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A Byzantine Lead Seal from Paphlagonian Hadrianopolis

Paphlagonia Hadrianopolisi'nden Bir Bizans Kurşun Mührü

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Abstract

The subject of this article is a Byzantine lead seal found during the excavations of the Inner Castle Baptistery of Paphlagonian Hadrianopolis in 2022. The lead seal found during the archaeological excavations in the baptistery is understood to belong to the 11th century AD thanks to the coins found in the same layer with the seal. The dotted borders on the obverse and reverse are carved very close to each other, and the borders became straight lines in some places. On the obverse of the seal, Archangel Michael is depicted within a dotted border, wearing an outfit decorated with precious stones, with diademed curly hair, holding a scepter in his right hand and a globus in his left hand. The reverse reads an address in four lines within a dotted border, the first line beginning with a cross. These kinds of seals are categorized by sigillographers as private seals used for personal business since they do not bear the owner's title or position on the reverse, except for his name. An evaluation of the Byzantine lead seal together with the coins found in the same context revealed that it has a significant place in terms of indicating that Hadrianopolis continued to be inhabited until the 11th-12th century AD, albeit on a small scale, which was previously considered to have been abandoned due to the interruption of data from archaeological excavations starting from the middle of the 7th century AD.

Keywords

Paphlagonia, Hadrianopolis, Byzantium, Lead Seal, Sigillography

Öz

Makalenin konusunu, Paphlagonia Hadrianopolis'i 2022 yılı İç Kale Vaftizhanesi kazılarında bulunan bir Bizans kurşun mührü oluşturmaktadır. Vaftizhanedeki arkeolojik kazı çalışmalarında bulunan kurşun mührün hem ön ve arka yüzünde yer alan noktalı bordürlerin birbirine oldukça yakın işlenmesinden dolayı bazı yerlerde bordürlerin düz çizgi hâline gelmiş olması hem de mührüle aynı tabakada ele geçen sikkeler sayesinde MS 11. yüzyıla ait olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Mührün ön yüzünde noktalı bordür içerisinde Baş melek Mikail'in kıymetli taşlardan süslü kıyafetiyle diademli kıvrıkcık saçlı, sağ elinde asa ve sol elinde globus tutan tasviri bulunmaktadır. Mührün arka yüzünde ise, noktalı bordür içerisinde dört satır hâlinde ilk satırının haçla başladığı bir hitap yazısı yer almaktadır. Bu mührüler, arka yüzünde sahibinin adı dışında unvan ve görevlerinin yazılı olmamasından dolayı sigilografî çalışanları tarafından şahsî işler için kullanılan özel mührüler olarak sınıflandırılmaktadır. Çalışmanın konusunu oluşturan Bizans kurşun mührü aynı kontekste ele geçen sikkelerle birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, arkeolojik kazılardan elde edilen verilerin MS 7. yüzyılın ortalarından itibaren bir kesintiye uğramasından dolayı terk edildiği düşünülen Hadrianopolis'te küçük de olsa MS 11.-12. yüzyıla kadar yerleşimin devam ettiğine işaret etmesi açısından da oldukça önemli bir yere sahiptir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Paphlagonia, Hadrianopolis, Bizans, Kurşun Mührü, Sigilografî

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Paphlagonia Hadrianopolis'i olarak adlandırılan antik kent, günümüzde Karabük ili, Eskipazar ilçe merkezinin 3 km batısında "Viranşehir" olarak adlandırılan mevki ve çevresindeki arazi üzerinde dağınık bir şekilde konumlanan Budaklar, Büyükyaylalar, Çaylı ve Beytarla köylerini kapsamaktadır. Antik kente ait kalıntılar, günümüzde Budaklar köyü ve Hacı Ahmetler Mahallesi'nde yoğunlaşmaktadır. Hadrianopolis'te, günümüze kadar yapılan kazı çalışmalarında ortaya çıkarılan yapıların büyük bir bölümü Geç Roma ve Erken Bizans dönemlerine tarihlenmektedir. Günümüze kadar yapılan kazılar sonucunda kentin merkez bölgesinde Geç Roma-Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ait olan üç adet kilise, iki hamam, domus, İç Kale ve Vaftizhane kalıntıları ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Bizans Dönemi'nde dinî açıdan önemi artan Hadrianopolis, Honorias Eyaleti'ndeki beş piskoposluk merkezinden biridir. I. Nikaia Konsili (325), Khalkedon Konsili (451), Konstantinopolis Sinod'u (518), III. Konstantinopolis Konsili (680-681) ve son olarak II. Nikaia Konsili'ne (787) Hadrianopolis kentinden farklı seviyelerdeki din adamları katılmıştır. Antik dönemin önemli din adamlarından biri olan Aziz Alypius Stylites'in (MS 522-640) bu kentte doğması ve hayatının önemli kısmını burada geçirmiş olması da oldukça önemlidir. Aziz'in Hadrianopolis kentindeki bir sütun üzerinde yaklaşık 50 yıl yaşadığına inanılmaktadır. Hristiyanlığın güçlü yaşandığı kentlerden biri olan Hadrianopolis'te günümüze kadar gerçekleştirilen arkeolojik kazı çalışmalarında temel seviyesinde kalıntılara ulaşılan üç kilise ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Ayrıca kentte yapılan Jeofizik-Arkeojeoradar çalışmaları sonucunda bazilikal planlı bir kilisenin de varlığı tespit edilmiştir. Söz konusu kiliseler dışında Hadrianopolis'te 2013 yılında yapılan Jeofizik-Arkeojeoradar sonuçlarına göre yapı kalıntılarının olduğuna dair verilere rastlanan İç Kale'de arkeolojik kazılara 2022 yılında başlanmıştır. Yapının merkezinde haç planlı bir havuzun varlığı, zemindeki mozaiklerdeki figür ve motiflerin dinî anlamlar içermesi, yapının kare planlı olması ve içerisinde ele geçen küçük buluntular ışığında yapının ilk evresinin vaftizhane olarak hizmet ettiği anlaşılmıştır. Dolayısıyla 2022 kazı çalışmalarında Hadrianopolis'te İç Kale Vaftizhanesi olarak adlandırılan yeni bir dinî yapı ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Çalışmanın konusunu oluşturan Bizans kurşun mührü de İç Kale Vaftizhanesi 2022 kazılarında bulunmuştur. Bizans Dönemi'nde kurşun mühürler yaygın olarak iki farklı amaç için kullanılmıştır: İmparatorlar, askerler, kilise görevlileri ve devlet memurlarının yazışmalarının gizliliğini korumak veya evrakın sahte olmadığını ispat etmek.

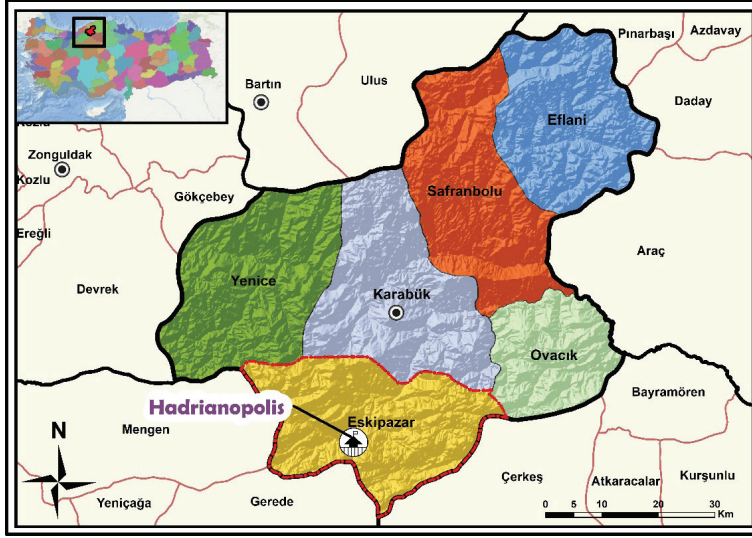
İç Kale Vaftizhanesi'ndeki arkeolojik kazı çalışmalarında bulunan kurşun mührün kanal girişi ve çıkışında kırıklar olup belirli bölümleri korozyona uğrayıp bozulmuştur. Buna karşın mührün, ön ve arka yüzü tanımlanabilecek durumdadır. Mührün ön yüzünde noktalı bordür içerisinde Baş melek Mikail'in sanki bir imparator gibi betimlenmiş büstü bulunmaktadır. Baş melek Mikail kıymetli taşlardan süslü kıyafetiyle, diademli kıvrıkcık saçlı, sağ elinde asa ve sol elinde globus tutarken betimlenmiştir. Büstün sağında ve solundaki dikey yazıtta baş meleğin ismi yazmaktadır.

Mührün arka yüzünde ise, noktalı bordür içerisinde dört satır hâlinde ilk satırının haçla başladığı bir tanrıya hitap yazısı bulunmaktadır. Mührün arka yüzünde Grekçe “Tanrım, kulum Basileios’a yardım et” yazısı mevcuttur. Mührün arka yüzünde sadece sahibinin ismi bulunduğundan mührün sahibinin makamı konusunda kesin bir bilgiye ulaşılamamıştır. Bu tür mühürler üzerlerinde sadece sahibinin isminin yazması, unvan ve görevlerinin yer almamasından dolayı araştırmacılar tarafından özel yazışmalar için kullanıldıkları düşünülmekte ve özel mühürler olarak sınıflandırılmaktadır. Hadrianopolis İç Kale Vaftizhanesi içerisinde ele geçen Basileios adlı bir kişiye ait kurşun mührün hem ön yüz hem de arka yüzünde yer alan noktalı bordürlerin bazı bölümlerde birbirine oldukça yakın işlendiği ve bundan dolayı bazı yerlerde bordürlerin düz çizgi hâline geldiği görülmektedir. Bu durum MS 11. yüzyıl mühürlerinde görülen bir dönem özelliğidir. Mührün bulunduğu yapıda 2022 yılı kazı çalışmalarında mührüle aynı tabakada MS 11. yüzyıla tarihlenen beş sikke ele geçmiştir. Bu sikkelerden biri A2 grubu (MS 976-1030/1035), diğeri C sınıfı (MS 1042-1050) olmak üzere ikisi anonim follis’tir. Diğer üç sikkenin ikisi, X. Konstantinos Dukas’a (MS 1059-1067), biri ise VII. Mihail Dukas’a (MS 1068-1071) aittir. Söz konusu beş sikke de mührün kullanıldığı dönemde sirkülasyonda olup mührün MS 11. yüzyıla ait olduğunu destekleyen önemli arkeolojik verilerdendir. Hadrianopolis kazılarında elde edilen arkeolojik veriler ve Hadrianopolis territorysında yer alan ve günümüzde hâlâ kullanılan şifalı sıcak su kaynakları kentte bir sağlık kültürünün varlığına işaret etmektedir. Çalışma kapsamında incelenen kurşun mührün ön yüzünde betimlenen Baş melek Mikail ise özellikle Anadolu’da şifalı suların bulunduğu yörelerde hastalıkları iyileştiren hasta insanların koruyucusu olarak bilinmektedir. Dolayısıyla Hadrianopolis kazılarında bulunan kurşun mührün sahibi Basileios’un mühürlerinde Baş melek Mikail’i tercih etmesinde Hadrianopolis’in şifalı sıcak su kaynaklarına sahip bir sağlık merkezi olmasının da etkili olduğu söylenebilir. Ayrıca Hadrianopolis’te günümüze kadar gerçekleştirilen arkeolojik kazılardan elde edilen veriler MS 7. yüzyılın ortalarından itibaren bir kesintiye uğradığından kentte yerleşimin bu tarihten itibaren sona erdiği düşünülmekteydi. 2022 yılında başlayan İç Kale Vaftizhanesi kazılarında bulunan ve MS 11. yüzyıla tarihlendirilen Bizans kurşun mührü ve mührüle aynı kontekste ele geçen Anonim follisler, X. Konstantinos Dukas’a (MS 1059-1067) ve VII. Mihail Dukas’a (MS 1068-1071) ait sikkeler, Hadrianopolis’te yerleşimin küçük de olsa MS 11.-12. yüzyıla kadar devam ettiğine işaret etmektedir. Hadrianopolis İç Kale Vaftizhanesi kazıları ilk yılında kent için önemli veriler sunmuş olup önümüzdeki yıllarda yapıda gerçekleştirilecek arkeolojik kazılar bölgenin ve Hadrianopolis’in Orta ve Geç Bizans Dönemi’nin aydınlatılmasına kuşkusuz katkıda bulunacaktır.

Introduction

Paphlagonian Hadrianopolis is located 3 km west of Eskipazar district centre in Karabük province, covering the villages of Budaklar, Büyükyaylalar, Çaylı and Beytarla, scattered on the surrounding land and in the area called Viranşehir (F. 1). The ruins are concentrated in Budaklar Village and Hacı Ahmetler Neighbourhood¹. Most of the buildings discovered during the excavations in Hadrianopolis date back to the Late Roman and Early Byzantine periods. The excavations uncovered the remains of three churches, two baths, a domus, an Inner Castle and a baptistery belonging to the Late Roman-Early Byzantine period in the city's central region. Numismatic and archaeological data indicate that the city was adversely affected by Sassanid raids in the first half of the 7th century AD and Arab raids from the end of the same century². So far, the excavations in the city have not yielded any data other than a few coins recovered as surface finds dating back to the 8th century AD³. It is known that the Umayyads and Abbasids organised expeditions against İstanbul. The Umayyad ruler Muawiya carried out the first siege in 669 AD⁴. The last most comprehensive Arab siege was carried out in the 8th century AD by the Abbasid dynasty. The armies of Mahdi, one of the Abbasid caliphs, penetrated deep into Asia Minor in 782 AD⁵. Many castles and cities along their route were captured during these extensive campaigns⁶. The data obtained during the excavations and surveys carried out in Hadrianopolis suggest that the people of Hadrianopolis, fleeing from these campaigns, left the city and moved to Kimistene (= Kimiata), a more sheltered spot. On the other hand, the fact that the lead seal and the coins found in the same context are dated to the 11th century AD indicates that there was a small settlement in Hadrianopolis after the 8th century AD.

- 1 Vedat Keleş, Ersin Çelikbaş and Alper Yılmaz, "Hadrianoupolis 2010 Yılı Çalışmaları (İlk Sezon)", 33. *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, vol. 3 (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Publications, 2011), 39; Vedat Keleş, "Tarihî ve Lokalizasyonu", *Paphlagonia Hadrianoupolis'i: (2010-2014 Sezonları)*. (Ankara: Bilgin Kültür Sanat Publications, 2021), 4.
- 2 Kasım Oyarçın, "Sikke Buluntuları Işığında Hadrianoupolis Kilise C Yapısı", *Uluslararası Geçmişten Günümüze Karabük ve Çevresinde Dini, İlmî ve Kültürel Hayat Sempozyumu Bildirileri Kitabı* (Karabük: Karabük University Publications, 2019), 442-451; Kasım, Oyarçın, "2010-2014 Yılları Sikke Buluntuları", *Karabük-Eskipazar Paphlagonia Hadrianoupolis'i (2010-2014 Sezonları)* (Ankara: Bilgin Kültür Sanat Publications, 2021), 171-190.
- 3 Ergün Lafli, Christ S. Lightfoot and Max Ritter, "Byzantine Coins from Hadrianoupolis in Paphlagonia", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 40 (2). (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 201-202.
- 4 İbrahim Sarıçam, "Arapların İstanbul Kuşatmaları", 550. *Yılında Fetih ve İstanbul* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Publications, 2007), 54.
- 5 Sarıçam, "Arapların İstanbul Kuşatmaları", 60.
- 6 Sarıçam, "Arapların İstanbul Kuşatmaları", 61.



F. 1: Map of Karabük and Hadrianopolis (Excavation Archive)

1. Hadrianopolis during the Byzantine Period

Kaisareis Proseilemmeneitai was the first known name of the city, belonging to the provinces of Galatia and Paphlagonia, which are considered to have been founded in the 1st century BC. It was later named Kaisareis Hadrianopoleitai⁷. The city, which was first affiliated with the province of Paphlagonia in Late Antiquity, was included within the borders of the newly established province of Honorias during the reign of Theodosius I (379-395 AD). Hadrianopolis, whose religious importance increased during the Byzantine Period, became one of the five episcopal centres in the Province of Honorias⁸. Hadrianopolis was again included in the borders of Paphlagonia with the new arrangements made in 535 during the reign of Iustinian I⁹. The Bishopric of Hadrianopolis, however, remained under the administration of the Church of Honorias and, according to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, under the metropolitan of Gangra. The Clergy of Hadrianopolis in different positions attended the Council of Nicaea I (325), the Council of Chalcedon (451), the Synod of Constantinople (518), the Council of Constantinople III (680-681) and finally, the Council of Nicaea II (787)¹⁰. It is also noteworthy that St Alypius Stylites (522-640 AD), one of the important clergymen of the ancient period, was born in this city and spent a significant part of his life here. It is claimed the saint lived on a column

7 Klaus Belke, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 9, Paphlagonian und Honorias* (Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996), 155.

8 Ercan Verim, "Dört Nehir Kilisesi (Kilise B)", *Karabük-Eskipazar Paphlagonia Hadrianopolis'i (2010-2014 Sezonları)*. (Ankara: Bilgin Kültür Sanat Publications, 2021), 65.

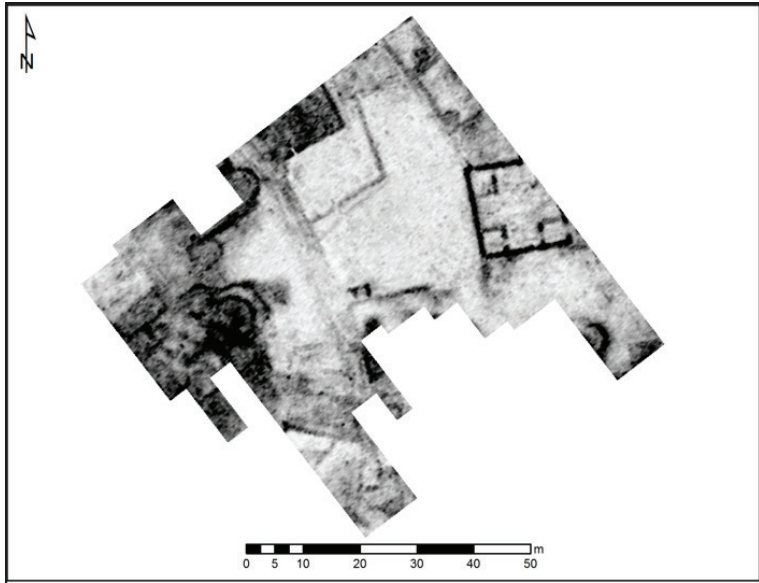
9 Belke, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 9, Paphlagonian und Honorias*, 156.

10 Belke, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 9, Paphlagonian und Honorias*, 156.

in Hadrianopolis for about 50 years¹¹. During the Byzantine period, many churches were built within the boundaries of the Hadrianopolis Diocese, with only three surviving to the present day at the foundation level. In addition, the Geophysical-Archaeogeoradar studies carried out in the city revealed the existence of a basilical-planned church. The inscriptions found around the city showed that Hadrianopolis was an important trade centre during the Byzantine Period. An inscription dating to the 6th century AD mentions the fur trade, while another inscription dated to the 5th-6th century AD mentions a furrier¹². Furthermore, the presence of around 25 press stones found around the city indicates an important viticulture activity in the city¹³.

2. Hadrianopolis Inner Castle Baptistery Excavations

The Byzantine lead seal, the subject of this study, was found in the Baptistery section during the Inner Castle excavations of Hadrianopolis in 2022. As a result of the Geophysical-Archaeogeoradar studies carried out in Hadrianopolis in 2013, many building complexes were identified within the Inner Castle (F. 2).



F. 2: Geophysics-Archaeogeoradar Image (Excavation Archive)

11 Ercan, Verim, “Paphlagonia’da Bir Piskoposluk Merkezi: Hadrianoupolis Antik Kenti”, *Uluslararası Geçmiş-ten Günümüze Karabük ve Çevresinde Dini, İlmî ve Kültürel Hayat Sempozyumu Bildirileri Kitabı* (Karabük: Karabük University Publications, 2019), 279.

12 Denis Feissel and İsmail Kaygusuz, “Un Mandament impérial du VI^e siècle dans une inscription d’Hadrianopolis d’Honoriate”, *Centre de Recherche d’histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Travaux et Mémoires 9* (Paris: Centre de Recherche d’histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, 1985), 406.

13 Mevlüt Eliüşük, “Paphlagonia Hadrianoupolis’inde Üretim ve Ticaret”, *Oannes 4-1* (2022), 6-7.

Archaeological excavations started in the Inner Castle Baptistry in 2022, and a lead seal was uncovered here (F. 3). The 23.80 m north wall of the building and a square-shaped hot water pool adjacent to this wall, as well as the entire 21 m west wall, were discovered (F. 4). Since the excavations have yet to be completed in the area where the south and east walls were partially exposed, it is impossible to determine the exact dimensions of the structure. However, the dimensions of the north and west walls make it possible to estimate that it is a square-shaped building. As in all other buildings, yellow travertine and rubble stones characterised as local architectural elements, were used to construct the walls forming the main lines of the building. Although the wall thicknesses are between 80-90 cm, some parts are damaged. A cruciform pool measuring 3.80 x 3.40 m with 30 cm thick wall lines embedded in the floor was unearthed. The marble fragments and joint traces found in situ on the interior and exterior of the pool indicate that the pool was covered with marble. It was also found that the surrounding area was decorated with mosaics with concentric circles and geometric adornments. Anemurium Centre 13 C Church Baptistry¹⁴ dating to the second half of the 5th century AD, Alahan Monastery Baptistry¹⁵, estimated to have been built in 440-442 AD, and Arykanda Arif Kale Episcopal Church Baptistry¹⁶ are like each other in terms of characteristics and period.

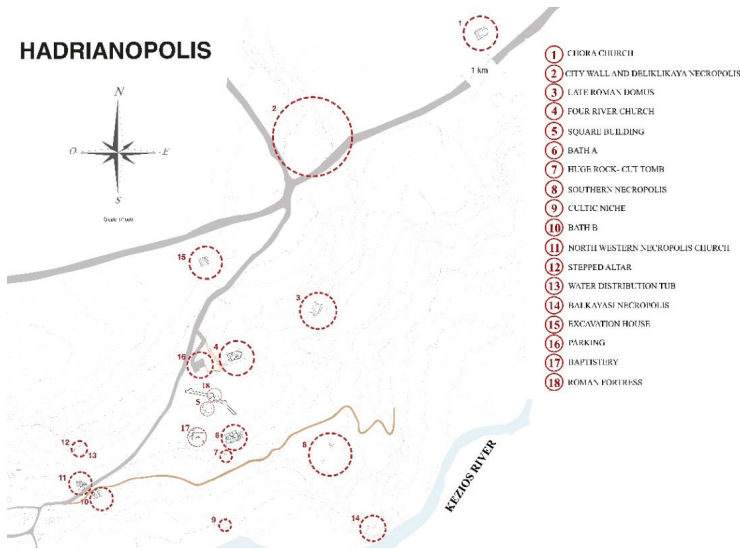
The building floor is decorated with mosaics with various bird, geometric and floral motifs. The building was extensively renovated in the second phase, and the section from the northern edge to the middle was divided into three rooms in the north-south direction, in adjacent order. After the building ceased to be used, it was filled with a layer of soil about 1 m high and a new masonry extending in the north-south direction was built inside the filled soil. It is evident from the soot traces, observed mainly in the third construction phase, and the explosions of the stones forming the wall due to the heat that the building was destroyed by fire. In light of the presence of a cruciform pool in the centre of the building, the religious meaning of the figures and motifs in the mosaics on the floor, the square plan of the building and the small finds found inside suggest that the building served as a baptistry at the first phase. Therefore, it is possible to designate the building as an Inner Castle Baptistry. Stratigraphy of the building identified during scientific excavations made another critical evaluation of the baptistry possible; the building's phases of use were determined approximately thanks to the contextual artefacts unearthed in three different phases. Accordingly, during the first construction phase, a cruciform baptismal pool embedded in the ground was placed in the centre of the square-plan baptistry. The entire

14 Selda Uygun Yazıcı, "Anadolu'da Erken Hıristiyanlık Dönemi Vaftizhaneleri: Kilikia, Pamphylia, Lykia Örnekleri" (PhD. Dissertation, Anadolu University, 2019), fig.7.

15 Uygun Yazıcı, "Anadolu'da Erken Hıristiyanlık Dönemi Vaftizhaneleri: Kilikia, Pamphylia, Lykia Örnekleri", fig.3.

16 Taner Akar, "Arykanda Arif Kale Piskoposluk Kilisesi ve Vaftizhanesi" (Master's thesis, Hacettepe University, 2022), fig. 131.

baptistery floor was decorated with mosaic. A square pillar was placed on each arm of the cruciform baptismal pool and probably enclosed in a gallery with arches and columns. The archaeological finds and traces recovered at the ground level indicate that the building was built in the 5th century AD and continued to function as a baptistery until the 7th century AD. The second phase starting in the 7th century AD witnessed major structural changes in the building's interior. In this phase, the northern part of the building was divided into three rooms and used for a different function, evident from the walls built in the second phase over the cruciform pool. The last phase of the building could be identified by the remains of the wall close to the surface found during the excavation of the east wall. The coins recovered from the soil layer removed during the excavations in the area with the remains of the wall simply built with earth mortar evinced that the building was in use until at least the 11th century AD.



F. 3: City Plan of Hadrianopolis (Excavation Archive)



F. 4: 2022 Aerial View of Baptistry (Excavation Archive)

3. Impression and Use of Byzantine Lead Seals



Byzantine lead seals, an example of which was found in the Hadrianopolis Inner Castle Baptistry, were widely used by emperors, soldiers, church officials and civil servants. The blank seal required for the imprinting of the lead seal, which is relatively easy to print, was purchased ready-made by the user, and the images and writings on the seal were transferred on these coins with the help of a tool called *boulloterion*, which resembles iron pliers¹⁷ (F. 5). Everyone who used a seal had their own *boulloterion* with a cylindrical section at each end. These cylindrical sections, which touched each other when closed, had negatively engraved figures or inscriptions on their inner faces, such as coin dies. To strike a lead seal, a blank seal was placed between the two dies, then one side of the *boulloterion* was placed on a flat surface, and the other side, which was on top, was struck with a hammer so that the figures and inscriptions on the dies were positively engraved on the lead seal. Thousands of seals could be imprinted from a *boulloterion*, but if the *boulloterion* became unusable due to overuse, the craftsmen would engrave the same composition on it again¹⁸. When one side of the

17 Jean Claude Cheynet and Beatrice Caseau, “Sealing Practices in Byzantine Administration”, *Seals and Sealing Practices in the Near East* (Leuven, Peeters Publishers, 2012), 133-134.

18 Vera Bulgurlu, *Bizans Kurşun Mühürleri* (İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Publications, 2007), 16-17.

seal is of very high quality and the other one is poor, we assume that the *boulloterion* had to be repaired locally¹⁹. Lead seals were used for two purposes in the Byzantine Period; either to protect the confidentiality of private letters or to prove that the sealed document was not forged. In cases requiring secrecy, the document was folded by tying a cord at both ends so that the writing on the official document could not be read, and then the two ends of the cord were passed through the lead seal channel and fixed by pouring beeswax into the channel. Thus, since it was impossible to read the document without breaking the seal, its confidentiality was preserved until it reached its owner. Sometimes open documents were also sealed to indicate that the document was official and not forged. In this case, the document would be left open, the unwritten bottom part folded several times, two holes opened in the folded part, a cord passed through the holes, and the two ends of this cord tied in front and then sealed²⁰.

4. Byzantine Lead Seal Found in Hadrianopolis Excavations²¹

Seal Owner	Basileios	
Date	11 th century AD	
Obverse	Bust of the Archangel Michael with nimbus, holding the scepter in his right hand, and the globus in his left. Border of dots. Sigla: MI - [...]; M[χρήλ]	
Reverse	Inscription of four lines followed by an ornament. Border of dots. +KER . Θ,ΤΩΩΩ ΔΘΛΡ ΧΗΛΙ Κ(ύρι)ε β(οή)θ(ει) τῷ σῶ δούλ(ω) Β[α]σηλ(ε)ι(ω) Translation: Lord, help your servant Basileios!	
	PB, 31 mm., 10,48 g., Dp. 12	
Ref.	BZS.1951.31.5.2518(https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/ BZS.1951.31.5.2518/view), (Variation).	

19 Nicolas Oikonomidès, “The Usual Lead Seal”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (Cambridge: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1983), 147-157; Cheynet and Caseau, “Sealing Practices in Byzantine Administration”, 140.

20 Bulgurlu, *Bizans Kurşun Mühürleri*, 18; Kasım Oyarçın, “Parion Hristiyanlık Tarihine Yeni Bir Katkı: Parion Başpiskoposu Ioannes’in Kurşun Mührü”, *Arkhaia Anatolika* 5 (2022), 88.

21 Hadrianopolis excavation works were started at 2006 and still going on. Assoc. Prof. Ersin Çelikbaş was appointed as head director to Hadrianopolis at 2020. Hadrianopolis excavation works is supported, funded and allowed by Culture and Tourism Minister with project which its number is CK017801 every year.

The lead seal, which is the subject of this study, was found in the middle of the three rooms added to the north side of the Baptistery during the second phase of the Early Byzantine Period, in the space called “Room No. 2” by the excavation team (F. 4). It is evident that the building was not used as a baptistery during the second renovation phase, as walls were built over the mosaics on the floor, and the pool in the centre was filled in and left under the wall. In the second phase, the building floor was filled with about 50 cm of soil and the walls were placed on this fill. It can be argued that the lead seal found in this fill soil did not belong to the first phase of the Baptistery but probably to the second phase or later. However, although the building underwent a major change during the second renovation phase, the lead seal in question, which may have been used for religious purposes, has fractures at the entrance and exit of the channel, and certain parts have been corroded and deteriorated. Nevertheless, the obverse and reverse of the seal are identifiable. The seal’s obverse has a bust of Archangel Michael depicted within a dotted border as if he were an emperor, wearing a costume decorated with precious stones, with diademed curly hair, holding a sceptre in his right hand and a globus in his left. The name of Archangel Michael is inscribed to the right and left of the bust, from top to bottom. Archangel Michael was believed to be the military commander of the sky as the *Archestrategos*. He appears on Byzantine seals as an emperor²², in bust or standing, with his wings open and his head with a halo and curly hair with a diadem. He is usually dressed in a rich emperor’s costume decorated with precious stones or sometimes in armor. He holds a globus or shield with a cross in his left hand and a scepter with a *trifolium* in his right²³. On Byzantine coins, he is depicted in a similar iconography on the seals, winged, with a nimbus, wearing a tunic and himation or loros, carrying a long staff on his right shoulder, usually with a small three-leaf clover motif, and a globe in his right hand, sometimes a disk with the letter X on it²⁴. Michael, who is mentioned as the archangel in the Bible and is also called a saint²⁵, was also known as the patron saint of sick people who healed diseases, especially in Anatolian regions with healing waters²⁶. The reverse of the seal has an address to a god in four lines within a dotted

22 For the depiction of the Archangel Michael as an emperor, see Henry Maguire, “Nature and Magic in Byzantine Art, A Murderer among the Angels: The Frontispiece Miniatures of Paris Gr. 510 and the Iconography of the Archangels in Byzantine Art”, *The Sacred Image East and West* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 66.

23 Gustave Léon Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l’Empire Byzantin* (Paris: E. Leroux Publications, 1884), 21-22; Bulgurlu, *Bizans Kurşun Mühürleri*, 22.

24 Ceren Ünal, “Bizans Sikkelerinde Başmelek Mikhail ve Aziz Mikhail Tasvirleri”, *Seleucia* 3 (2013), 52.

25 For Byzantine depictions of sainthood and saints, see Ceren Ünal, *Bizans Sikkelerinde Kutsal Kişi Tasvirleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Publications, 2015), 97-147, 323-365; John A. Cotsonis, *The Religious Figural Imagery of Byzantine Lead Seals II Studies on Images of the Saints and on Personal Piety* (New York: Routledge Publisher, 2020), 17-193; Alice Mary Talbot, “Bizans Anadolu’sunda Azizler ve Azizlik”, *Bizans Dönemi’nde Anadolu* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Publications, 2021), 148-155; Şebnem Dönbekci, “Anadolu’da Bizans Anıtsal Resim Sanatında Azizler ve Azizeler”, *Bizans Dönemi’nde Anadolu* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Publications, 2021), 326-339.

26 Bulgurlu, *Bizans Kurşun Mühürleri*, 103; Philipp Niewöhner, “Healing Springs of Anatolia: St. Michael and

border, the first line beginning with a cross (F. 6), and bears the Greek inscription “Lord, help your servant Basileios”. Since the reverse bears only the owner’s name, we do not precisely know the owner’s occupation. Since only the owner’s name is written on this type of seal while the title and duties are not listed, it is considered that they were used for personal business and are classified as private seals²⁷.



F. 5: A Byzantine Boulloterion 850-1100 AD (<https://hvr.dartmouth.edu/291105>)



F. 6: Lead seal belonging to Basileios found in Hadrianopolis excavations (Excavation archive)

the Problem of the Pagan Legacy”, *Life is Short, Art Long. The Art of Healing in Byzantium. New Perspectives* (İstanbul: Istanbul Research Institute, 2018), 120-124.

²⁷ Bulğurlu, *Bizans Kurşun Mühürleri*, 247.

Conclusion

The dotted borders on both the obverse and reverse sides of the lead seal of a person named Basil, found in the Baptistery of Hadrianopolis Inner Castle, are worked very close to each other in some parts, and therefore the borders have become straight lines in some points. This is used by researchers to date the seals as it is a period characteristic of 11th-century AD seals²⁸. During the excavations in 2022 in the building where the seal was found, five coins dating to the 11th century AD were discovered in the same layer as the seal. Two of these coins are *anonymous follis*, one of group A2 (976-1030/1035 AD) and one of class C (1042-1050 AD). Two of the other three coins belong to Constantinus X Ducas (1059-1067 AD) and one to Michael VII Ducas (1068-1071 AD). All five coins in question were in circulation at the time of the seal's use and are important archaeological data supporting that the seal belonged to the 11th century AD. Most Byzantine lead seals provide information about the duties of their owner. However, there is no information about the owner's occupation on the seal we are dealing with in this study. Such seals are considered by researchers to have been used for personal business and are called private seals. However, the fact that the lead seal found during the excavations in Hadrianopolis was uncovered in a religious building suggests that the seal may have belonged to a clergyman, although the seal does not bear the owner's name.

Another important point is that Archangel Michael, depicted on the seal, is known as the patron saint of sick people, especially in the regions of Anatolia with healing waters. Hadrianopolis is known to have been respected as a healing centre since early times. Hadrianopolis' autonomous coins of the Roman emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus depict the figures of Asclepius and Hygeia²⁹. During the 2022 excavations, a votive column used as a spolian was discovered 20 m east of the baptistery, inside the Inner Castle, in the building named Square Structure. The 3-line Greek inscription on the votive column with the phrase "Savior Asclepius" proves the existence of the cult of Asclepius in Hadrianopolis during the Roman Imperial Period.

Furthermore, a votive column unearthed in the Hadrianopolis territory and preserved today in Hadrianopolis Excavation House depicts two snakes and a patera between them³⁰. A votive slab discovered during the excavations of the Northwest Necropolis Church bears a woman with a snake depiction. All these data provide evidence for a health cult located in Hadrianopolis. In addition to the archaeological data obtained from the excavations, the territory of Hadrianopolis houses the Akkaya hot water spring, located within the borders of İmanlar Village and still in use today.

28 Nicolas Oikonomidès, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seal* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Publications, 1986), 155.

29 Ersin Çelikbaş and Kasım Oyarçin, "Roman Provincial Coins of Paphlagonian Hadrianopolis", *The Numismatic Chronicle* 182 (2022), Cat. 2, 3, 5.

30 Çelikbaş and Oyarçin, "Roman Provincial Coins of Paphlagonian Hadrianopolis", fig. 5.

Vitruvius states the following regarding the construction of healing centres near thermal springs and the cult of Asklepios in ancient times: Care is taken to find water sources in places chosen suitable for health facilities for the temples of Asclepius, who is believed to cure many patients with his healing Powers, as sick bodies will recover more quickly when they move from unhealthy places to healthy places and when they are treated by using the water from healing springs³¹. Eskipazar Stream, which passes right through the centre of Hadrianopolis, is another water source that gives life to the city. In other words, Hadrianopolis is a city rich in thermal and freshwater resources. The fact that Hadrianopolis has essential resources in terms of healing has enabled it to be used as a health centre for centuries, from ancient times to the present day. The owner of the seal in question may have preferred to depict Archangel Michael on the obverse of his seals because Archangel Michael is known as the protector of the sick and healer of diseases, especially in regions of Asia Minor with healing waters, and Hadrianopolis is a health centre with healing hot springs. Moreover, the data obtained from the archaeological excavations carried out in Hadrianopolis until today were interrupted from the mid-7th century AD and suggest that the settlement in the city ended in the 8th century AD. The 11th century AD Byzantine lead seal in question, found during the excavations of the Baptistery of Inner Castle, which began in 2022, the anonymous follis, and coins of Constantinus X Ducas (1059-1067 AD) and Michael VII Ducas (1068-1071 AD) found in the same context as the seal, indicating that the settlement in Hadrianopolis continued, albeit in a small scale, until the 11th-12th century AD. The excavations of the Hadrianopolis Inner Castle Baptistery provided important data for the city in its first year, and the archaeological excavations to be carried out in the structure in the coming years will undoubtedly contribute to the elucidation of the Middle and Late Byzantine Period of the region and Hadrianopolis.

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31 Vitruvius, *Mimarlık Üzerine*, trans. Çiğdem Dürüşken (İstanbul: Alfa Publications, 2017), I.2.6.

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