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'AKKO III

THE 1991–1998 EXCAVATIONS

THE LATE PERIODS

PART 2: THE KNIGHTS' HOTEL SITE,
THE MESSIKA PLOT AND MISCELLANEOUS STUDIES



DANNY SYON AND AYELET TATCHER

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Back Cover: The sea at 'Akko (photographer, Daphna Stern); inset: ampulla and molds from the Crusader-period pilgrim-souvenir workshop (photographer, Danny Syon)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ABSA	<i>The Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
ADAJ	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan</i>
AIHV	Association internationale pour l'histoire du verre
AJPA	<i>American Journal of Physical Anthropology</i>
'Akko I	E.J. Stern. 'Akko I: <i>The 1991–1998 Excavations; The Crusader-Period Pottery</i> (IAA Reports 51). Jerusalem.
'Akko II	M. Hartal, D. Syon, E. Stern and A. Tatcher. 'Akko II: <i>The 1991–1998 Excavations: The Early Periods</i> (IAA Reports 60). Jerusalem.
ANSMN	<i>American Numismatic Society Museum Notes</i>
ARCE	American Research Center in Egypt
BAIAS	<i>Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society</i>
BAMA	British Academy Monographs in Archaeology
BAR Int. S.	British Archaeological Reports (International Series)
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BMMA	<i>Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i>
BSAE	British School of Archaeology in Egypt
BSAJ	<i>British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem</i>
CIEPO	Comité International des Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes
DAFI	<i>Cahiers de la délégation archéologique française en Iran</i>
DOC 3	P. Grierson. <i>Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection 3: Leo III to Nicephorus III. 717–1081</i> . Washington, D.C. 1973
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
ESI	<i>Excavations and Surveys in Israel</i>
HA	<i>Ḥadashot Arkheologiyot</i>
HA–ESI	<i>Ḥadashot Arkheologiyot–Excavations and Surveys in Israel</i> (from 1999)
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IGLSyr	<i>Inscriptions Grecs et Latines de la Syrie</i>
IJNA	<i>International Journal of Nautical Archaeology</i>
INJ	<i>Israel Numismatic Journal</i>

<i>INR</i>	<i>Israel Numismatic Research</i>
<i>JAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>JAS</i>	<i>Journal of Archaeological Science</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JEMAHS</i>	<i>Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies</i>
<i>JERI</i>	<i>Journal of Excavation Reports in Israel</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JGS</i>	<i>Journal of Glass Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>LA</i>	<i>Liber Annuus</i>
<i>MA</i>	<i>Mediterranean Archaeology</i>
<i>MDAIA</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung</i>
<i>MDAIK</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo</i>
<i>NC</i>	<i>The Numismatic Chronicle</i>
<i>NEAEHL</i>	E. Stern and A. Lewinson-Gilboa eds. <i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> 1–4. Jerusalem 1993.
<i>NNM</i>	<i>Numismatic Notes and Monographs</i>
<i>OIP</i>	<i>Oriental Institute Publications</i>
<i>PAS</i>	<i>The Portable Antiquities Scheme</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>QDAP</i>	<i>Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine</i>
<i>RDAC</i>	<i>Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus</i>
<i>SAOC</i>	<i>Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization</i>
<i>SBF</i>	<i>Studium Biblicum Franciscanum</i>
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum graecum</i> . Leiden 1923–
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>

CHAPTER 30

TWO SEALS, A BLANK AND A SEAL MATRIX FROM THE CRUSADER PERIOD

DANNY SYON AND ROBERT KOOL

Excavations in the Hospitaller Compound, the adjacent Hammam and the Knights' Hotel Site, yielded two lead seals (Figs. 30.1, 30.2), a lead blank (Fig. 30.3) and a bronze seal matrix (Fig. 30.4). The two seals are of particular importance as such items are rare in the archaeological record (Kool 2007:186; Mayer 2014:2–3; Kool and Landes-Nagar 2023:229–239).

Lead seals are known to have been widely used in the Byzantine East since the fourth century CE, particularly by the imperial administration and the church hierarchy (Zacos and Vegler 1972:367). The quantities of such seals found in Israel demonstrate that their use decreased considerably during the Early Islamic period (Amitai-Preiss 2007; Amitai-Preiss and Tal 2015). Subsequently, their numbers increased again during the period of Frankish rule in the East, at which time the use of lead for sealing was adopted by royalty and by both lay and ecclesiastical lords in place of wax sealing, which was the method of choice in western Europe at that time (Mayer 1978:14). The Crusader-period seals were, on average, twice as large as the earlier lead seals of the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods.

No. 1. Knights' Hotel Site; Area A, L132, B1125; IAA 1999-55.

Seal of William, Viscount of Tripoli; thirteenth century.

Material: Lead.

Dimensions: Diam. 40 mm.

Obverse: +S' GVILLELMI:VICECOMITIS Heater shield with two horizontal bars;

S(igillum) Guillelmi vicecomitis ('The seal of William the viscount').

Reverse: +CIVITAS TRIPOLIS *Civitas Tripolis* ('the city of Tripoli'). Turreted city gate, flanked by two towers; above, star; below, crescent.

Parallel: A seal identical to No. 1, of unknown provenance in the East, was assigned by Schlumberger (1894:179, No. 3) to the first of two viscounts of Tripoli by that name, mentioned in several documents from 1145–1174 CE (see Rey 1869:495); the second of the two viscounts is mentioned in later documents, from 1236 and 1241 CE. In our judgment, a more appropriate attribution of this type is to the second of the two viscounts of Tripoli, thus amending its date from the twelfth to the thirteenth century. This is based on the coin finds from the Knights' Hotel Site, which indicate that 'Akko maintained quite close relations with Tripoli during the thirteenth century (see Chapter 29). In addition, the blazon-type shield with a coat of arms appearing on the seal is known to have been widely used during the thirteenth century, while seals of the preceding century mostly featured equestrian types (Bedos-Rezak 1993:4–5).

This exceptionally well-preserved seal was found in the ampulla workshop in Area A (see Chapter 21: No. 8), and quite likely arrived there as scrap material for melting. Assuming that the workshop continued to function until the sacking of ‘Akko in 1291 CE, the seal was nearly fifty years old when it arrived at the workshop.



Fig. 30.1. A seal from the Knights' Hotel Site.

No. 2. Hospitaller Compound; the 2000 excavation season (unpublished), L43033, B431188.¹

Seal of Bohemond, Lord of Botron (modern Batrūn, northern Lebanon, a small coastal town in the County of Tripoli); thirteenth century.

Material: Lead.

Dimensions: Diam. 46 mm.

Obverse: (beginning at 12 o'clock, between two circles of dots)

[BOA]MVNDVS:DMS:BOT[RON] *Boamundus d(o)m(inu)s Botron(i)* (Bohemond, Lord of Botron). Equestrian knight to r., brandishing a sword in his right hand.

Reverse: (beginning at 12 o'clock, between two circles of dots) [†CASTELLVM BOTRONI]

Castellum Botroni (The castle of Botron), represented by three turrets and a gate.

Description: This seal was found in the Southern Alley (see Chapters 3, 7), at the foot of the southern wall of the Hospitaller Compound. It is very poorly preserved and barely identifiable. A deep gash across the obverse was probably the result of forcefully tearing the strings that bound the sealed document out of the channel in the seal.

Parallel: A seal identical to No. 2 is known from the Seyrig Collection, now held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (Cheynet, Morrisson and Seibt 1991: No. 380, and see further references therein). Charters issued in the Frankish East during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries refer to the Lord of Botron—a lordship in the County of Tripoli,

¹ This seal is included in the present chapter together with the find from the Knights' Hotel Site due to the rarity and importance of such seals.

Lebanon, which was among its main fiefs. From the charters, we learn that a Bohemond Lord of Botron ruled during the reigns of Bohemond IV (1187–1233 CE) and Bohemond V (1233–1252 CE), who both ruled simultaneously as Prince of Antioch and Count of Tripoli. The rule of Bohemond Lord of Botron could not have pre-dated 1209 CE, as nine of the charters, dating between 1181 and 1209 CE, mention that the ruler of this lordship was a wealthy Pisan named Plebanus, who had married the last heiress of the d'Agout and Aurel families that ruled Botron since the early twelfth century. Six charters mention Bohemond as Lord of Botron, all noting instances in which he witnessed property transactions. The earliest, dating to 1228 CE, refers to him as witnessing a grant of property to the Hospital of St. Mary of the Germans, the forebearers of the Teutonic Order (Strehlke 1869:50, No. 61 [RRH No. 979]), while the later charters date to the early 1250s.²

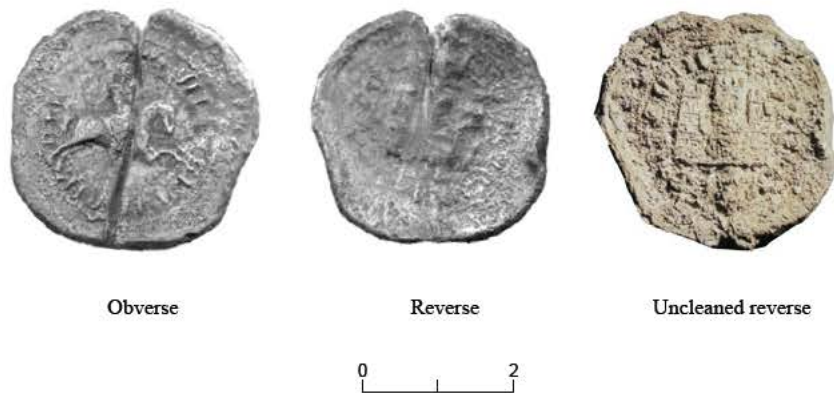


Fig. 30.2. A seal from the Hospitaller Compound.

No. 3. Courtyard of the Turkish Hammam; Area B3, L14015, B140109.³

Seal blank;⁴ thirteenth century(?).

Material: Lead.

Dimensions: Diam. 45 mm, 5 mm thick (thickness at rib 9 mm).

Description: Large, circular seal blank with a perforation for attaching a string.

Parallels: Similar lead seal blanks and their molds were found in Corinth (Davidson 1952: Pl. 134:2826–2832).

² Strehlke 1869:53, No. 64 (RRH 989); Delaville Le Roulx 1894, Cart. gén. II:429–430, No. 2003 (RRH 1031); Müller 1879:99, No. 68 (RRH 1041); 99–100, No. 69 (RRH 1042); Delaville Le Roulx 1894, Cart. gén. II:594–596, No. 2280 (RRH No. 1102). Somewhere around 1252, Bohemond died and ‘Guillaume sir dou Boutron’ appeared as his successor (Delaville Le Roulx 1894, Cart. gén. II:807–808, No. 2801 [RRH No. 1102]).

³ Hospitaller Compound, Permit G-102/1992 (unpublished).

⁴ The authors are grateful to Elias Khamis, who first studied the blank, for his permission to include it here.

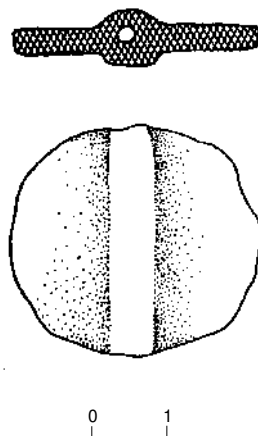


Fig. 30.3. A seal blank from the Turkish Hammam.

No. 4. Knights' Hotel Site; Area F, L818, B3424.

Unidentified, broken seal matrix; Crusader period.

Material: Bronze.

Dimensions: Diam. 50 mm, 6 mm thick.

Description: The surviving part of the circular matrix is completely flat and hence, the missing part may have carried a lug for holding or affixing the matrix. Such circular matrices were the most common type in the medieval period, and several have been found at Crusader-period sites in the Frankish East, all dating to the thirteenth century (Kool 2000:545). Matrices like these were used for single impressions with soft materials like wax or resin, typically employed to seal judicial documents of lesser importance in the Frankish East, unlike royal documents, for which lead seals were used (Kool 2000:544).

The matrix from 'Akko bears part of an inscription, the remainder of which has been obliterated, primarily by heavy blows to the object. The motif of the matrix comprises a helmeted, mustached head in a facing posture in medieval style, appearing in the center. The features of the face are obliterated. The head is surrounded by two concentric circles made of notches that are connected by a protruding ridge below the head. While the ridge could be interpreted as part of the design, it is more likely the result of damage to the matrix, as it obliterated part of one or two letters of the inscription and a few of the small, radially arranged notches.

Only five complete letters of the inscription and part of a sixth survive. Apparently, the letters on the matrix face outward, deviating from the predominant inward-facing arrangement of inscriptions on almost all Crusader-period seals and coins. A reading of the letters reveals a peculiar mixture of what appears to be Latin and Greek: the Latin L, well-defined although somewhat poorly executed, appears to the left of the head, followed by the letter D and a partly damaged letter resembling an E or an F lying on its side, or a Ω (a square cursive *omega*); to the right of the head is what appears to be a sequence of the Greek letters Γ Λ , although, considering the generally poor execution of the matrix, it may be that the Γ is, in fact, a damaged T and the Λ an uncrossed A. This reconstruction would yield the undeciphered Latin inscription ---]LDETIA[---

No parallels of matrices bearing this type of impression and inscription are known.

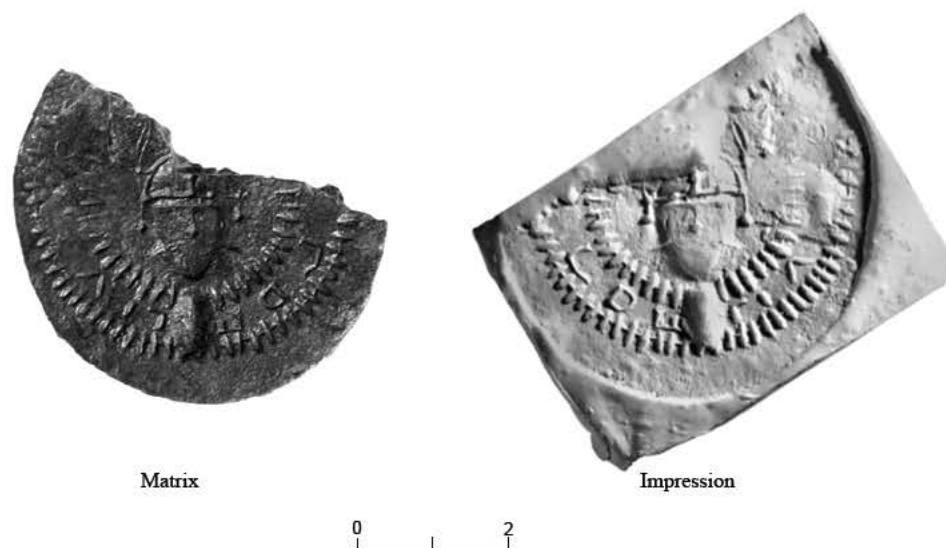


Fig. 30.4. A broken seal matrix from the Knights' Hotel Site.

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