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# INSCRIBED FINGER RINGS FROM LATE ANTIQUE AND BYZANTINE ASIA MINOR

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## ABSTRACT:

In this short paper we present thirteen metal rings from the museums of Izmir (nos. 3-4 and 9-10), Afyonkarahisar (no. 5), Bergama (nos. 6 and 8), Ödemiş (no. 7), Trabzon (no. 11), and Balıkesir (no. 13), dating mainly from the late antique and middle Byzantine periods. Two of these rings (nos. 2 and 12) belong to the private collection of Mr Koray Selçik and one (no. 1) belongs to the private collection of Ms Berna Oğuz, both of whom reside in Kemalpaşa near Izmir. Only no. 3 was previously published. Most of these rings bear Christian inscriptions, and belong to the late antique period; nos. 12 and 13 seem to date from the middle Byzantine age. Nos. 3, 6 and 7 contain an appeal to God for the salvation or cure. No. 9 is particularly interesting because it expresses one's devotion to Longinos, a popular late antique and Byzantine saint. Other rings, nos. 2, 4 (with a monogram), 5, and 8 (with a monogram), bear personal names of their owners. No. 1 may be a gift to a girl, called 'beautiful'.

## RIASSUNTO: ANELLI BIZANTINI CON ISCRIZIONE DALL'ASIA MINORE

In questo breve contributo si presentano tredici anelli metallici del periodo bizantino dai musei di Izmir (nn. 3-4 e 9-10), Afyonkarahisar (n. 5), Bergama (nn. 6 e 8), Ödemiş (n.7), Trabzon (n. 11) e Balıkesir (n. 13). Due di questi anelli (nn. 2 e 12) appartengono alla collezione privata del signor Koray Selçik e uno di questi (n.1) appartiene alla collezione privata della signora Berna Oğuz, entrambe conservate a Kemalpaşa vicino a Izmir. Solo il n. 3 è stato in precedenza pubblicato; il resto è rimasto inedito fino ad ora. La maggior parte di questi anelli appartiene al primo periodo bizantino; i nn. 12 e 13 sembrano databili all'età mediobizantina. I nn. 3, 6 e 7 contengono un appello al Dio per la salvezza o la cura. Il n. 9 è molto interessante perché esprime la devozione attraverso un oggetto, forse in qualche modo consacrato a un santo molto popolare nel primo periodo bizantino. Gli altri anelli, nn. 2, 4 (con monogramma), 5 e 8 (con monogramma), portano il nome personale dei rispettivi proprietari. Il n. 1 è chiaramente un regalo a una ragazza, chiamata 'bella'.

## ÖZET: ANADOLU'DAN BİZANS DÖNEMİ'NE AİT BAZI YAZITLI YÜZÜKLER

Bu kısa makalede İzmir (no. 3-4 ve 9-10), Afyonkarahisar (no. 5), Bergama (no. 6 ve 8), Ödemiş (no. 7), Trabzon (no. 11) ve Balıkesir (no. 13) Müzeleri'nden Bizans Dönemi'ne ait toplam 13 adet metal yüzük tanıtılacaktır. Sayılan örneklerin dışında ikisi (no. 2 ve 12) İzmir yakınlarındaki Kemalpaşa'da bulunan Koray Selçik'in özel koleksiyonuna ve biri de (no. 1) Berna Oğuz'un özel koleksiyonuna ait üç örnek daha bulunur. Bu örneklerden sadece 3 numaralı örnek daha önce yayımlanmıştır; diğer örnekler şu an itibarıyla yayınlanmamıştır. Bu yüzüklerin çoğu Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne aittir; 12 ve 13 numaralı örnekler ise Orta Bizans Çağı'na tarihlenirler. 3, 6 ve 7 numaralı örneklerin yazıtları Tanrı'ya yalvarış ya da tedavi için yardım isteği metinleri içerirler. 9 no'lu örnek çok ilginçtir; çünkü bu yüzük yazıtında belki de Erken Bizans Dönemi'nde oldukça popüler olan bir azizden bahsedilmektedir. 2, 4 (monogramlı örnek) ve 5 ile 8 (monogramlı örnek) numaralı diğer yüzük örnekleri ise sahiplerinin adlarını taşımaktadırlar. 1 numaralı yüzük 'güzel' olarak nitelendirilen bir kıza özel bir hediyedir.

**KEYWORDS:** Finger rings, inscribed gemstones, inscribed bezels, invocations of God, personal names, sigillography, Late Antiquity, early Byzantine period, middle Byzantine period, Izmir, Asia Minor, Turkey.

**PAROLE CHIAVE:** Anelli digitali; gemme iscritte; castoni iscritti; invocazioni a Dio; nomi personali; sfragistica; prima età bizantina; media età bizantina; Izmir; Asia Minore; Turchia.

**ANAHTAR KELİMELE:** Yüzükler, yazıtlı yarı değerli taşlar, yazıtlı yüzük kaşları, Tanrı'ya yalvarma metinleri, kişisel isimler, Erken Bizans Dönemi, Orta Bizans Dönemi, İzmir, Anadolu, Türkiye.

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This paper will present several unpublished late antique and middle Byzantine inscribed metal finger rings from Asia Minor, a group that has not been particularly well documented in Turkey.<sup>1</sup> The types of finger rings from the Roman period<sup>2</sup> include examples with inscriptions in the nominative case or plain monograms for sealing like a signet, marriage and betrothal rings, devotional and religious rings, and decorative rings. Already by the mid-third century A.D., after the fall of the Severan dynasty, a significant change in fashion of finger rings is apparent. Gemstones were rarely engraved, and rings were set instead with old gems, unengraved gems, or coins. In the Constantinian period rings became larger, with tubular hoops or hoops decorated with floral patterns (usually an acanthus wreath).<sup>3</sup>

A typical Byzantine inscribed metal finger ring has a separately worked flat bezel (round, square, cruciform, or floral-shaped) that is engraved with a monogram, a religious invocation, or an iconographic device (such as Christ, the Virgin Mary, a saint, or an eagle with wings spread). These rings with short epigrams, monograms or simple inscriptions with expressions, mostly in abbreviated forms, such as *ὁμόνοια* ('concord') and *χάρις* ('grace') are very common objects throughout the entire Asia Minor as they were a common grave good. During the Byzantine period, aristocratic men and women usually wore gold finger rings like these; but bronze rings were worn by almost everybody. Although Byzantine rings based their forms typologically on Roman rings, Byzantine rings were less elaborate, notably those with tall, conical, or calyx-shaped bezels ringed with gemstones, sometimes embossed or executed in openwork. They may well derive from the same ateliers that produced other types of jewellery, such as earrings, necklaces, small crosses, and various forms of pendants.<sup>4</sup>

Although numerous finger rings dating from the late fifth and early sixth century A.D. survive in Asia Minor, this group is poorly attested and difficult to classify. Most of the shapes that emerged in the sixth century A.D. are distinctive and found in relatively large numbers, but there are some unusual types as well. The cruciform monogram first appeared in Byzantium in the 520s<sup>5</sup> and became increasingly popular. Rings with Greek monograms of block type were widely used, and the style continued well into the sixth century, eventually to be replaced by cruciform monograms around A.D. 550.<sup>6</sup> The rings from the Late Byzantine period (*i.e.* A.D. 1204-1453) are remarkable not only for their fine design but also for the variety of inscriptions they bear, including personal names and monograms, official titles, and epigrams composed by Byzantine poets. A possible Byzantine workshop for finger rings in Constantinople and a further one in the Black Sea area (Trapezus?) were already suggested by Jeffrey Spier.<sup>7</sup>

So far, very few comprehensive studies on Byzantine inscribed finger rings have been undertaken. In fact, numerous rings are published in studies related to occasional finds or excavations,<sup>8</sup> more rarely they are part of a reasoned catalogue of a museum collection or private collections.<sup>9</sup> Often the parts related to the rings are included in the broader ambit of Byzantine jewellery. Isabella Baldini Lippolis has distinguished five types of rings of the late antique period with particular reference to southern Italy and Sicily.<sup>10</sup> Major progress was accomplished by the study of middle Byzantine jewellery by Antje Bosselmann-Ruckbie, which also included finger rings of various metals.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Andreas Rhoby gathered numerous epigrams on Byzantine small objects, but finger rings were not covered by this research except for one example.<sup>12</sup>

In this short paper thirteen metal rings from the museums of Izmir (nos. 3-4, 9 and 10), Afyonkarahisar (no. 5), Bergama (nos. 6 and 8), Ödemiş (no. 7), Trabzon (no. 11), and Balıkesir (no. 13), will be presented, dating from the late antique and Byzantine periods (fig. 1). Two of these rings (nos. 2 and 12) belong to the private collection of Mr Koray Selçik and one of them (no. 1) belongs to the private collection of Ms Berna Oğuz, both of whom reside in Kemalpaşa near Izmir. The collections are registered at the archaeological museum of Izmir. Only no. 3 was previously published. Most of these rings belong to the early Byzantine (late antique) period; nos. 12 and 13 seem to date from the middle Byzantine age. They are difficult to categorise, as little information is available.

<sup>1</sup> For the Graeco-Roman finger rings and engraved gems in Asia Minor see Konuk and Arslan 2000.

<sup>2</sup> For the typology of rings dating from the Imperial period, see the useful surveys in: Marshall 1907, xlv-xlix.

<sup>3</sup> Spier 2012, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Spier 2012, 16, 19, note 34.

<sup>5</sup> Spier 2012, 16, 19, note 31: The earliest datable cruciform monograms are those of the Emperor Justin I (A.D. 518-527), which appear on small bronze coins struck at Antioch; see Phillips and Tyler-Smith 1998, 318 and 322.

<sup>6</sup> Spier 2012, 15, 18, note 24.

<sup>7</sup> Spier 2012, 13.

<sup>8</sup> *E.g.* Waldbaum 1983.

<sup>9</sup> *E.g.* Spier 2012. Recently for Bulgaria *cf.* Doncheva and Bunzelov 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Baldini Lippolis 1999, 187-215.

<sup>11</sup> Bosselmann-Ruckbie 2011, 117-129.

<sup>12</sup> Rohby 2010.



Fig. 1: Places in Asia Minor and elsewhere referred to in the text.

## Catalogue

**No. 1:** A gold ring beaded with a gemstone with a two-lined inscription (figs. 2a-b)

Depository and provenance: The Berna Oğuz collection, Izmir, accession no. 57. Acquired in 2014; originated from western Asia Minor (possibly from Magnesia on the Maeander).

Measurements: Inner diameter 18 mm, height 15 mm, total weight 2.04 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: A gold twisted wire ring, with a brownish-red semi-precious gemstone, most probably a carnelian, and an engraved two-lined inscription. The shape is well-known during the Roman period and corresponds to the Guiraud 4c type.<sup>13</sup> Each endcaps decorated with two gold beads. Well preserved.

Transcription:

2            Κύνα  
              καλή

Translation: *To Kyna, the beautiful (girl).*

Comments: Line 1 contains the name of the owner or the recipient of the ring, followed by the epithet καλή, 'beautiful'. The name can be given either in the nominative or the dative form (as transcribed above). Therefore, the inscription reads either 'Kyna, the beautiful (girl)' or 'To Kyna, the beautiful (girl).'

It has been believed that καλή was an epithet of prostitutes, especially in the Classical and Hellenistic periods, but this is now questioned.<sup>14</sup> The expression καλός/καλή also recalls inscriptions from Attic symposiastic vases from



Fig. 2a-b: A gold ring beaded with a gemstone with a two-lined inscription. The Berna Oğuz collection, Izmir, accession no. 57.

<sup>13</sup> Guiraud 1989, 179. For Κύνας from Cyzicus in Mysia, western Anatolia, dating from A.D. 205, see *LGPV* VA, s.v.

<sup>14</sup> See Kapparis 2017, 386.

the fifth century B.C. and later.<sup>15</sup> On our ring, the epithet is obviously given to the girl whose name appears in line 1. *Comparanda*: A carnelian from a ring with an identical inscription (KYNA | KAAH) was found at Panticapaeum (Cimmerian Bosphoros), and published in 1909.<sup>16</sup> Two earrings in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, accession number 66.318 a-b, each with one square stone inscribed with TH KAAH, are dated to the fourth century A.D.<sup>17</sup> Here the article τῆ supports the supposition that our inscription too, may be in the dative case.

Dating: Middle or Late Roman.

**No. 2:** A silver ring beaded with an octagonal gemstone with a two-lined inscription (figs. 3a-b)

Depository and provenance: The Koray Selçik collection, Izmir, transferred from the Berna Oğuz collection, Izmir, former accession no. 236. Acquired in 2015.

Measurements: Inner diameter 16 mm, height 17 mm, total weight 2.58 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: A silver ring, with a light brownish-red semi-precious octagonal gemstone, probably a carnelian, bearing an engraved two-line inscription. Well preserved.

Transcription:

	Ἰη-
2	σοῦ

Translation: *O Jesus (help)!*

Date: Fifth-seventh century A.D.

Comments: The case is vocative; therefore, this is an invocation of Jesus and the ring was owned by a Christian.

On the possible production of octagonal gems in Roman Asia Minor see Goldman (2014).



Fig. 3a-b: A silver ring beaded with an octagonal gemstone with a two-lined inscription. The Koray Selçik collection, Izmir.

**No. 3:** A carnelian *intaglio* with a four-lined inscription (fig. 4)

Depository and provenance: Archaeological museum of Izmir, accession no. 013.529.

Measurements: Height 10 mm, width 8 mm, thickness 2 mm, weight 3 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: An oval, brownish-red carnelian *intaglio* with engraved four-lined inscription, which is framed by a thick circle. Well preserved.

Transcription:

	Κ(ύρι)ε β-
2	οήθ(ε)ι Γε-
	οργίου
4	+

Translation: *O Lord, help Georgios!*

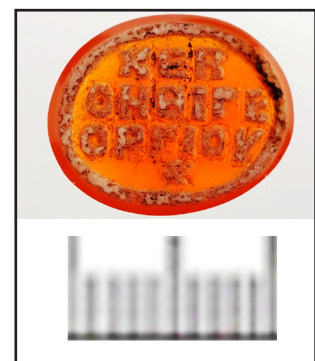


Fig. 4: A carnelian *intaglio* with a four-lined inscription. Archaeological museum of Izmir, accession no. 013.529.

<sup>15</sup> See Talcott 1936, part. 333-334.

<sup>16</sup> See *LGN IV*, s.v. *Κύνα* referring to *AA* 1909, 155: KYNA | KAAH. For the name Kyna documented by an inscription, see also Mihailov 1975, 32: *Κύνα* (Amphipolis in Macedonia).

<sup>17</sup> <<https://www.mfa.org/collections/object/earring-with-inscribed-gemstone-3>>.

Comments: 'Lord' can be both God the Father and Christ. The invocation Κύριε βοήθει is omnipresent in inscriptions of all kinds from the fourth and fifth century A.D. onwards. For this type of invocation see, for example: Di Segni (2017): 63-68; Yasin (2015): 36-60; Eck (1995): 206-222. Similar formulas also appear on Jewish and magical and/or syncretistic gems [e.g. ΟΥΡΙΑΛ ΣΑΒΑΩ ΒΟΗΘΙ, 'Ouriel sabao[th] help', accompanied by a Jewish divine name and a request: Spier (2007), 112, no. 652 = Mazor (2015), 129; two amulets, one from the Louvre, the other from The Newell Collection: Spier (2007), 112, cat. nos. 654 and 652 = Mazor (2015), 130 with the inscriptions ΣΑΒΑΩ ΒΟΗΘΙ 'Sabao[th] help' and ΟΥΡΙΑΛ ΣΑΒΑΩ ΒΟΗΘΙ, 'Ouriel Sabao[th] help', as well as on further examples, e.g. Baldini Lippolis (1999), 199, no. 12; 200, no. 16; 207, no. 3; 208, nos. 4 and 5; 212, no. 2].

Dating: Fourth-sixth century A.D.

Reference works: Bru, Laflı (2011), 196, no. 3; and Laflı (2012), 147, no. 64, 142, fig. 64.

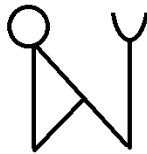
**No. 4:** A silver ring with a monogram (figs. 5a-b)

Depository and provenance: Archaeological museum of Izmir, in the depot of courtial antiquities, accession no. 2016.861.1. Given to the museum by the Second Civil Court of First Instance in Izmir in 2016, formerly belonged to a private collection in the surrounding of Izmir.

Measurements: Inner diameter 19 mm, height 27 mm, weight 1.95 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: A very plain ring with a monogram engraved on its bezel. Black patina; otherwise well preserved.

Transcription:



Ἰωάννου



Fig. 5a-b: A silver ring with a monogram. Archaeological museum of Izmir, accession no. 2016.861.1.

Translation: *Of Ioannes.*

Dating: Monograms denoting personal names were used periodically in Greek and Roman times. Only for a brief time in the early third century A.D. engraved gems were decorated with monograms of individuals. Monograms reappear again in the fifth century A.D., when personal monograms on gems and rings became very popular.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, our ring probably dates from the fifth-eighth century A.D.

**No. 5:** A silver ring beaded with an octagonal gemstone with a two-line inscription (fig. 6)

Depository and provenance: Museum of Afyonkarahisar, in a display case in the hall of small finds. Originated from Phrygia.

Measurements: Inner diameter 18 mm, height 29 mm, weight 6.83 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: A silver ring, with a dark brownish-red semi-precious octagonal gemstone, most probably a carnelian bearing an engraved two-line inscription. Blackened surface.

Transcription:

2 Ἀνα-  
ξίου

Translation: *Of Anaxios.*

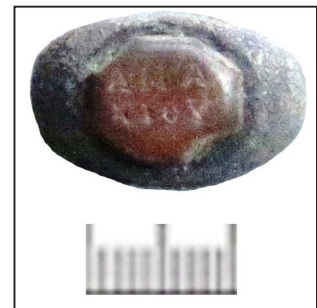


Fig. 6: A silver ring beaded with an octagonal gemstone with a two-line inscription. Museum of Afyonkarahisar.

<sup>18</sup> Spier 2012, 4.

Comments: The inscription records the name of the owner, probably Ἀνάξιος (see the Trismegistos database record TM35570). A much more popular form of this name was Ἀναξίων. The *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* records five instances of the occurrence of the name Ἀναξίων in the Aegean Islands (LGN I, s.v.), two instances on the north coast of the Black Sea, in Macedonia and Thrace (LGN IV, s.v.), and six instances in south Anatolia (LGN VB, s.v.).

**No. 6:** A bronze ring with a three-line inscription (figs. 7a-d)

Depository and provenance: Museum of Bergama, exhibited in a display case of the small finds from the local excavations. It was found in Paşa Ilıcasi-Yortanlı, ancient Allianoi in Mysia between 1994 and 2006, when a Graeco-Roman thermal complex was excavated. In the seasons of 1994-1996 a Byzantine settlement until eleventh century A.D. as well as its *necropolis* were excavated where this ring was probably found.

Measurements: Inner diameter 20 mm, height 32 mm, weight 3.47 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: A simple, wire ring with a large, oval, flat bezel on which the inscription engraved cavernously. Green patina.

Transcription:

+ Μαρ-  
2 τῖρω-  
v // ΚΘ

3. possibly κθ' = 29, or Κ(ύριος ὁ) θ(εός), or Νήκx = Νίκx.

Translation: (*Blessing*) of the martyrs (- - -).

Comments: The inscription probably invokes the blessing of martyrs (cf. no. 9 below with a similar formula referring to St Longinos). If we consider the signs which follow the word μαρτύρων as a number, 29 (κθ'), then we can have here a reference to the martyrs of Cyzicus. They are normally called the Nine Martyrs of Cyzicus (BHG), but in some *menologia* they appear as the Twenty-Nine Martyrs of Cyzicus. This is probably a confusion of their original number with the date of their feast (29 April).<sup>19</sup>

Alternatively, ΚΘ may be an abbreviated formula, for example, Κ(ύριος ὁ) θ(εός), 'God is the Lord!' sometimes also translated as 'the Lord is (our) God!', which is a common biblical acclamation, particularly popular in the Book of Revelation [Mark 12:29; Luke 1:32, 1:68; Acts 2:39, 3:22; Revelation 1:8, 4:8; 19:6; 21:22, 22:5-6, see also Felle (2006) for the use of this phrase in inscriptions]. We have no clear photograph, but other readings, e.g. κβ, i.e. Κ(ύριε), β(οήθει), see no. 3 above, or a damaged cross can be present at the end, are rather implausible. Another possible reading of the entire text: μαρτυρῶ Νήκx, 'I give witness to Nikas', is rather implausible, as the inscription is not in mirror letters, and the ring was apparently not used as a seal.

Dating: Fifth-eighth century A.D.



Fig. 7a-d: A bronze ring with a three-line inscription. Museum of Bergama.

<sup>19</sup> See Anderson 1992, 54.

**No. 7:** A bronze ring with a three-line inscription (figs. 8a-b)

Depository and provenance: Museum of Ödemiş, accession no. 2017.317. Given to the museum by the Second Civil Court of First Instance in Ödemiş in 2017, formerly belonged to a private collection in the surrounding of Kiraz, Graeco-Roman Κολόη or Byzantine Καλόη in the upper Cayster valley, c. 150 km east of Izmir.<sup>20</sup>

Measurements: Inner diameter 21 mm, preserved height 15 mm, thickness 3 mm, length of bezel 11 mm, weight 2.17 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: The oval bezel presents an engraved, transversal inscription, which is barely legible. Bottom of the ring is missing. Yellow patina.

Transcription:

2                      Κ(ύριε), β(οήθει)  
                          Χ(ρίστε),  
                          β(οήθει) Ιωάν(νου)

Translation: *Lord help, Christ help Ioannes!*

Dating: Fifth-eighth century A.D.



Fig. 8a-b: A bronze ring with a three-line inscription. Museum of Ödemiş, accession no. 2017.317.

**No. 8:** A bronze ring with cruciform monogram (figs. 9a-c)

Depository and provenance: Museum of Bergama, exhibited in a display case of Greek, Roman and Byzantine jewellery from Bergama, as it should come from Bergama.

Measurements: Inner diameter 28 mm, height 34 mm, weight 4.47 g.



Fig. 9a-c: A bronze ring with cruciform monogram. Museum of Bergama.

<sup>20</sup> Lane 1975, 106, note 6.

Typological description and state of preservation: The ring's shape, having two bulges on the two sides of the bezel, recalls examples of the late antique period onwards, decorated with dolphins.<sup>21</sup> Black patina; otherwise well preserved.

Inscription: On the round bezel a cruciform monogram with some letters E-H and another which is non-readable. It could also be a decorative or magical cross. The cross is not regular.

Dating: Sixth-seventh century A.D.

**No. 9:** A copper alloy ring with a four-line inscription (figs. 10a-b)

Depository and provenance: Archaeological museum of Izmir, in the depot of courtial antiquities, accession no. 2016.861.2. Given to the museum by the Second Civil Court of First Instance in Izmir in 2016, formerly belonged to a private collection in the surrounding of Izmir.

Measurements: Inner diameter 22 mm, height 32 mm, thickness 5 mm, length of bezel 16 mm, weight 3.23 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: A thick wire ring with a round, flat bezel in the form of an inverted pyramid where the deep letters were previously inserted by 'niello' technique. Well preserved.

Transcription:

	Toũ
2	ἀγίου
	Λο(γ)γίν-
4	ου



Fig. 10a-b: A copper alloy ring with a four-line inscription. Archaeological museum of Izmir, accession no. 2016.861.2.

Translation: *(Blessing) of Saint Longinos.*

Comments: Saint Longinos was identified by an early Christian tradition with a Roman soldier present at the Crucifixion of Jesus, and piercing his side with his lance (John 19:34). The Christian hagiography holds him as a later convert to Christianity. His name, which itself does not appear in the Gospels, was probably chosen for him by Christian hagiographers because of its similarity to the Greek word λόγχη, 'spear' or 'lance'. It is sometimes said that the saint appears under this name for the first time in an illuminated manuscript from the so-called Rabbula Gospels, now in the Laurentian Library, Florence, dated A.D. 586. As a matter of fact, the cult of this saint is, however, also attested by inscriptions, one of them slightly earlier than the manuscript. A lintel from Al-Burj near Amathe/Hamāh and Chalkis in north Syria bears the following text:<sup>22</sup> μητᾶτον τοῦ ἀρχανγέλο[υ] Μηχαήλ καὶ τοῦ ἀγίου | Λονγίνου τοῦ ἐκατοντάρχου· ἐκτίσθη ὁ πύργος οὗτος, ἔτους ζω', μ(ηνὸς) Παν(ήμου), 'Military transit camp (*metaton*) of the Archangel Michael and of Saint Longinos the Centurion. This tower (*pyrgos*) was built in the year 837, in the month of Panemos.' Thus, the date, given according to the Seleucid era, corresponds to July A.D. 526. A labelled image of Longinos also appears on a capital from 'Aila near modern 'Aqaba on the north coast of the Gulf of 'Aqaba, stylistically dated to the sixth or seventh century A.D. His commemorations at and in the environs of Jerusalem are well documented by Georgian sources.<sup>23</sup> To us, the saint's links to Asia Minor are also of interest. In the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* a feast of St Longinos is mentioned on 15 March. The entry reads 'In Cappadocia sancti Longini' or 'Cappadociae sancti Longini' in different manuscripts. The manuscripts BnF 10837 and Bern 289 also mention his feast on 23 October: 'In Caesarea Cappadociae Longini.' Both feasts are believed to have been celebrated in Caesarea in Cappadocia.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Spier 2012, 182.

<sup>22</sup> IGLS IV 1610, see also the *Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity* database record E01834 = <<http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E01834>>.

<sup>23</sup> The Georgian version of the Lectionary of Jerusalem from the seventh century A.D. records the commemoration of the deposition of relics of Longinos in the village of Bethany on 17 July, and the Church Calendar of Ioane Zosime, a tenth century A.D. work preserving fifth-seventh century A.D. traditions, mentions a commemoration of Longinos on 11 February, 17 July, and probably 15 October. See the *Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity* database records E03641; E03803; E03896.

<sup>24</sup> For the cult of Longinos, see also Ossola 2008.

*Comparanda:* Waldbaum (1983), 130, no. 834. The shape with the inverted pyramid appears in several rings of a type that Spier dates back to the sixth century A.D.<sup>25</sup>

Dating: Seventh-eleventh century A.D.

## Appendix I: An opal *intaglio* with a two-lined inscription

**No. 10:** An opal *intaglio* with a two-lined inscription (fig. 11)

Provenance: Archaeological museum of Izmir. Accession no. 017.312.

Measurements: Length 18 mm, width 15 mm, thickness 9 mm, weight 3 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: Oval, pierced, white opal was used as an *intaglio* of a stamp to which a bronze griff with green patina was attached. Well preserved. Spier (1992), form IX.

Transcription:

	AWNK
2	EETZ

Translation: The two lines have a different orientation and each one can be read by turning the stone. Line 1 reads AWNK, AMNK or ANNK. Line 2 EETZ. A tentative reading may be: is ἀμ(ή)ν, Κ(ύρι)ε ΕΤΖ - but this is extremely doubtful. If the correct reading is ANNK, the first letters ANN may perhaps refer to a Greek name, Anna, Annia or similar. We can also have here some magical *voces*.

*Comparandum:* Rings with reversible bezel are known in the Byzantine and other periods, such as e.g. a ring in the Benaki museum, Athens.<sup>26</sup>

Dating: Such pivoting gems were typical of the Archaic period whereas the writing form is that of the Roman period.

## Appendix II: Three Byzantine digital rings with engraved geometric decoration

**No. 11:** A bronze ring with some engraved geometric decoration (fig. 12)

Depository and provenance: Museum of Trabzon, in a display case in the hall of small finds. Found in northeastern Turkey.

Measurements: Inner diameter 28 mm, preserved height 31 mm, weight 5.13 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: A wire ring with a circular, flat bezel with a wolf-shaped frame. Yellow patina. Otherwise well preserved. Engraved signs on the bezel.

*Comparandum:* For another ring, of gold, with a similar frame, dated to the fifth century A.D. cf. Spier (2012), cat. no. 14e.

Dating: Fifth-sixth century A.D.

**No. 12:** A bronze ring with some engraved geometric decoration (figs. 13a-b)

Depository and provenance: The Koray Selçik collection, Izmir, transferred from the Berna Oğuz collection, Izmir, former accession no. 243. Acquired in 2015.



Fig. 11: An opal *intaglio* with a two-lined inscription.  
Archaeological museum of Izmir; accession no. 017.312.



Fig. 12: A bronze ring with engraved geometric decoration.  
Museum of Trabzon.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Spier 2012, 80, no. 11, fig. 11, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Baldini Lippolis 1999 202, no. 39.



Fig. 13a-b: A bronze ring with engraved geometric decoration.  
The Koray Selçik collection, İzmir.

Measurements: Inner diameter 17 mm, height 27 mm, thickness 3 mm, length of bezel 17 mm, weight 2.57 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: The shape corresponds with Spier (2012), cat. no. 10 which is dated to the beginning of the sixth century A.D. Engraved signs on the bezel. Well preserved.

*Comparanda:* Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2011, 283, no. 128. In the antique market, there are numerous silver rings with such engraved signs. As far as we know, this interesting motive that may have had a meaning did not receive scholarly attention. Its surface reveals many signs of use, or is perhaps linked to an imperfect finishing touch on the ring. Noteworthy are also the transversal lines on the surface that recall similar signs on *fibulae* of the sixth-seventh century A.D.

Dating: Eleventh-twelfth century A.D.

#### No. 13: A bronze ring with some engraved geometric decoration (fig. 14)

Depository and provenance: Museum of Kuvâ-yi Milliye (Turkish national forces) in Balıkesir, in a display case in the hall of small finds from the local excavations. It was excavated in Güre, ancient Astyra<sup>27</sup> in Mysia in 2006-2007 in which seasons a Roman bath was excavated. Thermal spring water on the site was also exploited in the late Roman and Byzantine times. According to the excavators, a small chapel was built over the ruins perhaps in the eleventh or twelfth century A.D.; in and around it are simple inhumations and burials in tile tombs. Perhaps this ring was found in one of these tombs. Byzantine coin finds of this excavated site go up to A.D. 1254.<sup>28</sup>

Measurements: Inner diameter 24 mm, height 41 mm, thickness 4 mm, length of bezel 37 mm, weight 8.46 g.

Typological description and state of preservation: Its large, octagonal, flat bezel is divided into a central rectangular field between two engraved oblique lines. In the central part of its field, it presents series of oblique lines, above other horizontal lines (in form of a pseudo-inscription?). On the right square field there could be a possible monogram (?) in which letters like AV or VA may be distinguished. Alternatively, it could simply be a decorative motif. The octagonal bezels were widespread in the Roman times in western Europe, and became even more common during the Middle Ages. Black patina; otherwise well preserved.

Dating: Eleventh-thirteenth century A.D.



Fig. 14: A bronze ring with engraved geometric decoration. Museum of Kuvâ-yi Milliye in Balıkesir.

## Conclusions

The small series of rings with inscriptions or signs we have presented here certainly does not exhaust the large number of existing examples or the considerable variations in decoration in Asia Minor. Nos 3, 6 and 7 contain an appeal to God for salvation or cure. No. 9 is very interesting because it expresses one's devotion through the intercession of a very popular saint. Other rings, nos. 2, 4 (with a monogram), 5 and 8 (with a monogram), bear the

<sup>27</sup> During the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods Astyra (Ἄστυρα) was a small town of Mysia between Antandros and Adramyttium. Pausanias describes also a spring of hot water at Astyra (IV 35, 10). For the localisation of and a list of ancient sources on this site, see: <<https://topostext.org/place/396269UAst>>.

<sup>28</sup> Lenger and Yaraş 2010, 456, no. 29.

personal names of their owners. No. 1 may be a gift to a girl, called 'beautiful'. Most of these rings seem to belong to the late antique-early Byzantine period, while few others date to the middle Byzantine period.

### Notes and acknowledgements

Nos 3-4 and 9-10 from the Archaeological Museum of Izmir were studied with an authorization granted by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Directorate of the Monuments and Museums on April 13, 2010 and enumerated as B.16.0.KVM.0.13.04.00-155.01.(TA10.B81)-77614. The necessary documentation was assembled between June 2010 and May 2017. We would like to thank to Mrs Zuhale Küçükğüney and Ms Necla Okan (both from the Archaeological Museum of Izmir) for their assistance during the study of these objects.

No. 5 from the Museum of Afyonkarahisar was studied with four authorizations granted by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Directorate of the Monuments and Museums on February 28, 2002 and enumerated as B.16.0.AMG.0.10.00.01/707.1-2 (002458), on June 5, 2002 and enumerated as B.16.0.AMG.0.10.00.01/707.1-2 (008638), on December 9, 2004 (for the year 2005) and enumerated as B.16.0.AMG.0.10.00.01/707.1/14 (030316) as well as on April 27, 2005 and enumerated as B.16.0.AMG.0.10.00.01/707.1(9)-54946. The necessary documentation was assembled during March 2002 and December 2005.

Nos 6 and 8 from the Museum of Bergama were studied with an authorization granted to Ms Gökçe Çiçek Keskin (Izmir/Çanakkale) by the Museum of Bergama on April 20, 2016 and enumerated as 75845132-155/396. The necessary documentation was assembled in May 2016. We would like to thank to Ms Gökçe Çiçek Keskin for the permission to publish her photo in this article.

No. 7 from the Museum of Ödemiş was studied with an authorization granted by the Museum of Ödemiş on April 6, 2018 and enumerated as 25920734-155.01-E.302122. The necessary documentation was assembled in August 2018. We would like to thank to Mrs Ayşen Gürsel (the Museum of Ödemiş) for her assistance during the study of these objects.

No. 11 from the Museum of Trabzon and no. 13 from the Museum of Kuvâ-yi Milliye in Balıkesir were studied with an authorization granted by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Directorate of the Monuments and Museums on June 4, 2007 and enumerated as B.16.0.KVM.200.11.02.02.14.01.222.11.(TA07.40/A)-116546. The necessary documentation was assembled between August 2007 and May 2016.

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A short while before the final edition of the present article, a new book by Andrea M. Pülz has appeared on the Byzantine small finds from Ephesus, entitled as "Byzantinische Kleinfunde aus Ephesos" (Forschungen in Ephesos 18/1; Vienna 2020). As it was not available to the authors, this book could not be considered here as a reference source.

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#### FIGURE CAPTIONS

Fig. 1: Places in Asia Minor and elsewhere referred to in the text.

Fig. 2a-b: A gold ring beaded with a gemstone with a two-lined inscription. The Berna Oğuz collection, Izmir, accession no. 57.

Fig. 3a-b: A silver ring beaded with an octagonal gemstone with a two-lined inscription. The Koray Selçik collection, Izmir.

Fig. 4: A carnelian *intaglio* with a four-lined inscription. Archaeological museum of Izmir, accession no. 013.529.

Fig. 5a-b: A silver ring with a monogram. Archaeological museum of Izmir, accession no. 2016.861.1.

Fig. 6: A silver ring beaded with an octagonal gemstone with a two-line inscription. Museum of Afyonkarahisar.

Fig. 7a-d: A bronze ring with a three-line inscription. Museum of Bergama.

Fig. 8a-b: A bronze ring with a three-line inscription. Museum of Ödemiş, accession no. 2017.317.

Fig. 9a-c: A bronze ring with cruciform monogram. Museum of Bergama.

Fig. 10a-b: A copper alloy ring with a four-line inscription. Archaeological museum of Izmir, accession no. 2016.861.2.

Fig. 11: An opal *intaglio* with a two-lined inscription. Archaeological museum of Izmir, accession no. 017.312.

Fig. 12: A bronze ring with engraved geometric decoration. Museum of Trabzon.

Fig. 13a-b: A bronze ring with engraved geometric decoration. The Koray Selçik collection, Izmir.

Fig. 14: A bronze ring with engraved geometric decoration. Museum of Kuvâ-yi Milliye in Balıkesir.

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