TECHNICIAN TRAINING FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MOSAICS

PART 1
THE CONSERVATION OF IN SITU MOSAICS

Introduction to mosaics

Livia Alberti, Ermanno Carbonara, Thomas Roby
Mosaic

A mosaic is a decorative surface finishing technique used on buildings: pavements, walls, pools, columns and other architectural elements.

It is made by inserting elements made of hard materials into a soft layer that holds them in place as it sets.
Decoration of floors of a building

Byzantine basilica

Roman house

Roman thermal baths

Ermanno Carbonara 2010 © J. Paul Getty Trust

Ermanno Carbonara 2011 © J. Paul Getty Trust

Livia Alberti 2006 © J. Paul Getty Trust

Decorative surface of architectural elements

Basins

Steps
Types of ancient mosaic pavements
OPUS TESSELLATUM
Monochrome
OPUS TESSELLATUM
Bi-chrome, geometric
OPUS TESSELLATUM
Bi-chrome, geometric
OPUS TESSELLATUM
Bi-chrome, figurative
OPUS TESSELLATUM
Polychrome, geometric
OPUS TESSELLATUM
Polychrome, figurative
OPUS TESSELLATUM
Polychrome, figurative and geometric
OPUS VERMICULATUM
OPUS FIGLINUM

MOSAIKON Technician Training for the Conservation of Mosaics
Getty Conservation Institute, 2020
© J. Paul Getty Trust, www.getty.edu

Ermanno Carbonara 2012 © J. Paul Getty Trust

Livia Alberti 2004 © J. Paul Getty Trust

Ermanno Carbonara 2020 © J. Paul Getty Trust
CHIP MOSAIC
COCCIOPESTO
(lime mortar mixed with ceramic fragments)
Types of ancient mosaic pavements

OPUS TESSELLATUM  monochrome
OPUS VERMICULATUM  bi-chrome
OPUS PSEUDO-FIGLINUM  polychrome
PEBBLE MOSAIC  geometric
OPUS SCUTULATUM  figurative
OPUS SEGMENTATUM
OPUS SECTILE
OPUS FIGLINUM
OPUS SPICATUM
OPUS SIGNINUM
CHIP MOSAIC
COCCIOPESTO (lime mortar mixed with ceramic fragments)
Geometric polychrome mosaic from the Byzantine Period
Geometric polychrome mosaic from the Islamic Period
Main parts of a mosaic pavement
Field: main part at the center of the mosaic, usually quadrangular in shape.

Frame: band that surrounds the field.

Connecting band: part of the mosaic located between the frame of the field and the walls of the room.

Threshold: part of the mosaic located in the entrance to a room.

Emblema: small panel inserted into the field, generally made separately in opus vermiculatum.
Mosaic construction technique
Stratigraphy
Examples of stratigraphies
Bedding layer
Materials used for tesserae
Marble
Other stones
Glass
Ceramic
Cutting tesserae
Construction of the tessellatum

Construction of geometric shapes
Background of figurative motifs
Construction of the tessellatum
MOSAIKON is a partnership of four institutions: the Getty Conservation Institute, the Getty Foundation, ICCROM, and ICCM. The aims of the project are to strengthen the network of professionals concerned with the conservation, restoration, maintenance, and management of mosaic heritage in the southern and eastern Mediterranean region; provide training to a variety of individuals involved in mosaics conservation and, more generally, with the management of archaeological sites and museums with mosaics; work with national and international bodies to provide a more favorable legislative, regulatory, and economic environment for the conservation of mosaics in the Mediterranean; and promote the dissemination and exchange of information.