

liberation the Communist Party hoped that they could reach a *modus vivendi* with the Church and did not immediately place Stepinac on trial for his role as at least a temporary supporter of the independent state of Croatia created by the Axis occupiers during the Second World War. It was only his opposition to Communist policies, both religious and secular, which caused his trial. Involved in the conflict was not only the church-state relationship but the entire role of Croat nationalism in recent history. While the author presents an accurate and fair chronicle of these events, she does not do them full justice by not placing them in the overall context of the Croat-Serb relationship. She points out that the role of any religious organization would have been more than difficult in the postwar circumstances. The previous period caused so much suffering to many Yugoslavs that tolerance eroded, while terror had been practiced by all sides within that war-ravaged country. Both churches ultimately made the best of what could be achieved in a state which was hostile to religion by its very nature and came to a *modus vivendi*. This was difficult because prior to the war the churches had wielded more power than was customary in the more secularized portions of Europe.

It is to be hoped that Stella Alexander will follow through by publishing a more extended treatment, which will bring the story up to date.

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Gordana Cvetković-Tomašević, *Ranovizantijski podni mozaici. Dardanija, Makedonija, Novi Epir* (=Early Byzantine mosaic floors. Dardania, Macedonia, New Epirus), Belgrade, Filozofski Fakultet u Beogradu, Institut za Istoriju Umetnosti, 1978, pp. 128, 49 pictures, 112 tables and plans.

In recent years, the early Christian floor mosaic which have been and continue to be found in the Balkans have been systematically studied and published. (J. P. Sodini, *Mosaïques paléochrétiennes de Grèce*, BCH 94, 1970, 699-753; S. Pelekanidis, *Corpus mosaicorum christianorum vetustiorum pavimentorum graecorum I, Graecia insularis*, Thessalonique 1974). A new and significant contribution to the study of this branch of early Christian art has been made by the Yugoslavian scholar G. Cvetković-Tomašević's work on the early Byzantine floor mosaics of Dardania, Macedonia and New Epirus.

Ms Tomašević's monograph, based on her doctoral thesis, is the result of many years of study and work on the early Christian monuments of both her homeland and the other Balkan countries. In the six chapters of her work (pp. 7-101) the author presents us with a composite yet comprehensive account of the most notable floor mosaics in these countries. One of the basic aims of her study, as she herself emphasises in the foreword to the book, is to interpret the nature and the significance of the mosaics' representations, to define their position in the history of Byzantine art and to determine the year they were made.

The historical and ecclesiastical events which determined the life and development of the Byzantine Empire during the first centuries of its existence are discussed in the first chapter of the book (pp. 7-10). In the second chapter, which is also the longest (pp. 11-53), Ms Tomašević deals with the thematic composition of the most notable floor mosaics to have been found in the regions concerned. Dardania, Macedonia and New Epirus were provinces of Eastern Illyria: the first comprised the areas of the Morava, Axios and White Drim rivers; the second, the areas between the River Nestos to the East, the River Aliakmon and the Aegean Sea to the South and New Epirus to the West; while the last extended from

Macedonia as far as the Adriatic Sea. The author presents a total of 92 mosaics with a description of each and a positional plan. She also provides a brief history of each monument together with details of the research carried out into each one. The descriptions of the floor mosaics are made in the following order: first, those of Dardania, which today is on the Yugoslav border and has archaeological sites at Čaričin Grad (Iustiniana Prima) and Ulpiani (Iustiniana Secunda); next, she examines the monuments of Macedonia, which today lies within the territory of three nations—a) Bulgarian Macedonia, where there is a monument at Sandanski (Parthicopolis), b) Greek Macedonia at Philippi, Amphipolis and Dion, as well as the early Christian monuments at St Paraskevi, Voskohorio, Akrini in Kozani and Edessa, c) Yugoslavian Macedonia, where there are the monuments of Herakleia Lynkestis, Sudovol and Stobi; finally, there are the monuments of New Epirus—Ahrida (Lychnidus), Studenčište, Radolište and Oktisi in modern Yugoslavia and Lin in Albania. For the description and classification of the Yugoslavian material Ms Tomašević has used details collected by herself, the results of her own research into the monuments of her homeland. For the monuments of Greece, Bulgaria and Albania, however, she relies heavily upon the publications and studies of native researchers. This fact accounts for her more thorough presentation of the mosaics upon which she has worked personally.

In the third chapter (pp. 55-66) Ms Tomašević goes on to classify the floor mosaics according to their subject matter. A distinct division is made between the representations with pictorial subjects (human figures, depictions from the animal and plant world, representations of objects and symbols) and those of geometric patterns. The author devotes more time to the former category, undertaking in a very interesting and original way not only to classify the various pictorial subjects but also to explain their interrelationships within the decoration as a whole. It is a known fact that in early Christian floor mosaics the figures (whether human or animal) are positioned with almost no coherent relationship to each other. Furthermore, the figures are usually rendered very superficially with neither realism nor any impression of the third dimension, depth. The author points out that this contrasts with Greek-Roman art and also with contemporary art as revealed in the murals of early Christian monuments, which depict various complete scenes from Bible stories and Christian teaching*. Ms Tomašević regards this abstract unrealistic portrayal not as a simple decorative device, but as an endeavour to convey a hidden meaning. In seeking to interpret the hidden significance of these depictions she first classifies them into five groups: a) the symmetrical (heraldic) depictions, b) the pictures of fruit-bearing trees, birds, flowers, animals in peaceful poses, c) pictures with symbolic subjects: the garden and rivers of Paradise, *trivels*, arches and the cross, d) pictures of hunts and of battles between animals, and e) portrayals of water, of fish and amphibious creatures. Ms Tomašević explains that these groups correspond symbolically to the Christian idea of the division of the world into four areas. The first two groups correspond to the first area, *the first heaven*, the third group to the second area, *paradise (the firmament)*, the fourth group to the third area, *the earth*, and the last group to the fourth area, *the ocean (water)*. Relying on Kosmas Indikopleustis' diagrams of the shape of the world (that of a large chest with a curved lid) and the Miletian cosmologists' idea that matter is constituted from four elements (earth, water, air and fire) in the form of

* Depictions of Old and New Testament subjects are also to be found in several mosaic floors chiefly on the south-eastern Mediterranean coast. Cf. S. Pelekanidis, *Corpus mosaico-rum...*, p. 19.

successive concentric circles, Ms Tomašević classifies the various pictorial subjects and demonstrates the schematic relationship between them.

The next chapter (pp. 67-86) is devoted to dating the floor mosaics. Ms Tomašević first deals with the dates which have hitherto been proposed by various mosaics scholars. Then she refers briefly to the floor mosaics on the south-eastern coast of the Mediterranean, many of which are clearly dated and thus assist in the comparative dating of those which are not. She then proceeds to a chronological classification of the floor mosaics in the Balkans, dividing them into seven groups covering three centuries (4-6 A.D.). She maintains that in the IVth century depictions of Bible stories predominated, which could be connected with Greek and Roman mythology; in the first half of the Vth century, non-pictorial decoration prevailed (the result of Theodosius II's forbidding the portrayal of holy people and symbols on floors); in the second half of the Vth century, pictures symbolising the four areas of the world predominated in the form of concentric compositions; finally, in the VIth century, we mainly find geometric patterns with the addition of isolated subjects taken from the symbolic representations of the world.

In the last two chapters Ms Tomašević deals more systematically with symbolic representations of the world in art generally. First (pp. 87-94), she mentions this phenomenon with reference to idolatrous, early Christian and medieval Byzantine art, giving her own interpretation of the origins, birth and development of this means of depiction; in her opinion, it had already begun by the Vth century B.C. She makes an interesting comparison between the various subjects of the pictorial decoration of the Byzantine (medieval) monuments and the symbols of the four areas of the world. Although one might have reservations on this subject, Ms Tomašević's view is attractive and deserves attention.

This presentation of the early Christian floor mosaics closes with an artistic analysis of the mosaics themselves and their place within the framework of early Christian and Byzantine art in general. The author's reference to the opinions of various scholars on the nature and characteristics of the depictions in the floor mosaics, together with her own opinion on every problem not only form a composite presentation of what the scholarly world believes, but also indicate that the author has made a deep study of the whole subject, a fact which makes her opinions much more persuasive.

Ms Tomašević's monograph is a complete scholarly work, rich in information and soundly-articulated thought, and it makes a decisive contribution to the study of and research into early Christian floor mosaics. One may disagree with the way she regards the nature and character of the mosaic's pictorial subjects, but nevertheless one cannot ignore her original and sound approach to the problem. The reader may occasionally find himself tired by the author's dense style, which is due to the listing of many statistical facts together, but this does not detract from the work's ultimate achievement. One shortcoming, perhaps, is the fact that the author has not taken effective note of more recent research into early Christian monuments outside Yugoslavia: for instance, concerning the dating of the floor mosaics in the temple underneath the Octagon at Philippi, she does not take into account the recent discovery of an epigraph mentioning the name of the well-known bishop Porphyrios, who lived during the first half of the IVth century (cf. Pelekanidis, PAE 1975, 101-102, table 93b).

Nevertheless, Ms G. Cvetković-Tomašević has produced a complete scholarly work of great value.