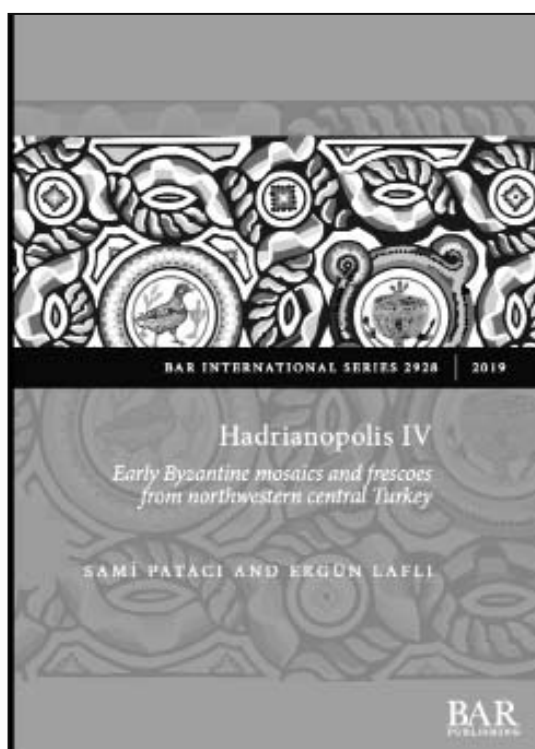


## REVIEWED

S. Pataci/E. Lafli, *Hadrianopolis IV: Early Byzantine mosaics and frescoes from northwestern central Turkey*, BAR, International Series 2928 (Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2019), pp. 328. ISBN: 978-1-4073-1526-3



Following the publication of the inscriptions (Hadrianopolis I), glass (Hadrianopolis II), and pottery finds (Hadrianopolis III), the present, fourth volume of the Hadrianopolis series, aims to present all the mosaic and fresco finds from an early Byzantine city (Hadrianopolis – Ἀδριανούπολις), located on the principal western route from the Central Anatolian plain through the mountains to Bartın and the Black Sea, 3 km west of modern township of Eskipazar (= 'old bazaar'), near Karabük, in Roman southwestern part of Paphlagonia. (northwestern central Anatolia).

The city is in a rich agricultural and vinicultural enclave on the borders between Paphlagonia, Bithynia and Galatia. Geographically, the book limits its coverage to the Central Anatolian plateau and Turkey's western coast, the heartland of Byzantine power in the eastern half of the Empire.

The authors, Dr. Sami Patacı – a classical archaeologist at the University of Ardahan and Professor Ergün Lafli - a classical archaeologist at Dokuz Eylül University in Izmir, chairs the Division for Medieval Archaeology and is the director of the Center of the Archaeology of Western Anatolia (EKVAM), offer us a complete overview of their four seasons of work on the early Byzantine mosaics of Hadrianopolis, from approximately the 6th through the 7th centuries AD. The author mentions the fact as

“Hadrianopolis became a diocesan centre in the second half of the 5th cent. AD and a sudden flowering of urbanism marked its subsequent history during the first half of the 6th cent. In the late 5th and early 6th cent. AD, there was an increase in the overall number and spread of settlements in southwestern Paphlagonia, including urban centres and a number of villages and farms that dotted along river valleys, roadways and the territories of larger towns, as well as previously unsettled lands. In the 7th cent., Paphlagonia became part of the theme of Obsequium (or Opsikion), i.e. a military-civilian province of the Byzantine Empire, and, later, of the Bucellarian theme, before it was detached again to form a separate unit“ (p. 11).

The objects presented in the book were found mainly in the field seasons between 2005 and 2008 by a team from the Dokuz Eylül University (DEU) in Izmir, under the direction of E. Lafli. The 2005 season was a survey season and the focus of the survey was the *chora* of Hadrianopolis, especially Kimistene (p. 7) and surveys identified the remains of at least 24 buildings, many of which were paved with extensive mosaic floors. It also includes the dissertation thesis of S. Patacı which was submitted to the Institute of Social Sciences of the DEU in Izmir in May 2012 and defended in July 2012.

In this book, the authors revised texts of inscriptions and detailed analysis of the non-inscribed carpet mosaics from Hadrianopolis's baths (A, B p. 7-30), two basilicas (A, B p. 61-191), and other buildings (Apsidial Building p. 209-211, and the Domus p. 211-236) from the perspective of their archaeological context and history of art. These are complemented by floor mosaics of the baths and churches depicting various subjects, including the geometric designs (pentagonal, hexagonal, octagonal, triangular, rhomboid and circular *crustae* in

other geometric forms (p. 27) in both baths, Basilica A and Basilica B and in Domus), the rosette (of Room 2 in Baths B who has no known parallel in mosaic art, in Domus), combination of geometric and floral designs (in Baths B's Room 2 mosaic and in Basilica A – in the border design of the nave, there is a band with floral ornaments which is the first known type of its kind, for example), animal-scenes (like horses, elephants, panthers, lions, gazelles and even mythical griffons – in Basilica A: 40 animals figures and 32 bird figures – bull and in Basilica B and the Domus) and Christian Iconography (two confronted peacocks on both sides of a crater Basilica B) or symbolic Biblical motifs (paradise scene in Basilica A with analogies in mosaics of Tunisia, also images of the Four Rivers of Paradise: Geon, Phison, Tigris, and Euphrates, in Basilica B (p. 174-178), only example of this theme in Asia Minor, but with analogies in Tegea, Corsica, Syria. The authors found the analogies in the floor mosaics of Edessa, Antioch and its surroundings as well as Cilicia, Perrhe, Sardis, Xanthus and Laodicea on the Lycus (p. 231-235).

Paweł Nowakowski, from University of Oxford, authors of Preface, (p. XXI) believes that: „One of the most remarkable discoveries was undoubtedly the floor mosaic of the nave of Basilica B, which displays personifications of the Four Rivers of Paradise: Euphrates, Tigris, Phison and Geon“.

The floor of Basilicas is covered with an *opus sectile* of brick and stone, started to be used in religious buildings, but “was intensively preferred for the floors of public buildings of the Roman period, and it also continued to be used as a pavement in public and religious buildings in the early and middle Byzantine periods in Anatolia“ (p. 27).

In Basilica B,

“the most remarkable feature is that it has the only completely preserved mosaic inscription among the mosaics of Hadrianopolis. In this inscription the «Loyal scholarius Himerios and honest and respectful Valentina» are mentioned. Therefore, this mosaic inscription with prosographic data played an important role in dating Basilica B to the first half of the 6th cent. AD.“ (p. 232)

The authors made the effort of publishing in English, and the book is a fuller-length comprehensive study of the topic, something that is

certainly needed, especially due to the sometimes hermetic world of archaeology in Turkey and the general lack of knowledge of Turkish language scholarship among students of Byzantium. And indeed, ecclesiastical and other monumental urban architecture (including the Baths) constitute a core interest of many authors, as do chronology, epigraphy, and detailed stylistic analysis of architectural ornament (carpet and floor mosaics and frescoes). The result of study is a complementary, comprehensive and updated collection of these past papers concerning the mosaic and fresco finds at. With all of the discussion of ecclesiastical and monumental architecture and urbanism, it is striking how rarely one encounters words such as "stratigraphy" in this volume. We consider that stratigraphy would have been useful to verify the chronological determinations.

The authors mentioned that this book is the first monograph on the Turkish Black Sea area that is fully dedicated to mosaic studies. In present,

"during the early Byzantine period mosaic finds are patchy, unsuccessfully documented and generally not well-known in the southern Pontic littoral, i.e. Paphlagonia and Pontus, in comparison with other countries that are located on other Black Sea coasts, namely Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia and Georgia" (Introduction, p. 1).

In Turkey the main sites for the study of mosaics of the early Byzantine period are Antioch-on-the-Orontes, Zeugma, Edessa, Istanbul, Muğla, Mopsuestia, Anemurium, Xanthus and Aphrodisias, but „Hadrianopolis seems to be one of the very few sites in the hinterland of Paphlagonia where extensive mosaic floors of the early Byzantine period were found“.

The book is exciting and thoughtfully illustrated (302 figure and 23 plates), with 25 descriptive table (p. 245-260) and its extensive bibliography will give easy access to wider literature on the artistic evolution in mosaics and frescoes from of Hadrianopolis, the northwestern central Turkey, of the Byzantine Empire in the early periods, allowing for more comparative study with other parts of the Turkey's western coast and Mediterranean basin at this time.

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