

**REMINDING OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN PAST  
IN THE ROMAN  
LATE 8<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 9<sup>TH</sup> - CENTURY MOSAICS**

The period between 760 and 860 in the history of Rome was brilliantly described by R. Krautheimer and reasonably defined by him with terms 'Renewal and Renaissance'<sup>1</sup>. He claimed that this process, which affected political, economic, social and cultural aspects of life in medieval Rome, was parallel to the Carolingian Renaissance north of the Alps or formed a part of it<sup>2</sup>.

Mosaic (as a means of artistic expression) reappeared in Rome in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century after almost a century of absence since 705-707, when Pope John VII had decorated the oratory at S. Peter's<sup>3</sup>. It is known that Roman mosaic workers of the late 8<sup>th</sup> and early 9<sup>th</sup> centuries used mostly glass tesserae like their predecessors three or four centuries before<sup>4</sup>. But here, to tell the truth, the decision was self-evident. Many ancient and early Christian buildings decorated with mosaics had come into decay by that time, so their mosaic cubes could be reused. One may only guess if the revival of mosaic occurred thanks to the presence of Byzantine artists who fled to Rome in the period of iconoclasm<sup>5</sup>, or

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<sup>1</sup> R. Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a city, 312-1308*, Princeton 1979, 109.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, 122-123.

<sup>3</sup> M. Andaloro, *I mosaici dell'oratorio di Giovanni VII*, in: *Fragmenta picta. Affreschi e mosaici staccati del Medioevo romano*, Catalogo della Mostra, Roma 1990, p. 169-178.

<sup>4</sup> Krautheimer, *Rome*, 125-126.

<sup>5</sup> It is known that since the 7<sup>th</sup> century there existed ten eastern (Greek and Syrian) monasteries in Rome, and in the period of iconoclasm their communities significantly grew up. See: J.M. Sansterre, *Les moines grecs et orientaux à Rome aux époques byzantine et carolingienne (milieu du VI<sup>e</sup> - fin du IX<sup>e</sup> s.)*, Bruxelles, 1983; Idem, *Le monachisme byzantin à Rome*, in: *Bisanzio, Roma e l'Italia nell'Alto Medioevo*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Spoleto 1988, vol. 34, 701-746.



Fig. 1. Mosaic of the Leo III's triclinium in the Lateran Palace, Rome. Before 800, restored in 1625.

Сл. 1. Мозаик триклинијума Лава III у Латеранској палати, Рим, пре 800, обновљена 1625.

mosaic reappeared as a result of the flourishing of Roman art. The only other mosaic surviving from that time outside Rome – in Germigny-des-Près<sup>6</sup> – was probably created by Byzantine artists<sup>7</sup>.

Mosaic decorations of the late 8<sup>th</sup> and early 9<sup>th</sup> centuries have come down to us in five Roman churches; these are SS. Nereo ed Achilleo, S. Prassede with the adjacent chapel of S. Zeno, S. Maria in Domnica, S. Cecilia in Trastevere, and S. Marco. There is also a mosaic of the Leo III's triclinium in the Lateran Palace<sup>8</sup>, damaged and unskillfully renovated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (two heads of

<sup>6</sup> The chapel has attracted attention of art historians by its unusual iconographical program. Among the recent publications on it: A. Freeman; P. Meyvaert, *The meaning of Theodulf's apse mosaic at Germigny-des-Près*, in: *Gesta*, Vol. 40/2 (2001), 125-139; G. Mackie, *Theodulf of Orléans and the Ark of the Covenant: a new allegorical interpretation at Germigny-des-Près*, in: *Racar*, 32 (2007), 1/2, 45-58.

<sup>7</sup> This was hypothesized long time ago by Del Medico (H.E. del Medico, *La mosaïque de l'abside orientale à Germigny-des-Près*, in: *MonPiot*, 39 (1943), 81-102) but opposed by A. Grabar (A. Grabar, *Les mosaïques de Germigny-des-Près*, in: *Cahiers archéologiques*, 7 (1954) = *Atti del Congresso di Studi sull'Arte dell'Alto Medioevo*, 4 (1954), 177). Modern scholars mostly avoid the stylistic aspect of study of the mosaic in Germigny-des-Près; however, we must admit, that its visual, artistic expression is closer to the Byzantine mosaics, and not to those Roman, contemporary to it. T. Velmans observed recently that "Ce rayonnement de la peinture byzantine dépassa les frontières de l'Italie et touchera la France, comme on voit, par exemple, dans la mosaïque de Germigny-des-Près (v. 800)..." (T. Velmans, *Rayonnement de Byzance*, Paris 2006, 95).

<sup>8</sup> H. Belting, *I mosaici dell'aula leonina come testimonianza della prima "renovatio" nell'arte medioevale di Roma*, in *Roma e l'età carolingia: atti delle giornate di studio / a cura dell'Istituto di Storia dell'Arte dell'Università di Roma; Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte*, Roma 1976, 167-182.

apostles are preserved in the Museo Sacro in Vatican<sup>9</sup>). Monuments adorned with mosaics were by far more numerous as evidenced by the lists in the *Liber Pontificalis*<sup>10</sup>. In some cases iconography of the lost monuments can be reconstructed on basis of the old drawings and descriptions.

Two mosaics of the late 8<sup>th</sup> and early 9<sup>th</sup> centuries – those of the Leo III's triclinium in the Lateran Palace (the so-called Aula Leonina) and the lost mosaic of the basilica S. Susanna – were associated with the proper ideology of the renaissance<sup>11</sup>. Both of them alluded to the spurious document, the Donation of Constantine, probably composed in 754, during the stay of Pope Stephen II in France, according to which the emperor (Constantine the Great) granted to Pope Sylvester and his successors a status higher than his own and ceded them the Lateran Palace, Rome with provinces and towns of Italy and the West. In the half-dome of the surviving apse of the triclinium the Mission of Apostles was depicted (Fig. 1). On the front arch there were two groups of three figures each: to the right, St. Peter sitting on a throne gives the pallium to Pope Leo III and the labarum to Charles; to the left, Christ hands the labarum to Constantine and the pallium to St. Peter. As the mosaic was restored and perhaps even re-created in 1625, the second group could originally contain an image of Pope Sylvester according to the hypothesis of Krautheimer, so that the whole ensemble, together with the composition in the apse, could be interpreted in the spirit of the Constantinian Donation<sup>12</sup>. Thus, Constantine was represented as a model for Charlemagne in protecting and supporting the Roman Church in its mission to bring Christianity to the mankind. In this mosaic Charles is still depicted as a king, so it was made before he was crowned an emperor on the Christmas of 800. The compositional scheme used in the mosaic of the basilica S. Susanna created soon after 800 (and destroyed in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century) was more traditional for Roman medieval art: Christ was depicted in the centre, to His right – the Mother of God, St. Peter, St. Susanna and Pope Leo III with the model of the church, to His left – St. Paul, two unknown saints and Charlemagne<sup>13</sup>.

Besides these two mosaics inspired by one of the aspects of the political situation of that époque – the relationship of papacy with Frankish rulers – there exists a mosaic which gives an allusion to the events of the early 9<sup>th</sup> century that aimed at the revival of the glorious Roman past. The mosaic of the triumphal arch of S. Prassede depicts multitude of martyrs making their way towards the walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem; at the gates their processions are met by the angels and apostles Peter and Paul<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 2). Scholars believe that the artists

<sup>9</sup> C. Davis-Weyer, *Karolingisches und Nichtkarolingisches in zwei Mosaikfragmenten der Vatikanischen Bibliothek*, in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 37 (1974), Heft 1, 31-39.

<sup>10</sup> *The lives of the eight-century popes : the ancient biographies of nine popes from A.D. 715 to A.D. 817* / transl. with an introd. and commentary by R. Davis, Liverpool 1992.

<sup>11</sup> C. Davis-Weyer, *Die Mosaiken Leos III. und die Anfänge der karolingischen Renaissance in Rom*, in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 29 (1966), Heft 2, 111-129; Ch. Walter, *Papal political imagery in the medieval Lateran palace*, in: *Cahiers archéologiques* 20 (1970), 157-160.

<sup>12</sup> Krautheimer, *Rome*, 115.

<sup>13</sup> Davis-Weyer, *Die Mosaiken Leos III.*, 125-126.

<sup>14</sup> R. Wisskirchen, *Das Mosaikprogramm von S. Prassede in Rom. Ikonographie und*



Fig. 2. Mosaic of the triumphal arch of the basilica S. Prassede in Rome, 817-824  
Сл. 2. Мозаик на трукумфалном луку базилике S. Prassede у Риму, 817-824.



Fig. 3. Apse mosaic of the basilica S. Prassede in Rome, 817-824  
Сл. 3. Апсидални мозаик базилике S. Prassede у Риму, 817-824

have represented the martyrs whose relics were transferred to the church by Pope Paschal I<sup>15</sup>. In the late 8<sup>th</sup> and early 9<sup>th</sup> century transfer of relics from catacombs and neglected cemeteries outside the city walls, previously practiced by the popes of eastern origin, became Roman custom, because it was important to provide access to them for pilgrims and inhabitants of the city.

Iconography of the mosaics of the triclinium of Leo III and triumphal arch of S. Prassede is unique being related to the events of that time. The other mosaics of the period under consideration, on the contrary, follow well-known schemes.

Apse compositions of the basilicas S. Prassede (Fig. 3) and S. Cecilia in Trastevere (Fig. 4), created during the pontificate of Paschal I (817-824), are quite similar<sup>16</sup>. Both represent the Second Coming of Christ with the apostles Peter and Paul, titular saints of the churches and Pope Paschal. They go back to the apse mosaic of the basilica SS. Cosma e Damiano (526-530)<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 5) though slightly changing the accent. While in SS. Cosma e Damiano we observe the Appearance of Christ to the Princes of apostles, titular saints and the Pope, in two compositions of the early 9<sup>th</sup> century the saints and Pope seem to become participants of the apocalyptic vision. Another feature of the 9<sup>th</sup>-century mosaics is the use of haloes for all the figures. The central part of this composition with Christ and Princes of apostles reminds the scene *Traditio legis*, the earliest examples of which are found in the mosaic of the mausoleum S. Costanza (ca. mid-4<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>18</sup> and in the fragment of the sarcophagus in the Museum at the basilica S. Sebastiano near Rome (ca. 370)<sup>19</sup>. Images of the sisters Prassede and Pudenziana bringing crowns of martyrs seem to have their close prototype in the mosaic of S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna (early 6<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>20</sup> (Fig. 6). Depictions of date palms come probably from the same source; but since this

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*Ikonologie*, Münster/Westfalen 1990, 64-68.

<sup>15</sup> C.-G. Coda, *Duemilatrecento corpi di martiri : la relazione di Benigno Aloisi (1729) e il ritrovamento delle reliquie nella Basilica di Santa Prassede in Roma*, Roma: Biblioteca Vallicelliana, 2004

<sup>16</sup> A. Ballardini, *Dai Gesta di Pasquale I secondo il Liber Pontificalis ai monumenta iconografici delle basiliche romane di Santa Prassede, Santa Maria in Domnica e Santa Cecilia in Trastevere*: (prima parte), in: *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, 122.1999(2000), 5-67.

Among the recent publications on the basilicas and their mosaic decorations: A. M. Affanni, *La Chiesa di Santa Prassede a Roma: la storia, il rilievo, il restauro*, Viterbo 2006; N. Parmegiani, A. Pronti, *S. Cecilia in Trastevere: nuovi scavi e ricerche*, Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana 2004; C. La Bella, *Santa Cecilia in Trastevere / Provincia di Roma*, Roma 2007.

<sup>17</sup> V. Tiberia, *Il restauro del mosaico della Basilica dei Santi Cosma e Damiano a Roma*, Ediert 1991; A. Rava, *Il restauro del mosaico absidale della basilica dei Santi Cosma e Damiano a Roma*, in: *Kermes* 5 (1992), 13, 19-26

<sup>18</sup> *L'orizzonte tardoantico e le nuove immagini: 312-468: Corpus della pittura medievale a Roma*, vol. 1, a cura di M. Andaloro, Roma 2006, 84-86.

<sup>19</sup> Wisskirchen, *Das Mosaikprogramm von S. Prassede*, 32.

<sup>20</sup> R. Zanotto, *La chiesa di Sant'Apollinare Nuovo a Ravenna*, in: *Venezia e Bisanzio: aspetti della cultura bizantina da Ravenna a Venezia (V-XIV secolo)*, a cura di C. Rizzardi, Venezia 2005, 351-361.



Fig. 4. Apse mosaic of the basilica S. Cecilia in Trastevere in Rome, 817-824  
 Сл. 4. Апсидални мозаик базилике Св. Сесилија у Трастевере у Риму, 817-824.



Fig. 5. Apse mosaic of the basilica SS. Cosma e Damiano in Rome, 526-530  
 Сл. 5. Апсидни мозаик базилике Св. Козме и Дамјана у Риму, 526-530.



Fig. 6. Mosaic of S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna. Early 6<sup>th</sup> century  
Сл. 6. Мозаик С. Аполинаре Нуово у Равени, рани VI век

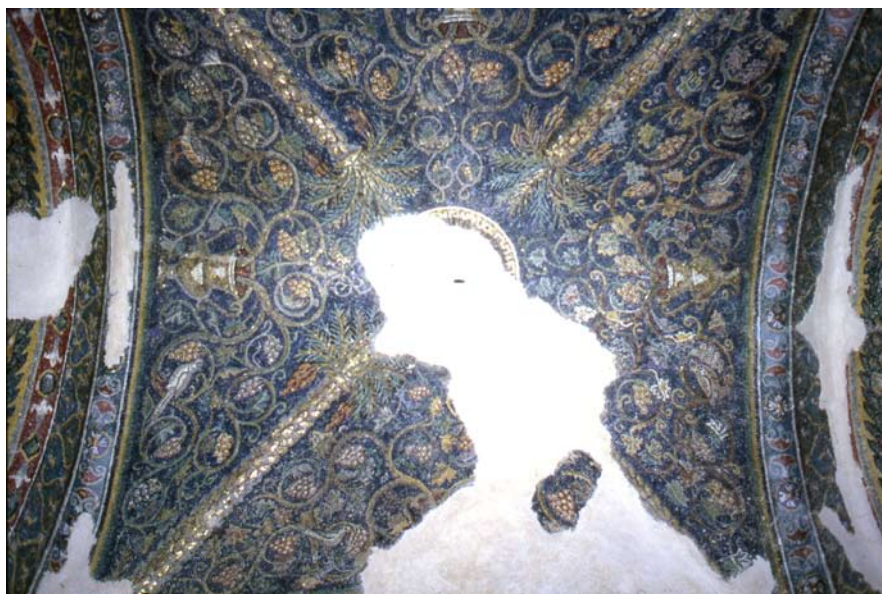


Fig. 7. Vault mosaic of the chapel of S. Matrona in the church of S. Prisco in Capua Vetere,  
Before the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century  
Сл. 7. Мозаик капеле Св. Матрона у цркви С. Приско у Капуе Ветера, пре средине 5.  
века

motif was extremely popular in early Christian art, we may point out more ancient examples in the mosaics of the vaults in the chapel of S. Matrona in the church of S. Prisco in Capua Vetera (before the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>21</sup> (Fig. 7) and in the Arian Baptistery in Ravenna (late 5<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>22</sup>. A frieze of lambs and an image of Agnus Dei standing on the mountain with four rivers of Paradise, having their literary source in the Revelation of St. John the Theologian, were even more ancient and widespread in the early Christian art (see the sarcophagi from S. Sebastiano and S. Ambrogio<sup>23</sup>; they were depicted in the lost mosaics of the western wall of the tower at S. Costanza<sup>24</sup>, and in the first iconic decoration of the apse of S. Peter's, all of the 4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>25</sup> Fig. 8)). In mosaics they were often represented departing from the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, like in the just mentioned lost mosaic or, in 422-423 on the apse and apse arch of S. Sabina<sup>26</sup> (Fig. 9). *Dextera Domini* with the golden wreath appears already in the vault mosaic of the baptistery S. Giovanni in Fonte in Naples (after the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>27</sup> (Fig. 10) and is often used to represent the Holy Trinity. In the apse of S. Marco (827-844)<sup>28</sup> the composition is quite the same as in the two churches of Paschal I except some not very significant details (Fig. 11).

The composition of the apse arch in S. Prassede<sup>29</sup> (Fig. 12) was also copied from that of SS. Cosma e Damiano<sup>30</sup> (Fig. 13), the latter embellished, according

<sup>21</sup> R. Olivieri Farioli, *La decorazione musiva della capella di S. Matrona nella chiesa di S. Prisco presso Capua*, in: Corsi di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina, 5-17 Marzo 1967, XIV, 267-291

<sup>22</sup> T. Bruno, *Il Battistero degli Ariani a Ravenna*, in: Felix Ravenna, 1963, vol. 88, 5-82.

<sup>23</sup> A. Katzenellenbogen, *The sarcophagus in S. Ambrogio and St. Ambrose*, in: The art bulletin 29 (1947), n.4, 249-259.

<sup>24</sup> The subject of this mosaic is known to us owing to the drawings by H. Sabin and P. Ugonio. Both of them have drawn Agnus Dei, the former – with three vases on each side, the latter – with an outline of a lamb below (Andaloro, *Corpus*, 66).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, 87-90.

<sup>26</sup> These mosaics were renovated in the middle ages and finally lost probably in the time of Benedict XIII (1724-1730). The cities were depicted in the low corners of the apse arch; along its curve 15 medallions with portraits of Christ in the centre and popes on both sides were represented (*Ibidem*, 301-304). The lambs were depicted in the apse but, it can be suggested, that the composition was changed by the author of the present fresco if compared to the Early Christian model.

A few examples may be drawn from relieves of sarcophagi and works of applied arts (see, for instance, Wisskirchen, *Das Mosaikprogramm von S. Prassede*, Abb. 25, 27a).

<sup>27</sup> P.L. De Castris, *I mosaici del Battistero di San Giovanni in Fonte nel Duomo di Napoli: la letteratura, i restauri antichi e quello attuale*, in: Mosaici a S. Vitale e altri restauri: atti del convegno nazionale sul restauro in situ di mosaici parietali, Ravenna 1 - 3 ottobre 1990, Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali; Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici di Ravenna, a cura di A. M. Iannucci, C. Fiori, Ravenna 1992, 203-212

<sup>28</sup> V. Tiberia, *Il mosaico restaurato in San Marco di Roma*, in: L'urbe, N.S. 50 (1987), 3/4, 74-84; C. Bolgia, *The Mosaics of Gregory IV at S. Marco, Rome: Papal Response to Venice, Byzantium, and the Carolingians*, in: *Speculum* 81 (2006), n. 1, 1-34.

<sup>29</sup> Wisskirchen, *Das Mosaikprogramm von S. Prassede*, 50-51.

<sup>30</sup> V. Tiberia, *Mosaici restauri nella basilica dei Santi Cosma e Damiano a Roma*, in: Mosaici a S. Vitale e altri restauri: atti del convegno nazionale sul restauro in situ di mosaici



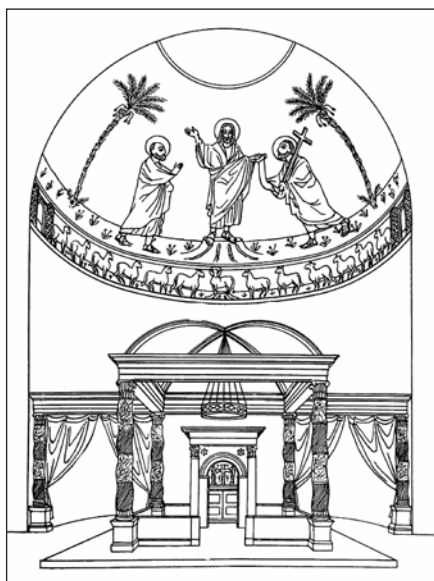


Fig. 8. Reconstruction of the lost apse mosaic of S. Peter's in Rome (after Buddensieg), First half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century

Сл. 8. Реконструкција изгубљеног апсидалног мозаика Св. Петра у Риму (по Buddensieg), прва половина IV века



Fig. 9. East part of S. Sabina with the reconstructed composition of apse arch

Сл. 9. Источни део Св. Сабина са реконструисаном композицијом лука апсиде



Fig. 10. Vault mosaic of the baptistry S. Giovanni in Fonte in Naples, After the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century

Сл. 10. Мозаик крстионице Св. Ђовани у Фонте у Напуљу, после средине V века



Fig. 11. Apse mosaic of the basilica S. Marco in Rome, 827-844

Сл. 11. Апсидни мозаик базилике Св. Марко у Риму, 827-844.

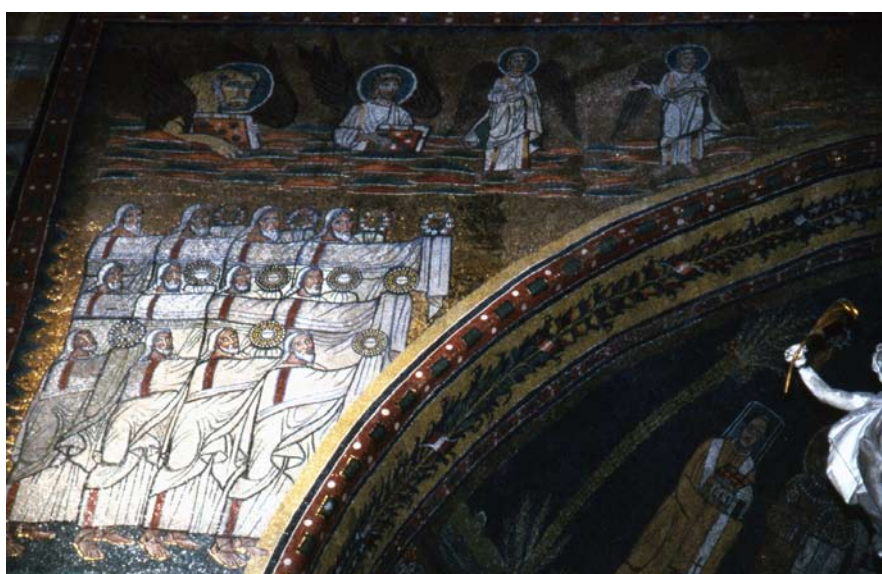


Fig. 12. Apse mosaic of the arch of the basilica S. Prassede (left side), 817-824

Сл. 12. Мозаик апсидног лука базилике Св. Праседе (лева страна), 817-824



Fig. 13. Mosaic of the apse arch of the basilica SS. Cosma e Damiano  
Сл. 13. Мозаик апсидалног лука базилике Св. Козме и Дамјана



Fig. 14. Interior of S. Paolo fuori le mura (ca. mid-5<sup>th</sup> century) painted by G.P. Pannini, 1741. Private collection  
Сл. 14. Ентеријер S. Paolo fuori le mura (око средине V века), насликао Г.П. Панини, 1741. Приватна колекција

to the opinions of various scholars, in the same time as the apse (526-530) or in the pontificate of Sergius I (687-701)<sup>31</sup>. It illustrates the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> chapters of the Revelation of St. John the Theologian. There were, probably, no earlier examples of the whole composition before that of SS. Cosma e Damiano, but we come across the particular motives of it in the monuments of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, seven candlesticks were depicted in the mosaic of the apse arch of the church S. Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna (ca. 425, destroyed in 1568)<sup>32</sup>. The 24 Elders of the Revelation, as well as the four creatures were represented on the triumphal arch of S. Paolo fuori le mura (ca. mid-5<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>33</sup> (Fig. 14) and again, in the pontificate of Leo the Great (440-461) - on the façade of S. Peter's<sup>34</sup>.

The chapel of S. Zeno is the earliest surviving example of the layout of images, which later, in the Middle-Byzantine period became conventional for the decoration of churches having Greek-cross plan<sup>35</sup>. However, beginning with its architecture (similar to that of pagan and Christian mausolea), it reflects strong influence of ancient and early Christian art, or rather deliberate use of the traditional motifs. Four angels holding a medallion with the bust of Christ in the vault of S. Zeno (Fig. 15) originate from the similar scheme used in the 6<sup>th</sup> century in the presbytery of S. Vitale<sup>36</sup> and in the vault of the chapel of the Archbishop's palace in Ravenna<sup>37</sup> (Fig. 16), but with the other central motifs. Krautheimer mentions the 5<sup>th</sup> century monument – a chapel S. Croce near the Lateran baptistery where four caryatides carried the cross in a laurel wreath<sup>38</sup>. Etimasia with Peter and Paul pointing to it recalls the mosaic of the apse arch of S. Maria Maggiore (432-440)<sup>39</sup> (Fig. 17) and that of the Arian baptistery in Ravenna, etc. Deer drinking from the four rivers of Paradise (Fig. 18a) have

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parietali, Ravenna 1 - 3 ottobre 1990, Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali; Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici di Ravenna, a cura di A. M. Iannucci; C. Fiori, Ravenna 1992, 111-132.

<sup>31</sup> For various opinions on this point see: Wisskirchen, *Das Mosaikprogramm von S. Prassede*, 51, note 2.

<sup>32</sup> Ch. Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten bis zur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 1960, 169ff.

<sup>33</sup> Andaloro, *Corpus*, 395-402.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, 416-418.

<sup>35</sup> B. Brenk, *Zum Bildprogramme der Zenokapelle in Rom*, in: *Archivo Espanõl de Archeologia*, 45-47 (1972-1974), 213-221.

<sup>36</sup> *The Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna* / a cura di P. Angiolini Martinelli. Modena, 1997.

<sup>37</sup> *Bovini G. La capella arcivescovile di Ravenna* // *Bolletino economico della camera di commercio, industria ed agricoltura di Ravenna*. 1956. 3; *Mackie G. The Early Medieval Chapel: Decoration, Form and Function. A study of Chapels in Italy and Istria in the period between 313 and 741*. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Victoria 1991.

<sup>38</sup> Krautheimer, *Rome*, 130.

<sup>39</sup> Andaloro, *Corpus*, 331-342; P. O. Folgerø, *The Sistine mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome: christology and mariology in the interlude between the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon*, in: *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia*; N.S. 7=21 (2008), 33-64.



Fig. 15. Mosaic of the vault of the S. Zeno chapel, 817-824  
Сл. 15. Мозаик свода Св. Зенон капеле, 817-824.



Fig. 16. Vault mosaic of the chapel of the Archbishop's palace in Ravenna. Early 6th century  
Сл. 16. Мозаик капеле палате архиепископа у Равени, рани VI век



Fig. 17. Etimasia. Fragment of the mosaic of the apse arch of the basilica S. Maria Maggiore in Rome, 432-440

Сл. 17. Хетимасиа, фрагмент мозаика апсидалног лука базилике Св. Марија Мађоре у Риму, 432-440.

their prototypes, though made in more naturalistic style, in the mosaics of the mausoleum of Galla Placidia<sup>40</sup> and S. Giovanni in Fonte (Fig. 18b); other examples can be drawn. Two rows of medallions over the entrance to the chapel (Fig. 19) remind those on the apse wall of S. Sabina.

The scene with the Theotokos surrounded by multitude of angels in the apse of S. Maria in Domnica<sup>41</sup> (Fig. 20) was probably inspired by a Byzantine work of art, but its central part with kneeling Pope harks back to the famous Roman icon preserved in S. Maria in Trastevere (early 8<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>42</sup> (Fig. 21) and to the fresco Adoration of the Cross in S. Maria Antiqua<sup>43</sup>. There is a written testimony about the existence of a venerated icon in S. Maria in Trastevere in earlier times<sup>44</sup>, and one may speculate if it had the same iconography. The left part of the mosaic on the apse arch in SS. Nereo ed Achilleo<sup>45</sup> (Fig. 22) with

<sup>40</sup> P.A. Martinelli, *The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna*, a cura di C. Rizzardi, Modena 1996.

<sup>41</sup> R. Wisskirchen, *Überlegungen zur frühesten absidalen Darstellung der thronenden Maria in Rom*, in: *Aachener Kunstblätter* 61 (1995-1997), 381-393.

<sup>42</sup> C. Bertelli, *Osservazioni sulla Madonna della Clemenza*, in: *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, 30/31, 1957/59 (1959), 141-152.

There exists another opinion on the dating of this icon, expressed by M. Andaloro and M. Lidova, but it will not be discussed here; I adduce the point of view accepted by most of the scholars.

<sup>43</sup> P.J. Nordhagen, *The Frescoes of John VII (705-707 A.D.) in S. Maria Antiqua in Rome*, Spoleto 1968.

<sup>44</sup> M. Andaloro, *La datazione della tavola di S. Maria in Trastevere*, in: *Rivista dell'Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte*, n.s., XIX-XX, 1972-1973, Roma 1975, 139-215.

<sup>45</sup> S. Antellini, *Il restauro del mosaico dell'arco absidale nella Chiesa dei SS. Nereo*

Fig. 18a. Deer drinking from the four rivers of Paradise in the mosaic of the S.Zeno chapel. 817-824

Сл. 18а. Јелен пије из четири реке Раја, мозаику Св. Зенон капеле, 817-824.



Fig. 18b. Deer drinking from the four rivers of Paradise in the mosaic in S. Giovanni in Fonte. After the mid-5th century

Сл. 18б. Јелен пије из четири реке Рају, мозаику Св. Ђовани у Фонте, друга половина V Века



Fig. 19. Entrance to the S. Zeno chapel, 817-824

Сл. 19. Улаз у капелу Св. Зенон, 817-824.





Fig. 20. Apse mosaic of the basilica S. Maria in Domnica in Rome, 817-824  
 Сл. 20. Апсидални мозаик базилике Св. Марија Домники у Риму, 817-824.



Fig. 21. Madonna della Clemenza.  
 S. Maria in Trastevere, early 8<sup>th</sup>  
 century  
 Сл. 21. Madonna della Clemenza,  
 Св. Марија у Трастевереу, по-  
 четак VIII века



Fig. 22. Mosaic of the apse arch of the basilica SS.Nereo ed Achilleo in Rome. Early 9th century

Сл. 22. Мозаик апсидалног лука базилике SS.Nereo ed Achilleo у Риму, рани IX век

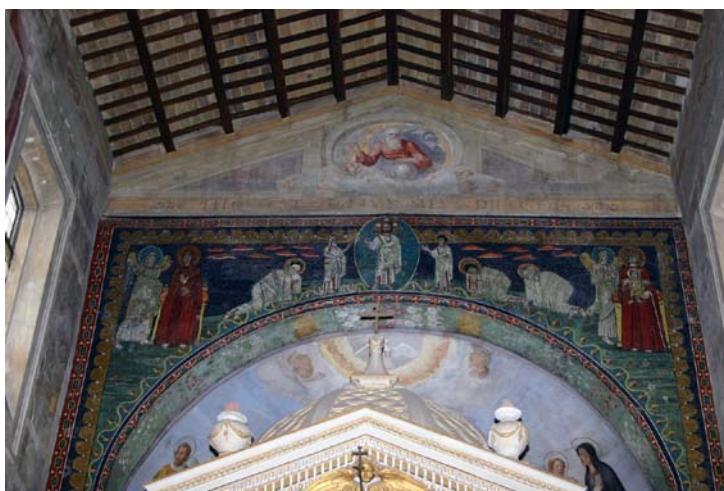


Fig. 23. Annunciation. Fragment of the mosaic of the apse arch of S. Maria Maggiore, 432-440

Сл. 23. Благовести, фрагмент мозаика апсидалног лука S. Maria Maggiore, 432-440.



Fig. 24. Mosaic of the apse arch of the basilica S.Marco in Rome, 827-844

Сл. 24. Мозаик апсидалног лука базилике Св. Марко у Риму, 827-844.



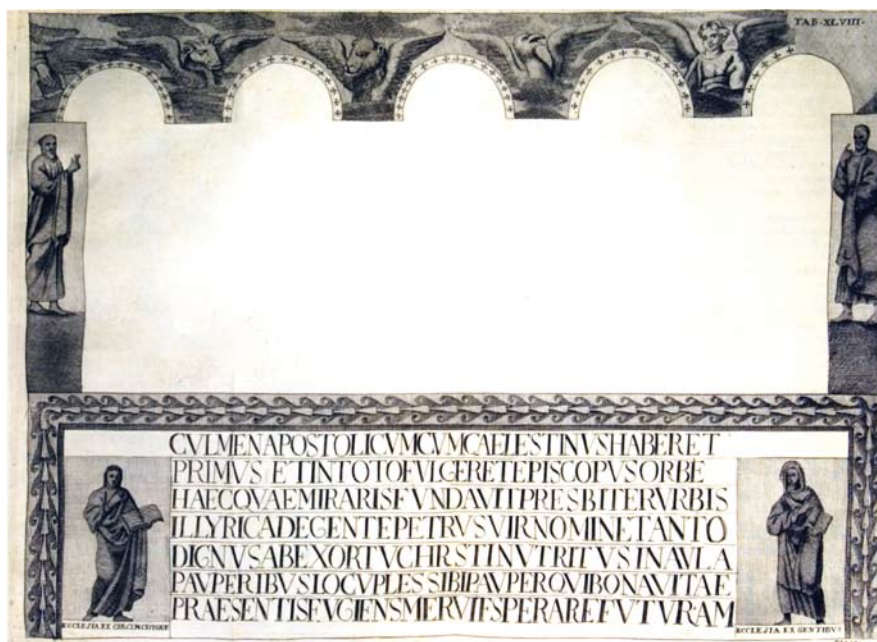


Fig. 25. Reconstruction of the 5<sup>th</sup>-century mosaic of the western wall of S. Sabina  
 Сл. 25. Реконструкция мозаик из V века на западном зиду Св.Сабине

the enthroned Mother of God holding Christ child and an angel could have had the icon from S. Maria in Trastevere as its prototype, while the image of the Annunciation in the right part was possibly modelled on the mosaic of the arch of S. Maria Maggiore<sup>46</sup> (Fig. 23). The jewelled cross with lambs which was depicted in the lost mosaic of the apse of this basilica is an eastern motif but by the 9<sup>th</sup> century it was already rooted in Rome (for instance, the mosaic of S. Stefano Rotondo, 642-649<sup>47</sup>). The composition of the apse arch of S. Marco (Fig. 24) repeats almost exactly that of the upper part of the western wall of S. Sabina (lost probably in the 16<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>48</sup> (Fig. 25); the only point of discrepancy is the upper central image: of Christ in S. Marco and of *Dextera Domini* in the lost mosaic of S. Sabina.

Thus, this brief survey demonstrates that most of the motifs used in the late 8<sup>th</sup>-early 9<sup>th</sup>-century Roman mosaics come back to the famous monuments

*ed Achilleo a Roma*, in: *Mosaici a S. Vitale e altri restauri atti del convegno nazionale sul restauro in situ di mosaici parietali*, Ravenna 1 - 3 ottobre 1990, Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali; Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici di Ravenna, a cura di A.M. Iannucci; C. Fiori, Ravenna 1992, 191-196; G. Curzi, *La decorazione musiva della basilica dei SS. Nereo e Achilleo in Roma: materiali ed ipotesi*, in: *Arte medievale*, 2. Ser. 7, 1993, 2, 21-45.

<sup>46</sup> Andaloro, *Corpus*, 331-336.

<sup>47</sup> G. Basile, *Il restauro del mosaico di S. Stefano Rotondo a Roma*, in: *Arte medievale*, 2. Ser. 7, 1993, 1, 197-228.

<sup>48</sup> Andaloro, *Corpus*, 295-296.

of the Christian antiquity. Sometimes it is possible to find prototypes in the mosaics of the other Italian centres, like Ravenna or Naples, but since they were widespread in the Mediterranean world we may suggest that at least some of them were in use also in Rome. The influence of eastern, Byzantine art, especially tangible in Rome during the 7<sup>th</sup> and early 8<sup>th</sup> century, was probably seen in the 9<sup>th</sup> century as a part of the Roman artistic heritage. Byzantine iconographic schemes could have blended with those local. However, whatever schemes were chosen by the late 8<sup>th</sup>-early 9<sup>th</sup>-century artists they were perceived as works of art of the Golden age of Christianity, of the time of Constantine and his immediate successors. For them there was no difference to which century belonged a mosaic taken as a model. The fact that there existed a long tradition of veneration of these mosaics guided mosaicists to repeat the well-known examples.

One of the questions, which needs further investigation is the style of the mosaics belonging to the period under consideration. It is claimed that the mosaics either in the treatment of figures go back to the frescoes of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, especially to those of S. Saba<sup>49</sup>, either in colouring revive the impressionistic tradition of the Christian antiquity<sup>50</sup>. Such points of view appear to be disputable. In my opinion the mosaics of the late 8<sup>th</sup>-early 9<sup>th</sup> century are even less classical and more conventional in the treatment of forms and figures than the 8<sup>th</sup> century frescoes (in S. Maria Antiqua and S. Saba)<sup>51</sup>. Proportions of the human body are often distorted, volume denied, movements simplified, but more frequently figures look motionless and stiff. Draperies are rendered flat, with rigid folds, which do not reflect movements of bodies. The facial expressions are uniform, especially if compared with early Christian works of art. These mosaics impress with brightness, laconism and the inner power of images. They have made their way as far from the early Christian and, certainly, from the Byzantine classicism as to arrive to an image that approximates to a sign.

However the mosaics of Leo III, Paschal I and Gregory IV are not absolutely homogeneous in style, and the problem is to be solved: how many workshops laboured for three Roman pontiffs of the late 8<sup>th</sup>-early 9<sup>th</sup> century. Neither of them was able to revive the classical style of the Christian antiquity and, at the same time, they drew from its iconographical resources as often as they could. The new artistic language, they created, with previously unknown sound and familiar verbal formulae was chosen to proclaim the glory of Rome in the time of its first medieval renaissances.

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<sup>49</sup> Davis-Weyer, *Die Mosaiken Leos III.*, 122.

<sup>50</sup> Krautheimer, *Rome*, 133.

<sup>51</sup> The contrast will be even more noticeable if we compare the Roman mosaics of the late 8<sup>th</sup> – early 9<sup>th</sup> century with the frescoes of Temietto Longobardo in Cividale di Friuli dated by various scholars to the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> – early of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. (See: *Il tempietto longobardo di Cividale del Friuli* / testo di P. e O. Rugo. Commento alle immagini di L. Perissinotto, Pordenone 1990, 18-19, and more recently: H. Torp, *The Longobard Tempietto: Palatine chapel of Cividale*, a cura di V. Pace, Cividale del Friuli 2006).

Ирина Оретскаја  
ОСТАЦИ РАНОХРИШЋАНСКЕ ПРОШЛОСТИ У РИМСКИМ МОЗАИЦИМА  
КАСНОГ VIII И РАНОГ IX ВЕКА

Период између 760. и 860. је време обнове и процвата папског Рима. То утиче на већину аспеката римског живота: политику, администрацију, економске прилике, идеологију, уметност и архитектуру. Званична терминологија преузела је много из речника ранехришћанске прошлости. Жеља повратку на славно време Константина је евидентна. Ову Обнову је брилијантно описао Р. Краутхеимер.

Централно место у идеологији крајем VIII и почетком IX века је био неаутентични документ, Константинова доација; његова концепција се огледа се у декорацијама мозаика Аула Леонина, делу триклинјума Лава III (798 - 99), и базилике Св. Сузана (крајем VIII века, изгубљен крајем XVI века). Предмет других мозаика из тог периода нема никакве везе са стварним политичким идејама, али јасно сеже до ранехришћанског времена. Захваљујући објављивању дела *Corpus della pittura medievale a Roma* М. Андалороа и др, који укључује многе цртеже изгубљених споменика, ми можемо боље разумети изворе инспирације с краја VIII - почетка IX века: Римске мозаике, да генерализујемо: 1) као и у свакој средњовековној ренесанси у Византији и на Западу не постоји разлика између модела израђених у различитим вековима, јер сви они се третирају као дела узвишене прошлости; 2) Већина ових модела су локалног римског порекла али нека, попут апсидалне композиције *S. Maria in Dominica*, или концепт *S. Zeno* капеле, откривају византијски утицај; 3) упркос коришћењу бројних ранехришћанских извора, резултирајућа дела касног 8. и раног 9. века у уметности мозаика значајно се разликују од дела њихових претходника, без обзира јесу ли у питању шеме тада најпопуларније у ранехришћанској декорацији апсида: други долазак Христа или Вознесење Богородице, али је акценат мало промењен (на пример, ако упоредимо мозаике *S. Coma e Damiano* из 526-530. године са онима које су радили *S. Prassede* и *S. Cecilia* у Трастевереу, оба из периода 817-824, чини се да претходни представља појаву Христа титуларним свецима и папама, док у другоје представи, свец и *Paschal I* постају учесници апокалиптичне визије).