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Sunoikisis Digital Classics

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► **To cite this version:**

Alessio Sopracasa. Sunoikisis Digital Classics. École thématique. Text-Bearing Objects 2, <https://github.com/SunoikisisDC/SunoikisisDC-2019-2020/wiki/Summer2020-Session-4#session-3-text-bearing-objects-2>, France. 2020. halshs-03950835

HAL Id: halshs-03950835

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03950835v1>

Submitted on 22 Jan 2023

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Digital (Byzantine) Sigillography

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Sunoikisis Digital Classics Summer 2020
Text-Bearing Objects 2 - April 30, 2020

What a Byzantine seal is ...

a small round object

mostly made of lead

used to authenticate a document

often bearing name and functions of the issuer + the chosen iconography

the documents which the seals were attached to are today lost, hence, the seals are studied *per se*

... and how to produce it

Engraved surface (negative)
One of the 2 faces of the
future seal

Engraved surface (negative)
One of the 2 faces of the
future seal



Matrix or *boulloterion* for Byzantine seals
(Harvard Art Museum, 1951.31.6)

... and how to produce it



A blank

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future seal

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One of the 2 faces of the
future seal



Matrix or *boulloterion* for Byzantine seals
(Harvard Art Museum, 1951.31.6)



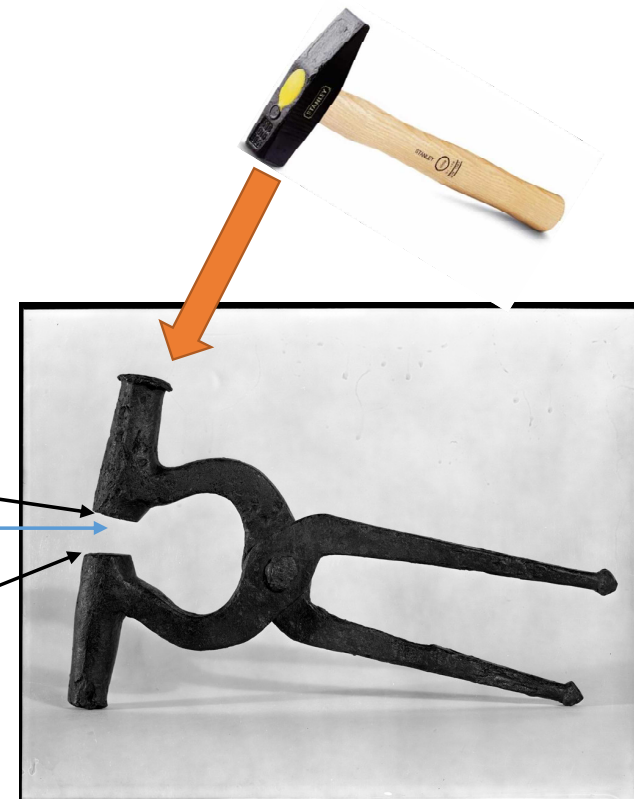
... and how to produce it



A blank

Engraved surface (negative)
One of the 2 faces of the
future seal

Engraved surface (negative)
One of the 2 faces of the
future seal

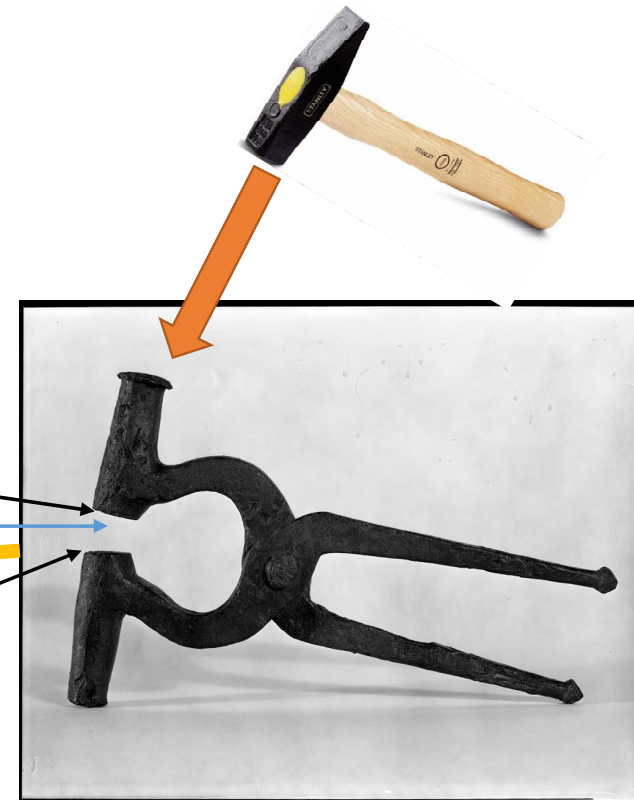


Matrix or *boulloterion* for Byzantine seals
(Harvard Art Museum, 1951.31.6)

... and how to produce it



A blank



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One of the 2 faces of the
future seal

Matrix or *bouloterion* for Byzantine seals
(Harvard Art Museum, 1951.31.6)

An impression has been left on the blank
and an image and text bearing object has been produced



obverse



reverse

3 different examples of what is currently done with the seals



RTI Image Gallery

Interact with advanced seal imagery.



Contributing Repositories & Sources

Search 40598 seal records from the following sources:

Publications and Projects

- Catalogue of British Seal-Dies in the British Museum
- Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum
- Catalogue of Seals in the Public Record Office
- Catalogue of Seals in the Treasury of the Dean and Chapter of Durham
- Portable Antiquities Scheme
- Seals in Medieval Wales and the Welsh Marches
- The National Archives, Kew, Catalogue of Seals

Repositories

- Bangor University, Archives and Special Collections
- British Library
- British Museum
- Canterbury Cathedral Archives
- Cheshire Archives and Local Studies
- Durham Cathedral Library
- Durham County Record Office
- East Sussex Record Office
- Gwent Archives
- Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon Record Office
- Hereford Cathedral Archives
- Herefordshire Archive Service
- Huntington Library
- London Metropolitan Archives
- Museum of London



USING DIGISIG

seal

Find a particular 'seal' by entering its DIGISIG *identification number*, eg: '10213781'. The seal information page offers references to descriptions of the seal and a list of examples (impressions, matrices, casts).

item

An 'item' is a document or object in an archive or museum. To search for an item, enter the item's *shelfmark*, eg: 'DL10/87', or a *location*, eg: 'Westminster'. The location is provided by the repository which holds the item, and may refer to where the item originates or where it was discovered. On the item information page you discover what seal impressions, matrices, and casts are components of the item.

description

A 'description' is an entry in a seal catalogue. You can search descriptions in three ways. Each description can be located by its *identifier*, eg: 'P38'. Descriptions can also be searched by entering a *name*, eg: 'Henry of Grosmont'. Alternatively, you can search the text that the cataloguer has used to describe the seal's *motif*, eg: 'griffin'. The description information page provides links to related descriptions and to the seal information page.

impression/matrix/cast

Seals survive in different physical forms. A matrix is a stamp used to make a seal impression. A seal impression is an object imprinted with a seal matrix. A cast is a modern copy of a seal impression.

<http://digisig.org/>: an enhanced and searchable version (with photos where possible) of British archives' and libraries' catalogues

BASE NUMÉRIQUE DES SCEAUX CONSERVÉS EN FRANCE

Entrez le nom d'un sigillant, une fonction ou un titre



Rechercher

LE PROJET SIGILLA

Sigilla est la concrétisation d'un outil de recherche simple rapide et unifiée au travers de toutes les sources sigillographiques françaises. Le projet a la volonté de considérer le sceau dans sa sérialité, et dans son contexte et développe une démarche pluridisciplinaire qui associe la diplomatique, l'emblématique et l'épigraphie. Le projet est conduit par un consortium d'établissements qui réunit des universités, des services d'archives et des établissements de recherches. Son accès est libre et ouvert à tous les possesseurs de sources sigillographiques.

<http://www.sigilla.org/>

A more elaborated search tool
based on French archives' and
libraries' catalogues

Search the Catalogue

More filters

General Search

- all items in current results

Search

Century

- 10th (2184)
 11th (5408)
 12th (2182)
 13th (2109)
 14th (614)
 15th (21)
 4th (1)
 5th (213)
 6th (2171)
 7th (2182)
 8th (2111)
 9th (2128)

Location

All (11884) ▾

Title

All (11884) ▾

Office



https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals#b_start=0: ongoing catalogue of the Byzantine seals collection at Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington D.C.

Anastasios archiatros (tenth/eleventh century)



Obverse

Patriarchal cross (X on lower crossing) on three steps. Fleurons rise from the base to the upper crossbar. Border of dots.



Reverse

Inscription of four lines, a cross above. Border of dots.

+
·ER,Θ,
·ACTA
·APXI
·TPO

[Κ(ύρι)ε βο(ή)θ(ει) [Αν]αστα(σ(ίω)) ἀρχι(α)τρο

ACCESSION NUMBER	BZS.1958.106.5338
DIAMETER	19.0 mm

Translation

Κύριε βοήθει Αναστασίω ἀρχιατρο.

Lord, help Anastasios, head surgeon.

Commentary

The rare term *archiatros* indicates that the owner of this seal was "head surgeon."

SigiDoc is...

...an XML-based & TEI-compliant tool and encoding standard for the digital edition of Byzantine seals and the digital conversion of paper-published editions

From a SigiDoc point of view, a seal is:

➤ an object → numismatics

➤ a text → epigraphy
(numismatics)

➤ an iconography → numismatics

A major difference: unlike for coins, usually there are not **series** of inscriptions and seals



XML

<https://tei-c.org/>



EpiDoc

+

EFES

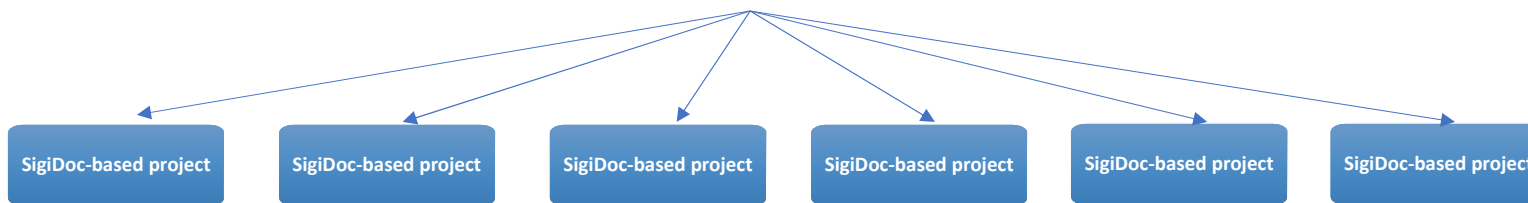
+

**Specific and original work
on sigillographic standards
of edition**

<https://github.com/EpiDoc/EFES/wiki>

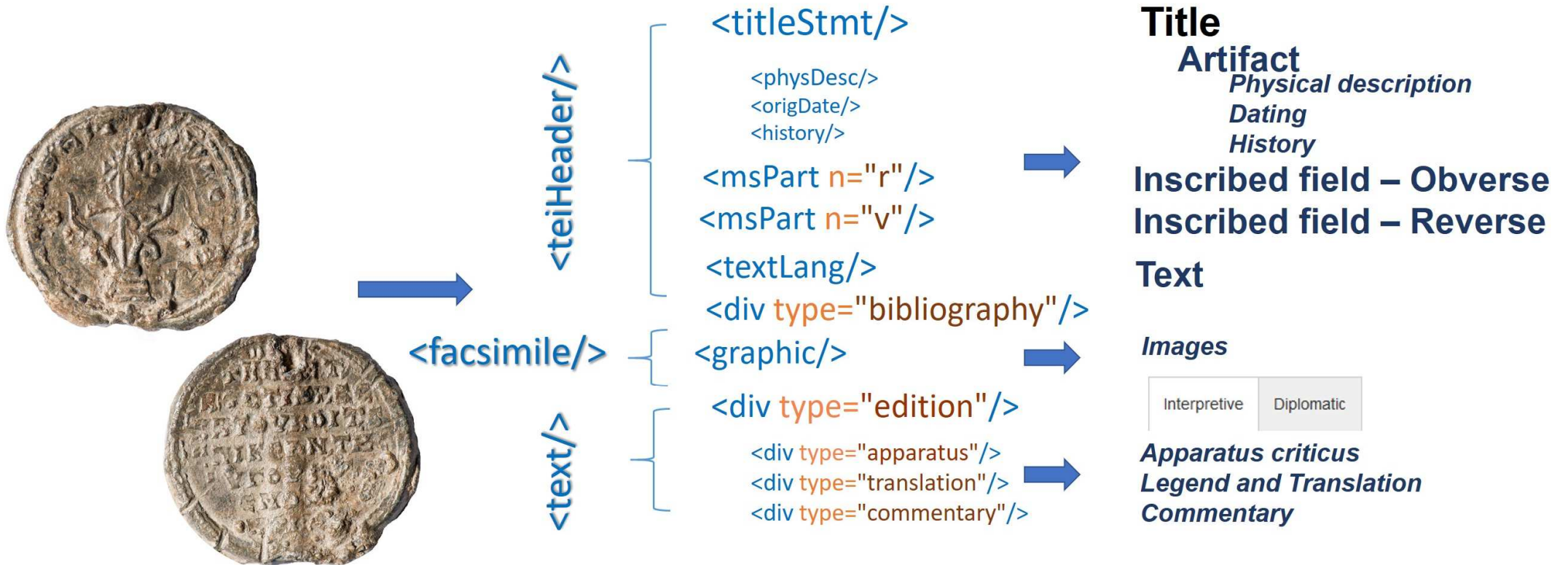


SigiDoc



**Virtually unified
sigillographic corpus through
common search interface**

The structure of a Sigidoc XML file: the template for the edition of a Byzantine seal



From the seal (left) to the EFES-generated webpage (right), through the SigiDoc XML template (middle)

SigiDoc (adapted from EpiDoc)

Produces XML files containing all the information, esp.:

- Metadata
- Legend (text)
- Indexing information



EFES

- Organisation of data (indices, search form, ...)
- Visualisation and publication: draft of the final web page

An exemple of how SigiDoc encodes a seal's text (i.e. a legend)

Seal of Oursel (Roussel) de Bailleul, proedros and stratopedarches

```
<div type="textpart" subtype="sigla" n="obv" rend="linear">
```

```
<ab>
```

```
<cb n="a"/>
```

```
<rs type="marianSigla" ref="marianSigla.xml#Μήτηρ_Θεοῦ">
```

```
<w lemma="μήτηρ" lemmaRef="http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=mhthr&la=greek">
```

```
<expan><abbr>Μ</abbr><ex>ήτη</ex><abbr>ρ</abbr></expan>
```

```
</w>
```

```
<cb n="b"/>
```

```
<rs type="divinity" ref="divinities.xml#Θεός">
```

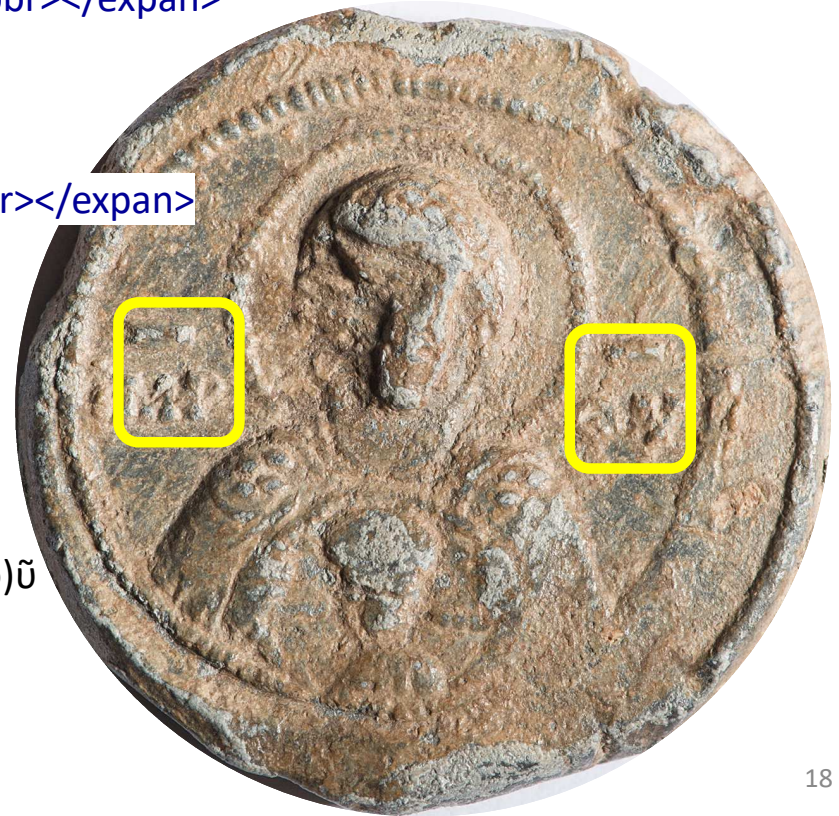
```
<expan><abbr>Θ</abbr><ex>εο</ex><abbr>ῦ</abbr></expan>
```

```
</rs>
```

```
</rs>
```

```
</ab>
```

```
</div>
```



ΜΡ-Θῦ

Μ(ήτη)ρ Θε(εο)ῦ

Seal of Oursel (Roussel) de Bailleul, proedros and stratopedarches

```
<div type="textpart" subtype="face" n="rev" rend="linear">
```

```
<ab>
```

```
<lg type="legendsCases" ref="legendsCases.xml#Dat">
```

+ΘΚΕΡΟ
ΗΘΕΙΥΡΣΕ
ΛΗΠΡΟΕΔΡΩ
ΣΤΡΑΤΟΠΕ
ΔΑΡΧΗ

+ Θ(εοτό)κε βο-
ήθει Ούρσέ-
λη προέδρω
(καὶ) στρατοπε-
δάρχη



Seal of Oursel (Roussel) de Bailleul, proedros and stratopedarches (1070/72-1078)

<lb n="1"/>

+

<rs type="invocation" ref="invocation.xml#Invoc5">

<rs type="marianAppellative" ref="marianAppellatives.xml#Θεοτόκος">

<expan><abbr>Θ</abbr><ex>εοτό</ex><abbr>κε</abbr></expan>

</rs>

<w lemma="βοηθέω" lemmaRef="http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=bohqe&la=greek">

βο

<lb n="2" break="no"/>ήθει

</w>

</rs>



Seal of Oursel (Roussel) de Bailleul, proedros and stratopedarches

```
<persName type="attested" ref="prosopography.xml#PBWRoussel61">  
  <name type="forename">  
    Οὐρσέ  
  <lb n="3" break="no"/>  
    λη  
  </name>  
</persName>
```



Seal of Oursel (Roussel) de Bailleul, proedros and stratopedarches

`<rs type="dignity" ref="dignities.xml#πρόεδρος">`
 πρόεδρω
`</rs>`



Seal of Oursel (Roussel) de Bailleul, proedros and stratopedarches

<lb n="4"/>

<w lemma="καί" lemmaRef="http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=kai&la=greek">
<expan><ex>καί</ex></expan>
</w>



Seal of Oursel (Roussel) de Bailleul, proedros and stratopedarches

<rs type="officeMilitary" ref="officeMilitary.xml#στρατοπεδάρχης">

στρατοπε

<lb n="5" break="no"/>

δάρχη

</rs>



The iconography (in progress)

- a major challenge
- SigiDoc will also come with an iconography description standard specifically designed for Byzantine sigillography
- the principle is:



- data are organised in **hierarchical order**, from the largest categories (person, animal, cross, etc.) to the smallest details (objects held by persons, clothes, attributes, etc.)
- the system is **extensible**

The iconography (in progress)

Which is the best way to handle and display it?

XML to visualise the description inside the seal's edition?

A drop-down menu with constrained choices for a search interface?

The iconography (in progress)

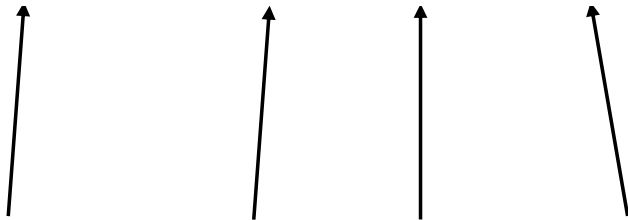
Animal

DESCRIPTION

Number	Class	Species	Stance
1	winged	eagle	flying right

ATTRIBUTES

Object	Field	Appearance	Gesture
ribbon aroundNeck	cross betweenWings	curvedWings	wingsUplifted upward



These terms look weird simply because the stylesheet takes the attributes' values in the XML file

- The elements and the attributes of the descriptive XML files (partly represented here in green) are also the fields for a future **search form**

