
Vania Popova
(Independent researcher)

LITURGY AND MOSAICS: THE CASE STUDY OF THE LATE ANTIQUE MONUMENTS FROM BULGARIA

*The various liturgies and various 'Christianities' in the Central and Eastern
Balkans*

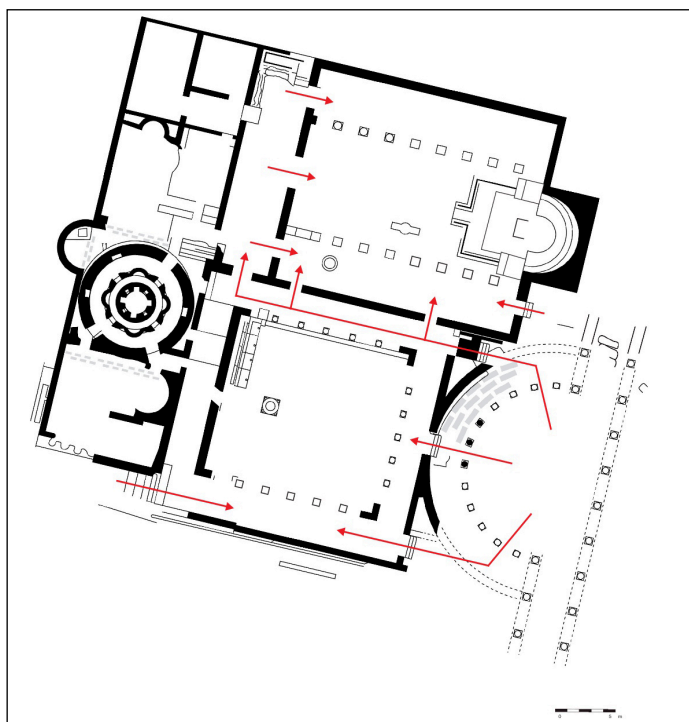
The late antique provinces in the boundaries of present-day Bulgaria do not constitute a single area of constant and non-changing Early Christian liturgy. On the contrary, similarly to the entire Early Christian world, it was in a process of shaping¹ in a very dynamic and long period, from the Edict of Mediolanum of Constantine I and Licinius I in 313 up to the beginning of the 7th century, when part of the provinces were invaded and thorn out of the Early Byzantine empire. The influences and orientation were to a greater extent traditional for the Roman and Late Antique provinces (mainly Moesia Inferior and partly Moesia Superior, Dacia Mediterranea, Thracia and Macedonia) in the boundaries of the present-day Bulgaria². So the Northeastern part of Eastern Illyricum and Dacia belonged and tended to Rome, Northern Italy and Western Balkans, with the Latin language dominating. The Southeastern part, the one of the interior of Thracia and Thracia Pontica, tended to the Greek centers and the Greek language was dominating. The Southwestern part, that one of Macedonia, also with dominating Greek language, was at the beginning under the church jurisdiction of Rome through the Pope's vicariate in Thessaloniki. But since 451, the year of the Council at Chalcedon, already became a part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Constantinople played a significant role for the further development of the liturgy in Late Antiquity³. First adhering to the Syrian Antiochian liturgy,

¹ Р. Тафт, Е. Фаруджа, *Теология на литургията и теология на символа*, София 1992.

² В. Велков, *Градът в Тракия и Дакия през късната античност (IV-VI в.)*, София 1959; V. Popova, *Itinerant and local workshops: the problem of direct work and indirect influences on the Roman mosaics in Bulgaria*, in: L. Neira Jiménez (ed) *Estudios sobre mosaics antiguos y medievales*, Roma 2016, 115-120.

³ T. Mathews, *The Early churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy*,



Pl. I. The Episcopal complex in Particopolis. Author S. Petrova with additions of V. Popova.

Пл. I. Епископски комплекс у Партикополису. Аутор С. Петрова са допунама В. Попове.

later the metropolia developed its own features, influencing some churches in the interior of Thracia and especially of Thracia Pontica as well as those in Macedonia. Additional complexity to the described picture was attributed by the fact, that up to Theodosius I and the Council held by him in Constantinople in 381, most of the studied churches in Thracia were Arianic. Finally, it may be supposed that more specific Arianic and monophysite liturgies have been practiced in the enclaves of the Goths in the lands of the present North Bulgaria of the Syrian settlers in the area of Odessos⁴. But while, according to the available data, the Goths of the time of Ulfila and later (on the present-day territory of Bulgaria) have decorated their basilicas and churches only with wall paintings, the Syrians settlers did cover their churches and monasteries with a mosaic decoration.

It should be emphasized that the small churches in the rural settlements hadn't any mosaic pavements. It is considered reasonably that the mosaics attributed greatly to the aristocratic look of all kinds of Early Christian buildings.

University Park, Penn., 1971; See for the later views and differentiation in Caraher W. Church, Society and the Sacred in Early Christian Greece. Dissertation. Ohio State University, 2003.

⁴ The problem of the liturgy itself in the supposed basilicas and churches of Goths in the territory of Bulgaria is not studied so far. For the monastery in Djanavara see Georgiev P. Odessos – Theodoriada. A Centre of Monophysitism During the 6th Century (The Djanavara Church and Its Syro-Mesopotamian Features). – *Acta Musei Varnaensis* V (2006), 291-308; see also the recent statue of A. Manev with literature 'Early monasticism in Thrace: an issue of archaeology'. - In: *Studia academica šumenensia*, vol. 4, 2017, 229-230.

Thus almost all Early Christian buildings in the big cities possessed such a decoration and the mosaics became a sign of the wealthy and important Early Christian/Early Byzantine settlements. The pavement mosaics and the rare fragments and separate tesserae/tesselae from wall mosaics from the period p. q. 313 - beginning of the 7th century from Bulgaria can be used as sources for revealing the mentioned already different liturgies and different 'Christianities'⁵ in these lands.

The purpose of the research

Naturally, this topic is too enormous, complex and full of still spotty information from theologian, archaeological and art historian point of view and with very few written sources at disposal. The most successful research can be achieved by combining the data from the mosaics with the architectural observations and the liturgical furniture. Because of the limited sources, at the present the picture can only be fragmentary. This article aims to outline the main aspects of the connection liturgy-mosaics as a first attempt so far. It will concentrate merely on some architectural aspects of the movement of the clergy and the laity in connection with the liturgy, not concerning the content itself (the kind of reading, preaching and performing the sacraments and their sequence in time) because of the lack of such data from archaeological point of view. The research will also concern the place and the essence of the mosaic decorative and figurative schemes and motives, for which the evidences are numerous. First, the attention will be drawn to the entrances and exits and to the axis of movement; to the limits of access for the laity and the privilege position of the clergy, outlined together with the architectural elements; to the role of mosaics in the different places of the building in connection with the liturgy; to the gradation of the mosaic decoration in horizontal and vertical direction in the basilicas and churches; to the place and role of the geometric-ornamental motives and of the symbolic meaning of some of them; to the figurative representations and the mosaic inscriptions, reflecting the liturgy directly or symbolically; finely to some particular symbols revealing the mystery of the liturgy.

The Stational liturgy and its variations

The liturgy in the ancient provinces of Bulgaria from the period p. q. 313 – beginning of the 7th century was mainly processional, opened and solemn. The liturgy was performed in processions in the streets and the plazas; after that and entering through the atrium, it was performed in the interior of the church buildings. During the rites there happened many entrances and exits of the clergy (in the basilica, in the chancels and the additional rooms), followed by the limited movement of the laity. The architecture of the church buildings demonstrates predominantly ensembles, united by the longitudinal axis, that's why this axis, beginning from the atrium and the nartex and then crossing the naos to

⁵ This term used by W. Caraher (2003) in his work is very suitable in describing the different types of Christianity and liturgy in the Late Antique provinces of Bulgaria.

the chancel and the apse was the most visible and essential for performing the liturgy. Several parallel or perpendicular to it axes in the aisles, the chancel and the additional rooms were also important for the liturgical movements. All they were underlined in many architectural ways and also by the architectonic and mosaic decoration. Rare are the cases, like in basilica No 4 in Parthicopolis (Pl. I)⁶, where because of the configuration of the terrain the atrium has been built south of the basilica and not on the longitudinal axis. This is the second type of the plan and movement during the liturgical rites on the Balkans⁷. Also more complex or with variations were the liturgical rites in the basilicas with transept or ambulatory, with their entrances in the most eastern part (the basilica No 2 in Zaldapa, the Episcopal basilica in Pautalia, St. Sofia in Serdica, the Episcopal basilica in Marcianopolis, – Pl. II, 1 and Pl. III, 4)⁸ and in the buildings with centric plan and cupolas (basilicas, martyria and baptisteries).

The mosaics of the Episcopal basilica in Philippopolis can serve as excellent illustration of the connection between the mosaics and the liturgy during the studied three centuries. In the mentioned basilica as well as in many other Early Christian/Early Byzantine basilicas from Bulgaria this connection can be expressed in different ways and has different essence. More often the mosaics support and enable the performance of the liturgy through their rhythm, design, compositions, palette and accents at the key places of liturgy. Sometimes they may be a background, full of the general for the Early Christian art repertory and mysterious spirit, not always directly connected with the liturgy. In the third case the inscriptions and the figurative representations could be the visible symbol or a literal repetition of a definite liturgical action. Finely the mosaics may play even the role of a guide at the places of liturgical path, denoting the necessary stops, pray etc.

The peacock in the atrium of the Episcopal basilica in Philippopolis

The atrium was the first vast space intended for gathering the people, waiting to enter the church. Usually in these lands the atrium was not paved with mosaics, revealing its profane essence in comparison to the sacred nave and the most sacred chancel and apse. That's why usually the atrium was covered pragmatically only by marble or terracotta pavement. Nevertheless the recent discoveries in the Episcopal basilica of Philippopolis show a different picture: the atrium was covered like the entire basilica with mosaics from the very beginning with opus signinum (the first mosaic) and two more times with

⁶ B. Assamer, *Bodenmosaiken aus der sog. Basilika No 4 (Vorbericht)*, – In: Pillinger R., A. Lirsch, V. Popova (Hg.), *Corpus der spätantiken und frühchristlicher Mosaiken Bulgariens*. Wien 2016, 347-354.

⁷ Caraher 2003,

⁸ L. Russeva-Slokoska, V. Kacarova, L. Stajkova-Aleksandrova, *Mosaiken aus der sog. Basilika No 2 oder Bischofskirche*, In: Pillinger et alii, *Corpus*, 401-408; V. Popova, *The Martyrium under the Basilica St. Sofia in Serdica and its Mosaics*, Niš and Byzantium XIII, Niš 2015, 131-150; eadem, *Mosaiken aus der sog. Südbasilika oder Bischofskirche*, – In: Pillinger et alii, *Corpus*, 67-70; eadem, *Mosaik aus der frühbyzantinischen basilica N 1*, In: Pillinger et alii, *Corpus*, 23-24.

mosaics in opus tessellatum and opus vermiculatum (the second and the third mosaic), each time the new mosaic over the elder one became richer and richer⁹. These facts show the special metropolitan role in Thracia of the enormous Episcopal basilica, long almost 90 m and wide circa 36 m, including the role of the atrium as well. The basilica had the same role for the interior of Thracia as the basilica of St. Peter and the Lateran basilica for Rome or the first St. Sofia for Constantinople. The three levels of extraordinary mosaic decoration and especially the last one demonstrate the exceptional place of the Episcopal basilica of Philippopolis as metropolitan, not typical in many aspects for the rest of the basilicas in Thracia. This basilica was the cornucopia of architectonic, mosaic and wall painting decoration, reflecting the basic sacraments and notions of the Early Christianity and its liturgy for three centuries and a half.

In Philippopolis the earlier two mosaics from the first and the second pavement of the atrium, at the entrance in the naos, were replaced by a figurative one, with a splendid peacock in the center of a complex composition, surrounded by birds of different species and vases (Pl. IV, 1)¹⁰. The whole composition was turned with its front not to the entering Christian, but to the opposite side. This unusual orientation of such an important symbol is not occasional and seems to reflect the salutation of the bishop in the atrium¹¹.

This basilica was unusual also because it possessed according to the last research¹² the rare for the Early Christian basilicas in Bulgaria ambulatory at the eastern end, revealing the influence of the basilicas in Rome of the type from the period of Constantine I on¹³. At the same time the basilica of Philippopolis has a also a chancel, thus combining two types of liturgies. We should add also, that the plan of the ambulatory was not quite typical for Rome, where the width of the aisles was preserved in the rounded end of the ambulatory. In Philippopolis the apse excludes the aisles' width and the corridor to the place of the relics with martyrs or other saints (still not found or ruined in the centuries?) between the chancel and the apse is very narrow. Nevertheless the three levels of mosaics in the parts of this transition every time reveal the particular curve of the ambulatory at that place and follow the liturgical movement.

The entrances from the atrium to the naos are three, through which the clergy was entering, while the laity used the direct entrances from the atrium at the very corner to the 'female' north aisle and to the 'male' south one. Except

⁹ Е. Кантарева, 'Нови стратиграфски проучвания на мозайката от епископската базилика на Филипопол', В: Сборник доклади от Международна научна конференция 'Наука, образование и иновации в областта на изкуството'. Пловдив 2018, 365-372.

¹⁰ The brochure 'The bishop's basilica and the Roman mosaic heritage of Philippopolis', p. 4 (without date of print), published in 2017 on the inclusion of the Episcopal basilica in the list of monuments of UNESCO.

¹¹ T. Matthews, „Private“ *Liturgy in Byzantine Architecture: Toward a Re-appraisal*, In: Cahiers archéologiques. Fin de l'antiquité et Moyen Âge. Vol. 30, 1982, p. 125, note 4.

¹² This is the opinion of Dr. St. Stanev from the excavators' team and of Assoc. Prof. Dr. E. Kantareva at the head of the team for the mosaic conservation. See their papers in the Acts of the conference on the Episcopal basilica in Plovdiv in 2018 (in print).

¹³ H. Brandenburg, *Roms frühchristliche basiliken des 4. Jahrhunderts*. München 1979, 61-120.

that, there existed entrances from the aisles to the naos, also at the very beginning of the naos. The aisles were separated from it by the intercolumnar screens, at least from the second and the third building period. From this description it is clear that the laity was restricted already from the very atrium not to enter directly the naos together with the clergy, but only through the back entrances to the aisles. The believers had access to the naos only during the communion of the Eucharist. That's why the three central entrances and the immediate space in the atrium in front of them was intended only for the clergy and the bishop stood for his reception and acclamation namely at this place with the mosaic representation of the peacock, before the so-called First Entrance¹⁴. That's the reason the peacock to be turned not to the viewers in the atrium, but towards the bishop facing the crowd.

The geometric-ornamental mosaics

In the basilicas excavated in Bulgaria there exist two main decisions of mosaic decoration: entirely geometric-ornamental compositions or compositions with mixed character. The non-figurative parts begin from the west, the less sacred part of the nave and are repeated modules, defying the rhythm of movement towards the presbytery and the apse by their size, colour and frequency of changing the schemes. To the east the rhythm is accelerating and the ornamental and figurative motives becoming richer and very saturated (Pl.III, 4 and 5; Pl. IV, 5).

The non-figurative style, without any representations, except rosettes and leaves or with the only Fountain of Life¹⁵, called by me 'puristic'¹⁶, is one of the many variants of the ornamental-geometric style which dominated in the studied provinces from Theodosius I probably to Theodosius II¹⁷. Scholars explain the absence of figurative images by the attempt to drop the pagan figurative traditions in mosaics and to concentrate only on the Early Christian separate representations, scenes and symbols¹⁸. But it should be confessed that the new repertoire was full of old schemes and motives and only the treatment was new, similar to the carpet one. The monuments in this style (the Episcopal basilica in Marcianopolis and basilica No 2 in Garmen) supplied the liturgical movement with the most fine and appropriate rhythm and lavish decoration and the attention was paid to the rites, not to the mosaic decoration.

¹⁴ . Taft P. The Great Entrance, *A History of the Transfer of Gifts and other Preanaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, OCA 200, 3rd ed, Rome 1976.

¹⁵ V. Popova, *Vons vitae in Late Antique monuments from Bulgaria*, In: *Studia academica šumenensia*, vol. 3, 2016, 154-198.

¹⁶ Eadem, *Die Mosaiken aus der sog. Basilika No 2*, In: Pillinger et alii, 330-337.

¹⁷ Eadem, *Две раннохристиянски базилики от околностите на Никополis ad Нестум*. – В: Ст, Станев, В. Григоров, В. Димитров (ред.), *Сборник в чест на Стефан Бояджиев*, София 2011, 285.

¹⁸ Calaher 2003,

Non-figurative was also the second mosaic pavement in the Episcopal basilica of Philippopolis with its geometric-ornamental essence¹⁹. Its main aim was to help the movement of the clergy and the laity to their places, to underline the main axes of movements in performing the liturgy, the gradation and meaning of the different parts of the basilica from liturgical and symbolic aspects. The repeating elements in each mosaic scheme, the several changes in the schemes and its fillings in each field or panel, including the dimensions and the colours, were creating a very dynamic rhythm, leading first of all parallel to the main axis from the entrance of the naos to the chancel and the apse. There were also parallel and perpendicular axes to the main one in several key places: at the entrances, alongside the longitudinal one, in front of the entrance of the chancel, inside it and in the aisles. All entrances are underlined in one or another way, outlining the beginning, the transition to another room and space or the end of the axis.

The atrium was still not a sacred space, the western part of the naos was less sacred than the eastern part with the chancel and the latter with the apse were the most sacred spaces in the horizontal gradation. Vertically the Cosmos of the Early Christians has been depicted with its higher and most sacred spheres of God, the Paradise and the several spheres of the Heavens. That's why the mosaics on the floors, following this structure of the Cosmos, represented in the naos the Earth and the Ocean²⁰, e. i. the lower spheres, created by God on the fifth and the seventh day of the Genesis. The liturgical rites should guide the Christian to the same idea of the Salvation of man by the Crucifixion of Christ and His Blood and Body embodied in the Wine and the Bread. The liturgical acts, the readings, the preaching, the movements and the decoration constituted a great symphony, in which each media played its role in the general theme of the Salvation and the Ever Lasting Life in the Christian Paradise.

The magic ornaments and apothropeic motives

In spite of the efforts of the Church and its theologians to free the mosaic and any other repertory from the pagan inheritance, nevertheless many schemes and motives continued their life in the mosaic decoration, keeping their previous magic and apothropeic meaning²¹. The reason was hidden in the extremely long tradition, created and existing for centuries and even for millenia of such special schemes and motives. They could not be ignored in the period 4th-7th century, but only compromisely accepted and transformed in the Early Christian buildings. We can observe the usage of such repertory in almost every Episcopal basilica (of Philippopolis, Pautalia, Marcianopolis, Odessos, the Episcopal basilica and basilica No 3 of Parthicopolis, the basilica of Shkorpilovtzi, basilica No 1 of Garmen etc.)²². Namely the sacred space of the naos is surrounded by

¹⁹ Кантарева, *Нови стратиграфски проучвания*.

²⁰ H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean. The Terrestrial World in the Early Byzantine Art*, Pennsylvania State University, University Park & London 1987.

²¹ Caraher 2003..

²² See note 7; A. Mincev, *Mosaiken auf der frühchristlicher Basilica in der Han*

borders with ivy leaves, small and big interwoven circles, meander and meander-swastica, beribboned parrots and beribboned dogs and colonnades and arcades on columns from which the Amazon pelta, often with ivy leaf in the center, is hanging (Pl. II, 3 and 4; Pl. III, 1b and 2, 4, 4a, 4b, 5 and 5a). In some borders like in Pautalia different animals are hunting/chasing other animals, symbolizing the cyclic changes of the seasons. The old pagan mythological iconography in that sense was very suitable for transformation in the also cyclical conception of time in Christianity. Inside the borders the mosaic compositions also contain apothropeic schemes and motives, such as the Herculan and Solomon's knots and swastika-meander (Pl. VI, 1 and 4). These schemes and motives as traditional magic depictions strengthened the stability of the House of God and supported the harmony bestowed upon the nature and the mankind by the Creator. In that the mosaic decoration repeated the liturgy and the blessings, promising the Kingdom of God to mankind.

The new mosaic as indication for new liturgical installations

The solea and the ambo also played special roles in the liturgy: the first one should stop the laity from crowding at the entrance of the chancel, intended only for the clergy; the second one was a place also of concentration of believers around it, with the deacons and rarely the bishop himself reading from the top of the ambo²³. As it and the solea appeared not immediately after 313, their introduction later than the initial building period often caused destructions over the mosaic they were installed, so repairs or even significant new mosaic parts were laid after that. Due to these new mosaics around them, we can judge about the time of these novelties in the liturgy, with the most obvious case in the Episcopal basilica of Parthicopolis (Pl. II, 2). Here the situation is even more complicated, because a new chancel was erected as well with a new mosaic inside it.

Mosaic entrances

In comparison to Philippopolis, the other Early Christian monuments from Bulgaria have more usual for the Central and Eastern Balkans mosaic decoration, but it also can be very helpful in regard of the liturgy. The two next spaces after the atrium, the exonarthex or the only existing narthex were marking the beginning of the main longitudinal axis and the place the participants were entering. It was only in Constantinople and St. Sofia of the Justinianic period that the clergy, the emperor, the elite and the laity entered the church at one at the same time, but through the numerous different entrances from all sides and stood together. In the provincial cities the laity could follow behind the clergy

Krum-Straße N 34, In: Pillinger et alli., 25-36; A. Lirsch, *Bodenmosaiken auf der sog. Basilika N 3*, – In: Pillinger et alli., 377-381; A. Mincev, *Bodenmosaiken einer frühchristlichen Basilika*, In: Pillinger et alli., 48-52; V. Popova, *Mosaiken der sog. Basilika N 1*, In: Pillinger et alli., 337-345.

²³ See the article and the references in И. Досева, *Ранновизантийски амвони от територията на съвременна България: образци и адаптация*, В: Сб. В чест на Стефан Бояджиев, 139-160; Caraher 2003.

and the elite, but not to enter together with them at one and the same time and the male and female congregation remained also separated. The entrance from the back side, the place of the ambo aside the longitudinal main axis and the short solea are also features of some but not of all Greek basilicas. When there was no place for the atrium, the exonarthex replaced it in basilicas either with lesser significance, or visited by smaller population. Their entrances, of the exonarthex or narthex, were not only decorated, as it was the habit in Roman and Late Antique time, they had very special compositions, playing the role of “rugs” of ornamental-geometric character, usually of bigger dimensions with special fillings, outlining also by more intensive colours from the rest banal modules or outlining by a guilloche the marble plate at the entrance (Pl. III, 2; IV, 2). In basilica No 3 in Parthicopolis the tribelon is decorated with a pair of beautiful birds, immediately drawing the attention by their saturated colours of the smalti (Pl IV, 4) and the two back entrances with small squares, decorated with triangles.

These entrances also served for building and donators’ commemorative and ex-voto mosaic inscriptions. Often here is placed the mosaic inscription with the name of the bishop, during whose time the church was erected and decorated. The central entrance of the exonarthex of bishop Ioannes’ basilica in Parthicioilis (basilica No 2) was the most suitable for the purpose. The inscription in the central entrance of the exonarthex (Pl. II, 6) is framed by polychrome geometric figures, reminding precious stones on the liturgical crosses and the Bible’s cover. This bejeweled style is used in the whole exonarthex as well, creating the impression of richness and solemnity. In the more modest narthex the ways of the clergy and the Christians were separated: the latter were waiting for the beginning and the performing of the liturgy, while the clergy entered the chancel for the preparations of the Eucharist or the other rites, readings and preaching. It should be emphasized that in Antiquity every written text had to be read aloud: somebody from the literates was reading the inscription and everybody was listening to it. In this way the non-literate persons could obtain the same information as the other educated people could read. By reading aloud of such mosaic inscriptions preceding the beginning of the liturgy, the bishop was confirmed as the main figure in the life of the Church and the settlement, again demonstrating his highest status in the hierarchy. His position was underlined in many ways: by his privilege to enter first the basilica, by the praising inscription and most of all by his leading role in the rites and particularly in the Eucharist and the baptism.

Another example of extremely rich composition at the entrance of the narthex is to be observed in the Episcopal basilica (basilica No 4) of Parthicopolis, exactly before entering the nave, thus underlying the axis to the presbyterium (Pl. IV, 4). It represents numerous tendrils and vine grapes hanging on many branches, growing out from a vessel with two flanking birds. The liturgy is beginning in front of it, after entering the nave, stopping here and reading the mosaic inscription, unfortunately not preserved (Pl. IV, at the corner below of No 4). There are also several more entrances to the basilica, but this is the main way

with the first liturgical stop in the basilica itself during the usual visits or after coming back from the open-air procession on the main street of Parthicopolis, entering through the semicircular piazza to the atrium and to the narthex (Pl. I)²⁴.

The mosaic compositions in the naos of the Early Christian basilicas in Bulgaria are covering the whole space, usually as all-over composition or divided in smaller symmetrical fields left and right alongside the longitudinal axis (Pl. III, 1 and 4; Pl. IV, 4). The mosaic symmetry alongside this axis underlines the main direction of the liturgical movement (the liturgical path) and the increasing tension towards the chancel and the apse. There are only two cases with non-symmetrical composition. The mosaic in the naos of the Episcopal basilica of Odessos consists of three different asymmetrically distributed schemes²⁵. Their existence can be explained by several building periods, during the second of which new relics have been buried in the southeastern part of the nave and new mosaic panels added²⁶. The second and most important composition to the east shows the picture of the gardens of the Paradise limited by the railing in front of it and three Fountains of Life (Pl. VI, 2). The later mosaics of St. Sofia in Serdica from the 5th century²⁷ are also asymmetrical because of the reconstruction of the naos with transept and the slow work on the separate mosaic panels in dependence of the will and possibilities of the donators.

Figurative compositions

The figurative representations in the compositions appeared again in the ancient provinces of Bulgaria probably in the second quarter of the 5th century and became more abundant in the second part – at the end of the same century. The floors reveal the Christian cosmology, following first the Genesis in the Old Testament, especially the Acts of the Creator on the 5th and the 6th day, and also the various notions of the studied period. The representations show the Earth and the Ocean and many of the wonderful creatures and creations (Pl. V, 1-9). Sometimes it is a very detailed picture of a lot of strictly represented species of animals, fruits and vegetables, plants and trees of the earth in the form of the previous Roman xenia. These may be too fishes and birds dwelling the rivers, the sea, the ocean, the forests, the planes and flying in the air.

The third (the most upper) mosaic in the eastern part of the naos of the Episcopal basilica of Philippopolis is the most lavish demonstration of the richness of the visible world. In other monuments only few images can be showed in adapted version, also illustrating each main sphere of the Christian Universe: the heaven and the air, the land and the water. Some representations do not look

²⁴ See the article of S. Petrova in this volume on the semicircular piazza and the processional liturgy in the main street of Parthicopolis.

²⁵ A. Minchev, *Mosaiken aus der frühchristlichen Basilika in der Han Krum-Straße No 34*, In: Pillinger et alii., *Corpus*, 25-36.

²⁶ The first one has the scheme of squares framed by garlands with fillings of birds and vessels. The third composition consists of the banal scheme of interwoven circles.

²⁷ V. Popova, *The Martyrium under the Basilica St. Sofia in Serdica and its Mosaics*, Niš and Byzantium XIII, Niš 2015,

only as catalogues of different species, but depict genre scenes: still life, such as baskets with grapes or flowers; a bird eating a snake; a rabbit eating grapes; a jumping dolphin; a monster fish (ketos) eating smaller fish; birds nestling on a basket, birds closed in cages or at the moment of flying out through the opened door. Such images had also a symbolic meaning of the basic Early Christian notions, like the soul starving for the Christian faith, the combat of the good against the evil etc. The fusion of the genre and the symbolic meaning is wonderful and reminds the psalms and readings praising of the beauty of the visible world created by God. The mosaic representations of the Earth and the Ocean are very poetically treated, although of real creatures and creations, thanking their Creator and causing the same feelings in the observer. The mosaic creates the general atmosphere of the religious piety, which the liturgical rite is achieving in its performance and in that way they are acting parallel.

The role of the mosaic inscriptions in the liturgical rites

After entering the south aisle of the Episcopal basilica of Philippopolis, the men, waiting there for the beginning of the liturgy could read the very impressive mosaic building inscription from the second mosaic level, inserted in a mosaic tabula ansata, which was installed on a solid low column (Pl. VI, 1). The inscription is woven in the geometric-ornamental scheme almost at the beginning of the aisle. Unfortunately the name of the bishop from the end of the 4th century is not preserved, with the exception of several letters. Two liturgical vessels, probably made of silver (one for wine and the second one for olive oil) are represented from both sides of the inscription. They are a continuation in the mosaic iconography of the liturgical usage of both liquids in the Jewish and Early Christian rites and art. The place of the inscription is very unusual, because normally it is situated at the central entrance or alongside the axes west-east of the naos. In the concrete case the new mosaic from the second level has been begun namely from that aisle replacing the previous mosaic in opus signinum and that was the reason to place the building inscription of the bishop there. Again the great role of the bishop in the life of the Christian city can be observed, evidenced in written form, with the representations of some vessels used in the liturgy.

These parts, especially in front of the entrance to the chancel, were also preferred for the donator's inscriptions. In the mosaic inscription placed here of the so-called Small basilica of Philippopolis (Pl. II, 5) from the second half of the 5th century a patrician is mentioned for the first time in Bulgarian mosaics²⁸. The inscription placed in front of the earlier chancel supposes the mentioning the name of the patrician-donor in the liturgical rites. The letters are laid with gold-like tessellae, attributing a very solemn aristocratic quality. That places the basilica, its liturgy and Philippopolis in the circle of protection by individuals of very high-social status, probably coming from Constantinople and even from the milieu of the emperor himself. This could be even a church built near the residence of the same patrician and in that sense somehow similar to a domestic church, although at that time such private basilicas were still unknown. In all

²⁸ V. Popova, A. Lirsch, *Bodenmosaiken der sog. Kleinen Basilika*, In: Pillinger et alli., Corpus, 227-238.

cases the basilica of this patrician was a smaller one and visited not so widely, in comparison to the Episcopal basilica built in the church metropolitan city of Thracia, functioning for all the population of Philippopolis, the region and for a significant part of the territory of the ancient province. Another interesting feature of the composition and the liturgy in the so-called Small basilica was that only in the south 'male' aisle and in the narthex the mosaic scheme was covered with additional squares with rosettes, while the north 'female' aisle was covered only with a geometrical scheme (Pl. VI, 2). This again is indicating that the south aisle intended for men was considered more important and that some of the liturgical paths were passing through it. This does not mean that the mosaic composition in north aisle is always more modest. In the Episcopal basilica of Philippopolis the mosaics in this aisle, made a little bit later than in the south one, are repeating the whole composition. In the Episcopal basilica of Odessos (Pl. VI, 3) the mosaics in the north aisle demonstrate also variety of geometric-ornamental fillings of the scheme, including also a repetition of the liturgical vessels from the naos.

The initial plan of the Small basilica in Philippopolis with Syrian type of apse in the second half - end of the 5th century was changed by erecting a new additional banal apse, thus creating a new plan with different proportions. The previous mosaic pavements were already replaced by terracotta tiles and the baptistery erected and covered with mosaics. In this case the form of the mosaic in the first apse helped in revealing its initial plan and liturgy.

In the so-called basilica of Bitus (basilica No 7) in Pautalia²⁹ the donator Bitus (Pl. II, 7), with an ancient Thracian name, often met since Hellenistic times and up to the end of Antiquity, placed unusually his donator's inscription in the Eastern part again in the south 'male' aisle. It is in Latin with the specific formula for praying for him and his family for forgiving their sins³⁰. It is necessary also to relate without any doubt the Latin of the inscription to the Roman liturgy, having also in mind that Pautalia belonged during the 5th century to the administration of the Western Roman church. Most probably in the 5th century the name of Bitus was mentioned in the liturgy on special cases, for good health in lifetime and on the day of his passing. In the sixth century the situation has changed and the mosaic inscription has undergone *damnatio memoriae*. This fact is reflecting the new liturgy during the sixth century, when a new mosaic was laid in the apse.

The front of the chancel is the boundary between the allowed for the clergy and forbidden for the laity spaces. The solea which appeared in these provinces not at the very beginning of the official Christianity, rather later³¹, is also protecting the chancel during the liturgy from the crowds. The relationship among the mosaics, the chancel, the solea and the ambo is very indicative of the changes in the liturgy. Often, like in the Episcopal basilica of Parthicopolis,

²⁹ В. Попова, *За хронологията на мозайките от базиликата на Битус (базилика Но 7) в Пауталия*, Изкуствоведски четения 2008,

³⁰ There was no possibility to disturb the well preserved mosaic in that part as to check for the eventual burial of this donator there.

³¹ Досева, *Ранновизантийски амвони*, with references; Caraher 2003

the later ambo, the solea and the chancel of the second building period have destructed the earlier laid mosaic and caused the creating of a new one there. In such cases the earlier mosaic is t. p. q. and the new one – t. a. q. or contemporary for the innovations or more essential changes in the liturgy.

In another and very important case from basilica No 1 in Storgosia, a small rather church than basilica also has the most important inscription placed in front of the chancel (Pl.V, 5). It is a citation of psalm 42, read by the priest before entering the chancel both in the East and the West³² and the first evidence from Bulgarian monuments of a concrete liturgical reading, therefore priceless. The fact that it is in Latin refers in to the liturgy of Rome, where the Latin gradually began replacing the Greek. The mosaic inscription from Storgosia also points to the boundary between the areas belonging to Rome and Constantinople church administration. Since now it was thought to be defined by the river of Iskar, ancient Oescus, but after this inscription it should be moved already to the east of it, including Storgosia. The other important addition to this and to many other monuments in connection with the liturgy is that psalm 43 should probably also be included in this reading, because it is very similar to psalm 42, with the same symbol of Fountain of Life, the dear and the water of the Paradise.

The most important Early Christian symbols in the mosaic pavements and the liturgy.

The majority or the most important figurative compositions are concentrated in the most eastern parts/panels of the mosaic compositions in the naos or immediately in front of the chancel. This is one of the most saturated with Early Christian symbols and decorative motives area, because namely here many entrances and exits and liturgical actions are performed and observed. At these places the frequency of images, the variety of iconographies and the picturesque treating is at its climax. Very often the Fountain of Life can be met, while more rare in Bulgaria so far are such symbols of Christianity, as the fish (Pl.V, 2) and the daulphin, also depicted in the eastern part of the naos of the bishop Ioannes' basilica in Parthicopolis and in basilica No 1 in Garmen³³. By concentration of all the symbols in front of the chancel, its role as the sacred space for the liturgy is emphasized and all the attention is concentrated namely there as expectation for the basic Christian mystery, the Eucharist.

The Fountain of Life. The mosaic program of the basilicas in Bulgaria, containing large representations of the Fountain of Life, always depict two vessels, but without the deer³⁴. The vessels are placed either inside the chancel

³² V. Beševliev, *Spätgriechische und spätateinische Inschriften aus Bulgarien*, Berlin 1964, 34, No 49. V. Gerassimova-Tomova reads also in a second inscription on the same mosaic the name of the mosaicist Lalius. See В. Герасимова-Томова. Майсторът на раннохристиянската мозайка при Кайлъка от град Плевен. – В: М. Грънчаров (ред.). 730 години град Плевен (1903-1944 г.). Плевен, 1993, 90-93.

³³ Pillinger et alli., Taff.274, N 663.

³⁴ Popova, Vons vitae.

(basilica No 2 in Garmen – Pl. V, 3) or in front of it (the Episcopal basilica of Odessos- Pl.V, 2) or in the aisles (the Episcopal basilica of Philippopolis – Pl. VI,). In the last (the third) mosaic from the second half of the 5th century of the latter basilica there are two identical figurative compositions, laid almost in the middle of the north and the south aisles. Except their symbolic meaning, most probably these are the places for a liturgical stop in front of The Fountain of Life in a very unusual iconography, intended for a sermon in honour of the Virgin the Life-Giving-Source, whose cult appeared in Constantinople in the middle of the 5th century³⁵. This fact should be interpreted as a transformation of the existing previously liturgy, now including a special new iconography of Virgin. The twice repeated *vons vitae* in the north and the south aisles reveal the Constantinopolitan influence in introducing this new variant of the cult of Virgin and her new iconography, as well as the new, unknown to this moment places of stops during the liturgical procession of the participants, different from the stop in the previous mosaic pavement with the inscription of the bishop. After the adequate liturgical action in front of the representation of the Fountain of Life, the procession should continue for worshipping the relics of martyr/martyrs or other saints, placed either on or under an altar or in a crypt, located between the apse and behind the provisory wall of the synthronon (now missing). After that the laity should return back to the aisles or should leave the basilica.

The mosaic inscription of psalm 42 in basilica No 1 from Storgosia, the doubled symbols of *vons vitae* from the Episcopal basilica in Philippopolis and Odessos and from basilica No 2 in Garmen make it plausible to suppose that on the territory of Bulgaria, before entering the chancel, the priest was reading psalms 42 and psalm 43. The same motif of *vons vitae*, but in smaller size can be scattered everywhere in the naos, the chancel and the aisles in the later basilicas (Pl. IX, 2). The presence of such numerous representations, mixed among other ones of the same small size, means that the symbol has lost its previous most important significance and that the liturgy has been changed in the second part of the 5th century in comparison to the beginning of the same century.

The chalice with wine, the cross and the Chrisma. The symbols of the Eucharist, the wine, the bread and the cross are generally avoided on the floor, with few exceptions. They are decorating the cancel screens, the ambo, the liturgical objects and the walls and the cupolas as the most sacred spaces in horizontal and vertical direction of the basilica, together with the personages from the New Testament. The floor, as already mentioned, is the space of the lower spheres of the Christian Cosmos and the Old Testament representations. The main sacraments are performed in the chancel and in the baptistery, so all basic Christian symbols encircle them very densely, by thus enforcing the mystery expectation and the place in which it will be realized. The sacred space is on the one hand guarded at its margins by the mighty symbols, on the other hand they are prompting the presence of God during the liturgical action and the promised by him Salvation.

The first appearing of the symbols of the Eucharist in Bulgarian monuments display the chalice (cantharos) with wine, two crosses of rare type and a

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, 163-166.

very monumental Fountain of Life from the Late Tetrachy in Augusta Traiana. They are shown in the mosaic pavement of a domus, maybe of a settler from Asia Minor (Pl. VIII, 3-4)³⁶. The reception hall with the mosaic, depicting the cosmology of the Christian world, probably was functioning as a domestic chapel or the owner was demonstrating freely his Christian faith in his reception hall. Another example of an early cross from the middle of the 4th century can be seen in the House of Felix in Serdica³⁷. The cross is miniature, of the Greek type, and the intensive colours are the most important artistic media in its depicting. The so-called 'House of Felix' is rather a part of a residence of a person from the imperial milieu or of the bishop of Serdica, because in another part of the mosaic the imperial bejeweled diadem is shown (Pl. VI, 5). Different interpretations have been proposed for it, because the supposed residence is very large, beginning with mosaic pavements at the West Gate of Serdica³⁸ and probably stretching up to the House of Felix, near to which a monumental apse is excavated (of the reception hall of the emperor's residence or of the Episcopal basilica with residence of Serdica?). The recently proposed date by the archaeologist for the House of Felix is the time of Gratian because of one found coin³⁹, the rest belonging to the middle of the 4th century. It is difficult to accept the time of Gratian for the time of laying the mosaic for many reasons. First, the coin of Gratian was not found in the same room with mosaic, but in another room and in this way is showing the long time of existence of the residence or some additional building phases; second, the kind of diadem on the mosaic is typical only for the imperial iconography on the coins of the Constantinian dynasty and disappears after it; third, the iconographic-stylistic features of the mosaic belong generally to the middle of the 4th century and not later⁴⁰.

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the real Early Christian cross from the traditional cross-like configurations of the pagan Roman and Late Roman mosaics. But it is possible to identify them as Christian, when, for instance, the Christian symbols in the monument are of rare iconography, repeated even several times (as in the domus in Augusta Traiana) or the cross is underlined three or even more times both graphically (on white and black backgrounds) and by different colours, including the golden one in the center, like in a pavement from Pautalia (Pl. VIII, 7)⁴¹. That's why the interpretation of latter should be related rather to a basilica or a private house of a Christian than to a pagan building. The most important of the representations, the Chrismas, are 'read' at

³⁶ Popova, *Vons vitae*, 168-170.

³⁷ M. Ivanov, *The 'Felix' mosaic from Serdica*, – In: *Studia academica šumenensia*, vol. 4, 2017, 181-202.

³⁸ I. Borissova-Katsarova, *A newfound Late Roman Mosaic from Serdica*, In: *Nis i Vizantija XIII*, 2015, 151-160.

³⁹ Ivanov, *The 'Felix' mosaic*.

⁴⁰ V. Popova, *Monuments from the Tetrarchy and the Reign of the Constantinian Dynasty in Bulgaria*, In: *Nis i Vizantija XIV*, 2016, 172.

⁴¹ J. Karadacka, *Mosaik aus der Ljuben Karavelov-Straße Nr. 1*, – In: *Pillinger et alii., Corpus*, 394-400. The date offered here is generally the second half – end of the 3rd century, but it may be a little bit later in the first third – first half of the 4th century as well, as already proposed by T. Ivanov, see Karadacka, *op.cit.*, 400.

the most important from liturgical points of view places, immediately before the entrance to the Chancel, next to mosaic inscription of psalms 42 and 43 in Storgosia and in the apse of Mikrevo. Several Chrismas appear in front of the chancel of basilica No 1 of Storgosia and in the very apse in Mikrevo (Pl. VII, 5; Pl. IX, 2)⁴². Their placing on the floor may reflect the time, when they were not still forbidden to be overstepped, or exclusions of this rule as evidence of Arianic essence. The possible reasons, explaining them on the floor, can be looked for in several directions: as anachronism and provincialism in the case of Mikrevo; as influence of the Arianic milieu, especially in the case of Storgosia, in whose area Goths-federates have settlements, and in the supposed basilica with crosses from Pautalia, where the cult of the Cross has left strong written evidences. It should be noticed, that these examples come mainly from Macedonia and the western part of Dacia Mediterranea, oriented and belonging first to the West. The other connection with the liturgy is their four or five times repeating in one row in Storgosia, as if a protective wall in front of the chancel, similarly to the guarding dogs in the Episcopal basilica of Pautalia. In the basilica of Mikrevo the baptistery has also cross-like form with rounded ends, repeated by the mosaic on the bottom of the piscine (Pl. VIII, 6). Each rounded end of the cross' wing is decorated with green and bluish circles, some additionally divided by two triangles, all reminding precious stones on the cover of the Bible and the crosses for stational and processional liturgy. Here the rite of baptism is visibly associated with death and Salvation both architecturally and by the mosaic art. The latter in this way is an essential real and symbolical part of the baptismal rite.

The places immediately before the entrance to the chancel or left and right of the solea can be covered with the next important symbols, the chalice/ the cantharos with wine. In basilica No 1 in Garmen two birds, flanking the cantharos with wine, the symbol of the Eucharist, are twice depicted, although this symbol is rarely appearing in the 5th century on the floor and more often represented on the wall mosaics, as reliefs on the chancel screens and the ambo and on the liturgical objects. Although baskets often are shown on many floors, they do not contain the bread of the Eucharist, only fruits and flowers or a nestling bird. The reason is that this was among the most sacred symbols and, like the Cross, its place was not on the floor.

The mosaics in the additional rooms, the prothesis and diakonikon

These rooms in the 5-6th century are in different places, some of them are distinguished by mosaics, while the other spaces are not covered with it. In this way the presence of a mosaic decoration emphasized the liturgical function of the mentioned rooms. In the Old Metropolia in Mesambria they are sticking to both sides of the atrium (Pl. VIII, 1). In the northern one, the prothesis probably, a scheme with scales is inserted, while no remnants are found in the basilica itself, covered with marble pavement. Even more interesting is the case in ba-

⁴² B. Asamer, B. Zimmermann, *Die Mosaiken der frühchristlichen Kirche bei Mikrevo/Sandanski*, MiChA 4, 1998, 31-44.

silica No 1 in Garmen (Pl.III, 1 and 2). The most eastern parts of the aisles are appointed to serve as prothesis and deakonikon. Only these parts of the aisles are laid with mosaics forming in that way a pseudo-transept, otherwise not articulated architecturally. To the eastern corner of the northern wall of the aisle a support of a marble rectangular mensa is built (Pl.III, 1a), on which the deacon is putting the received still not consecrated wine and bread. After the liturgical action, he should bring them to the central mensa sacra in the chancel likely through a back entrance to it (Pl.III, 1), although this entrance is not preserved and not found during the excavations. Otherwise he should take the gifts and go back almost to the west entrance of the north aisle, where to turn to the left and enter the naos through a special mosaic entrance between the columns, in order to reach to the chancel in the normal liturgical path (Pl.III, 2). Normally the mosaic entrance between the north aisle and the naos was used by the women for taking the communion in the naos. Such mosaic entrances between the separate parts of the basilica in Bulgaria are rare, especially between the back aisles and the naos. In the case of basilica No 1 in Garmen the mosaic is following the liturgical action and movement.

Other examples can be observed in the basilica in Djanavar-tepe near Odessos, where the central space of the naos is surrounded by four smaller separated spaces, one of them the baptistery (Pl. VIII, 2). In the other three the transition to the central naos has a mosaic 'rug', again following the necessity the believers to be united there after the separation in the small rooms in the manner of the later liturgy⁴³. It should be added in this case, that the Syrian settlers in Odessos have built their monastery with very particular plan, which has been recognized as a monophysite one long ago, different from the rest of liturgies and 'Christianities' in these provinces. In the Episcopal basilica of Parthicopolis (basilica No 4) the prothesis and diakonikon have been built in the eastern part of the aisles only in the 6th century, thus closing the exit/entrance from the semi-circular piazza by the northern aisle, which previously was probably existing as well. Both the prothesis and the deakonikon are laid with mosaics, different from the rest in the chance, the naos and the aisles simply because they were laid later. Generally the different mosaics descending from the additionally built rooms help in differentiating their liturgical function very clearly.

The chancel mosaic decoration

Some of the earlier chancels in Bulgaria have mosaic figurative representations. The mosaic composition in the chancel of the martyrion under St. Sofia in Serdica (Pl. IX, 1) has several panels, oriented circle-like around the central one, over which the mensa sacra/the altar stood. This kind of composition is unusual and presumes the adequate movements around the mensa during the liturgy in honour of two unknown martyrs, whose names were probably written in the mosaic inscription at the front panel. Here the two lambs most possibly were flanking a cross and we should remember in connection with the date the mentioned early crosses in the domus of Augusta Traiana from the end of

⁴³ See note 4.

the Tetrarchy. The other preserved representations in the chancel of the martyrion depict different Early Christian symbols: peacocks among the Garden of Paradise with roses, the chalice with wine, birds eating the grapes of wine. Because of the found here coins, the date of this chancel composition is in the period from the middle of the 4th century with t. p. q. 360, the last years of the mutual reign of Constantius II and Julian. We know from the written sources, that the Council in Serdica in 343 demonstrated the division between the Orthodox and the Arians: the Orthodox bishops remained in Serdica, while the Arianic ones moved to Philippopolis for their own Council. It is unclear whether in 360 the situation was the same, because Constantius II was also a supporter of the Arianism, while Serdica was adhering to the Orthodoxy. Independent of this, the Arianism of this emperor has not limited the figurative program only to the cross. On the opposite, the very rich figurative program with the eventual presence of the Cross among the lambs reveal the outburst of the official Early Christian repertory in these provinces and the influence of the earlier martyrial liturgy and its movement around the altar with the relics of the two local martyrs.

Other mosaics in the chancels of basilicas are either not preserved or they have geometric-ornamental character like in the basilica of Mikrevo (Pl. IX, 2), basilica No 2 of Zaldapa (Pl. II, 1) and the Episcopal basilica from the first building period in Parthicopolis (Pl. IX, 3). The mentioned chancels are already later than the martyrion of Serdica and now the general tendency is the attention not to the mosaic decoration, but rather to the liturgy itself and the architectonic decoration of the low or two-floor chancel screens. In other cases as in basilicas NoNo 1 and 2 in Garmen, the basilica in Tsaravetz in V. Turnovo⁴⁴, in the Episcopal basilica of Parthicopolis and Philippopolis, the floors are either marble, with long mosaic panels aside with *vons vitae*, or covered with terracotta tiles or with opus sectile of very fine colour combinations. The result is the same – the attention is not concentrated on the floor mosaic, being just a non-figurative decoration, without symbolic meaning and connection with the liturgy. In that time of the 5th and the 6th century the liturgy is becoming more complex, with some decisive novelties, reflected in the already new plans of the basilicas, churches etc. So the chancel is strongly underlined not by the mosaic decoration, but by the new forms of the screens and its decoration and by the essence of the novelties in the liturgical rites and its content.

The mosaic decoration in the apse.

The apse without or with synthronon very rarely has a mosaic decoration of figurative character. Again the earliest example to the present is the apse of the martyrion under St. Sofia in Serdica (Pl. IX, 1 and 2). It represents the Paradise in a rare iconography, probably reflecting some particularities of the martyrial liturgy and of the notions of this early period of the official Church. A number of other apses are covered with ornamental-geometric compositions

⁴⁴ V. Pandurski, *Paviment aus der Jungeren Basilika der Carevec*, In: Pilliner et alli, Corpus, 77-78.

(the vestibule of the *thermae-gymnasion*, turned to a basilica with *synthronon* in Augusta Traiana/Beroe, the Episcopal basilica from the second building period in Parthicopolis)⁴⁵. The floor of the apse of the already mentioned basilica on Tsarevetz in V. Turnovo is covered with terracotta tiles and probably a liturgical inscription is placed on the periphery of the apse. In some cases as in basilica No 1 and 2 in Garmen and in the basilica with *synthronon* in Augusta Traiana/Beroe the floor, the steps and the low parts of the walls of the apse are decorated with *opus sectile* and *intarsio* or with wall painting. Again these examples demonstrate the more limited and neutral character of the mosaic decoration in the apse dominated by the presence of the bishop and the priests seating on the *synthronon* and by their liturgical actions.

Only in the period of the Justinianic Renaissance the figurative compositions are back in the apse in Bulgarian monuments so far. This time has marked a revival of the Roman figurative tradition, although in an entirely new style. The exclusively rich mosaic of the apse of basilica No 7 (the basilica of Bitus) represents the twelve lambs, symbols of the Apostles, in the Paradise, with the vase in the center and probably the *omphalus* with the Lamb or with the cross over it (Pl. IX, 4). The composition is turned generally to all sides and can be read during the movement or partly when seating on the *synthronon*. A whole group of monuments in the 6th century from the Western and Central Balkans is representing the Apostles as lambs, or parallel to them, or the lambs only in the Paradise. They copy the wall mosaics, especially in the apses and lunnettes of the basilicas of Rome and the mosaic pavements in Northern Italy, laid on behalf of donators. On the other hand, the apse mosaic from Pautalia is continuing the tradition of the early floor mosaics of the 4th century of Aquileia and Grado. This strong connection with Rome and North Italy is kept up to the end of the 6th century because of the same western liturgy and cultural relationship, also of itinerant mosaic workshops moving constantly between the Western and Central Balkans and the attempt of Justinian to unite again the West and East empires. The most interesting case is the apse of the basilica in Mikrevo, with decoration of a big *Chrisma* in the center, flanking ornamental motives and two birds (Pl. IX,2), reminding strongly the birds of the tribelon of basilica No 3 in Parthicopolis. It can be also observed the mosaic 'path' in the middle of the chancel, by which the bishop reaches the apse and ascends his throne on the *synthronon*.

Unfortunately only fragments and separate tesserae are preserved from the wall mosaics in the basilicas and the baptisteria in Bulgaria. Naturally their mosaic decoration more directly reflected the rites during the different Church holidays, especially of the Great Entrance and of baptism. Nevertheless two monuments should be analysed because they evidence the specific movements during the ritual of Baptism. The mosaics on the floor and the walls of the piscine of the baptistery of basilica No 4 in Parthicopolis are geometric, but the fallen fragments from the walls surely contained figurative images judging by the fragments and the parallels from the baptisteries in Stobi and Ravenna. From the palette and the small motives it is clear that the scale scheme with flowers is

⁴⁵ Popova, *Vons vitae*.

depicted, also the blue heaven probably. The smalti from the wall mosaics in basilica No 2 in Garmen and basilica No 2 in Storgosia demonstrate similar palette of the Heaven. Highly likely St. Sofia in Serdica from the period of Justinian also had figurative wall mosaics, tightly connected as well with the liturgy.

The only well preserved mosaics of a baptisterium is that one of the basilica of the patrician-donor in Philippopolis. The sacrament is symbolized by the iconography of psalm 42 and 43 with the deer watering from the source in the Paradise. This is one of the sides meeting the person going to the piscine, while two birds in the Paradise are at the side of the neophyte going out, symbolizing the new life in Christ. The mosaic program in this monument is tightly bound to the baptismal rite and the practical and symbolic phases of the rite.

Synthesis

When compared to the known Early Christian mosaics from the Balkans in combination with the plans, the chancel, the ambo, the solea and the entrances, this can point clearly to the kind of liturgy. The Episcopal basilica in Parthicopolis and basilica No 2 in Zaldapa (Pl.I and Pl. II,1) demonstrate the access from all sides of the Constantinopolitan type of liturgy. But here is present another type of chancel, the typical II—like chancel and the short solea, known widely from the liturgy in the other Greek cities. Also in the case of Parthicopolis the dominant longitudinal axis, consisting of the atrium and the basilica, is replaced by the side position of the atrium with the main entrance to the basilica from aside. These mixtures, rather hybrid types of plans, can be observed also in the basilicas with specific plans. The basilicas with transepts and their back entrances from the eastern part, with a very lavishly developed mosaic composition, combines two main axes with the ambo a little bit aside to the south and a short solea (Pl.III, 4); the basilica with tribelon may have a very different and complex access from the southwest (Pl.III, 5); finely the monastery basilica of Syrian settlers has another kind of liturgical planning, with several small rooms distributed around the naos without aisles (Pl. VIII, 2). In the martyrion the rites could be performed even circle-like. All these liturgical plans reveal the several kinds of liturgies or their variations. Because of the mixed influences of several strong administrative, theologian and artistic centers (Rome, Thessaloniki, Constantinople, Antiochia etc.) as a rule the pure type of liturgy is rarely demonstrated. More often one feature of one circle is combined with a feature from another circle and the mosaics confirm this impression, together with the presence of a long or a short solea, ambo exactly in the middle of the naos or to the south, the entrances on the longitudinal axes or from aside, the presence or the absence of tribelon. Very mixed from this point of view are the basilicas and the mosaics from Macedonia, in which the west influences are mixed with the ones of Constantinople and as a result a very well articulated local group is formed in the area between Strymon and Nestos. Also because of the Latin and the rich figurative program the Western lands (in Bulgaria) up to Storgosia are under strong influence of Rome, Northern Italy and the Western Balkans. But if we take the monuments from the period of Justinian, we shall

see rather the unity than the strong differences in the mosaic figurative decoration and to a certain extent in the liturgy, because one and the same emperor ruled over a part of the Italian peninsula and the Balkans and one and the same politics was followed in the Church and culture. So the liturgy and adequately the mosaics were like a flexible string playing in time according to the pressure of the political, theologian and cultural circumstances.

We have traced the different types of connection between the mosaics and the Early Christian liturgy, from being a part of a symphony, in which each one is playing its own melody in the general harmony, up to the mosaics being a background of the rites and finely to the pavements, strictly bound to the plans, the concrete movement and actions and the sequences of rites. The rhythm, the colours, the axes of composition of the geometric-ornamental pavements and the essence of the figurative and symbolic representations and scenes are the media of the mosaic realization and partition in the liturgy. Already in numerous cases descending from Bulgaria, the mosaic inscriptions are either literal citation of the liturgical text, or a formula with donator's name, which ought to be mentioned in the rites or usually with the name of the bishop, responsible for the erecting of the basilica. Most often the mosaic repertory reflects and helps the Eucharist and the rite of baptism, but the main Early Christian symbols, except the Fountain of life, are rare on the floors. In earlier mosaic repertoire cross-like motives are not burdened with Christian meaning, but just usual geometric configuration. In Late Antiquity, when this meaning was already intended, it is always underlined either by the colours, usually of a golden cross decorated with precious stones, or by the colour contrast of the background or by the size. Associations with the precious stones decoration on golden liturgical crosses and the cover of a Bible may be done as well. We can suppose that because of the crosses, some still not identified mosaics belong in fact to an Early Christian basilica or to a house of a Christian.

Nevertheless the Christians of the studied period were conscious that this most sacred for Christianity and liturgy image-symbol-object should not be stepped over and placed on the floor mosaics. Therefore later in the 5th century such a ban was indeed issued. For some unknown so far reasons, this rule was not followed in the earlier and later periods. It seems that the Southwestern area of Bulgaria was involved in that phenomenon. In the mosaics of Pautalia, Serdica, Parthicopolis and its region crosses and lambs are placed on the mosaic pavements.

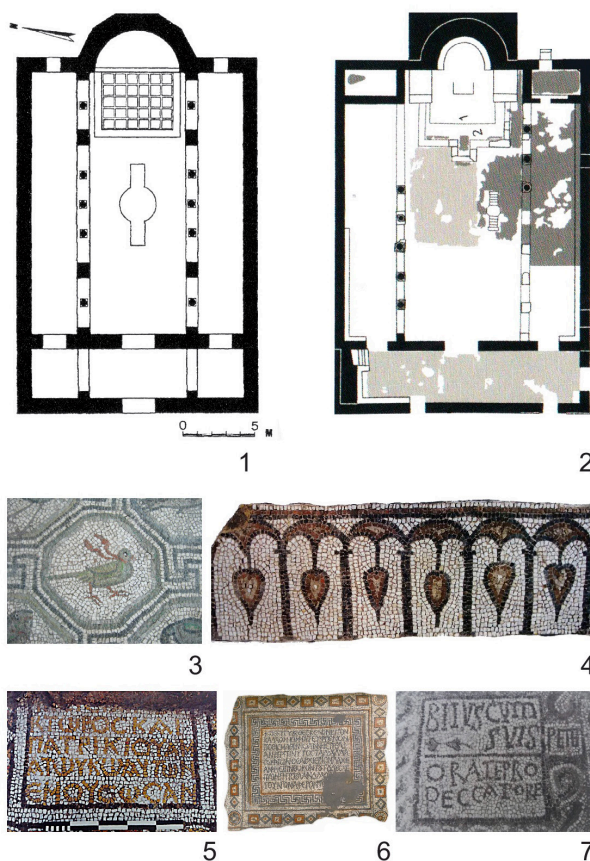
We can observe how the program is changing, from the initial one with many symbols like in the martyrium of St. Sofia, to geometric-ornamental compositions and finely to the restoring of the figurative ones, with the climax in the Justinianic times. Regardless of the time and the type of mosaic, the connection between the liturgy and the mosaic always was strong and revealing its many faces.

Вања Попова
(Независни истраживач)

ЛИТУРГИЈА И МОЗАИЦИ: СТУДИЈА О КАСНОАНТИЧКИМ СПОМЕНИЦИМА У БУГАРСКОЈ

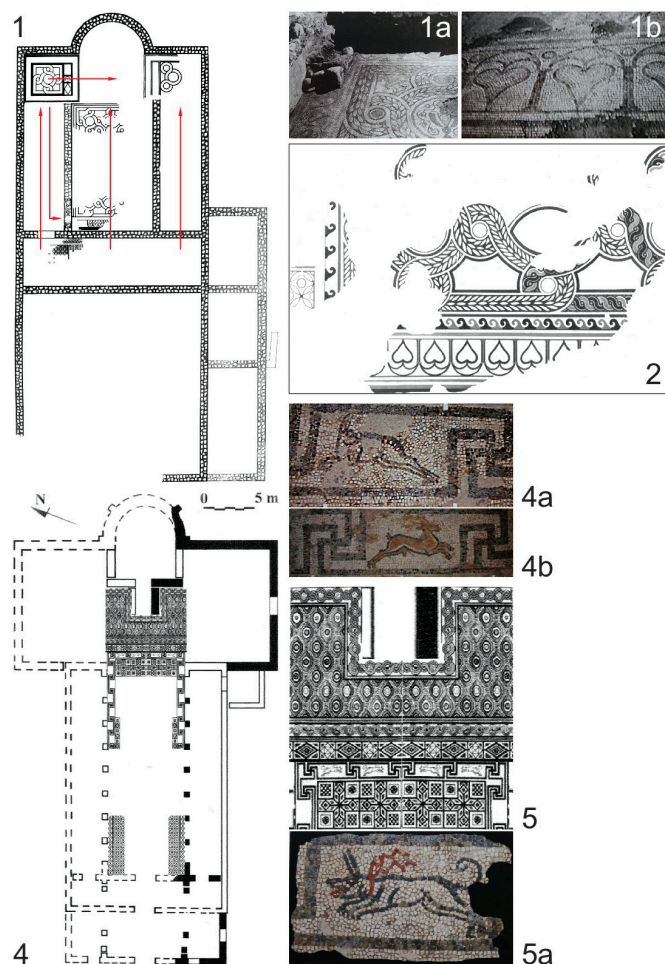
Студија обрађује многе аспекте у односу између ранохришћанске литургије и мозаика из древних покрајина у Бугарској. То може бити учествовање у истом духу у ранохришћанском репертоару и идејама. Натписи на мозаицима могу бити буквални цитати из псалма или имена донатора који се помињу у молитвама. Нови мозаици поред старих откривају извесне литургијске промене као што су то нови облик предикаонице, увођење солеа и амвона.

Најчешћи случај је да се налазе испод осе композиције мозаика, на улазима и излазима и да се користе у литургијским обредима. Нефигуративне и фигуративне композиције се налазе на најсветијим деловима базилика, на име презвитеријуму и апсидама.



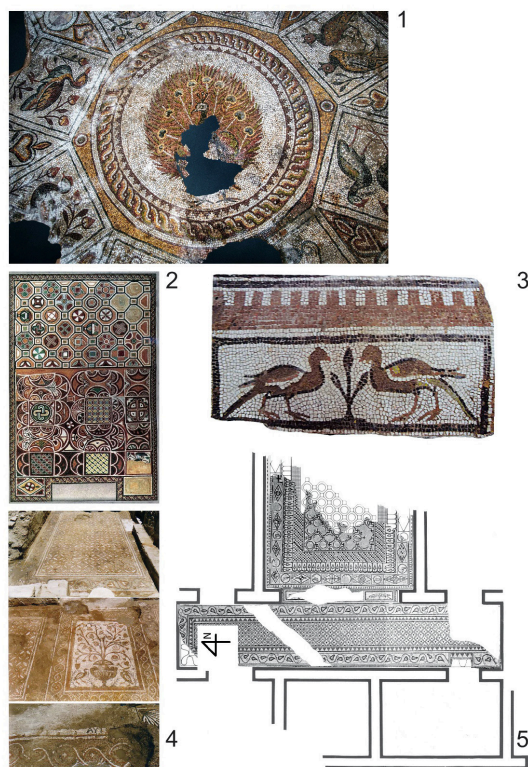
Pl. II. Basilica No 2 in Zaldapa
nafter S. Torbatov, the mosaic – V.
Popova. The Episcopal basilica of
Parthicopolis, 2nd and third period.
After Pillinger et alli. Corpus The
beribboned parrot from bishop Ioannes’
basilica in Parthicopolis. Author S.
Petrova. The arcade with columns
and hanging leaf from basilica No
3 in Parthicopolis. After Pillinger et
alli, Corpus. The mosaic inscription
of the basilica of the patrician
in Philippopolis. After Pillinger et
alli. Corpus The mosaic inscription
of bishop Ioannes in basilica No 2 in
Parthicopolis. Photo: Archaeological
Museum Sandanski. The mosaic
inscription of Bitus in basilica No 7 in
Pautalia. Author: V. Popova.

Pl. II. Базилика бр. 2 у
Залдапанафтеру С. Торбатов, мозаик
- В. Попова. Епископска базилика
у Партикополису, други и трећи
период. Извор, Пилингер. Збирка.
Плави папагај из Базилике епископа
Јоанија у Партикополису, Аутор
С. Петрова. Аркада са стубови-
ма и листром са базилике бр. 3 у
Партикополису. Извор Пилингер.
Збирка. Натпис на мозаику у патри-
цијској базилици у Филипополису.
Извор Пилингер. Збирка. Натпис
на мозаику епископа Јоанија у
базилици бр. 2 у Партикополису.
Фотографија: Археолошки музеј
Сандански. Натпис Битуса на моза-
ику у базилици бр. 7 у Пауталији.
Аутор: В. Попова.



Pl. III. 1. Basilica No 1 in Garmen. Author: St. Goshev 2. 1a. The northeastern corner of the north aisle of the same basilica with the support for a proscomidian mensa. 3. 1b. The western border of the mosaic in the naos with arcades on columns with peltae between with hanging leaf. 4. 2. The mosaic of the naos of the same basilica, on the left – the mosaic entrance from the northern aisle. 5. 3. The Episcopal basilica with transept. After L. Russeva-Skokoska, with additions of V. Popova 6. 4a, 4b, 5a. Details of the animals in borders and in front of the chancel. After Pillinger et alli., Corpus. 7. 5. The mosaic parts in front of the chancel with short solea. Detail of No 3, with the border with the running beribboned dogs.

Pl. III. 1. Базилика бр. 1 у Гармену, Аутор: Св.Гошев. 2. 1a. Североистични угао у северном пролазу исте базилике са носачем проскомидије. 3. 1b. Западна ивица мозаика у наосу са аркадама на стубовима са пелтатама између њих са viseћим листом. 4. 2. Мозаик у наосу исте базилике, на левој страни – мозаик на улазу са северне стране. 5. 3. Епископска базилика са трансептом. Извор Л. Русева –Слокоска са додатком В. Попове. 6. 4a, 4b, 5a. Детаљи животиња на ивицама и испред презвитеријума. Извор Пилингер и др. Збирка. 7. 5. Делови мозаика испред презвитеријума са кратком солеом. Детаљ бр. 3 са ивицом са плавим псима у трку.



Pl. IV. 1. The composition with the peacock in the atrium. Author: E. Kantareva. 2. The western part with the entrance of the martyrion under St. Sofia in Serdica. After B. Filov with addition of P. Popov. 3. The right panel of the tribelon. Basilica No 3 in Parthicopolis. After Pillinger et alli., Corpus. 4. The mosaic with the vase and wine grapes in the nartex of the Episcopal basilica of Parthicopolis. Archeological museum Sandanski. 5. Basilica No 3 with tribelon in Particopolis. After P. Popov.

Pl. IV. 1. Композиција са пауном у атријуму. Аутор: Е. Кантарева. 2. Западна страна са мозаиком на улазу у мартинијум испод Св. Софије, Сердика. Извор Б. Филова са додатком П. Попова. 3. Десни панел трибелона. Базилика бр. 3 у Партикополису. Извор, Пилингер и др. Збирка. 4. Мозаик са вазом и виновом лозом у нартексу Епископске Базилике у Партикополису. Археолошки музеј Сандански. 5. Базилика бр. 3 са трибелом у Партикополису. Извор П. Попов.



Pl. V. 1, 2, 5 and 8 – basilica of bishop Ioannes in Parthicopolis. Author S. Petrova. 3, 7 and 9 – the Episcopal basilica of Philippopolis, naos. Author: E. Kantareva. 4 and 6 – basilica No 1 in Garmen. Author V. Popova.

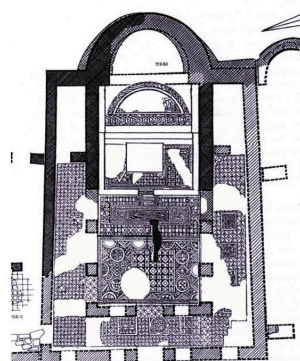
Pl. V. 1, 2, 5 и 8 – Базилика епископа Јоанија у Партикополису. Аутор: С. Петрова. 3, 7 и 9 – Епископска Базилика у Филипополису у наосу. Аутор: Е. Кантарева. 4 и 6 – Базилика бр. 1 у Гармену. Аутор: В. Попова.



1

Pl. VI 1. South aisle of the Episcopal basilica in Philippopolis, the building inscription of the bishop. Photo E. Kantarieva. The Small basilica (the Patrician basilica) of Philippopolis. After M. Bospachieva. The north aisle of the Episcopal basilica in Odessos.

Pl. VI Јужни пролаз у Епископској Базилици у Филипополису, епископов натпис на згради. Фотографија Е. Кантариева. Мала Базилика (патрицијска базилика) у Филипополису. Извор М. Боспачјева. Северни пролаз Епископске Базилике у Одесосу.



2



3

Pl. VII South aisle of the Episcopal basilica of Philippopolis. Photo E. Kantareva. The south representation of the Fountain of life in the chancel of basilica No 2 in Garmen. Photo V. Popova. The border of the transept of the Episcopal basilica in Philippopolis. After Pilliger et alli., Corpus. The Fountain of Life with the railing of the Garden of Paradise. Episcopal basilica in Odessos. After Pillinger et alli, Corpus. The mosaic inscription with citation of psalm 42 and the row eith Chrismas in front of the chancel of basilica No 1 in Storgosia. After Y. Trifonov.

Pl. VII Јужни пролаз Епископске Базилике у Филипополису. Фотографија: Е. Кантарева. Јужна репрезентација Фонтане живота у презвитеријуму базилике бр. 2 у Гармену. Фотографија: В. Попова. Ивица бордуре на трансепту Епископске Базилике у Филипополису. Извор Пилигер и др. Збирка. Фонтана живота са оградом рајске баште. Епископска Базилика у Одесосу. Извор Пилингетали. Збирка. Натпис на мозаику са цитатом из псалма 42 и у осмом реду бр. 1 испред презвитеријума базилике у Сторгозији. Извор И. Трифонов.



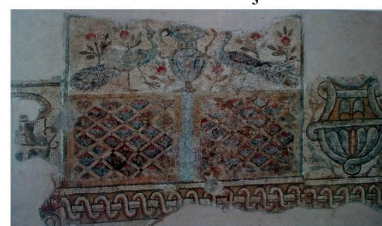
1



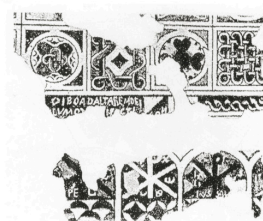
3



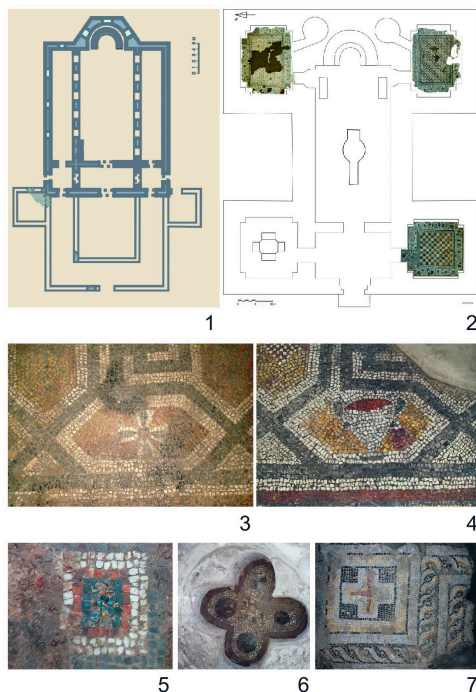
4



2

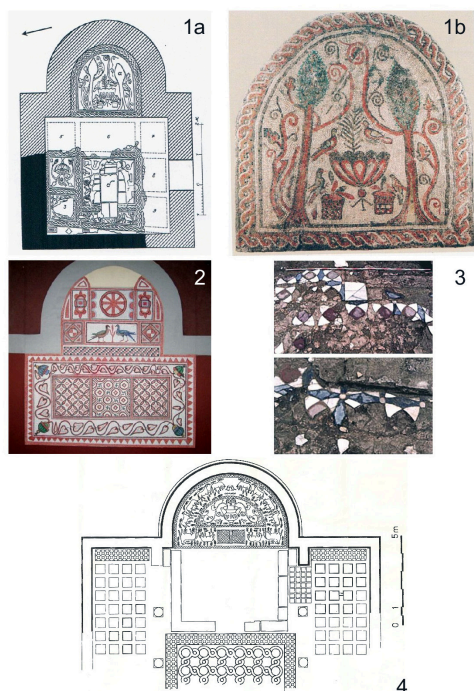


5



Pl. VIII The Old metropolia in Mesambria. The Djanavara church with mosaics. After Pillinger et alli., Corpus. And 4. Domus on Stoletov str. In Augusta Traiana. Depictions of crosses and chalice with wine. Archive of the Institute of Art studies in Sofia. The cross in the House of Felix. The mosaic of the piscine of the baptistery of the basilica in Mikrevo. After R. Pillinger et alli., Corpus. Cross on a mosaic from L. Karavelov street in Pautalia.

Pl. VIII Древна метропола у Месамбрији. Црква Ђанавара са мозаицима. Извор Пилингер и др. Збирка. и 4. Кућа у Столетов стр. У граду Августа Трајана. Приказ крста и путира за вино. Архива Института за уметничке студије у Софији. Крст у Дому Феликс. Мозаик у крстионици баптистерија у базилици у Микреву. Извор Р. Пилингер и др. Збирка. Крст на мозаику из Л. Каравелстрита у Пауталији.



Pl. IX 1a and 1b. The chancel and apse of the martyrion under St. Sofia in Serdica. The chancel and the apse of the basilica in Mikrevo. Author: P. Popov. The opus sectile in the chancel of the Episcopal basilica of Parthicopolis. The apse mosaic and the schemes of the naos and the aisles of the basilica of Bitus. Authors: V. Popova and St. Goshev.

Pl. IX 1a и 1б. Презвитеријум и апсида у мартријуму у Св. Софији, Сердика. Презвитеријум и апсида у базилици у Микреву. Аутор: П. Попов. Техника опус сектиле у презвитеријуму у Епископској Базилици у Партикополису. Мозаик у апсиди и план наоса и пролаза у базилици у Битусу. Аутори: В. Попова и Св. Гошев.