Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi (AEÜSBED)
2025, Cilt 11, Sayı 3, Sayfa 811-830

An Early Byzantine Larder in Iuliopolis

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Araştırma Makalesi		DOI: 10.31592/aeusbed.1658053
Geliş Tarihi: 14.03.2025	Revize Tarihi: 15.09.2025	Kabul Tarihi: 28.11.2025

Atıf Bilgisi
Gür, D., Çelik, T. ve Karakök, C. (2025). An early Byzantine larder in Iuliopolis. *Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 11*(3), 811-830.

ABSTRACT

The Ancient City of Iuliopolis is located 123 km northwest of Ankara, in the Gülşehri area of Çayırhan Town, Nallıhan District. The settlement, divided by the Aladağ Stream, was previously known as Sarılar Village. With the construction of the Sarıyar Dam in the 1950s, the city was submerged under the dam's waters. Under the scientific supervision of the Anatolian Civilizations Museum in Ankara, archaeological excavations were carried out in 1991, 2009, and subsequent years. In the southern part of the area, which served as a necropolis during the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods, numerous findings from the Late Roman and Early Byzantine periods were identified during the 2023–2025 excavations. Remains of fortification walls, roads, and structures have been identified and documented. An Early Byzantine storage room was discovered during excavations in November 2024. No kitchen or storage room had been previously identified in the city. Five in situ terracotta pithoi were found side by side at the base of a wall. One of these pithoi is notable for having a Latin cross on its surface. Inside Pithoi No. 4, a bronze patera was discovered, while the soil fills within the storage room yielded various artifacts, including a terracotta loom weight, an iron axe, a glass unguentarium (tear bottle), a fragment of a marble column drum, a column base, an altar fragment, a sculpture fragment, two coins, ceramic sherds, as well as terracotta brick and roof tile fragments. Apart from the three-aisled church and burial structures dating to the Early Byzantine Period, the discovery of this storage room suggests the presence of a monastic complex in the area, where surplus production was stored. The five pithoi and other small finds identified during the study were analyzed through analogical comparison to date the storage facility. In light of the data obtained were provided into the architecture and socioeconomic structure of Iuliopolis, shedding light on the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Periods.
Keywords: Byzantine, Iuliopolis, Nallıhan, Pithoi, Roman.

Iuliopolis'te Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne Ait Kiler

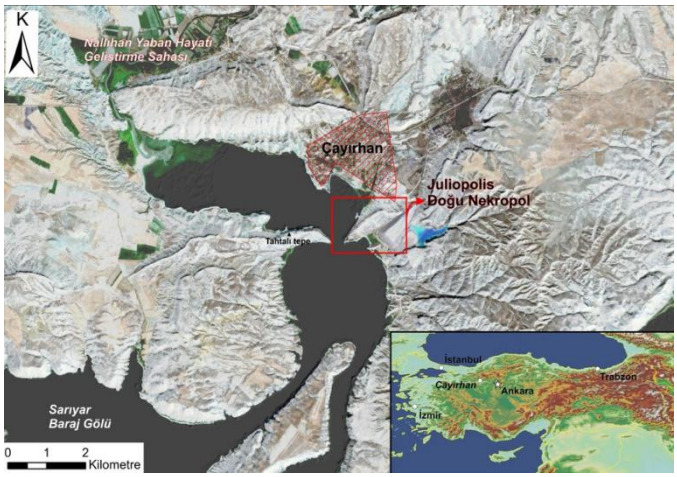
ÖZ

Iuliopolis Antik Kenti, Ankara'nın 123 km kuzeybatısında, Nallıhan İlçesi'nin Çayırhan Beldesi, Gülşehri Mevkii'nde bulunmaktadır. Aladağ Çayı'nın ikiye ayırdığı yerleşim alanı daha önceden Sarılar Köyü olarak adlandırılmıştır. Sarıyar Barajı'nın 1950'lerde inşa edilmesiyle birlikte kent, baraj sularının altında kalmıştır. Ankara Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi'nin bilimsel danışmanlığında 1991, 2009 ve sonrasındaki yıllarda bilimsel kazı çalışmaları gerçekleştirilmiştir. Helenistik, Roma ve Bizans dönemlerinde nekropol olarak kullanılan alanın güneyinde, 2023-2025 yıllarında Geç Roma ve Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ait birçok veri tespit edilmiştir. Sur kalıntıları, yol ve yapılara ait kalıntılar tespit edilerek kayıt altına alınmıştır. Kasım 2024'te gerçekleştirilen çalışmalarda Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ait bir kiler tespit edilmiştir. Daha önce kente ait herhangi bir mutfak ya da kiler tespit edilememiş olmakla birlikte, yan yana duvarın dibine yerleştirilmiş in situ durumdaki pişmiş toprak beş pithosun birinin üzerinde Latin haçı bulunmaktadır. Dört numaralı pithosun içinden bir bronz patera ve kilerin içindeki toprak dolgusundan ise p.t. ağırşak, demir balta, cam gözyaşı şişesi, mermer sütun tambur parçası, sütun kaidesi, altar parçası, heykel parçası, iki sikke, seramik parçaları, p.t. tuğla ve kiremit parçaları tespit edilmiştir. Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ait üç nefli kilise ve mezar yapıları dışında tespit edilen bu kiler, burada bir manastır yapılaşmasının bulunduğunu ve üretim fazlası ürünlerin burada depolandığını göstermektedir. Çalışma kapsamında tespit edilen beş pithos ve diğer küçük buluntular analojik

açıdan incelenerek kilerin tarihlendirilmesi yapılmış, elde edilen veriler ışığında Iuliopolis'in mimarisi, sosyoekonomik yapısı, Geç Roma ve Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ışık tutulmuştur.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Bizans, Iuliopolis, Nallıhan, Pithos, Roma.

Introduction

Iuliopolis is located within the borders of the Nallıhan district in Ankara, in the Çayırhan area. Within the scope of this study, an Early Byzantine Period storage structure, situated approximately 750 meters southwest of the church and south of the necropolis, has been examined (Map 1).



Map 1. Ankara, Location of Iuliopolis and the Location of Iuliopolis Necropolis and Larder (Ulusoy, Şen, and Diker, 2024, p, 78, Figure 1)

In the archaeological studies conducted in 2023–2025, a larder from the Early Byzantine Period was identified within the remains of a three-phase building complex dating to Late Antiquity and the Early Byzantine Period. The larder, designed with an east-west oriented rectangular plan and adjoining sections, contained five pithoi—one of which was intact—along with stone lids of various sizes belonging to six pithoi, discovered in the northern section (Room No. 2). In the larder, besides the five pithoi, small finds from the Roman and Early Byzantine periods were discovered. Among the finds were two bronze coins, a marble column fragment, a marble column base, a marble altar fragment, a marble statue fragment, numerous re-used architectural block fragments, a broken glass tear bottle, an iron axe, a bronze patera, a pottery loomer weight, and ceramic fragments.



Figure 1. Ankara, Iuliopolis City, View from South to North (2024)

In the archaeological studies conducted in 2023-2025 in the 1 and 2 units of A-B-C-D-E plan squares, at elevations ranging from 477.98 m to 475.62 m, two adjacent building remains identified as a larder were uncovered. The southern and northern structures of these are rectangular in plan, oriented east-west. The connection between the two spaces is provided by a door. In the southwestern corner of the northern space, five in situ pithoi were identified, one of which was intact. One of the pithoi has a Latin cross on its surface, along with ceramic fragments depicting crosses and other small finds. These, along with the three-phase buildings to the west of the larder, were evaluated as a whole following the

archaeological research. The in situ data found within the Early Byzantine larder indicate that it was contemporary with the church and several burial structures in the city. The findings prove that the larder was used as a storage area between the 5th and 7th centuries (Figures 1-2).



Figure 2. Ankara, Iuliopolis, Early Byzantine Period Larder Aerial Photograph and Dam Lake (2025)

In the city, which is divided by the Aladağ River, the three-phase building remains found on the southern slope of the terrace where the necropolis is located, near the riverbank, were used as a larder. The boundaries of the northern space of the larder have not yet been determined, and the work was concluded in November 2024, with plans to continue in 2025**.**



Figure 3. Ankara, Iuliopolis, Early Byzantine Period Larder, Aerial Photograph (2025)

In light of the available data, the rectangular-plan larder structure (Spaces 1 and 2) dated to the Early Byzantine Period has been classified and dated. The aim was to investigate whether there is any connection between the larder and monastic structures or city buildings. For this purpose, the historical process of the larder was examined about the Early Byzantine history of the city, particularly focusing on the 5th to 7th centuries, and the larder and small finds from that period were evaluated together (Figure 3).

The fieldwork was conducted and the data was converted into a publication with the permission of the T.R. Ankara Governorship, Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilizations Directorate, dated 30.01.2024 and numbered E-70583208-155.01-4716552. We extend our endless gratitude to the museum staff, especially the museum director, for their support in the execution of the fieldwork and the publication. We would also like to thank Dr. Nikos Mertzimekis and Dr. Deniz Demir for their support during this study.

History

The name of Iuliopolis first appears on the historical scene in the 1st century BC. Until the 11th century AD, sources from the period and scholarly works mention Iuliopolis. Scientific research conducted on Iuliopolis (Onur, 2014, pp. 71-76; Procopius, VII/V) has revealed significant data dating back to the Phrygians (Şener, 2016, p. 39). The city, which is noted as a small settlement since the Hellenistic period, has been found to contain numerous graves in its Eastern Necropolis (Sağır et al., 2015, p. 151), indicating that Iuliopolis had a substantial population (French, 1981, p. 38). Iuliopolis, during the Roman period, was one of the border cities between Galatia and Bithynia (Ramsay, 1960, p. 214; Ruge, 1918, p. 102) and is known to have had a dense population in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Dabrowa, 2013, p. 361; French, 1981, pp. 38-39). Milestones from this period, particularly from the Flavianus era in the 1st century, indicate that the Roman road passing near the city's necropolis was renovated (French, 1981, p. 36). During the reign of Emperor Traianus, it is stated that a regional command post/ centurio regionarius should be established in Iuliopolis, which was part of an important transportation network (Marek, 2003, p. 58). At the beginning of the 4th century, Iuliopolis became part of the Galatia region (Belke and Restle, 1984, p. 197; Onur, 2014, p. 67) and completed its development during the Early Byzantine Period. During this period, Iuliopolis, described as one of the economically rich cities, was located along the pilgrim route (Onur, 2014, p. 68). The pilgrim route was repeatedly used by Roman and Byzantine emperors. It has been determined that especially Emperor Arcadius and Honorius also used this route for military and civil purposes (French, 1981, pp. 38-39). Epigraphic texts, inscriptions, milestones, stelae, graves, roads, and other architectural plastic works prove that Iuliopolis was one of the important cities along the commercial-religious transportation routes during the Byzantine period (French, 2013, pp. 144-146; Galanti, 1951, pp. 33-34; Mitchell, 1982, No.: 158-165).

Iuliopolis, located among the bishopric cities of Galatia I (Doğan and Avcu, 2018, p. 429, Fig. 6; Onur, 2014, p. 69), was represented by clergy at the Ankara Synod (314), the Nicene Council (325), the Council of Chalcedon (451), and the Istanbul Synod (536), as well as the Fourth Council of Constantinople (869-870) (Belke and Restle, 1984, pp. 181-182; Onur, 2014, pp. 69-70). Additionally, researchers have pointed out that the information found on the inscription in the Sarılar area near the city refers to Bishop Theodotos, indicating that he was the bishop of Iuliopolis (Mitchell, 1982, p. 139). In the Early Byzantine Period, Iuliopolis, one of the cities in Galatia, is mentioned in council lists and church records (Ramsay, 1960, p. 267). With the onset of the Byzantine Period, territorial changes took place. As a result, Iuliopolis was included within the borders of the Opsikion Theme in the 7th century, and by the 8th century, it became part of the Boukellarion Theme (Belke and Restle, 1984, p. 62; Onur, 2014, p. 69). During the 7th century, when Arab raids were significant, it was determined that the fortifications of Iuliopolis were strengthened (Kaya, 2020, p. 259).

To the south of the necropolis, a single-chambered graves belonging to Presbyter/Priest Paulos (6th-7th century), numerous epigraphic remains from the graves, small finds from the Early Byzantine Period, and a large three-aisled church structure demonstrate that the city was religiously powerful during this period (Sağır et al., 2015, p. 154, Fig. 5). Additionally, the city's name is often associated with Saint Theodoros of Sykeon (Mitchell, 1974, pp. 27-39; Niewöhner, 2011, p. 47; Kaya, 2020, p. 47).



Figure 4. Ankara, Iuliopolis, Room Grave of Presbyter Paulos (Inv. No.: M392) (6th-7th Century) (Gür, Demir and Çelik, 2024, pp. 149-166)

In the archaeological studies conducted in Iuliopolis, 24 out of approximately 781 graves have been dated to the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Periods. The fact that some of these graves are located inside and around churches and that most of the small finds were recovered from the church and its surroundings (Dolmuş et al., 2024, pp. 44-45), along with small data from the larder structure, further supports the idea that these slopes to the south of the Eastern Necropolis were used as religious, civic, and social spaces during the Byzantine period. In the list of churches from the Middle Byzantine Period (II, X, XII, XIII), the city's name is mentioned in various forms such as Basilio, Basilaiov, or Basileov (Ramsay, 1890, p. 244-245). The church in the city, which is mentioned in historical sources until the 11th century (Arslan et al., 2011, p. 273), was said to be under the jurisdiction of the Bishopric of Ankara in the 11th century (Ramsay, 1890, p. 244). Archaeological findings, including Seljuk ceramics, indicate the relationships between the Seljuks and Byzantines in Iuliopolis during the 12th and 13th centuries (Figure 4).

The city, which continued to be used as a settlement area during the Ottoman period and beyond, was still located along trade routes during this time. However, with the onset of the Ottoman period, the settlement was abandoned, and the population shifted to the north and east. Between 1951 and 1956, the Sarıyar Dam was constructed on the Sakarya River, and the ruins of Iuliopolis were submerged under the dam's waters during this period (Güney, 2018, p. 101).

Larder Structure from the Early Byzantine Period

Excavation work conducted at Iuliopolis has uncovered and recorded many graves from the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods. Additionally, the church and burial structures from the Early Byzantine Period indicate that Iuliopolis was a significant city, particularly during this time. While the city's transportation network, commercial activities, and economic aspects have been largely clarified through previous studies, no prior research has been conducted on the culinary culture of the area.

Archaeological work has uncovered many buildings remains from three successive phases in Iuliopolis. Among these remains, the southern one of the two northern rooms has been recorded as Room 1, while the room to its north is marked as Room 2. Excavations were carried out in A-B-C-D-E grid squares, with a width of 12.00 m north-south and 10.00 m east-west. The northern parts of the excavation, Rooms 1 and 2, form the larder structure. A 1.10 m wide opening between Room 2 in the north and Room 1 in the south provides access between the strorage rooms. These interconnected rooms can be examined and numbered as follows (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Ankara, Iuliopolis, Early Byzantine Period Larder, Place 1 and 2 (2025)

Place No:1

To the south, there are many remains of buildings from three successive phases. On the southern wall of Room 2, there is a 0.90 m wide door located on the western axis, leading into Room 1. Room 1 has a rectangular plan in the east-west direction and measures 4.40 x 4.20 meters internally. The floor is completely made of reused materials and earth fill, which includes pieces such as a marble altar base from the Roman period, a column base, and a column drum. The earthfill also contains rough, non-symmetrical reused stones and occasional fragments of tiles.

In the center of the rectangular-shaped room, there is a wall fragment made of rough-cut stone, rubble, adobe, and mortar, which divides the room into two halves along the east-west direction. This wall is 0.30 m thick, 0.40 m high, and 4.20 m long. The western part of the room, closer to a square shape, is labeled as 1a, while the eastern part is labeled as 1b. Room 1b measures 4.85 x 4.44 meters. The wall to the west of Room 1a is 0.80 m wide and 1.57 m high. The wall extending east-west to the south of Room 1 is approximately 0.80 m high and 0.80 m wide. The flooring of both Room 1a and Room 1b has been destroyed, but a thick layer of ash in the area has not gone unnoticed. This dense layer of ash is believed to be from decayed or burned wooden construction, suggesting that there may have been wooden elements in the structure that have deteriorated over time due to fire or decay.

A large number of reused materials from the Roman period were found inside Room 1. Most of these materials were used as fill for the floor. Among the finds, there are ceramic fragments dated between the 5th and 7th centuries, as well as a loom weight (Images 6-7).



Figure 6a-b. Reused Materials in the Door and Floor Covering between Rooms 1b and 2, Iuliopolis, Ankara (2025)



Figure 7. Ankara, Iuliopolis, Room 1b, Reused Materials on the Floor, View from West to East (2025)

Place No:2

The pithoi studies conducted in November 2024 have shown that some structures in Iuliopolis, dating to the Early Byzantine period, were repurposed and used as storage areas. The storage area in question measures 5.10 x 3.30 m. The eastern wall of the larder is 3.00 m long, 0.80 m wide and 1.00 m high. The ends of the northern walls extending east and west could not be determined during the 2024 investigations. The southern wall of the larder is 5.10 m long, 0.60 m wide and 1.10 m high. The western wall of the larder is 3.30 m long and 1.25 m high. Research on the northern wall of the larder is ongoing, and further investigations are still underway. Additionally, the discovery of walls to the west of Room 2 indicates the presence of another structure. Research will continue in the northern and western parts of Room 2 in 2025, as the investigations were paused for the time being.

In the southwestern corner of Room 2, adjacent to the western wall, five pithoi were discovered in situ, lined up side by side, and connected. Two of these pithoi are located along the southern wall (pithoi 1 and 2), while the remaining three are aligned north south along the western wall. Of the southernmost pithoi, one is intact, while the others are fragmented but could be reconstructed. The pithoi are fixed in place with limestone fragments. Additionally, six pithoi lids were found next to the pithoi. These lids are made of local limestone, three of which are intact, and three are broken. The average dimensions of the lids are approximately 6 x 33 cm. The higher number of pithoi lids suggests that more pithoi may be present in Room 2, where ongoing archaeological investigations are taking place (Figures 8-9).



Figure 8. Ankara, Iuliopolis, Place No. 2, Pithoi No. 1 and 2 (2024)




Figure 9. Ankara, Iuliopolis, Place No. 2, Pithoi No. 2 and 5 (2024) (Left)
Figure 10. Ankara, Iuliopolis, Early Byzantine Period Larder, View from North to South (2024)

Rooms 1a and 1b are located on a sloping terrain, from north to south. As a result, differences in the thickness of the soil layers were observed during stratigraphic studies. In Room 1a, excavation work began at an elevation of 477.86 meters and ended at 475.69 meters. In Room 1b, excavation work began at 477.43 meters and ended at 476.11 meters. The ground elevations of Room 2, as well as Rooms 1a and 1b, are close to each other. In Room 1b, where there is a concentration of reused architectural plastic artifacts, efforts were made to reach the original ground surface by digging below the floor level. In Room 2, archaeological work began at an elevation of 477.98 meters and ended at 476.89 meters (Figures 10-11).



Figure 11. Ankara, Juliopolis, Early Byzantine Period Larder, Room No. 2, After the Removal of the Pithoi, View from West to East (2024)

Pithoi

In the archaeological excavation work carried out in October 2024 in Room 2, five pithoi were discovered. These pithoi, made of fired clay, are approximately 1.00 meters in height. Apart from the first pithoi, which features a Latin cross depiction, the surfaces of the others are plain.

Pithoi No:1

The pithoi found adjacent to the southern wall of Room 2 has been preserved in good condition. The dimensions of the pithoi are as follows: body diameter: 2.40 m, mouth diameter: 0.42 m, height: 1.00 m, and body width: 0.80 m. The pithoi, with an ochre color, has survived intact. On the front face of the pithoi, between the shoulder and neck, a Latin cross, created using dots, is present. It is 21 cm high and 15 cm wide. Around the thick rim of the mouth, there are inward-curved and asymmetrical decorations made freely with fingers. Two rows of borders, created with dotting, encircle the upper part of the body (Figures 12a-b).



Figure 12a-b. Pithoi with Cross Depiction Number 1 Identified from Room 2 of the Byzantine Period Larder in Iuliopolis (2025)

The double border arrangement on the shoulder of the pithoi ends asymmetrically at the joining point, with the ends of the dots not overlapping. In the upper levels of the body, horizontal "S" curves are visible, interspersed with vine leaf patterns, forming a free decorative composition. This free composition of vegetable and geometric decoration has been created using a dotting technique, suggesting intricate craftsmanship and attention to detail in the decorative elements of the pithoi.

Pithoi No:2-5

The pithoi, which were broken, were documented with measurements taken from the outside before the soil inside was emptied. These pithoi are approximately 1.25 meters in height and 1.15 meters in body width, with mouth diameters of 0.40 meters. After a rounded mouth, the body expands in an almond shape before narrowing downward, ending with a narrow, round low base. Aside from the first pithoi, the other four pithoi lack any decoration, making the decorated one stand out with its more intricate features.

The pithoi were photographed and documented before being moved to the storage of the Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilizations for further restoration work. After the documentation, mechanical cleaning operations were carried out on the floor and walls of the second room. The south, east, and west walls were constructed with reused stone, rubble stone, and mortar, with an average height of 1.25 meters and a plastered surface. All of these walls were built with similar techniques and materials, with a thickness of 0.60 meters (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Ankara, Juliopolis, Early Byzantine Period Larder, Room No. 2, West Wall (2024)

Small Findings

During the archaeological work carried out in 2023 and 2025 in the 1a-b and 2-numbered areas, two bronze coins, a marble column fragment, a marble column base, a marble altar fragment, a broken glass tear bottle, an iron axe, a bronze patera, a loom weight, a marble sculpture fragment, numerous re-

used architectural block fragments, and ceramic fragments were discovered. Among the many ceramic pieces found, which included parts of lips, handles, bases, and bottoms, the majority were red-glazed North African imported ceramics dating to the 5th-7th centuries. These ceramics were found broken in the floors of pithoi and their surroundings. Notably, the fragments of an imported ceramic plate, dating to the 5th-7th century, were found beneath the base of the second pithoi. The central field of the plates often features a circular border enclosing inscriptions, with a Latin cross typically positioned at the very center of the composition. Although the poor condition of the two bronze coins found in the archaeological area does not allow for precise dating, an assessment based on their contextual association suggests that they can be dated to between the 5th and 7th centuries A.D. One coin was located within the building material of the southwest wall of the second room where the pithoi were placed, while the other was near the base of a pithoi (elevation: 477.67 m). Given their stratigraphic context, it is reasonable to propose that they date to the period between the 5th and 7th centuries.

In (area) 1a, a broken marble altar fragment, fragments of brick, and roughly hewn stone materials were discovered near the threshold of the 1.10-meter-wide doorway leading to the second room, indicating substantial use of this zone within the floor layer. Additionally, a Roman column base was identified in the southwest corner of 1b, while a column drum was used as floor paving in the northeastern section of the same room. These findings contribute to the understanding of the space's architectural evolution and its role during the period in question (5th-7th century).

In 1a, near the threshold of the 1.10-meter wide door providing access to the northern 2nd room, broken marble altar fragments, brick pieces, and rough-hewn stone materials were found in the floor fill. These materials suggest that they were repurposed or incorporated into the floor structure during the period of use. Additionally, in the southwest corner of the 1b room, a Roman period column base was discovered, while in the northeastern part of the same room, a column drum was used as part of the floor paving. These findings highlight the reuse of architectural elements from earlier periods in the site's continuous occupation and development (Figure 14).

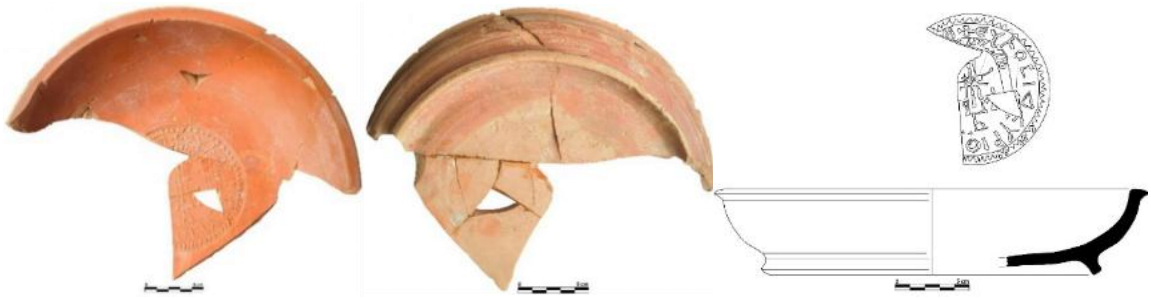


Figure 14. Ankara, Iuliopolis, African Type Red Slip Imported Ceramic Fragments (5th-7th Century)
(The inscription reads ΕΥΛΟΓΙΑ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ / The blessing of the Lord.)
(D. Demir and D. Gür Archives, 2025)

In addition to ceramics, numerous baked clay brick and roof tile fragments were found in the 1st and 2nd rooms. From the storeroom, where not all pieces could be identified, fragments of bricks with one side measuring 0.31-0.32 m in length and 0.04-0.045 m in thickness, made with large particle inclusions and in light brown-brown tones, as well as fragments of roof tiles with a thickness of 0.02-0.025 m, made with large particle inclusions and in light brown-brown tones, were found.

In the 1b room, a marble column drum fragment (elevation: 476.50 m), a marble column base (elevation: 476.11 m), and a marble altar fragment (elevation: 476.45 m) were found. These pieces were used as floor fillers within the room.

In the 2nd room, a piece of a glass tear bottle was found at an elevation of 476.54 m inside the 2nd pithoi, which was leaning against the southern wall. The tear bottle, measuring 2.6 cm in height and 1.2 cm in body width, has a broken and incomplete mouth section.

Outside the western wall of the storerooms, an iron axe was found. The heavily corroded axe measures 16.01 cm in length, 10.00 cm in width, and 5.00 cm in thickness. There is a place behind the sharp tip for attaching a handle. The axe was found in the floor fill and shows signs of extensive corrosion on its surface.

In the 2nd numbered room, six broken but restorable terracotta pithoi vessels were found, leaning against the southern and western walls. Based on analogical assessments, pithoi vessels with similar characteristics from the 3rd-7th centuries found in the ancient city of Perre (Yağız and Tosun, 2024, pp. 195-96) are proposed to date the pithoi vessels from the 6th-7th centuries when evaluated within their context. Among these pithoi, a bronze patera and terracotta handle were found inside the 4th pithoi. The handle of the bronze patera is designed in the form of a stylized dolphin, attached to the body by welding. Due to corrosion over time, the handle has detached from the body. There are broken and dented areas around the edges of the circular-bodied patera. The mouth diameter of the patera is 19.2 cm, the base diameter is 10.2 cm, the handle length is 14.4 cm, and the handle width is 3.6 cm. It was found at an elevation of 477.43 m (Figures 15a-b).



Figure 15a-b. Ankara, Iuliopolis, Location 2, Patera identified inside Pithoi 4 (2024)

In the excavations conducted in 2023 to the south of Room 1a, a terracotta spindle whorl was discovered at an elevation of 475.69 m, adjacent to the southern wall of the room. The spindle whorl measures 10.6 cm in diameter and 2.5 cm in thickness, with a central hole of 2.0 cm in diameter. A corroded iron fragment is attached to one of its surfaces.

To the east of Pithoi No. 2, at an elevation of 476.89 m, a marble fragment of a statue's left hand was discovered. The hand measures 11.5 cm in height, 12.8 cm in length, and 12.4 cm in depth. The four fingers of the left hand are carved in a closed position, and the hand appears to be holding a himation (?) in its palm. Considering the contextual evidence, the statue fragment is suggested to date to the Roman Period (1st–3rd century). Several statues were discovered in the city during illegal excavations in the 1980s. One of these statues is a torso, while the other two are heads of a woman and a child (Aksoy and Tekkılıç, 2024, p. 254). Although the torso is attributed to Iuliopolis, its context, and findspot remain unidentified. Scholars have suggested that it was made during the Augustan Period, which raises the possibility that the hand fragment could also belong to this period or later (Tokbudak and Çelik, 2024, pp. 227-245) (Figures 16a-b).



Figure 16a-b. Ankara, Iuliopolis, Statue Fragment (2024)

The walls of the larder were rebuilt and underwent several repairs during the Late Roman and Early Byzantine periods. Numerous spolia architectural block fragments, mortar, and brick materials were used together in the construction of the walls.

In the southwest part of Room 2, two in situ marble slabs belonging to the floor pavement were identified beneath the pithoi. Each piece of the marble floor pavement measures approximately 3.00 cm in thickness, 5.00 cm in width, and 12.00 cm in length. Although the rest of the floor pavement has not survived, the soil fill at this level has been compacted and hardened.

Conservation Works

The larder, identified during the October-November 2024 excavations, was documented in situ following scientific investigations conducted within the stratigraphic layers. The finds included five pithoi, two bronze coins, a marble column fragment, a marble column base, a marble altar fragment, a broken glass unguentarium, an iron axe, a bronze patera, a terracotta loom weight, a marble statue fragment, numerous spolia architectural blocks, and ceramic fragments. After the completion of the necessary documentation, the artifacts were transferred to the storage facility of the Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilizations for restoration and conservation.

The pithoi underwent mechanical and chemical cleaning processes carried out by conservators. The restoration and repair of four pithoi (Nos. 2–5) are currently ongoing. Following archaeological investigations, the floors and walls of the larder (Rooms 1 and 2) were photographed and documented. To protect the site from adverse weather conditions and potential damage caused by looters, the area was covered with geotextile fabric. Archaeological activities have been temporarily suspended and are scheduled to resume in 2025 (Figure 17).



Figure 17. Ankara, Iuliopolis, Larder and South Areas, Geotex Closure Process (2024)

Evaluation

The ancient city of Iuliopolis was an important settlement during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and from the 4th century onwards, it became one of the significant cities of the Byzantine Empire. The research conducted in the necropolis, including the identified tombs, grave goods, the three-aisled church, and the restoration activities on the walls, provides significant data for the 5th-7th centuries of Iuliopolis (Gür, Demir and Çelik, 2025 pp.105-123). Additionally, the storeroom identified in 2024 is dated to the Early Byzantine period, but due to insufficient funding, the work was concluded with plans to continue in 2025. Among the identified finds, in addition to numerous repurposed materials (column drum fragments, column bases, altar fragments), there are five terracotta pithoi, six round stone lids and pithoi lid stones, terracotta ceramic fragments, glass fragments, one loom weight, and two bronze coins. Archaeological excavations in Iuliopolis, conducted under the supervision of the Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in 1991, led to the first discovery of a larder structure dating to the Early Byzantine period. It is believed that sections of the symmetrical water channels, located in the south of the excavation site and oriented in the north-south direction, may have originally belonged to bathhouse structures and transportation networks, which were later transformed into storerooms and

various other spaces. These findings align with the statement made by the Byzantine scholar Michael Psellos, who mentioned the presence of thermal structures and baths near Iuliopolis, which he referred to as Basileion (Belke and Restle, 1984, p. 182). Future archaeological work is expected to provide clarity on this hypothesis.

The larder classified as numbers 1 and 2 consists of two adjoining rooms with a rectangular plan oriented east-west. The storerooms have walls that stand at an average height of 1.00 meters. Between the southern room (1) and the northern room (2), a 1.10-meter-wide door connects the two spaces. To the north of room 2, the walls that define the boundaries of the space have not yet been identified. As a result, the research in this area has been concluded with plans to resume in 2025. Access to room 1 is provided through a 0.90-meter-wide door located to the south of room 1a. On the floors of rooms 1a and 1b, a dense layer of ash, approximately 0.10 meters thick (altitude: 476.59-476.49), is noteworthy. The floor fill, especially between the ash layer, contains a high concentration of repurposed materials. It has been determined that repurposed materials from the Roman Period were used in the architectural structure of the larder during the 5th-7th centuries. The fact that the upper levels of the column drum, altar fragment, and column base are at the same elevation as the floor level (altitude: 476.69 m) supports this view.

Archaeological studies of Byzantine settlements have identified storage areas similar to those at Iuliopolis. These structures were built alongside churches, monasteries, houses, or various other buildings (Doğan, 2003, p. 79; Gürkan, 2003, p. 559; Kingsley, 1987, pp. 30-35; Talbot, 1991, p. 1391). Storage areas have been found in locations such as Amorium (Demirel-Gökalp and Tsivikis, 2022, p. 339, fig. 4-5), Aspendos (Köse, et al., 2024, p. 239), Perre (Yağız and Tosun, 2024, pp. 175-197), Bergama, Kuşadası, Miletos (Fidancı, 2016, pp. 84-86, 164; Mimaroğlu, 2011, p. 47), and Komana (Tatbul and Erciyas, 2019, p. 276). It is known that various food items were stored in these spaces (Cheung, 2021, pp. 63-75; Rzeźnicka, Kokoszko, and Jagusiak, 2014, pp. 245-259). Storage areas typically have thick walls and small, secure windows. Farmers and merchants used large ceramic storage vessels such as dolia and pithoi to maintain the temperature of products like wine, olive oil, fish sauce (garum), and many others throughout the year (Cheung, 2021, p. 63). Pithoi, which stored both liquid and solid foods, are noted as ceramic vessels that allowed for the long-term preservation of products without spoilage (Routman, 2006, p. 188; Yağız and Tosun, 2024, p. 175). The pithoi found at Iuliopolis are similar in typology to those from Early Byzantine periods discovered in Amorium (Demirel-Gökalp and Tsivikis, 2022, p. 339, fig. 4-5), Alişar Höyük (Waage, 1937, pp. 127, 165), Kuşadası, Miletos, Demre St. Nicholas Church (Mimaroğlu, 2011: 47, 141, 146), and several other sites. Based on the data collected from the storage structure at Iuliopolis, there is a clearer suggestion that liquid foods such as water or wine were stored there.

The small finds, particularly from the southwest corner of the 2nd room, which were identified to date between the 5th and 7th centuries, suggest that the larder was used as a storage area during this period. Samples of the fill soil found inside the pithoi were taken for analysis, numbered, and transported to the museum's storage. No tangible evidence of seeds or any other finds were detected in the soil fill inside the emptied pithoi. This suggests that there may not have been any remnants inside the vessels and implies that they might have been used for storing liquids. This will be confirmed through laboratory analysis.

The location of the storerooms to the south of the necropolis, particularly about 750 meters southwest of the church, suggests that this vast area was used as a settlement space starting from the Early Byzantine period. Its position on the Hacı Road route also indicates that the city had continuous commercial relations with other cities. The depiction of a Latin cross on one of the pithoi, along with geometric and floral decorations, suggests it may have been produced in a local workshop. The simpler appearance of Pithoi Nos. 2-5, with similar dough structures, colors, and walls, supports the idea that they are contemporaneous. If ceramic and amphora workshops are identified in later periods in the city, it will help answer questions about whether these amphorae were produced in this city or another workshop.

In Room 2, the bronze patera found inside Pithoi No. 4 is thought to have been manufactured in the 3rd century and used during religious ceremonies or evening meals for serving water and wine in the 5th to 7th centuries. Many examples of bronze pateras made from various materials have been found in situ inside the pithoi. Most of these pateras are made of ceramics and are significant representatives of the oinophoros group in mold production. It is believed that their initial appearance was to imitate metal examples, and there are also glass, clay, bronze, and silver versions. Metal examples have been identified in the Thracian tumulus (Onurkan, 1988, pp. 48-51). These vessels are generally encountered as tableware and everyday-use containers (Öz, 2021, pp. 159-161; Pastutmaz, 2009, p. 45; Şahin, 2021, pp. 339–340;). In the Roman period, meals were eaten by hand, and oinochoai (pitchers-jugs) were used for handwashing before and after meals, with paterae held underneath to prevent the water from spilling onto the ground (Öz, 2021, p. 159; Şahin, 2020, p. 341). It is known that in Christian liturgical practices, the combination of a patera and a jug is still used by priests for handwashing (Öz, 2021, p. 159; Khamis, 2013, p. 96; Mustață, 2017, p. 45). Various scholars also state that paterae were used in kitchens for cooking and for offering food and drink to the gods (Matthews, 1969, p. 33; Öz, 2021, p. 159–160). It is noted that paterae were used by Roman priests to pour sacrificial wine onto the altar fire (Matthews, 1969, p. 33). Numerous bronze paterae from the Roman and Byzantine periods exist (Bosanquet, 2003, pp. 246–254; Laflı, 2021a, pp.192–193; Laflı, 2021b, pp. 212–214; Matthews, 1969, p. 30–42; Mustață, 2017, p. 254; Oransay, 2021, p. 76; Petchey, 1979, pp. 35–39; Ştefănescu, 2004, pp. 421–429; Treister, 2022, pp. 23–46; Wamser and Zahlhaas, 1998, pp. 58–59). The discovery of the bronze patera from Iuliopolis in situ within a pithoi suggests that it was used during the process of filling or transferring water or wine from one container to another. A patera handle depicting a dolphin, dated to the 3rd century and held in the Reading Museum collection (REDMG: 1981.40.59), shows similarities to the example from Iuliopolis, although its bowl has not survived to the present day (http://collections.readingmuseum.org.uk/index.asp?page=record&mwsquery=({search}=*{patera})& filename=REDMG&hitsStart=1 17.08.2024, 13:33).

During the Byzantine period, the control and supervision of key food products such as agricultural goods and wine were under the authority of monasteries and the church. It is known that large pithoi and amphorae were used to store agricultural products in the storerooms of fortresses, monasteries, or churches located at the center of monasteries. In addition to being used as storage containers in social living spaces, kitchens, or cellars, these vessels were also utilized for storing water and wine (Fidancı, 2016, p. 9). The fact that the five pithoi identified in Iuliopolis were carefully placed side by side, with a patera found in situ inside one of them, suggests that this space may have functioned as a larder or kitchen. Due to their large volume, four of the pithoi have broken over time. These pithoi, uncovered for the first time in 2024, had never undergone repairs before; the first example has survived intact, while the others are broken but restorable. The symbolic decorations and Latin cross on the first pithoi, which has a form and color similar to the others, have been dated to the 6th–7th centuries. Contextual data suggests that the other five pithoi are contemporaneous with it.

Conclusion

The pithoi identified in situ were used for storage purposes, suggesting that they may have been containers for liquid foods such as wine, vinegar, and water stored for transportation via the river in the south. The products, such as wine, vinegar, and water, were typically stored in monasteries' cellars, using various containers like pithoi and amphorae. The focus of your study is on five pithoi found within what is thought to be a storeroom belonging to either a church or a civic structure in Iuliopolis. This discovery suggests that the storage and preservation of goods, including liquids, played a significant role in the daily life and economy of the area during that period. It may also point to the importance of such spaces for both religious and civic communities in managing essential resources. The discovery of the fired clay pithoi in November 2024 has revealed a connection between them and the 1st and 2nd numbered spaces. The planned continuation of the 2nd space's excavation in 2025 aims to uncover the original structure and all sections of the storeroom. The research so far includes the study of spaces used as storerooms, pithoi, and other small finds. The pithoi discovered in the southwest of the 2nd space, buried in the ground, are analyzed based on their form, body shapes, and rim details, along with

analogical data from contemporary burial structures, inscriptions, and the historical context of the church. These findings suggest that the storeroom was in use between the 5th and 7th centuries.

The finds, including a marble statue fragment, an iron axe, altarpieces, a column base, and a drum fragment, which were used in the floor fill, date to the 2nd-3rd centuries. The pithoi in the storeroom, which was repaired and reused between the 5th and 7th centuries, date to the 5th-6th centuries, while a patera found inside the 4th pithoi is dated to the 3rd century. The fact that the patera continued to be used for approximately three to four centuries for tasks such as filling liquids, drinking, or pouring wine in honor of the gods is highly significant. The ongoing and future archaeological work planned for 2025 and beyond will seek answers to the question of how long the storeroom was used and provide more information about other associated spaces.

Author Contributions

The contribution rate of the first two authors in the research is 35%, and the contribution rate of the last author is 30%.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgments and/or Disclosure: The fieldwork was conducted with the permission of the Ankara Governorship Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilizations Directorate, dated 30.01.2024, with the reference number E-70583208-155.01-4716552, and the data have been transformed into publication. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the museum director and museum staff for their support in conducting the research and publishing the results. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the museum directorate and staff, who did not withhold their assistance during the data collection phase of the research.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Iuliopolis Antik Kenti, Ankara'nın 123 km kuzeybatısında, Nallıhan İlçesi'nin Çayırhan Beldesi, Gülşehri Mevkii'nde bulunmaktadır. Aladağ Çayı'nın ikiye ayırdığı yerleşim alanı daha önceden Sarılar Köyü olarak adlandırılmıştır. Sarıyar Barajı'nın 1950'lerde inşa edilmesiyle birlikte kent, baraj sularının altında kalmıştır. Ankara Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi'nin bilimsel danışmanlığında 1991, 2009 ve sonrasındaki yıllarda bilimsel kazı çalışmaları gerçekleştirilmiştir. Helenistik, Roma ve Bizans dönemlerinde *nekropol* olarak kullanılan alanın güneyinde, 2023-2024 yıllarında Geç Roma ve Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ait birçok veri tespit edilmiştir. Sur, yol ve yapılara ait kalıntılar tespit edilerek kayıt altına alınmıştır. Kasım 2024'te gerçekleştirilen çalışmalarda Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ait bir kiler tespit edilmiş, 2025 yılı itibariyle de çalışmalar devam ettirilmiştir.

2023-2025 yıllarında gerçekleştirilen arkeolojik çalışmalarda Geç Antik Çağ ve Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ait üç evreli yapı kalıntısının içinde, Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ait bir kiler yapısı tespit edilmiştir. Doğu-batı doğrultusunda dikdörtgen planlı ve birbirine bitişik olarak tasarlanmış olan kiler yapısından kuzeydeki (2 numaralı mekan) içerisinde bir tanesi sağlam olmak üzere beş *pithos* ile altı *pithos*a ait çeşitli ölçülerde taş kapaklar tespit edilmiştir. Kiler mekanında beş *pithos* dışında Roma ve Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ait küçük buluntular ele geçirilmiştir. Buluntular arasında iki bronz sikke, bir mermer sütun parçası, bir mermer sütun kaidesi, bir mermer *altar* parçası, bir mermer heykel parçası, çok sayıda devşirme mimari blok parçası, kırık bir cam gözyaşı şişesi, bir demir balta, bir bronz *patera*, bir pişmiş toprak ağırşak ve seramik parçası tespit edilmiştir.

Daha önce kente ait herhangi bir mutfak ya da kiler tespit edilememiş olmakla birlikte, yan yana duvarın dibine yerleştirilmiş *in situ* durumdaki pişmiş toprak beş *pithos*un birinin üzerinde Latin haçı bulunmaktadır. Dört numaralı *pithos*un içinden bir bronz *patera* ve kilerin içindeki toprak dolgusundan ise p.t. ağırşak, demir balta, cam gözyaşı şişesi, mermer sütun tambur parçası, sütun kaidesi, *altar* parçası, heykel parçası, iki sikke, seramik parçaları, pişmiş toprak tuğla ve kiremit parçaları tespit edilmiştir.

2023-2025 yıllarında A-B-C-D-E plan karelerindeki 1 ve 2 numaralı mekanlarda, ortalama 477.98 m - 475.62 m rakım/kotları arasında gerçekleştirilen arkeolojik çalışmalarda, kiler olduğu belirlenen birbirine bitişik iki yapı kalıntısı ortaya çıkartılmıştır. Bunlardan güneydeki ile kuzeydeki mekanlar, doğu-batı doğrultusunda dikdörtgen planlıdır. Mekanlar arasındaki bağlantı ise bir kapıyla sağlanmaktadır. Kuzeydeki mekanın güneybatısında, bir tanesi sağlam olmak üzere yan yana beş tane *in situ* durumda belirlenen *pithos*lardan birinin üzerindeki Latin haçı, haç tasvirli seramik parçaları ve diğer küçük buluntular incelenerek, kilerin batısındaki üç evreli yapılar, arkeolojik çalışmaların sonucunda bir bütün olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ait kiler yapısından tespit edilen *in situ* veriler, kilerin kentteki kilise ve birçok mezar yapısı ile çağdaş olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu alanda tespit edilen veriler, kilerin 5.-7. yüzyıl arasında depolama alanı olarak kullanıldığını kanıtlamaktadır.

Kilerin kuzeyindeki özellikle 2 numaralı mekanın güneybatı köşesinden tespit edilen küçük buluntuların özellikle 5.-7. yüzyıl arasına tarihlendirilmesi, kilerin de bu dönemde depolama alanı olarak kullanıldığını göstermiştir. *Pithos*ların içinden tespit edilen dolgu topraktan analiz yapılmak üzere numuneler alınarak numaralandırılmış ve müzenin deposuna taşınmıştır. Elenerek boşaltılan *pithos*ların içindeki toprak dolgusundan çekirdek ya da herhangi bir buluntuya dair somut veri tespit edilememiştir. Bu durum kapların içinde herhangi bir kalıntının olmamış olabileceğini düşündürmenin yanında sıvı depolamak amacıyla kullanılmış olabileceğini de düşündürmektedir. Laboratuvar analiz çalışmalarının gerçekleştirilmesiyle bu durum kesinlik kazanacaktır.

Kilerin, nekropolün güneyinde ve özellikle kilisenin ortalama 750 m güneybatısında bulunması, Erken Bizans Dönemi ile birlikte bu geniş alanın yerleşim alanı olarak kullanıldığını göstermektedir. Kentin Hacı Yolu güzergahında bulunmuş olması da diğer kentlerle sürekli ticari ilişkiler içinde olduğunu göstermektedir. *Pithos*lardan birinin üzerindeki Latin haçı tasviri, geometrik ve bitkisel süslemeler, yerel bir atölyede üretilmiş olabileceğini göstermektedir. 2-5 numaralı *pithos*ların ise sade

bir görünüme sahip olması, hamur yapıları, renk ve cidarlarının da benzer özellikte olması, çağdaş olduklarını güçlendirmektedir. İleriki dönemlerden kentte seramik ve *amfora* atölyelerinin tespit edilmesi halinde bu *amfora*ların bu kentte mi yoksa başka bir atölyede mi üretildiği sorularına yanıt sunacaktır.

2 numaralı mekanda, 4 numaralı *pithos*un içinden tespit edilen bronz *patera*nın, 3. yüzyılda imal edildiği, 5-7. yüzyıllarda ise dini törenler ve akşam yemeklerinde su ile şarap servisinde kullanıldığı düşünülmektedir. *In situ* durumda *pithos*un içinden belirlenen bronz *patera*nın, çeşitli malzemelerden yapılmış birçok örneği bulunmaktadır. Çoğunlukla seramikten yapılmış olan *patera*lar, kalıp yapımı *oinophoros* grubunun önemli temsilcileridir. İlk ortaya çıkışlarının metal örnekleri taklit etmek olduğu düşünülmekte, cam, kil ve bronz ve gümüşten yapılmış örnekleri bulunmaktadır. Trakya tümülüslerinde metal örnekleri belirlenmiştir. Bunlar genellikle masa servisleri ve günlük kullanım kapları olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Dönemi'nde yemekler elle yenilmekte, yemekten önce ve sonra *oinokhoe*lerin (sürahi-testi) el yıkamak amacıyla kullanılırken altına *patera*ların tutularak suyun yere akmasının önlendiği ifade edilmektedir. Hıristiyan ayinlerinde rahiplerin ellerini yıkamak amacıyla günümüzde de *patera* ve testi ikilisini kullandığı bilinmektedir. Çeşitli bilim insanları ise mutfakta yemek pişirmek, tanrılara yemek ve içki sunmak için kullanıldığı ifade edilmektedir. *Patera*lar Roma rahiplerinin kurban şarabını sunak ateşine dökerken kullandıkları da belirtilir. Roma ve Bizans Dönemi'ne ait çok sayıda bronz *patera* mevcuttur. Iuliopolis'teki bronz *patera*nın *pithos* içinde *in situ* durumda tespit edilmesi kaptaki su ya da şarabın başka bir kaba doldurulması ya da aktarılması aşamasında kullanıldığını göstermektedir. Müze koleksiyonunda, haznesi günümüze ulaşmamasına rağmen 3. yüzyıla tarihlendirilen yunus tasvirli *patera* kulpu (REDMG: 1981.40.59) Iuliopolis örneğiyle benzerlik göstermektedir.

Bizans Dönemi'nde temel tarım ürünleri (tahıllar) ve şarap gibi temel gıda maddelerinin kontrolü ve denetimi büyük ölçüde manastırların ve kilisenin denetimi altındaydı. Kale, manastır ya da manastırların merkezindeki kiliselerin depolarında büyük *pithos* ve *amfora*larla tarım ürünlerinin depolandığı bilinmektedir. Bu kapların sosyal yaşam alanları, mutfak ya da kiler gibi yapı bölümlerinde saklama kabı olarak kullanılmalarının yanında su ve şarap saklamak amacıyla kullanıldığı belirlenmiştir. Iuliopolis'te tespit edilen beş *pithos*un da yan yana özenle yerleştirilmiş olması ve bir tanesinin içinde *in situ* bir *patera* tespit edilmesi, buranın bir kiler ya da mutfak olabileceğini göstermektedir. Hacimlerinin büyük olması sebebiyle *pithos*lardan dördü zamanla kırılmıştır. İlk defa 2024 yılında ortaya çıkartılan bu *pithos*lar daha önce hiç onarım görmemiş, 1 numaralı örnek günümüze sağlam olarak ulaşmış diğerleri ise kırık ama tümlenebilir. Birbirine benzer form ve renkteki *pithos*lardan 1 numaralı örneğin üzerindeki sembolik süslemeler ve Latin haçı, 6.-7. yüzyıllara tarihlendirilmiş, diğer beş *pithos*un da çağdaş olduğu konteks verileriyle açıklanmıştır.

Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ait üç nefli kilise ve mezar yapıları dışında tespit edilen bu kiler, burada bir manastır yapılaşmasının bulunduğunu ve üretim fazlası ürünlerin burada depolandığını göstermektedir. Çalışma kapsamında tespit edilen beş *pithos* ve diğer küçük buluntular analojik açıdan incelenerek kilerin tarihlendirilmesi yapılmış, elde edilen veriler ışığında Iuliopolis'in mimarisi, sosyoekonomik yapısı, Geç Roma ve Erken Bizans Dönemi'ne ışık tutulmuştur.