The excavations held in Kamkoutis' field in the city of Velvento, near Kozani, Greece so far have revealed a villa dated in the early Byzantine period. Three of the villa's rooms are covered with mosaic floors. The mosaicists share the common repertory. Floral and vegetal elements are predominant, while animal and mythological scenes are excluded. The good workmanship of the floor makes this discovery of considerable interest.

Key words: Velvento near Kozani, early Byzantine mosaic floor, floral elements, vegetal ornaments, geometric designs, Tesserae.
The room E communicates directly with the central room ST of the villa which is considered to be the so-called "triclinium" through a wide doorway. The floor was paved with mosaics. Some of its parts are ruined. The preserved parts of the mosaic in room ST display intricate purely geometric patterns created from stone tesserae of a variety of colours: black, white, red, blue and yellow.

The central section is divided into many panels (Fig. 4). Octagons and squares are alternating with crosses and octagons. Within the crosses an interlace with eyelets ornament is revealed. Within the squares and octagons, a large number of geometric designs are inscribed: intersecting circles, chequerboard ornament, step ornaments in a circle, swastikas, fish – scale ornament, semi – circles, ivy leaf, extended crosses star with a square inscribed basketwave, parallel zigzag ornament, rosette running dog ornament formed in a circle, double axe.

Around the central section run four series of borders (Fig. 5). The outer border consists of lozenges which include rectangles. The following pattern is an interlace with eyelets, the next one consists of three strips of interlace, while the innermost border is decorated with rinceau.

Excavations brought to light a mosaic pavement with similar patterns in the south aisle of saint Paul’s basilica in Ko which has been dated to the late fifth or early sixth century. Also, in the central aisle of saint Leonidis’ basilica in Klapsi of Evritania which has been dated to the sixth century.

Excavation was carried on to the north and north-east side of the triclinium (room ST). Seven rooms of the villa were uncovered. The floor of room named L was paved with mosaics (Fig. 6). The design of the mosaics differs from those of the previous rooms. The predominant motif consists of a central circle with a bird and four flowers around. This central panel is surrounded by a border with a running dog

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ornament. Eleven concentric circles with rows of triangles, which form the pattern of the pine-cone are designed around the central element (Fig. 7).

The angles between the pine-cone and the enclosing square are filled with four different motifs: the first includes a tree with ivy leaves, the second three intersecting circles decorated with a cross and a rinceau, the third two fishes with a trident between them, while in the forth – which is ruined – leaves curling back from the stems.

Around the central square runs a continuous border of rectangles alternating with squares (Fig. 8). The squares are decorated with the chequerboard ornament. In the north and south side a symmetrical composition occurs on the rectangles: a lozenge includes a circle with concave diamonds inscribed. In the east and west side, within the rectangles are intersecting circles which include step ornament.

The pattern of pine-cone is popular from the forth to the sixth century a.C. It was also revealed in other monuments such as a room in the archaeological site of saint Patapios in Veria dated to the fourth century, a villa in Argos dated to the same period or in the central aisle of saint Leo-nidis’ basilica in Klapsi of Evritania which has been dated to the sixth century.

In room L two coins made of copper were found. They are issues of Onorios and date to 395–423 AD probably by the mint of Thessaloniki.

The fill covering the mosaic floors was rich in contextual material. It includes marble pieces, pieces of marble revetment, pieces of iron, pieces of window glass and fragments of glass bottles. The pottery of early byzantine period is repre-

11 Assimakopoulou-Atzaka, op. cit., 48–49, tab. 5b.
12 Ibid., 166, tab. 279b.
sented by vessels of various types: fragments of plates, bowls, dishes, late Roman amphorae which contained wine or oil. Fragments of glazed pottery were recovered in upper layers.

We jump to the conclusion that the mosaics have been dated along with the construction of the building – probably in the fourth century – and were still in use in the fifth and even in the sixth century.

In general the mosaic floors of the villa which was excavated in Kamkoutis’ field in the city of Velvento were preserved in rather good condition apart from a few swells and cracks. The damage of the floor in room ST (triclinium) resulted from a fire, which presumably was caused by an earthquake.

The pavements of the room are composed of tesserae. The average sizes vary from one to two centimetres in diameter. The artificially shaped tesserae are of black, white, yellow, red and blue. A part of the pavement of the yard which was revealed between the room L and the atrium is composed of smooth nature pebbles (Fig. 9). It is important to mention that the room M next to room L was covered with ceramic pavement preserved in a rather good condition (Fig. 10).

There is no evidence that the tessellated technique is derived from that of the pebble mosaics. There are not in the strict sense the ancestors of tessellated mosaics, despite its undoubted influence on their development, as the pebble technique is unquestionably the earlier one.\footnote{Greek mosaics are divided into two categories: mosaics of natural pebbles and mosaics of artificially shaped more or less regular tesserae. Some mosaics show a mixture of pebbles and chips and tesserae in the same pavement; cf. K. M. D. Dunbabin, Technique and Materials of Hellenistic Mosaics, American Journal of Archaeology 83/3 (1979) 265–266.}

Sometimes, two or three different techniques may alternate in the mosaics of the same building. The fineness of the technique varies from one part to another according to the importance of the room of the villa.\footnote{For example, the mosaicists of Delos (Hellenistic period) had a clear notion of the distinction between the various techniques. The same happened in earlier examples, such as in Olynthos, in Thera and elsewhere; \textit{ibid.}, 267, 269.}

The use of mosaics testifies to the increasing demand of the wealthier citizens for elegance and comfort in their domestic surroundings. They were evidently a luxury. Their use within the house is also limited and it depends on the function of the room although this is not always clear.

The mosaicists drew their inspiration from many sources. They show interest in vegetal ornament, mythological and animal scenes. Many motifs are shared by architecture vase – painting and other crafts. The designs of...
the floors with their multiple borders are reminiscent of a carpet.\textsuperscript{15} Although there was some enlargement of the decorative repertory, a decline in quality is obvious and the standard of execution is seldom high.

As far as the mosaics in Velvento are concerned, the mosaicists share the common repertory. Floral and vegetal elements are predominant, while animal and mythological scenes are excluded. Animals or birds are depicted in isolation, not as part of a larger scene and human figures are not seen. Colours are used more freely. Dedicatory inscriptions were not found. The mosaicists are not isolated but they are related to other regions of West and Central Macedonia.\textsuperscript{16} Their technique is rather fine and they retain a suggestion of the third dimension in particular parts of the mosaics. In the most parts, they show a rather two dimensional and linear style. The good workmanship of the floor makes this discovery of considerable interest.

So far there was not time to excavate along the rest of the field, but we can presume that new composition will come to light next year.

\textsuperscript{15} Dunbabin, \textit{Mosaics}, 9–10.
\textsuperscript{16} The mosaics of Velvento have similarities with those of Voskohori, of Komanos, of Veroia.
Мозаици виле у Велвенту код Козанија у Грчкој
Марија Читипали

У раду се представљају подни мозаици виле откапане у пољу Камкутис, у граду Велвенто близу Козанија у Грчкој. Наша досадашња ископавања откриве да су у три просторије виле постојала подови прекривени мозаицима.

Средиште великог мозаичког пода у просторији Е заузима мотив у облику октогона. Он укоњује амфору из које извиро убојиште, а спољашња је декорисана увојцима у која су савијене саке и једанаест угловитих кругова који се смењују ромбиновима.

Просторија Е повезана је широким улазом с просторијом ΣΤ, централном одејом у виле, претпоставља се да је то био тзв. триклинијум. Под централног дела триклинијума подељен је на више зоне. Њих означавају три декоративне бордуре које укласно увикли су ове делове украса у једнокрушној јединици у целину.

Под у просторији Л, у северозападном делу комплекса, такође је био прекривен мозаичким украсом. Његов главни мотив је након добара узорка у виду тзв. Витрувијевог таласа, познатог у литератури како мотив пса на трку. Ово његова фиџије је јединица која у паровима образују симетричне бордове. Низ кружних улас централ између кружних поља заезбе је у вило коме је њега бордуре од правоугаоних и квадратних форми.

Био је јединица која је између иконостаса у Грчкој. 1987. године, постојала су у Велвенту код Козанија у Грчкој. Наша досадашња ископавања откриве да су у три просторије виле постојала подови прекривени мозаицима.

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