Voytekh and Constantine Bodin in 1072. It is relatively well preserved, with a weight of 16.37 gr and a diameter of 27.5 mm. On the avers is represented the Archangel Michael in full stature, dressed in a military tunic and a sagion, with a scepter in the right and a globe in the left hand. The initials around the figure are unreadable. On the reverse there is an inscription in six lines:

+ΚΕΒΘ|.ΙΜΑΓΙΣ|.ΡΩΣΔΥΚΙ|.ΑΗΧΔΥΣΕ|.ΣΤΩΣΑΡ|ΝΙΤΗ

+ Κ(ύρι)ε β(οή)θ(ει) [Μι]χ(α)λ(α) μαγ(ισ)τ(ρ)ω (κα)ι δ(ου)κ(ι) [π]ά(σ)η(ς) Δύ(σ)ε[ω]  
ς τῶ Σαρ(ω)νίτῃ

In translation the text goes: O Lord, help Michael Saronites, the magistros and doux of the whole West.

This seal belongs to the Byzantine military leader Michael, who originated from the Armenian noble family of the Saronites. Another similar seal of Michael Saronites is published by Mordtmann and V. Zlatarski and according to this one he held a rank of vestarches and was the katepano of the theme of Bulgaria with

<sup>14</sup> Holmes, *op. cit.*, 373 n. 167, 445-447.

<sup>15</sup> Lj Mandić, R. Mihajlovski, 'Byzantine seal from Heraclea vicinity of Bitola', *XIe Congres International de Numismatique, Bruxelles 1991*, 21.

<sup>16</sup> Lj. Mandić, R. Mihajlovski, 'A XIth Century Byzantine Seal from Heraclea near Bitola, *Revue des etudes byzantines*, tome 58, (2000) 273-277 (with the entire bibliography).

a seat on the fortress of “Kale” in Skopje. He was designated as doux of the West after the failure of his predecessors Nikephoros Karantenos and Damianos Dalassenos during the uprising of George Voytekh and Constantine Bodin. In 1072 the population raised an armed rebellion, displeased by the Byzantine tax policy and the broken promises given by Byzantine rulers. Constantine Bodin of Zeta was pronounced emperor under the name Peter II, and they took over the main fortress of the doux of Skopje. After that the leaders made a tactical mistake and separated the rebel army into two groups: one part headed with Peter Bodin and George Voytekh for Nisos (Niš) and the other, headed by the duke Petrilo, moved towards Kastoria and on its way passed through Ochrid and Devol. At Kastoria the rebels were heavily defeated by the Byzantine strategoi Marianos of Ohrid and Theognostos Vourtsis accompanied by Boris David, after which Petrilo left the battlefield and fled to Zeta.

The seal of the doux Michael Saronites is probably from his letter sent to the head of the military post on the Pelagonian fortress, with logistic and operative instructions. Shortly after, at Taonion (Paun) on the Kossovo plain, with a skilled maneuver Michael Saronites defeated the rebel army and captured the leaders, thus ending the great uprising of George Voytekh and Constantine Bodin in 1072.<sup>17</sup>



Fig. 3 The seal of Theodore vestarches

Сл. 3 Печат Теодора Вестијарха

**3. The seal of Theodore Vestarches.** In 2003 the Institute of old Slavonic culture in Prilep supported the project “Ubication of medieval Bitola (VII to XIV century)”, under the leadership of the archaeologist Tome Janakievski.<sup>18</sup> The project was continued in 2004 by the Bitola archaeologist Gordana Filipovska Lazarovska. During the further archaeological excavations in Yeni-mosque the foundations were discovered of a medieval basilica that was rebuilt and expand-

<sup>17</sup> *Византијски извори за историју народа Југославије*, (Ј. Ферлуга, Б. Ферјанчић et alii) vol. 3, (1966) 177-186.

<sup>18</sup> Т. Јанакиевски, *Убикација на средновековна Битола (VII и XIV век)*, Битола 2003.

ed in the seventh, eleventh and thirteen-fourteen century, as well as the foundations of an older mosque that was built before 1553, for which reason the newly built was named as Yeni-mosque of the kadi Mahmud-efendi. Considerable archaeological finds were unearthed, including a pectoral two-sided medallion and several rings, as well as two rare Byzantine lead seals.<sup>19</sup>

The first of the two discovered seals, the lead seal of Theodore the vestarch, found during the archaeological excavations in 2008 in the northeastern part of the narthex of Yeni-mosque. The weight of the seal is 4.3 gr and the diameter is 13 mm. Although it had accumulated oxides on the surface, after the careful cleaning of the avers the representation was clearly visible of the Theotokos with Jesus on her chest. On both sides of the figure the sigla MP||ΘΥ are preserved, meaning “Mother of God”. (Fig.3, The seal of Theodore Vestarches)

On the other side over the reverse there is a readable inscription in six lines:

+ ΘΚΕΒΘ|ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟ|ΒΕΣΤΑΡ.Ο|ΤΟΣ...  
+ Θεοτόκε βοήθει Θεοδώρω βεστάρχω τῷ Σ...

The translation would be: Mother of God, help Theodore vestarches of S...<sup>20</sup>

Theodore the vestarch was a high court dignitary of the eleventh century. This position comes in between the titles of magistros and vestes and was appointed to the judges and to the Velum, who were a kind of official financial representatives.

**4. The seal of George Manges, proto-proedros and imperial secretary.** The second Byzantine lead seal belongs to George Manges and was found in the narthex of Yeni-mosque. It dates from the period after 1088 and towards the first half of the twelve century. (Fig. 4, The seal of George Manges) Although it is quite damaged by oxidation, after careful conservation of the surface one can still recognize an iconographic representation of St. George on the avers and the damaged text on the reverse, it being readable. On the avers is represented the to-the-belt figure of St. George with a characteristic curly hair, dressed in a military tunic with a round decorated shield in the left hand and with a spear in the right. On the reverse five lines of damaged text are preserved:

ΑΘΛΗΤΑ|ΣΩΖΕΤΗΝ|ΓΡΑΦΗΝ|ΤΩΜΑΓ|ΓΑΝ  
Ἀθλητά, σῶζε τὴν γραφὴν τοῦ Μαγγάν[η].<sup>21</sup>

In translation the text goes: O Athlete, preserve the writings of Manges.

<sup>19</sup> Р. Михајловски, ‘Битолската Јени џамија во светлината на најновите археолошки истражувања’, *Patrimonium.MK*, 3-4, 5-6 (2008-2009) 183-188 (with the entire bibliography).

<sup>20</sup> R. Mihajlovski, ‘Byzantine seals unearthed by the archaeological excavations at the Yeni mosque’, *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association*, vol. 6 (2010), 41-51. This seal perhaps belonged to the great-grandson of Aaron, Theodore, a strategos of Taron in Armenia.

<sup>21</sup> I express my gratitude to the colleague W. Seibt about the clarification of this quite damaged lead seal. My first interpretation of this seal was connected to the Manglavite guard, but after the careful reading and analysis it was re-read and reinterpreted.



Fig. 4 The seal of George Manges

Сл. 4 Печат Георгија Мананеса, прото-проедра

At the beginning the word “athlete” is a synonym of St. George, the martyr, but the metrical verse refers to George Manges, the proto-proedros of the Council at Blachernae palace in Constantinople in 1094, and the secretary of emperor Alexios I Komnenos. He is mentioned for the first time already in 1081 during the negotiations led between Alexios Komnenos and his son-in-law Nikephoros Melissenos around the taking over of the throne in Constantinople. He was promoted to the rank of proto-proedros - chief president, dikaiophylax and questor of the Council in the Blachernae palace that was held in 1094, and later George Manges was appointed as a personal secretary of the emperor. The family name Manges is connected to the monastery of St. George Manganon in Constantinople. But according to the writings of princess Anna Komnena, who didn't sympathize much her father Alexios' secretary, George Manges is characterized as a turncoat.<sup>22</sup>

Both seals from the Yeni-mosque are related to the basilical construction unearthed by the archaeological research, pointing to the fact that there was an office or an archive with an ecclesiastical or administrative character. This object is in the immediate vicinity of the church St. Demetrios the Great-martyr, which was in the Ottoman period the only and main church in the Christian quarter Dabiživ, (later known as Kilise mahallesi in the district of Varoš) on the right side of the Dragor, in whose vicinity were placed the residences of the bishops of Bitola.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> J.-C. Cheynet, C. Morisson, W. Seibt, *Sceaux byzantin de la collection Henry Seyrig*, Paris 1991, 206; I. Jordanov, *Corpus of Byzantine seals from Bulgaria, Byzantine Seals with Family names*, vol. 2, Sofia 2006, 263.

<sup>23</sup> Г. Филиповска Лазаровска, Археолошки наоди од XIV и XV век од црквата Свети Димитрија во Битола, *Битола низ вековите*, 3, (2000) 15-20; Р. Михајловски, Битолскиот соборен храм Свети Димитриј низ вековите и неговата обнова во 1830 година, *Битола низ вековите*, том 10, (2007) 43; Idem, Прилози за проучувањето на храмот ‘Свети Димитриј во Битола, *Пелагонитуса*, том 7-8, (1999) 112-124; А. Стерјовски, Постоеле ли населби Варош и Подградец во Битола, *Битола низ вековите*, том 1 (1998) 39-44.



**5. The seal of the Pelagonian bishop Stephanos in 1150.** This is a rare preserved ecclesiastical seal used by the bishop of Pelagonia and published by V. Laurent in 1965.<sup>24</sup> On the avers the figure of the Mother of God sitting on a throne is represented, while on both sides are found the letters ΜΡ||ΘΥ – ‘Mother of God’. In the Komnenian period the local cult of Theotokos Pelagonitissa was established that was revered in the region and throughout the Byzantine world, especially during the period of Palaeologian dynasty.<sup>25</sup>

According to V. Laurent on the reverse of the seal a metrical inscription was preserved in six lines:

+ΠΕΛΑΓΟ |ΝΙΑΚΤΥΑΕ |ΔΡΟΝΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΝ |ΠΡΑΞΙΣΒΕΒΕ  
|ΟΙΣΚΕΛΟΓΟΝΣ |ΘΥΝΛΟΓΕ

+ Πελαγονίας τοῦ προέδρου Στεφάνου πράξ(ε)ις βεβ(αι)οῖς κ(αι) λόγους, Θεοῦ Λόγε.

In translation it goes: O Word of God, may you confirm the deeds and the words of the bishop of Pelagonia Stephanos.

This sigillographic document preserved the name and the title of the bishop of Pelagonia Stephanos, the only known bishop of the twelve-century.<sup>26</sup> In the correspondence of Theophylact of Ochrid the bishop was named as Pelagonian, although in the already mentioned imperial chrysobull of emperor Basil II, he was the bishop “of Bitola”.<sup>27</sup> However, throughout the centuries the name “Pelagonia” remained as a designation of the orthodox bishopric, while the seat was in Bitola or Monastiri-Manastir, whose name was accepted in Byzantine and Ottoman ecclesiastical appellation.<sup>28</sup>

These five important seals fill the space in Byzantine history of the town of Bitola and the fortress of Pelagonia, as well as medieval Heraclea, besides all these toponyms being often intermingled. The later Ottoman name Toli-Manastir,<sup>29</sup> which relates to the previous compound by shortening, (Bi)Toli-Manastir has both Slavic and Byzantine origin.

At the end a complex hypothesis proposes itself about the medieval town and the stronghold of Bitola. The palace of Gabriel Radomir was according to Skylitzes out of the fortress and they would be somewhere around the bazaar of

<sup>24</sup> V. Laurent, *Le Corpus de sceaux de l'empire byzantine*, vol. V, V2, Paris 1965; A. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, vol. I, Padova 1988, 441.

<sup>25</sup> R. Mihajlovski, The Cult of the Mother of God (Pelagonitissa) in the Bitola region, *Byzantinoslavica*, vol. 62/1, 271-288.

<sup>26</sup> Р. Михајловски, Преглед на христијанската историја на Пелагонија и архиепископите хераклејско-пелагониски до 1767 година, *Прилози на ДНУ-Битола*, том 54-55 (1993) 8.

<sup>27</sup> *Византијски извори за историју народа Југославије*, (Ј. Ферлуга, Б. Ферјанчић et alii) vol.3, (1966), 354-355.

<sup>28</sup> W.M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, vol. III, Amsterdam 1967, 319.

<sup>29</sup> П. Скок, Битољ, *Гласник српског научног друштва*, том XII, (1933) 214-215. According to P. Skok, the name ‘Toli’ was the result of the Slavonic locative, but only the first syllable was left out, because in the Persian language the preposition ‘bi’ means ‘without’, and in Arabic it means ‘with, at, in’, so that in this stage of the Ottoman Turkish language the name Toli Manastir was accepted. This form of the name later entered also in the spheres of the French and the German language. There are stages in Byzantine Greek too: the latter Μοναστήριον, while the former form is Βούτελις or Βουτέλιον. The Crusaders latinized its name in Botella or Butella.



Fig. 5 Old photo of the Bedesten and the market

Сл. 5 Стара фотографија са Безистеном и чаршијом

Bitola near the Yeni mosque. But most probably the palace of emperor Gabriel was in the place of the modern Ottoman Bedesten, or eventually in the modern bazaar complex. Already before the reconstruction and revitalization of the Bedesten of Bitola it had been determined that in the eastern part there were foundations of an older construction which may be the older Bedesten building built in the fifteen century by the Ottoman vizier Davud Paşa Üzüncarşili on the remains of the former palace of emperor Gabriel Radomir.<sup>30</sup> (Fig.5, Old photo of the Bedesten and the market)

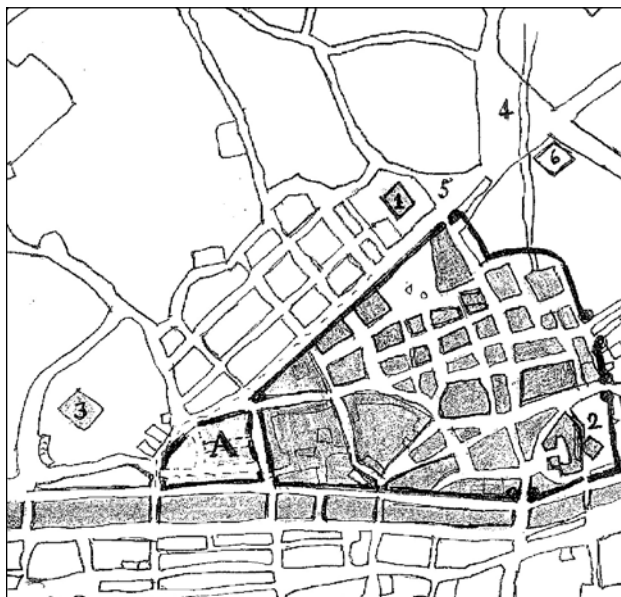
The name of the town, Obitel, (Обителъ) besides meaning a monastery brotherhood has several other meanings in Church Slavonic, but it is also preserved in Old Russian. It can also signify a bishopric or the region subordinated to the bishop, but it can mean a parish or a dwelling place as well.<sup>31</sup> Already in the time of the pious Bulgarian emperor Peter (927-965), on this location had founded a monastic community (as a continuation of the Heracleian, whose epis-

<sup>30</sup> Р. Петкова, 'Битола во XIV и XV век', *Битола низ вековите*, том 3 (2000) 21-25; З. Алтипармаков, Н. Георгиева, *Стара битолска чаршија, историско урбан развој, урбано архитектонски карактеристики, (Le Vieux Bazaar de Bitola, Histoire du développement urbain, Caracteristiques architecturales et urbain)*, Битола/Bitola 2013, 18-19; И. Емин, *Евлија Челебија во Македонија*, Скопје 2007, 22.

<sup>31</sup> И.И. Срезневский, *Материалы словаря древне-русского языка по письменным памяткам*, т. 2, Санктпетербург 1895, 511; С. Романски, *Имената на някои македонски градове, Битоля, Македонски преглед*, кн. 4, София, 1929, 63-70.

Fig. 6 The Fortress and the palace (A), 1. Sungur Cavus mosque, 2) Hacı Bey mosque, 3) Ishakkiye mosque, 4) Sheep market, 5) Wood market, 6) Deboy hamam.

Сл. 6 Мапа тврђаве и палате (A); 1) џамија Сунгур Чавуш; 2) џамија Хаџи Беј; 3) џамија Исакија; 4) Овчја пијаца; 5) Дрвени пазар; 6) хамам Дебој



copate was inscribed on the altar conch of St. Achilles, Prespa, in the eleventh century) for the struggle against the widespread in the region Bogomil religious movement.<sup>32</sup>

According to archaeological evidence the monasteries and churches of Bitola were outside the town walls on the right side of the Dragor where the district of 'Varoš' was located, but on the left river side they were located towards the town's road artery, today's Ilindenska street. Part of the suburb spread towards At-Pazar and underneath is still preserved the toponym of Şeheraltı. The very stronghold encompassed the modern Old bazaar from the Bedesten to the Green market, from Lenski most to the street of Filip II Makedonski, where the entrance gate was, to the open ground where once the Sungur Çavuş-bey mosque was. Because of that on that location was found the marble slab of John Vladislav, and it is not brought there, as most researchers supposed it.<sup>33</sup> It can be determined that here was one of the entrance gates in the fortress of John Vladislav, because before the demolishing of this part of the bazaar in order to build a residential complex there existed great gates of an Inn that followed the ancient structure. And the very mosque Sungur Çavuş was rebuilt in 1435 and was located a hundred meters to the north, near the Wood market (lower) and

<sup>32</sup> D. Obolensky, *The Bogomils, a study in Balkan Neo-Manicheism*, Twickenham 1948, 112; R. Mihajlovski, 'Bogomils on the Via Egnatia and in the Valley of Pelagonia: The Geography of a Dualist Belief', *Byzantinoslavica*, vol. 72, (2014) 152-170.

<sup>33</sup> И. Микулчиќ, *Средновековни градови и тврдини во Македонија*, кн. 4, Скопје 1996, 139-142; К. Ациевски, *Пелагонија во Средниот век, (од доаѓањето на Словените до паѓањето по турска власт)*, Скопје 1994, 52-53; Е. Манева, Прилог кон решавање на убицијата насредновековниот град Битола, *Историја*, том XXII/2, Скопје 1986, 267-274; С. Тодоровски, *Археолошки наоди од среден век во ареалот на Битола*, Скопје 2002, 27-28.



Fig. 7 Map of the “Kodru” hill and the fortress

Сл. 7 Карта „Кодру“ брдо и тврђава

the Sheep market.<sup>34</sup> So, the fortress of John Vladislav should be searched for in the foundations of the old bazaar complex, while the slab of John Vladislav was likely placed on the entrance in the fortress near of the Sungur Çavuş mosque. The names of the market places, such as the Sheep, Wood, Wheat, Green, Horse and Linen market are still preserved; all surround the Bitola fortress walls, as it was common in the Middle Ages. (Fig. 6, The Fortress and the palace (A), 1. Sungur Cavus mosque, 2) Hacı Bey mosque, 3) Ishakkiye mosque, 4) Sheep market, 5) Wood market, 6) Deboy hammam.)

In 2004 under the surveillance of the archaeologist Gordana Filipovska Lazarovska were conducted archaeological excavations during which on the locality west of the market were found massive wall foundations that further confirm the aforementioned assumptions.<sup>35</sup> It is possible that somewhere here ended the town wall or that there existed some larger building of the fortification. In the travelogue of William of Tyre, the emissary of the king Amalrich of Jerusalem writes that William met the Byzantine emperor Manuel Komnenos in 1153 in the province of Pelagonia, in the town of Bitola (in provincia Pelagonia, in civitate quae vulgo dicitur Butella).<sup>36</sup> According to the description the meeting took place at the location of medieval Bitola, a developed town and episcopal see in the province of Pelagonia.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> P. Mihajlovski, Неколку османлиски споменици од Битола, *Културно наследство*, 26-27, (2001) 65-70.

<sup>35</sup> I would like to express my special gratitude to the colleague Gordana Filipovska Lazarovska for her help on the two seals found in the Yeni mosque and for information about the archaeological findings from the Green market.

<sup>36</sup> E. Babcock and A.C. Krey (translated by), *A History of Deeds done beyond the sea, by William Archbishop of Tyre*, vol. II, New York 1943, 347-349.

<sup>37</sup> T. Томоски, Градиштето на средновековната Пелагонија, *Македонија низ*

The Byzantine military base of the Komnenoi known by the name Pelagonia should be differentiated from the Heracleian fortified acropolis, but also from the medieval town stronghold of Bitola. The foundations of this fortification are today hidden on the site where the radar of the Yugoslav Army military camp was once installed. This hill bears the name Kodru, a toponym that in the Thracian and Vlach language means forest, hill, square<sup>38</sup> that dominates over the hill Toumbeki (Tumbe kafe) and the remains of Heraclea Lyncestis. In the Ottoman period this place was also known as “Tabiye”, meaning fortress in Turkish, a fact noted down by the local Ottoman historian Mehmed Tevfik.<sup>39</sup> Probably the nineteenth-century the stone material from the fortress was reused for the construction of the massive Ottoman military barracks, the military school and the powder storage, “Jepane”, as well as the boundaries of the surrounding vineyards.

According to the writings of the Byzantine chronicler Niketas Choniates, on this hill south of Bitola was placed the military base and hunting camp of the Byzantine emperors Alexios I and Manuel I Komnenoi. This military point served the Byzantine emperors for intelligence on the movement of enemy armies. From the surroundings recruitment of soldiers was conducted and the military was supplied with cattle, grain and fodder.<sup>40</sup> (Fig. 7, Map of the “Kodru” hill and the fortress)

The byzantine scholar P. Magdalino writes on the period of the rule of the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos, when the travelers from Western Europe voyaged along the Via Egnatia across the cities of Dyrrachium, Pelagonia and Thessalonike, for Constantinople. The ambassador of Frederic Barbarossa, the monk Wibald of Stabulo suddenly passed away in Pelagonia in 1158. In the correspondence the fortress of Pelagonia is referred to as ‘Castro Pelagoniae’.<sup>41</sup>

With centuries this post together with Heraclea was supplied with water by the old Roman aqueduct from the mountain Neolitsa.<sup>42</sup> On some places one

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вековите, градови, тердини, комуникации, Скопје 1999, 40.

<sup>38</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Romanian\\_words\\_of\\_possible\\_Dacian\\_origin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Romanian_words_of_possible_Dacian_origin)

<sup>39</sup> М. Тефик, Кратка историја битољског вилајета, *Братство XXVII*, (превод Г. Елезовић), Београд 1933, 212.

<sup>40</sup> Choniates Nicetas, *Historia Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*, vol. XI/2, Berolini i Novi Eboraci 1975, 69; A. Kazhdan, ‘Pelagonia’, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. I, New York, Oxford (1991) 1619.

<sup>41</sup> *Fontes rerum Byzantinarum*, fasc. 1 et 2, ed. W. Pregel, (St Petersburg 1892-1917, repr. Leipzig 1982) 315-316; P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180*, Cambridge 1993, 137.

<sup>42</sup> The latest field research by the colleague Zoran Altiparmakov from the Bitola Museum confirms the existence of this fortress, which in its southern part has a rampart wall with polygonal towers. I thank him for the informative conversation. One should also mention here the six kilometers aqueduct that conduit from the mountain Neolitsa and supplied Heraclea and its fortifications with fresh water. See: Р. Михајловски, Ј. Роепендовски, Јустинијанска епископска фонтана од Хераклеја Линкестис, *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica*, vol. 20 (2012) 406-407.

This text is dedicated to the memory of the great friend of Heraclea and Bitola, prof. Jerzy Rospedowski.

I am very grateful to Jovica Grozdanovski and Michael Mihajlovski for their help and

can see the foundations of the polygonal defense towers. The position of the fortress of Pelagonia is ideal: it keeps under surveillance the Egnatian road and settlements of Bitola and Heraclea.

As a conclusion remains that the fort of Pelagonia – the Byzantine military camp and Heraclea with its acropolis are a separate unit from the town fort of Bitola at the Dragor river, that in the different historical conditions had various administrative, military and religious significance. The so far analyzed lead seals contribute in explaining more completely the gap in the history of the episcopal town of Bitola, of the pass Gyavato and the military base Pelagonia within the complex research around the locating of medieval Bitola and Byzantine camp of Pelagonia. The need persists to conduct further archaeological explorations at the designated sites, with hope of confirming the aforementioned suppositions and conclusions.

Роберт Михајловски  
ЦИРКУЛАЦИЈА ВИЗАНТИЈСКИХ ПЕЧАТА КАО ПРИЛОГ УБИКАЦИЈИ  
СРЕДЊЕВЕКОВНОГ БИТОЉА

Неколико печата пронађених последњих деценија у Јени џамији у Битољу, затим у околини Хераклеје Линкестис, у колекцији Мордтман и у Музеју Јанине у Епиру уносе нову светлост у историју средњовековног епископског града Битоља. Византијски историчар Јован Скилица бележи да је после смрти цара Самуила у октобру 1014. године, византијски император Василије II Бугароубица умарширао у Битољ (ἐν Βοτελλῶ), запаливши палату новог цара Гаврила Радомира, док је тврђава остала нетакнута захваљујући брзој војној операцији. Битољско утврђење је било друга престоница за царе Гаврила Радомира и Јована Владислава, док је Охрид остала главна црквена и царска престоница.

**Печат Петра Парда, куратора Битоља и Ђавата.** 2007, године Вернер Заибт је објавио печат из музеја у Јанини. Сачувани печат има текст на обе стране и потиче из прве половине XI века. На аверсу има текст у четири реда:

+ ΚΕΡΕΤΟΣΟΔΟΝΛΟΠΕΤΡΟΑΠΑΘ

+ Κ(ύρι)ε β(οή)θ(ει) τ(ῶ) σ(ῶ) δούλω Πέτρῳ (πρωτο)πλαθ[αρίῳ].

На реверсу текст у четири реда:

ΚΒΚΥΡΒΗΤΟΛΗΝΓΙΒΑ.ΤΟΠΑ.

κ(αὶ) Β(ασιλικῶ) κουρ(άτορι)Βητόλ(ης) καὶ Ἡγιβά(του) τῶ Πά(ρδῳ)

У преводу: *Помози Господе твоје робу Петару (Пардо) протоспатарију и царском куратору Битоља и Ђавата*

Печат припада царском куратору, протоспатарију Петару (Пардо а може да се прочита и као Плеурес) главном управнику финансија Битоља и Ђавата.

Други печат из приватне колекције је пронађен западно од хераклејског театра, у подножју брда Кордо. На аверсу је стојећа фигура Арханђела Михаила у ратничкој одећи са скиптром и глобусом у рукама. На реверсу има текст у шест редова:

+ΚΕΒΘ|.ΙΜΑΓΙC|.ΡΩCΔVKI|.ΑΗCΔVCE|.CTΩCΑΡ|NITH

English translation.

Contact address: Robert Mihajlovski, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 3086. E-mail: r.mihajlovski@latrobe.edu.au.

+ Κ(ύρι)ε β(οή)θ(ει) [Μι]χαήλ μαγίσ[τ]ρω (καί) δουκί [π]άσης Δύσε[ω]ς τῷ Σαρ(ω)  
νίτη

У преводу: *Господе помози Михаилу Сарониту, магистру и дуксу целог Запада.*

Печат припада Михаилу из јерменске племићке породице Саронита. Михаил Саронит је био вестарх и катепан теме Бугарска, касније и дукс Запада после неуспеха Никифора Карантина и Дамјана Даласина у гушењу устанка Војтеха и Бодина 1072. године.

Године 2003., започео је пројекат “Убикација средњовековног Битоља” под руководством археолога Томе Јанакиевског. Пројекат је наставила у 2004. години археолог Гордана Филиповска Лазаровска откривши темеље средњовековне базилике која је дограђивана у XI и XIII-XIV веку, као и темеље једне старије цамије испод Јени цамије у Битољу. Откривена су и два византијска печата: оловни печат Тодора Вестиарха, откривен 2008. године у нартксу Јени цамије. Тежина печата је 4,3 грама, а пречник је 13мм. На аверсу је Богородица са Христом а на реверсу натпис у шест реда:

+ ΘΚΕΒΘ|ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟ|ΒΕΣΤΑΡ.Ο|ΤΟΣ...

+ Θεοτόκε βοήθει Θεοδώρω βεστάρχω τῷ Σ...

У преводу: *Мајко божја помогни Теодору Вестарху из С...*

Теодор Вестарх је имао висок војни ранг и временски припада XI веку.

Други откривен оловни печат припадао је Георгију Манганесу и пронађен је у нартксу цамије. Датује се после 1088. године или у прву половину XII века. На аверсу је допојасна фигура Св. Георгија коврцаве косе у ратничком оделу са округлим штитом у левој руци и копљем у десној. На реверсу има пет редова текста који гласи:

ΑΘΛΗΤΑ|CΩΖΕΤΗΝ|ΓΡΑΦΗΝ|ΤΩΜΑΓ|ΓΑΝ

Ἀθλητά, σῶζε τὴν γραφὴν τοῦ Μαγγάν[η].

У преводу: *Мученику (Св. Георгије), сачувај Манганесова писанија*

Метрички стих се односи на Георгија Манганеса, прото-проедара на Собору у Влахернској палати у Константинопољу 1094. године и секретара императора Алексија I Комнена.

Печат пелагонијског епископа Стефана из 1150. године је редак црквени печат владике Пелагоније који је публикувао В. Лоран 1965. године. На аверсу је фигура Богородице која седи на престолу. У Комненском периоду локални култ Богородице Пелагонитисе је раширен у региону и византиском свету.

На реверсу печата је сочуван метрички натпис у шест редова:

+ ΠΕΛΑΓΟ | ΝΙΑΣΤΥΑΕ | ΔΡΟΥΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΝ | ΠΡΑΞΙΣΒΕΒΕ | ΟΙΚΣΕΛΟΓΟΝC  
| ΘΥΛΟΓΕ

+ Πελαγονίας τοῦ προέδρου Στεφάνου πράξ(ε)ις βεβ(αι)οῖς καί λόγους, Θεοῦ Λόγε.

У преводу: + *Владика пелагонијски Стефан делује и потврђује проповеди о Божјем слову*

На овом сигилографском документу сочувано је име и титула Стефана епископа Пелагоније из XII века.

Аутор истражује локацију средњовековног града Битоља и војно утврђење Комнена Пелагонију, које је било близу Хераклеје. Битољска градска тврђава, која се спомиње на “Битољској плочи” цара Јована Владислава из 1015-1016. године пронађена у цамији Сунгур Чавуш беј (1453), требало би да се тражи у старом битољском чаршијском комплексу на речици Драгор. Војна база и ловачки камп Комнена тврђава Пелагонија, требало би да је изнад Хераклеје, на брду Кодру.

Овој рад о убикацији средњовековног Битоља и Пелагоније, посвећен је сенима професора Јержи Роспендовског.

