

---

*Vania Popova, Georgi Atanassov*  
(Independent researcher, Regional Historical Museum of Silistra)

## NEW DATA ON THE APSE MOSAIC OF BASILICA NO 1 IN ZALDAPA/BULGARIA

### *History of research*

The Late Antique city Zaldapa is situated in Bulgaria, in the region of Dobrudja in the Northeastern end of the country, not far from Durostorum/Silistra and near to the contemporary boundary with Rumania and its monument Tropeum Traiani. In Late Antiquity Zaldapa was part of the ancient province of Scythia Minor<sup>1</sup> (fig. 1). The whole site and particularly basilica No 1 have been excavated at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Czech Karel Shkorpil (fig. 3), one of the founders of the Bulgarian archaeology after the liberation in 1878 and the formation of Third Bulgarian Kingdom. At the present, the whole site of Zaldapa and its three basilicas are in a process of excavations by the team of G. Atanassov from the Historical Museum in Silistra, with the participation of several Bulgarian, Canadian and French colleagues from different institutions.<sup>2</sup> After the time of K. Shkorpil, the new results of these recent excavations can be followed in the new plan of Zaldapa with its fortifications, basilicas and other buildings (fig. 3).

The apse mosaic of basilica No 1 has been discovered by K. Shkorpil during his excavations (fig. 4) and for the second time re-opened by some Rumanian archaeologists at the end of the 30s of the same century.<sup>3</sup> But the fate

---

<sup>1</sup> For the excavations up to 2017 see Atanassov G., I. Valeriev, V. Yotov, *The crypt of the sanctuary of the basilica No 3 at the ancient city of Zaldapa (province of Scythia)*, in: *Niš and Byzantium XV*, Niš 2017, 123-132.

<sup>2</sup> For the recent years of research of Zaldapa see G. Atanasov, Y. Valeriev, *La résidence épiscopale à proximité de la cathédrale de la ville romano-byzantine de Zaldapa dans la province de Scythie*, *Archaeologia Bulgarica* XXIV, 1, 2010, 33-58; Г. Атанасов, Н. Бодру, А. Миланова, Й. Валериев, Д. Моро, *Базилка No 2 и нейният централен и северен кораб в Залдапа*, Археологически открития и разкопки през 2018, София 2019, 260-262; Г. Атанасов, Й. Валериев, *Раннохристиянските базилики NoNo 3 и 4 в Залдапа*, Археологически открития и разкопки през 2018 г., София 2019, 262-264.

<sup>3</sup> The apse of the basilica was re-examined by G. Atanasov and Y. Valeriev in 2016-



Fig. 1 Map with the Late Antique provinces in the Eastern part of the Balkans.

Сл. 1 Карта са касноантичким провинцијама у источном делу Балкана.

of the mosaic of basilica No 1 was unhappy both in Antiquity and in modern times. When opened, it was in a bad state. In 1938-1939 some Rumanian scholars have picked up the only well preserved small panel. In spite of the efforts, the place it has been brought on the eve of World War II remains still unknown, and there is no data about the further fate of this panel neither in Rumania nor in Bulgaria so far.

Some black-and-white photoes of the mosaic from the Archive of K. Shkorpil in the Central Library of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia are already published<sup>4</sup>. But these photoes are not clear and well readable and cannot be used in revealing the filling motifs. On its ground it was only possible to reconstruct in the Corpus of Late Antique and Early Christian Mosaics of Bulgaria<sup>5</sup> the general scheme of this pavement mosaic, covering the apse

2018, but the mosaic was not found. Below the bema of the basilica where the mosaic was discovered a large crypt for holy relics. Atanassov, G., Y. Valeriev: *Basilica No 1 with a Newly Discovered Crypt in the Roman/ Early Byzantine City of Zaldapa*, Addenda et corrigenda, *Archaeologia Bulgarica*, XXIV, 4, 2020 (in print).

<sup>4</sup> R. Pillinger, A. Lirsch, V. Popova, *Corpus der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Mosaiken Bulgariens*, Wien 2016, No 1, 23-24, T. I, Abb. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Op.cit.*, Taf. I, Abb. 3.

of basilica No 1. The scheme consists of orthogonal set of squares (6 in direction north-south and 5 in direction east-west), outlined by narrow borders filled with guilloche.

We are grateful to Dr. V. Tenekedjiev from the Historical Museum in Varna (RIM-Varna) for the information about the existence of an unknown to that moment documents on this mosaic. These are two sheets of paper (fig. 5-6) found in the second archive of K. Shkorpil, given by his daughter in the 70s of last century to RIM-Varna. The first document is a sketch of the apse with the general mosaic scheme; the second one is a drawing made in aquarelle technique combined with pencil, representing probably the same well preserved panel (square) picked up by the Rumanian scholars. Also in the same archive was found a short description of the mosaic prepared by K. Shkorpil and translated in English. It was part of the future publication of K. Shkorpil after the invitation of Thomas Whittemore, director of the American Byzantine Institute in Paris<sup>6</sup>. The plan of K. Shkorpil was to represent a panoramic research of the excavations in Zaldapa, as well as of other Early Christian sites in Bulgaria, some of them visited by Th. Whittemore during his trips in the Balkans.

Unfortunately, after receiving the article of Shkorpil, Th. Whittemore suddenly died and the manuscript was returned back to Shkorpil, who meanwhile also passed away. So a century after the text has been written by K. Shkorpil, it was “discovered” in his archive in RIM – Varna, together with the drawing of the preserved part of the mosaic scheme and of the only preserved panel. Now we are offering them to the attention of the scholars. The new data on the general scheme, together with the colour drawing and the description enables the further study of the mosaic, although again partly, in revealing of the fillings, the palette, the style and the date of the apse mosaic of basilica No 1. From the new excavations in the recent 10 years it becomes also possible to draw some new conclusions on the date of this basilica and its mosaic and the spread of the mosaic art in Dobrudja, whose Early Christian monuments have been thought of being deprived of mosaics so far.



Fig. 2 Karel Shkorpil at the time of his excavations in Bulgaria, first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Сл. 2 Карел Шкорпил у време ископавања у Бугарској, прва четвртина 20. века.

<sup>6</sup> For Thomas Whittemore, his career and cooperation with Bulgarian archaeologists see R. Labrusse, N. Podzemskaya, *Maissance d'une vocation: aux sources de la carrière byzantine de Thomas Whittemore*, DOP 2000, v. 54, 44-69 (especially pp. 50, 57-58).

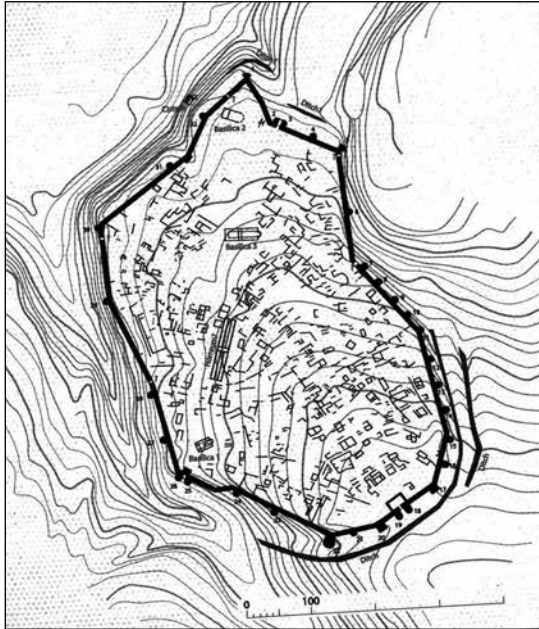


Fig. 3 Map of Zaldapa, made by B. M. Berek, in collaboration with D. Moreau, N. Beaudry and G. Atanassov, based on publications by K. Shkorpil, S. Torbatov, M. Mirchev, G. Atanasov, Y. Valeriev and satellite images from Google maps.

Сл. 3 Мапа Залдапе, коју је сачинио Б.М. Барек у сарадњи са Д. Мореау, Н. Беаудри и Г. Атанасов, на основу публикација К. Шкорпил, С. Торбатов, М. Мичев, Г. Атанасов, И. Валериев.

#### *The apse mosaic*

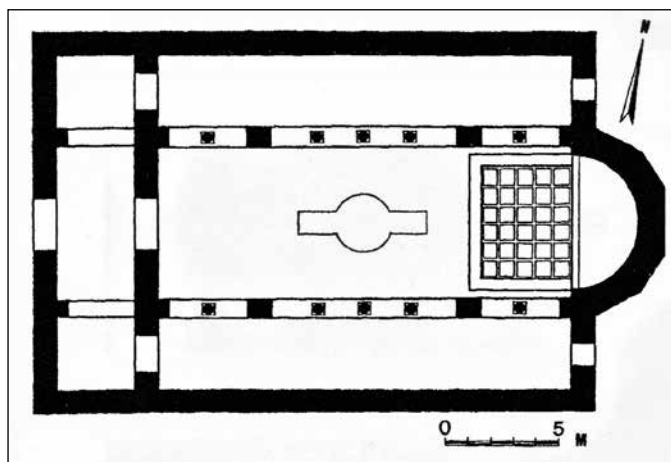
The computer enlargement made by G. Atanassov of the black-and-white drawing made by Shkorpil of the apse mosaic between the apse and the ambo (fig. 5), shows the mosaic composition in the chancel. When opened for the first time, the mosaic was in a bad condition, and the only preserved its part was in the first row from the west, arranged by symmetrical pairs of identical schemes in the axis east-west. That's why in the Corpus of Late Antique mosaics from Bulgaria is offered a composition of orthogonal scheme with small squares, filled with fish scales, although it was noted that maybe not all squares had identical fillings. At that time the problem could not be solved because there lacked reliable data. Generally the proposed in the Corpus scheme is adequate to the black-and-white drawing of the first archaeologist of the basilica and its mosaic. However, according to the new documents from the Varna archive not all the fillings are scales, including variety of other motifs as well.

The colour drawing of Shkorpil of the only preserved panel (fig. 6) is filled with scales and framed from all sides with guilloche. These two identical panels with scales occupy the end northwestern and southwestern corners of the first row from the west side. The guilloche drawn only by pencil is probably laid on a colour ground, with a median file in the strands of three different colours, opened in the center as to form a round eyelet<sup>7</sup>. The northwestern and southwestern corners are filled with adjacent scales of oblong form arranged in

<sup>7</sup> C. Balmelle, M. Blanchard-Lemée, J. Christophe, J.-P. Darmon, A.-M. Guimier-Sorbets, H. Lavagne, R. Prudhomme, H. Stern, *Le décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine*, I, Répertoire graphique et descriptif des compositions linéaires et isotropes, Paris 1985, p. 120, pl. 72e (hence Le décor I).

Fig. 4 Plan of basilica No 1 in Zaldapa made by K. Shkorpil, now in the archive of the Central Library of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Слика 4 Основа базилике бр 1 у Залдапи према К. Шкорпил, која се сада налази у архиву Централне библиотеке Бугарске академије наука.



simple filets in orthogonal pattern to the east direction. The form of the scales and its colouring do not belong to any definite one known so far: they are a combination of several types of the scales' inner decoration. The outlines of the scales are made by one green line of tesserae, the upper inside part of the scale shown in gold-ochre nuance, while the lower one is in white. In that the scale differs both from the ones with three different colours, the white one at the top<sup>8</sup>, and also from the ones in two colours, the inner smaller coloured one repeating the bigger outside scale configuration, but not touching the latter and in a distance from it<sup>9</sup>. Another combined element is the addition of a rosebud in the lower part on the white background, by adding two red lines as triangular petals<sup>10</sup>. The result reminds to some extent the form and the colouring of a heder<sup>11</sup>, however without well expressed heart-shaped upper part because of the triangular petals.

The latter can be observed both in its full and shortened forms. The lowest row of scales from the west is not oblong as usual, but as half-circles, the green outlines suddenly stopping on the very wide white background, the triangular red petals being in that case replaced by simple straight red lines in direction north-south. The scales represented at both sides of the mosaic panel represent only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the full scale form and have only one diagonal red petal. On its turn, the white background at the top of the panel is filled with very small also triangular petals, in some places reminding a small triangular.

The square panel with scales is outlined too by one red line, very delicately repeated inside by one line of black tesserae. That's why the black is

<sup>8</sup> Le décor I, Pl. 219a.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, Pl. 220g.

<sup>10</sup> Compare the thick dimensions and strict geometric forms of the rosebuds in Le décor I, Pl. 84b with some more graphically treated in Le décor I, Pl. 219c and with the triangular petals in C. Balmelle, M. Blanchard-Lemée, J.-P. Darmon, S. Gozlan, M.-P. Raynaud, *Le décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine*, II, Répertoire graphic et descriptif des décors centrés (hence Le décor II), p. 47 (the second one below the top to the utmost right).

<sup>11</sup> Le décor II, p. 49.

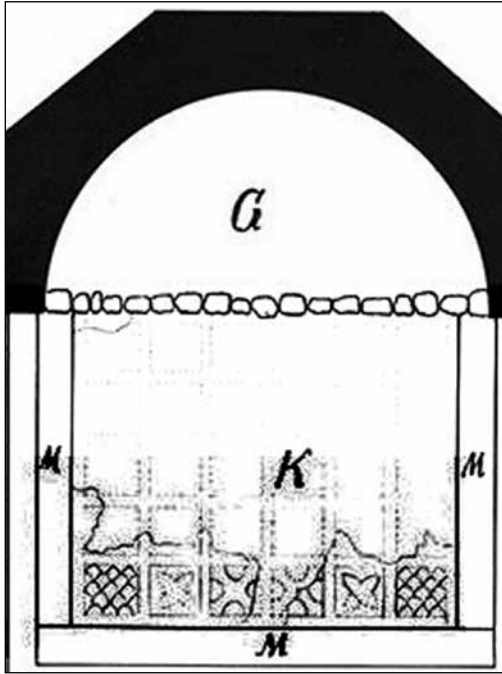


Fig. 5 Enlarged plan of the apse with the mosaic scheme of basilica No 1 of Zaldapa. Drawing of K. Shkorpil, now in the archive of Varna Regional Historical Museum.

Сл. 5 Увећани план апсиде са мозаичким шемом базилике бр. 1 Залдапа. Цртеж К. Шкорпила, који се сада налази у архиву Регионалног историјског музеја Варна.

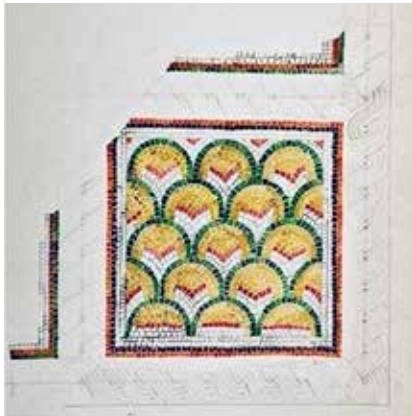


Fig. 6 Colour drawing of K. Shkorpil in aquarell technique and pencil, now in the archive of Varna Regional Historical Museum.

Сл. 6 Цртеж К. Шкорпила у техници акварела и оловке сада се налази у архиву Регионалног историјског музеја Варна.

almost missing among the very bright and contrast colours (red and green) and practically insignificant, at least in this panel. This treatment shows a balance between the colourful spots in ochre and the graphical but also polychrome lines in green and red, all on the white background.

The second kind of pair fillings has a complex configuration and occupies the panels situated next to the ones with scales from the inner side. The fillings in these two panels on the computer enlargement remind the figure known as “cross of interlaced spindles” (fig. 7, below)<sup>12</sup>. For the first time they appear in the second half of 4<sup>th</sup> century, for instance in the mosaic of the Episcopal basilica in Marcianopolis<sup>13</sup>, and are not among the widely spread motifs from monuments found in Bulgaria. In our

<sup>12</sup> Le décor II, p. 40.

<sup>13</sup> Compare both types used together in V. Popova, *The Mosaic Pavements of the Episcopal Basilica in Marcianopolis, Niš and Byzantium XVII*, Niš 2019, 99-114, fig. 6.

opinion, however, this motif is rather a variant of the Solomon knot, but with sharp instead of round ends, because both elements are crossing each other in the same way, as in the case of the Solomon knot (fig. 7, over).

The third kind of pair occupies the two central panels of the first row of the mosaic composition. The computer enlargement reveals X-like figure or saltire, with several variants to be proposed for it. It is represented a compound fleuron. It is very difficult to find out which kind of decoration has been placed in the very center of the figure, made on the drawing of Shkorpil. Most probably in the very center of the figure it has been placed either a small circle, or a square with X-like, or a cross-like central figure, or another kind of filling, not preserved at the time the mosaic was opened by K. Shkorpil. We can be sure about the presence of similar central decoration on the ground of the numerous analogies (fig. 8, see the centers of all motifs).

Although the two central panels should be identical, there are slight differences in its outlines made by the scholar. Probably the differences can be explained by his hesitation how to draw correctly the figure, having in mind that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the knowledge on the rarely used motifs was still not good, and that in that early period they were practically unknown and nameless. Nevertheless, we can suppose on the base of the numerous parallels that here initially has been designed a similar<sup>14</sup>. The flower-figure is consisting of 8 elements plus its center, the ninth element. The four one placed diagonally are enlarging to the end like spoons (lancets), touching both corners' sides. In some analogies this is the only form, with no additions; in others the enlarged end is doubled, with volutes or heart-shaped, or as a leaf or hedera with apex placed namely in the enlargement<sup>15</sup>.

However, we should have in mind, and that the corner motifs, as well as the four other elements placed among the spoon-like ending of the X-like forms, are limited by the square form of the panel. The space left among the X-like forms is like a half-circle enlarging from both sides up, thus allowing to see an inserted here trifold lotus, with extremely numerous parallels from elsewhere<sup>16</sup>.



Fig. 7 Two samples of Solomon's knots with rounded and pointed ends.

Сл. 7 Два примера Соломонових чворова са заобљеним и шиљастим крајевима.

<sup>14</sup> Le décor I, Pl. 260; Le décor II, Pl. 275f, Pl. 393a.

<sup>15</sup> Le décor, Pl. 260a and b, Pl. 242d; Pl. 275f.

<sup>16</sup> Le décor II, Pl. 393q.

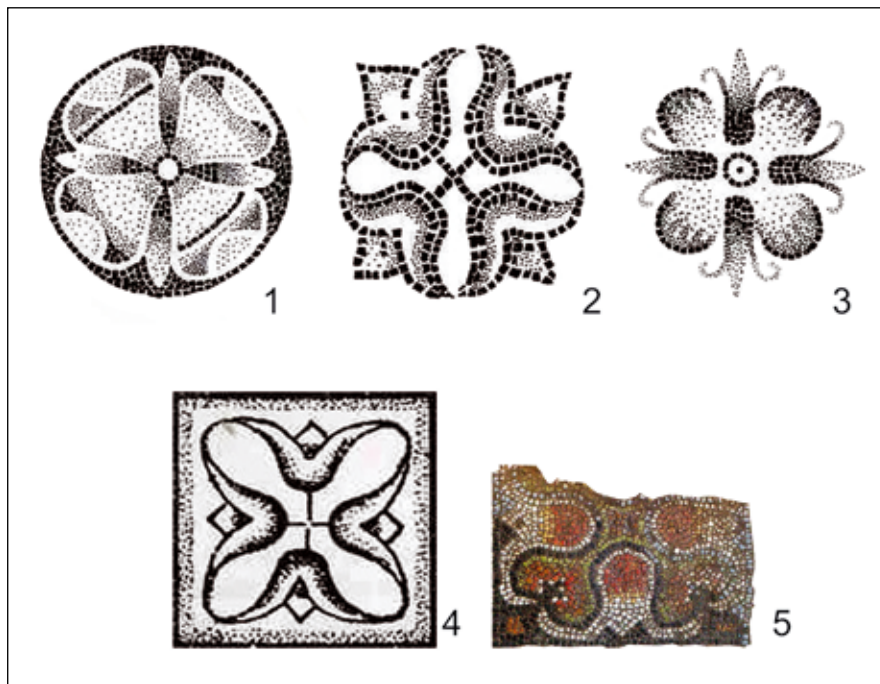


Fig. 8 Enlarged samples of rosettes of the type of Zaldapa according to Le décor I and II. The last one from the corridor of the Episcopal residence "Eirene" in Philippopolis in Thracia.

Сл. 8 Увећани узорци розета типа Залдапа према Le décor I и II. Последњи из ходника епископске резиденције „Еирене“ у Филипополису у Тракији.

But having this solid ground of practice, it should be underlined that the flower (unitary or compound) should be submitted to the square form, and not going out of it, following the existing limits<sup>17</sup>.

The pair in the very center of the first western row of the apse mosaic may be also identified with a very specific and rarely met in Bulgaria motif (fig. 8, the last motif below). It is placed in the south corridor of the Episcopal residence in Philippopolis, known for the personification of Eirene<sup>18</sup>. This corridor is situated next to the room with Eirene. The mosaic of the corridor is dated in the first half of 5<sup>th</sup> century. The motif, inscribed in a square, is very complex: a square with concave outlines is in the center; four X-like forms are coming out of the center, ending in heart-like forms. The angles of the square, in which the figure is inscribed, are filled with a ochre/yellow leaf. Black crosses are represented inside the heart-like forms. In the spaces among the X-like ends are placed four lotus flowers, forming on its turn a cross-like figure. Each lotus is filled with three consecutively following colours: red, ochre and white. But the lotus figure

<sup>17</sup> Le décor I, Pl. 192a; Le décor II, Pl. 275f.

<sup>18</sup> Pillinger et alii, Corpus, No 40, 174-198, the general scheme with the corridor on Abb. 318; the separate motif Abb. 343 and 351.



is not so clearly standing out as the x-like one, because the latter is outlined by one black line and by one or two white ones repeating it. The whole complex figure is mainly in green, with added contrasting red, the white background almost lacking. The yellow/ ochre colour is the last one included in the figure, and all the colours together constitute impression very near to the “rainbow style”.

It is considered that this very specific figure has a Syro-Palestinian origin, because it is used very often namely in that region. On the opposite, in Greece it appears rarely. In Bulgaria the motif from Zaldapa is also only the second example after the Episcopal basilica of Eirene. This fact means an Eastern direct or indirect influence on the choice of this motif.

In this way, it becomes clear the arrangement of the first row of the mosaic composition from the west: every pair has identical scheme in correlation to the central axis east-west (fig. 9). However, there exist no preserved mosaic parts from the other rows with panels, so we don't know if in them this concrete order of arrangement has been repeated; either the identical schemes have been placed in diagonal way; or the other rows have been occupied by some new motifs. On its turn, this situation does not allow offering of a reliable reconstruction of the whole composition, limiting only to the first row from the west.

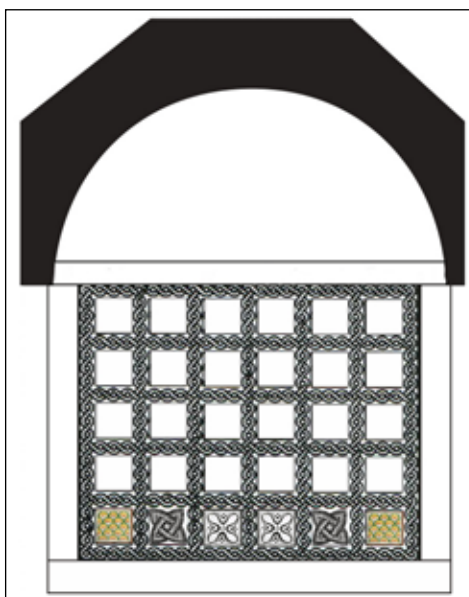


Fig. 9 Reconstruction of the fillings of the only preserved first western row during the excavations of K. Shkorpil. Author V. Popova.

Сл. 9 Реконструкција сачуваног првог западног реда током ископавања К. Шкорпила. Аутор В. Попова.

*The mosaic tesserae found separately*

Generally about 80 tesserae (fig. 10) have been found in the excavations of G. Atanassov. They have survived after the destruction of the basilica and the mosaic, falling directly on the floor of the crypt below the apse; also after the first excavations of Shkorpil, and finally after the picking up of the only well preserved panel with scales by the Rumanian scholars.

The tesserae/tesselae are predominantly smalt, the rest made of stone and terracotta. The tesserae dimensions are different: from 0.5 to 1.1 and up to 1.8 cm. Some of them are flat, almost square or rectangular, thin up to 2-4 mm. Others have irregular form and are a little bit thicker. The colours reveal vari-



Fig. 10 Separate stone and smalt mosaic tesserae found mainly in the crypt under the apse with mosaic of basilica No 1 in Zaldapa.

Сл. 10 Одвојени камени тесари мозаики из угла крипте испод апсиде са мозаиком базилике бр. 1 у Залдапи.

ous nuances of green, blue, red and lilac. But these are the colours now, without conservation of the tesserae, not always corresponding to the original colours and nuances. Nevertheless, on the base of the dimensions and the form it can be supposed that the mosaic technique applied in basilica No 1 was mainly opus tessellatum, in some places proceeding probably to opus vermiculatum.

The found tesserae in various colours, mainly green and blue smalta, prompt that each pair with identical scheme had the same palette. But the next pair had different motifs and correspondingly different palette. Some panels like the one with scales had been finer, laid in smalta technique, while others happened to be more banal, with stone and more rude tesserae.

Another supposition to be made is that some of the smalt pieces could belong not only to mosaic pavements, but also to wall mosaics in the conch of the apse. However, we have at disposal not enough data to affirm it. At the present state it is possible only to conclude that the mosaic laid only in the apse of basilica No 1 has a very unusual palette of the fish scales and two rare motifs for the mosaics from Bulgaria (the Solomon's knot with sharp ends and the rosettes of Eastern origin, consisting of eight elements). The mosaic underlines the dominant significance of the apse in liturgical and symbolic aspect. It is the only mosaic found in that part of Dobrudja from the Roman period and Late Antiquity so far.

#### *The date of the basilica and its apse mosaic*

Since the original mosaic is not preserved and only a colour drawing of a single panel is known, it is difficult to date the monument only on stylistic ground. However, some iconographic and stylistic observations can help in this aspect. The concrete form of the separate scales and its arrangement in our case of basilica No 1 in Zaldapa are well known, but the colouring and its fillings have no parallels so far. The Solomon's knots with sharp ends, the supposed flower of the third pair in the center of the first western row and the parallels

including the impression of the “rainbow style” point to a date in 5<sup>th</sup> century. The new trend in the treatment is first of all the balance between the linearity and the colouristic spot, also the enrichment and complicating of the forms and the colouring. The red colour is enriching the palette, inserted on the boundary of two colours, rarely met in the combination with green in the scales. The very thin linear outlines of the square, the scales and the V-like motifs are opposed to the colour spots inside the scales. This treatment is quite unusual: richer, more tender and even more decorative, being at one and the same time balanced and decorative.

However, we should have in mind that our analysis is based on idealized colour drawing and may be not quite identical to the original mosaic. Indeed, when observing the old photographs with details from the apse mosaic of basilica No 1 in Zaldapa<sup>19</sup>, it can't be discovered the refinement and stylistic definiteness impressed by the colour drawing of K. Shkorpil. But in spite of the conventionality, it supplies with a general idea and a possibility of comparison with similar mosaics.

In the first publication, the date of the apse mosaic of basilica No 1 has been related to the second half of 5<sup>th</sup> – early 6<sup>th</sup> century. More plausible argument for the date is given by a solid of Anastatius found under the walls of the basilica No 1<sup>20</sup>. In that case, it may serve as terminus post quem, relating the basilica and its mosaic to the end of 5<sup>th</sup> century in the reign of Anastatius I (491-518) – beginning of 6<sup>th</sup> century, up to the beginning of the reign of Justin I (518-527). In the region of Zaldapa happened very important historical and military events namely during the period of Anastatius, connected with the revolt of Vitalian against the emperor, in the period 512-513<sup>21</sup>. His rank was of a high military general and comes of Thracia. He three times has besieged Constantinople against Anastatius for several reasons: for the abolishment of the anonna to the boundary troops of foederats on the Lower Danubian Limes and for the accept by the emperor of the monophysite Christianity. The latter fact has even lead to the change of Macedonius II, the patriarch in Constantinople and uncle of Vitalian, by a new patriarch. Anastatius negotiated two times and succeeded in saving his throne from Vitalian on the third time in a decisive battle around Constantinople. But the rebellion has retrieved and hid in his homeland, probably in the region of Zaldapa, where he has been born. He managed to remain alive until the death of Anastatius, and was accepted in the court of Justin I and given the title of magister millitum. But only two years later in 520 he was killed in Constantinople, most probably by Justin and his nephew, the future emperor Justin I, because Vitalian was too dangerous in his intention to capture the throne.

<sup>19</sup> Pillinger et al., Corpus, Taff. 3 и 4.

<sup>20</sup> Atanasov, G., Y. Valeriev. Basilica No 1 ... (in print).

<sup>21</sup> Op. cit., D. Ruscu, *The Revolt of Vitalianus and the “Scythian Controversy”*, Byzantinische Zeitschrift 2008, v. 101/1, 773-785; И. Стоянов, *За бунта на Виталиан и неговите федерати – Българи*, Журнал за исторически и археологически изследвания, №3/2014, 13-54.



Fig. 11 Silver ring with the portrait of Vitalianus. Private collection.

Сл. 11 Сребрни прстен са портретом Виталиануса. Приватна колекција.

A silver ring (fig. 11) with a portrait of a man in a military dress and inscription Vitalius is found in the region of Odessos/Varna<sup>22</sup>. Among the mentioned suppositions, the main one is that the ring is a present from Vitalian to some of his military men for the support and brave behavior or after receiving a higher position in his career. Thus, the ring can be dated in the period of the first two decades of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, witnessing of the extremely dynamic events in Constantinople, Europa, Thracia and Scythia Minor in the period of Anastatius I, in which Vitalian was playing the main role.

Still this period is weekly represented by monuments in Bulgaria, therefore the ring and basilica No1 and its apse mosaic are very important evidences for the urban development and the Christian architecture and decoration during the Early Byzantine period of Dobrudja. The reign of Anastatius was one of the most flourishing ones for the northeastern lands in Scythia in building basilicas and its extraordinary architectonic and mosaic decoration. Gradually, the still lacking data on Late Antique/Early Christian mosaics in Moesia II and Scythia is remedied by the new discoveries in the locality Gradishte (between the town of Turgovishte and Shumen, excavated in 2020) and the new mosaics in basilica No 3 in Zaldapa (excavations 2019-2020). The basilicas from Zaldapa differ from the basilicas in Tropeum Traiani and Histria in the extremely rich architectonic decoration and by the already witnessed mosaic pavements, the latter not met in the basilicas on territory of Rumania. This fact may be explained by the stronger influence of Constantinople, Marcianopolis and Odessos and its mosaic production on Zaldapa, and generally by the more tight artistic connections with these important centers of theological and cultural life.

<sup>22</sup> А. Минчев, *Късноантичен сребърен пръстен с мъжки бюст и надпис Vitalianus от с. Бозвелийско*, Варненско, В: Сборник в чест 60 години проф. д.и.н. Георги Атанасов (= Добруджа, 32). Варна-София, 2017, 208-210.

*Вања Попова, Георги Атанасов*  
(Самостални истраживач, Регионални историјски музеј Силистра)  
НОВИ ПОДАЦИ О МОЗАИКУ У АПСИДИ БАЗИЛИКЕ  
БР. 1 У ЗАЛДАПИ/БУГАРСКА

Базилику бр. 1 и њен мозаик који покрива само простор испред апсиде, открио је К. Шкорпил почетком прошлог века. Када је откривен мозаик је био у лошем стању, само је делимично сачуван први ред мозаичне схеме. Само један мањи пано био је у потпуности сачуван, али је био подигнут у трећој години истог века од румунских археолога и вероватно је однесен у Румунију. Његови трагови су изгубљени и ништа се не зна о његовој судбини.

Након Шкорпилове смрти, његова ћерка га је предала Регионалном историјском музеју. Тако је један део архиве која садржи белешке и документацију К. Шкорпила припао Бугарској академији наука, а други Музеју у Варни.

Међу њима су откривена два Шкорпилова цртежа: један црно-бели на коме је схема мозаика, а други у акварелу са оловком. Поред тога, откривен је енглески превод текста, који је научник припремио за објављивање на позив Т. Уитмора, директора Америчког византијског института у Паризу. Али и Уитмор и Шкорпил су преминули и чланак није објављен. Нови подаци помажу у одређивању, макар и делимично, реконструкције мозаичке схеме, барем првог западног реда, гаму боја, појединачних допуњених мотива и, донекле датирању мозаика. Он је редак на подручју Добруце, и засада га налазимо у ранохришћанским мозаицима у овој провинцији само у Залдапи, док базилика у Северној Добруци на румунском територију није украшена мозаицима. Поред тога, архитектонски украс Залдапе је такође изузетно богата. Ове чињенице одражавају важну улогу насеља у ширењу хришћанства, трговачке и културне везе са Константинопољом, Одесом и Марцијанополисом, као и важну улогу Залдапе у Анастасији. Посебно је повезана са два заповедника, оцем и сином, од којих је Виталиан три пута организовао побуну против цара. Базилика бр. 1 у Залдапи и њен мозаик, остале две базилике, такође са мозаицима, као и пронађени сребрни прстен са натписом, који вероватно има слику Виталијана, још увек су међу малобројним доказима раног хришћанства, културе и историје Добруце током епохе Анастасиа.

