

The Birth of the cosmatesque style: Byzantium, Ancient Rus and Medieval Italy

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Cosmatesque (or Cosmati) mosaic style has long been associated with Italy. However, the history of its creation is ambiguous. The author argues that the groundwork for the Cosmatesque style did not appear in Italy because its geography is much wider than Rome and its suburbs, and the Cosmati family of marble makers are not the creators, but the successors of the centuries-old tradition of Byzantine mosaicists, formed in the VI-VIII centuries. A very valuable piece of information for us for obvious reasons is the fact that marble floors of this style appeared in the temples of Ancient Russia earlier than in the famous Roman basilicas. It may seem surprising, but the baptizer of Russia, St. Vladimir Equal Apostles, and later the first Russian Metropolitan Hilarion, stepped onto the floors of Byzantine masters decades before the rulers and popes of medieval Rome. And it was thanks to St. Vladimir that the craftsmen were able to bring their skills to ancient Kyiv.

Key words: intercultural communication, cosmatesque, Cosmati masters, mosaic, masons, Middle Ages, Ancient Russia, Byzantine Empire, Medieval Italy, history of art, history of religion, early Christianity, Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Islam, symbols, semantics of religious symbols, semiotics.

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Tourists who arrive in Rome examine the decorations and ornaments of the main city temples with interest and admiration. Many of them don't just look at the magnificent domes, frescoes, and statues but also at the marble floor. Guides contain special information for the inattentive – look down and get acquainted with the magnificent work of the Cosmati masters. It is indeed difficult to take your eyes off the white marble floor which was richly inlaid with complex geometrical shapes from piece mosaics (opus sectile), which are woven into strips of red porphyry, green serpentine and gold smalt. The contrast of dark and light colors creates the effect of “alive” paths which are coloring the entire space of the temple.

This way we get acquainted with the architectural style of Cosmatesque, created, according to the popular reference books, by the family of marble Cosmati, representatives of which worked in and around Rome in the 12th and 13th centuries.

In fact, every point in the generally accepted version of the origins of Cosmatesque, presented in the tourist guides, needs clarification, expansion, and in some cases a complete revision. However, everything is

in order.

1. Cosmatesque as a cultural and social phenomenon

It seems strange to associate a purely architectural style, moreover, strictly limited to decorative functions, with social trends. Nevertheless, such a connection can be traced. The point here is in unusual places marked with mosaics.

How do we get acquainted with architectural monuments? We study the situation with interest and attention but rarely do we put our heads down. Many tourists and pilgrims have visited The Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, but which of them examined the floors? Meanwhile, in this outstanding monument of the Renaissance, built by architect Giorgio de Dolci in 1473-1481 and full of magnificent frescoes by Botticelli, Pinturicchio, Perugino, Rosselli and the great Michelangelo, there are cosmatesco style floors. As it is known, the same place has been constantly used since 1871 for holding conclaves, meetings of cardinals electing the pope.



Fig. 1. Sistine Chapel, Cosmatesque floors.

However, the Sistine Chapel is no longer the work of the Cosmati themselves, but of their followers, while classical mosaic floors became the decoration of the main basilicas of Rome in the XII-XIII centuries. First of all, it is the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist on Lateran Hill, or San Giovanni in Laterano, built at the behest of Constantine the Great. In fact, this is the first Christian church in the world, and in the Catholic hierarchy it stands above all other churches, not excluding the Roman churches also bearing the title of "Basilica maior" such as the Cathedrals of St. Peter, San Paolo Fuori le Mura and Santa Maria Maggiore. Inscription above its entrance reads: "Most Holy Lateran Church, mother and head of all the churches in the city and the world."

The oldest Christian basilica, which includes the Lateran Palace, served as the residence of the popes for a millennium. The main relic of the temple at all times was considered to be the "Holy Staircase", brought by St. Helena from Jerusalem and according to legend belonged to the palace of Pilate. According to Catholics, it was by this ladder that Christ ascended to the judgment seat before his crucifixion.

The church of St John in Laterano has been rebuilt several times, but both in it and in the nearby papal chapel "holy of holies", an attentive guest will notice the figures of cosmatesco decorating the floors of the basilica and chapel, as well as the walls and the throne of the pope's pulpit in the apse of the temple.



Fig. 2. Cosmatesque floors in the Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran.



Fig. 3. The papal pulpit of the church.

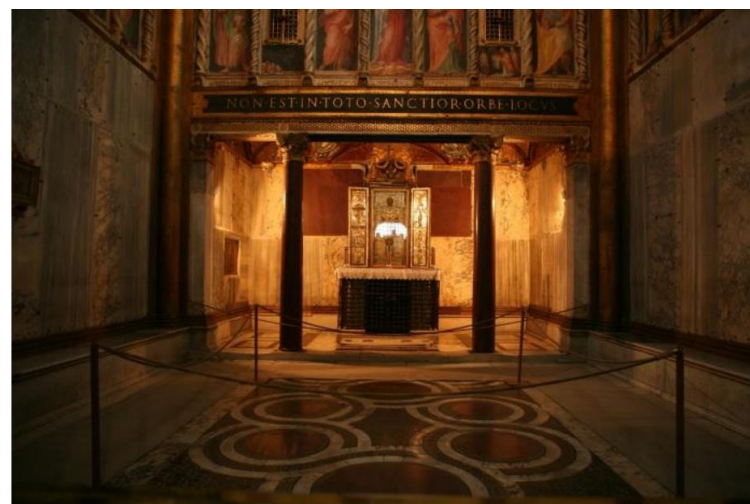


Fig.4. The Papal chapel "Holy of Holies".

If one enters another great early Christian Roman basilica — Santa

Maria Maggiore on the Esquiline Hill, built in the 440s by Pope Sixtus III, then they will see floors made by Cosmati masters. The place also was chosen not by chance, it is the most important church of the Catholic world dedicated to The Mother of God.

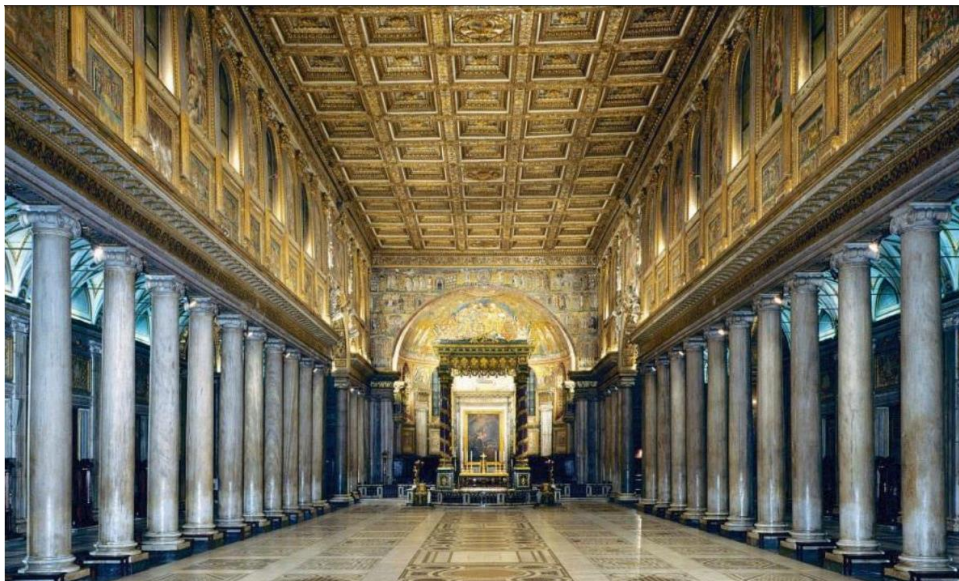


Fig.5. Cosmatesque floors in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore

There is an extensive list of Roman churches where the memory of Masters of the Cosmatesque was left. And that is why they are so often considered primarily a Roman phenomenon. Here.

The Italian masters were helped by history itself, which carefully preserved most of the works. It should be noted that almost all places really significant for Christianity in Rome are marked by their presence, which indicates the cultural and symbolic significance of the mosaic art.



Fig.6. Cosmatesque floors in Westminster Abbey

The floors of Westminster Abbey were created by craftsmen from Italy by request of Henry III.

Subsequently, here the coronation of 38 rulers of Great Britain took place, including William the Conqueror, Elizabeth I, Victoria. The now reigning Queen Elizabeth II was already standing on a mosaic covered with carpets — the masterpiece of architecture needed repair. For the wedding ceremony of Prince William and Catherine Middleton in April 2011, a significant reconstruction was carried out in the Abbey, including the masterpiece of the Cosmatesque style. After almost 150 years of "oblivion", the world saw it again.

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However, as always, the attention of millions of people watching the ceremony was drawn to the wedding scenes and few paid attention to the bizarre pattern on the floor. But it became the center of the composition for the painting by the Australian artist Ralph Heymans, who created a portrait of Elizabeth II, written on the occasion of the celebration of the diamond (60th) anniversary of the Queen's reign. In the picture, she stands in a "moment of reflection" on an ancient cosmatesco mosaic - exactly on the spot where she was crowned 60 years ago.



Fig.7. Portrait by Ralph Heymans.

It should be noted that in the UK the most honorable place was found for the cosmatesco style.

But this is not all the historical framing of the works of the mosaicists. Floors, in style and technique, strongly reminiscent of the style we are studying, are also found in France. 35 km from Orleans is still the current abbey of Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire, which is also called the abbey de Fleury, founded in the VI century. The medieval monastery was famous for its richest library, which kept not only the manuscripts of the Church Fathers, but also the writings of the ancient classics. It was one of the largest educational centers of the Carolingian era.

The abbey has a rich and complex history. In the X-XI centuries, his school flourished again. In addition to the monks themselves, chroniclers, historians, lawyers, theologians, poets, mathematicians, architects and artists, musicians and astronomers worked there. Around this time, the mosaic floors of interest to us appeared in the basilica of the abbey. The base of the gravestone of the grave of King Philip I (1052–1108), a representative of the Capetian dynasty, the son of King Henry I and Anna Yaroslavna of Kiev (the youngest of the three daughters of Yaroslav the Wise), is also decorated with mosaics. The king himself chose this place for his rest in advance.

Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire is known to have had a bitter dispute for decades with the monastery of Montecassino about who owned the "real relics" of Benedict. However, apparently, this circumstance did not prevent the monks of the Benedictine order from maintaining relations and even exchanging architects and craftsmen.



Fig.8. Floors in the Basilica of the Abbey of Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire.



Fig.9. Tombstone of King Philip I.

Several historical and geographical points, the number of which will be expanded in the course of further research, were chosen. However, even this is enough to understand that we are dealing with an interesting cultural phenomenon spanning several centuries of European—and not only, as we shall see later—history. However, first it is necessary to get acquainted with the official history of the origin of the marbles themselves.

2. Italy: the history of the appearance of the masters of Cosmati

The place where the Cosmati masters first appeared can be accurately indicated - the Benedictine monastery of Montecassino. The ascetics of the order, known for their support of religious education and the arts, made their monastery a European center of culture and education. It was their libraries, various schools and workshops that changed the cultural landscape of the era.

In the 50s of the XI century, a young and energetic abbot Desiderius appeared in the monastery, who later became Pope Victor III. He began rebuilding the monastery and invited a group of Byzantine marble makers from Constantinople (later they would be called Cosmati masters). By the time the temple of Abbatiale de Montecassino, decorated by marble makers in 1066-1071, was consecrated, the diligent abbott created a special school at the monastery that taught art adopted from Byzantine masters.

Subsequently, many new basilicas were built based on the model that had been created in Monte

Cassino.



Fig.10. The floor in Monte Cassino.

The success of the masters in the church environment is not accidental. Not only did they create elements of the temple environment, but also formed the liturgical environment by changing the mutual arrangement of objects of worship and furnishings (ambo, pulpits, candlesticks) – the architectonics of the temple.

The objects were made and built in accordance with the ritual and symbolic traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. But by far, the most recognizable element of their work was the mosaic floors. They changed the space of the old basilicas by adding a sixth symbolic dimension to the temple.

In the reign of Innocent III came the rise of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, and the style of the Cosmati masters was perceived as the pinnacle of mosaic art, which was consecrated by the tradition of the previous generation of masters.

It was the time of their greatest popularity. All temples of any significance tried to draw them in the design of their interiors. They were even exchanged. For example, the floor in the San Pietro de Appia in Rome was previously located in the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano and the Church of St.



Fig. 11. Fragment of the floors in the church of St. Nicholas.

Modern science has a vague idea of how these pieces of art were created, moved and reconstructed.

The modern history of the style began in 1860, when the architect and art historian Camillo Boito published an article about Roman marble floors and gave the name to this phenomenon — cosmatesco.

In various sources, Cosmati is referred to as a family of craftsmen (architects and artists) who formed a new architectural style in Rome in the 12th–13th centuries, which was called "cosmatesque". This is how it is presented on excursions and in tourist guides, without going into details. While architectural historians know that these are at least five families and free craftsmen working with them.



Fig. 12. A fragment of a mosaic in the Atri Cathedral

By the XII century, a system of artel relations had developed in Europe: groups of builders and architects worked with a certain church order and were engaged in servicing temples and monasteries under its care. At that time, there were already well-known guild communities of comacine masters, Lombard builders who constructed temples all over Italy. This method of organization turned out to be necessary in the production of complex works with a narrow specialization. Only the teamwork of architects, artists and builders could provide the best quality. Over time, they formed closed shop associations with their own

system of work, transfer of skills and knowledge. In a class society, they enjoyed not only respect but also a certain freedom.

First of all, Masters Kosmati are famous for their unique mosaic polychrome floor, altars, pillars and liturgical furniture. Little is known about the members of the "family" – this scant information was obtained from documentary sources, analysis of the names on marble tiles and works created by them. Detailed narratives about mosaicists appeared in the 19th and 20th centuries and most of them are artistic reconstructions.

It is important to define certain information. "Kosmati" is the denomination that was made by art historians by the name of the one of masters – Cosma I who gave the designation to the famous architectural style. He was not the first, best or special, but he had a habit of indicating his authorship - his name and names of his sons were seen by researchers more frequently than others.

Such a phenomenon was rare in the Middle Ages when works often were not signed.

By that time, floors that had been laid by the first masters were in need of repair – and Kosmati reconstructed them, this is the reason why his name appeared there. No wonder that such harmonious surnames became the designation of all masters of the style. However, the reason to choose it is based on rather far-fetched criteria.

A detailed elaboration of the history of the marble family was made by Nikolai Severin, a well-known Italian expert [8]. The founder of the "family", or, more precisely, the architectural school, is considered to be Master Paulus. However, if he had not left his signature on the parapet in the Duomo di Ferentino [9], another artist would have been considered the founder. But even the surname of the master is unknown. At that time, the foundations of the interpretation of the Italian style were being laid. The authorship of Master Paulus includes floors in a number of churches, starting with the Church of San Clemente (1084) and ending with St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican (about 1120) [10].

It is known that the master had four children who inherited his art: Giovanni, Angelo, Sasso, Pietro. These four artists were working in and around Rome in the period from 1120 to 1200. Angelo's son Nicola, who is a famous artist, architect and decorator of the second half of the XII century, became famous thanks to his magnificent works.

The second family, which entered the circle of initiates, had the surname Rainerius. It includes masters Nicola, Pietro, Giovanni, sons of Nicola Giovanni and Guiton.

A truly famous family of masters was the family of Lorenzo Tybalt and Kosmati. Lorenzo Tybalt was its founder. His works have been known since 1162 and he probably created them almost at the same time as Master Paulus. The fame of the family was brought by Jacopo di Lorenzo, who became the favorite architect of Pontiff Innocent III. It was the time of the heyday and greatness of the power of the popes. It doesn't surprise that the support of the all-powerful pontiff brought large orders in Rome and Lazio, significant fees and awards.

Jacopo died almost simultaneously with his benefactor, in 1216, and his son Cosmas I took over the affairs of the family. After that his name became a household name. The master developed his success by attracting his sons Jacopo II and Luca. The number of orders has grown, the floors from Kosma have become prestigious for any Roman temple. The last thing that is known about Kosma himself is the work on the design of Monastero di Santa Scolastica in 1240. Further traces of the master and his schools are lost.

In the second half of the XIII century, the Vassalletto family of marblers became famous. It is believed that they were employees and competitors of the Cosmas family. The first famous artist of the family was Pietro Vassalletto, who worked in collaboration with Nikola, the son of Angelo from the family of Master Paulus. It is Pietro's hand that owns the chapel of John Lateran, built in the period from 1220 to 1230. Part of his work was completed by his son, whose name remained unknown, Vassalletti II.

The artist Rudo de Trivium, who worked together with Cosma's son Luca and his own son Angelo in the Cosmatesco style, was also counted among the Vassalletto. A number of artists who were not directly

connected with the family created in the style of Cosmatesco. Of course it was Peter Oderisi who created cosmatesco in the Gothic style since 1250. It was he who became the first known exporter of the style outside of Italy. The famous floor in Westminster Abbey in London is his work [11].

In the 1200s, master Pietro Mellini appeared, who gave birth to a new family of artisans. In 1280, his son, known as the master Cosma di Pietro Mellini (cosma II), founded his workshop following the example of the famous Cosma (cosma I). He successfully used the name of the famous predecessor, although he had nothing to do with a famous family. But sometimes similar surnames lead to confusion in determining the authorship of works. His sons Deodato, Giovanni and Giacomo were also talented. However, by their time, the style was already influenced by Gothic. Let us also remember the names of Pietro de Maria, Johannes Presbyteri and his son, a certain Alessio and the Dominican monk Pascal. All of them became known for their individual works.

This is in brief the history of the families who made the fame of the Cosmatesco style. As you can see, this is a fairly limited circle of people connected to each other. Many of them worked together or studied with each other. All of them improved their method, making it an art phenomenon. This, as a rule, is where Italian researchers end the story, and Unas has a motive to trace it from the very beginning.

3. Byzantium: the history of the founding of the style

Let's make a reservation right away (taking into account that) - there is no reliable evidence about the circumstances of the creation of the Cosmatesco style. We know the names of the masters, rare mentions in historical documents without any significant details. However, no architectural style appears suddenly, it is always possible to detect traces preceding it. The style we are investigating is no exception. Let's try to determine the sources of its appearance. And the first thing to take up is the origin of the masters.

Note that in all materials about the history of cosmatesco it is noted that the marbles were not originally from Rome. Indeed, from childhood they called themselves the Romans (the self-name of the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire) and came from the Byzantine capital Constantinople. It is obvious that Desiderius' suggestion to come to the monastery of Montecassino was followed not by students at all, but by already established masters, with their own methodology, culture and style, brought up by the rich practice of their predecessors. However, very little information remains about the predecessors. The complicated history of the Byzantine Empire, wars, earthquakes, religious troubles erased many traces of their activities, as if they had never existed. Those who created wall mosaics were more fortunate, they are analyzed by art historians and talked about, although they are just as few. Let's imagine what it meant in those days for the Constantinople masters to go to Rome. The Byzantine Empire was in its prime. The population of Constantinople, even during the period of relative decline, at the beginning of the VII century, numbered about 375 thousand inhabitants, then it only grew. But once upon a time, the great ancient Rome in the years we studied was inhabited by about 45 thousand people. Proud descendants only remembered the former greatness of the city, while it consisted of ancient ruins turned into fortresses. It was a difficult time for medieval Italy. Roman ecclesiastical art was dominated by the trends laid down by Constantinople masters, recognized in all civilized parts of the world. In fact, for mosaicists it was an ordinary trip to a great, but province. And it was they who were taking samples of their understanding of architecture and style there, and they were not going to bow to the local masters. Although they later studied it, too, as previously had studied from Muslims, the art of creating ornaments, as the ancient works had been studied and absorbed.

So how was the art of Byzantine masters? Some ideas, unlike previous researchers, can be composed, because they had to operate with rather fragmentary information. It is possible to explain the finds that once seemed simply artifacts.

Numerous archaeological excavations and research in Italy, Turkey, Greece are sufficient to compare the stylistic and technical features of the manufacture of mosaic floors. Borrowing of symbolic structures used by the masters of antiquity are found, often accurate in detail. It is obvious that the basis of Cosmatesque is the School of Byzantine.

Constantinople mosaicists are known from the end of the V century. They were famous for the

creation of compositions on a white background with the help of small smooth mosaic cubes built by patterned rows. Byzantine masters used antique plots and early Christian motives, their works were always symbolic. Their famous works are the mosaics of the Church of St. John the Baptist in Palestine, a mosaic card on the semi of the Church in Madaba (Oultrejordain, VI century), Evangelical plots in the Churches of the Holy Apostles and the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. When making the temple of the Assumption in Nicaea (VII century) and the Church of St. Demetrius in the Fessonals, Constantinople masters first applied the unique laying of cubes at an angle to each other, which led to the creation checkered light and shade and volume of images. Then this technique was studied and borrowed by the Italian masters.

Fragments of floors in the famous basilica and the main temple of Byzantium - Hagia Sophia in Constantinople- give an idea of what Constantinople's marbleders started with. The Patriarchal Cathedral, subsequently became a mosque, was a grand monument of the Union of the Church and the Empire, delighting contemporaries with its magnitude, architecture and wealth of decoration. It was this cathedral that enraptured in the 10th century Russian ambassadors sent by Prince Vladimir to "experience" the Roman faith: "And we could not understand, in the sky, we or on Earth ..." For more than a thousand years, it remained the biggest church of Christian The world until St. Peter's Basilica was built in Rome.

An accurate date for the beginning of the construction of the cathedral is known. The previous temple, built when Konstantin ruled, burned down on January 13, 532, and 40 days after the fire, the emperor Justinian I commanded laying a new church, which would be worthy of the glory and greatness of the Byzantine Empire. The construction was directed by the best architects of that time, Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles, who had already shown their skills on the construction of the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus. Daily 10 thousand workers built the Cathedral, about three annual budget of the empire took its creation. The temple was consecrated on December 27, 537, and the emperor, according to legend, said: "Solomon, I surpassed you!"

Here you can see partially surviving floors of Constantinople Mosaicists, who already at the time demonstrate the undoubted similarity of the style followed by the Cosmodesco(Fig. 13: Mosaic floors of the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia, Fig. 14, 15: Fragment of the mosaic figure of the Hagia Sophia).



Fig.13. Mosaic floors of Hagia Sophia.



Fig.14,15. A fragment of the mosaic figure of the Hagia Sophia.

In the hall of the Magnaura Palace, which served to receive foreign ambassadors, a mosaic is presented, as if copied from the famous Roman floors, but created years earlier.



Fig.16. The floors of the main hall of the palace of Magnaura.

In this context, it is interesting to explore a fragment of floors in the current Turkish city of Demre, and earlier in the Lycian Worlds, which for a long time was considered a strange artifact. It contains the basic elements and symbols used by the Cosmati masters, but the mosaic dates back to the 8th century. It was at this time that next to the ruins of the church where the saint served, a temple dedicated to him was built, which was restored in the 11th century by Emperor Constantine Monomachos and eight centuries later by the Russian Tsars Nicholas I and Alexander II.



Fig.17, 18, 19, 20. Floor in the church of St. Nicholas in the Lycian Worlds.

Italian researchers recognized the undoubted similarity of the mosaics, but only speculated about their origin. Of course, it can be considered incorrectly dating the 8th century, but these floors were hardly made in the 12th century by Italians, since it is known that on May 9, 1087, the relics of St. Nicholas was forcibly taken to Bari by Italian merchants, and since then it is unlikely that anyone would have allowed craftsmen from Italy to decorate the temple, and they had no obvious reason for this. It can be concluded that this is not a unique artifact at all, but evidence of the continuation of the already existing tradition of Byzantine marble makers.

An equally interesting example of the art of mosaicists is found in Athens. The Byzantine Church of the Holy Apostles of Solakis, built in the 10th century on the southeastern outskirts of the famous Athenian Agora, is considered one of the oldest Christian churches in Greece. The church stands on the ruins of the nymphaeum (dedicated to the nymphs) of the Roman temple of the second century. The center of the temple is decorated with a five-part figure created in the best Byzantine traditions.



Fig.21. Fragment of the floor of the Church of the Holy Apostles Solakis in Athens.

We should pay special attention to famous Athenian temples. On the north-eastern part of Greek peninsula (there is) the Iverion monastery founded during the last quarter of Xth century, according to a number of sources, including John турникей (former court of the king Iveria (Georgia) - Devil and byzantine nobleman. John left everything and became a monarch. In 1357, according to the sigil of patriarch Calista II, that Georgian monastery was given to Greeks. Fires, invasions of pirates and numerous conquerors, however, it is still saved and to this day. Along with it, the katholikon (the main monastery) of the monarchy is paved with floor mosaics. It dates from 1042-1056 and is made, probably, by Constantinople marble masons. However, on Mount Athos it's not the only floor mosaic.

One of the oldest and the second largest monastery of Mount Athos (founded during 972-985) - Vatopedi has a long history and is connected with the names of Grigory Palm, Maxim Greek and many orthodox (hermits). In the katholikon of the monastery unique mosaics of the Byzantine period remained, including floor mosaics (too). And this is another obvious evidence of the hard work of Constantinople masters, developing not only the center but also edges of the empire.



Fig.22. Liturgy in the Iver Monastery (Byzantine floor)



Fig.23. Fragment of the floor of the cafolicon in Iveron

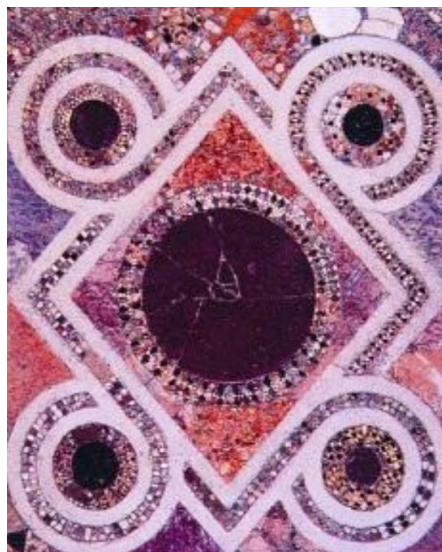


Fig.24. Fragment of the floors of the cafolicon in Vatopedi

The information about the mosaicists of the style we are studying is extremely stingy. However, there is a fact confirmed by historical sources: Christian masons also worked in the Muslim environment, not as prisoners or slaves, but as a some kind of "cultural exchange" of that time. With the permission of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian II and at the request

of Caliph Abd-al-Malik ibn Marwan, mosaic masters were invited to help in the construction of the first monumental structure of Islam — the Kubbat al-Sakhra Mosque.

4. Jerusalem: enriching the style

We already know that the information about the mosaicists of the style we are studying is extremely

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The mosque was built on the site where, according to legend, is the Ark of the Covenant of the times of the First Temple. It is built over a rock of sacred significance. According to one version, this is

The Foundation Stone, or the Cornerstone of the Universe, because it was with it that the Lord began the creation of the world. In a sense, it is the symbolic center of the Universe. Right here Abraham was going to sacrifice his son Isaac (according to Islam - Ismail), the king David built the altar, and his son, King Solomon, built the First temple in Jerusalem.

For muslims, this place has a special meaning. According to the generally accepted opinion, in 619, on the night of 27 Rajab (the seventh month of the Muslim lunar calendar), the angel Jibril (Archangel Gabriel) called the Prophet Muhammad, who was sleeping near the mosque in Mecca, to travel on a winged horse Barak to Jerusalem, where on the Temple Mount, in the mosque remote (al-Masjid aqsa), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus) and other prophets were waiting for him. Muhammad was transported to Jerusalem and led the prayer of the prophets.

Then, from the rock crowning the Temple Mount, he ascended (mi'raj) together with the angel Jibril, visiting the seven heavens and meeting the prophets, among whom were Adam, Isa (Jesus), Yahya (John the Baptist), Yusuf (Joseph), Idris (Yanoch), Ibrahim (Abraham). And he appeared at the Heavenly Temple (al-bayt al-ma'mur), where he conversed with Allah. In memory of this event, muslims celebrate the Night of Ascension (Laylat al-mi'raj), spending it in prayers. Pilgrims visiting Kubbat al-Sakhra can see the footprint of Muhammad on the Holy Rock. There is a cave under the rock, turned into a small sanctuary.

The crusaders who captured Jerusalem in 1099 founded two sanctuaries in the temple complex: Kubbat al-Sakhra became the Temple of the Lord (Templum Domini), and the Al-Aqsa Mosque became the Temple of Solomon (Templum Salomonis) and the main church of the Order of Templars.

It is difficult to single out those objects that belong to the hand of the Byzantine masons. The interior and architectural details have been changed and reconstructed many times. It is known that once the entire mosque was covered with Byzantine mosaics, but in 1552 Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent replaced part of it with Kashan majolica - Persian tiles. However, this does not prevent us from talking about the mutual influence of art traditions. And experts also note the symbolic component of the ornament, symbolizing in the Islamic tradition the infinity and incomprehensibility of the Almighty.

Familiarity with Arab traditions added methods and stylistic elements characteristic of Oriental art to the palette of the best Byzantine masters. And, curiously, in the interiors of Muslim buildings, we find five-part figures familiar to us in the style of kosmatesco, which may indicate their universality. At the same time, we do not see the famous intertwining white stripes of kosmatesco, but the structural similarity of geometric shapes cannot be overlooked. As well as the correspondence to the structure of the figures studied by us of the very plan of the shrine.

The authoritative British expert on muslim architecture K. A. K. Creswell noted that "the structure is <...> harmoniously, like a musical chord, it shines like a sparkling crystal <...>, and its proportions descend to the very foundations of nature and the universe in which we live and create. Surprisingly, it is these proportions that are embedded in the symbolism of many works by the masters of Kosmati, who became heirs and followers of the Byzantines who decorated Kubbat as-Sakhrah with mosaics. Creswell, with his rich archive of Islamic ornaments and architecture in 11,000 images, as well as many years of experience in field expeditions, had something to compare with.

The figure (most of the time hidden by carpets) created on the floor of the cave may belong to Byzantine mosaicists - this is indicated by both the technique of execution and iconography (a large circle surrounded by four small semicircles). The eight-pointed star is also found in the design of both christian and muslim shrines.



Fig.25. Decoration of the outer walls of Qubbat as-Sakhrhah.



Fig.26. Cave floor mosaic.

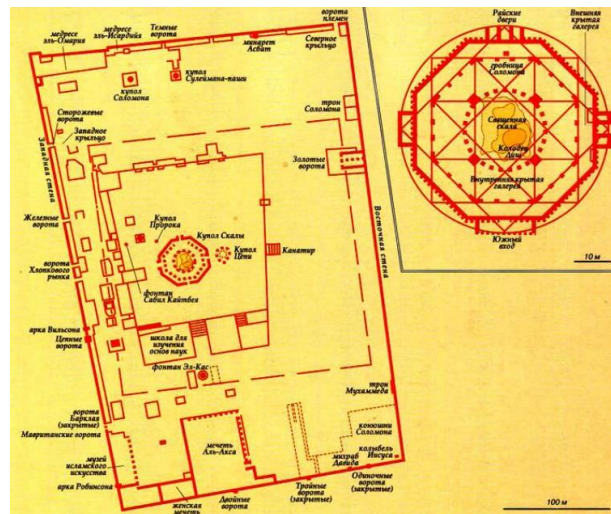


Fig.27. Location plan of Qubbat as-Sakhrāh and the scheme of the structure.

Thus, the Byzantine masons left their works among the greatest shrines of the two world religions. But this is not all in the mysterious story dedicated to the development of the famous style.

As you may have noticed, the basis of the Byzantine mosaic is two figures that are constantly present in the works of its creators and are practically a creative and symbolic-religious "signature". This is a five-part figure in the form of a circle or square (rhombus) surrounded by four small circles (quinconce²³). According to a symbolic or religious task, the number of circles varies. However, the basic structure remains virtually unchanged.

It is interesting that traces of the symbolism we are studying are also found in the main shrine of Christianity — the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built at the place where Christ's earthly journey ended and his crucifixion, burial and resurrection took place. The first church over the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built by the order of Emperor Constantine the Great and his mother Elena. Then it was destroyed and rebuilt for three times. It was reduced to ruins in 614 by the Persian king Khosrow II. Patriarch Modest of Jerusalem restored part of the temple, but it was also ravaged and destroyed in 1009 by the Arabs. In the XI century, the Byzantine Emperor Konstantin Monomakh built the temple again, but it remained unfinished for a long time. Then there were the Crusaders, who laid a new building in 1130. In the XVI century, under Emperor Charles V and his son Philip, the Crusader temple was dismantled and a new one was built, which existed until the fire of 1808. Then the rotunda was restored by architects from different countries, dome, kuvuklia (about it a little later). This was followed by restorations in 1959, 1995-97. In 2013, the last missing bell, made by Russian craftsmen, was installed on the bell tower. Today's Church of the Holy Sepulchre consists of three main structures — the temple on Golgotha, the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Resurrection.

In the center of the giant rotunda stands a marble chapel (Kuvukliya), built over the cave of the Holy Sepulchre. The chapel is the center of the whole complex. The Redeemer of the world which resurrected on the third day after his death on the cross was buried there.

It is known that the Kuvuklia was rebuilt by the Franciscan Boniface of Ragusa and it stood there until the memorable fire. The existing chapel was restored in 1809-1810 according to the project of the Greek architect Nikolai Komin from Mytilini. In the eastern part of the chapel there is an Angel chapel, you can get into the Holy Sepulchre only by passing through it. According to the Gospel, in this place, on a stone rolled away from the door of the Tomb, sat an angel who announced the Resurrection of Christ to the myrrh-bearing women (Matthew 28:2-6). In the north and south the walls are arranged with two oval holes, used on Holy Saturday for transmission of Holy fire from the chapel outside. It is there where we find a familiar symbol stamped on the altar barrier, while the author has no information about who and in what period of the

existence of the Kuvuklia put it. However, this is a typical element of the Byzantine bas-reliefs decorating the temples of Constantinople, Athens, Rome: pluteo. Pluteo (pluteo) – decorative plates decorating the fences dividing the interior of the church into separate parts date back to the VIII-XII centuries.



Fig.28. The Angel's Side Chapel in the chapel of the Empty Tomb.

Let us compare the photograph of the sample with the pluteo found in Lycian Myra in the church of St. Nicholas and the Athenian temple (Fig. 29. Pluteo - Lycian Myras; Fig. 30. Church of the Little Metropolis in Athens).



Fig.29. Pluteo - Lycian Myras.



Fig. 30. Church of the Little Metropolis in Athens.

In general, the influence of the works of Byzantine masters was great and spread far from the borders of the empire - mainly due to the popularity of stone carvings, relief icons and plates of carved ivory, numerous vessels made of stone.

Researchers of ancient art V. Heavyweight and O. Sonotsinsky in their work on the XI-XII centuries note: "The impact of the capital's art touched the creativity of the artists of Cancaza, it nourished the painting of the Italian monastery of Montecassino. Based on Byzantine samples and with the participation of Byzantine artists, mosaics of Torcello, the Palatine Chapel in Palermo, St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice and the Cathedral in Montreal were created,". If we compare the available information and try to determine the source of origin of Kosmatesco's signature figures, it becomes clear that everything converges in one center - Byzantine Constantinople. It was here that the first foundations of the style were laid, which were then brilliantly implemented in Montecassino and honed to perfection in medieval Rome.

5. Ancient Rus: Byzantine mosaics in Russian churches

In 989, in the capital city of Kiev, the capital of the Ancient Russian state, at the behest of St. Prince Vladimir Equal to the Apostles, the construction of the first stone church in Russia began. It was built on the site of the death of the First Martyrs Theodore and his son John. On this occasion, in the chronicle "Stories of Time Years" it was reported: "In the summer of 6497 ... Volodimer thought of creating the Church of the Most Holy Theotokos and sending the masters from the Greeks to prev." In other chronicle lists, the year of the foundation of the temple is also known as the 990th and 991st.

The tithe Church, according to archaeological excavations, was built 60 meters from the stone princely terem. Contemporaries called it "marble" because the Constantinople masons involved in the construction widely used this stone in decorating the walls and floor. During the construction of the temple, the Pharos Church of the Theotokos of the Grand Palace in Constantinople was taken as a model (dedication, type, function).

The tithe Church became for several decades the most significant and most revered in Russia, and the baptist of Russia, Vladimir, gave a tenth of the income for its maintenance and entrusted the service in it to Anastas Korsunyanin, who, according to legend, was an associate of the prince in the baptism of Russia and managed the construction site itself.

According to some experts, it was in the Tithe Church that the relics of the Holy Hieromartyr Clement, who died in Korsun, later transported Saints Cyril and Methodius in Rome.

The relics of St. Hieromartyr Clement, Bishop of Ancyra, who died in Korsun, were later transported by Saints Cyril and Methodius to Rome. It is known for sure that there was a princely tomb in the temple,

where the Byzantine princess Anna, the wife of Prince Vladimir, who died in 1011, and Vladimir himself, who died in 1015, were buried.

Unfortunately, a difficult fate awaited the temple. The church was plundered during the civil strife by the Russian princes Mstislav Andreevich (1169) and Rurik Rostislavich (1203). And in 1240, the horde of Batu Khan destroyed the church completely. According to contemporaries, it collapsed under the weight of Kiev residents fleeing from the enemy on the arches. According to historians, the reason for the destruction could be the use of battering guns.

In 1824, by order of Metropolitan Eugene (Bolkhonitinon), the foundation of the ancient church was cleared. Fragments of frescoes and mosaics were found among the ruins. And within 1828, the construction of a new church began. Further, in 1908-1911, the foundations of the original Tithe Perk (where they were not damaged by the construction of the second church).

Further, in 1908-1911, the foundations of the original Church of the Tithes (where they had not been damaged during construction of the second building) were excavated and examined. The remains of the foundation were studied only in 1938-1939 after the final demolition of the second church.

Archaeologists, who carefully studied the excavation and fragments of the building, confirmed that during the construction of the temple, a topological scheme, features of brickwork, mosaic flooring techniques and elements of carved marble decoration were used, corresponding to the practice of masters from Constantinople. And in this regard, it is interesting to get acquainted with fragments of the floor mosaic (Fig. 31. fragment of the floor mosaic of the Church of the Tithes in Kyiv; Fig. 32. restored facade of the building).



Fig.31. Fragment of the floor mosaic of the Church of the Tithes in Kyiv.

Obviously, in Kyiv, the ancient masters did not have close at hand the old ruined temples with their ancient porphyry columns, an abundance of marble stones, as was the case in Rome, and tried to make do with exclusively local material, but the properties and typological features of the Byzantine style of the mosaicists are quite obvious here.

And now it remains to compare the years of the beginning of the construction of the Church of the Tithes and the Italian monastery church of Abbey of Monte Cassino, from which the appearance of the cosmatesco style begins: 989 (990) and 1066, respectively. The difference is 77 years, and many elements of the cosmatesco style that are familiar to us are already present. That is, the style, later called cosmatesco, reached medieval Ruthenia much earlier than Rome, and had every chance for further development by local

masters.

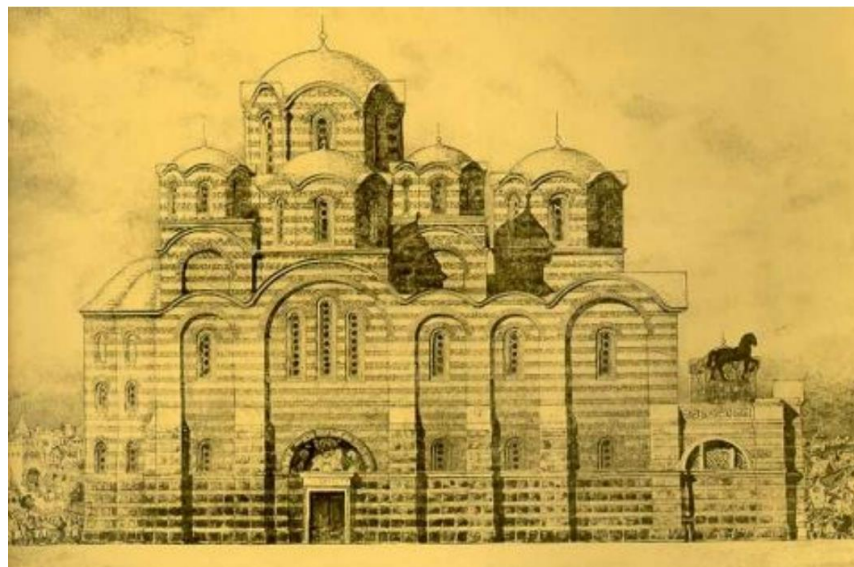


Fig.32. Restored facade of the building.

It should be noted that the first Russian stone church was not the only one for Byzantine masters. The second, no less curious object was the Hagia Sophia in the same capital city of Kyiv.

The construction of St. Sophia Cathedral is associated with the name of another significant Grand Prince of Russia - Yaroslav the Wise. The date of its construction is not determined as it is the subject of controversy among historians. There are three variants: 1011, 1017, 1037. We don't know the names of the architects but we do know that they were from Constantinople. Nevertheless, it is difficult to overestimate the significance of the cathedral in the development of Christianity in Russia as by the middle of the 11th century it became the Orthodox and cultural center of the entire metropolis. It is known that in 1037 Yaroslav the Wise founded a book depository and a scriptorium under the cathedral, where ancient manuscripts were copied and translated from Greek into Slavonic. In 1240 the temple was plundered by the warriors of Batu Khan. Then the cathedral had been the residence of the metropolit up to the 13th century until the throne of the Kiev metropolitans was transferred to Vladimir-Suzdal. Later St.Sophia Cathedral was desolated, then it was reconstructed and rebuilt in its modern and highly modified form to be turned down into the museum.

The cathedral has been through extensive restoration work that led to the discovery of mosaics and frescoes from the early 11th century. Unfortunately, the floor mosaic was almost lost. But it can be assumed that the mosaic was similar to the one that adorned floors of the Church of the Tithes. It can be supposed because of the fact that the throne of the metropolit was made in the characteristic symbolic and stylistic manner of Byzantine masters. (Fig. 33: the metropolitan throne and decoration of the back of the throne from St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv; rice. 34: Sophia Cathedral - reconstruction).

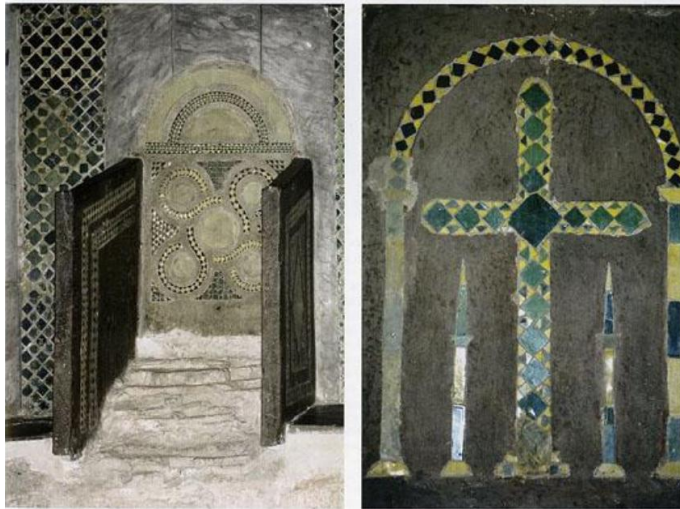


Fig. 33: the metropolitan throne and decoration of the back of the throne from St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv; rice. 34: Sophia Cathedral - reconstruction

For comparison, look at the Holy See bearing a similar symbolic construction.

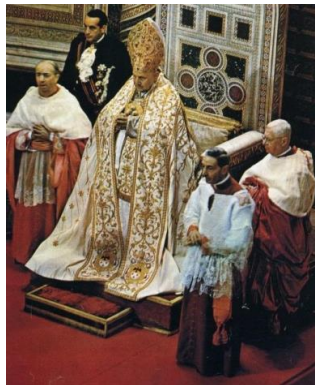


Fig.35. The Holy See in the Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran.

The second memorable building, constructed almost at the same time as the St. Sophia Church, was the Golden Gate, which served Kyiv both as a defensive structure and as a front entrance to the capital. The building was badly damaged over time, destroyed and rebuilt several times. During archaeological research of the Golden Gate in the gate Church of the Annunciation, cubes of smalt and fragments of fresco plaster were found. This indicates that the ancient church was decorated with frescoes and mosaics. One of the mosaics has been restored, and it contains a stylistic and symbolic "reference" to the studying style. And here it is already difficult to say whether this mosaic was created by the Byzantines or local masters undertook to make it, because despite the similarity of the general plan, deviations, rather characteristic of the style of Russian embroideries, are noticeable.

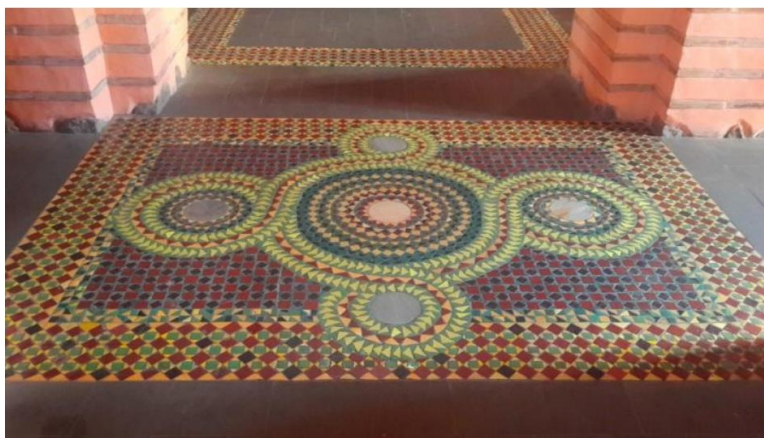


Fig.36. A fragment of a mosaic from the gate Church of the Annunciation of the Golden Gates of Kyiv.

However, the Byzantine mosaic style did not linger in Kyiv, but began to spread throughout Ruthenia, which is clearly served by the example of the Novgorod St. Sophia Cathedral. The main Orthodox Cathedral of Novgorod was built in 1046–1050. The temple was founded with the participation of Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise, who went with Princess Irina (Ingegerd) from Kyiv to help his son Vladimir.

The cathedral was built under the influence of the architecture of Constantinople, but due to lack of funds, marble was replaced with limestone, and mosaics were replaced with frescoes. The cathedral was rebuilt several times. It became an anti-religious museum in Soviet times, suffered from the Nazi occupation, worked as a museum-reserve and was again taken over by the Church.

The decor of the Novgorod cathedral is more modest than in Kiev Sofia. Fewer colors were used (130 colors in Kiev and only 6 colors in Novgorod), but the style remained polychrome. Mosaic tiles are decorated here with the "mountain place", the lower part of the altar apse, as well as the throne for the clergy. This is an example of the successful work of Russian masters who borrowed the techniques of their Byzantine colleagues. By this time, ancient Russian artists had developed the production of precious smalt.

For a long time specialists thought that the biggest part of smalto mosaic cover was made by renovators during the 19th century. However, recent research has shown that more than half of all mosaics of the cathedral relate to the XI century, that is, by the time of its construction.

Altar mosaic of the cathedral includes approximately forty sets of ornaments. For decoration of apse there were used 21 mosaic plates. Besides that, 35 plates of smaller size franked "ischial" stairs. Mosaic floor plates had been rearranged three times for the whole time of its existence - during the XVIII century and also in the middle of XIX. From them, mainly, several ornaments were saved.

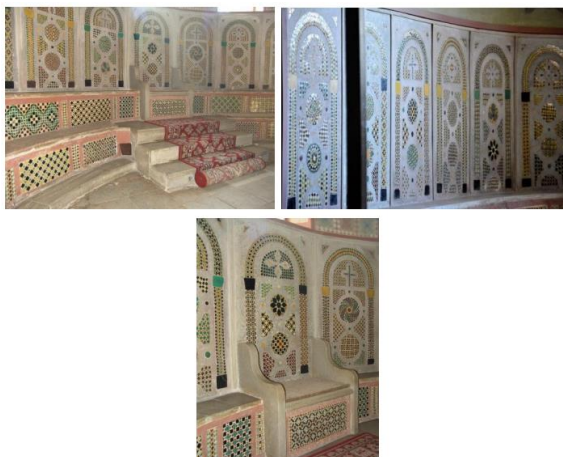


Fig. 37, 38, 39. Mosaic decoration of the "high place" of St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod.

It is still difficult to determine to what extent the mosaic in the Byzantine style has spread in Ruthenia. New fragments are found during excavations or reconstruction of churches. It should be borne in mind that even in famous temples it is impossible to detect ancient mosaics, because the former floors have sunk one and a half to two meters deep and there are already several layers of floors of subsequent times above them. In some places, only scattered fragments are found, in which the style is also guessed, as, for example, in the floor mosaic extracted in the Church of the Savior in Pereslavl.



Fig. 40 A fragment of the floors in the Church of the Savior in Pereslavl

The mosaic of Novgorod Sofia shows how the tradition had been installed on Russian land even before it reached the bounds of Italy. And, based on the fragments of the available works, they were in no way inferior to the works of Italian masters. However, history is a strict censor. First, feudal fragmentation and then the hordes of nomads that descended for a long time changed both the appearance of Russia and the development of the arts. The "Russian Cosmati" either died or left their craft which was not needed in the era of survival.

However, the Russian history of the Byzantine mosaic surprisingly had a continuation. And it is connected with the name of the outstanding Russian master Vladimir Alexandrovich Frolov. It was his mosaic workshop (the first private one in the history of imperial Russia) that carried out the reconstruction of the syntron and the mosaic covering of the altar in the ancient St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod. The master and his assistants carefully reproduced and supplemented the work of "Russian Cosmati".

Frolov's workshop participated in the construction of one of the most beautiful Russian churches — the Church of the Savior on Blood in St. Petersburg. The temple, as you know, was erected after the tragic

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death of Emperor Alexander II, mortally wounded by terrorists on March 1, 1881. It was built from 1883 to 1907 as a monument to the tsar-martyr with funds collected throughout Russia by famous and talented artists and architects.

The Church of the Savior on Blood is known for the largest mosaic art ensemble in Russia and for this reason is often called the “mosaic museum”. The mosaic covers almost all the walls of the vaults, pylons and domes, their total area is 7,065 sq. m. According to the famous researcher and collector of antiquities Professor Gleb Alexandrovich Pokrovsky, “None of the Byzantine, Roman, even Ravenna and Sicilian temples has such an abundance of mosaics.” Frolov's workshop won a competition for the design of the temple from such grandees as the “Venetian Workshop” of Antonio Salviati and the Venetian Mosaic Society, who by that time were world famous. While the walls were decorated by the masters of the Frolov workshop, the floor (608 sq. m.) was occupied by the famous Genoese firm Giuseppe Novi “Novi”.

Here the Byzantine, Italian and Russian mosaic traditions came together in an amazing way. The style presented in the temple, can hardly be attributed directly to Cosmatesque, but there are generic

features and, of course, the traditional five-part figure in the center of the temple. The continuity of symbols and their iconological scheme are obvious here.



Fig.41. Floors of the Church of the Savior on Blood

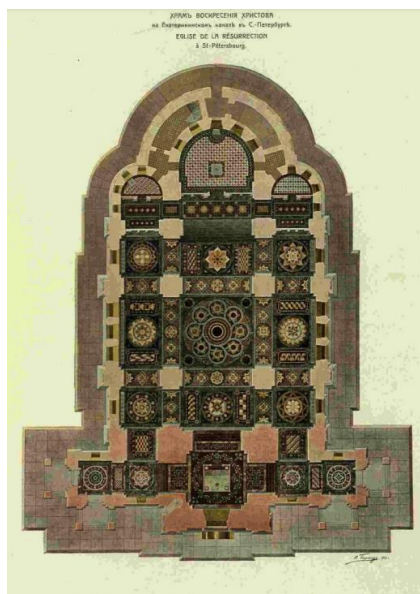


Fig.42. The plan of the Church of the Savior on Blood with a drawing of the floor, 1901

Curiously, the restorers of Frolov's workshop are famous for their work on the plafonds of the «Novokuznetskaya» Moscow metro station, as well as the mosaic decoration of the Lenin Mausoleum on the Red Square. All the masters, including V. A. Frolov himself, died in 1942 in besieged Leningrad from hunger while preparing mosaic paintings for the metro. This is how names and traditions intersect in the world.

6. Byzantine style and cosmatesco.

It is obvious that with an objective consideration of the history of the Cosmatesco style, we can find samples belonging to it (according to the work technique, iconographic schemes, symbols used) not only in the area of Rome and Lazio, in Sicily and Ravenna, but also in the temples of Byzantium, Jerusalem, Russia. Moreover, comparing the information and the dates of the origin of the works, we can conclude that the place of formation and appearance of the tradition are the Constantinople masters of Byzantium and it has been monitored since the VI century. Apparently the Byzantine tradition itself also did not originate in an airless space and absorbed elements of Hellenistic and Arab culture.

Cosmatesco was not especially an Italian phenomenon, and the masters did not create it exclusively within the walls of the monastery of Montecassino, as stated in many historical and tourist sources. Before their appearance on the Apennine Peninsula, the masters had already created the main approaches to floor mosaics and distributed it not only in the Byzantine Empire, but also in neighboring countries. Moreover, samples of this art came to Jerusalem and Russia centuries or years earlier. The Baptist of Russia, the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Vladimir, walked on floors carefully made by Byzantine craftsmen for the Tithe Church, much earlier than popes and European kings.

The art of Byzantine mosaicists was sufficiently developed when its masters began to spread it not only in imperial cities. Due to the specifics of the work, which requires the interaction of people with different competence and skills, there were closed associations of craftsmen, often based on medieval practice, created on the basis of families. The secrets of the masters were transferred from father to son, but it was not excluded that members of the community were close in spirit and craftsmanship. Groups of bricklayers were on journey to the provinces, and those who found a good reception remained in the new country, gradually passing on the basics of their skills to local mosaicists. And in just a few generations we can see the art enriched with local traditions, which has already become an independent phenomenon, as it was with the Novgorod masters or the masters of Kosmati. Due to historical processes, numerous wars and natural disasters, the Byzantine style survived and developed mainly in Italy, in order to become a truly

Roman phenomenon there.

It is obvious that the Byzantine craftsmen were not just bricklayers and knew the basics of mathematics and geometry, were experts in liturgical practice. They began to use symbols that have since penetrated quite deeply into the symbolic constructions of other cultures and have reached modern times. The famous five-part figures of Kosmatesco, formed in a checkerboard pattern, are still initially an element of their "handwriting". And, as we could note, they adorn the main shrines of the two world religions, still remaining part of the liturgical practice.

So did the Italian masters of the XII–XIII centuries create the Cosmatesco style? If we explore their first works, we will most likely say no — because they themselves were products of an already existing school. Cosmatesque is only one of the branches of the pre-existing Byzantine art. However, the subsequent samples of the work of the masters of Kosmati, while retaining the features of the style, nevertheless already differ from the previous ones and constitute an independent tradition. By the time the architect and art historian Camillo Boito named the style "cosmatesco" in 1860, reliable sources on the Byzantine mosaic school were not available, many monuments remained under a layer of soil or were hidden in ruins, so the style seemed self-sufficient.

And here the author identifies with the Italian researcher Nicola Severino, who considers the first works of the masters in Montecassino and a little later the style of "Pre-Cosmatesco". And, in fact, "precosmatesco" in its original version is exclusively a school of Byzantine masters who came to conquer Italy. While the samples created under the influence of local traditions can be rightfully attributed to the "cosmatesco" style, which has already become a phenomenon of Italian culture.

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Стиль мозаики косматеско давно уже стал образом, связанным с Италией. Однако история его создания не так однозначна. Автор доказывает, что основа стиля косматеско появилась не в Италии, география распространения его гораздо шире, чем Рим и окрестности, а семья мраморщиков Космати не создатели, а продолжатели многовековой традиции византийских мозаичистов, сформировавшейся в VI–VIII веках. И что для нас ценно в силу очевидных причин — мраморные полы этого стиля появились в храмах Древней Руси раньше, чем в знаменитых римских базиликах. Это может показаться удивительным, но креститель Руси святой равноапостольный Владимир, а позже и первый русский митрополит Иларион ступили на полы византийских мастеров за десятилетия до правителей и пап средневекового Рима. И именно благодаря святому Владимиру мастера смогли привезти свое мастерство в древний Киев.

Key words: межкультурная коммуникация, косматеско, мастера Космати, мозаика, каменщики, средневековье, Древняя Русь, Византийская империя, Средневековая Италия, история искусства, история религии, раннее христианство, православие, католичество, мусульманство, символика, семантика религиозных символов, семиотика.

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