

**East meets west: investigating the reciprocal influence of east and west in the Roman geometric mosaics of Portugal and Turkey.
A comparative study.**

M.J. Durán Kremer, M. Şahin

When compared with the figurative mosaics, it must be said that the geometric mosaics were long relegated to the background, often considered "inferior" to mythological or figurative mosaics. And yet, it is precisely these mosaics that allow us to analyze more closely the role and impact of each of the people involved in the creation of a mosaic: both in terms of motif selection and design of the decorative surface, highlighting specific characteristics related to the construction of the mosaic as well as the identification of different possible models which in turn allows us not only to isolate specific trademarks of one or several workshops that would have created the mosaic, but more importantly, underline the vital role and influence of the commissioning owner.

The collaboration of Portugal and Turkey in the project RoGeMoPorTur – Roman Geometric Mosaics of Portugal and Turkey – started already on both sides of the Mediterranean and aims to study the roman geometric mosaics of both “border regions” of the *mare nostrum*. This study focuses on the process of designing and building geometric mosaics from its inception to final product, allowing the identification of discrete stylistic influences leading ultimately to the classification of individual workshops.

The project consists of 4 distinct stages: Set-up, Inventorisation, Analysis and Publication. One fundamental element for the success of the project is the capture and sharing of data and analysis with the scientific world. For this a mosaic description form was created in collaboration between both teams and is used to record the data of both regions. In order to avoid unnecessary extra work at a later stage, we agreed on the type of data to be recorded.

The second phase – the creation of complete inventories of geometric mosaics in selected regions both in Portugal and Turkey – has already begun. To start with it was planned, on the Turkish side, to catalogue geometric patterns on mosaics in İstanbul, in Antandros- Altınoluk, in Hadrianoi - Karabük, in İzmir and Manisa environment, in Bursa and Myndos. For Portugal, it is envisaged to catalogue the mosaics of Rabaçal and Conimbriga, Torres Novas and Algarve, Torre da Palma, Pisões and Setúbal. Wherever possible, there will be a topographical survey and the analysis of the Christian mosaics of the *Conventus Pacensis* and, last but not least, the mosaics in the Museum collections in Portugal.

In the third stage, the catalogued mosaics will be examined in terms of their origins, developments, regional similarities and differences.

Finally, the new catalogue will be made available to the wider scientific community, the results of the project published step by step in the *Journal of Mosaic Research*. As I said, this project means a lifelong work. So we started on both sides of the Mediterranean, working through archaeological sites, deepening specific topics

as our work progressed, calling young researchers to take part in our project: Their presence in our team is very much to underline.