

ISLAMIC SEALS



IN THE BRITISH LIBRARY PHILATELIC COLLECTIONS

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The British Library's Philatelic Collections hold ten Islamic metal seal matrices, of unknown provenance. Most appear to be Ottoman, and all but one are dated. They have been arranged in chronological order below. Three seals appear to have the initials or signatures of Ottoman seal engravers, two of which occur in the list of seal engravers' signatures published in M. Şinasi Acar, *Türk hat sanatı = Turkish calligraphy* (Istanbul: Antik A.Ş., 1999), pp. 290-295. These signatures are always written in much smaller letters than the main inscription, and are placed in { } brackets in the transliterations. The inscriptions are transliterated both in standard romanisation for Arabic and in modern Turkish orthography.

<p>Islamic seal 1</p> <p>Round, with a double-ruled outline, d. 14 mm; with a looped flat-topped handle, h. 23 mm.</p> <p>الواثق... الفقير... حسن ...</p> <p><i>al-wāthiq... al-faqīr ... Ḥasan ...</i></p> <p>‘He who trusts [in God], the indigent ... Hasan’</p> <p><i>el-vāsik...el-fakir...Hasan</i></p>		
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Islamic seal 2

Round, with a double-ruled outline, d. 15 mm; central almond cartouche with double knots at each pointed end; handle with loop, h. 20 mm.

// الفقير عبد الرحيم بن محمد

سنه ٩٩٦ بختم [انبيا؟ و؟] ختم [مردان]

/ ختم کار ما بر خير کردن

*al-faqīr ‘Abd al-Raḥīm bin Muḥammad
// sanat 996 / Ba-khatm-i [anbiyā? va?]
khatm-i [mardān?] / khatm-i kār-i mā
bar khayr gardān*

The indigent ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, son of Muḥammad // [in Persian verse] By the Seal of the Prophets, and the Seal of the Men [of God] / Turn towards good the seal (or conclusion) of our actions (or destiny)

*el-fakir Abdürrahim bin Muhammed /
senet 996 / Bi-hatm-i [enbiyâ? ve?]
hatm-i merdân / hatm-i kâr-i mâ ber
hayır gerdân*

Dated: 996 (1587/8)

[Reading by M.I.Waley]



Islamic seal 3

Wide oval, 11 x 15 mm; with a small knob handle with hole, h. 17 mm.

سحر بنت حسين ١٢٢١









Saḥar[?] bint Ḥusayn 1221


[Saḥar?] bint Hüseyin 1221

Dated: 1221 (1806/07 AD)

This appears to be the seal of a woman.



<p>Islamic seal 4</p> <p>Wide oval, 15 x 17 mm; with a hinged handle, h. 26 mm.</p> <p>ابراهيم بن مصطفى ١٢٢٩</p> <p><i>Ibrāhīm bin Muṣṭafā 1229</i> <i>İbrahim bin Mustafa 1229</i> Dated: 1229 (1813/14 AD)</p>		
<p>Islamic seal 5</p> <p>Wide oval, 15 x 15 mm; handle with punched holes, h. 25 mm.</p> <p>السيد حسن بصرى ٩١ غنى</p> <p><i>al-Sayyid Ḥasan Baṣrī 91 {Ghanī}</i> <i>es-Seyyid Hasan Basrî {Ganî}</i> Dated: [12]91 (1874/75 AD)</p> <p>Signed by the seal maker Ghanī (Turkish Ganî) (not listed in Acar 1999)</p>		
<p>Islamic seal 6</p> <p>Wide oval, 12 x 13 mm, with a decorative handle, h. 23 mm.</p> <p>حسن [بن؟] حسين ٩٦</p> <p><i>Ḥasan [bin?] Ḥusayn 96</i> <i>Hasan [bin?] Hüseyin 96</i> Dated: [12]96 (1878/79 AD)</p>		
<p>Islamic seal 7</p> <p>Wide oval, 22 x 23 mm; with a small knob handle, h. 23 mm.</p> <p>شاهين ولايت حلب</p> <p>ژاندارمه قوماندانلاری ١٢٩٩</p> <p><i>Shāhīn wilāyat Ḥalab zhāndārma qūmāndān-lārī 1299</i> <i>Şâhîn vilayet-i Haleb jandarma komandanları 1299</i> Province of Shāhīn Aleppo gendarme commandants 1299 Dated: 1299 (1881/82 AD) [Reading by M.I.Waley]</p>		

<p>Islamic seal 8</p> <p>Wide oval, 16 x 17 mm; small leaf handle, h. 24 mm.</p> <p>احمد بن مصطفى ١٣٣١</p> <p><i>Aḥmad bin Muṣṭafā 1331</i></p> <p><i>Ahmed bin Mustafa 1331</i></p> <p>Dated: 1331 (1912/13 AD)</p>		
<p>Islamic seal 9</p> <p>Wide oval, 12 x 15 mm; small knob handle with punched holes, h. 24 mm.</p> <p>ابراهيم ١٣٣٢ حلمي</p> <p><i>Ibrāhīm 1332 {Ḥilmī}</i></p> <p><i>İbrahim 1332 {Hilmi}</i></p> <p>Dated: 1332 (1913/14 AD)</p> <p>Signed by the Ottoman seal maker Ḥilmī (Acar 1999: 295)</p>		
<p>Islamic seal 10</p> <p>Wide oval, 15 x 17 mm; with a hinged handle, h. 26 mm.</p> <p>احمد بيجان ١٣٤٣ عسقي</p> <p><i>Aḥmad Bījān 1343 {'Ishqī}</i></p> <p><i>Ahmed Bican 1343 {'Aşkî}</i></p> <p>Dated: 1343 (1924/25 AD)</p> <p>Signed by the Ottoman seal maker 'Ishqī (in Turkish, Aşkî (Acar 1999: 295)</p>		