



6TH SEE
MOSAICS
MEETING

MOSAICS FROM 1900s

MODERN
MATERIALS,
NEW PROBLEMS
IN FOCUS

Magyar Képzőművészeti Egyetem
Hungarian University of Fine Arts
Barcsay Hall
BUDAPEST
8-11 October
2024

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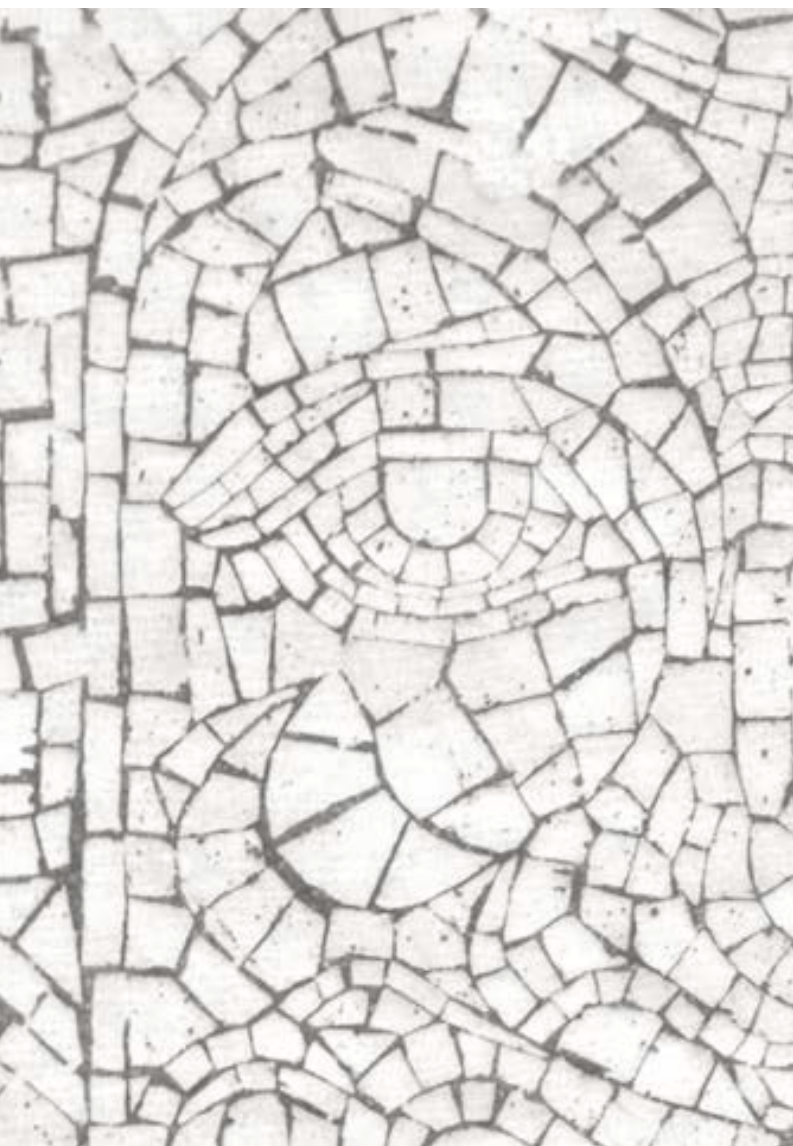
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Image of Medusa, simultaneously regarded with awe and affection, has served as a protective symbol in various cultural contexts from the ancient Greek era to the modern period.



Medusa-head by Miksa Róth and his workshop. Detail of the mosaic frieze, Paris Courtyard, Budapest, Ferenciek square, 1909

Photo: B. M. Kürtösi, 2024



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PROGRAMME

MOSAICS
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MODERN MATERIALS,
NEW PROBLEMS
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8-11 October 2024
Hungarian University of Fine Arts
Budapest, Andrásy 69.
Barcsay-hall

◻ 8 OCTOBER, TUESDAY

8.15 - 9.15 REGISTRATION

9.15. OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

Csaba Orosz *Vice Rector of Educational Affairs, Hungarian University of Fine Arts*
Gergely Dóczi *Chancellor, Hungarian University of Fine Arts,*

LECTURES

9.30. **Italian mosaicists in France - Between restoration and creation**
Véronique Blanc-Bijon – Patrick Blanc

9.55. **The Alternate History – A Fresh View of the Kosančićev Venac Mosaic in Belgrade, Serbia**
Maja Franković, Nemanja Smičiklas, Dunja Davidović Gnjatović, Milena Jovanović

10.20. **From making to faking ... are some so-called 'Late Roman' mosaics really old?**
Peter Berzobohaty

Coffee break

11.00. **Gruppo Mosaicisti Ravenna: Mosaic after the Twentieth Century between Art, Conservation and Sociality**
Marco Santi - Anna Caterino

11.25. **Traditional vs. modern artefacts – traditional vs. modern conservation?**
Eszter Tóth

11.50. **Industrial materials in restoration and mosaic art in the light of decisions about principles of compatibility and re-restorability**
Brigitta Maria Kürtösi

Lunch break

13.15. **Mosaics as a contemporary cultural layer**
Dobrila Vlahovic

13.40. **Art Nouveau funerary architecture with mosaic decoration in the cemeteries of Budapest**
Tamás Csáki

14.05. **Reflecting History: The Mosaics of the Culture Palace in Marosvásárhely**
Eszter Kiss – Brigitta Maria Kürtösi

14.30. **Conservation and reconstruction of the fire-damaged glass mosaic decoration of the interior of the Art Nouveau palace in Bratislava, Slovakia**
Barbora Viková - Petr Hampl

STUDY VISIT IN BUDAPEST

Mosaics in the axis of the Andrassy road

📅 9 October, Wednesday

STUDY VISIT IN BUDAPEST Mausoleums with mosaics

Lunch break

LECTURES

13.30. Linseed oil – its role and identification in mosaic mortars

Pavla Bauerová, Magdalena Kracík Štorkánová, Petra Mácová, Dita Frankeová, Zuzana Slížková, Martin Keppert

13.55. Typology of glass tesserae used for mosaic production in the territory of the former Czechoslovakia during the 20th century

Irena Kučerová

14.20. Use of plastic materials in mosaic art. The dilemmas and challenges in conservation

Miklós Ernő Balázs

Coffee break

15.00. A Neoavantgard innovation, the „Photomosaics” of Miklós Erdély

Kinga Veress – Brigitta Maria Kürtösi

15.25. Research and protective procedures carried out on the mosaic by Edo Murtić in front of the "Kockica" in Zagreb

Toni Šaina

15.50. Relocation of modern wall mosaics

Malu Storch

16.20. Planning the conservation-restoration project – contemporary wall mosaic from the Clinical Hospital Centre in Split, Croatia

Antonija Gluhan - Ivana Jerković

Coffee break

17.00. POSTER SESSION

Preservation vs. Profit: The Battle Over 'Beogradjanka' Mosaic and Cultural Heritage in Belgrade

Nemanja Smičiklas, Marijana Protić, Miloš Djuran

Preventive conservation of mosaics and columns in the assembly of the Roman villa at Košljun hill in Novalja, Croatia

Martina Rajzl

Presentation of Peter Berzobohaty's book 'Fabulous mosaics', a new bilingual English and Romanian edition

Maria Dumbravician

Lost treasure found
Marijana Protić

The memorial “Glavnjača” case study: Modern mosaic restoration amidst the construction site
Dunja Davidović Gnjatović, Maja Franković, Dušan Maksimović

Restoration of a glass mosaic from a private collection by the artist Edo Murtić
Matko Kezele

Restoration of mosaics using modern materials
Filip Janković, Marijana Protić, Nemanja Smičiklas

The reconstruction of “Panik”
Emír Kapetanović

Mosaics of Felix Romuliana, Galerius’s Palace, the end of 3rd- the beginning of 4th c. AD
Maja Zivić

Fabulous Mosaics - The Palace Mosaic of Constantinople ... and other Amazing Mosaics
Peter Berzobohaty

📅 **10 October, Thursday**

LECTURES

9.00. “The New Heritage”: a preservation attempt for the façade monumental art (1960s-1989) from Bulgaria
Alessandro Lugiari, Elena Kantareva Decheva, Angela Pencheva

9.25. Analysis of the state of conservation and endangerment of mosaics from the socialist era (1945-1990) in Slovenia
Blaž Šeme

9.50. Blue or red? Decision making in conservation of 1980’s glass mosaic on aluminium support
Jan Vojtěchovský

Coffee break

10.35. 20th-century mosaics in Georgia: Policies & Practices for Preservation
Nini Palavandishvili

11.00. Czechoslovak mosaics and the growing interest in their preservation
Magdalena Kracík-Storkánová- Pavla Bauerová

11.25. Restoration of the mosaics on the monument to the fallen soldiers and victims of fascism in Plovanija, Croatia
Matko Kezele - Tea Trumbić

11.50. Ukrainian Soviet monumental mosaics under double threat of destruction
Yevheniia Moliar

12.15. The story of SEE Mosaics
Branislava Lazarević Tošović – Maja Franković

Lunch break

STUDY VISIT IN BUDAPEST
Mosaics in the Castle hill and around

DINNER

📅 11 October, Friday

STUDY TOUR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

ABSTRACTS

Véronique BLANC-BIJON¹ - Patrick BLANC²

¹ *Researcher, CNRS Centre National de Recherche Scientifique – Aix Marseille Université, Centre Camille Jullian, Aix-en-Provence, France*

² *Restorer, Musée départemental Arles antique, Arles, France*



Italian mosaicists in France - Between creation and restoration

From the beginning of the 19th century, France took a renewed interest in mosaics that the army was probably able to see during the Italian campaign (1796-1797) followed by the occupation of the Italian peninsula. In 1907, Napoleon I invited the Roman mosaicist Francesco Belloni to create the Imperial Mosaic School in Paris. Also arriving from the Vatican Workshops, Clemente Ciuoli was presented to King Charles X (1824-1830) in 1829 and was called the 'King's Mosaicist' up to 1860.

Experiencing economic and political instabilities, it was the turn of Northern Italy to send its best mosaicists to France from the mid-19th century. Like a real colonisation, the families shared the territory, sometimes travelling to contribute to a project obtained by another. One of the most famous was Giandomenico Faccina, the mosaicist of the Opéra Garnier in Paris. These mosaicists worked for the private market and for the Church which then built cathedrals and Marian churches. All those families had one thing in common: they were from Sequals, in Friuli. They produced modern mosaics and also restored newly discovered Roman or medieval mosaics, creating manufacturing techniques, materials, and restoration methods.

In some cases, real exchanges were established between mosaicists and architects. For example, Antonio Mora settled in Lyon, his son Francesco in Nîmes, creating a workshop which employed up to a hundred workers mainly from Sequals between 1848 and 1901. In Marseille, Francesco Mora worked with the architect Henri Espérandieu before 1874, then with the architect Henri Revoil for the Nouvelle Major cathedral inaugurated in 1893, decorated with mosaics inside and outside, those with significant influences of Ravenna.

At the same time, as Belloni had done with the famous circus mosaic found in Lyon in 1806, Francesco Mora intervened in the restoration of Roman mosaics, for instance that of Europe unearthed in Arles in 1900, which was restored and presented to the public in 1901. Today, we can sometimes see the hand of the modern mosaicist in these ancient pavements.



Fig. 1. Marseille, 19th century mosaic pavement in the Nouvelle Major cathedral, realised by Francesco Mora (around 1890).
(Photo: V. Blanc-Bijon)

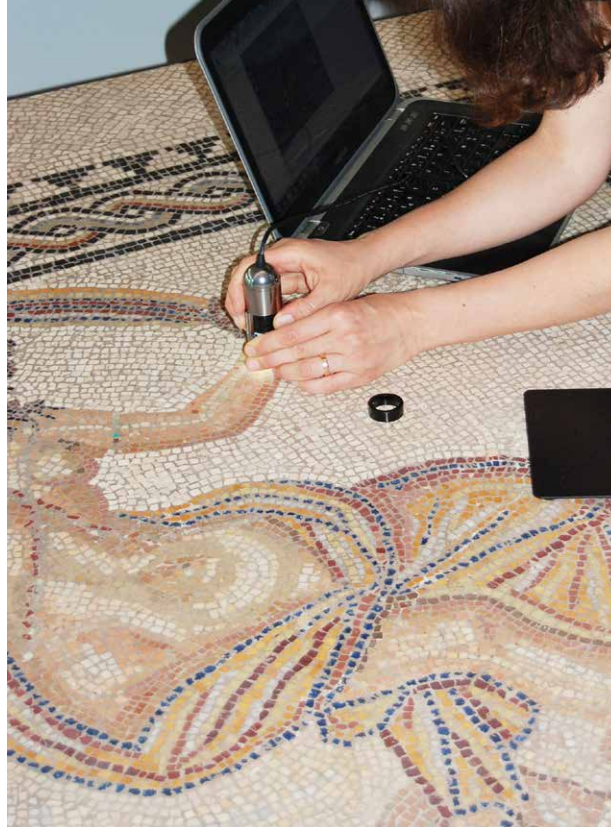


Fig. 2. Roman mosaic pavement with Europe (2nd century AD), restored in 1901, Arles. Recent analyses showed the intervention of the modern workshop led by Francesco Mora in the change of some tesserae.
(Photo: P. Blanc)

Maja FRANKOVIĆ¹, Nemanja SMIČIKLAS², Dunja DAVIDOVIĆ
GNJATOVIĆ³, Milena JOVANOVIĆ⁴

¹ PhD, conservator/restorer, counselor, National Museum of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia

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³ conservator technician, National Museum of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia

⁴ freelance



The Alternate History – A Fresh View of the Kosančićev Venac Mosaic in Belgrade

At the site Kosančićev venac 12-16, next to the former National Library destroyed in the 1941 bombing of Belgrade, 122 fragments of the floor mosaic were found during the archaeological excavations carried out in 1978. The discovered fragments belong to a polychrome floor created by combining terrazzo and opus tessellatum techniques, using black, red, and white stone tesserae. The mosaic fragments were found dislocated from their original position, in a layer formed at the end of the 19th or the beginning of the 20th century. However, the finds were attributed to the remains of an ancient building with a hypocaust that was discovered in the lower layers of the excavation. The mosaic fragments were handed over to the City Museum of Belgrade.

Mosaic conservation-restoration was initiated in 2021 as part of the preparation for a permanent exhibition in the new museum building. By joining the fragments, some parts of the mosaic decoration were reconstructed, but relatively small areas were obtained, and their mutual relationship and position within the floor could not be determined. The number and sizes of fragments were insufficient to reliably reconstruct the floor decoration. Due to the fact that reconstructed parts should be taken only as a proposal of possible decoration patterns, fragments were incorporated into a new support in a way that enables complete reversibility of the performed treatment. Careful examination during conservation-restoration work brought to light questions related to mosaic dating.

Apart from presenting the solution applied for mosaic restoration, the paper will also present observations on the technology of production and decoration style that cast doubt on the dating of the mosaic. Similarities in style with the mosaic dated at the end of the 19th century from the Cathedral in Negotin are the starting point of future research.



Fig. 1. Positioning mosaic fragments on the support.
(Photo: D. Davidović Gnjatović)



Fig. 2. Mosaic panels after restoration.
(Photo: V. Džikić)

Peter BERZOBOHATY

conservator/restorer of mural paintings & mosaic



From making to faking ... are some so-called 'Late Roman' mosaics really old?

Using the Istanbul Palace Mosaic as an example, the primary technique of Late Roman and all other ancient mosaics is once again examined in detail. The frescoed preparatory painting and the pressing in of relatively large sections of the images only after they have been provisionally laid and corrected are clearly recognisable features of the ancient technique. This, in turn, explains the significance of the technique of multiple neutral framing lines of tesserae in almost all ancient depictions, which was previously assumed to be 'for aesthetic reasons'. There are, however, exceptions to this rule, and it is these that will be examined in more detail in the lecture, with the aid of photographs.

Such exceptions also exist in the Palace Mosaic, but they imply that the background was laid at the same time as the rather small border images. But what if the background of a fragment from an alleged, usually locally undefined excavation was created at the same time as the depiction? Here we can make assumptions such as those already made in 1962 by Eberhard Paul on stylistic grounds in "Die falsche Göttin: Geschichte der Antikenfälschungen" ["The False Goddess: History of Antique Forgeries"].

From such and other inconsistencies, it can be concluded with some probability that not everything identified on the market as 'late Roman', is authentic. They are usually labelled from a 'Syrian workshop' of unknown local origin (often also 'around the 4th or 5th century'), and is therefore in some cases they are examples of forgery. Eberhard Paul already dated them between the 18th century and the 1900s.



Fig. 1. Palace Mosaic, Istanbul, 5th century: birds with unusual setting = without framing lines.
(Photo and drawing: P. Berzo-Gastl)

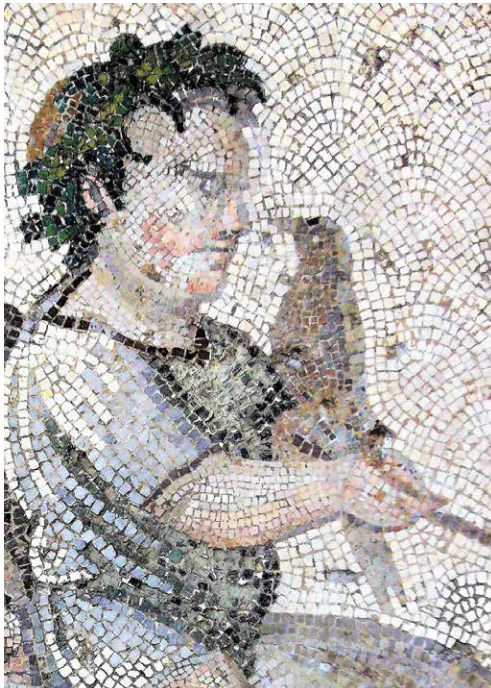


Fig. 2. Palace Mosaic, Istanbul, 5th century, the young emperor (?)
(Photo: P. Berzo-Gastl)

Marco SANTI¹ - Anna CATERINO²

¹Dott., *Cultural heritage restorer, Gruppo Mosaicisti Ravenna di Marco Santi*

²Dott.ssa., *Cultural heritage conservator, Gruppo Mosaicisti Ravenna di Marco Santi*



THE GRUPPO MOSAICISTI RAVENNA: Mosaic after the Twentieth Century between Art, Conservation, and Sociality

The Gruppo Mosaicisti Ravenna has always stood out, since its foundation in 1947, for its dual productive soul: the first focused on the design and realisation of modern-contemporary mosaics, and the second on restoration, conservation, and maintenance practices of the national and international mosaic heritage.

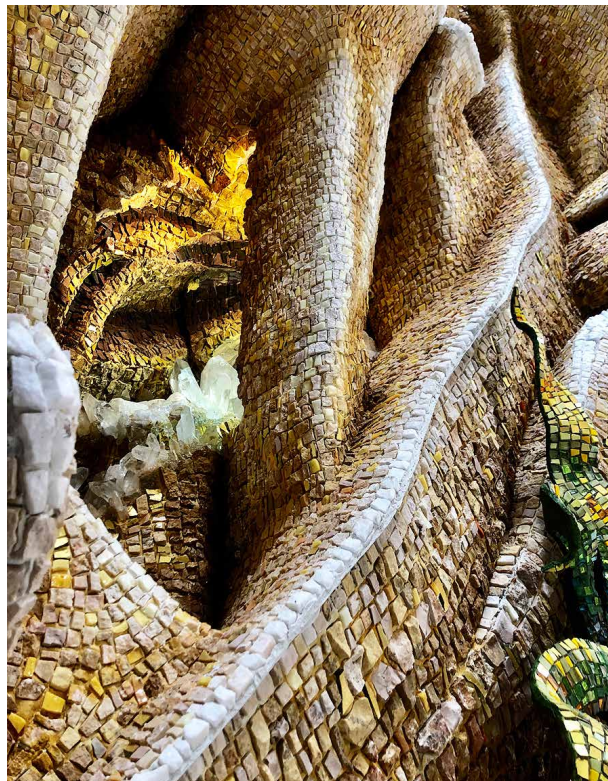
The foundation in the first context is the need to liberate mosaic language from classic narrative wall decoration and elevate it to an expressive language with strong emotional content and engaging social impact, paying great attention to how the works relate to space. Through the language of mosaic, composed of colours, material heterogeneity, lines, volumes, and engineering components, the visitor is led through an artistic visual experience that touches the most intimate chords of the human being. The mosaic becomes the means of a contemporary discourse and dialogue between aesthetic canons and new levels of imagination: it bursts forth and results in the intersection of classic, Byzantine, and contemporary heterogeneous aesthetics. Mosaic works function as relics of a suspended time: at the same moment their technique refers to the Byzantine mosaic world, while their expressive softness and material innovation refer to contemporary mosaic research.

In the second context, the transitional needs characterising contemporary society globally demand that conservation and restoration interventions achieve objectives such as ecological considerations, responsible use of resources, and overall sustainability. In this scenario, a rethinking and initiation of reflection on the characteristics that make innovation compatible with conservation and protection goals is required, as well as the ability to resolve potential conflicts that may arise between innovation and tradition. Particularly significant cases regarding innovation in different phases of the mosaic artefact restoration, conservation, and maintenance process are presented here. Concerning the ability to resolve conflicts between different restoration, conservation, and maintenance demands, what cultural and technical innovative scenarios are required today?

Fig. 1. The interior of the Gruppo Mosaicisti's workshop in 1948
(Photo: Historical Archives of Gruppo Mosaicisti Ravenna)



Fig. 2. Detail of mosaic sculpture by Marco Santi, Maronite Church, Beirut, Lebanon.
Marble, Venetian coloured glass mosaic and gold leaf tesserae.
(Photo: M. Santi)



Eszter TÓTH

*metal and goldsmith conservator, Hungarian National Museum, Budapest
Head of Specialization of Metal and Goldsmith Objects Conservation
DLA student
Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Budapest*



Traditional vs. modern artefacts – traditional vs. modern conservation?

The widespread belief is that traditional and modern artefacts are fundamentally different from each other so they need different conservation approaches, methods, and examination. Moreover, it is often emphasised that a traditional paradigm identifies a traditional work with its fixed material character, and focuses only on material preservation.

As the author comes from the world of traditional metal artworks, but – as part of her ongoing PhD study – focuses on modern and contemporary reality, it was essential to make these real or perceived differences clear by confirming or denying them.

Although writing or speaking about the ethics and methodologies of conservation is hardly ever an academic objective, some scholars lay more stress on the decision-making models for conservation decisions. These theories have evolved from studies of how people actually make decisions, rather than by considering how they should. If we understand that the difference between traditional and modern conservation is not caused by the traditional or modern nature of the material, nor the age of the artefact or the person who created it, but rather the human way of thinking, then we can find numerous similarities between them.

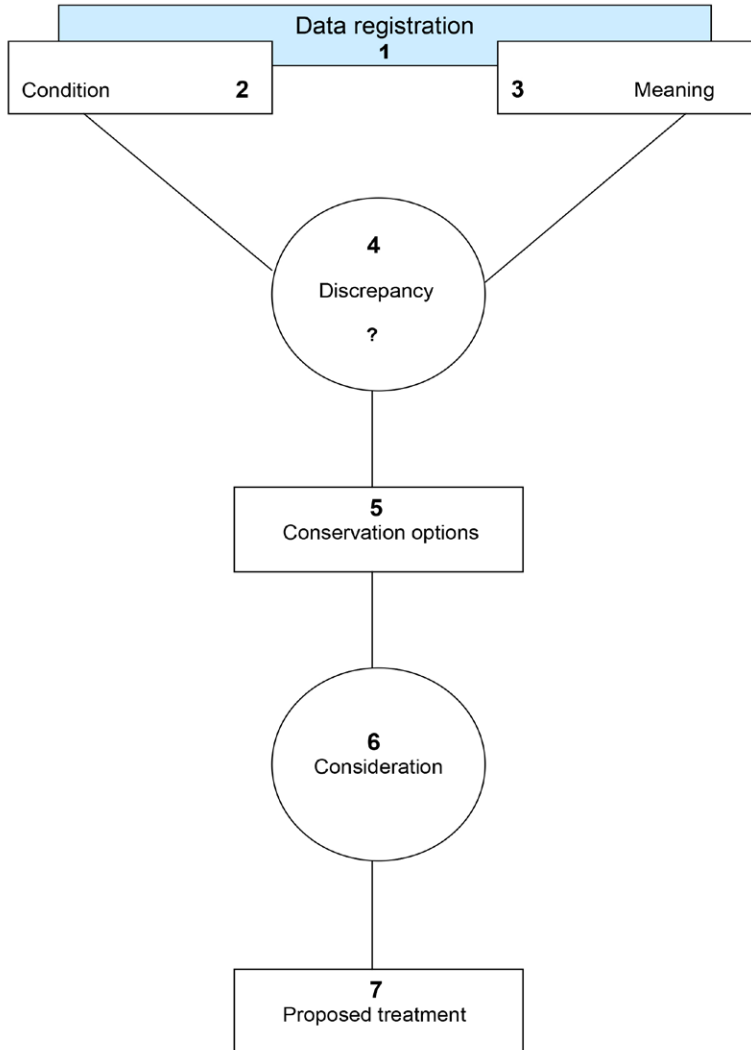


Fig. 1. The decision-making model for the conservation and restoration of modern and contemporary art by the Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art/Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, 1999, p. 4. (<https://sbmk.nl/source/documents/decision-making-model.pdf>)

Brigitta Maria KÜRTÖSI

*DLA, painting conservator, monument conservator expert, assistant professor
Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Conservation Department, Budapest*



Industrial materials in restoration and mosaic art in the light of decisions about principles of compatibility and re-restorability

Since we know that not only are the historical materials used in modern mosaics but there are numerous attempts to modify the traditional way of mosaic making in the previous centuries, we need to be as familiar as possible with the characteristics of the technical and functional innovations.

Novelties were created in the way of setting, in direct and indirect methods and in the use of temporary materials, or additives (animal glue, linseed oil) or completely different types of fixing materials such as Portland cement or artificial resins. The physical and chemical properties of these materials are the determining factors in the processes of deterioration, as well as in the optimal approach to conservation and restoration interventions. Within the framework of restoration theories, works of art from the examined period are in a specific situation, since the principles of the Venice Charter but also the Turin Declaration are peculiarly significant.

Can we use industrial materials, such as epoxy-kitt in complementing Art Nouveau details made of seashells? And how about epoxy resin based grouting as bedding mortar of a glass mosaic on a new outdoor fountain to benefit from its properties developed for industrial use?

The decisions we make regarding the principles of compatibility and re-restorability are occasionally superseded by prior treatments and materials. Consequently, we are no longer in a position to treat the original artwork, but must develop solutions to treat a modified, more complex version of the artefact.



Fig. 1. Gargoyle made of seashells (1904-07) before and after restoration. Liszt Ferenc Music Academy, Budapest 2013.
(Photo: B. M. Kürtösi)

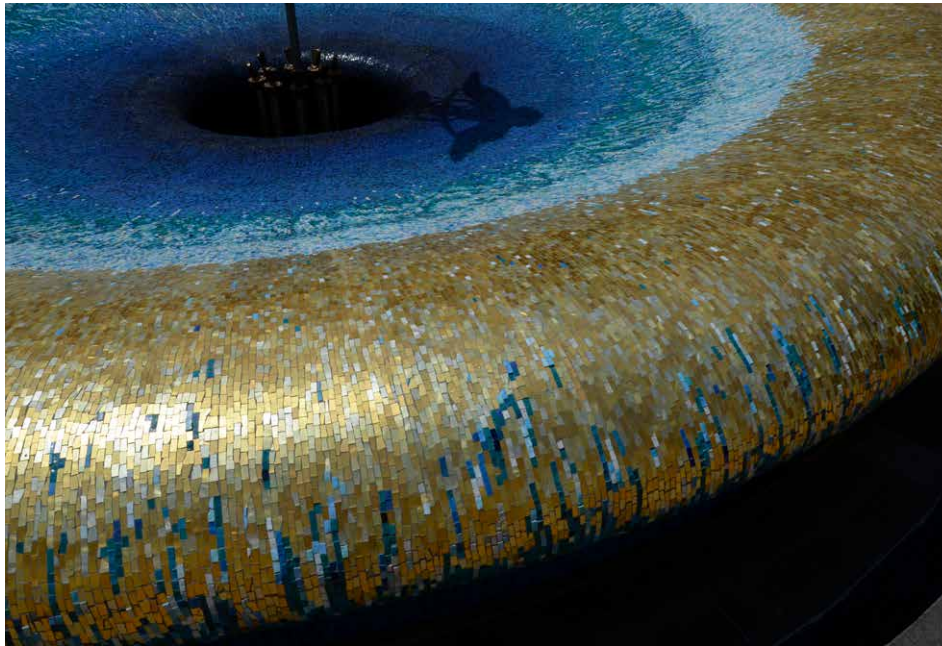


Fig. 2. Detail of the glass mosaic on the fountain realized after the conception of architect Márta Vörös, 2021-23. Kalocsa, Hungary
(Photo: B. M. Kürtösi)

Dobriša VLAHOVIĆ

*MSc Arch. graduate conservator restorer
Ministry of Culture of Montenegro*



Mosaics as a contemporary cultural layer

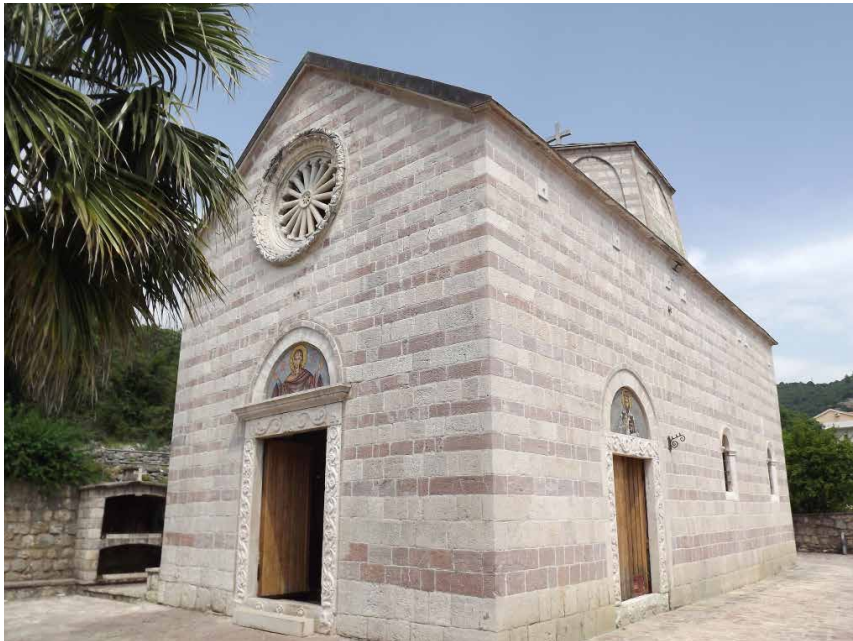
Mosaic, as an art form, has a rich history that goes back thousands of years, and still occupies an important place in contemporary culture. This paper explores the evolution of mosaic from traditional techniques to its contemporary representations, emphasising how mosaic has been adapted and integrated into modern cultural contexts.

Contemporary artists use mosaic not only as a decorative element but also as a medium for expressing complex themes and messages, thus contributing to the discourse on identity, community and globalisation. A special focus is placed on the issue of introducing new mosaics to historical buildings.

While some believe that this contributes to the revitalization and reinterpretation of cultural heritage, others question the justification of such interventions in the context of preserving the authenticity of historical monuments. Through the analysis of examples from recent artistic practice, the paper shows how mosaic serves as a cultural layer that connects the past and the present, and how its traditional and innovative forms enrich cultural heritage and contribute to its dynamic evolution.



Fig. 1-2. New mosaics on the façades of the old church in Budva (17th century).
(Photos: D. Vlahović)



Tamás CSÁKI

PhD, art historian, historian, curator

*ELTE University, Budapest, Faculty of Humanities, Institute of Art History; Budapest
BHM History Museum, Kiscell Museum, Modern Urban History Department*



Art Nouveau funerary architecture with mosaic decoration in the cemeteries of Budapest

The paper aims to analyse three distinctive examples of the art nouveau funerary architecture in the Hungarian capital: the Schmidl and Gries Mausolea in the Kozma Street Jewish Cemetery (designed by Béla Lajta in 1904 and 1906 respectively), and the pair of arcaded multi-family vaults in the Kerepesi Street Cemetery (built according to the plans of Lajos Gerle in 1904-1908).

While all three buildings aim to reform and reinterpret the common 19th century types of monumental funerary representation, they do it in very different ways. The presentation will look into the role of the architectural frame and the mosaic decoration in the three constructions, the differences stemming from the Jewish and Christian funerary customs and from the private and public nature of the commissions. Notwithstanding their essentially Art Nouveau character, historical models have a special importance for all three buildings, just as the examples of the modern Viennese art and architecture – the links to the ancient past and the contemporary trends will also be analysed.

Fig. 1. Schmidl Mausoleum, 1904.
(Photo: Judit Fárnyé Szalatnyay)



Fig. 2. Mosaic decoration
of the dome in the Gries
Mausoleum, 1906.
(Photo: Judit Fárnyé
Szalatnyay)



Eszter Kiss¹ – Brigitta Maria KÜRTÖSI²

¹ *painting-restorer*

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² *DLA, painting conservator, monument conservator expert, assistant professor
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Reflecting History: The Mosaics of the Culture Palace in Marosvásárhely

The Palace of Culture in Marosvásárhely (Targu Mures) is a building (1911-1913) designed by Marcell Komor and Dezső Jakab in Art Nouveau style fused with Hungarian folk art. The palace is a true gem of the city of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

The whole edifice carries a characteristic design and bears with decorative building materials and techniques such as glass mosaics and stained glass windows executed by the Róth-workshop, enamelled roof tiles and pyrogranite wall tiles of the Zsolnay manufactory which were prestigious from the beginning of the 20th century. The designers of the mosaics were two prominent artists of the movement, being also the founders of the Artists' Colony of Gödöllő. Aladár Körsösfői-Kriesch signs the mosaics of the main façade and the frescoes of the foyer, while Sándor Nagy designed the stained glass windows of the mirror-hall and the music-themed mosaics on the façade to the main square.

Most of the topics represented in the interior frescoes and decorative paintings, stained glass windows and mosaics are connected to Hungarian folk art, tales and legends, as well as to music.

A lot of these typical aspects was finally uncovered during a comprehensive restoration in 2023-24 [1], after the last intervention which happened in the communist era in the early 60's when the details not ideologically fit with political circumstances were systematically covered, overpainted not only in the interior decorative mural paintings, but on the façade mosaics too. Some parts of the mosaics were also restored in 1965 and 1986, but a revision was needed not only in aesthetics but in materials aspects.

The Róth-workshop applied some new features on the façades, for example the concave bordure of the Patrona Hungariae mosaic, or the atypical gold backgrounds made of triangles and polygons instead of the generally applied strict rows of tesserae concerning the mosaics of the main façade.

[1] IMAGO PICTA Srl, Lóránd Kiss et al.



Fig. 1. Detail of the mosaic "Patrona Hungariae" of Aladár Körösfői-Kriesch and Miksa Róth (1913) on the main façade of the Culture Palace in Marosvásárhely/Tg. Mures. In raking light the original uneven surface character of the mosaic is well visible. The phenomenon is resulted from the mounting process of the prefabricated sections.

(Photo: B. M. Kürtösi, 2023)



Fig. 2. Mosaic of Sándor Nagy and Miksa Róth (1913) on the eastern façade of the Culture Palace after restoration in 2023.

(Photo: E. Kiss)

Barbora VIKOVÁ¹ - Petr HAMPL²

¹*MgA, restorer, assistant, PhD student*

*University of Pardubice, Faculty of Restoration, Studio of Restoration and Conservation of Wall Paintings, Sgraffito and Mosaics Litomyšl, Czech Republic
Atelier mozaiky*

²*visual artist, restorer, hamplpetr.cz*



Conservation and reconstruction of the fire-damaged glass mosaic decoration of the interior of the Art Nouveau palace in Bratislava

The paper deals with the comprehensive conservation and reconstruction of the mosaic decoration of the interior of the so-called "great hall" located on the ground floor of the Art Nouveau palace in the Main Square in Bratislava.

The subject of conservation were 26 mosaics with figural motifs, which were created from coloured and painted plate glass set in a gypsum plaster bed. The mosaics most likely date from the time the palace was built in 1911. The ground floor of the building with the former Roland Café and the building façade was affected by a fire in November 2018. The extensive fire severely damaged the mosaics. Less than half of the mosaic panels were preserved in their entirety, with only minor losses in the mosaic glasses and their damage in the form of cracking and deformation. However, most of the mosaic decoration was in a state of complete disrepair.

The underlying plaster panels were heavily cracked or completely disintegrated into separate pieces, the glass was detached and fell off when touched. A massive part of the figural motifs depicted in many mosaic panels was already completely missing. In the spring of 2019, a conservation survey was conducted in order to consistently map the types and extent of damage to all mosaic panels and assess their state of preservation.

In February the following year, the mosaic panels were dismantled, and in 2020-2022 their conservation and reconstruction of the missing parts were carried out. The contribution describes the process of the intervention on the fire-damaged mosaics, the main feature of which was the interdisciplinary collaboration of mosaic conservators with stained glass restoration specialists, but also with plaster restoration experts.



Fig. 1. Two mosaic panels after the fire, 2019.
(Photo: B. Víková)



Fig. 2. Detail of the mosaic depicted Athena after
the fire, 2019.
(Photo: B. Víková)

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Linseed oil – its role and identification in mosaic mortars

The addition of linseed oil to mosaics' fixing mortars has been a common practice since the 16th century. Our investigation showed linseed oil had been added in surprisingly high quantities up to almost 40 wt% acting as a plasticizer slowing down the carbonation process. However, its identification and especially quantification in lime-based mortars is not always straightforward. Traditionally, special methods have been used for the detection of organics, which makes the whole analytical process longer and more expensive.

Our goal was to estimate linseed oil admixture content in lime-based mortars by thermal analysis coupled with evolved gas analysis (TG-EGA-MS). Thermal analysis belongs to basic cheap analytical tools used for the characterisation of mortars. The method was compared with other common analytical techniques commonly applied to the identification of organics such as FTIR spectroscopy and TOC (total organic carbon). A set of model samples with varying linseed oil content (air lime mortars with carbonate aggregates) was prepared.

A methodology of linseed oil content estimation in the historic mortars was proposed with model mortars measurements serving as “calibration curves” [1]. The developed methodology was applied to a reference authentic 19th/20th century mosaic mortar bed from the Peluněk sepulchre, Malvazinky. The approach based on EGA-MS (identification and analysis of m/z 95 signal corresponding to “oil-specific” [C7H11]⁺ ion) provided the closest results to a popular mosaic recipe available at the time of the reference authentic mortar's origin. Moreover, this approach seems to be the least sensitive to possible interfering effects of other mortar's components.

[1] P. Bauerová, M. Kracík-Štorkánová, P. Mácová, P. Reiterman, E. Vejmelková, and M. Keppert, 'Estimation of the linseed oil content in historic lime mortar', *J Therm Anal Calorim*, vol. 148, no. 3, pp. 697–709, Feb. 2023, doi: 10.1007/s10973-022-11792-9.

This work was supported by the Czech Science Foundation, project No. 18-13525S “Modern mosaic mortars in a microscope – methods for their materials characterization and degradation studies” and by Czech Academy of Sciences under program “Strategy AV21 – 23. City as a Laboratory of Change; Construction, Historical Heritage and Place for Safe and Quality Life”.

Fig. 1. ATR-FTIR spectra of model mortars (labelled M, numbers express wt % linseed oil dosage) and a 19th/ 20th century authentic mosaic mortar bed (Peluněk).

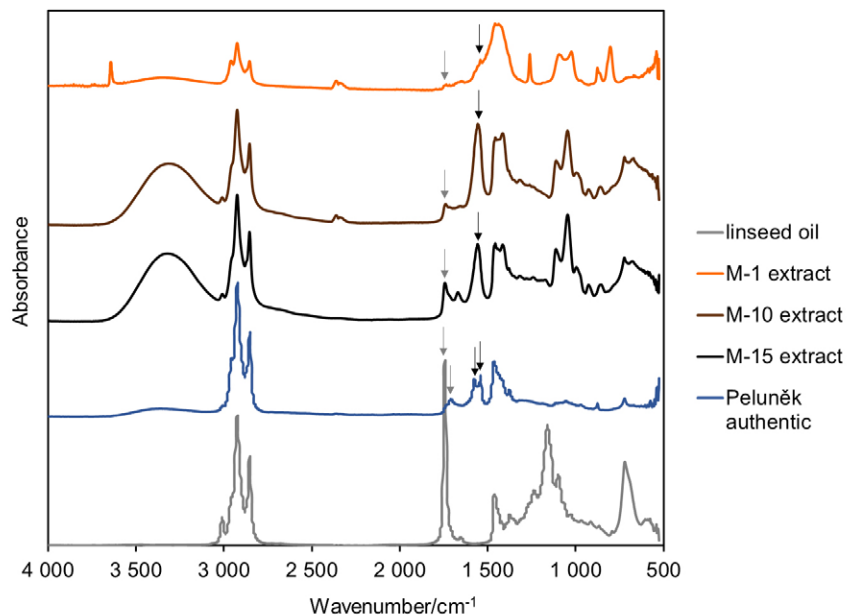
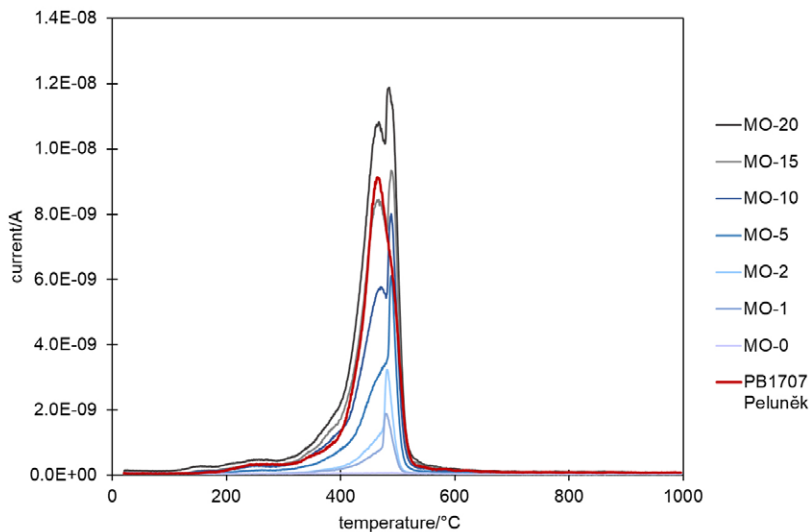


Fig. 2. EGA-MS signal of m/z 95 ion detected in model mortars containing 0 - 20 wt% linseed oil (bluish lines and historic mortar Peluněk (red line). The intensity increased with the oil content from M-0 (0 wt% linseed oil) to M-20 (20 wt% linseed oil). After [1].



Irena KUČEROVÁ

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Typology of glass tesserae used for mosaic production in the Czech Republic made in 20th century

Mural mosaics made of glass, stone, ceramics and combinations of these materials can be found in the territory of the Czech Republic. While the best-known of them, the medieval mosaic of the Last Judgement in St Vitus Cathedral in Prague, received much care in the past, hundreds of other mosaics have been outside professional attention until recently.

These works came into existence from the late nineteenth century for exteriors and interiors of both public and private buildings and also as a decoration of demanding funeral architectures. The earliest of them, implemented in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are works of foreign mosaic companies. A comprehensive line of domestic mosaic production can be observed in the Czech Republic from the 1930s, culminating in mosaics of the socialist workshop in the second half of the twentieth century.

A systematic archival and topographic survey revealed not only the richness of the musive fund but also great losses of works of art. The survey has resulted in a map offering an overview of both preserved and vanished mosaics in the whole territory of the Czech Republic. Each individual mosaic record combines information about the mosaic and photographic documentation.

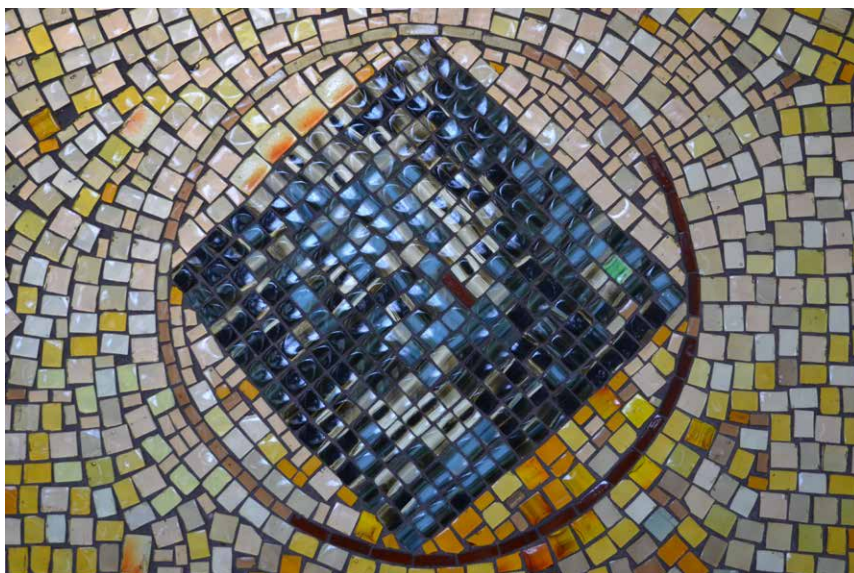


Fig. 1. Detail of Eliška Rožátová's abstract mosaic, 1969. The mosaic is a set of rectilinearly pressed tesserae of various shapes and sizes combined with rotationally pressed ones (striped tesserae forming a circle). The tesserae were produced in the former Czechoslovakia during the 60s-80s of the 20th century.

(Photo: I. Kučerová)

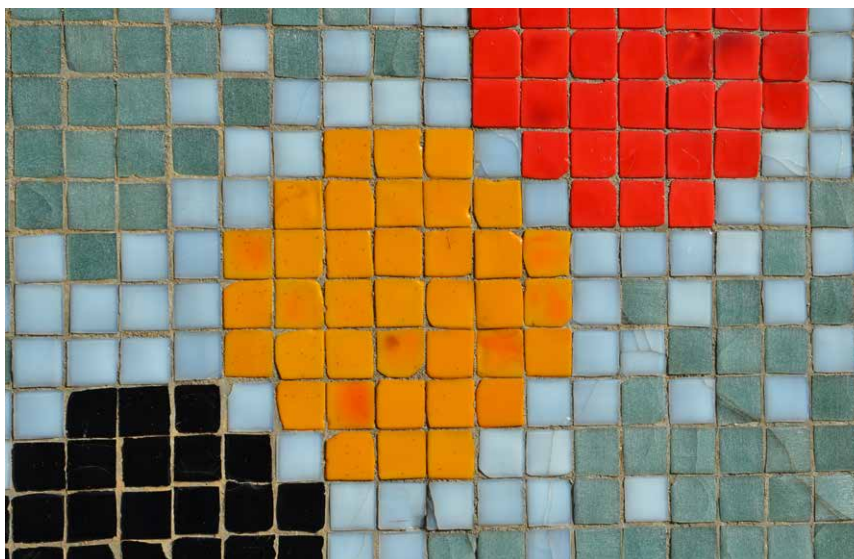


Fig. 2. Detail of mosaic Sklo a skleněná bijouterie (Glass and Glass Bijouterie) designed by Jaroslav Melich, 1968. The mosaic combines smooth and so-called sandblasted cast tesserae produced in the former Czechoslovakia.

(Photo: I. Kučerová)

Miklós Ernő BALÁZS

*Dr. habil, mosaic artist, monument conservator expert
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Use of plastic materials in mosaic art. The dilemmas and challenges in conservation

The results of natural scientific discoveries and the technological innovations of industry were immediately incorporated into the visual arts' toolbox. The reverse is also true. The forms of artistic expression, which always want to be renewed, have continuously encouraged science and industry to develop new techniques.

It was no different when plastics appeared in the 19th century. In the last 60 years, 8 billion tons of plastic have been produced in the world. Plastics were soon used by artists as raw materials, but also as auxiliary materials such as adhesives, casting resins, injecting agents, mortar repair additives, impregnations, and paints.

To this day, the profession of mosaic restoration lives under the spell of Roman, Byzantine, later Art Nouveau art, and more recently the collectivist stone and glass mosaic art of the 1950s and 1960s. Only stone, glass, lime and cement. However, the restoration of the first mosaic works which also used plastics, is slowly becoming timely. This challenge should not find the profession unprepared. The presentation outlines the problems and dilemmas of this, without, however, offering a solution to them. You will have to find it - if it is even possible.



Fig. 1. Joseph Robert Balázs: "In memory of our lost friends". Polished marble mosaic cast in epoxy resin, 1990s, 130x100 cm. Private collection
(Photo: K. Szelényi)



Fig. 2. Ibolya B. Meszléri: "Still life". Polished Pietra Dura. Marble, cast in epoxy resin. 1980s. 40x50cm. Private collection.
(Photo: M. E. Balázs)

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A Neo-Avant-Garde innovation: the "Photomosaics" of Miklós Erdély

The artist, architect, actor, and theorist Miklós Erdély inspired his contemporaries with his diverse activity and also found the narrow gap between how to remain a free-thinker and how to help others in a strictly controlled political environment of the era. Among his projects, he invented the technique of the so-called photomosaic in 1966. He worked in this genre as a designer, teacher and mosaicist between 1966-1982.

Pop art in Hungary could not respond to mass consumer culture since there was no such thing here. The photomosaics of Miklós Erdély provided a new "surface" for visual solutions in pop art and its changed relationship with objects. In Erdély's compositions, like in Western Pop Art, the world of commercial objects and the visibility of mass culture are elevated to the realm of art. Nevertheless, from the point of view of fine arts, his photomosaics are more like montages than pop art creations since the motifs of the functional wall mosaics also reflected the client's needs. The mosaics of Erdély preserve one of the great values of traditional painting, painterliness, but also have a close affinity with poster art.

Erdély and colleagues designed compositions using the photomontage technique as a preliminary plan reflecting the purpose and context or recalling the function of the interiors. He worked mainly with black and white photographs, personal ones along with those from magazines. After enlarging the composition by traditional methods, he applied industrial glazed ceramic tesserae (2x2 cm). The individually and manually selected tesserae, matching with the details of the photographs' tones served as monochrome or coloured pixels to create the transitions. His idea and realisation were completely ahead of the digital photography era. The mosaics were executed by direct technique in the studio through a collective workflow, and then the sections were mounted on site. The recognition of the value and protection of these artworks is a current issue.

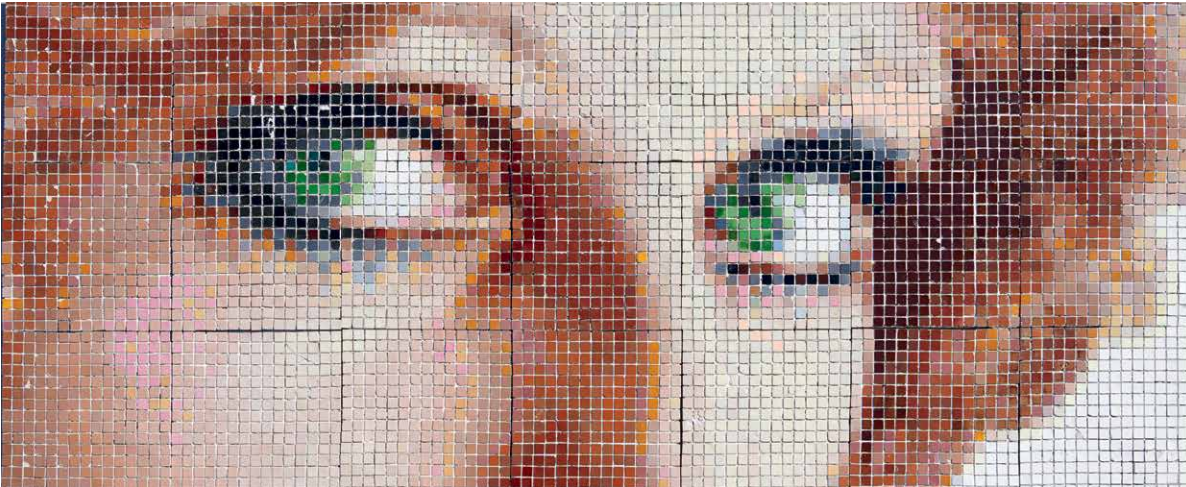


Fig. 1. Previously detached and later restored detail of the "Fabulon" photomosaic advertisement by Miklós Erdély.
(Photo: Kieselbach Archives)

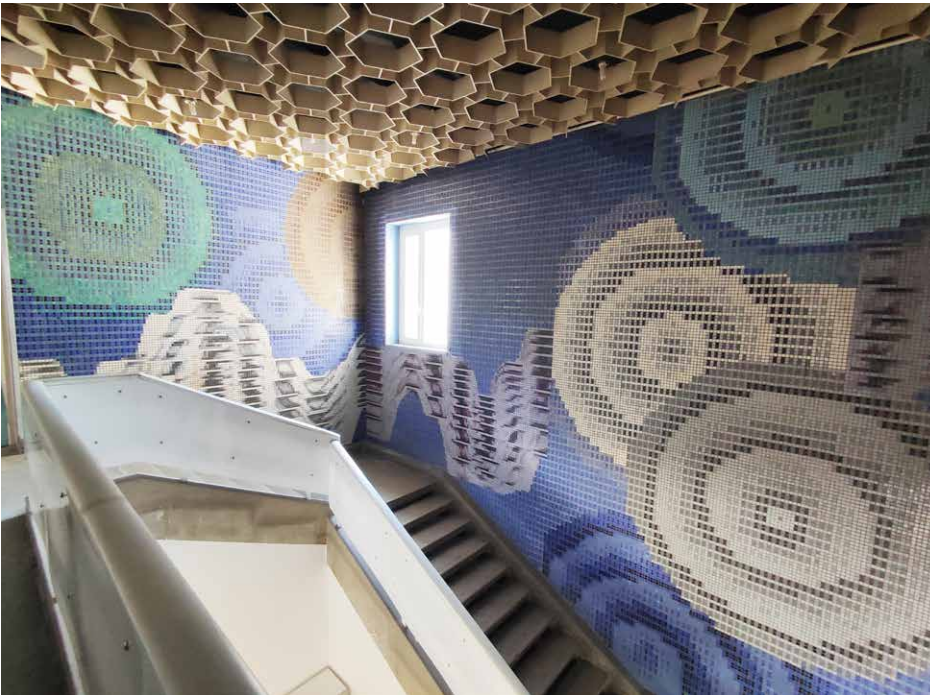


Fig. 2. "Narrowed spectra" interior by Miklós Erdély and Tamás Hencze. Photomosaic made of 2x2 cm enamelled ceramic tiles, 1971.
(Photo: B. M. Kürtösi, 2024)

Toni ŠAINA

MA, Senior conservator-restorer



Research and protective procedures carried out on the mosaic by Edo Murtić in front of the "Kockica" in Zagreb

Edo Murtić's mosaic is situated in the fountain in front of the building of the Ministry of Sea, Transport and Infrastructure in Zagreb, colloquially known as "Kockica" ("The Cube"). It was designed by the architect Ivan Vitić in 1968, and his project called "The Social-Political Organizations Building", better known as the CK SKH (Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia), is considered to be the peak of his creativity. This mosaic as an artistic intervention gave a special touch to the northern plateau, acting as an extension of the interior designed by Raul Goldoni, following the aesthetics of high modernism and featuring the works of the most famous Croatian artists.

Due to the poor condition of the mosaic, the building owners initiated research works that began with the creation of detailed documentation, which consisted of photographing the present condition and creating a 3D laser scan with a high-resolution orthophoto, as well as graphic documentation of the condition in situ. In addition, archival historical-artistic research was also carried out. Under the influence of atmospheric conditions, about 60% of the glass tiles had degraded, crumbled and fallen off. The remaining preserved mosaic tiles were in very poor condition and the base and walls of the pool had cracked, making it impossible to fill the pool with water. A facsimile reconstruction of the heavily damaged mosaic emerged as the only possible way to restore the original appearance.

The reconstruction of the mosaic was carried out in the workshop by glueing glass tiles in inversion onto paper. Inside the pool, which was previously structurally repaired, a sketch of the mosaic's field positions was made. The fields were then sequentially glued using adhesive resistant to external conditions. Finally, the mosaic was grouted with waterproof epoxy plaster, which will significantly extend its durability under external conditions. After glueing and grouting, the mosaic's surface was thoroughly cleaned and the fountain was filled with water just as the author originally had envisioned for his work.

Fig. 1. A view of the plateau, the fountain and the mosaic by Edo Murtić before protective works, 2020.
(Photo: J. Kliska)



Fig. 2. A view of the plateau, the fountain and the mosaic by Edo Murtić after protective works, 2021.
(Photo: J. Kliska)



Malu STORCH

mosaicist
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Relocation of modern wall mosaics

An issue that concerns restorers more and more often, especially regarding modern mosaics from the post-war period, is the relocation of mosaics. Buildings with art in the architectural structure are renewed and converted, or even demolished. Many of these artworks are not (yet) listed, so questions arise if they are worth being saved, if the financial outlay is justified, or whether the architect is willing to integrate the “relic” into the new building. Compromises often have to be made.

We are confronted with wall mosaics in different sizes ranging from entire wall designs via mosaics in free shapes to compact mosaics with a closed outline. Each work is individual and therefore the requirements are also very different. The decision for the most suitable deinstallation method is based on various factors such as the size of the mosaic, which materials were used, the condition of the mortar, the situation and the material of the back wall (brick or concrete).

It is also important to find a suitable new location. Technical reasons play a role here, for example what the condition of the wall is like at the new location, or whether it makes more sense to mount the mosaic in a "mobile" metal cassette, and whether the mosaic can be installed outdoors. Visual criteria also needs to be taken into account, for example how much space the mosaic needs to create its original planned visual effect. Sometimes the entire work is literally turned upside down.

Fig. 1. Original situation of the mosaic "Venzone" by Valentin Oman, Spittal (Carinthia), 1983, 2,8 x 5 m. 2019: extension of the school building, the mosaic was relocated.
(Photo: M. Storch)



Fig. 2. Wall-filling mosaics by Max Spielmann, Wattens (Tyrol), 1964. The motif "Birds" gets relocated (2024).
(Photo: M. Storch)



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Planning the conservation-restoration project – contemporary wall mosaic from the Clinical Hospital Centre in Split, Croatia

At the end of the 20th century, Vinko Protić Pipin created a decorative wall mosaic in the waiting room of the Emergency Surgical Reception of the Clinical Hospital Centre in Split. The mosaic covers an area of approximately 16 square metres, and it is made of polychrome irregular pieces of glass paste or smalti.

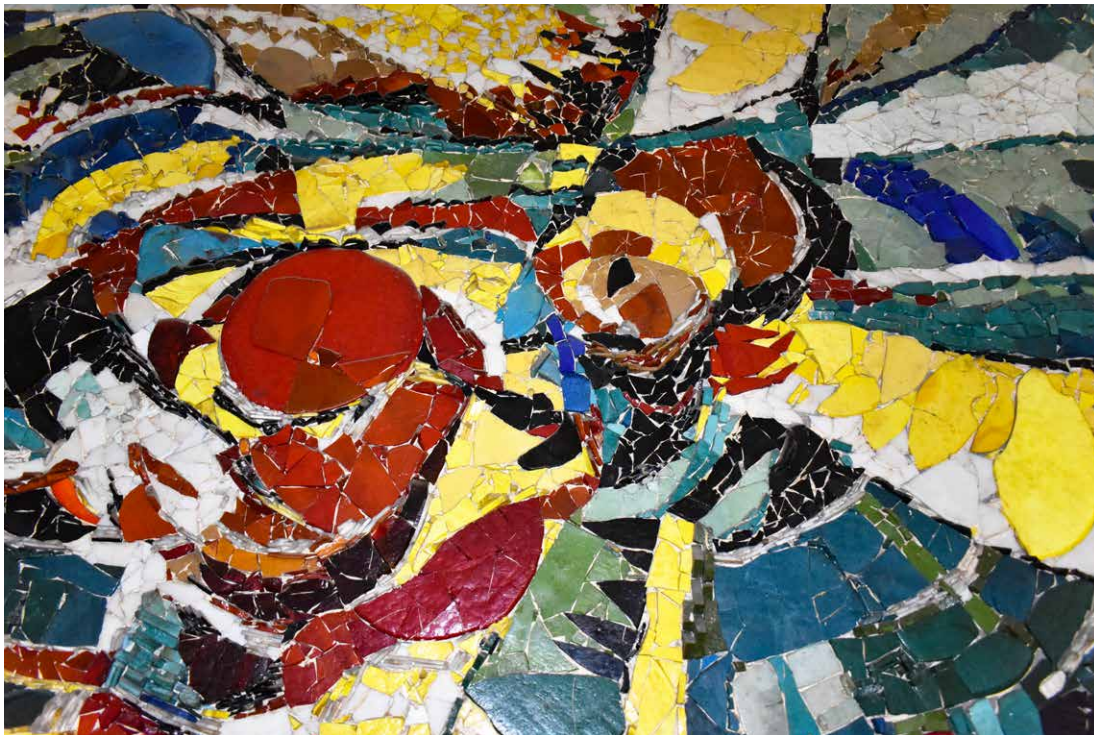
In order to protect and preserve the mosaic during the renovation and reconstruction of the hospital emergency unit, the Croatian Conservation Institute created a plan for conservation-restoration works.

The project was adjusted to the necessary relocation of the mosaic due to new architectural space layout. Extensive research was carried out about the original mosaic-making techniques and the materials used, the method of division and separation, as well as the possibility of assembly and display in the new space was considered. An additional challenge was the fact that the work had to be coordinated with the work of the emergency surgical admission unit.

Fig. 1. Wall mosaic by Vinko Pipin Protić from the Split Clinical Hospital Centre in Croatia
(Photo: I. Jerković)



Fig. 2. Detail of the wall mosaic by Vinko Pipin Protić from the Split Clinical Hospital Centre in Croatia.
(Photo: I. Jerković)



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“The New Heritage”: a preservation attempt for the façade monumental art (1960s-1989) from Bulgaria

The project: “The New Heritage: Approaches to conservation and dissemination of contemporary monumental façade art in Bulgaria” was realised between 2022 and 2024 by the Balkan Heritage Foundation and funded by National Culture Fund. It focused on the preservation and conservation of façade monumental art: mosaic, sgraffito, ceramic artwork, and metal artwork created in the Socialist period in Bulgaria after 1960 until 1989 in Burgas, Veliko Tarnovo, Plovdiv and Sofia.

Involving a broad team of experts with expertise in conservation, history of art, legislation for cultural heritage, the goal of the project was to create a framework for systematic protection, conservation and documentation for this legally unprotected category of monuments. This also included a condition assessment of 80 façade monuments and the creation of a prototype for a register containing documental and conservation information.

The largest category of façade art from this period is the mosaics made of predominantly natural stones and smalt. There is no information about the materials or any conservation attempts. Monumental works of art once created to decorate exterior façades and interiors of public buildings are now standing as witnesses of past legacies and aspirations of the Soviet state establishments as well as illustrative examples of state propaganda. This heritage carries encrypted stories, symbolisms, and conflicting, politicised messages, which perhaps overshadow their artistic, historic and evidential value.

In the recent years, a number of noteworthy independent initiatives have started documenting the remnants of this heritage in different post-Soviet states, including Ukraine (and the territories of Crimea Luhansk and Donetsk), Georgia, Moldova, and the Czech Republic, which are under threat of demolition in the wider scoping of decommunization. The present project aims to consolidate and link these efforts much like a setting bed in mosaic stratigraphy, and hence to strengthen the work of documentation and dialogue for preservation of this unique expression of the Soviet era.



Fig. 1. Detail of the mosaic from the Former Communist party's building in Plovdiv.
(Photo: A. Chalakov)

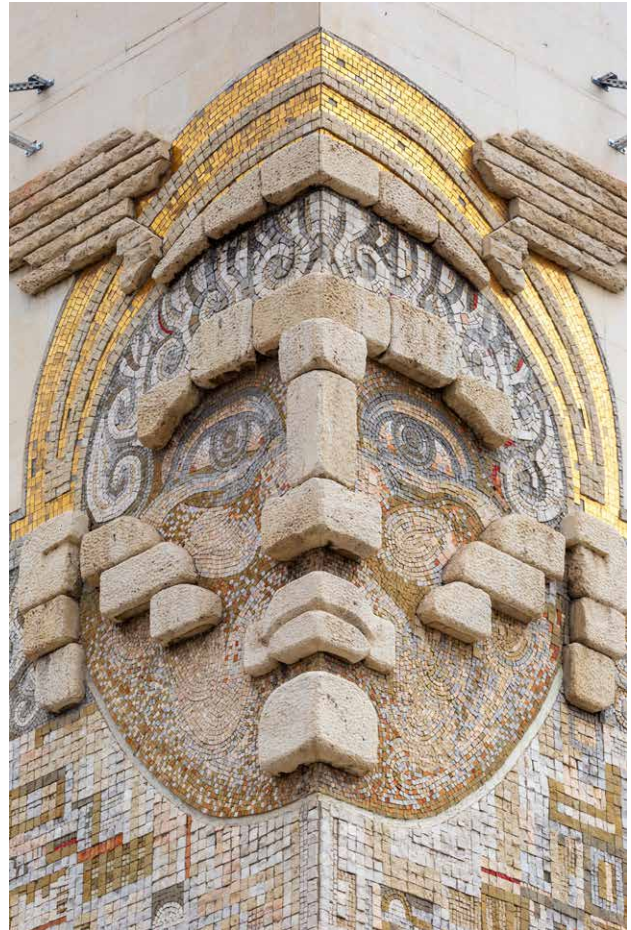


Fig. 2. The corner of the international Fair Building, Plovdiv.
(Photo: A. Chalakov)

Blaž ŠEME

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Analysis of the state of conservation and endangerment of mosaics from the socialist era (1945-1990) in Slovenia

In the socialist period from 1945 to 1990, numerous mosaics were created in Slovenia, but until recently they have not been catalogued and studied as a whole. In recent years, the Department for Restoration at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design at the University of Ljubljana has begun to record them and to collect data on their condition through desk and field research.

Many of the earliest mosaics are in the style of socialist realism and show figurative depictions of the national liberation struggle and the development of the working class and peasantry in the post-war period. In the 1950s, more abstract representations also began to appear. From the 1960s onwards, there were also more church commissions, but this field is less researched. Understandably, we also have less insight into private commissions and artwork. The mosaics were mostly designed by Slovenian artists and most often made by the Italian mosaicist Alfio Tambosso.

With this research, which includes the study of various sources and field visits, we have managed to create a database of more than 50 mosaics in Slovenia and analyse their condition and endangerment. The list of mosaics includes all currently known mosaics created in the period between 1945-1990, regardless of artistic quality or other selection criteria. Thus, the register also includes mosaics that are more decorative, illustrative or informative.

The mosaics are generally in good condition, regularly maintained and some have recently been conserved-restored. The analysis of the collected data confirms the assumption that mosaics are better preserved in interiors and on buildings of national and local significance. But there are also exceptions. It is surprising, however, that mosaics without a socialist theme are generally somewhat less well-preserved, and those on buildings with registered heritage status are on average significantly less well-preserved.

Fig. 1. Monument with mosaic panels in Mislinja, which will require conservation-restoration.
(Photo: B. Šeme)



Fig. 2. Mosaic by E. Bernard and A. Tambosso in the Petrol building in Ljubljana with some pieces falling off; detail view. (Photo: B. Šeme)



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Blue or red? Decision making in conservation of a 1980's glass mosaic on an aluminium support

A pair of mosaics decorating the northeast façade of the cultural house in Ústí nad Orlicí were created according to a design by the artist Václav Zeman in 1983. The first mosaic depicts three young women with a bouquet and the second one represents a young couple in the background of an urban landscape with factories and originally a red flag.

The mosaic was created with a special technology that was only made in Czechoslovakia by the national enterprise Železnobrodské sklo. The mosaics consist of composite panels that were prepared in advance in the studio. The panels were created by glueing prefabricated rectangular tesserae of clear glass onto aluminium plates using a special polymer, which was then cured by baking. The mosaic composed in this way has a very specific visual character, where underneath the clear coloured cubes, a shiny aluminium sheet is reflected.

This character was disrupted in 2010 when, on the occasion of a visit to the city President Václav Klaus, the then mayor decided to overpaint the flag blue using a semi-matte paint. As part of the current conservation, which included mainly the completion of missing parts of the mosaics damaged by vandalism, it was proposed to remove the secondary paint. This proposal has aroused controversy, which will be described in this paper.

Fig. 1. Zeman's mosaic in the Cultural House of Ústí nad Orlicí with overpainted flag in the background.
(Photo: J. Vojtěchovský)

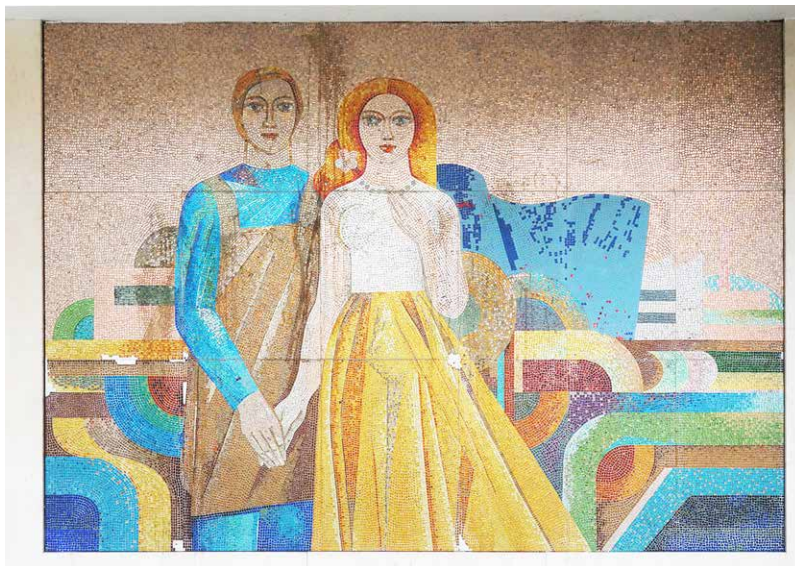


Fig. 2. The overpainted detail during uncovering.
(Photo: J. Vojtěchovský)



Nini PALAVANDISHVILI

*Curator, researcher
Independent scholar*



20th-century mosaics in Georgia: Policies & Practices for Preservation

The mosaics that boomed across Georgia during the 20th century have ingrained themselves so deeply into our collective visual memory that their significance goes unnoticed, or worse, they are disregarded and covered with advertisements. Frequently associated with the Soviet era, these mosaics are mainly seen as tools of propaganda, reflecting the ideological underpinnings of the regime.

While it is undeniable that much of the monumental-decorative art from the Soviet period served propagandistic purposes, promoting ideals like the triumph of the proletariat and the advance of industrialization, it is important to recognise that themes such as friendship, family and leisure also found expression in this art form. The choice of themes for these mosaics was often dictated by the function of the building they adorned, yet within the context of Georgia, unique interpretations that differed from centrally imposed standards emerged.

The mosaics on cultural, educational, industrial, or independent structures in Georgia are rich with pictorial representations of commonly familiar or national symbols. They often depict saints, heroes, fables, and symbolic representations of similar themes. Sadly, many of these artworks now face the threat of destruction, with some already lost forever. The preservation of these mosaics requires not only political will but also active engagement from the professional community and heightened public interest.

Regrettably, there appears to be a lack of comprehensive efforts to safeguard these invaluable cultural artefacts. Without mediation, these mosaics risk fading into obscurity, erasing not only a visual record of the history of Georgia but also the diverse narratives and interpretations they encapsulate. It is essential that steps be taken to protect and celebrate these mosaics as integral elements of the cultural heritage of Georgia and other countries.

Fig. 1. Khevsurs' Wedding, Vakhtang Kokiashvili, 1968-69
(Photo: N. Palavandishvili)



Fig. 2. Former Cafe "Fantasia", Architect George Chakhava / Mosaic Zurab Kapanadze, 1980
(Photo: N. Palavandishvili)



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Czechoslovak mosaics and the growing interest in their preservation

In the Czech Republic, over 300 mosaic works from the socialist era (1948-1989) can be found. In the course of time, the status of these mosaics has shifted from contemporary artworks to historic monuments. Since they have not been considered “historic enough” and due to the controversy they may raise (the connection with the past oppressive regime), quite low attention has been paid to their characterization and conservation. Thus little is known about their material composition and degradation processes. Understanding these issues can bring a significant benefit to design proper conservation and restoration strategies.

The production of mosaics was state-controlled under socialism. Most of the mosaic works were created in the specialised state mosaic studio of the Ústředí uměleckých řemesel (Central Art & Craft Studio). Over the years, the studio staff developed standardised procedures for assembling mosaics. Tesserae were generally applied alla prima to reinforced concrete slabs in the studio, and the panels were subsequently assembled on site into the final unit. Typical tesserae materials were either stone of various geological origins (both hewn and unhewn) or mosaic glass. Czechoslovakia was one of only three countries in the world where local mosaic glass was produced.

The aim of our work was to study, rescue, restore and characterise some of the Czechoslovak socialist mosaics. We also focused on the materials - i.e. the mosaic mortars and other binders. A wide range of analytical methods (scanning electron microscopy, light microscopy, thermal analysis, x-ray diffraction, infrared spectroscopy and gas chromatography) was used to characterise the composition and properties of the mortars of socialist mosaics.



Fig. 1. Květa and Jitka Válový: "Orchids". Carton and mosaic. Ohradní 1159/65 Praha 4, Michle, 1976-77
(Photo: The Archives of the Válový-sisters and M. Kracík-Storkanová)



Fig. 2. Ivan Vychlopen: "The Wise Cat". Ceramic mosaic, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1972. Restored in 2022-23.
(Photo: M. Kracík-Storkanová)

Matko KEZELE¹ - Tea TRUMBIĆ²

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Restoration of the mosaics on the monument to the fallen soldiers and victims of fascism in Plovanija, Croatia

The monument in Plovanija, on the border with Croatia and Slovenia is a project by the sculptor Aleksandar Rukavina (1934-1985). The memorial sculpture was inaugurated in 1981 and represents three concrete vertical fins where the artist projected three mosaic panels designed and executed by him.

After more than 40 years, the visible degradation of the mosaics requested a major intervention. The mosaics were made with 2x2 cm industrial glass tiles with not more than 15 colours. They depict three typical subjects for this type of memorial monument that are the fight, transporting the wounded and national costumes.

The restoration work consisted of detaching the original remains due to the degradation of the material with the purpose of preserving and presenting the mosaics in a safe environment. On the base of the original mosaics, the whole reconstruction was carried out with new glass mosaic tiles using the inverse technique on paper. New materials like glue and grout that are more compatible with the glass tiles were used making the new mosaics more durable for the open air environment.

Fig. 1. Overview of the restored monument, Plovanija.
(Photo: M. Kezele)



Fig. 2. View of the restored mosaic panel with the theme of national costumes, Plovanija.
(Photo: M. Kezele)



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Ukrainian Soviet monumental mosaics under double threat of destruction

The history of the Soviet period has always been a very complex and emotionally tense topic for Ukrainians. Not least because it was and is the subject of constant manipulation and speculation by Kremlin propaganda, particularly since the annexation of Crimea, the beginning of the Russian military intervention in 2014, and especially after the full-scale war in 2022. Russian propaganda has specifically claimed the Soviets as Russian. As a result, the Soviet is no longer perceived as the Ukrainian past but mostly as the Russian present. This leads to growing intolerance and hatred toward this heritage in society.

Due to such manipulations, Ukrainians are ready to get rid of the cultural heritage of the complex, totalitarian past. But it is the time when a unique Ukrainian Soviet cultural phenomenon was created. Unfortunately, it is now disappearing rapidly.

The most vulnerable is art in public space, in particular mosaic panels from the 1960s and 1980s. These works are destroyed by Russian shells and by Ukrainians themselves in the process of decommunization. In my paper, I will present how the Ukrainian Soviet cultural heritage is being studied and actualized in Ukraine by independent researchers and activist initiatives. Moreover, I will also discuss how valuable works of art are lost as a result of the official policy of memory.

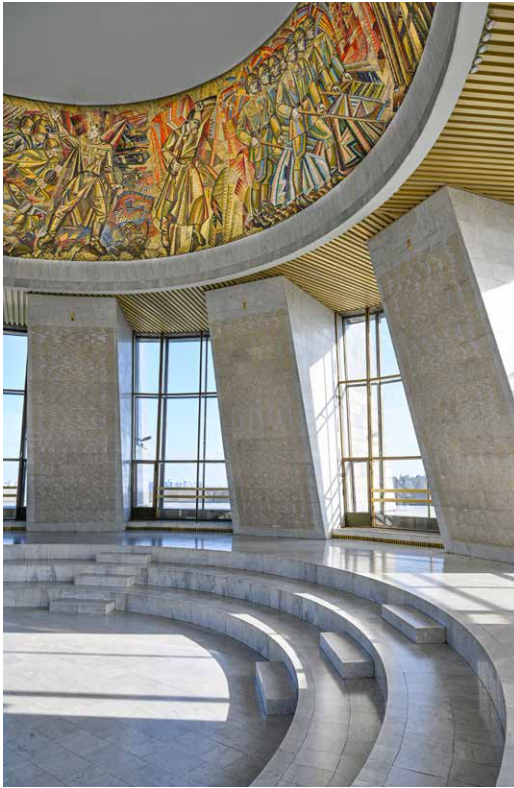


Fig. 1. Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War with mosaic frieze, 1981. Authors: Stepan Kyrychenko, Roman Kyrychenko, Nadiia Klein.
(Photo: D. Solovyov, 2024)



Fig. 2. Detail of the mosaic, Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War, 1981. Authors: Stepan Kyrychenko, Roman Kyrychenko, Nadiia Klein.
(Photo: D. Solovyov, 2024)

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The story of SEE Mosaics

The SEE Mosaics project is an initiative aimed at raising awareness of the need for the organised protection of the mosaic heritage and strengthening the mosaic conservation profession in Southeast Europe.

The video presents the story and people behind the SEE Mosaics through short interviews and experiences of individuals who have been part of the project over the years. It illustrates the journey from the initial idea in 2008, through the survey on Mosaic Conservation and Training of Conservators in Southeast Europe, to the network of experts dedicated to preserving the mosaic heritage of the Southeast Europe region.

For over a decade, we have been striving to achieve our goals: recording and assessing regional capacities, developing a network of professionals and promoting mosaic heritage through collaborative efforts with many colleagues. We are pleased that the project has strengthened connections among professionals and institutions involved in mosaic heritage, demonstrating the value of fostering positive relations, collaboration and knowledge exchange in heritage preservation.

The video was filmed during the previous SEE Mosaics Meeting V, held in Zaječar, Serbia in 2019.

Fig. 1. Meeting of the survey team in Ohrid, North Macedonia in 2011.
(Photo: SEE Mosaics Archives)



Fig. 2. SEE Mosaics Meeting V in Zaječar, Serbia in 2019.
(Photo: S. Ristic)



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Belgrade City Museum 3



Preservation vs. Profit: The Battle Over 'Beogradjanka' Mosaic and Cultural Heritage in Belgrade

Belgrade Palace or "Beogradjanka" is a business building in Belgrade. It was built in the period from 1969 to 1974, based on the designs of architect Branko Pešić, as the first skyscraper in the city centre. It was built exactly 50 years ago. At that time, it was one of the most modern office buildings in Yugoslavia, the first "smart" and the tallest building in the Balkans with a height of 101 metres or 24 floors. The interior of the building was decorated with works of contemporary and applied art, including mosaics.

In 2018, the "Beogradjanka" was sold to private owners. During the purchase, the new owner stated "We are aware of the fact that Beogradjanka is one of Belgrade's landmarks and we will enter into its reconstruction with maximum responsibility and enthusiasm". Of course, wishes and promises rarely come true in such cases. One of the things that stood in the way of modernization and the ideas of the new designers was the mosaic on the 9th floor, the work of Tanasije Stojić Ruzmarin, measuring 24x1.2m. Fortunately, the Belgrade City Museum prevented its destruction and alerted the authorities, so that the new owner, forced by law, accepted to finance the removal of a part of the artwork from the original place. On that occasion, a 10x1.2m piece of the mosaic was removed and is now stored at the Museum, while the rest of this mosaic is still at its original place. The conservation treatment will be shown here.

Unfortunately, the same fate befell a large number of art in public institutions from that period. The obvious conclusion is that profit is much more important than the preservation of cultural heritage, and that the attitude of the state and the insufficient education when it comes to the importance of heritage preservation are to blame.



Fig. 1. Belgrade Palace
(Photo: N. Smičiklas)



Fig. 2. Preparation for conservation. Detail of the mosaic with the author's name.
(Photo: M. Protić)

Marijana PROTIĆ

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Lost treasure found

The National Museum of Užice (NMU) is a complex as well as a regional museum responsible for nine municipalities of the Zlatibor district. It was founded in 1946, first as the Museum of the 1941 Uprising. In 1955, the two main NMU buildings were connected by a pergola, on which two mosaics made of marble tesserae with an anti-fascist theme, the work of the academic painter Rajko Nikolić, were applied.

Not long after its installation, in 1961, the pergola was removed, and the mosaic was cut into panels measuring 0.80 x 2 m, which were placed in the underground humid tunnel belonging to the Museum, where they can be found still today. A number of 27 plates were identified, of which five are broken. There is no information about the installation or removal of the pergola in the documentation of the Museum, and it is assumed that the reason for this was political in nature.

The mentioned mosaics are a valuable testimony of the era when socialist realism gave way before the return to modernism, and they certainly do not deserve to be placed in the storage space of the Museum. Their presentation to the public would contribute to fostering the culture and memory of the anti-fascist struggle, which is one of the distinguishing features of the NMU.

The problems that the conservation and restoration of such mosaics represent are definitely the result of using modern materials and inadequate storage spaces. Reinforced concrete, widely used as mosaic carrier material nowadays leaves with lots of difficulties and questions.



Fig. 1. Current state of the mosaics uncovered.
(Photo: M. Protić)



Fig. 2. Tunnel where mosaics were stored.
(Photo: M. Protić)

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The memorial “Glavnjača” case study: Modern mosaic restoration amidst the construction site

The poster will present the conservation-restoration of the mosaic made in 1974 on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the liberation of Belgrade. It is part of the memorial, displayed in front of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics - the former Administration of the City of Belgrade called "Glavnjača", demolished during bombing in 1944. The memorial, made in memory of fallen communists and freedom fighters imprisoned there, is composed of a mosaic and the sculpture created by Milorad Tepavac. The mosaic bears the text of Svetozar Trebješanin.

The mosaic was made using large tesserae of six different types of local limestone and white marble for the text. Mosaic fragments were embedded in the floor with a total surface of 10.85 m². The damages ranged from the surface deterioration of tesserae (especially affecting burgundy coloured limestone “Sirogojno”), loss of cohesion between original cement base and tesserae to lacunae of various sizes.

The project involved dismantling the mosaic (lifting in fragments following the methodology for lifting ancient mosaics), relaying onto a new concrete base and restoration. The restoration included the reintegration of the original tesserae (separated from the substrate during the process of lifting), reconstruction of lacunae and integration of new tesserae.

The mosaic restoration was part of the project aimed at the structural stabilisation of landslides affecting the faculty building. Therefore, it was carried out in cooperation between the building company, which was the main contractor, and restorers. The challenges in conservation involved reconciling the needs of preserving the tessellatum during lifting and relaying with time constraints, and the general implementation of delicate conservation work during the ongoing construction works of building stabilisation.



Fig. 1. State of conservation of the mosaic. (Photo D. Maksimović)



Fig. 2. The memorial “Glavnjača” after restoration. (Photo: V. Džikić)

Matko KEZELE

mosaic artist and restorer
Mozaikart



Restoration of a glass mosaic from a private collection by the artist Edo Murtić

The Croatian artist Edo Murtić created a small mosaic panel which is now part of a private collection. The mosaic was gifted to the owner of the apartment in Rijeka, where it was originally installed on the balcony wall. The mosaic represents an abstract fish. Even without a signature, its style can be clearly attributed to Edo Murtić. Before the panel was removed in 2007 from its location, the surface was cleaned and a gaze was applied using polyvinyl glue.

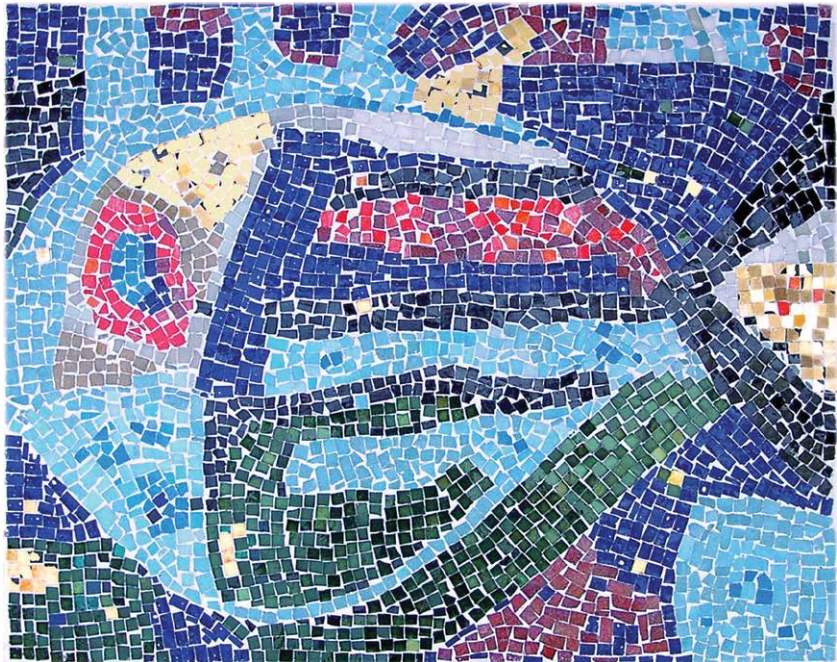
Degradation occurred due to its location and the use of jute as reinforcement, but the main cause of the degradation of the mosaic was the bedding layer, which consisted of two layers of gypsum. Exposure to the sun and the proximity to the sea, which brought constant humidity, also contributed to the degradation. Most of the mosaic is made with industrial glass tiles, but the artist also combined glass paste from Venice to achieve a greater variety of colours, as well as gold tesserae. The particularity of this mosaic is that the gold tesserae are used on both sides, utilising the transparent background of green glass to create a depth effect on the surface.

The restoration process began by removing all the gypsum from the background down to the joints. Afterward, the work proceeded with the reintegration of the missing pieces that had fallen off the mosaic over time. Following the reconstruction, the mosaic was installed into a cement base plaster. The gaze was removed, and the work was finalised by making some small corrections on the face of the mosaic and performing basic cleaning.

Fig. 1. The process of removing the gypsum from the background of the mosaic.
(Photo: M. Kezele)



Fig. 2. The mosaic by the artist Edo Murtić after the restoration process.
(Photo: M. Kezele)



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Restoration of mosaics using modern materials

This poster inquires into the usage of modern technologies and materials in mosaic restoration, with special emphasis on utilisation in museum conditions or in situ. By utilising Mapei Adesilex P10 and Isolastic in the absence of original tesserae, the restoration of missing pieces is facilitated. Mapei Adesilex P10, a high-quality white cementitious adhesive, ensures bonding between the mosaic and the substrate, while Isolastic enhances the flexibility of the adhesive, preventing cracking over time.

Missing pieces, where we have enough information, can be replaced by creating separate tesserae that are inserted into lacunae or filled with a mixture, followed by tesserae sculpting. Restoration of mosaics in situ employs this material in combination with various aggregates to achieve specific structure and texture, while different pigments are added for obtaining colours and tones. Structure and texture can also be achieved mechanically, using different tools on the surface of new tesserae. In museum conditions, restoration can be conducted similarly to in situ, with pigment retouching subsequently, enabling precise colouring of the surface of new tesserae.

This research and the techniques enable restorers to preserve and restore mosaics, maintaining their aesthetics and historical value for future generations.



Fig. 1. Retouching of the uncoloured tesserae reconstruction.
(Photo: M. Protić)



Fig. 2. Reconstructing with pre-coloured material.
(Photo: M. Protić)

Martina RAJZL

*Senior conservator-restorer
Archaeological Museum Zadar, Croatia*



Preventive conservation of mosaics and columns in the assembly of the Roman villa at Košljun hill in Novalja, Croatia

A 8.05-metre long and 7.05-metre wide floor mosaic with columns has been preserved as part of the Roman villa. The mosaic is monochrome, made with the opus tessellatum technique from irregularly cut black and white square pebbles, while the columns are made of a thick layer of plaster on the outside and filled with larger fragments of semicircular bricks inside. The central composition of the mosaic is composed of black cubes, while the decorative lane between the columns is made in black and white.

The mosaic and columns in the Roman villa were preserved in extremely poor condition, and during the archaeological research it was necessary to carry out urgent preventive protection.

The poster will present the following problems:

- fractures and breaks in the mosaic surface,
- anomalies in the level of the floor and at some points subsidence or bulging, caused mainly by surface anomalies and geological changes,
- disintegration of the materials of the substratum,
- biological activity, for example large vegetation roots or penetration of a fine root network into the tessellatum led to the detachment and loss of individual tesserae or loss of entire areas of the tessellatum creating smaller and larger lacunae in the surface of the mosaic,
- and fractures and breaks on the columns surface.

The main focus of further work is whether the Roman villa with the mosaic should be visible and accessible to the public, and what types of constructions can be applied as a protective shelter that includes protection of the mosaics on the one hand, and ensuring a consistent and aesthetic appearance of the site on the other.

Fig. 1. Aerial view of a Roman villa with mosaics and columns at Košljun hill, Novalja, Croatia.
(Photo: R. Maršić)



Fig. 2. Mosaics and columns in the assembly of the Roman villa at Košljun hill in Novalja, Croatia.
(Photo: R. Maršić)



Emír KAPETANOVIĆ

*restorer of archaeological materials
National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina*



The reconstruction of “Panik”

The poster presents the visual reconstruction of the full composition of “Orpheus”, an ancient Roman floor mosaic, from an excavation site in Panik near the small city Bileća, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the last third of the 3rd century AD.

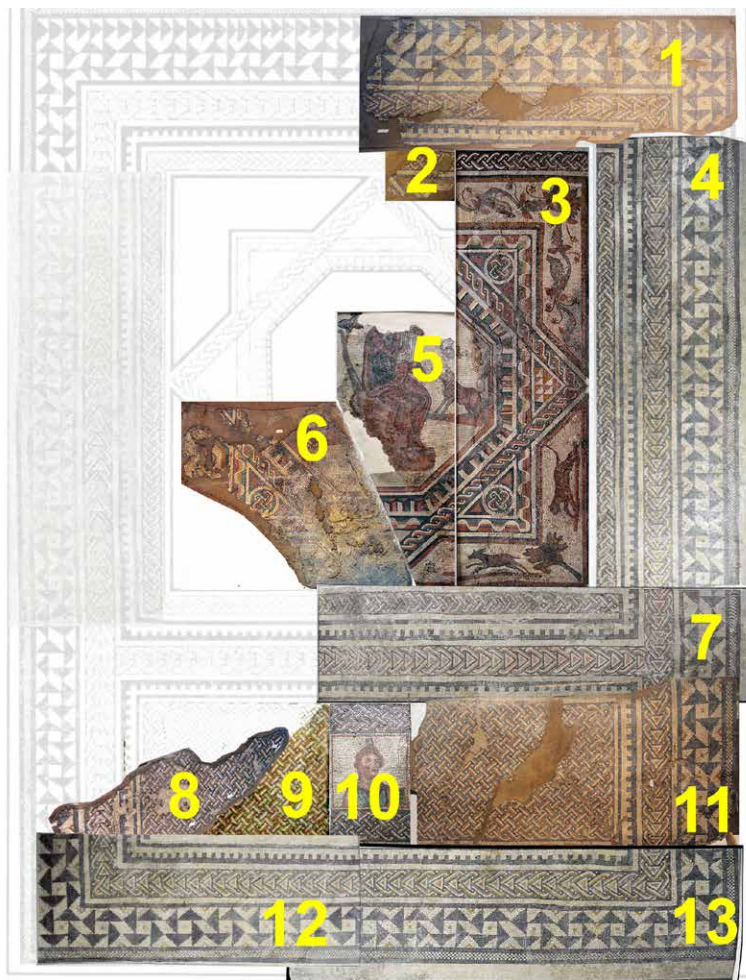
The mosaic was dislocated from the original excavation site during the middle of the last century, and its parts are now in storage at the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It represents Orpheus in an octagonal frame with the bull, snake, tree and a bird, and the muse Calliope in a rectangular frame beneath Orpheus. There are 13 parts on boards in the museum, and two out of the 13 parts were restored during a workshop in collaboration between Opificio delle Pietre Dure, the Italian Institute for Conservation and the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The purpose of the poster is to initiate a discussion about finding the best solution for the possible presentation of the visual reconstruction of the full composition within the museum collection.

Fig. 1. Protecting edges of fragment no. P8.
(Photo: E. Kapetanović)



Fig. 2. Reconstructed total view of the fragments. Orpheus mosaic, Panik, (P1-13).
(Photo: E. Kapetanović)



Maja Zivić

*PhD, archaeologist
National Museum in Zaječar, Serbia*



Mosaics of Felix Romuliana, Galerius's Palace between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th century AD

Felix Romuliana, the Memorial Palace of the Emperor Caius Valerius Maximianus Galerius, (293-311) is built in the birthplace of Galerius near Zaječar, in Eastern Serbia, and was named after his divine mother Romula. It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007.

The court complex is walled by a unique double fortification formed from the remains of the older fortification nested into the younger one. Galerius possibly started building the older fortification only after his great victory over Persians in 298 AD, while the building of the younger fortification started in 305/6 AD. The pilaster with the representation of tetrarchs in medallions testifies that 305 AD, the year in which Galerius was proclaimed Augustus, is the year which we can count as the beginning of building of the palace. The whole complex was probably supposed to be completed by celebration of the 20th Anniversary of Galerius' reign (vicennalia) and his voluntary abdication in 313 AD which was prevented by his death in 311.

Remains of mosaics cover approximately 1.800m² of floor of the Palace. They are the most impressive visual expression of the idea and political concept of the Tetrarchy as well as a testimony of Galerius's adoration of the God Dionysus. The most important mosaics, Dionysus on a feast, the Labyrinth and Venatores, were removed and placed in the National Museum "Zaječar". The others are covered with sand, except one mosaic in the round entrance hall of the stibadium of the Palace. The National Museum "Zaječar" and the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Belgrade asked UNESCO for permission to create protective structures over 325 m² of mosaics in the entrance hall (vestibulum) of the palace for their presentation and got an affirmative response.



Fig. 1. Felix Romuliana,
aero-photo
(Photo: R. Milojević)



Fig. 2. Mosaic pavement in the
vestibulum of the Palace.
(Photo: R. Milojević)

Peter BERZOBHATY

conservator/restorer of mural paintings & mosaic



"FABULOUS MOSAICS - The Palace Mosaic of Constantinople and other Amazing Mosaics"

Preview of a forthcoming book in Romanian/English version: Based on the results of the restoration of the so-called "Palace Mosaic of Constantinople" and the conservation of the dome mosaics of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, the author attempts to change the perception of Late Antique mosaics.

He discusses the various aspects of mosaic making, the bedding layers and the preparatory steps of a graphic sinopia on the core and, in particular, the fresco painting on the setting bed followed by the execution with stone and glass tesserae. Attention is also given to comparable Late Roman mosaics from recent excavations in eastern Anatolia, the Roman province of Syria, and in particular to those with background arches formerly known as "scales". A new dating for the Palace Mosaic is the result of this and several other art-comparison and source-text studies.

A final chapter deals with computer-aided methods of creating templates for the presentation process i.e. the retouching. Somehow a new integrity must be achieved for such unique works of art, for these mosaics deserve more than just an archaeological presentation.

Maria DUMBRAVICIAN

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Presentation of Peter Berzobohaty's book "Fabulous mosaics",
a new bilingual English and Romanian edition

Fig. 1. Cover of the book "FABULOUS MOSAICS" with a detail of the mosaic at 30 year intervals including a suggested version in the future (?)

(Photo: P. Berzobohaty-Gastl)

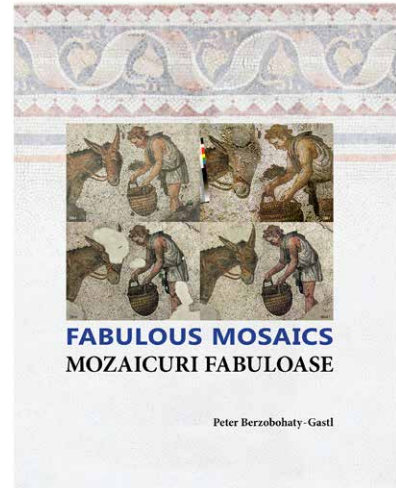
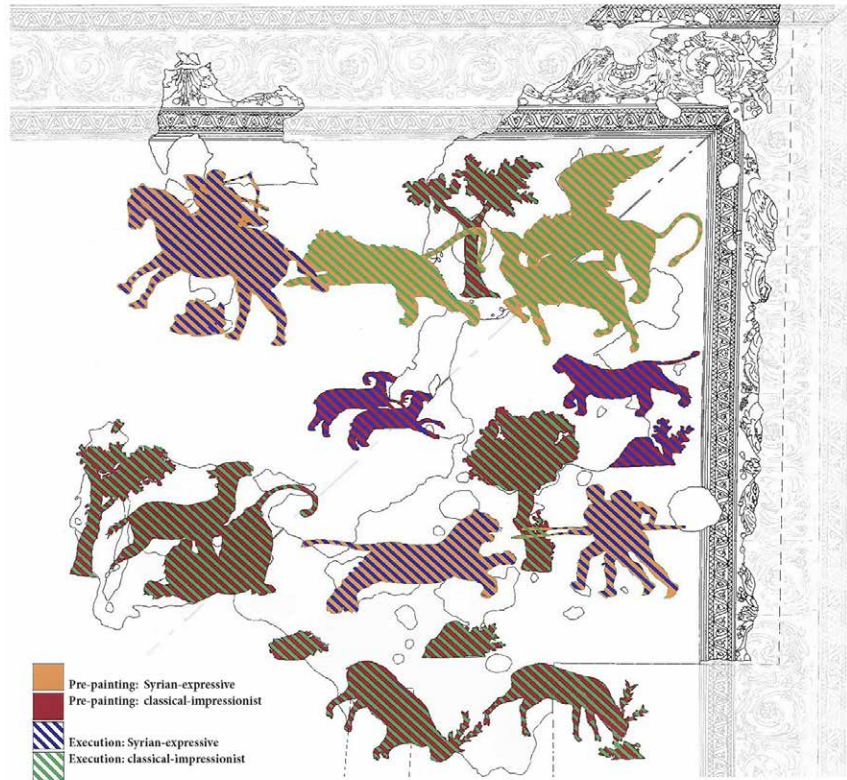


Fig. 2. Back cover of the book: Overlay of different styles of preparatory painting with different styles of execution of tesserae setting on the Palace Mosaic. (Photo: P. Berzobohaty-Gastl)



⬡ NOTES























IMPRESSUM

6th SEE Mosaics Meeting
"MOSAICS FROM 1900s
Modern Materials, New Problems in Focus"

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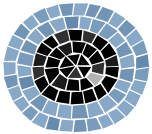
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