

Ancient Repairs on the Alexander Mosaic from Pompeii

Pompeii İskender Mozaïği'ndeki Antik Dönem Onarımları

Demet BEŞİKÇİ*

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Abstract

Every so often throughout antiquity, cities, structures and objects were damaged to varying degrees as a result of wars, earthquakes, floods and fires, and became unusable. However, similar to the present day, in some cases it was possible to maintain their function by carrying out repairs. Traces of such repairs are visible on mosaic flooring, one of the structural elements most affected by these destructions.

Since mosaics are composed of lots of small pieces, they can quickly disintegrate in any destructive situation and fall apart easily. Through the ages, the loss of components occurred as a result of not only great destruction and devastation, but also of wear due to overuse. In such cases, in order to reduce the growth of the damaged area, various repair techniques were used, and the use of the structures/spaces continued. The craftsmen doing these repairs sometimes tried to restore the floor and its decoration elements to its original appearance, and other times utilised different materials in order to re-open the space as quickly as possible. The location and dimension of the damage as well as the repair methods on the mosaic provide us with information on the techniques of the craftsmen and the practices of the period.

Found at the Casa del Fauno (VI 12, 2) in Pompeii on October 24, 1831 and dated to the end of the 2nd century BC (120 BC) (Pappalardo - Ciardiello 2010: 153) the Alexander Mosaic is one of the most well-known mosaics today, as well as being famous enough in the period it was made to be mentioned in historical and literary sources. The original is preserved in the Naples National Archaeological Museum (MANN, inventory number 10020). It depicts the battle of Issus (333 BC) or Gaugamela (331 BC) between Alexander the Great and Darius III (Pappalardo - Ciardiello 2010: 154; Giulierini et al. 2020: 105). Despite having undergone repairs following the extensive damage it sustained in the earthquake of 62 AD, the mosaic never regained its former appearance. It is a rare example, as it was in some parts repaired with tesserae and some other parts repaired using mortar. Studies of the Alexander Mosaic suggest that these two different mending techniques belong to separate attempts from different periods. This article, as a result of detailed examinations, discusses the possibility that repairs made with both tesserae and mortar may have been applied simultaneously after the same destruction.

Keywords: Mosaic, repairs in antiquity, the Alexander Mosaic.

Öz

Antik çağlar boyunca savaş, deprem, sel ve yangın gibi nedenlerle çeşitli boyutlarda tahrip olan kentler, yapılar ve eşyalar tıpkı günümüzde olduğu gibi bazen kullanılamaz hale gelirken bazen de onarılarak işlevlerini sürdürmüşlerdir. Bu tahribatlardan en çok etkilenen yapısal unsurlardan biri olan mozaik zemin döşemelerinde bu onarımlara dair izleri görmek mümkündür.

Mozaik döşemeler küçük parçalardan oluştukları için herhangi bir tahribatta çok çabuk dağılabilmekte ve bütünlüğünü yitirebilmektedir. Bazen büyük yıkım ve tahribatlar bazen de kullanım sürecinde oluşan aşınmalar parça kaybına yol açabilmektedir. Bu gibi durumlarda, hasarlı alanların daha fazla büyümemesi için çeşitli tekniklerle onarılarak yapıların/mekanların kullanımlarına devam edilmektedir. Onarımı yapan ustalar bazen döşemeyi ve üstündeki süsleme unsurlarını orijinal görünüşüne kavuşturmaya çalışmışlar bazen de mekânın

* Demet Beşikçi, Ancient City of Blaundos (Turkish Historical Society), Türkiye.  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7190-4953>. E-mail: dmtbes@gmail.com

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bir an önce tekrar işlevlendirilmesi için farklı malzemeye onarımlar yapmışlardır. Mozaik üzerindeki hasarların ve sonrasında yapılan onarımların konumları, boyutları ve onarım şekilleri ustaların çalışma şekilleri ve dönemin onarım uygulamalarıyla ilgili bilgi vermektedir.

24 Ekin 1831 tarihinde Pompeii Casa del Fauna'da (VI 12, 2) açığa çıkarılan ve İÖ 2. yüzyılın sonuna (İÖ 120) tarihlenen (Pappalardo - Ciardiello 2010: 153) İskender Mozaïği, yapıldığı dönemin tarihi ve edebi kaynaklarında bahsedilecek kadar ünlü olmasının yanı sıra günümüzde de en çok tanınan mozaiklerden biridir. Orijinali günümüzde Napoli Ulusal Arkeoloji Müzesi'nde (MANN, envanter numarası 10020) korunmaktadır. Büyük İskender ve III. Darius arasında gerçekleşen Issus (İÖ 333) ya da Gaugamela (İÖ 331) savaşı tasvir edilmektedir (Pappalardo - Ciardiello 2010: 154; Giulierini et al. 2020: 105). İS 62 depreminde almış olduğu büyük ölçekli hasardan sonra onarılmaya çalışılmış olmasına rağmen bir daha eski görüntüsüne kavuşamamıştır. Bazı kısımlarının tesseralarla bazı kısımlarının ise harç kullanılarak onarılmış olması açısından ender örneklerden biridir. İskender Mozaïği üzerine yapılan araştırmalarda bu iki farklı teknikteki antik onarım uygulamasının farklı dönemlere ait olduğu öne sürülmüştür. Bu makalede, yapılan detaylı incelemeler neticesinde hem tesseralarla hem harçla yapılan onarımların aynı tahribat sonrasında uygulanmış olabileceğine değinilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mozaik, antik onarım, İskender Mozaïği.

1. Repairs of the Mosaics in Antiquity

Archaeological data demonstrates that in case of any damage to either their buildings or everyday items, ancient people first chose to repair it. Although traces of renovation and restoration on ancient structures are frequent, it requires special attention to detect traces of repair on objects. In antiquity, just as today, the parts of buildings that were used the most were damaged and worn down more frequently. Therefore, it is safe to say that detrition or abrasions are most often found on floorings. When examined in detail, repairs made in antiquity can be noticed on numerous mosaics that have survived to the present day. In the process of use floors were subject to wear; additionally, some were destroyed by a natural disaster or even intentionally. Some of these floors were repaired after their destruction and brought back to use. It can be said that partial renovations and repairs were preferred, as they were more cost-effective than the reconstruction of the whole mosaic.

Among the ancient repair applications, some were made with tesserae similar in size and colour to the original, some others on the other hand were made using different materials. Mosaics placed in the more frequently used spaces of homes such as the triclinia, tablina or atria were more elaborate and flamboyant than those in the other rooms, as here the owners were able to display their wealth and glory to their guests. There was a clear effort to repair the mosaics in these rooms more carefully and to restore them to their initial appearance as much as possible (Fig. 1). When evaluated in terms of quality and workmanship, it becomes clear that some repairs were made by master mosaic craftsmen, while others were improvised by apprentices or amateurs. The distance to mosaic production centers, the financial status of the owner and differences in taste must have been decisive factors in this matter. Apparently on some mosaic floors, abrasions that occurred as a result of long usage periods were repaired impromptu and with haste (Fig. 2). Similarly, the location of the damage on the floor was also significant in terms of the quality of the repair. Some detrition and damages were mended carelessly in places where they were not very visible. However, this situation also depends on the employer's demands. In some cases, it seems that deliberate damage done for whatever reason is repaired and the mosaic redone. As an example, parts of mosaics depicting human figures were erased due to religious movements such as iconoclasm, and the resulting gaps (lacuna) were refilled by placing the same tesserae randomly. The tesserae depicting human and animal figures on the mosaics in the Church of St. Stephen

Figure 1
Mosaic of the Four Seasons (Red Pavement)
(Cimok 2000: 71).



Figure 2
Ancient repairs on the Narcissus Mosaic
from Antioch (Cimok 2000: 178).



and the Church of Bishop Sergius in Jordan (Fig. 3) were deliberately scraped and the same tesserae were placed on top of the figures to impose a kind of censorship (Piccirillo 1988: 211). Even though most mosaic repairs in antiquity were done using tesserae, it is also possible to encounter maintenance work done with marble plates, ceramics, stone or mortar. These repairs were done in haste in the hopes of being able to return to using the floor as soon as possible. Taking into consideration that large scale repairs would be expensive and take days to complete, patching the mosaics with different materials was a cheaper and more practical method.



Figure 3
Ancient repairs on the St. Stephen Church mosaic (Friedman 2015: 24, 26).

2. Repairs in Antiquity of the Alexander Mosaic in Pompeii

Excavations in Pompeii near Naples in the Campania region of Italy have shown that settlements on the site date back to the 7th - 6th century BC (Ling 2005: 29). The magnificent mosaics and frescoes covering the walls and floors of its buildings attest to the wealth richness of the rapidly growing city. However, in 62 AD a severe earthquake did considerable damage to Pompeii. Seneca (4 BC-65 AD), the Roman statesman, stoic philosopher and tragic poet, reports (Sen. nat. VI, 1) that Pompeii was devastated by an earthquake and all neighboring regions were badly affected. He also mentions how Campania had always been uneasy about this threat but had remained unharmed until then.

It is possible to see the traces of the 62 AD earthquake, which greatly affected the city, in the House of the Faun (*Casa del Fauno*), one of the largest and most spectacular structures in Pompeii. Here, excavations were carried out in 1830-1831 and many mosaic floors were unearthed. Undeniably, the most spectacular of these is the Alexander Mosaic, which adorns the floor of the exedra (37) (Fig. 4). This room, which is also known as the summer triclinium (Meyboom 1995: 81), is located within the first peristyle courtyard of the House of the Faun (Clarke 1991: 83). Dated to 101 BC (Dunbabin 1999: 43), the mosaic measures 5,82 x 3,13 m and currently is preserved in the Naples National Archaeological Museum.¹ It depicts the battle of Issus or Gaugamela between Alexander the Great and Darius III of Persia. Plinius (Plin.nat. XXXV, 110: ... Philoxenum Eretrium, cuius tabula nullis postferenda, Cassandro regi picta, continuit Alexandri proelium cum Dario) reports that this composition was first produced as a painting by the painter Philoxenos of Eretria in the last quarter of the 4th century BC, and then re-done as a mosaic (Şahin 2014: 52). The battle scene covering the mosaic surface is limited by a border of large stones in a

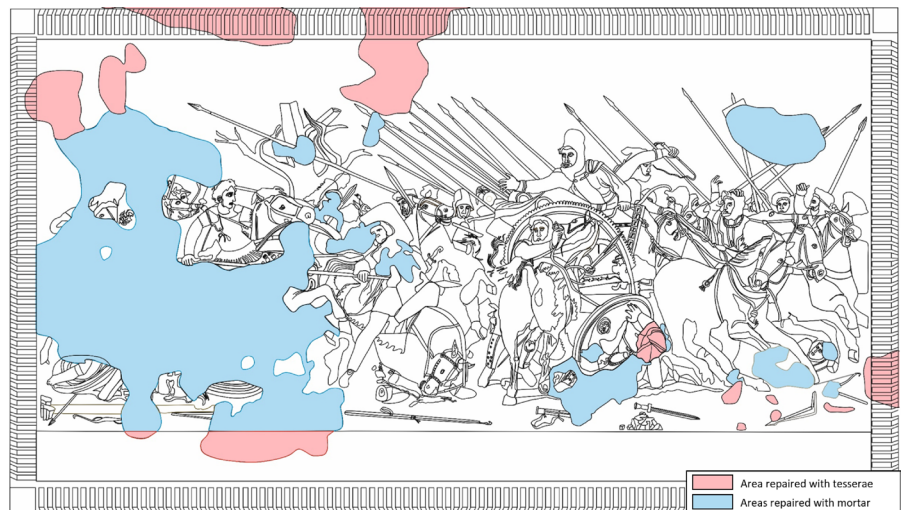
¹ <http://alexandermosaik.de/en/>

Figure 4
The Alexander Mosaic from Pompeii
(Dunbabin 1999: 41).



dentate pattern, creating a three-dimensional effect. There are floral rosettes in square cassettes at the corners of the border. Facing each other, Alexander the Great and Darius are depicted on the attack. Depictions of falling horses, dying soldiers, military equipment and various cultural symbols of both kingdoms are prominent details. The scene strikingly depicts a very crowded environment and a moment of great tension during the battle; the fact that the figures are presented somewhat in layers with differences in size and colour from front to back strengthens the perception of the depth of space. Repair applications on the Alexander Mosaic were made in antiquity using two different techniques. While the main damage in the vicinity of Alexander the Great was repaired by filling in mortar, other large and small damages in different parts of the border were fixed with tesserae (Dunbabin 1999: 43) (Fig. 5). Different opinions have been

Figure 5
Areas of the Alexander Mosaic from Pompeii
repaired with tesserae and with mortar
(Illustration: Buket Beşikçi Akdoğan).



put forward concerning the restoration program of the mosaic panel. The general opinion expressed in studies of the Alexander Mosaic is that the parts filled with mortar and the parts repaired with tesserae are not contemporaneous and were made during different periods. Some scholars suggest that while the damage caused by the earthquake in 62 AD to the mosaic was repaired with mortar, the other repairs done with tesserae date before the 62 AD earthquake, to fix the wear and tear from usage of the floor (Fuhrmann 1931: 95; Hölscher 1973:

123; Dunbabin 1999: 43). According to another view, a restoration program was started to repair the abrasions on the mosaic, which at that point had been used for more than a hundred years, but these repairs were left unfinished due to the earthquake and the remaining parts were filled in with mortar (Fuhrmann 1931: 94). It has been suggested that wear and damages occur on mosaic floors as a result of continuous and repeated movement of people and these worn-out areas also indicate the routes most walked on the mosaic.² Another theory is that the Alexander Mosaic was damaged when it was assembled elsewhere and brought to Pompeii as an import (Pappalardo - Ciardiello 2010: 157), and repairs were made after it was placed inside the House of the Faun (Donderer 1990: 27-28). However, the fact that the tesserae and the production techniques are similar to other mosaics in the House of the Faun, and that the same type of stones as some local stones from around Mount Vesuvius were used have dispelled this idea (Meyboom 1995: 360; Dunbabin 1999: 43). In addition, considering the dimensions of the Alexander Mosaic and that it consists of many delicate pieces, it is a very remote possibility that it came to Pompeii as an import (Dunbabin 1999: 43; Giulierini et al. 2020: 107). The Lion Mosaic (42) found at the Casa del Fauno (VI. 12. 2) was laid on a 20 cm thick slab (Fuhrmann 1931: 115). If the Alexander Mosaic had been laid on site but elsewhere instead, a mosaic of such large dimensions would have had to have been carried here on a rather thicker slab. However, no information suggesting this was found in the excavation reports (Pernice 1938: 94). The common opinion resulting from the studies concerning the repairs on the mosaic is that the areas of the floor that were repaired with tesserae had been worn out due to usage, and then repaired consequently. Furthermore, considering the location of the mosaic floor within the building, its period of use, the method of use and the state of repairs, it can be said that the areas repaired with both tesserae and mortar may have been done during the same period; an idea that has not been mentioned in any research before (Beşikçi 2021: 36).

When the ancient repairs on the Alexander Mosaic are examined in detail, small interventions stand out in front of the hooves of the four black horses pulling Darius' chariot in the lower right corner of the panel (Fig. 6). Here, the tesserae used for the repairs are darker than the originals (Beşikçi 2021: 35). Traces of repairs made with darker tesserae can also be seen on the dentate pattern border of the mosaic (Fuhrmann 1931: 94) (Fig. 7). Likewise, in the lower left edge of the panel on the thick band of dark green tesserae, some areas were repaired with darker tesserae than the original (Fig. 8). On the other hand, on the large central panel where the battle scene is depicted, the colour-tone difference of the tesserae indicates that in this section repairs were also made to the right arm of the Persian soldier, whose face is reflected in the shield (Fig. 9). This repair with tesserae is connected to the part repaired with mortar to the left of the soldier. Similarly, the dark green tessera-repair area below the panel neatly merges with the mortar-repaired section in the vicinity of Alexander the Great.

When the ancient repairs on the Alexander Mosaic are examined, it becomes clear that the repairs made with tesserae were applied to parts that are relatively easy and without complex colour schemes, such as the border or the background of the battle scene. Since the same motif is repeated along the border that surrounds

2 In his statement to Discovery News, Martin Beckmann mentions traces of an itinerary used during the presentation of the mosaics by the homeowners to their guests. Beckmann states that these parts were damaged and repaired due to the continuous use of the floors along this route. For more detailed information see: http://www.nbcnews.com/id/34770241/ns/technology_and_science-science/t/scientists-figure-out-how-ancient-art-was-seen/

Figures 6-9
 Details of the ancient tesserae repairs on the Alexander Mosaic, Pompeii (Dunbabin 1999: 41).



the panel, and the background of the figured panel consists of tesserae of a single colour, repairs in these areas were conveniently done without requiring any specialization. Nevertheless, repairs in these areas can be discerned from the original, as the repair tesserae differ in hue and size from the original tesserae. In the complex war scene where figures and motifs are intertwined, repairs were unable to resemble the original. In the area where the figures are, only the arm of the Persian soldier whose face is reflected in the shield, was able to be repaired with tesserae.

It seems the earthquake in 62 AD caused great damage to the geometric border, as well as the central panel of the Alexander Mosaic (Melillo 2009: 61; Simone - Piezzo 2022: 6). While only the background consisting of white tesserae in the figured panel and the geometric border were repaired using tesserae, the damage in the multi-coloured war-scene of intertwined figures was repaired by mortar fillings (Fuhrmann 1931: 94; Niccolini 1832: 9). The large size of the destroyed area on the mosaic floor and its impressive artistry indicate that plenty of financial funds and professional craftsmanship were needed for repairs to be effective (Fuhrmann 1931: 93; Beşikçi 2021: 36). Moreover, it is almost impossible to restore such a detailed and complex piece without any references available (Fuhrmann 1931: 94).

Other artworks damaged by the devastating earthquake of 62 AD are the mosaic floor panels at the entrance of the exedra where the Alexander Mosaic was located, dating to 90-80 BC and representing Nilotic scenes (MANN, inventory number 9990) (Meyboom 1995: 81, 365) (Fig. 10). These three panels, in which various animals such as ducks, ibises, a hippopotamus, a crocodile, snakes and an Egyptian mongoose are depicted, are the continuation of each other in content. As in the Alexander Mosaic, ancient restoration efforts seem to have also been made on these mosaics immediately after the 62 AD earthquake (Wohlgemuth 2008: 60, 137).



Figure 10
Details of the ancient repairs on the Nilotic Mosaic, Pompeii (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q47468132>)



The animal and plant depictions on the rightmost panel appear different from the animal and plants on the other two panels. Despite the repairman's obvious efforts to stay true to the original theme, the differences in style between the originals and the repaired parts is clearly discernible. The relatively clumsy craftsmanship is especially noticeable in the repaired duck figures of the right panel (Wohlgemuth 2008: 137). Although the colour of tesserae used for repairs are the same tone as the originals, they differ in size and arrangement. Comparably, on the left side of the panel, the arrangement of the tesserae above the water in which the ducks are swimming is also not faithful to the original. In addition, while the plants above the water should be growing in an upward manner, on the contrary, they are depicted pointing downwards. Some scholars suggest that like the Alexander Mosaic, the Nilotic scene mosaic may have been brought here from the Eastern Mediterranean and placed in the exedra of the House of the Faun (Meyboom 1995: 358). However, this idea is not widely accepted as plausible as the tesserae of the Nilotic Mosaic were made from local materials, just as the Alexander Mosaic and other mosaics inside the House of the Faun (Meyboom 1995: 358). Since the entrance to the exedra where the Alexander Mosaic was located was from the column space on the right, it is

suggested that here the Nilotic panel floor had eroded due to usage (Barrett 2019: 237). However, if this were the case, the continuation of same wear should be detectable on the Alexander Mosaic. Apparently, just as many other buildings and mosaic floorings in Pompeii, the Nilotic Mosaic and the Alexander Mosaic were also damaged in the earthquake of 62 AD (Beşikçi 2021: 37). Although the areas depicting figures in the Alexander Mosaic were filled with mortar, the damaged areas in the Nilotic scene were repaired with tesserae, and it appears that it was easier to complete the damaged figures and motifs such as ducks, plants, etc. than the complex war scene. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in the repairs made on the Nilotic mosaic are clearly visible. Based on this, it is possible to say that both the Alexander Mosaic and the Nilotic scene panel were repaired under the same repair program. The intention to apply of the same method for fixing the Alexander Mosaic must have been abandoned as a result of the unsatisfactory quality of repairs on the Nilotic Mosaic. Perhaps the mosaic master even started the restoration work on the Alexander Mosaic by repairing the damage on the Persian soldier's shoulder, but because he was unable to achieve the desired result both here and on the Nilotic scene, he chose to repair the other damaged parts in the figured area by filling them with mortar, not with tesserae (Fig. 11). Looking at the Nilotic mosaic, the patron must have understood that the master who made the repairs was able to easily make straight and simple lines, but that he could not faithfully complete the areas with more complex figures and fine details as the original, and that it required higher expenses and longer time to achieve (Beşikçi 2021: 37). While tesserae were used in the repairs made on the parts of the Alexander Mosaic without any complex patterns, the filling of the figured parts with mortar can also be explained in this way. The fact that both methods were carried out within the same restoration program can be explained with the smooth combination of the mortar repair area and the tessera-repairs on the green ground below.

Figure 11
The likely sequence of repairs of the mosaics in the exedra of the House of the Faun (Illustration: Demet Beşikçi).



Evaluation / Conclusion

According to ancient sources, Pompeii had not experienced such a devastating earthquake before 62 AD. One can conclude that all repairs on the mosaic are related to the destruction caused by the earthquake that took place in 62 AD. The Alexander Mosaic, consisting of approximately 1.5 million tesserae, needed extensive repair work following the damage caused by the earthquake. For the mosaic to be restored to its original state, the size and color of the tesserae needed to be the same, just as the style of the master who would make the repairs had to be compatible with the craftsmen who initially had installed the mosaic. In this respect, repairs of the Alexander Mosaic must have required a detailed and professional effort.

On the other hand, the scale of repairs and the quality of craftsmanship required high expenditure. Considering the damage caused by the earthquake to the whole building, it inevitably must have created a great burden for the owner who would have to get the work done (Fig. 12). Located in the peristyle courtyard of the house and probably thought to be a summer triclinium, the exedra was not used intensively by either residents or guests and the mosaic was not very visible unless the room was purposefully visited. Therefore, it is possible that there was no harm seen in repairing the damaged parts of the mosaic with mortar. Although there may have been plans to repair such an important mosaic, which at that point had been used for about 160 years, and to restore it to as it was originally, it is thought that these plans were abandoned due to costs, the difficulty of the work, etc. and consequently the figured parts were filled with mortar.

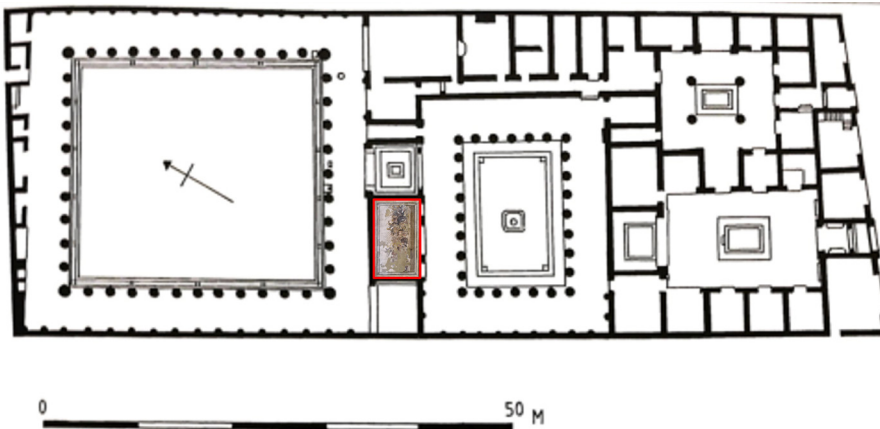


Figure 12
Location of the Alexander Mosaic within the House of the Faun (Plan: Ling 2005: 47).

When one follows the edge of the damaged area repaired with mortar, it becomes apparent that it intersects with some areas that were repaired with tesserae (Fig. 13). Tesserae were used at the bottom left of the panel, in the part of the repairs made by filling in mortar which continues within the dark green banded area. While tesserae were used for repairs made on the border and the background, the reason the damage of the central panel was covered with mortar must have been the fact that it no longer was possible to remake the mosaic like the original. Repair work must have started initially in the relatively easy areas, and these were then filled with tesserae.

Underneath Darius' chariot, the tesserae on the right arm of the Persian soldier whose face is reflected in the shield in his hand, were repaired using different colors (Fig. 14). The inability to recreate the light-shadow contrast and the fact that this area of repairs made with tesserae is situated in the direction of the mortar repair area on the left side of the soldier suggests that the mosaic master

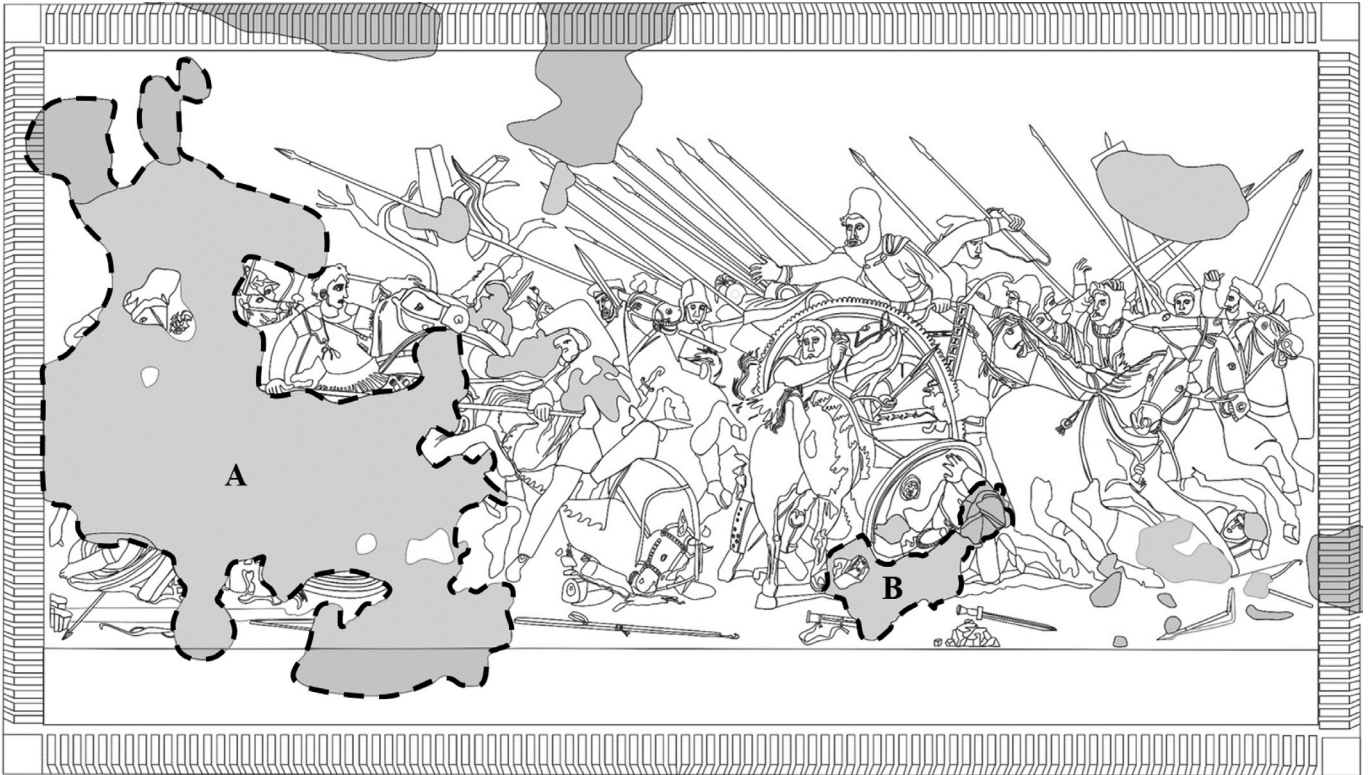


Figure 13

When one follows the boundary of the damaged area repaired with mortar, it becomes apparent that it interconnects smoothly with the edges of the areas that were repaired with tesserae (Illustration: Buket Beşikçi Akdoğan).

Figure 14

Detail of the repairs made to the right arm of the Persian soldier, whose face is reflected in the shield (Dunbabin 1999: 41).



tried to repair with tesserae but decided that despite a long effort the mosaic would not regain its old appearance and gave up.

Previous studies of the mosaic propose the repairs were made after the wear caused by human movement within the house. However, when examined in detail, the lines of the repairs on the mosaic and the way they were applied suggest it is more likely that the repairs belong to the same period. However, considering the location of the repaired parts on the mosaic and the fact that the exedra is not a crowded space in terms of human movement, these marks of wear show inconsistencies with the wear and tear caused by human circulation on the Stoa Mosaics at the Forum of Corporations (Piazzale delle Corporazioni) in Ostia (Meiggs 1973: 309) or the mosaic from the Round Hall at the Bath of Seven Sages in Ostia (Clarke 1979: 23).

The following question arises when comparing the repairs of the Nilotic mosaics located between the columns at the entrance of the exedra with the repairs of the Alexander Mosaic: “Although both mosaics were damaged in the earthquake of 62 AD, why were the three panels of Nilotic mosaics repaired with tesserae, while a large and ostentatious floor like the Alexander Mosaic was not repaired with tesserae but instead filled with mortar?”. After the earthquake, the repairs of all the mosaics here must have been planned together. Although the mosaic workers seem to have done their best on the small panels with the Nilotic scenes, it was obviously not possible to achieve a quality that was indistinguishable from the original. As a matter of fact, the apparent style differences on the mosaic are a clear indication of this circumstance. Yet, these small and relatively easy mosaics were mended to be as close to the original as possible. Sadly, things seem to not have been that easy in the case of the Alexander Mosaic. Despite the color inconsistency of the new tesserae used in the restoration, it seems it was possible to complete the destruction gaps on the continuous geometric border of the mosaic and the monochromatic tesserae of the central panel’s background. This masterpiece’s detailed, meticulous and high-level craftsmanship applied to reflect the tension and excitement of an event that shaped history had made it almost impossible to compare the repairs to the original. Compared to the repairs on the border, which consists of regular repetitions of the same motifs, it must have been a challenge to find the same tone of tesserae, let alone restoring the scene with intertwined complex figures and motifs by staying faithful to the mosaic’s original style and quality. It appears work was started along the arm of the soldier below the chariot and maybe in a few other places, but the difference was obvious, and it would have been time-consuming labour. Restoring the mosaic must have turned out to be a huge burden. Since the desired results were not achieved in the parts of the work that were completed, it was decided to abandon tesserae and fill the central area with mortar.

Ultimately, it does not seem plausible that repairs of the Alexander Mosaic, which stands out today as it did in antiquity through its subject matter as well as its and great craftsmanship, even in a very ostentatiously rich house in a wealthy city like Pompeii where mosaics and wall paintings were plenty and high in quality, were to be willingly done incompetently and in a hurry. However, the fact that the work was so detailed made it near impossible to make the perfect repairs or to imitate. Although the earnest efforts of the mosaic master can be observed in the areas repaired with tesserae, the damage in the area depicting the figures was covered with mortar due to factors such as its size, cost, difficulty and the time it would take to repair. And so, the use of the room continued.

Observations and studies of literature have not resulted in any definite evidence suggesting that the tesserae-repairs and mortar-repairs were done in separate periods. Our detailed examination shows that both repair methods were carried out at the same time and that any differences were perhaps a necessary choice for various reasons. However, a final conclusion could be reached by analyzing and comparing mortar samples taken from the repair area with mortar and the repairs with tesserae.

It must have been a twist of fate that only after a few years after being damaged in the earthquake and then repaired, Pompeii and the Alexander Mosaic were buried under volcanic ash and pumice in the Eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD, until they were rediscovered 1750 years later.

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