

## THE EARLY CHRISTIAN MARTYR CHAPEL OF SAN VITTORE IN CIEL D'ORO IN MILAN AND ITS V<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MOSAIC DECORATION

The Early Christian chapel of San Vittore in Ciel d'oro in Milan is a small building with trapeze form plan, connected to the south wall of the Romanesque basilica of Sant Ambrogio. It was originally an independent memorial chapel erected over the grave of martyr Victor of Lodi. It is probable that, at the end of the XI<sup>th</sup>- at the beginning of the XII<sup>th</sup> century, it had been incorporated into to the church and became its lateral chapel<sup>1</sup>.

During the first half of the IV century, at the time of bishop Maternus, between 314 and 343, the first martyr chapel of Saint Victor had been built in the city of Milan<sup>2</sup>. The bishop Maternus is credited with ordering the transfer of Saint Victor's relics, in order to allow their glorification and veneration to take place there.

Probably in the V century, a historic date is missing, and the opinions of researchers on this issue are diverging, martyrrium of San Vittore had been rebuilt<sup>3</sup> and it was at this time that the mosaic decoration of the dome and walls were created. However, the precise date of the mosaics continues to be debated. The scholars propose different dates, varying from the end of IV-until the sec-

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<sup>1</sup> For the basilica Saint Amboise and its lateral chapels, see F.Reggiori, *La Basilica Ambrosiana. Ricerche e restauri, 1929-1940*, Milano, 1941; G.Righetto, *Sant' Ambrogio e San Vittore "in ciel d'oro"*, in *Milano Capitale dell'Impero Romano, 289-401 d.C. Catalogo della mostra*, Milano 1990, 127-135; Fr. Monfrin, *A propos de Milan Chrétien. Sièges épiscopaux et topographie chrétienne à IV-VI siècle*, in "Cahiers Archéologiques", 1991, vol.39, 35-36; *La basilica di Sant Ambrogio: il tempio ininterrotto*, a cura di M.L. Gatti Perer, Milano 1995, vol.1-2, with the previous bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> G. Bovini, *Gli edifici di culto milanese d'età preambrosiana*, in "Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina", 1961, vol. 8, 47-72; E. Paoli, *Les notices sur les évêques de Milan (IV-VI siècle)*, in "Mélanges de l'école française de Rome. Moyen age temps modern", 1988, t.100, 1, 14-225, 221; *Dizionario della chiesa Ambrosiana*, Milano, vol.4, 2112-2115; *S. Vittore, martire*, in *Dizionario dei Santi della Chiesa di Milano*, a cura di C. Pasini, Milano 1995, 53-56.

<sup>3</sup> L. Biraghi, *Recognizione dei gloriosi corpi dei SS. Vittore Mauro, martire; Satiro, confessore; Casto e Polemio. Diaconi confessori*, Milano, 1861; Reggiori, 1941, 37.

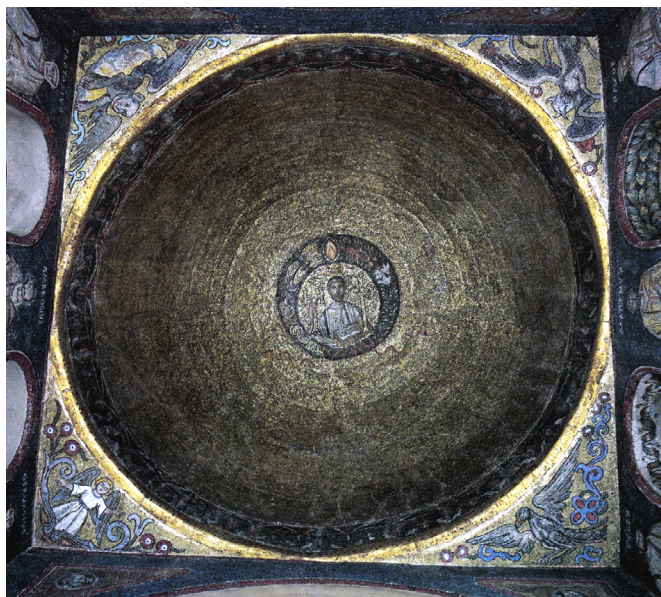


Fig. 1 Mosaics of the chapel of San Vittore in ciel d'oro in Milan, second half of the V century

Сл. 1 Мозаики капелле Сан Виторе у цел ди оро у Милану, друга половина V века

ond half of the VI century<sup>4</sup>. From my point of view, based on the analysis of mosaics' style, the decoration of chapel might have been added at the second half of the Vth century<sup>5</sup>. I suppose the mosaics of San Vittore in Ciel d'oro have a close similarity to the mosaics of Baptistery of Orthodox in Ravenna and baptistery of San Giovanni in Fonte in Naples.

The martyr-chapel of San Vittore in Ciel d'oro has retained a major part of its original mosaic decoration, which is considered to be quite rare for the early Byzantine period. Most of the mosaics of the later centuries were repainted and restored, a few of them lost their original appearance<sup>6</sup>. The mosaics of

<sup>4</sup> The different dates proposed by the scholars, see in G. Bovini, *I mosaici di S. Vittore "in Ciel d'oro" di Milano*, in "Corso di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina", 1969, vol.16, 71-80; for the recent opinions for this point, see G. Mackie, *Symbolism and Purpose in an Early Martyr Chapel: The Case of San Vittore in Ciel d'Oro*, Milan, in "Gesta", 1995, vol.34/2, p.91-101; M. Della Valle, *I mosaici di Milano: IV-XII secolo. L'aula di Sant'Aquilino presso San Lorenzo e il suo atrio*, in Proceeding of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London, 21-26 August, 2006, vol.3, Abstracts of Communications, Ashgate 2006, 48-49; M. Davide, *I mosaici parietali tardoantichi di Milano. Novità, revisioni, problemi*, in Coloquio internacional sobre mosaic Antigua, Valencia-Madrid, Octubre, 1990, Guadalajara 1994, 115-121.

<sup>5</sup> С.П. Заиграйкина, *Мозаики капеллы Сан Витторе ин Чьел д'оро в Милане. Стиль и атрибуция*, в Лазаревские чтения, Искусство Византии, Древней Руси, Западной Европы. Материалы научной конференции, Москва 2008, 26-39.

<sup>6</sup> For some lost, restored and renovated mosaics of the IV and V centuries in Rome, Naples, Milan, see: G. Matthiae, *Pittura romana del Medioevo. Secoli IV-X*, con aggiornamento di M. Andaloro, Roma 1987; *Fragmenta picta. Affreschi e mosaici staccati del Medioevo romano*, Roma 1989; M. Andaloro, S. Romano, *L'Orizzonte Tardoantico e le Nuove Immagini 312-468*, coll. Pittura medievale a Roma 312-1431, Corpus, vol. I, Milano 2006; G. Stanley *The apse mosaics at Santa Costanza. Observation on restoration of antique mosaics*, in "Mittelungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Römische Abteilung", 1987,

Fig. 2 Saint Victor, dome mosaic of the chapel of San Vittore in ciel d'oro in Milan

Сл. 2 Свети Виктор, мозаик на куполи капеле Сан Виторе у цел ди оро у Милану



San Vittore in Ciel d'oro, by contrast, survive in near original condition. The later interventions, renovations and additions are minor<sup>7</sup>. The only exceptions include the four apocalyptic beasts at the base of the dome and the medallion busts of the Evangelists on the eastern and western dome arches. They are the result of the XIXth century restoration. Otherwise, the iconographic program of mosaics of San Vittore remained unchanged.

The iconography of the mosaics of San Vittore is unique and has no analogues among the works of their time.

The medallion with a bust of the martyr Victor is at the center of the golden dome (Fig.1-2). His image is framed by a massive round wreath, made up of four kinds of plants: grapes of vine, colossi of wheat, flowers of lilies and

bd.94, 29-42, taff.17-24; T. Vitalino, *Il mosaico di Santa Pudenziana a Roma: il restauro*, Todi 2003; P.L. De Castris, *I mosaici del Battistero di San Giovanni in Fonte nel Duomo di Napoli: la letteratura, i restauri antichi e quello attuale*, in *Mosaici a San Vitale e altri restauri. Il restauro in situ di mosaici parietali*, in *Atti del convegno nazionale*, Ravenna 1-3 ottobre 1990, a cura di A.M. Iannucci, C.Fiori, Ravenna 1992, 203-212; P.J. Nordhagen, *The mosaics of the Capella di S.Aquilino in Milan: evidence of restoration*, in "Acta ad Archeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia", II, 1982, 77-94; M.Davide, *De aurea ecclesia Genesii*, in *Milano ritrovata. La via sacra da San Lorenzo al Duomo*, parte 2, a cura di M.L. Gatti Perer, Milano 1991, 49-54.

<sup>7</sup> A. Surace, *La cappella di S.Vittore in Ciel d'oro a Milano nella Basilica di Sant'Ambrogio. Storia di un restauro*, in *Mosaici a San Vitale e altri restauri. Il restauro in situ di mosaici parietali*, *Atti del convegno nazionale*, Ravenna 1-3 ottobre 1990, Ravenna 1992, 147-149; C. Ferrari da Passano, *La cappella di S.Vittore in Ciel d'oro a Milano. Restauro statico e conservativo della Cappella di S.Vittore in Ciel d'oro*, Ibid., 153-156; J. Kosinka, *La cappella di S.Vittore in Ciel d'oro a Milano nella Basilica di Sant'Ambrogio. Il restauro dei mosaici*, Ibid., 157-159.





Fig. 3 North wall mosaic of the chapel of San Vittore in ciel d'oro in Milan

Сл. 3 Мозаик на северном зиду капеле Сан Виторе у цел ди оро у Милану

roses – all of which symbolize the four seasons and the circle passage of time. This vegetal crown fastens with a red bend (below) and a large red oval stone in a golden frame (up).

Victor is shown in a fully frontal position, with short hair and a beard, according with the Roman taste, wearing a white tunic with wide dark blue *clavi*. The Divine hand over Victor's head holds the golden gemmed crown.

Victor holds a large cross in his right hand and an opened codex in his left. On the open pages of the book appears the name of the saint - VICTOR, which is also a generic term for "conqueror". On the left flank of the saint there is another cross. Both crosses have an unusual form: the first one resembles the Greek letter "Eta", and the second one – the Greek letter "Theta". The horizontal cross-bars bear the Latin inscriptions: on the left cross is PANECIRIAE, on the right one is FAUSTINI. Probably, the crosses are monogrammatic and together with the names of donators (PANECIRIAE, FAUSTINI), as Joseph Wilpert suggested<sup>8</sup>, form a certain kind of prayer. However, to date none of the researchers were able to convincingly decipher the prayer's contents<sup>9</sup>.

There are six full-size saints represented against the dark blue background of the chapel walls (Fig.3-4). On the north wall to the left of the entrance are saints Ambrosius, Gervasius and Protasius. On the south wall, to the right side

<sup>8</sup> J. Wilpert, W.N.Schumacher, *Die römischen Mosaiken der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV-XIII Jahrhundert*, Freiburg 1976, 320.

<sup>9</sup> The various opinions for this point summarized by Bovini, see in Bovini, 1969, 75-77; according to the recent interpretation proposed by Davide, the crosses compose the monogram of bishop Onorato (second half of the VIth century). Davide, 1994, 121; M. David, *Forme di controllo militare bizantino dell'Italia settentrionale. Appunti in chiave archeologica*, Studi in Memoria di Patrizia Angioini Martinelli, a cura di Silvia Pasi, Università di Bologna Dipartimento di Archeologia, Bologna 2005, 125-132.





Fig. 4 South wall mosaic of the chapel of San Vittore in ciel d'oro in Milan

Сл. 4 Мозаик на јужном зиду капеле Сан Виторе у цел ди оро у Милану

of the entrance are saints Maternus, Felix and Navor. The images of bishops Ambrose and Maternus are placed in the piers between the windows. They are represented in priestly vestments: light *alba* with *clavi*, ocher tones *paenula* (brown of Ambrose and golden of Maternus) and white narrow *stole*. Ambrose has a small cross on his chest. Ambrose is flanked by martyrs Gervase and Protase and Maternus stands between martyrs Felix and Navor. Martyrs are wearing white tunics and himations and holding books in their hands.

The choice of saints for the mosaics is closely connected with the history of the discovery, translation and veneration of their relics in Milan. Originally, they were all locally venerated saints, patrons and protectors of the Milanese Church<sup>10</sup>.

At the beginning of IV century bishop Maternus had discovered the remains of Victor, Felix and Navor in Lodi and ordered to transfer them into Milan. The relics of Felix and Navor were buried in basilica Navoriana, erected by Maternus as his own mausoleum<sup>11</sup>. The holy body of Victor was buried at the cemetery of Christian martyrs near Porta Vercellina and over his grave the martyrs chapel San Vittore in Ciel d'oro was built. Later at 386 the bishop Ambrose found the relics of Gervase and Protase near the San Vittore chapel and founded the basilica of the Martyrs (Basilica Martyrum). The remains of the saints Gervase and Protase were placed here in a crypt, located under the sanctuary. After the death of Ambrose in 397, according to his last will, he was buried in

<sup>10</sup> Ss. Protaso e Gervasio, Martiri, in Dizionario dei Santi, 1995, 71-75; Ss. Nabore e Felice, martiri, Ibid., 80-84; S. Atanalo (III sec.) e tutti santi vescovi milanesi, Ibid., 136-144; Per I Santi Vittore, Nabore e Felice, martiri; Ambrogio di Milano. Inni, a cura di G. Boffi, Milano, 1997, comments to the hymns Per i santi Vittore, Nabore e Felice, martiri and Per il ritrovamento dei Santi Protasio e Gervasio, martiri, 80-81, 84-85.

<sup>11</sup> Monfrin, 1991, 28; Paoli, 221.

the crypt of the Basilica of the Martyrs, near the bodies of Gervase and Protase. After that the Basilica of the Martyrs received a new dedication to St. Ambrose (Sant Ambrogio). Therefore, Maternus appears in mosaics between Nabor and Felix because he brought their remains to Milan, honored them with a memorial church and chose it for his own burial. And by the same reason Ambrose stands between Gervase and Protase. Both bishops have links to Saint Victor.

The image of dedicatory saint Victor has absolutely a dominating position, high in the apex of the dome, which is the most significant. The martyr is shown literally at the center of a golden sky, («in cielo d'oro»), which symbolizes the immaterial divine light of Heaven. The idea to place the image of the martyr in the dome, which in the Byzantine church decorations belongs only to Christ, looks extremely bold. Meanwhile in an earlier Christian era, which Andre Grabar called the „age of acquisition of the relics“<sup>12</sup> - it seems widespread. Unfortunately, we have no survived examples except San Vittore in Ciel d'oro. However, there are grounds for assuming it was not the only case of its kind in that period. Thanks to the research of H. Delehay and A. Grabar, it is well-known that the IV and V centuries were times of exceptional reverence for martyrs and their passions. The first calendars of saints were composed completely of the remembrance days (*dies natalis*) of the martyrs. The places of their martyrdom (passions) and their graves were marked by small memorial chapels and churches martyria<sup>13</sup>.

The beginning of this trend goes back to the early IV century and is closely connected to the private activities of Constantine the Great and his mother Helena<sup>14</sup>. The construction of the first churches dedicated to martyrs in the East and the West of the Roman Empire began according to their personal initiative and financial support. In the East, first of all in the Holy Land, the churches indicated the places of Jesus Christ's life and Passions (the Basilica of Nativity in Bethlehem, the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem) and the Apostle acts (Saint Mark in Alexandria). In the West the churches were linked to places of suffering of Christian confessors and their shrines (the Apostles Peter and Paul, martyrs, popes, bishops)<sup>15</sup>. Among the churches founded by Constantine The Great and members of his family in Rome, the earliest ones were just martirias: San Pietro in Vaticano, San Paolo fuori le Mura, San Lorenzo on Via Tiburtina, Sant Agnese on Via Nomentana, San Sebastiano on via Appia Antica, Santi

<sup>12</sup> A. Grabar, *Martyrium, recherché sur le cult des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, Paris, 1943-46, vol. I-II, vol. I, 11-44.

<sup>13</sup> H. Delehay, *Les origines du cultes des martyrs*, Bruxelles, 1933; Grabar, 1943-46, vol. I.

<sup>14</sup> See R. Krautheimer, *The ecclesiastical building policy of Constantin*, in *Costantino il Grande, dall'antichità all'umanesimo*, a cura di G. Bonamente e F. Fusco, Atti del congresso, Macerata, 18-20 dicembre 1990, II, Macerata, 1993, 509-552; P. Liverani, *L'edilizia costantiniana a Roma: il Laterano, il Vaticano, Santa Croce in Gerusalemme*, in *Costantino il Grande. La civiltà antica al bivio tra Oriente e Occidente*, a cura di A. Donati e G. Gentili, catalogo della mostra, Rimini, 13 marzo- 4 settembre 2005, Milano 2005, 74-81

<sup>15</sup> R. Krautheimer and S. Curčić, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, Yale University Press, 1986; P. Краутхаймер, *Три христианские столицы*, Спб., 2000.

Pietro and Marcellino on via Labicana<sup>16</sup>. Basilica of San Pietro and San Paolo erected on their graves (ad corpo). The others (San Lorenzo, Sant Agnese, San Sebastiano) were built on cemeteries in the immediate vicinity of the burial places of martyrs. The initiative of Emperor Constantine was continued in the activities of the Popes and the local bishops<sup>17</sup>.

The tombs and relics of the saints became a focus of the martiria. For example, the silver reliquary with remains of martyr Nazarius in basilica of San Nazaro in Milan was placed in the center of the church, where the main nave and transept make a cross<sup>18</sup>. The relics of Gervase and Protase were buried in the crypt of the basilica of the Martyrs, under the sanctuary of the church. It is also clear that at the same time, in parallel with the acquisition of the relics, the glorification of the martyrs and the building of martyria - the iconography of martyrs and the art of martiria decoration began to form. However, it is difficult to imagine and describe the process in the absence of the monuments. The only surviving example from the IV and V centuries are the mosaics of San Vittore in Ciel d'oro. Nevertheless, features of this phenomenon can be found in the decorations of later basilicas of the sixth and seventh centuries in Ravenna (San Vitale, about 546; Sant Apollinare in Classe, about 549), Rome (Sant Agnese in Roma, VII century) and Porec (basilica Eufasiana in Porec, VI cent.). They convincingly demonstrate the existence of the strict and well-considered iconography program of martiria. The image of the martyrs there is placed in the conch, in the most sacral zone closest to the sanctuary. They are unambiguously related to the image of the Christ or the Virgin Mary, which the martyr imitates in his sacrifice and his reward. The comparison of martyr to the main Christian images of the Christ and the Virgin Mary is accentuated by the different compositional and artistic effects. I'll give you two examples: mid-VI century mosaics in the basilica Sant Apollinare in Classe in Ravenna (Fig.5),

<sup>16</sup> H. Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches of Rome from the Fourth to the Seventh Century. The Dawn of Christian Architecture in the West*, Turnhout, 2005; *Roma Archeologica. Guida alla antichità della Città Eterna. Le chiese paleocristiane di Roma. I luoghi di culto nell'Urbe dal I al VII secolo dell'arte cristiana*, Roma 2003, Marzo, itin.16-17.

<sup>17</sup> For example, in Rome Pope Silvester (324-335) founded basilica Titulus Silvestri on the Catacombs of Priscilla; Pope Julius (336-352) erected basilica of San Valentino on the Via Flaminia over the relics of St. Valentine and basilica Julia and Callista (now Santa Maria in Trastevere) over the grave of Pope Callistus; Pope Siricius (384-399) built basilica of Santo Silivano on Via Salaria Vetus; Pope Bonifacius (418-422) - basilica Santa Felicia on the Via Salaria Nuova; in Milan, bishop Maternus (314-343) built the church of Santi Felice e Nabore and bishop Ambrosius (374-397) erected basilica of Santi Nazaro e Celso and San Simpliciano; in Naples bishop Severus (308/309 - 363/64) **founded basilica Santa Restituta** and San Gennaro. For the basilicas founded by the roman Popes, see H. Brandenburg, 2005, 110-113; 133-166; *Roma Archeologica*, 2003, 28-29, by the Milanese bishops, see Краутхаймер, 2000, 75-100; for basilica Santa Restituta and San Gennaro, see A. Sorrentino, *La basilica di S. Restituta in Napoli*, in "Bolletino d'Arte", 3, 1909, 217-235; Fr. Strazzullo, *Edifici sacri dell'antica insula del Duomo di Napoli*, in *Scritti in onore di Roberto Pane*, Napoli 1969-1971, 73-84; eadem, *Le due antiche Cattedrali di Napoli*, *Campania Sacra*, 4, 1973, 177-241.

<sup>18</sup> For The San Nazaro reliquary, see: B. Kiiierich, *Late fourth century classicism in the plastic arts Studies in so-called Theodothian renaissance*, Odense University Press, 1993, 181-182, note 606 (bibliography).





Fig. 5 Apse mosaic of the basilica Sant Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna, about 549

Сл. 5 Мозаик у апсиди базилике Сант Аполинаре у Класе (Sant Apollinare in Classe), Равена, око 549. год.



Fig. 6 Apse mosaic of the basilica Sant Agnese, Rome, VII century

Сл. 6 Мозаик у апсиди базилике Св. Агнеса, Рим, VII век

where Apollinarius bishop and martyr of Ravenna, is represented in a pose of orant (in prayer) and surrounded by twelve lambs. The number of the lambs corresponds to the number of the Apostles. The figure Apollinarius is placed on the same visual axis with *mandorla* with large jeweled cross, the symbol of the Christ, and the bust of blessing Savior on the triumphal arch. All these effects point directly to the role of the archbishop of Ravenna as a teacher and a pastor of the local church which is similar to the role of the Christ in the Church.

In VII century apse mosaics in basilica Sant' Agnese in Rome (Fig.6), martyr Agnesa is represented on an abstract gold background. Her vestments are splendid, like the ceremonial court costume of Empress Theodora in San Vitale mosaics (Fig.7) or Mary the Queen on the early VIIIth century icon from Santa Maria in Trastevere (dark purple *dalmatica*, lavishly ornate *maniakion*, the bright crimson shoes and crown) (Fig.8). The Divine Hand emerges from a cloud in a starry segment and crowns the saint by a golden wreath. The martyr is shown with the attributes of her passions (double-edged sword and flame) between two pontiffs Pope Symmachus and Pope Honorius, who offer her their

Fig. 7 Empress Theodora in mosaics of San Vitale, Ravenna, about 546

Сл. 7 Царица Теодора на мозаику Сан Витале, Равена, око 546. год.



gifts. The position of Saint Agnes is similar to the place of the Christ and the Virgin Mary in the apse mosaics of basilicas Santi Cosma e Damiano in Rome (Fig.9) and the church of Panagia Angeloktistos in Cyprus (Fig.10), both from the VI-th century.

In the mosaics of San Vittore in Ciel d'Oro created more than a century before the mosaics of Sant Apollinare in Classe and Sant Agnese, the same artistic treatments have been used. The image of martyr Victor is placed at the height of the dome, on a non-figurative golden background. The God's hand is a sign of the Divine presence and a crown is his reward for fidelity. It is possible to hypothesize that in the second half of the Vth century, when the mosaics of San Vittore in Ciel d'oro were created, the main principles for the martiria decoration have been already formulated.

This kind of *tondo* images, like the bust-length portrait enclosed by medallion used in San Vittore dome mosaic, has an ancient iconographic prototype. This sort of portrait, called an «*imago clipeata*», had a wide use in Ancient Greek and Roman art, moreover in funeral art<sup>19</sup>. It could be found in paintings of the graves (Fig.11), in tomb and stele reliefs and on the sar-



Fig. 8 The icon "Madonna della Clemenza", Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome, early VIIIth century

Сл. 8 Икона „Мадона дела Клеменца”, Санта Марија у Траставере, Рим, рани VIII век.

<sup>19</sup> R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Roma L'arte romana nel centro del potere dalle origini alla fine del II secolo d. C.*, Milano 1999 ed.12, 87-93; fig.98-100.





Fig. 9 Apse mosaic of the basilica SS. Cosma e Damiano, Rome, 526-530

Сл. 9 Мозаик у апсиди базилике Св. Козме и Дамјана, Рим, 526.-530. год.



Fig. 10 Apse mosaic of the church of Panagia Angeloktistos, Cyprus, VI century

Сл. 10 Мозаик у апсиди цркве Панагиа Ангелоктистос, Кипар, VI век



Fig. 11 Mural painting of the tomb of Ailia Arisuth, Gargaresh, second half of the IV century

Сл. 11 Зидно сликарство гробнице Алије Арисут, Гаргареш, друга половина IV века



cophagus<sup>20</sup>. The image of the dead is commonly accompanied by images of funeral gifts (baskets of fruits, colossi, breads)<sup>21</sup>. All these elements of sepulchral art are reflective of a ritual, and were later adapted for the Christian funeral art<sup>22</sup>. We also see them in the dome mosaic of San Vittore chapel.

However, the image of a martyr Victor in San Vittore is not just a portrait of the dead, which marks his tomb. Rather, it is an image of a famous Christian martyr, his triumphant portrait (*imago laureata*). The image of Victor has all the features of the ceremonial portrait. Victor is shown at the moment of his coronation by the Christ. The saint martyr bears the cross in his hand, the symbol of suffering, death and resurrection of the Christ, as well as his passion and victory in the Christian sense: the Victory over Death.

The gold background of the dome mosaic (ciel d'oro) symbolizes the uncreated Divine light and, therefore, Heaven. An invisible force attracts the wreath with the saint up into the sky (while the ends of the wreath waver and are hanging downward). In accordance with the ancient Roman iconographic tradition, the triumph of the Christian martyr, his divine glory, was interpreted as the scene of Ascension<sup>23</sup>.

This triumphant theme is developed in the mosaics on the walls as well. The wall is divided by two semicircular windows and resembles the double-gate Triumphal Arch<sup>24</sup>. The composition of the mosaic, where the martyrs Gervase and Protase, Felix and Navor flank the bishops Ambrose and Matern, can be compared to a court ceremony scene of the public appearance of an Emperor like on the relief of the column of Theodosius at Constantinople, about 400



Fig. 12 The relief of the column of emperor Theodosius, Constantinople, about 400

Сл. 12 Релјеф на споменику цара Теодосија, Цариград, око 400. год.

<sup>20</sup> See the examples of the *imago clepeata* in roman funeral arts in R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Roma La fine dell'arte antica L'arte dell'impero romano da Settimio Severo a Teodosio I*, Milano 1976, ed.2, fig. 114, 115, 242-243.

<sup>21</sup> See Ibid., fig.261.

<sup>22</sup> For examples, see A.Grabar, *L'Arte paleocristiana (200-395)*, Milano 1991, 2 ed. Italian, fig. 48, 123, 270, 292.

<sup>23</sup> See examples of the scenes of triumph in roman art, W.F. Volbach *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike unter frühen Mittelalters*, Mainz, 1952, taf. 2, 3,5,7,8,12; K.Weitzmann *Ancient Book illumination*, Cambridge, 1959, fig.124, 125.

<sup>24</sup> See for example the arch of Tiberius, Germanicus and Duza, 21 a.C, in Sant, Fran- ce, in Ю.Д. Колпинский, Н.Н. Бритова, *Искусство этрусков и Древнего мира*, Москва, 1982, 122в.



Fig. 13 The silver misorium of Theodosius, Madrid, about 400

Сл. 13 Сребрни мисоријум Теодосија, Мадрид око 400. год.



Fig. 14 Apse mosaic of the basilica Eufrasiana, Porec, VI century

Сл. 14 Мозаик у апсиди базилике Еуфрасијана, Пореч, VI век

(Fig.12) or on the silver misorium of Theodosius, about 400 (Fig.13). Like basileus accompanied by the guards (*Augusti milites*), the bishop is accompanied by the martyrs (*Christi milites*). Martyrs in the San Vittore mosaics appear as advocates and celestial patrons of the Milanese bishops, with whom they hope to arrange the Day of the Last Judgment. It is not accidental that Maternus made his mausoleum in the Basilica Navoriana, where relics of the martyr Navor and Felix were preserved and Ambrose asked to bury him in the Basilica of the Martyrs, near the relics Gervase and Protase. The idea of intercession of martyrs is significant for the early age of Christianity and was further realized in mosaics of VI-VII centuries. In the apses compositions of the church of basilica

of Santi Cosma and Damiano and the basilica Eufrasiana in Porec (Fig.14) the saints, patrons of the church, present to the Lords of Heaven, (the Christ and the Virgin Mary), the local bishops and donators of the church decorations.

To sum up, the mosaics of San Vittore in ciel d'oro are the earliest examples of the martyr shrine decoration created at about the second half of the Vth century. The iconographical program of the chapel reflects the general development of the martyr cult during that period, yet has a clearly local tinge. Its main idea is the glorification of the saints of Milan, the patrons and protectors of the city and its churches. This theme will be continued in the VI-VII centuries in the decorations of the martirias churches all around the Byzantine world.

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#### РАНОХРИШЋАНСКА КАПЕЛА МУЧЕНИКА САН ВИТОРЕ У ЦЕЛ ДИ ОРО У МИЛАНУ И ЊЕН ДЕКОРАТИВНИ МОЗАИК ИЗ V ВЕКА

Рано-хришћанска капела Сан Виторе у цел ди оро (San Vittore in ciel d'oro) у Милану је мала грађевина са планом трапезног облика, повезана са јужним зидом базилике Сан Амброђо. Првобитно је била независна меморијална капела подигнута вероватно у доба Матернуса, миланског епископа, (око 313.-343.), изнад гробнице мученика Виктора од Лодија.

Капела Сан Виторе у цел ди оро задржала је велики део свог оригиналног декоративног мозаика насталог, по мојој претпоставци, у другој половини V века. Мозаици у куполи и на оба бочна зида капеле опстали су практично непромењени. Касније интервенције, поправке и измене и додаци су мали.

Медаљон са бистом мученика Виктора налази се у центру златне куполе. На зидовима капеле Сан Виторе налазе се представе миланских епископа, Матернуса (око 313.-343.) и Амброзија (374.-397.), мученика Гервасијуса и Протасијуса, Набора и Феликса, постављене на тамно-плавој позадини. Избор светаца за мозаик блиско је повезан са историјатом овог открића, преводом и поштовањем њихових моштију у Милану. Сви они били су локално поштовани свеци, покровитељи и заштитници миланске цркве.

Појединачни елементи мозаика Сан Виторе имају прототипове у римској сакралној и царској уметности. Међутим, иконографски програм на мозаицима у целини је јединствен и нема аналогних међу споменицима тог времена. Мозаици Сан Виторе представљају најранији пример украшавања мартириума који је опстао. Ово одражава општи развој култа мученика током тог периода, али има јасно локални траг. Основна идеја је прослављање миланских светитеља, покровитеља и заштитника града и његових цркава.

Развој истог концепта може се наћи у декорацији каснијих базилика из VI и VII века у Риму (Свети Козма и Дамјан, 526-530, Света Агнеса, VII век), Равена (Сан Витале, око 546.; Сант Аполинаре ин Класе, око 549.) и Пореч (базилика Еуфразијева у Поречу, VI век). Тамо су ликови мученика поређани у најсакралнијој зони најближе светилишту и (тријумфални лук) и недвосмислено повезани са ликом Христа или Богородице.

Могуће је претпоставити да су у другој половини V века, када су настали мозаици Сан Виторе у цел ди оро, основни принципи за декорацију мартириа већ били формулисани.



