Doctoral Thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor

at Pázmány Péter Catholic University

entitled

The Mosaics of the Syrian Coastal Region: A Comparative, Analytical and Comprehensive Study

Presented by:

Lorna Asaad

Doktori értekezés

a doktori fokozat megszerzéséhez szükséges követelmények részleges teljesítéseként benyújtva

a Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetemen

címe:

A szíriai tengerparti régió mozaikjai: összehasonlító, analitikus és átfogó vizsgálat.

Készítette:
Lorna Asaad

Pázmány Péter Catholic University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Doctoral School of History

Doctoral Thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor
at Pázmány Péter Catholic University
entitled

The Mosaics of the Syrian Coastal Region: A Comparative, Analytical and Comprehensive Study

Presented by: Lorna Asaad

Supervisors:
Dr. Brigitta Mária Kürtösi
Associate Professor
Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Budapest
Prof. Dr. Komait Abdallah
AOROC, École normale supérieure, Paris
Sorbonne University, Paris 1

Doctoral School / Program Leader:
Dr. Balázs Major
Associate Professor
Pázmány Péter Catholic University

Budapest, 2026

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Brigitta Mária Kürtösi, for her guidance, valuable advice, and continuous support throughout the preparation of this thesis. I am also deeply grateful to Professor Komait Abdallah for his encouragement and academic support.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Pázmány Péter Catholic University, particularly to the Institute of Archaeology and its head, Dr. Balázs Major, for providing me with the opportunity to continue my studies at a time when pursuing academic work in Syria had become extremely difficult due to the war.

My thanks are also extended to Mr. Marwan Hassan, head of the Directorate of Antiquities in Tartus, and Mr. Ibrahim Kheir Beik, former head of the Directorate of Antiquities in Latakia, for their assistance and for facilitating access to essential documentation and archaeological materials relevant to this research.

I would also like to thank my colleagues at the Tartus Museum for their help and cooperation during the course of this research.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to my family for their constant encouragement and support. I would like to dedicate a special thought to my late father, who was my greatest supporter and whose encouragement played a fundamental role in my academic journey.

Contents

Acknowledgments **4**

Contents **5**

1. General Introduction **8**

1.2. The provenance of the mosaics 8

1.3. Previous studies. 8

1.4. Problem of the Research 10

1.5. Research purposes 11

1.6. The geographical background 12

1.7 The historical background 13

2. Catalogue of Mosaics from Latakia Governorate **16**

2.1. ‘Ain al –Helweh 17

2.2. Ghillineh 24

2.2.1. Tethys 24

2.2.2. The Orontes River 27

2.2.3. Alpheus Panel 32

2.2.4. Pastoral Scene Panel 38

2.3. Jableh Bath 41

2.4. ‘Ain Salem 43

2.5. Shabatliyeh 52

2.6. Bahr al-Midan 56

2.7. Ras al-Bassit 60

2.8. Latakia City. 69

2.8.1. Al- ‘Innabeh Mosaic Fragments 69

2.8.2. At-Tabiyyat 71

2.8.3. Panel 4 72

2.8.4. Panel.5 72

2.9. Tall Tweini 74

3. Catalogue of Mosaics from Tartus Governorate **76**

3.1. Amrit Tomb 77

3.1.1. The first panel 77

3.1.2. The second panel 80
3.1.3 The third panel 80
3.2. Banyas Northern Corniche 87
3.3. Khirbet al- Libneh 99
3.4. Al-Mintar 110
3.5. Al-Sha'ara 116
3.6. Tartus City, al-Ghamqah Mosaics. 121
3.6.1. Panel. 1 121
3.6.2. Panel. 2 121
3.7. Hraysoon 122
3.8. Tall Talyn 124
3.9. Wata Ibtilleh 124
3.10. Tall Darruk 125
3.11. Mosaic panels of unknown provenance 125
3.11.1. Panel 1 125
3.11.2 Panel 2 126
3.11.3 Panel 3 126
4. Synthesis of Iconographic and Decorative Patterns 128
4.1. Human Representations 129
4.2. Aquatic Scenes 134
4.3. Animal Representations 135
4.4. Vegetal Motifs 137
4.5. Geometric Decoration 138
4.6. Filling Motifs 143
4.7. Unique composition 145
4.8. Conclusion 146
4.9. Notes on Confiscated Panels 148
4.10 Notes on White Mosaics 149
5. Overview of Lebanon mosaic decorations. 150
5.1 Decorative Motifs 151
5.1.1. Centered compositions 151
5.1.2. Isotropic compositions used as field motifs 152
5.1.3. Linear Compositions in Border Decoration 158

5.2. Figural Representations 162
5.2.1 Human Representations 162
5.2.2 The Animals 163
5.2.3 Fish / Aquatic Scene 164
5.3. Conclusion 164
6. Conclusion 167
Appendix A: Chronological Table of Mosaic Panels 173
Bibliography 175
Abstract 185
Összefoglaló 186
Appendix B: Figures 187

1. General Introduction

1.2. The provenance of the mosaics

The mosaic of the Syrian coast region mosaic belongs mostly to the Proto-Byzantine period (4-early 7th c. AD). Some of these panels were used to pave a bath (Ghillineh, Jableh), a tomb (Amrit); a synagogue (Ras al- Basit) or a church (‘Ain Salem, Bahr al-Midan, Khirbet al-Libneh). Whereas the architectural context of the other ones, is either not yet studied such as: ‘Ain al-Helweh - Banyas: Northern Corniche, or unknown such as: five panels displayed in Latakia museum.

With the exception of the mosaics of Ras al-Bassit, ‘Ain Salem, which were found during field excavations. Most other mosaic discoveries of the Syrian coast region were found by accident through emergency excavations conducted in the governorate of Tartus and Latakia.

The sites of Tartus governorate are: Al- Qadmus: Al- Sha'ara; Banyas: Mosaic of the northern Corniche, Hraysoon village, Watah Ibtelleh and Tall Darruk; Tartus: al-Ghamqah, al- Mintar, Amrit tomb, Khirbet al- Libneh and Tall Talyn.

The sites of Latakia governorate are: Ghillineh, Shabatliyeh, ‘Ain al- Helweh, Baher el- Midan, Ras al- Bassit, in addition to five panels displayed in Latakia museum from Latakia souk; Jableh; the Bath and ‘Ain Salem church.

In addition to some of the mosaics confiscated by the Customs Administration, three are currently exhibited in the Tartus museum garden. The remaining mosaics are stored on textile rolls in the museum warehouse, with no available information regarding their specifics.

1.3. Previous studies. Research on these panels is limited. One of the panels from Ghillineh, currently displayed at the National Museum of Damascus, was discussed by Janine Balty in her article on Syrian mosaics (*La mosaïque antique au Proche-Orient I. Des origines à la Tétrarchie, Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, 2(12.2), 1981) and later revisited in her subsequent works on Syrian mosaics. Two other panels, now housed in the Museum of Tartus, were examined by Hans R. Goette in his article *Alpheios in Syrien: Zu einem Mosaik in Tartus* (*Damaszener Mitteilungen*, 5, 1991, 71-80), where he focused on the Alpheus and peasant panels, briefly mentioning all four panels in another work co-authored by several researchers on Tartus

(*Tartus und sein Hinterland. Archäologische Forschungen in der syrischen Küstenregion von der Antike bis ins Mittelalter*). Recent research by Gatiers on the Orontes River (*Géographie mythologique de l'Oronte, Syria*, 2016, 249-269) also references one of these panels. However, none of these studies have thoroughly analyzed all four panels in detail within a single article. While the River God panel of Orontes has been frequently discussed, no explanation has been provided for the horns, for which we will present an alternative interpretation. Additionally, the Tethys panel and its iconography have remained largely unexplored.

As for 'Ain al-Helweh, it was published by Maher Jbaa in the article *A New Mosaic from Ain El-Helweh in Latakia, Syria*, ICCM, 2017, where he demonstrates the restoration steps without addressing the theme itself.

In contraste, Courban uncovered and dated the mosaics at Ras al-Bassit in his article *Une nouvelle fouille française sur la côte syrienne : a-t-on retrouvé l'antique Posideion à Ras el Bassit ?* (*Archéologia*, 116), but did not delve into the details of their motifs, instead focusing on earlier historical periods. Beaudry's thesis, *La basilique de Ras el Bassit, une église paléochrétienne sur la côte de Syrie du Nord* (2004), also prioritized architectural elements, with particular emphasis on the minaret and Jewish features of the synagogue. Similarly, Anna Chock, in her doctoral thesis *Khirbet el-Libneh: étude architecturale et archéologique des vestiges protobyzantins (Tartus-Syria)* (2015), concentrated mainly on the construction aspects of the Khirbet el-Libneh site near Tartus. The same applies to the mosaic fragments discovered in Baher al-Midan Church, studied by Redwan and Ahmad in *L'église de Bahr el-Midan: Résultats des campagnes de fouilles du service des Antiquités de Lattaquié (2010-2016)* (*Syria*), where the focus was also not on the motifs."

In this context, it is important to mention Massoud Badawi's article, *L'église de ʿAin Salem dans la région de Gabala (Jablé, Syrie)*, published in *Syria* in 2019, which explores the mosaics of 'Ain Salem Church. While Badawi conducted an extensive study of the site, its architecture, and findings, his analysis of the mosaics remained relatively basic, particularly in regard to the symbolic meaning of certain scenes that require further investigation. Badawi has also studied the Bath of Jableh in his work *Les thermes de Gabala (Jablé – Syrie)*, featured in *25 siècles de bain collectif en Orient. Proche-Orient, Égypte et péninsule Arabique* (S. D. M.-Fr. Boussac, Ed., 2014), as well as the Byzantine-era winery at Tall Tweini, as discussed in his article *Le niveau*

byzantin de Tell Tweini (chantier B) Tweini II / Niveau 3, published in *Studia Orontica* XVIII, 2019.

Additionally, Komait Abdallah's study of the tomb mosaic in Amrit (*Pavement de l'époque romaine en Syrie côtière: La mosaïque d'Amrit,* in É.-P.-B. Vassal, Ed., *Art et Archéologie du Proche-Orient hellénistique et romaine,* 2018) provides an extensive analysis, concluding that the mosaic reflects Egyptian influence, particularly through the interpretation of the goddess's name as Neith, the Egyptian deity, for which we will offer an alternative suggestion.

Overall, while these studies contribute valuable information, no comprehensive study examines the coastal Syrian mosaics as a unified corpus, leaving gaps in chronology, interpretation, and regional comparison.

1.4. Problem of the Research

New discoveries: As previously mentioned, some mosaic panels were uncovered during emergency excavations. Unfortunately, the documentation of these finds was inadequate, resulting in unclear photos and difficulty distinguishing colors. Additionally, detailed schematics of the mosaics or their original locations are missing. At best, only general plans indicate where the mosaics were found. This issue is compounded by the fact that most of these mosaics were removed from their original positions and are now stored on textile rolls, except for the 'Ain al-Helweh mosaic, which has been restored.

Illegal excavations: Illegal digging at the al-Mintar site has hindered efforts to investigate it thoroughly, making it difficult to create a comprehensive site plan or properly examine the ruins.

Unclear photos: The poor quality of existing photos prevents their use in developing accurate schemes or sketches of the mosaics.

Inadequate documentation of pottery shards and coins: The site survey suffered from organizational issues, leaving the documentation of pottery shards and coins incomplete. Many sites lack a coherent plan tracking the various surveys and excavations over the years, making it challenging to understand the site as a whole and its architectural context in relation to the mosaics.

Confiscated panels at the Tartus Museum: Museum records state only that certain panels were confiscated, without providing further details. Furthermore, there are fragments embedded in cement within the museum that are not officially registered, indicating a lack of documentation for these artifacts.

Latakia Museum panels: The five panels in the Latakia Museum also lack proper documentation. There is no information about their place of discovery only the name of the Souk locations, and for two of the panels, no details are available regarding their discovery, leaving all five fragments disconnected from their original context.

1.5. Research purposes

Document all mosaics on the Syrian coast: This includes studying both newly discovered panels and previously dated ones to verify their dates. Additionally, assess mosaics of unknown origin to determine whether they are authentic or forgeries.

Periodization and Analysis of the Mosaic Corpus: An attempt to establish a chronological framework for the mosaics.

Examine the characteristics of Roman and Proto-Byzantine mosaics: Analyze the features of mosaics from both the Roman and Proto- Byzantine periods separately to compare their distinct characteristics with those of nearby workshops. This will help determine whether the region had unique features or if it was merely reflecting trends from neighboring areas.

Analyze mosaics in their architectural context: Where possible, consider the mosaics' function, motifs, shape, meaning, and inscriptions, and examine how these elements relate to their architectural settings.

Study mosaics as part of the region's history: Investigate the distribution, function, and quantity of mosaics to understand why their numbers are lower on the Syrian coast compared to neighboring regions.

Comparative overview of the Lebanese coast: The Syrian and Lebanese coasts, as part of the ancient Levant, share a rich history, tracing back to Phoenician settlements such as Arados (Arwad), Balanea (Banyas), Gabala (Jableh), Byblos (Jbeil), and Tyre. During the Roman era,

this coastal region was part of the larger province of Syria before it was administratively divided. The historical and natural similarities between these regions emphasize their interconnectedness, particularly when compared to the interior of modern Syria. Thus, studying the mosaic art of the Lebanese coast offers valuable insights into the broader mosaic tradition of the Levant, considering their shared historical and cultural heritage.

1.6. The geographical background

The Syrian coast, stretching 160 km along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, is bordered to the east by a mountainous barrier separating it from the interior. This barrier consists of the Jabal Anṣāriyya and its northern continuation, the Jabal al-Aqra'. These mountains are subdivided into lesser units. Between the mountains and the coast lie several low-lying fertile regions, the most important of which is the Gap of Homs. This gap divides the Jabal Anṣāriyya from the Mountains of Lebanon. Between the mountain ranges which extend along the Levant shore, a deep depression runs in a north-south direction, connecting the plain of Antioch and the Gulf of Aqaba[1].

The coastal region of ancient Phoenicia in western Syria had a Mediterranean culture with abundant rainfall and sea access, distinguishing it from the rest of Syria. Inland, the limestone massif formed the hinterland of Antioch and the plain of Aleppo, contrasting with the basaltic regions of region of southern Syria in Hawran and Jabal al-'Arab. To the east, the vast Syrian desert, home to nomads and caravan routes, stretched to the Euphrates. These regions were not closely connected: the coast was accessible to the interior only through the Orontes Valley and Homs Pass, while the southern basaltic interior had ties to the Nabataean realm. The desert was distinct, relying on water for survival. The coastal area had a mild, humid climate and fertile land, ideal for agriculture such as wheat, olives, fig trees, vines, and citrus[2].

Administratively, the Syrian coast is currently divided into two governorates: Tartus and Latakia.

[1] Major, 2015, p. 3.
[2] Bowersock, 1989, p. 64. For the general description see also, Syria, 1920, p. 11-23, Dussaud, 1972, p. 1-4, Sartre 1991, p. 309-312.

1.7 The historical background

The Syrian–Lebanese coast, from Akko to Sukas, was part of Phoenicia and a major maritime trade region[3], with settlements continuing from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age[4]. Under the Achaemenids (539–333 BC), local kings ruled under Persian oversight[5]. After his victory at Issus in 333 BC, Alexander rapidly secured Syria, as most cities surrendered with little resistance, while Phoenician cities retained a distinctive degree of autonomy under their own kings. Following his death, Syria was contested between the Seleucids and Ptolemies [6]. During this period, major cities such as Antioch, Apamea, Laodicea, Seleucia, Cyrus, and Doura-Europos were founded[7].

Pompey incorporated the region into Roman rule in 64 BC. Civil wars, revolts, and battles destabilized the region. After Caesar's assassination, Augustus restored order and reorganized Syria administratively. Some cities regained autonomy, while others lost portions of their territory. His successors continued this policy, but it took almost a century to fully integrate the subordinate principalities and vassal kingdoms. With Augustus' rise and the peace established with the Parthians, Syria experienced a long period of stability from the late 1st century BC to the mid-3rd century AD[8].

From the 2nd century AD onward, economic growth accelerated. Cities shifted their focus from military functions to municipal development and monumental construction. Fortifications were largely neglected, except in major centers such as Antioch, Apamea, and Cyrrhus[9]. As a reward for its earlier support of Septimius Severus, Laodicea was elevated in 194 CE to a metropolis, temporarily surpassing Antioch, and became a Roman colony with *ius Italicum*. [10]. During the imperial period, the peraia of Arados was limited to the city itself, from Simyra to the ridge of the Alawite Mountains in the region of Baetocaece (Hosn Suleiman). The remnants of the old

[3] Sartre, 2001, p. 39.
[4] Akkermans, 2003, p. 386.
[5] Sartre, 1989, p. 10-11 ; Akkermans, 2003, p .389-391.
[6] Sartre, 1989, p 33-38 ; Sartre, 2001, p. 187-201.
[7] Will, 1989, p. 224-225.
[8] Sartre, 2005 p. 55-60 ; Rey-Coquais, 1989, p. 47-52.
[9] Leriche, 1989, p. 268.
[10] Sartre, 1991, p. 341 ; Rey-Coquais, 1989, p. 55.

Phoenician confederation likely disintegrated gradually[11], while a new urban center, Antarados, emerged opposite Arados, first mentioned in Ptolemy's *Geography* and later rebuilt by Constantius in 346 AD as Constantia, although the name rarely appears in official records[12].

From the mid-3rd century onward, the rise of the Sasanian Empire brought renewed instability to Syria. Sasanian invasions and the revolt of Zenobia of Palmyra challenged Roman authority, but the region remained under imperial control[13]. Reforms by Diocletian (284–305) stabilized the empire through the tetrarchy and strengthened provincial administration. While his persecution of Christians failed, Constantine I legalized Christianity, which later became the state religion under Theodosius I[14].

Syria, previously divided into two provinces in the second century, was reorganized again in the early fourth century around 312–314 AD. According to the Verona List, the Diocese of the East in the Levant included several provinces: Mesopotamia, Osroene, Augusta Euphratensis, Syria Coele, Augusta Libanensis, Phoenicia, Arabia, and Palestine. Subsequent divisions in the early 5th century split Coele Syria into Syria I, with Antioch as its capital, and Syria II, with Apamea as its capital. The final stage of its evolution came in the 6th century with the establishment of the province of Theodorias along the coast, south of Antioch[15]. In 529 AD, Laodicea, Gabala, Paltos, and Balanea were combined into Theodorias, with Laodicea as its metropolis. Ecclesiastical organization followed this framework, with a metropolitan in each provincial capital and a bishop for each city[16].

The victorious campaign of Galerius against the Persians in 297 AD marked the beginning of over two centuries of peace for the Syrian provinces, particularly from the 4th to early 6th centuries. This stability facilitated trade between the Far East and the Mediterranean, restoring Syria's role as a major commercial hub[17]. During this period, the mainland city of Antarados rose

[11] Rey-Coquais,1974, p. 140.
[12] Renan, 1864, 20-21, 105 ; Dussaud, 1927, p. 124.
[13] Rey-Coquais, 1989, p. 58-60. About Palmyra, the period of prosperity and decline see Sartre, 2001, p 971-984.
[14] Cébeillac-Gervasoni, 2002, p. 333-337.
[15] Tate, 1989, p. 99.
[16] Tate, 2004, p. 398.
[17] Tate, 1989, p. 97-98. For more details, see Tate, 2004, p. 373-401; for more on Christianity in Syria, see Canivet, 1989, p. 117-148.

in prominence over the island city of Arados, [18] while the port of Laodicea complemented Seleucia in supplying Antioch and the army[19].

The sixth century, however, brought major crises to Syria, including war, Persian occupation, plague, and earthquakes[20]. The Syrian coast was no exception, though limited excavations and fragmentary historical evidence make it difficult to reconstruct. It is known, however, that Laodicea (Latakia) suffered a severe earthquake in the late sixth century, resulting in 7,000 deaths[21]. According to Kennedy, al-Balādhurī portrays Laodicea as mainly agricultural, and the lack of epigraphic evidence suggests its decline as a major seaport. Further south, coastal settlements like Antarados (Tartus) and Gabala (Jabala) are described as fortresses rather than cities, and the monastic use of Gabala's fortress points to a broader contraction of urban life along the coast[22]. The Arab conquest of Syria in the early seventh century occurred swiftly, driven not only by economic or religious factors, but also by exhaustion from continuous wars, destruction, and dissatisfaction with Constantinople, reflecting the overall decline of Byzantine power[23].

While the evolution of ancient coastal cities can be traced to some extent, the interior remains harder to assess. Evidence for its prosperity is limited, but recent surveys by the Syro-Hungarian Archaeological Mission (SHAM) indicate a dense network of rural settlements. Despite the mountainous and forested terrain, dozens of settlements have been identified even in the most remote areas of the hinterland[24].

[18] Rey-Coquais,1974, p. 140-141 ; Dussaud, 1927, p. 124-125.
[19] Tate, 2004, p. 386.
[20] Tate, 1988, p. 114.
[21] Sauvaget, p. 111-12.
[22] Kennedy, 1985, p. 156; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, p. 157–158, 172–173.
[23] Tate, 1989, p. 115.
[24] Major, 2015, p. 29.

2. Catalogue of Mosaics from Latakia Governorate

2.1. ‘Ain al –Helweh

Bibl.; Maher Jbaee, 2017, A New Mosaic from Ain El-Helwe in Latakia, Syria, *the conservation and presentation of mosaics: at what cost? proceedings of the 12th ICCM conference*, Sardinia, October 27-31, 2014, Getty Conservation Institute, California, p 208-212.

The mosaic of 'Ain al-Helweh was discovered in 2004 at the archaeological site of 'Ain al-Helweh, located to the north of Latakia city on the Syrian coast. This mosaic adorned a room in a building that had been uncovered during urgent excavations initiated in 2002. Subsequently, in 2008, the mosaic was transported to the Mosaics Laboratory at the Damascus Citadel. where it has been undergoing restoration and has been housed ever since[25].

Numerous excavations were conducted at this site between 2002 and 2014, yielding a variety of artifacts such as coins, pottery fragments, some of which were recognized by fish engravings. According to the excavation report, the site was inhabited from the Hellenistic period up to the Byzantine era. The structure discovered at the site has been identified as a bathhouse[26]; however, this interpretation is not supported by conclusive evidence.

Description

The mosaic panel is 3.80x 2.30 meters in size, featuring small tesserae ranging between 0.50 and 1 cm. It is made of glass (blue, light and dark green), and marble in colors of green, brown, black, red, white and pink[27](Fig. 2.3.4).

This panel consists of a main field decorated with marine animals outlined by a straight black band, followed by a running two-strand guilloche, against a white background. In its remaining white surround, oblique elongated crosslets, consisting of both big and tiny dots, alternate with poised squares, each cut by an elongated crosslet.

The central theme of the mosaic unfolds against a white background, showcasing a diverse array of marine life, including different types of fish, crustaceans, and mollusks. In the upper left corner, an octopus is portrayed, while two dolphins grace the lower corners, both oriented towards the center. In the middle, various species of fish, lobsters, squid, snail shells, and crabs

[25] For the restauration process see, Jbaee, 2017.
[26] Excavation reports from 2002 to 2014 were led by Zayneb Ahmad.
[27] Ashraf Abu Trabii ,2008, Restauration *in situ* Report.

swim freely in all directions. Notably, there is no representation of water or the seafloor. Approximately twenty-two fish, characterized by a spectrum of colors and sizes, enhance the mosaic's dynamic and vibrant aquatic representation. The identifiable species, known in Syria, encompass Mullidae, Mugilidae, Barracuda, scorpion fish, Dusky fish, Forage Engraulidae, and a variety of sea bream. This meticulous depiction contributes to a nuanced portrayal of the underwater world, capturing the diversity and vitality of marine life in the region[28].

Rendering of Figures

A superposition of two distinct representations is evident: one portion showcases two symmetrical dolphins in the lower corner, while another group of marine creatures emerges, on the opposite side, starting in the middle of the panel, with poses executed as if they were viewed from the opposite side. These creatures are depicted swimming in various directions.

The marine scene is portrayed against a white background, with no attempt to render depth or spatial awareness. The only indication of depth lies in the shadows beneath the fish bellies. Unfortunately, this shadow detail is damaged on most parts of the panel, but its place in the restoration can still be identified. It takes varied forms—a simple thick line in the representation of the octopus and a large spot, observed in the surviving fish shadow on the right side of the panel. The surviving shadow shapes are distinct from the fish bodies, allowing for a clear outline of the entire body.

Rendered with precision, the scene exhibits strong contrasts of light and shade, along with clear outlines. The most noteworthy aspect lies in the meticulous gradation of tones in different colors, this artistic technique imparts a naturalistic vivacity to the sea creatures. creating a vivid and lifelike portrayal.

Although, there is a lack of visible effort to depict spatial depth, but the portrayal embraces naturalistic liveliness. These elements collectively create an impression of authenticity and an appealing decorative effect.

[28] The identification of these species was expertly carried out by Komaite Abdallah, a specialist in mosaic art history.

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

The border: The simple two-strand guilloche serving as the border is a traditional motif from the Greek repertoire,[29]that persisted and continued to be employed in later centuries, as can be seen in the Atrium House (turn of the 2nd c. AD), [30] the House of the Red Pavement, [31] and the House of the Phoenix, Lower Level (2nd c. AD), from Antioch; the Ge panel from the House of the Euphrates (end of the 2nd c. AD) [32] and the geometric mosaic in the House of Dionysus (beginning of the 3rd c. AD)[33] both from Zeugma; and the mosaics of the Church of Oum Hartein (c. 500 AD) in northern Syria[34].

The crosslet: The uniformly elongated crosslets, i.e. crosslets formed of a quincunx of squares of four tesserae with two additional poised tesserae to form each arm[35], were common in Antioch region mosaic, dating to the Roman period. They were depicted either as a filling motif, such as in the House of Menander, [36] where they ornament the centers of the intersecting-circles pattern, or as a filling motif within a trellis in the House of the Euphrates (Zeugma) [37], or in the outer broad borders, such as in the House of Cilicia, [38] and the House of the Buffet Supper, [39] and the geometric pavement near the Isiac Ceremony[40].

As for the **oblique crosslets with poised serrated squares at their centres (i.e., saltires with poised serrated squares at their centres)**. We see a similar motif of spaced saltires with poised serrated squares at their centers, in a geometric mosaic from House of Guilloche (turn of the third century) from Zeugma[41]. We observe crosslets alternating with diamonds in the borders such as the House of Porticoes; small crosslet of five dot alternating with small diamonds[42], and a uniformly elongated crosslets alternating with four-petalled flowers in straight lines, e.g., House

[29] Ovadiah, 1980, p. 110-113, pl. I-2, pl. III- fig 4, pl. V-fig 8,
[30] Levi, 1947, pl. I-a, II-c; Cimok, 2000, p. 25-27.
[31] Cimok, 2000, p. 86-87; Levi, 1947, pl. CLXXVIII-a.
[32] Onal, 2009, p. 71.
[33] Onal, 2009, p. 83.
[34] Abdallah, 2018, p. 155, fig. 10.
[35] Balmelle, 1985, p. 170, pl. 113, h.
[36] Levi, 1947, pl. XLV-d.
[37] Onal,2009, p. 67.
[38] Levi, 1947, pl. XCV-b.
[39] Levi, 1947, pl. XLVIII-a
[40] Levi, 1947, pl. XCIV-b.
[41] Onal, 2009, p. 101.
[42] Levi, 1947, pl. XCVIII-a-b.

of the Boat of Psyches[43]. Nevertheless, based on the available data, there is no evidence of crosslets or a uniformly elongated crosslet alternating with a saltire bearing poised squares, as observed in outer border of the panel under discussion.

The central field subject (Fig. 4). The representation of marine themes stands out as a favored subject in Roman mosaics across every province of the Empire. One of the reasons given to justify the popularity of marine animals, is that they were destined for the decoration of thermal establishments, nymphaea and pools. In these places the water rested above the mosaics, or ran over them or near them, adding veracity and effectiveness to the representation of fish moving in the water in the mosaics themselves [44].

The preference for mosaics featuring naturalistic depictions of fish dates back to the Hellenistic-Roman period, notably observed in Pompeii and other parts of Italy, and seems to have originated in South Italy, where it can also be seen in other categories of monuments[45]. The representations of the mere sample-book of fish. were soon broadened by the introduction of mythological beings belonging in some way to the sea. Thus, we see Erotes riding on dolphins and fishing[46]. The sea-divinities, such as Venus (Triumph of Venus scene) and Neptune and Amphitrite from Algeria,[47]Tethys such as the mosaic of the Tethys of Shahba[48]. They are often introduced into a sea swarming with fish meant to suggest the surroundings in which the deities are conceived. Other representations of fish may belong to the category of the *Xenia*, that is, representations of still life or of edibles[49] e.g., still life mosaic from Tor Marancia,[50] and Red mullet(House of the Grand Duke of Tuscany).[51]

The mosaic under discussion belongs to the marine fauna category, as exemplified by two mosaics from Pompeii currently on display at the Naples Museum. Both mosaics feature a central theme of the intense battle between an octopus and a lobster. In the mosaic from the triclinium of the Casa del Fauno (House of the Faun) in Pompeii,[52]there are two distinct parts. The lower part

[43] Levi, 1947, pl. XXXIX-b.
[44] Levi, 1947, p. 596.
[45] Levi, 1947, p. 597.
[46] See below p. 22.
[47] Dunbabin, 1978, pl. LVIII, LXI, fig. 154.
[48] Balty, 1977, p. 66.
[49] Levi, 1947, p. 597.
[50] Levi, 1947, fig. 224.
[51] Reese, 2002, p. 283, fig. 234.
[52] Reese,2002, p. 276, fig. 226-7.

presents an actual representation of the sea bottom, with fish flashing amid a dark brown and green background adorned with brown strokes. In contrast, the upper part features a light background. Here, the sea is not portrayed realistically but rather as a decorative pattern or illustration from a natural history book, with fish and sea creatures set against a light blue sky. This juxtaposition contrasts the detailed, realistic depiction of the sea in the lower part, including a bay surrounded by rocks and a kingfisher resting on one of them with its bill on the sea surface. The other panel from House VIII.2.16 in Pompeii,[53]depicts a scene with an octopus engaged in a battle with a lobster at the center. Surrounding this central confrontation, various other marine creatures align. In contrast to the previous mosaic, the background here is dark, creating the impression that it represents the bottom of the sea.

These two panels differ from our discussed mosaic in their approach to the background depiction. Unlike our mosaic, where the background is plain white without an attempt to convey spatial depth, these panels feature a more intricate background, showcase more marine species. However, they share a common feature: a tendency toward decorative filling for the entire background of a sea representation. This shared stylistic choice emphasizes the inclination to adorn the background with marine creatures, even though there are variations in the portrayal of marine fish. It's worth noting that this distinctive decorative background feature is also attested in the Antioch panels depicting marine fauna from the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, for example, Room near the House of the Boat of Psyche,[54]panel discovered near the House of the Sun -Dial (DH35-Y, House 2),[55]and the House of the Red Pavement(room 4a)[56].These panels feature marine creatures against a white background with no attempt to render the spatial perspective. Additionally, the fish in these panels are not densely arranged, and their depiction gives a more decorative impression, rather than a naturalistic one that reflects the marine fauna. This is best illustrated by another panel near the House of the Boat of Psyches,[57]which features four dolphins in the center swimming towards the four corners. This arrangement appears as if dividing the panel into four sections. A similar compositional concept appears later in the Constantinian villa (4th c. AD), where the panel is likewise divided into four parts by seasonal personifications,

[53] Reese, 2002, p. 277, fig. 228-9.
[54] Cimok, 2000, p. 190.
[55] Cimok, 2000, p. 200.
[56] Levi, 1947, pl. CLXXXII b.
[57] Levi,1947, pl. CLXXXII c.

likely imitating a groin vault[58]. This also applies to the mosaic under discussion: although the fish are colored to convey realism, their placement—with two symmetrical dolphins in the lower corners and other marine creatures arranged across the panel, swimming in various directions as if seen from different angles—renders the composition clearly decorative rather than strictly naturalistic.

In fact, most fish representations in Syria, particularly in the Antioch region, are associated with mythological figures. They appear either surrounding Tethys and Oceanus—as in the House of the Calendar,[59]the House of Menander,[60]and the House of Oceanus and Tethys[61]—or accompanying Tethys alone, as in the House of the Boat of Psyches[62]. Alternatively, they are depicted in scenes of Erotes riding dolphins or fishing, as seen in the House of the Drunken Dionysus (upper level),[63] the House of Menander,[64]and the House of the Drinking Contest[65].

In later periods, large seascapes are no longer attested. Instead, fish appear in reduced decorative schemes, either as single figures alternating with other animals or within small panels featuring two fish alternating with bird panels—or a single fish—used to evoke the presence of the sea, as seen in the Striding Lion[66] and the Mosaic of Rassim Bey, [67] both dating to the 5th century AD.

In the rest of the Levant, there are a few mosaics depicting marine scenes, among the known discoveries. Two examples are from Palestine, the first panel from a Roman villa in ‘Ein Yael, depicts Thetis among marine creature as usual,[68] while the second, discovered in Lod, is related to a fishing scene. In this mosaic, marine fauna decorates the southern part of the fourth-century panel. The maritime scene includes fish, shells, bait, and two ships, all depicted on a white background[69]. The depiction of fish as purely decorative elements in the later period is also

[58] Levi, 1947, p. 228, p LII.
[59] Levi, 1947, pl. VI ; Cimok, 2000, p. 46-49.
[60] Levi, 1947, pl. CLIX-b; Cimok, 2000, p. 187.
[61] Levi, 1947, pl. L-c.
[62] Levi, 1947, pl. XXXIX-b; Cimok, 2000, p. 169.
[63] Levi, 1947, pl. LI-c.
[64] Levi, 1947, pl. XLIV-a; Cimok, 2000, p. 188.
[65] Levi, 1947, pl. XXXI-c.
[66] Levi, 1947, pl. LXXIV-a.
[67] Levi, 1947, pl. CLXXXIII-c; Cimok, p. 284.
[68] Talgam, 2014, p 46, fig 66.
[69] Talgam, 2014, p. 65- 67, fig. 92, 96-97.

observed in the eastern provinces, such as, the chapel of Susannah Mother Artavan on Mount of Olives in Jerusalem,[70]'Ain es-Samake and Khaldeh- Shwayfat churche in Phoenicia[71].

Across these regions, however, representations of marine creatures continue to appear in association with sea deities in the Byzantine period, such as Thalassa,[72] as well as in Nilotic scenes[73].

Noteworthy, marine animals were a favorite topic in North Africa, as exemplified by numerous examples[74]. Nevertheless, there were differences from that of the Levant, mainly in the way of depicting the background water using multicolor lines e.g., parallel zigzag, dotted lines, broken lines etc.

Dating

The panel is framed by the classic two-strand guilloche, surrounded in turn by a white surface adorned with elongated crosslets(saltire) alternating with saltires with poised squares at their centers. The use of the crosslets (small or elongated) alone or alternating with other motifs, mainly diamonds and four-petalled flowers in a straight line, was characteristic of the Roman broad border that framed panels, as exemplified by the mosaic in Antioch (see examples cited above).

Regarding the marine scene. The panel in question, characterized by sharp outlines, varied hues, plasticity of forms and the lively movement, aligns with the Hadrianic-Antonine period[75]. A comparable example from The House of the Calendar at Antioch depicts Tethys and Oceanus seated on cliffs rising over the sea surface, surrounded by diverse fish on a background of deteriorated light blue and blue-green glass tesserae. The fish, casting shadows underlined with blue-green glass, are separated from the fish bellies, allowing for a clear outline of the entire body. The compact depiction of marine life, with 22 identifiable species,[76]and the delicate rendering of shades and color transitions, make the resemblance undeniable. This holds true despite other differences in the subject of the panel and the representation of the background.

[70] Talgam, 2014, p. 207, fig. 266.
[71] Chehab,1959, pl. CXIV-2, pl. LXVI, LXXII-2.
[72] E.g., Thalassa from the Apostles at Madaba; Telgam, 2014, p. 214, fig. 304.
[73] About the Nilotic scene see Balty, 1995, p. 245-262, pl. XLIV, XLV.
[74] Dunbabin, 1978, pl. IX, XXXVI-fig 93-94, pl. XLVIII, pl. L, pl. LVI-LIX.
[75] Levi, 1947, p. 599-600.
[76] As for the names of fish species, see Morey, 1938, p. 30-31.

This resemblance, combined with Levi's dating of a previous panel to the Hadrianic–Antonine period, supports assigning a similar timeframe to the panel under discussion.

2.2. Ghillineh

Bibl.: A.AL-Ush, A. J. (1969). *Catalogue du Musée national de Damas*. Damas, p 109-110 ; Balty, J. (1977). *Mosaïques antiques de Syrie*, p. 14 ; Balty, J. (1981). La mosaïque antique au Proche-Orient I. Des origines à la Tétrarchie. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, 2(12.2), p 380 ; Balty, J. (1989). La Mosaïque en Syrie. *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie*, 2, p 503 ; Balty, J. (1995). *Mosaïques antiques du Proche-Orient*. Paris. P 67-68 ; 78; Goette, H. (1991). Alpheios in Syrien : Zu mosaic in Tartus. *Damaszener Mitteilungen*, 5, 71-80; 77 ;
Goette, H. R. (2001). "Mosaiken aus einer Therme in Gallineh (Lattakia)." In *Tartus und sein Hinterland: Archäologische Forschungen in der syrischen Küstenregion von der Antike bis ins Mittelalter*, pp. 54–60. Damascus ; Gatier, P.-L. (2016). Géographie mythologique de l'Oronte dans. *Syria*, 254-256.

Four mosaic panels were discovered in a Bath from Ghillineh near Latakia city in 1953. Three of them are on display in Tatous Museum, while the fourth is displayed in the National Museum of Damascus (Fig. 5-11).

2.2.1. Tethys

The panel is displayed in Tartus Museum, measuring: 174x174cm.The tesserae are of limestone; those in the inner field measure less than 1 cm, whereas those in the borders range between 1 and 1.5 cm. The colors are: black, off-white, orange, grey, light yellow, light and dark green, red, light blue, ochre brown. The panel is portraying Tethys against a marine scene (Fig.5,6).

In the center of the panel, we observe Tethys, half-reclining. Her head gently turns to her left, and so does her gaze. Long, wet locks of hair cascade down her shoulders, with two small wings emerging from her forehead. Her facial features are characterized by an oval shape, conveying a somewhat masculine expression through the tall, prominent nose, thick eyebrows, and almost round chin. The delicate modeling of her bust is rendered with soft white and pink hues, and a mantle drapes around the lower part of her body, enveloping her thighs and crossed legs. Her left elbow is gracefully positioned on the fold of the mantle. As she raises her right hand, the

corresponding section of the panel is unfortunately damaged. However, it appears that the head of a Cetus can be discerned, seemingly winding its coils around her right hand. The marine creature surrounded her in the upper part of the panel, of which we can recognize that the marine creatures were realistically depicted, with a shadow beneath them indicating the water.

This central panel is famed by a manifold border consisting of a black stipe, followed by a guilloche of three Strades running between two white stripes.

Iconography

In Greek mythology, Tethys is a Titan, born of Gaia (Earth) and Uranus (Sky). She is the wife of Oceanus, and together they are the parents of the 25 rivers, among them the Nile and Alpheus[77]. In Greek and Roman traditions, Oceanus was considered as the oldest of all ocean gods and Tethys is considered as the fertile power of oceans[78]. On the other hand, in Greek and Latin literatures of Late Ancient Period, Tethys was described as Thalassa, the personalized form of the sea[79].

Tethys has a mythological role in the mosaics of Early Roman Period; she accompanies her husband Oceanus. In this period, she was generally described as a young and beautiful woman. Among her indicators was a pair of wings on both sides of her head and a Cetus covering her neck[80]. Tethys was depicted either in full-body form, as seen in the panel under discussion, or as a bust. Examples include the House of Menander in Antioch, dating back to the 3rd century AD [81], and the House of Poseidon in Zeugma from the turn of the 3rd century AD[82].

Tethys, featured in the panel under discussion, is portrayed in a full-body form, similar to three other panels discovered in Antioch and its surroundings. The oldest among them was unearthed in the Calendar House in Antioch[83]. This mosaic, currently on display in the Antioch Museum, dates back to the 2nd century. In the Calendar House mosaic, Tethys and Oceanus are depicted alongside various marine animals while seated on the sea floor. Tethys leans to the left and raises her right hand, presumably holding the body of Cetus.

[77] Jentel, 1997, p. 1193 ,the basic refernce is (Hesiod, Theogony, I, 126-139, 337).
[78] Eraslan, 2015, p. 454. The basic reference (Homer: The Iliad, II, XIV. 201).
[79] Hygin, fab, pref,2, Eraslan, 2015, p. 454.
[80] Eraslan, 2012, p. 158.
[81] Levi,1947, pl CLIX-a; Cimok, 2000, p.187.
[82] Önal, 2002, p. 27-29.
[83] Levi, 1947, 38–9, pl. VI.

In the House of Tethys and Oceanus mosaic,[84] they are depicted as half-reclining, with their faces and bodies parallel to each other. Notably, there is no known example of Oceanus and Tethys depicted in whole-body form in Roman provinces outside of Anatolia. Consequently, Erslan has suggested that compositions featuring the full-body representations of Oceanus and Tethys together may have originated in Antioch[85].

The third example is found in Seleucia Pieria (Samandağ)[86]located in the environs of Antioch. Tethys is depicted individually in whole-body form in the center of this panel. However, in contrast to classical representations, she appears elderly. Her face is thin and long, with small eyes and colorless, shapeless lips. Additionally, she is portrayed holding a ruddle in her left hand, a characteristic typically associated with Oceanus. In all other examples, Tethys is presented solely as a bust.

Transitioning from the second half of the 3rd century A.D. onward, Tethys began to emerge in solitary depictions as a bust[87], such as a panel from House2 in DH35-U in Antioch region,[88] Anazarbus (Anavarza) dating back to the 4th century AD,[89] a mosaic found in Tarsus,[90] a panel from Philippolis (Shahba) in south of Syria[91]. In such mosaics, Tethys was depicted in the center of the mosaic with wings on her head, the rudder resting on her shoulders and the Cetus around. According to Erslan, in early examples, Oceanus and Tethys represented the husband-wife concept. However, in later depictions, they transformed into symbolic representations of the sea, distinct from their divine origin. That's why these two figures were portrayed separately as symbols of the sea[92].

Notably, depictions of Tethys, with the exception of one example found in Italy, are all found in the Greek East, often in baths or adjacent to pools. Most of these representations have been excavated in Antioch and its suburbs, with some have been discovered further north in

[84] Levi, 1947, p. 222, pl. L c.
[85] Erslan, 2015, p. 455.
[86] Eraslan, 2015, fig. 6.
[87] Eraslan, 2015, p. 460.
[88] Levi, 1947, pl. La.
[89] Erslan, 2011, p. 31-2, p 259, fig 67, BuddeII,1972, fig. 82- 84.
[90] Erslan, 2011, p. 31, p. 258, fig. 66.
[91] Balty 1977, p. 66.
[92] Erslan, 2015, p. 461.

Alexandretta and Cilicia and south in Syria, and as far as Garni in Armenia[93]. Interestingly, we don't see Oceanus portrayed on the eastern province mosaics since the second half of the 3rd century. Whereas Oceanus continued to survive in Europe and North Africa until the 6th century AD[94]. In such depictions, Oceanus was depicted as coming out of the sea at shoulder length and sometimes as in mask form on sea ground with various mythological creatures or marine animals around[95]. Such as Glesia villa dated to 4th century AD in Montreal province of France[96]. Roman bathhouse in Themetra city of Tunisia. In this mosaic, dated 3rd century AD, the big head of Oceanus was depicted with all its glory[97].

Noteworthy, the representation of Tethys persisted into the Byzantine era, shedding its earlier monstrous attributes like Cetus and wings, which were strongly associated with paganism. Tethys then undergoes a transformation into Thalassa[98]. Represented with claws on her head, as seen in the Yakto Complex, Thalassa was depicted individually as a bust with a pair of claws[99]. The presence of these claws, originally associated with Oceanus in depictions of Thalassa, can be attributed to the transformation of claws into a marine symbol[100]. However, in later depictions, such as the instance observed at the Church of Apostles in Madaba, Jordan, the portrayal of Thalassa does not feature claws [101.] In this particular panel, Thalassa emerges waist-length from the sea, holding a rudder with her right hand and a small dolphin with her left hand. In brief, Tethys transforms into Thalassa and, like her counterpart Ge (the Earth goddess), gains through the transition to Christianity, a symbolic value of glorifying the God's creations[102].

2.2.2. The Orontes River

This panel is displayed in the national Museum of Damascus. Measuring, 1,20x1,20m and the emblemata is 1,63x1,61 m (Fig. 7,8).

---

[93] Wages, 1986: 120, fig. 1-8; Jentel, 1997, p. 1193-1195. It is worth noting that Eraslan suggests that the distribution of depictions of Tethys alone, primarily found in Antioch and its environs alongside Shahba, implies that the origins of examples portraying Tethys individually can be traced back to Antioch. (Eraslan, 2015, p 458).
[94] For Oceanus depiction see: Erslan, 2012; Cahn, 1994.
[95] Eraslan 2012, p.157-166 ; Eraslan 2015, p. 3.
[96] Balmelle, 1987, p. 194.
[97] Ben Abed-Ben Khader, 2006, p.115.
[98] Cahn, 1997, p. 1198-1199; Eraslan, 2015, fig. 9-12; ERASLAN 2011, p. 261-268.
[99] Levi, 1947, p.323–5, pl LXXVI-a; Cimok, 2000, p 248–249.
[100] Eraslan, 2015, p. 5.
[101] Piccirillo 1993, p. 106, fig. 80; Dunbabin 1999: p.199, fig. 212.
[102] Balty 1977, p. 68.

The colors: red, pink green, yellow, black , light blue. Off-white, white. brwon and black.

In the middle of the panel, we see a bearded and relatively old figure sitting on a rocky mass, with a bare torso, wearing an olive-green cloak that wraps around his left arm. His position is oblique, but his chest is twisted almost to full view, while the head is bent slightly to his left.

The head of the figure is adorned with a *calathos*, and on each side of the *calathos*, there is a small horn-like feature. He extends his bare right hand holding a reed cane, while reclining on his left holding a cornucopia, with a chubby naked kid(*putto*)seen holding its tip. Under this *putto*, another one is sitting, holding a wreath crown above his head. Additionally, three other *putti* are present in the scene. On the left side of the panel, a kid is holding a plant, another one approaches the god holding the same reed cane that the god holds in his right hand, and the third child is behind the god's right shoulder, with only his upper part visible, looking towards the god. In the left part of the scene, we see riverine plants.

The central panel is framed by a black stripe, followed by Serrated and symmetrical band composed of five rows of poised squares of four tesserae, the middle is always white. The colors are (black, light blue, white, light blue, black), changing midway to another group of colors that is either (dark yellow, light yellow, white, light yellow, dark yellow) or (red, caramel, white, red, caramel). In each of the four corners, we see a disc with a white outline.

Restauration

Observing the panel reveals the following:

•The different hued background behind the head and in the upper left part of the scene, arrangement and size of the tesserae, those parts seem lighter, whiter than the other original parts.

•The plant in the left side, the upper is not on its exact place but higher and positioned closer to the frame. The children in this corner also seem chaotic

•The shape of the cornucopia is deferent from the one Alpheus held. the later seem more well executed, this tip of this cornucopia is seemed elongated, the lower part of it seemed not fit with the upper part, one could think whether this is due to a later restoration.

•His right hand it seemed also executed differently from the other hand, and it’s done with one radish tone with no attempt to use lighter tone to show the muscle like the other hand.

In fact, making definitive assumptions proves challenging, primarily due to the absence of records regarding the restoration process when this panel was left. Additionally, the lack of clear photos of the panel upon its initial discovery adds to the complexity. Nonetheless, one might contemplate the possibility of restoration phases, making it challenging to distinguish whether it is an older or newer restoration. Especially noteworthy are examples of panels that have been restored using original tesserae, completing them in a way that seamlessly blends with the original, such as the representation of the seasons in the Oum Jalal mosaic displayed in Ma'arat an- Nou'man Museum,[103] and the Sarrin mosaic panels, displayed in Aleppo Museum[104].

Iconography

The depiction of this figure as reclining bearded old man holding a bundle of reeds and crowned with herbs shares features commonly seen in representations of rivers deities. In fact, this type of depiction was very common in Roman art,[105]such as the Euphrates[106]. Therefore, without a doubt, this figure is a representation of a river god.

Hans R. Goette suggests that this figure could be either the Nile or Oceanus[107]. The latter possibility is supported by the presence of Tethys, Oceanus's wife. However, none of the distinctive attributes of Oceanus are depicted. Specifically, there are no crab claws typically serving as horns on the forehead of Oceanus. Additionally, he holds a cornucopia, not rudder the usual features of Oceanus[108]. Despite an initial resemblance claimed to be the Nile, which will be discussed later, the presence of the horns makes it less plausible.

Janine Balty has proposed identifying the figure as the Orontes River, highlighting the distinctive presence of a *calathus*,[109]to emphasis on fertility themes as well as the *kaproi*(fruit of earth)[110]. This suggestion is also supported by Gatier, who, in his approach, considers another bearded

[103] Abdallah, 2018, p.229, fig. 10-14.
[104] See the whole study about these panels in Balty J. , 1990.
[105] Ostrowski, 1991, p. 30.
[106] Onal, 2009, p. 62.
[107] Goette, 1991, p. 71.
[108] Such as, Eraslan, 2015, fig. 1-10; Levi, 1947, p. 38-39, pl VI-a; LIMIC,VII.I,1994, p. 31-33;
[109] A calathus (/ˈkæləθəs/ or /ˈkæləˌθɒs/; Ancient Greek: κάλαθος, plural calathi or kalathoi κάλαθοι) was a basket in the form of a top hat, used to hold wool or fruit (R. Hurschmann, art. Kalathos, in: Der Neue Pauly, 6, 1999, col. 152). This instrument linked to daily feminine life and to worship, the *calathos* became a crown for several goddesses, such as Artemis, Demeter, Core, and Hecate, and later for fertility gods like Dionysos and Serapis. In Greco-Roman symbolism, it represents abundance (Malaise, 2009, p 173-174, 192) In Syria, it is especially attributed to the earth goddess.
[110] Balty, 1977, p.14.

statue of an old man sitting and resting his hand on an amphora, possibly representing a river god, found in Seleucia. If the figure is interpreted as the Orontes River, Gatier suggests considering the possibility that the iconography of the Orontes in Seleucia and Laodicea may differ from the known Ortones depictions which depict him as beardless young man[111].

In fact, the known Orontes model was first presented in the bronze statue of Tyche of Antioch, which created by Eutychides around 300 BC, featuring a representation of the Orontes River, depicted as beardless young man, floating on waves at the feet of a siting woman. Although the original statue is lost, it was replicated numerous times and was popular for a long time in the Roman Empire. Such as a marble sculpture depicts the city of Antioch as a female figure seated on a rock in a closed composition. The figure gracefully holds sheaves of wheat, and her head is held erect beneath a crown adorned with turreted walls. Notably, her foot rests on the shoulder of a youthful depiction of the swimming Orontes[112].

Interestingly, this depiction of a river, with its upper part emerging among waves, was frequently used on coins, especially on the coins of the Roman period, and was not limited to symbolizing the Orontes River[113]. Possibly because this type is inspired by the Antiochan Tyche, it is therefore depicted relatively more often on the coinage of Syria and Asia Minor[114]. consequently, it's not surprising to observe the Orontes River depicted following the same model on coins from some Syrian cities including Apamea from the time of Claudius, Emesa under Antoninus Pius, Caracalla and Heliogabalus, and Laodicea in Lebanon under Caracalla [115].

One interesting feature in the mosaic under discussion is the presence of five *putti*. Balty identifies them as *Karpoi* (the fruit of the earth) emphasize the fertility of the river, a fitting interpretation, given the panel depicting Ge and Aroura, in which we see between them a row of six naked *putti* drags a huge heavy garland of stalks of wheat, two more *putti* to the left behind Ge sustain the opposite end of the garland another one hugs Aroura. These *putti* are identified by an inscription as *Karpoi*[116]. As the artist emphasized the idea of fertility through the use of

[111] Gatier, 2016, p. 254-256.
[112] Becatti, 1967, p. 261, fig. 234; Ostrowski, 1991, p. 24-25.
[113] Ostrowski, 1991,p.25, 31-32;
[114] Tekin, 2001,p.522, 524, 426-428 & catalogue:531-546, 551: n 17a-b,19; Euphrates: Imhoof-Blumer,Nos, 469-470; Balty,1988 P70-72;for more examples see: Ostrowski, 1991, p31, note 26.
[115] Balty, 1986, p. 68-69.
[116] Levi, 1947, p. 263, pl. LXII-b.

calathus- a fertility symbol that associated in Syria particularly with Ge[117]-interpreting them as *Karpoi* is not surprising. However, it remains intriguing why such *putti* are not commonly depicted with other river deities in the region, such as the Euphrates?

Although identifying the river god as Orontes is plausible, it is not certain based on the available evidence. The Orontes is typically depicted as a beardless youth floating on waves at the feet of a siting woman, as noted previously. Additionally, the presence of horns in the figure remains unexplained. Therefore, further examination of the figure is needed to clarify its identity.

In fact, while the mosaic under discussion lacks specific features of the Nile, such as ducks, hippos, or Nile cubit[118]. One cannot dismiss the striking resemblance, particularly in the inclusion of river plants in the scene and the depiction of the *putti*, especially the one holding the cornucopia. This child reminds us of the kid sitting on the cornucopia in the statue of the Nile from Alexandria [119]. Additionally, in the Vatican statue, the Nile is depicted holding a cornucopia in his left hand, from which a small child emerges standing. In his right hand, he carries sheaves of wheat while leaning on a sphinx. Surrounding him are 16 *putti* , symbolizing the height of the Nile during its annual flood—an event that played a crucial role in bringing fertility to Egypt [120]. In fact, the entire depiction of the river in question bears a resemblance to the Nile representations. However, the presence of the horns open doors for alternative suggestion.

A horn-adorned head or bust represents a simplified version of zoomorphic imagery, where the full form of the animal is replaced by a male head, either bearded or clean-shaven. This type of depiction occurred relatively rarely in Roman times, primarily on the coins of Greek centers[121].

In Greek art, the two main forms of river personification — "zoomorphic" and "anthropomorphic"— are exemplified by images of Achelous, a river god depicted as early as the 7th century BC. Achelous was likely the most frequently portrayed river deity in antiquity, with representations spanning from the Archaic period through to the 2nd/3rd centuries AD. These depictions were found on various types of monuments throughout antiquity[122].

[117] Balty, 1977, p.14.
[118] Such as, Guimier-Sorbets, 2023: fig 1,3,4,5; LIMIC, VI.I, 1992, p.720- 727; Ostrowski, 1991, fig. 45.
[119] Guimier-Sorbets, 2023, fig. 1; Gais, 1978, fig. 11.
[120] Gais, 1978, fig. 10-11.
[121] Ostrowski, 1991, p. 27-28.
[122] Ostrowski, 1991, p. 16.

The representations of Achelous include the figure of a man-bull or a bull with a horned male head, depicted both as a full figure and in abbreviated forms like the *protome* or a bull's head in profile. Another notable depiction is the bearded, horned mask. Additionally, there is a rare form where Achelous is shown as a man with a bearded, horned head[123].

In Greek mythology, Acheloos (or Achelous) is described by Hesiod as the son of Oceanus and Tethys, though another tradition identifies him as the son of the Earth (Ge). He is the god of fertile and life-giving water and presides over the major river Achelous in northwestern Greece, as well as other smaller rivers bearing the same name[124]. Achelous's role in the Heracles myth, where he frequently changes his shape, and their fight ends with Heracles breaking off one of his horns, significantly contributed to his popularity[125].This broken horn was later equated with the cornucopia (horn of plenty), or Achelous offered the cornucopia in exchange for his own horn[126]. Although no identical depiction of Achelous exists in art, Herodotus emphasizes the transformative power of the Achelous River by comparing it to the Nile:

"There are other rivers as well which, though not as large as the Nile, have had substantial results. In particular (although I could name others), there is the Achelous, which flows through Acarnania into the sea and has already turned half the Echinades islands into mainland[127]."

In this context, the comparison to the Nile is understandable, as Achelous is portrayed as a significant and transformative river god. Additionally, both Alpheus and Achelous were prominent rivers in ancient Greece and were associated with Tethys. Here, the *putti* can be interpreted as cubits rather than *karpoi*, emphasizing the river's fertility.

2.2.3. Alpheus Panel

This panel on display in Tartus Museum, measuring:174x174cm. The tesserae are of limestone of the inner field are less of 1cm, whereas the tesserae of the borders range between 1-1.5cm on each side. The colors are; light-blue, shades of yellow, shades of green white, off-white, black, red (Fig. 9).

[123] Isler, 1981, p. 30. For the catalogue, see p. 13-30 and fig. 1-265.
[124] Isler, 1981, p. 12.
[125] Ostrowski, 1991, p. 16.
[126] Isler, 1981, p. 12.
[127] Herodotus, Hist. 2.10, trans. Rawlinson, n.d.

This mosaic panel portrays Alpheus alongside a female figure. Unfortunately, a portion of the upper right is missing, resulting in the loss of the woman's head and a significant part of the river god's face. Despite this, their shared gaze, though seated in opposite directions, suggests a deep connection, confirmed by the woman draping her right arm around the river god's shoulders.

Alpheus, identified by an inscription, is on the left side. He wears a grey-green coat with a distinctive shoulder bulge, revealing a well-defined, youthful, muscular upper body. Leaning on a smooth block with his left hand, he holds a golden cornucopia in his right, secured against his left thigh. Above the cornucopia, a green loop and an oval object are visible, and three jets of water emerge from its tip. The river god turns his beardless head adorned with elongated reed leaves towards the female figure on his left.

Seated to the right, the woman turns slightly towards Alpheus, her right hand resting on his shoulder. She wears a red undergarment cinched beneath her breasts, complemented by a yellow cloak draping over her lower body and left shoulder. Her left hand extends to the side, grasping the handle of a metallic jug on a rectangular block.

Behind the base and jug, a schematic depiction of branches with leaves casts shadows on the cuboid. This detailed representation not only highlights the artistic skill but also reveals the intricate interplay of light and shadow in the mosaic. The central panel is framed by a black stripe, followed by a wave pattern running between two white stripes.

Iconography

Alpheus is traditionally known as the god of the river Alpheus in Peloponnesus, recognized as the son of Oceanus and Tethys according to Hesiod's Theogony[128]. However, in some accounts attributed to Pseudo-Plutarch's,[129] Alpheus is portrayed as a human descendant of Helios. In this version, he is said to have murdered his brother Kerkaphos for his kingdom. Overwhelmed by despair, Alpheus is said to have drowned himself in the river Nyctimus, which was later named after him.

[128] Hesiod, 337.
[129] Plutarch, V, XIX.

Romantically he was linked with two legendary personalities, but it was an unrequited love. According to Pausanias,[130] Alpheus was a passionate hunter who fell in love with the nymph Arethusa. Arethusa, however, fled from him to the island of Ortygia near Syracuse and metamorphosed herself into a spring. Alpheus, determined to pursue her, became a river, flowing from Peloponnesus under the sea to Ortygia. There, he united his waters with those of the well Arethusa. This story is also recounted by Ovid in his Metamorphoses[131]. According to Ovid, Arethusa, a nymph, was bathing in the river Alpheus in Arcadia when she was surprised and pursued by the god. In this version, it is Artemis who takes pity upon Arethusa and transforms her into a spring. The spring then flows under the earth to the island of Ortygia, emerging as a fountain. In another version of the story, Artemis, who's only briefly mentioned here, was actually the one Alpheus was in love with. Once, he chased her to Letrini in Elis. To escape him, Artemis and her nymph pals smeared mud on their faces, so Alpheus couldn't recognize them. Tricked, he had to give up the chase[132].

Alpheus depicted in art mostly in a reclining position,[133] as we see in coins from Elis, a Roman province in Achaia. On some of these coins, Alpheus appears beardless and reclining in waves, holding a wreath in his raised right hand and a reed in his left, with a tall urn positioned in front of him[134]. In another representation on a coin, Alpheus is depicted as bearded, reclining, holding a cornucopia in his right hand and reeds in his left, with an amphora at his feet[135].

Additionally, there is a coin featuring the nymph Olympia in a Doric chiton standing and facing, holding an eagle in her right hand and an olive branch in her left. At her feet, two naked river-

[130] Pausanias, v. 7. 2.
[131] Ovid, v. 572-641.
[132] Pausanias, VI. 22. 9 and 10.
[133] Palagia, 1981, p. 576-78.
[134] Seltman, C.1948, 78 no.3 pl. 28.3; M.L. Sälfund,1970, 149 figs. 100; Franck Wojan, Michel Amandry, 2013, M.24,25, 30 p. 325, 24 a, 25 a-b, p. 326, 30 a.
[135] F. Imhoof-Blumer and P. Gardner, 1964, p 71. In fact, there are two famous reclining male figures in the corners of Zeus temple pediment at Olympia which rise a strong argument, some like Hans.R. Goette, “Alpheios in Syrien: Zu mosaic in Tartus", in Damaszener Mitteilungen. 5, 1991, p. 75, and M.L. Sälfund, The East Pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia (Göteborg,1970) 11-59, 147 sees them as river gods(Alpheios and Kladeos) based on Pausanias description(Paus.5.10.7) while other disagree based primary on the available evidence which indicates that in the 5th BC the river-gods were not represented as nude or semi-reclining figures, for the full argument see , Ruth Michael Gais, 1978, Some problem of river-god iconography, American Journal of Archaeology, Vol.82, p.355-362.

gods, Alpheus and Kladeos, recline. One holds a sprig of reeds, and the other holds a wreath, with waves depicted below them[136].

We see him also running in pursuit of a nymph named Arethusa for instance, there is a mosaic exhibited in the Alexandria Museum featuring Alpheus on the left, preserved from the waist up. He is depicted wearing a wreath, a billowing cloak, and holding a reed as he pursues Arethusa (though only her head and upper part of the garment are preserved)[137]. Another depiction from Antioch, specifically the House of the Porticoes, features busts of both Alpheus and Arethusa[138]. Alpheus follows with his head slightly turned toward his left shoulder, casting a dark shadow. His thick, curly locks are adorned with a crown of river weeds. Arethusa's bust, unfortunately, is significantly damaged, with flowing, almost wet-looking locks over her shoulder, a wreath similar to Alpheus' on her hair, and her head turned slightly to the right.

The examples provided all depict Alpheus in human form, appearing youthful and without a beard. However, none of them showcase the river god in a position similar to the one depicted in our panel. In fact, seated river gods are rarely represented, mostly appearing on coins from Greek centers such as Philippopolis and Alexandria[139]. On mosaics, we have few examples, such as Eurotas from The House of Aion in Nea Paphos, the Nile on the Tazza Farnese,[140]also the headless marble statue of the Nile sitting on a throne found in Kynopolis, Egypt, displayed at the Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria[141].

The female figure next to him is interesting. The figure has been identified by an inscription, of which only the first letter remains (Ῥ). This figure was thoroughly studied by Hans Goette, who argues that the female figure should be related to the river deity, and the name starts with the letter 'Pi' Based on that, there are two possibilities. The first is that this inscription is Pegai, a place where Alpheus emerge again, but this possibility is not likely because this is not a special place, and the place of the inscription gives the impression of a longer name.

[136] Seltman, 78 no.8 pl. 28.8; Wojan & Amandry, p. 294, M. 32, p.327, 32a-e.
[137] Michalowski & Dziewanowski, 1971, p. 21, n. 20, fig. 20.
[138] Levi, 1947, p.109, fig. 42, pl. XVIII a-b.
[139] Ostrowski, 1991, p. 29-30.
[140] Ostrowski, 1991, fig. 27, 41.
[141] Sandri, 2017, p. 196, fig. 5.

The second possibility, is that the name is Ṗ[ελοπόννησος] Peloponnese. In ancient times, the Peloponnese was considered an island, which was then depicted as female. This possibility is more convincing based on the fact that there are many representations of landscapes and cities[142].

Goette goes further by suggesting a connection between Pergamon and the couple Peloponnese and Alpheus. According to him, this scene could be linked to the myth of Telephos, to whom the rulers of Pergamon traced their lineage. Based on this, the scene might represent an episode in the cycle of the myth, similar to what we observe in the Boscoreale frieze. While the rural scene of the third panel may allude to Pergamon[143].

Before delving into the scene analysis, a preliminary examination will be conducted on the distinctive horn held by the river god, drawing parallels with a rhyton. In fact, The Greek word "rhyton" (τὸ ῥυτόν) is derived from the verb "rhein" (ῥεῖν), meaning "to flow." In the Classical period, a rhyton was a vessel, typically horn-shaped, with a perforated tip. These vessels were often adorned with a zoomorphic protome,[144]and were not exclusive to that region, spreading to another region such as Persia, India, and Rome.

Whereas, the cornucopia as a word is derived from the Latin word *cornu-copiae*, which means horn of plenty. In Greek mythology, the cornucopia, also known as the horn of plenty, is linked to the tale of Amalthea, the nurturing goat that cared for the infant Zeus or Jupiter. The narrative involves Zeus being hidden in a cave as a baby and nourished by the magical goat Amalthea[145]. There are alternate versions related to the horn and Amalthea's depiction, including one where Zeus breaks the goat's horn and presents it to the daughters of Melisseus. Another variation ties the cornucopia to the battle between Hercules and Achelous, the River God of Aetolia in central Greece, over the Aetolian princess Deianeira. In this version, Hercules tears off one of Achelous's horns. So, Achelous replaced his broken horn by the horn belonging to Amalthea the daughter of Haemonius[146]. Despite some differences in the narratives, the cornucopia consistently symbolizes abundance and fertility, particularly in agricultural produce. It is often depicted filled with fruits

[142] Goette, 1991, p.73-74.
[143] Goette, 1991, p.78-80.
[144] Murray, 1891, p.565; Koehl, 2006, p. 5.
[145] Apollodoros, 1. 1. 7–8.
[146] For all the narrative see: Borumand, 2018, p. 167-170.

and vegetables, representing the blessings of bountiful harvests. Noteworthy the oldest depictions of the cornucopia can be traced back to the fifth century B.C[147].

The river god in this panel grasps a horn that shares the shape and size characteristics of a typical cornucopia, but stands out with a hole at its tip, resembling a rhyton. This can be identified as a rhyton-cornucopia. Interestingly, this representation is not unique; comparable instances are found mainly in Greece. For example, a panel from Patras in which the Nile River holds a cornucopia in his right hand, with water flowing from its end. The interesting twist here is the water strands, as suggested by Goette; the artist not being familiar with this type of representation. This water strands are more evident in another example from Antioch, the panel of Ladon and Psalis from the House of Menaner[148]. The mosaic features Ladon, the river deity, who, according to myth, is a brother of Alpheus and the father of Daphne. In this mosaic, Ladon is depicted holding a cornucopia, with a jet of water springing from its mouth, overflowing its horizontal rim. As for the name of the female figure, contrary to Goette's suggestion, Gatier sees it more likely to be Pegae Ι̣Ι[ηγή]or Ι̣Ι[ηγαί][149]which was mentioned by Pausanias (…The waters of the Eurotas mingle with the Alpheius, and the united streams flow on for some twenty stades. Then they fall into a chasm, and the Eurotas comes again to the surface in the Lacedaemonian territory, the Alpheus at Pegae(Sources) in the land of Megalopolis...)[150].

In fact, both hypotheses are possible, and it's hard to pick one in the light of the absence of any surviving iconography of Pegae or Peloponnese. Although one would think firstly of Pegae, as it is indeed mentioned by Pausanias. Moreover, it doesn’t have to be a famous or special place to be pictured in Syria, as Goette considers- which is proven by the depiction of the river-God Eurotas and his wife Lacedaemonian,[151]also located in the Peloponnese peninsula and mentioned by Pausanias in the quote above. This panel is found in Bath E of Antioch.

As for the suggestion that this panel could be fragments of a Telephos cycle remotely reproducing a royal Attalid iconographic program, it seems highly unlikely- It is all build upon the theory that the female figure represents the Peloponnese, and that the various elements within the panel refer to Pergamon- In fact, even if we go along with this hypothesis, the old black and white photo of

[147] Borumand, 2018, p. 169, fig. 2-3.
[148] Cimok, 2000, p. 183; Levi, 1947, pl. XLVI-c.
[149] Gatier, 2016, p. 267.
[150] Paus. 8.44.4.
[151] Cimok, 2000, p. 224.

the site reveals three panels lined up in a row. One of the panels depicts Tethys in a manner unrelated to the myth. Therefore, this hypothesis appears improbable, unless the two panels represent only the beginning of the myth, as suggested by Goette. Nevertheless, it is more plausible to interpret the scene as a depiction of famous Greek rivers, a subject particularly suitable for bathing facilities.

2.2.4. Pastoral Scene Panel

This panel is displayed in Tartus Museum, measuring: 174x174cm. The tesserae are of limestone of the inner field are less of 1cm, whereas the tesserae of the borders range between 1-1.5cm on each side. The color is of shades of brown, shades of green, black, off-white, yellow, light pink, blue-gray, gray (Fig. 10).

The scene depicts a pastoral setting with a background featuring a round, towering object on the left, possibly representing urban architecture. Above it there is an inscription ΠΟΙΜΗΝ (ποιμήν) meaning shepherd. In the foreground, there is a man with a yellow hat, holding a long stick, and a bag lying on the ground in front of him. A magnificent goat is prominent in the foreground, while on the right edge of the picture, a shepherd in simple attire leans against a gnarled tree, supporting his left hand on a staff. The exact gesture of his right arm is unclear due to preservation issues. The central panel is framed by a black stripe, followed by a wave pattern running between two white stripes.

Iconography

This panel is unique. We don’t find a shepherd scene in any of the Roman baths in the Levant. Unfortunately, the scene is destroyed, so we cannot read it more. Nevertheless, one cannot deny the resemblance between this panel and the Alpheus panel, particularly in the green background, unlike the other two panels. The borders are the same; the inner border is a black still band followed by a white one, then a ribbon on a black background. Whereas the other two panels have a different border, both panels have an inscription, unlike the other two. One could think, at first glance, that they are connected. Their style and resemblance make the suggestion of Geote about linking them possible, and that they could be a copy of the Hellenistic version, although we don’t agree about the Telephose interpretation, as discussed above. Therefore, given its poor state of preservation, we can only read it as a pastoral scene, likely copied from an earlier version.

Rendering of Figures

The artist used smaller tesserae for detailed features, compared to the larger ones in the background. The hair, resembling that of the shepherd and Orontes panels, looks dense with black and brown colors, making the faces stand out. The contrast between light and shadow *chiaroscuro,* seen in the folds of their clothing, is created using darker tesserae, also in the tree where the masses of foliage have lost their naturalistic outlines and was done with two shades of green and a brown trunk. This contrast is sharp, lacking a soft transition. Black tesserae are also used in the folds and objects, like the cornucopia. What stands out the most are the emotions on their faces. In the remaining figures have the eyes that seem lost in deep thought. Darker shades enhance a feeling of sadness, especially seen in the downturned corners of their mouths. This expression is typical of the Severan period[152].

Geometric Motifs Analysis

Twisted ribbon (Figs. 9–10, border): This motif is attested in mosaics from Antioch as early as the 2nd century AD, appearing in its simplest and most regular form in the Oceanus and Tethys panel from the House of Calender[153]. From the Severan period, examples include the House of the Porticoes[154]; House of the Buffet Supper[155] and the Isiac Mysteries[156].

The ribbon in the panel under discussion, differ from the previous examples. Here, the filling, in gradated colors, of the ribbon calyces doesn't end with an induvial curving line, but in a continuous straight line drawn along the bottom of the calyces themselves throughout the ribbon's entire extent. The identical form of ribbon recurs in House of the Peddler of Erotes[157], the room of the Fishing Erotes, as well as, in the room of Oceanus and Thetis from the House of Menander[158]. This pattern continues in use in the later centuries. However, it has many variations, *e.g.,* triangle of three dots in the base of each calyx as we see Hermes and Dionysus frame panel

[152] Levi, 1947, p. 540; Balty, 1981, p. 371.
[153] Levi, 1947, pl. VI, Cimok, p. 45-46.
[154] Levi, 1947, pl. XVII-d, XVIII-f.
[155] Levi, 1947, pl. CXLII-c.
[156] Levi, 1947, pl. XXXIII-a.
[157] Levi, 1947, pl. XLIII-a; Cimok, 2000, p. 173.
[158] Levi, 1947, pl. XLVII-c, XLIV-a; Cimok, 2000, p. 188.

of a Bath bulding at Antioch (4th c. AD)[159]. According to Levi two pattern originated from the pattern of twisted ribbon: the loose ribbon and the lotus frieze.[160]

Serrated band (Fig. 7, border): A Serrated and symmetrical band composed of five rows of poised squares of four tesserae, the middle is always white. The colors are (black, light blue, white, light blue, black), changing midway to another group of colors that is either (dark yellow, light yellow, white, light yellow, dark yellow) or (red, caramel, white, red, caramel). In each of the four corners, we see a disc with a white outline.

While we lack a direct parallel to this band, it may mark the initial stages of what we later recognize as the cable pattern, characterized by a gradation of colors. This pattern, initially termed the 'rainbow band' by Levi. Made of a series of lines of tesserae placed on the tip; with a gradient of colors from the exterior to the center[161]. It is now preferably referred to as a 'cable' due to its metallic appearance and the impression of relief it imparts.[162]

The three-strand guilloche (Fig. 5, border) is a motif that originates in Greek decorative tradition and continued into later periods. It appears, for example, in House of the Porticoes from Seleucia (Severan period)[163] as well as in House of Dionysus[164]and House of Poseidon[165], (end of the 2nd c.AD) both from Zeugma.

Dating

These four panels dated by Balty to beginning of the third century (Severan period) based on stylistic criteria[166] .

[159] Cimoke,2000, p. 228-229.
[160] For the evolution of this pattern see Levi, 1947, p. 455- 457, fig. 174.
[161] Levi, 1947, p. 406-407.
[162] Balty, 1995, p. 90.
[163] Levi, 1947, pl. XVIII-e.
[164] Cimok, 2000, p.80.
[165] Cimok, 2000, p.54, 55.
[166] Balty, 1981, p. 380; Balty, 1977, p. 14.

2.3. Jableh Bath

Bibl. ; Badawi, 2014, Les thermes de Gabala (Jablé – Syrie), *25 siècles de bain collectif en Orient. Proche-Orient, Égypte et péninsule Arabique ; Actes du colloque de Damas*, 2009, p. 307-318.

Jableh, a coastal city 28 km south of Latakia, is attested from the 2nd millennium BC as Giba'laya (in the Ugaritic archives) and later as Gabala during the Hellenistic period. In 2007, a rescue excavation conducted about 50 m south of the Roman theatre uncovered the foundations of a large bath complex extending over more than 900 m², located in an insula separated from the theatre by an east–west street (Fig. 12,13).

The baths were built in a trench cut into bedrock and constructed with large sandstone blocks, disturbing earlier levels dating to the 11th century BC, including remains of a weaving workshop aligned with the Hellenistic urban plan. The complex was bounded by substantial walls and underwent several phases: its construction in the 1st century AD, major modifications between the 2nd and 5th centuries AD, and its probable abandonment in the 5th century AD.

The first phase of construction, dating to the 2nd century AD saw the establishment of the main thermal rooms within the eastern section of the final building. These rooms followed the traditional sequence: *caldarium* (room 1), *destrictarium/laconicum* (room 2), *tepidarium* (room 3), and *frigidarium* (room 5).

Room 1, serving as the *caldarium*, featured a large rectangular pool to the east and a smaller one on its north wall. Room 2, potentially functioning as the *destrictarium* or *laconicum*, had an apse likely housing a semi-circular basin or *labrum*. Adjacent to room 2 was Room 3, presumed to be the *tepidarium*, with a rectangular layout. Room 5, believed to be the *frigidarium*, lacked fittings but likely served for cold bathing.

The floors of the three hot rooms (1–2–3) were constructed with marble slabs and mosaics, with fragments found in the northern part of room 1. These rooms were built on hypocausts, with the hypocaust of room 1 connected to that of room 2 via two narrow, slightly oblique passages. The hypocausts included numerous terracotta pilae, either circular or square in shape. These

underground passages also allowed for the circulation of bathers between rooms 1 and 2, as is typical in thermal buildings of this period.

In the initial phase of the baths, another structure with a mosaic apse was discovered approximately 15 meters west of the hot rooms (No. 15), This structure, preserved only in its foundational remains, received water from terracotta pipes, possibly for a basin or fountain. A separate pipeline extended west toward the baths, but no functional connection could be established due to the presence of a modern street between them. Additional pipelines were uncovered about 30 meters north of the baths (see Fig. 3 and 10). Slightly inclined in an east-west orientation, they lead to a stone distributor and may have served to supply water to the baths. Excavations unearthed various artifacts, including ceramics, glass, tablets.

In the second phase, the initial building is expanded westward with rooms 6-7-10-11-12. Room 3's hearth is abandoned, replaced by a new one in the southern part of room 2. A new hot room (room 11) is added, with its hypocaust slightly elevated. Evidence of a chimney base suggests a wall heating system. Room 6, a cold room, is added west of room 5, featuring a mosaic floor made of small terracotta elements. Wastewater was evacuated through a masonry pipeline to the northwest, joining the main collector of the north-south street further north, similar to the setup in the first phase. Excavations yielded ceramics, molded lamps, bone pins, a gold earring, bronze pins, and a bracelet, dating to the 2nd –4th centuries AD. Fragments of painted plaster in red and white were also found in destruction layers, suggesting decorative wall finishes.

The baths were abandoned in the late 5th century AD, evident from excavated materials. This abandonment is likely linked to the 476 AD earthquake. The preserved lower parts and absence of a destruction layer imply systematic stone reuse for city restoration under Justinian in the 6th century AD.

Mosaic Pavement

During the initial phase, the floors of the hot rooms were paved with marble slabs and mosaics, as indicated by available data. Approximately 15 meters west of these rooms, a separate building foundation preserves a mosaic-decorated apse, likely containing a basin or fountain. Furthermore, during the second phase, a mosaic floor made of small terracotta elements was discovered in Room 6.

2.4. ‘Ain Salem

Bibl, ; Massoud Badawi, 2019, L’église de ʿAin Salem dans la région de Gabala (Jablé, Syrie), Syria, p 37-56.

‘Ain Salem is situated in the mountains of the Jableh region. The village is located 25 km southeast of Jableh, the ancient Phoenician city of Gabala, and 2 km south of the main road connecting the Ghab plain to the Jableh plain (Fig. 14-23).

As part of the Syrian archaeological mission conducted at the site of ʿAin Salem in the Jableh region of Syria, four excavation campaigns occurred between 2009 and 2011, along with another in 2013. These excavations unveiled a church dating back to the Proto- Byzantine period, as well as some artifacts from various Islamic periods. Numerous architectural elements were discovered on the surface, including partially preserved walls spanning multiple courses, two fragments of a sarcophagus lid adorned with relief decorations depicting two lion heads and three figures, fragments of limestone columns, components of an olive press, and an abundance of ceramic shards dating from the Hellenistic, Roman, Proto-Byzantine, and Islamic eras.

The excavation of the church revealed that it was constructed on the western slope of the site, following a basilica plan. It comprises a central nave with an oriented apse, flanked by two side aisles that extend into annexes on the north and south sides. The primary remains of the church are primarily found at the foundation level.

Mosaic Pavement

In the central nave, at the foot of the choir, there is a large square carpet (4 × 4 m), divided into four rectangular panels aligned in pairs and presenting different themes. The large square is framed by a double-eyelet guilloche (Straight-tongued double guilloche opened to form eyelets) and divided by a cable into four panels (Fig.15).

The northeast panel is decorated with an animal scene against a white background. This scene includes three registers of animals’ motifs ordered vertically around the mosaic’s axis, marked by two trees. The first at the bottom depicts a hare eating grapes on the left, and a goat resting on the right of a cypress tree. On the second register we see a dog on the right and a deer on the left, both are running toward the cypress tree tip. Above them there are three flower plants. The last

top row depicts a fig tree flanked by a lion with its open mouth as if roaring on the right, and a leopard on the left walking quietly, its head bowed towards the plant in front of it. Above them another two vegetal plants (Fig.16).

The southeast panel depicts an aquatic scene. The thick waves, pouring out of an urn in the lower right corner, unfortunately the left corner is damaged. Among the moving waves, fish of different sizes can be seen tending to be large. In the middle is an octopus (Fig.16). To the south of it, there is another panel, unfortunately badly damaged, in the preserved part of which a peacock is shown standing near a vase. The fourth panel is totally lost (Fig.17).

To the west of this square another panel, damaged heavily, in the preserved part appears a diagonal net of cable enclosing a cross in each partition, formed by four semi circles. Each lateral is decorated with a small rectangle filled with zigzag of rainbow style pattern. This mesh is farmed by three borders, as the following a cable, a white band then a band of two-strand guilloche (Fig.19).

In the north aisle, a well-preserved pavement, is decorated with all-over pattern of white scale, each contain a rosebud(Fig.18). Three of the north intercolumniations are preserved. The first two panel, between the apse and the first column, and the one between the first and the second column, are decorated with zigzag pattern (Fig. 20). Whereas the third one, located between the second and third columns, is adorned with three interloped circles one made of two Strade guilloche, the other of a cable while the middle one is mad of both guilloche and cable and its center is decorated with a grape. the other two circle loaded with pomegranates (Fig. 21). The pavement of the south aisle has been heavily damaged, and only its central part is preserved. As far as can be observed, it is similar to the decoration of the north aisle floor. Fragments of mosaic panels were also found in the intercolumnar spaces on the south side of the nave. The first is decorated which is decorated with rosebuds. Each section contains a serrated diamond (Fig. 23). The annexes around the main church were only partially excavated, especially in the eastern and northern sectors. Some contained heavily damaged mosaic pavements.

Animal Representations

The animal is represented in a simplified manner: the body is outlined in bold, the mass of the body is depicted as a single unit, and no attempt was made to detail the body's muscles. The body

measurements are disproportioned, especially in the case of the lion, whose head is larger in comparison to its body, as well as the dog. This simplification and rigidity are reminiscent of Houad (568 AD). In fact, this schematic treatment of animals characterizes the decorative art of the 6th century in Syria, especially during the latter half of that century. This can be observed in Oum Nir al-Qubleh, Saraqeb, and the Tall Khanzir church [167].

Analysis of Geometric Motifs

An orthogonal pattern of tangent crosses paty in the cable[168], creating a pattern of Maltese-cross-like forms. (Fig. 19). Shown in the preserved corner is a square, and in the intervals appear rectangles, all laden with zigzag motifs of a rainbow pattern. Two similar examples, datable to the first half of the fifth century AD, were found. The first example comes from the baptistery of the Cathedral of Hama-Epiphaneia in Syria,[169]where an orthogonal motif of rhombuses with lobed sides formed by double-stranded braid. Smaller repeats the movement inside up to the central diamond creating the effects of Maltese cross. The second close parallel is found in the Complex of Eustolios at Kourion of Cyprus[170]:the decoration of the Bird panel consists of a running guilloche that frames it and then turns towards the center and interlaces so as to form four curvilinear Maltese crosses. Small checkerboard squares occupy the corners of the panel while in the center and the sides there are panels with birds and fish.

The interloped circles(Fig. 21): the interloped circles are one of the geometric motifs that has become popular in the eastern Mediterranean since the 5th century[171]. It was used to decorate the frames, and more often to cover the large space as a field decoration. Although interloping and intersecting patterns was common in the decoration of the intercolumniation panels, few examples show this type of interloping circles. Such as the Old Diakonikon-Baptistry (530 AD)[172], and the Basilica of Moses(6th c.AD),[173]both at Mount Nebo in Arabia.

[167] Abdallah, 2018, p. 209, fig. 2.
[168] Picard, 1985, p. 204, pl. 135.
[169] Piccirillo, 2007, p. 606, fig. 6.
[170] Michaelides, 1987, p. 41, pl. XXVIII, no 45.
[171] Balty, 1984, p. 441.
[172] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 146 fig. 182.
[173] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 148, fig. 193.

Two strand guilloches (Fig. 19, border). This pattern is an ancient border ornament, belonging to the Greco-Roman decorative repertoire[174].

All -over pattern of scale decorated with rosebuds (Fig. 18). Scale technique can be found in Pompeii as early as the Hellenistic mosaics. It is a form of the fan pattern[175]. As for the scale adorned with rosebuds it was used on Syrian mosaics since the second third of the fifth century AD. The use of rosebuds to decorate the scales was most likely the result of internal evolution to enrich this style rather than the convergence of bud and scale styles[176]. Regardless, staring from the second half of the fifth century all kind of the composition of imbrication spread.[177]

The rosebud has a round tip like a fan, which we encounter on many mosaics such as Oum Hartein Church nave in North Syria(500 AD)[178], where the background of the animal scene is dotted with rosebuds of either rhombus or fan shape, Oum Nir al-Qoubleh church (end of 5th – mid of 6th c. AD),[179]always in North Syria a panel from Houad church(568 AD), [180] in which the back ground is decorated with all pattern scales each adorned with a rosebud that has a fan or rhombus shape.

The pattern of Straight-tongued double guilloche opened to form eyelets (Fig. 22)[181]is one of the variation of the composite guilloche, an ornament that was a common architectural motif in the Archaic period, and appeared as a painted or relief decoration on terra-cotta. Hence, it is assumed that the mosaic artists adopted it from the architectural motifs[182]. Straight-tongued double guilloche opened to form eyelets was popular on the Eastern provinces mosaic in the Proto-Byzantine period. Such as the border of the mosaic of Ananeosis, and Mosaic of

[174] Ovadiah , 1980, p. 110.
[175] Levi, 1947, p. 440.
[176] This hypothesis is provided by. Donceel-Vout, les pavement des église; p 456-457: argues that, the introduction of the floret into scales was an inward evolution. Citing examples to prove that before taking the floret as the main decoration they used a colored minuscule tesserae or other motif such as a cross to enrich this poor motif. Whereas the previous hypothesis (the convergence of bud and scale styles) was provided by D. Levi 1947, The Antioch pavements, P436-453., who in his study about the history of rosettes and florets, argued that the scale did not introduce the floret nor the floret generate from the scales that was invented centuries before without the floret and said: ‘’the semicircles around the rosettes would alternate with scales around florets”. And added that the association of florets with the rosettes could be the reason of this adaption.
[177] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 457.
[178] Abdallah, 2018, p. 156, fig. 16.
[179] Abdallah, 2018, p. 167, fig. 16.
[180] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 144, fig. 116.
[181] Balmelle, 1985, p.124, pl. 74-h.
[182] Ovadiah , 1980, p. 116.

Megalopsychia – Topographical border from Antioch(second half of 5th c. AD)[183], where the double guilloche has a straight tongue and opened to eyelets. Taybet-al Imam, Hama(first half of 5th c. AD)[184]. In which the order of the main room is surrounded by round-tongued double guilloche opened to form eyelets same as our panel, which also found in Ouzai Villa(mid-5th to early 6th century AD),[185]Jnah Villa- Room d (first third of the 6th c. AD),[186] mosaic of the entrance to the central nave of Jiyeh church(477 AD)[187] in Phoenicia. Beth Shean- Monastery of Lady Mary, Room L (567 AD)[188], Imhoff monastery-Room 10 (5th- 6th c. AD),[189]Erez, fragment second half of the 5th c. AD, [190] Gaza Maiumas: Synagogue, nave, 6th c. AD.[191]Migdal Monastery-Room 15, byzantine period[192], Chapel of Tall es-Samak, Shiqmona, Byzantine period[193](Church- south -eastern room). Yafia' Synagogue-part of the nave (5th c. AD) in Palestine,[194]The Propylaea church[195], and the old Diakinikon- Baptistry chapel[196] from Arabia.

The grid of rosebuds (Fig. 23) is one of the new patterns that prevailed the mosaic in Syrian and the east as a whole from the 5th c. AD. A similar pattern is found in the mosaic from the Khan al-Sabil church, which also encloses serrated diamonds in each segment (dated to 489)[197]. Additionally, in the Oum Nir al-Qoubleh church, the compartments enclose serrated diamonds alternating with flowers of four florets (dating to the end of the 5th century AD and the first half of the 6th century AD)[198] from northern Syria.

Iconography

The depiction of animals was a common theme on Syrian mosaic and the whole Eastern provinces during the Proto-Byzantine period. Most of which were hunting scenes or wild animals

[183] Levi, 1947, pl. LXXX.
[184] Zaqzuq & Piccirillo,1999, pl. VI.
[185] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXXXVII.
[186] Chehab, 1959, pl. XXVII.
[187] Helou,2019, p. 142, fig.151.
[188] Ovadiah, R. & A., 1987 p. 29-30, pl. XXIV.
[189] Ovadiah, R. & A., 1987 p. 32, pl. XXVIII-2.
[190] Ovadiah, R. & A., 1987, p 58, pl. XLVII.
[191] Ovadiah, R. & A.,1987, pl. LVIII-2.
[192] Ovadiah, R. & A.,1987 pl. CXXIV-1, p 110.
[193] Ovadiah, R. & A.,1987, p. 132, pl. CLVII. CLVIII.
[194] Ovadiah R, &A., 1987, p. 141-142. pl CLXXIV.
[195] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 297, fig. 574.
[196] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 146, fig. 166, 182.
[197] Abdallah, 2018, p. 111, fig. 7.
[198] Abdallah, 2018, p. 167, fig. 13-5.

chasing their preys. It was used also in churches such as Mezra'a el-Oulia church[199], Oum Hartein church[200], Khaleh-Shwayfat[201]. However, fewer examples show scenes of animals living in peace, such as the Martyrion of Seleucia from Antioch, where an elephant, a goat, a giraffe, gazelles, a group of lionesses and birds among the procession of varied animals that decorated the round frieze of the Martyrion. The scenes included also trees and flower plants. The background adorned with monochrome scales[202].

Always in Syria, the Howarteh church in Apamea region (472 or 487 A.D)[203], an animal scene paved the nave. In the preserved part we see Adam surrounded by wild variety of beats and birds such as eagles, a lioness, snakes, a griffon, phoenix among others, that set amid the trees and flowering plants. These beasts are calm and approach Adam peacefully.

More example from Arabia such as, the western panel of church of the Holy Martyrs Lot and Procoius nave, datable to the middle of the 6th century A.D. It is decorated with four-laden trees placed in the four corners, growing towards the centers. In the intervals we see pairs of animals facing each other: two bulls, two deers, two hares[204].

Regarding the depiction method of placing the animals in rows on either side of the mosaic's axis. The closet example is found at Houad church near Mhardeh city in North Syria, dated by an inscription to the year of 568 A.D.[205] The nave is decorated with animals set in two columns on either side of the mosaic's axis that surmounted by an eagle. The eagle is flanked by a lion and a phoenix to its left and a bull to its right. The right side include from base to tope the following animals: an elephant, a lioness, a dear, a panthers and a bear, whereas the left side contain the following: a goat, a zebra, a tigress. In addition to small birds scattered between the animals, all set against a white background adorned with flower plants and rosebuds. Another parallel is found in Arabia, in the lower Baptistry Chapel of Madaba. The old chapel is a long and narrow room; the floor consists of a rectangular panel with a dedicatory inscription dating to the first decades of the 6th century. This panel portrays animals facing each other in pairs among the branches of a vine. From base to top as follows: two rams, two gazelles, a bull and a lion.

[199] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p 179, fig. 150.
[200] Abdallah, 2018, p. 156, fig. 16.
[201] Helou, 2019, p. 42-55.
[202] Levi, 1947, p. 360-361.
[203] Canivet M T.&P.,1979, fig. 20.
[204] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 164-165, fig. 215.
[205] Abdallah, 2018, p. 83,95, fig. 2.

The representation of Fish

The fish depiction on the mosaics of the East during Proto-Byzantine period, was most often either in Nilotic scenes such as Oum Hartein church in North Syria[206]: One of the panels of the nave's frame is decorated with aquatic plants and large fish. Always in North Syria, in Oum Nir el Qoubleh church[207], the fish was part of the Nilotic scenes on some of the intercolumniation panels. Also, the church of the Holy Martyrs Lot and Procopius in Mount Nebo (6th A.D), the intercolumnar panels have Nilotic motifs, on one of them we see fish, two geese, water fowl and flowers[208]. Or it was used as a decorative element such as khaldeh Shwayfat church in Phoenicia[209]: in the grid that adorns the pavement of the entrance to the central nave, we see animals of all species including fish. In the holy martyrs at Tayibat al-Imam near Hama in central Syria. The fish were part of the paradise scene that decorate the eastern nave panel for which the fish and birds move in the flowing waters created by the four rivers[210]. Nevertheless, the depiction of fish moving in water streaming from un urn has no equivalence.

The Peacock The peacock appears frequently in Christian funerary art, in tomb paintings, on carved sarcophagi, and in the mosaics covering tombs in North Africa[211]. The depiction of a peacock was common on Syrian mosaic. In some examples it was portrayed in front view out-spread its tail, as we see in the House of the Buffet Supper- lower level in Antioch, dated to the 3rd century A D[212], it's a rectangle panel with bird decoration and putti playing around a peacock in the center above a crater; the mosaic of the Striding Lion dated to the second half of the 5th century , the peacock, drawn in frontal view with its tail spread, was one of the filler motifs of the grid sections. It is placed at the axis of the panel under the lion[213]. Also, in the church of Soughaneh, dating back to the 6th century. It represented in an octagon that is flanked by squares and diamonds filled with floral and geometric motifs[214].

[206] Abdallah, 2018, p. 156, fig. 13.
[207] Abdallah, 2018, p. 164, fig. 2.
[208] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 162, fig. 112.
[209] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXVI; Helou,2019, fig. 21.
[210] Zaqzuq & Piccirillo, 1999, pl. VI.
[211] Maguire, 1987, p. 39, see Leclercq, 1922, p. 1075-97.
[212] Levi, 1947, pl. XXIII-b.
[213] Campbell, 1988, pl. 85.
[214] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 315, fig. 307.

Most of the examples shows the peacock in side view on either side of a vessel such as the church of ’Ain el-Bad, in which the two peacocks flanked a vas from which grow two vine branches, with birds filling its scrolls. The same pattern is depicted in The church of Tall-‘Ar[215]. Always in North Syria, In Howarteh -north church, at the relic chapel pavement, we see a vase flanked by two birds, while the two peacocks set above it in the vine scrolls. In Kherbet Mouqa church, the two peacocks surrounded a vase that did not contain vine coils, and its background was decorated with rosebuds and other birds. This scene has inscriptions at the top and bottom. In fact, the peacock could also `flank an inscription as we in Qasr el-Abyad church, the preserved panel shows a peacock, seen in side view next to an inscription, and surmounted by a vegetal plant [216].

Further examples of the two peacocks flanked a vessel can be cited from other eastern provinces such as Beit Mery church in Phoenicia[217], the church of Palm Tree[218], the church of Saint George [219], Nahariya church [220]from Arbia-Palestine.

Returning to the panel, the peacock is depicted in profile on one side of a vase. The opposite side is unfortunately damaged, and the presence of a second bird cannot be confirmed. However, as the examples above prove, pairs of peacocks arranged symmetrically around a central object (often a vassel) are among the most decorative antithetical composition in the East[221]. It is therefore possible that a second peacock, flanking the vase, was originally present.

Allegorical Program of the Eastern Nave Panels

The significance of the representations in the floor mosaics of Christian sacred buildings has been the subject of extensive debate among scholars. Some scholars dismiss any symbolic interpretation, while others argue that the motifs found on these mosaic floors carry allegorical meanings. Yet, a third group suggests a middle-ground perspective, asserting that the meaning of a visual image largely relies on the internal logic that connects various images within a single

[215] Jouéjati, 2012, fig. 18.
[216] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 254, fig. 232.
[217] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 338, fig. 321.
[218] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 241, fig. 393.
[219] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 179, fig. 246.
[220] Ovadiah, R & A., pl. CLXXXVII.
[221] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p 478.

work.[222] According to Olszewski, the prevailing view among scholars is that the figural floor mosaics adorning early Christian churches symbolically represent the cosmos. This cosmic representation, divided into spheres of earth, sky, water, and paradise, is reflected in the design and decoration of the church itself[223].

According to Donceel-Voute, drawing on texts by authors of Syrian origin, early Christian church architecture may be interpreted symbolically: the nave or naves represent the inhabited Earth, while the sanctuary—particularly its vault—symbolizes the Heavens. Eden is situated at the eastern end of the nave, within the bounds of the Earth yet in contact with Paradise, which is represented either by the choir platform (qestrômô) or by the sanctuary platform. The ambo-bema occupies the centre of the nave, corresponding to the position of Jerusalem at the centre of the Earth[224].

The eastern floor of the nave is decorated with four panels from which only three has survived; the aquatic scene depicting fish and an octopus in swimming in a water floating from un urn. In fact, one of the numerous symbolisms associated with the fish is baptism[225]. Many of the commentaries on the created world have referred to the saving power of the water, such as Severian of Gabala, who associated the creatures from the water with the saving power of baptism. And Theophilus of Antioch, who said that the creatures made from the water on the fifth day were blessed by God so that this might serve as a pattern for the regeneration of Christians through water[226]. As a result, this panel could be interpreted as a symbol of salvation.

Under this panel another one adorned with a peacock standing near un vase. The peacocks had long been the image of immortality and eternal life. According to a popular belief their flesh passed for incorruptible; their representation therefore aroused ideas of apotheosis and it was for this reason that they figured in the ornamentation of the imperial mausoleums[227].

As for the last panel depicting animals. We see the animals adopt a peaceful posture; the leopard bends its neck as if eating a plant. The lion and the dog leap without pursuing prey, and the hare eats a grape while encountering a goat sitting calmly, all set on either side of two trees. Vegetal

[222] Talgam, 2014, p. 183-5.
[223] Olszewski,1995, p. 10.
[224] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p.485-488.
[225] Maguire, 1987, p. 57.
[226] Maguire, 1987, p. 40.
[227] Bréhier, 1918, p. 27.

and floral plants adorn the background. This scene could easily be interpreted as an earthly paradise, a recurring theme depicted in many mosaics, especially from Arabia. Notable examples include the mosaic of the New Baptistery Chapel in the Basilica of Moses on Mount Nebo[228], the Church of the Lions -Umm al-Rasas[229], the Church of Bishop Sergius -Umm al-Rasas[230], and the lower chapel of the Priest John in Khirbat al-Mukhayyat[231]. Also, the Tayibat al-Imam Church, located near Hama in Syria[232].

The interpretation of this panel as an earthly paradise is quite plausible, particularly because this panel, along with the other three panels, is situated on the eastern floor of the nave. Furthermore, it aligns with the themes of the other two panels: the aquatic scene symbolizing salvation through baptism and the peacock symbolizing eternal life. This interpretation is consistent with John 3:5, where Jesus tells Nicodemus, a Pharisee, that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are "born of water and the Spirit". Thus, the representation of paradise signifies the salvation granted to true believers and their entry into heaven, where they experience eternal life and the presence of God.

Dating

The ornamental program's motifs were widespread as early as the fifth century. The depiction of animals, however, is similar to the depiction of animals in the Church of Houad, which is thought to have been built about the year 568, according to an inscription. This representational style was popular in Syria in the sixth century, which is compatible with the excavation report, which dates the church to the sixth century AD.

2.5. Shabatliyeh

It was discovered during the agriculture work, this followed by emergency excavation in 2009 by Latakia department of archaeology team (Fig. 24-26).

The excavation revealed a mosaic pavement, remains of walls and rooms and remnants of limestone pavements. In fact, the site was severely damaged and the finds were few and limited

[228] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 150, fig197.
[229] Piccirillo, 1993, fig. 338.
[230] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 234, fig. 365.
[231] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 177, fig. 234, 240.
[232] Zaqzuq & Piccirillo, 1999, pl. VI.

to the following: a pottery basin with a diameter of 110 cm, it has a small hole in its bottom(50cm) filled with a stone. It was found in a small room (270 x 168 cm) north of the pavement, a marble basin with diameter of 40cm and Three graves. These graves were found southern the pavements. They were oriented east-west, covered by stone slabs and filled with earth. They contained remains of skeletons. In addition to three bronze coins of Roman period, and potteries fragments of Roman and byzantine periods.

The pavement is damaged; the remaining part measures 4.70 × 9.80 m. The tesserae, averaging 1.5 cm in size, are made of limestone and pottery. The colors include black, red, white, olive green, and orange[233].

It shows a geometric pattern of interlaced squares, between each two horizontal rows is a row of smaller squares. Each contained a rosebud, whereas the larger rhombs enclose serrated diamonds of gradated tones. It's noted that the tesserae around these diamonds were set in a circular alignment. Also, there are later restoration in some parts, using small tesserae (basically white with some red and black tesserae). This field is framed by a band then a border decorated with a filet forming diamonds, each filled with a four-petaled flower in straight line. The filet is made of squares of four tesserae. Within this band in the eastern section is a Greek text of three lines. The pavement is damaged in its southern part, and we can see remains of two columns and a remain of a wall along the southern side of the pavement. In the east part there are remains od the apse.

The Inscription (Fig. 26)

[ΥΠΕΡ ΑΝΑΠ]ΑΥΣΕΩ[Σ Τ]ΗΣ ΧΗΣ (*vacat*)

Ε]ΨΗΦΩΘ[ΗΤ]ΟΣ ΕΠΙ ΘΕΟ

(*vacat*) ΤΕΚΝΟΥ ΠΡ

For the salvation of [Khe?] (Either referring to a woman's name or meaning 'the world'), it was paved with mosaics during the time of Theoteknos presbyter."

Accordingly, this pavement belongs to a church or a small chapel.

[233] Excavation Report.

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

The interlacing squares (Fig. 25, central panel), are part of the interlacing geometric patterns that became widespread in the Eastern provinces during the second half of the fifth century [234]. However, this pattern is rather unique. There are only two similar examples known, with the first one discovered in the northern aisle of Nebha church in Lebanon, dating back to the 7th century AD [235]. In this example, the filling motifs consist of small diamonds.

The second example comes from the church of Kursi, [236] specifically the north aisle in Palestine, dating to the late 6th and 7th centuries AD. The net pattern is filled with various depictions. Between every two horizontal rows, there is a row of smaller rhombs, each filled with a diamond. Meanwhile, the larger rhombs are filled with various fruits, vegetables, flowers, and leaves, including leaves.

The trellis of oblique fillets forming diamond patterns (Fig. 25, border**)** was a common feature in Antioch mosaics since the 2nd century AD. Primarily used as a border decoration, this pattern often comprised single serrated bands. For instance, in the House of Iphigenia, Room 3 (2nd century AD)[237], solid diamonds were used as filling elements, similar to those found in the House of the Boat of Psyches (3rd century AD),[238] where small diamonds were enclosed within the trellis. Additionally, the House of the Porticoes featured compartments enclosing crosses [239]. This type of fillet of poised squares was mostly used in Roman times in the eastern provinces, such as Bacchus and Satyre mosaic border of Byblos in Phoenicia[240], and Beth Shearim catacomb courtyard dated to the third century in Palestine[241]. Moreover, it's worth mentioning that this type of band, composed of poised squares (mostly of four tesserae), became less common in Syrian mosaics after the third century compared to other types, such as single or multiple serrated bands. In fact, only a few examples were found using this type. For example, the mosaic of the Ma'arat Masrin house (second half of the fourth century)[242], features filets forming squares enclosing

[234] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 448, 458-60.
[235] Donceel-Voute, p. 403-4, fig. 393.
[236] Ovadiah, R. & A., p. 103-104, pl. CIX; Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 169, fig. 133.
[237] Levi, 1947, pl. XXI-b.
[238] Levi, 1947, pl. CLXXXII-c.
[239] Levi, 1947, pl. C b-c.
[240] Chehab, 1959, pl. IV.
[241] Ovadiah, R. & A., p. 41, pl. XXXVI.
[242] Abdallah,2018, p. 223-4, fig. 1.

other squares. The large oblique squares alternate in colors, white and ochre. Another example is seen in the House of the Ram's Heads, where compartments enclose small crosses (5th century AD) from Antioch[243].

The filling motif of repeated four-lobed motif, visually readable either as a crosslet with tassel-like terminals[244] or as floret of four tassels[245], (Fig. 25, border filling motif), was a common feature in Syrian mosaics during the Roman period. However, it gradually lost its popularity over time. It has been seen as elements of pavement borders since the early second century AD, e.g., the outer fame of House of Iphigenia, Lower level (2nd c. AD),[246]and House of Porticoes (Severan period)[247]. In both the motifs depicted on a white background with no trellis. In a border from Tomb of Amerimnia(first quarter of the 3rd c. AD),[248]it is used as a filling motif of the dotted grid. Few examples observed from the byzantine time ex, the House of the Ram's Heads, where compartments enclose small saltires (5th century AD) from Antioch[249].

This panel features a motif that resembles more a four-petalled flower arranged in a straight line, with only a few similar examples found. For instance, in the Comus mosaic (2nd century AD)[250], the four petals hang on a white background without a central dot. Additionally, in the House of the Boat of Psyches,[251]the outer border of the mosaic of Tethys is adorned with an alternating pattern of elongated crosslets and four-petalled flowers.

Dating

The pavement style belongs to the interlaced geometric patterns that were popular from the 5th century in the eastern provinces. However, the panel under discussion is unusual. Its interlaced grid of large and small squares is rare, with only two known similar examples, including one from the Nebha Church in Lebanon, dating to the 7th century.

The border design is also noteworthy. The fillet pattern, forming diamonds or oblique squares, had been in use since the early 2nd–3rd century in Antioch mosaics. This type of fillet of poised

[243] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXXIII-d.
[244] Balmelle, 1985, p. 30, pl. 4, j- l.
[245] Balmelle, 1985, p. 189, pl. 124, a-f.
[246] Levi, 1947, pl. XCIV-d-e.
[247] Levi, 1947, pl. XCIX-c.
[248] Levi, 1947, LI-d ; Cimok, 2000, p. 199.
[249] Levi, 1947, p.l CXXXIII-d.
[250] Levi, 1947, pl. XCIV-c, Cimok, 2000, p. 62.
[251] Levi, 1947, pl. XXXIX-b.

squares was mostly used in Roman times in the eastern provinces. Examples include the border of the Bacchus and Satyr mosaic in Byblos, Phoenicia, and the courtyard of the Beth Shearim Catacomb in Palestine, dated to the third century. However, this fillet became less common during the Byzantine period compared to other types.

An example resembling this fillet pattern and the filling motif, though not identical, can be found in Antioch, in the House of the Ram's Heads, dating back to the fifth century, where the compartments enclose small saltires. It is also worth noting that in a nearby church there is a comparable grid with different filling motifs, featuring flowers of four rosebuds alternating with serrated diamonds. The same four-petalled flower is used in straight lines to decorate octagon bands. Excavators dated this church to the 5th or 6th centuries.

The site itself has yielded few finds: only a limited number of bronze coins from the Roman period and pottery from both the Roman and Proto-Byzantine periods. The site is heavily damaged, making it impossible to determine the specific function of the rooms. Consequently, assigning a precise date to the pavement is difficult, beyond what stylistic features suggest. Nevertheless, the evidence indicates that the site was occupied during both the Roman and Proto-Byzantine periods, suggesting that the pavement most likely belongs to the Proto-Byzantine era, possibly forming part of a small chapel.

2.6. Bahr al-Midan

Bibl. : Mohamad Redwan & Zeinab Ahmad, 2019 ; L'église de Bahr el-Midan Résultats des campagnes de fouilles du service des Antiquités de Lattaquié (2010 à 2016), *Syria*, p17-36.

In 2010, a Syrian archaeological mission began excavations in the Gulf of el-Qabban, known locally as Bahr el-Midan, located 12 kilometers north of Latakia. The excavations uncovered remains from the Hellenistic, Roman and medieval periods. More significantly, the excavations unearthed a complex of ruins dated from 6th to 13th centuries AD. This complex includes a three-aisled basilica with a unique tri-apsidal chevet, offering insights into the spread of this architectural style and the region's Christian presence during the Byzantine period.

The Church (Figs. 27, 28)

The church, measuring 27 meters in length by 16.5 meters in width, comprises three distinct parts: an east-facing sanctuary, a hall with three aisles, and a spacious western narthex.

The hall (approximately 22.5 × 16.5 m) is divided into three aisles by two rows of four columns (bases with a diameter of 0.40 m, intercolumniations of 2 m), whose layout is clearly identifiable. These columns served as the foundation and alignment for later structures. Two column bases were found in situ, while sections of columns and elements from both colonnades were reused in later constructions around the monument.

The tripartite sanctuary, elevated and accessible by two steps, features a chevet composed of three projecting apses. Despite significant devastation and subsequent alterations, the chevet retains the foundations of the original central apse, with some courses still in place, including those of the two buttresses that supported it. Remnants of the southern buttress are still visible, while those of the northern buttress are incorporated into the main wall of the construction site.

The central apse, measuring approximately 7 meters in diameter, is open to the choir. The lateral apses, each about 2.50 meters in diameter, exhibit slight asymmetries and open into the spaces of the two sacristies flanking the choir

The lateral sacristies are nearly identical. The southern one (3.5 × 4 m), accessible from the main apse and likely from the south nave as well (length 4.05 m), features an apse on its eastern side, measuring 2.45 m in depth and elevated by a step. In front of it, a mosaic spanning the entire width of the space still extends for 1.65 m in length; The remainder of this mosaic appears to have been destroyed and replaced by a pavement of small stone blocks during the alterations made to the entire apse. The floor of the southern sacristy was then raised, and stone steps seem to have been added to access the adjacent spaces.

The northern sacristy (length 3.8 m), also accessible from the choir, ends with an apse elevated by a step, which has a depth of 2.55 m. Its remains do not indicate the existence of a second phase, but in its southeast corner, remnants of pavement are found at a level similar to that of the southern sacristy. Surveys suggest the location of a door in the north wall, intended to serve various annex rooms. However, the state of the remains does not definitively identify the mode of communication between the annexes and the corresponding side naves.

Mosaic Pavement (Figs. 29- 31)

The original pavement is completely destroyed, but the large quantity of colored limestone tesserae found in the stone and lime foundations indicates that the floor was entirely covered with mosaics. Only the chancel retains two remnants of this decoration: the first in the southern sacristy and the second in the southwest corner of the main apse.

The pavement in the southern sacristy consists of a section of the mosaic that originally covered the entire width of the sacristy floor. Extending over 1.65 meters, it was later covered with a stone pavement. Within this section, there is a border consisting of tangent octagons, each enclosing squares. Surrounding these squares are either smaller red diamonds or crosslets with tassel-like terminals. This border is set apart from the central panel by a second border featuring a band of light tesserae, flanked by two lines of blue-gray tesserae. The field design displays a diagonal grid, forming serrated squares. Within these squares, there are various motifs, including serrated diamonds with small crosses at their centers and flowers, each made up of four roebuds.

The second pavement occupies a rectangular space (1.50 × 1.20 m) in the southwest corner of the central apse. It is surrounded by a double border that appears at the corner. The outer border consists of an interlacing motif in blue, brick, and white; however, the poor clarity of the photograph does not allow for a precise identification, although it may correspond to a two-strand guilloche. Followed by a simple band of white tesserae bordered by two lines of blue-gray tesserae. The inner field is decorated with all-over pattern of white scale; each contain a rosebud. The stem of blue-gray tesserae and the tip is red.

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

The band of adjacent octagons forming triangles (Figs. 30, border), is a common feature in Levantine mosaics, especially during the 5th and 6th centuries. For example, in the Green Carpet of the House in Daphne (5th century AD)[252], the main field is distinguished by a border of tangent octagons forming triangles, with each octagon containing a square. These filling motifs showcase various types of rainbow-style designs such as checkerboard and broken lines. In the

[252] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXVIII b-c.

House of the Phoenix[253], a similar pattern is observed but without the rainbow filling motifs, from the Antioch region.

In the mosaics of the Porticos of the Great Colonnade in Apamea(second half of 5th c. AD),[254] the tangent octagon pattern encloses squares filled with two types of filling motifs. The main scene is bordered by the tangent octagons, and each inscribed square contains rainbow-style motifs. In another border, the enclosed squares are surrounded by four serrated diamonds.

Similarly, in the Kafre Kama chapel from Palestine[255], the tangent octagon border features squares filled with rainbow-style motifs, each surrounded by four serrated diamonds.

However, this panel lacks an equivalent in terms of filling motifs, such as alternating patterns of four flowers, each with four rosebuds, and four small diamonds.

The oblique grid of single filet (Figs. 30, central panel), composing of poised squares and enclosing various motif, was in use on Syrian mosaic since the second century as approved by Antioch region discoveries such as a Season panel from Daphne (3rd c. AD),[256]House of Porticoes[257]. Less example found of the byzantine period including the House of the Ram's Heads, where compartments enclose small crosses (5th century AD) from Antioch[258].

The all-over pattern of scales, adorned with a rosebud in each scale (Fig. 31), spread in Syrian mosaics from the first decades of the fifth century and became popular throughout Levantine mosaics. This scale pattern adorned with rosebuds is similar to many examples, the scale was either outlined in bold such as the Kafer Roma mosaic from northern Syria (end of the 5th and beginning of the 6th century AD)[259], where the scale outlines in gray each contain a rosebud made of two tesserae and tipped like a fan. Another example is the Kaoussie Church in Antioch. [260] or white like our mosaic such as Houad church (568) A. D[261].

[253] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXV-a, LXXXIII-b.
[254] Dulière, 1974, pl. V.
[255] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, pl. C.
[256] Cimok, 2000, p. 189.
[257] Levi, 1947, pl. C-b.
[258] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXXIII-d.
[259] Abdallah, 2018, p. 278, fig. 2.
[260] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXXIX-b.
[261] Abdallah, 2018, p. 88, fig. 8.

Dating

The mosaic pavement is severely damaged, with only a small part remaining. It features a geometric decoration that was trendy since the fifth century: the all-over scale pattern, adorned with rosebuds, tangent octagons, and a grid enclosing flowers and serrated diamonds Consequently, determining an exact date is not viable. We will stick with the excavation suggestion of the Byzantine era. We can only say that it was likely paved after the first third of the fifth century, as the scale with florets was not common before that date.

2.7. Ras al-Bassit

Bibl. ; Courbin, P., 1978, Une nouvelle fouille française sur la cote syrienne : a-t-on retrouvé l'antique Posideion à Ras el Bassit ? *Archéologia*, Paris. 116, p 48-62 ; Beaudry, N, 2004 La basilique de Ras el Bassit, une église paléochrétienne sur la cote de Syrie du Nord. Thèse, Paris : Université de Paris-I Panthéon-Sorbonne ; Montréal : Université de Montréal ; Beaudry, N Mosaïques inédites d'une synagogue à Ras el-Bassit, Syrie du Nord, *O Mosaico romano nos centros e nas periferias. Originalidades, influências e identidades, Actas do X Colóquio Internacional da AIEMA* — Conimbriga 2005 (Conimbriga, 2011), 669-678.

Paul Courbin's work at Ras el-Bassit, on the north Syrian coast, led to the discovery of what he believed to be a large basilica

The excavations conducted at al-Bassit, on the north Syrian coast, from 1971 to 1984 by Paul Courbin revealed a Roman-Byzantine period of great prosperity, during which an ensemble interpreted as a large "basilica" would have belonged. In 1973, a survey uncovered two rooms in the northeast corner of the monument, labeled as room (A^s) in the south and room (A^n) in the north, both containing partially preserved mosaic floors. Courbin dated the first room to the late 3rd or early 4th century. The second room, featuring a Menorah and inscriptions, was identified as a synagogue dating to the early 6th century. The inscriptions were transported to Damascus at the end of the mission. In 1984 work at Bassit was temporarily halted, but it resumed in 2000 under Beaudry, aiming to explore and study the complex. During the clearing and examination of the area's remains, it became apparent that the complex had ecclesiastical significance and followed the synagogue (Fig. 32-38).

The Pavements

Room A^{s}

The mosaic pavement at the base of the wall consists of a series of square panels. These panels are separated from the north wall by a frieze of adjacent irregular octagons, bordered by black lines. The remnants suggest the possibility of restoring a similar frieze to the south side (Fig. 34, 35).

The room measuring 3.25x8.20 m. The tesserae density about 50 tesserae/100 cm².

The octagons feature a sequre at their center, surrounded by four saltire crosslets and bordered by a black line. Within this rectangle, there is a small serrated square, marked with a colored *tessera*. Additionally, the octagons create triangles, or rather half-squares on their tips, corresponding to the rectangles. These triangles are also adorned with a serrated half-square on their tips. Three partially preserved panels are enclosed by a white band that extends between two black stripes. The first panel's frame, which remains only in the northeast corner, features a polychrome two-strand guilloche. Additionally, a short guilloche creates a small triangle of concentric threads in the corner, with a second triangle separated from the braids by a white band. The second panel, bordered by a black frame, features an orthogonal composition of intersecting circles. The quatrefoils are white, and each concave square enclosing a serrated square with tesserae of different colors at its center.

The third panel is surrounded by a two-strand guilloche, connected by the arms of a swastika composed of a similar guilloche. Within the arms of the swastika, and separated from them by white lines, there are gamma bands adorned with twisted ribbons. These bands are topped by small rectangles, three of which are still preserved. The filling motif inside these rectangles, consist of chevrons, opposing chevrons, pairs of diamonds placed on their tips, each enclosing a polychrome serrated square.

A survey conducted in space Ae, beyond a subsequent threshold, revealed the continuation of the mosaic. It encompasses at least two additional panels, although the available documentation does not provide sufficient detail for description. Phase IV of the space seems to have been succeeded

by Phase V, The subsequent phase, Phase VI, marks the final form of the room until the destruction of the complex[262](Fig. 34).

The north room (A^n) The northern room belongs to a phase VII. The floor of this room is made up of three-square panels, framed by a white band bordered by two black stripes. The entire composition is separated from the walls by a broad white band. The tesserae are coarser than those of the mosaic of the southern part, with density about 40/100cm² (Fig. 36, 38).

The oriental panel is adorned with an orthogonal composition of scale pattern, outlined in black. Within each scale is a bichrome serrated square, with its center marked by a black *tessera.*

The central panel features a medallion within a square, housing an inscription. The inscription is framed by the wreath-like border, consisting of four short cable bands joined by polychrome chevrons. These chevrons extend in opposite directions from the midpoint of each side of the four wreath segments. Additionally, the colored border spans between two wide bands, each positioned between two black stripes. The central medallion measures 1.02 - 1.05 meters in diameter.

The third panel is adorned with serrated squares composed of red tesserae set against a white background. The central panel, bordered by a white band between two black stripes, preserves part of a menorah oriented towards the south. Flanking the menorah are ritual objects: on the right side, there is a yellow fruit(etrog) connected to a palm leaf(lulav) and a red rectangular object outlined in black with a handle, likely representing the incense shovel(mahtah); on the left side, there is a second palm leaf and another yellow object, which appears illegible in the photos but is noted in the excavator's plan as a ram's horn(shofar)[263].

To the west of the third panel, a black line, together with the central composition, forms a cartouche situated between the staircase and the north wall. Between this cartouche and the western wall, three small black squares set on their points animate a white field. The orientation of the tesserae also defines the ends of a tabula ansata containing an eight-line inscription.

[262] Beaudry, 2012, p 671.
[263] Beaudry, 2012, p 672.

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

The intersect circles (Fig. 34, middle panel)**.** This pattern is an ancient motif. We see it, for example, in Masada, dating to the Herode period[264]. It is also present in the mosaics of Pompeii from the first century AD. In the earliest examples in Pompeii, we find it in its simplest form: simple black quatrefoils on a white ground[265]. This pattern gained widespread popularity across the Levant region. with significant examples found in Antioch region dating to the 2nd century AD, including the House of Trajan's Aqueduct[266], Fragment in Sector 25-L[267], House of the Evil Eye[268], House of Polyphermus[269], House of the Phoenix, Lower Level[270].

From Phoenicia : Khaldeh Shwayfat church (end of 5th first third of 6th c. AD) [271] , Church of beit Mery[272] (6th c. AD) , Anane church (6th c. AD)[273], Funerary church from Gerasa (6th c. AD)[274], a mosaic from a mansion in Madaba[275], Ein Ha-Shiv'ah Monastry Chapel(6th c.AD)[276], 'Ein Gedi Synagogue(4th -5th c.AD)[277], Gaza Maiumas synagogue[278].

This pattern displays many variations, ranging from simplicity without filler decorations, as seen in numerous examples, primarily from the Arabia province mentioned previously, to designs with filler elements. One type resembles our mosaic, where each concave square contains a diamond, and the quatrefoils are left empty. similar examples can be seen in Bath of Apolausis(second half of 4th c. AD)[279], fragment in Sector 25-L(2nd c. AD)[280], Kaoussie Church, Latest additions [281],

[264] Ovadiah, 1980, p 157.
[265] Blake, Plate 23-1, 24-4.
[266] Levi, 1947, pl. XCIV-a.
[267] Levi, 1947, pl. CXX-c.
[268] Levi, 1947, pl. XCIII-b, d.
[269] Levi, 1947, pl. II-b.
[270] Levi, 1947, pl. IX-a.
[271] Helou, 2019, p. 49, plan 1.
[272] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 325.
[273] Helou, 2019, p. 103, fig. 107.
[274] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 298, fig. 581.
[275] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 76, fig. 44.
[276] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, no 75, pl XLV.
[277] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, no 73, pl XLIV.
[278] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, no 83, pl LII-2.
[279] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXI-c.
[280] Levi, 1947, pl. CXX-c.
[281] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXXIX-a.

House of the Bird-Rinceau, Upper Level (6th c. AD)[282]. From Antioch Region, Khan Khaldeh Shwayfat church[283], Bath C (Second half of 4th c. AD)[284].

The adjacent octagons pattern (Fig. 35, border), can be traced back to the second century in Antioch, as evidenced by the mosaic of DH 24-S[285]. This geometric motif later gained widespread popularity in Syria, primarily for borders, such as House of the Green Carpet -Upper level (5th c.AD)[286], the House of the Phoenix[287] and Bath C (350-400 AD)[288]from Antioch region. Deir Sem'an church, [289] Maarrat Bitar (5th c.AD), [290] Oum Hartein church (500 AD), [291] the Dibsi Faraj church(429 AD)[292]from North Syria.

It was also used in the other Eastern provinces but was less prevalent, such as church of Beit Mery, Boustan ech-Cheikh (5th c. AD)[293]; Nebha church[294] in Phoenicia and Shunah church near Nebo Mountain[295]and Kafre Karma church in Palestine[296]

This pattern has many variations; it could be forming either diamonds or triangles. It can appear as a simple form with no filling motifs, as seen in the Dibsi Faraj church[297], or have various filling motifs, for example, four diamonds around a central one in Khirbet Mouqa[298]. Another variation includes a square with angles extended by a rose bud, as observed in, Bath C (350-400 AD) [299], etc. The octagons in this panel were adorned with sequares surrounded by four crosslets and containing a serrated diamond.

[282] Levi, 1947, pl. XCII-b.
[283] Helou, 2019, p. 24- fig 10.
[284] Levi, 1947, pl. CXVIII-f.
[285] Levi, 1947, pl. XCVIIc.
[286] Cimok, 2000, p. 242.
[287] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXXV a.
[288] Campbell, 1988, plate 111.
[289] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p.59, fig 37.
[290] Abdallah, 2018, p. 116, fig. 1.
[291] Abdallah, 2018, p. 152, fig. 1.
[292] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 79, fig. 47.
[293] Helou, 2019, p. 109, fig 112.
[294] Helou, 2019, plan 16.
[295] Piccirillo, 1993, p 323, fig. 667.
[296] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, pl. C-1.
[297] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 79, fig. 47.
[298] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 161, fig. 133,135.
[299] Campbell, 1988, plate 111.

The swastika (Fig. 34, first panel on the right). The swastika is an ancient design used in a number of arts, such as waving, architecture, sculpture, and metalwork, and it is most often found on painted ornament on pottery from which spread to mosaic art[300].

In Syrian mosaics, the swastika was seen since Roman time, primarily used in border designs, often in the form of a swastika-meander, as seen in the House of Sun-Dial[301] and House of Porticoes[302] in Antioch. This motif continued to be a part of such borders with various variations over time. One such variation is the meander pattern traced by a cable and guilloche, enclosing small square panels. An example can be found in the House of Amazonomachy (beginning of 5th c. AD) [303]where the emblem is surrounded by a broad meander pattern traced by a cable and guilloche, enclosing small square panels. The same pattern is observed in the nave border of the church of Oum Hartein in North Syria (500 AD)[304]. This meander-swastika pattern can be observed in numerous mosaics from Syria especially between the 5th and 6th centuries, featuring variations such as swastika meanders with single or double returns, which enclose squares and rectangles with various fillings. Examples include Kratin (second half of the 5th c. AD)[305] and the bath complex in Antioch, where a meander of swastikas with returns is evident. Additionally, the Building under Bath F (4th c. AD)[306] showcases a meander with swastikas depicted in perspective. This motif was also used in other eastern provinces such as Awzai' [307] and Khan Khaldeh church[308] mosaic from Phoenicia; Bethlehem church (4th c. AD) and Shellal chapel (561-2 AD) from Palestine[309]; the church of the Prophets Apostles and Martyrs (464/65 AD) in Gerasa[310] and Ebsus North Church from Arabia[311].

The swastika is also used as a central motif within intersecting octagons, which first appeared in Antioch in a panel found in the complex of the House of Porticos, dating back to the Severan

[300] Ovadiah, 1980, p. 149.
[301] Levi, 1947, pl. CXLIII-a.
[302] Levi, 1947, pl. XVII-f.
[303] Levi, 1947, pl CXXIII-a.
[304] Abdallah, 2018, p 156, fig 11-15.
[305] Abdallah, 2018, p282, fig 1-2.
[306] Levi, 1947, pl CVIII-e.
[307] Chehab, 1985, pl LXXXIX.
[308] Chehab, 1958, pl LXIII-2. LXXVI.
[309] Madden, 2014, p 37-8, Fig 7, p122-3, fig 23.
[310] Piccirillo, 2003, p 286.
[311] Piccirrillo, 2003, p 250, fig 425

period (193-235 AD)[312], and also a panel of the Therapenides mosaic pavement from Apamea[313] in the third quarter of the 4th century AD.

However, there is no identical example where the swastika is treated as a separate motif decorating a square. A close example can be found in the Room 2 of the Constantian Villa (beginning of the 4th c. AD)[314]. In this mosaic pavement, a long, narrow band features a checkerboard of diagonal black and white squares. Only the west part of this corridor has been preserved. Here, four small panels with different geometric patterns alternate with a large element of the meander pattern, a key motif. Within one of these panels, the swastika stands out in a dark color against a background of alternating black and white triangles, serving as a filling motif within one of the border squares. We observe it in the border as a swastika meander.

Dating

The current dating of these panels to the late third or early fourth century AD lacks a documented explanation. To investigate this further, we will conduct a stylistic analysis of the mosaics, examining motifs, to assess and verify the dating

At first glance, the panel bears resemblance to those of the fourth century, with a border of octagon patterns (mostly secant octagon) framing panels decocted with geometric motifs. However, upon closer inspection, the following details emerge:

the filling motifs style in the swastika panel. Predominantly, these motifs consist of dotted patterns leaning towards an advanced rainbow style: Gamma bands carry a white wave on a horizontal gradient and are adorned with small rectangles. Three of them are preserved, featuring opposing chevrons, a pair of tangent diamonds on their tips enclosing a polychrome serrated square. This tendency to fill the spaces with decoration of dotted rainbow style motifs can be observed in two examples from Antioch, dating back to Severan Period: The House of Dionysus and Ariadne[315], and the House of Drinking Contest[316]. Additionally, similar decorative styles are evident in mosaic panels from Zeugma dating to end of the second and the beginning of the third

[312] Levi 1947, pl. XCVIII-c.
[313] Balty 1972, pl. L 1-2.
[314] Levi, 1947, pl LIII-a.
[315] Levi, 1947, pl CI-a ; Cimok, 2000, p 124-5
[316] Levi, 1947, CI-b.

centuries, such as Muses-Paideia, Arete and Sophia from the House of Euphrates[317]. Achillis Revaeled[318], House of Oceanus[319].

This decorative style, characterized by the use of dotted filling motifs in a rainbow style, later became dominant in decoration, with notable variations exemplified best in two mosaics from Apamea: The Therapenides mosaic, dating by Balty to the third quarter of the 4th century, in particular to 361-362 AD to the time of Julian 'stay in Antioch[320], and most importantly, the mosaic of the synagogue of Apamea dating by inscription to 392 AD[321]. In this mosaic, we observe a variety of rainbow-style patterns with thicker lines and clearer color contrasts, resulting in the creation of various motifs such as zigzag, tiles, chevrons, cable and more, dominating the surface of the panel.

In summary, the swastika filling motifs reflects a style from the first half of the third century and does not exhibit the innovation seen in the rainbow style evident in mosaics of the end of third and beginning of fourth centuries. The band of adjacent octagons decorate the border of a room that divided into panels decorated with geometric motifs, has been observed before in Daphne house in DH 24-S[322] , dating to the end of the second century. Where the border of Room 2 has pattern of tangent octagons, with diamond in each octagon and in each square of the squares enclosed by them, the rest of the pavement is divided into rectangular panel.in fact the border of octagon pattern mostly secant as a frame became common after the beginning off the 4th c. AD, such as Yakto complex (second half of 4th.c. AD)[323] Kaoussi church(387 AD) [324].s

The damaged state of the pavement makes it impossible to fully interpret its decorative program. Therefore, we propose a wider timeframe extending to the third century, and no later than the beginning of fourth century.

[317] Onal, 2009, p 73, 79.
[318] Onal, 2009, p 90.
[319] Onal, 2009, p 112.
[320] Balty, 1986, p 4-5, fig,1.
[321] Balty, 1986, p 6 , fig 9-12.
[322] Levi, 1947, p 105, pl XCVII-c.
[323] Levi, 1947, pl CXII-c.
[324] Levi, 1947, pl CXIII-b.

Second Panel

All-over pattern of scales, adorned with a serrated diamond on each (Fig. 37). The all-over pattern of scales is an ancient motif observed in Greece and Pompeii [325]. It emerged as one of the new trends in motifs prevalent in Syria since the 5th century AD. This pattern was commonly adorned with a rosebud on each scale, although other variations exist, albeit less commonly observed. Such as two examples from North Syria: a panel from Abu Daphne church features scales outlined in red and containing a small four-petaled flower resembling a cross[326]. Also, in Tall ‘Ar church, each scale is nested within another, forming three layers, each of a different color (Last third of 4th c. AD)[327]. In this panel, the scales contain a serrated diamond, which proves to be the least common. A similar example can be found in Palestine, specifically in the Church of Bethlehem's south aisle (dated by Avi Yonah to the 5th c.AD)[328].

The inscription is encircled by a medallion consisting of four short cables placed perpendicularly and connected by polychrome chevrons. These chevrons form two sections running in opposite directions from the middle of each side: using cables as a frame for medallions was a common practice, as seen in examples such as the Zahrani church (6th c. AD) from Phoenicia, where the inscription is framed by a medallion of cable bands[329]. In the Fa’aloul mosaic from North Syria (last quart of 5th c. AD), the personification of Autumn was framed by a cable band [330]. At the Shavei Zion church (5th c. AD), from Palestine, a cross is framed by a cable between two bands of crowstep, and in other pavements of the same church, however, a four-petalled flower occupies the center.[331] In Shiqmona monastery from Palestine, the inscription is inside a medallion of cable[332]. Finally, in the Funerary Chapel (570 AD) in Gerasa, the inscription is enclosed in a cables frame[333].

However, the use of chevrons in the medallion alone or combined with cables is relatively rare. For instance, in Arabia at the Chapel of the Twal Family[334], a medallion contains a ram near a

[325] Ovadiah A. , 1980, p 154-5, pl XXXVIII-fig 104.
[326] Abdallah, 2018, p 21, fig 1-2.
[327] Abdallah, 2018, p 195, fig 29,
[328] Ovadiah R &A.,1987, p 23, pl XVIII, no. 19.
[329] Chehab, 1959, pl LVI-1, LVII-2.
[330] Abdallah, 2018, p 240, fig 1.
[331] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, pl CXLVI, CXLVII, no. 21.
[332] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, pl CLVI-2 no. 220.
[333] Piccirillo, 1993, p 298, fig 282.
[334] Piccirillo, 1993, p 128, fig 140.

small tree, framed by a band of chevron patterns radiating outwards from the four meeting points in opposite directions. in the Chapel of Khirbet Munyah, the inscription is framed by bands of chevron and cable patterns, alternating and connected by discs at the four meeting points northwest of Gerasa[335].

Dating

This mosaic, dated by an inscription to the 6th c. AD.

2.8. Latakia City.

Five mosaic panels, now on display in the Latakia Museum, were discovered accidentally during construction work in the city. These fragments had been removed from their original architectural context, and no relevant information about them exists in the museum records.

2.8.1. Al- 'Innabeh Mosaic Fragments. In 1993, two mosaic fragments were discovered accidently during construction work that took place in al- 'Innabeh area in Latakia city[336].

2.8.1.1. Panel. 1. Dimensions are 130 x 133 cm. Made of limestone tesserae with an average size of 1cm on each side. The colors are: green, white, red, orange, black and ochre. It is decorated with a polychrome oblique grid of serrated bands. The compartments are alternating in colors (green and white), in order to create the effect of a chessboard- pattern. Each contains a crossed flower with a white center and gradations of white, orange, yellow and red towards the outer part, creating a background of the green colored cross (Fig. 39).

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

Grate Pattern. The grate pattern, whether Straight or oblique, became popular on Syrian mosaics since the 5th c. AD [337]. It was mostly of either floral motifs, such as Khan al-Sabil church(489 AD)[338], and House of the Green Carpet, upper level,[339]simple cords, such as Ma'art Masrin panel(Second half of 4th c. AD),[340]or multi- serrated bands like this panel, which in turn resemble a small rectangular panel from Hawa Bath (end of the 5th c. and beginning of 6th c.

[335] Piccirillo, 1993, p 299, fig 587.
[336] Museum archive.
[337] Balty,1984, p 451-2.
[338] Abdallah, 2018, p 113, fig ,7.
[339] Levi, 1947, pl CXXVIII-b.
[340] Abdallah, 2018, p 223, fig 1.

AD),[341]the apse mosaic Goubelleh church (5th c. AD)[342] as well as the Barrak house courtyard panel[343].

2.8.1.2. Panel. 2 Dimensions are 200 x 146 cm. Made of white, black, green, light- blue, ochre, orange, and red limestone tesserae with an average size of 1x1 cm on each side. This panel is decorated with a grid of square scalloped pattern. The grid is framed by a strip of colored multi-strand guilloche against a colored ground which extended between two white bands (Fig. 40).

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

Square Scalloped Pattern. The square scalloped pattern was first used on Syrian mosaics at the end of the 4th c. AD[344], and became popular especially in Phoenicia and Arabia provinces. In most examples, the scalloped square was made of white scales loaded with various types of rosebuds e.g., The nave of Anane church (6th c. AD)[345] and the martyrium of Khaldeh Shwayfat church (end of 5th –first third of 6th c. AD)[346] from Phoenicia; The church of Saint George in mount Nebo (535/36 AD)[347] and Yasilah church east of Irbid (518 AD)[348]from today Jordan. Nevertheless, it should be noted here that the scales of al-'Ennabeh panel pattern were not decorated with either rosebuds or dark motif[349] (as usual).

Guilloche. The guilloche itself is an ancient ornament and one of the most common border motifs in mosaics of the Levant. However, this particular variation of the guilloche pattern—namely the multi-strand guilloche—has only a few parallels resembling the panel under discussion. e.g., a mosic from Tell Shioukh Tetani in Euphrates valley (Osrhoene province)[350]. In fact, most of the examples are found mainly in Arabia and Palestine, such as a small fragment from as-Suwayda Basilica (6th c. AD),[351]mosaic pavement of The Shunah church from mount

[341] Abdallah, 2018, p 221, fig 5.
[342] Donceel-Voute,1988, fig56.
[343] Campbell, 1988, pl 226.
[344] Balty, 1984, p 442.
[345] Helou, 2019, fig 107.
[346] Helou, 2019, fig 52.
[347] Piccirillo, 1992, p 178 fig 244-245.
[348] Picirillo, 1992, p 341, fig,754.
[349] such as Tel Esh –Sheikh church in north Syria (end of the 4th beginning of the 5th c. AD) in which the core was made of four red scales, each has a fan-shaped decoration like a small scale (Abdallah, 2018, p 80, fig 29), also the pavement of the synagogue of Apamea (391 AD) where each scale enclosed another colored one which in turn contains a dark small scale (Balty 1981, fig. 156).
[350] Abdallah& Al-Kaid, 2020, fig21-22.
[351] Donceel-Voute,1988, fig 304.

Nebo region,[352]where the upper mosaic partly overlaps a braided guilloche similar to this panel guilloche belongs to the 6th c. AD, the chapel of the Twal-family pavement,[353]also the synagogue of Beth Shean[354].

2.8.2. At-Tabiyyat

It was found during construction works carried out in the at-Tabiyyat area in Latakia city. [355]. The date of its discovery and entry into the museum is unknown. Its dimensions are 101x104 cm. The tesserae are made of black, light-blue, orange, white, red, green, and ochre limestone with an average size of 1cm on each side. This panel is decorated with a grid of serrated oblique bands that forms squares at their intersections. The bands enclosing poised squares, whose free angles are decorated with fan-shaped ornaments. The intervals are decorated as well with poised squares loaded with different motifs: Chessboard, salmon's knot. The first examples show this pattern in its simplest and severest aspect i.e., the squares of the intersection are dark and enclose white twofold square. The poised squares are dark ex; the Building under the Bath F (second quarter of 4th c.AD)[356], the border of room-10 in Bath E, also Yakto complex room -9(mid of the 4th c. AD)[357](Fig. 41).

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

This pattern is found on several mosaic pavements from Syria dating to fourth and first decades of the fifth century. The first examples show this pattern in its simplest and severest aspect i.e., the squares of the intersection are dark and enclose white twofold square. The poised squares are dark ex; the Building under the Bath F (second quarter of 4th c.AD)[358], the border of room-10 in Bath E, also Yakto complex room -9(mid of the 4th c. AD)[359]. Later on, the pattern is slightly enriched from its earliest as we see in Tall Menas mosaic (first third of 5th c. AD)[360], the narthex mosaic of Debsi Faraj church (429 AD)[361]and Tall 'Ar church (435/436 AD) [362]from north Syria,

[352] Piccirillo 1992, p322, fig. 669.
[353] Piccirillo 1992, fig.140.
[354] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, pl. XXIX-1.
[355] Museum archive.
[356] Campbell, 1988, p 50, plate 144.
[357] Levi, 1947. PLCXII d.
[358] Campbell, 1988, p 50, plate 144.
[359] Levi, 1947. PLCXII d.
[360] Abdallah 2018, p. 290, fig. 2.
[361] Donceel-Voute 1988, fig. 47.
[362] Abdallah 2018, p. 198, fig. 37-8.

and the Bath of Apolausis mosaic (Room 10)[363] in Antioch, a mosaic panel from Misis in Cilicia (third quarter of the 4th c. AD)[364]. In addition to the collateral carpet of Zahrani church (end of the 4th c. AD)[365] from Phoenicia,. Accordingly, this fragment can be dated to the same range of period (between the third quarter of the 4th c. and the first half of the 5th c. AD).

2.8.3. Panel 4 (Fig. 42). It was discovered during the construction work in Latakia city in 1980[366]. Its dimensions are 191x71 cm. The tesserae are cut from limestone with an average size of 1 cm on each side. Their colors are: white, red, ochre, black and light-blue. It's likely a border of Swastika-meander of spaced single-returned swastika, executes in a band of guilloche and a symmetrical cable with a square or rectangle in each space, which contains a variety of filling motifs.

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

The border of swastika-meander belongs to the traditional motifs of the Greco-Roman repertoire. This border of swastika-meander, made of cable and guilloche is found on many mosaics from north Syria that belong to the 5th c. and the 6th c. AD. It has many variations and the compartments were decorated with varied filling motifs, e.g., Kratin[367](second half of the 5th c. AD). Oum Hartaine church (500 AD)[368] , Al-Tamaia'ah church [369]and Soran diaconicon mosaic border[370].

2.8.4. Panel.5 (Fig, 43). It was found during construction work that took place in Latakia city in 1980[371]. Dimensions are 71x103 cm. The tesserae are made of limestone, measured about 1cm on each side on average. Colors are: red, black and white. This fragment is decorated with a band of serrated saw-tooth pattern. Followed by a band of outlined orthogonal pattern of irregular octagons intersecting and adjacent on the shorter sides, worked in swastika-meander, decorated with a small red cross in each compartment.

[363] Levi, 1947, pl. LXVII-a.
[364] Buddle, 1969, fig. 4, 110.
[365] Donceel-Voute 1988, fig. 424.
[366] Museum archive.
[367] Abdallah 2018, p. 282, fig. 1-2.
[368] Donceel-Voute 1988, fig. 174.
[369] Abdallah 2018, p.34, fig. 4.
[370] Donceel-Voute 1988, fig. 299.
[371] Museum archive.

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

The saw- tooth pattern is one of the common motifs that belongs the Greco-Roman repertory. As for this **octagon pattern**. In fact, the composition of secant or tangent octagons was one of the geometric patterns that became popular on Syrian mosaics since the end of the 4th c.AD [372], such as the mosaics of Kaoussie church (room 11)[373] and Bath f from Antioch[374]; Tall 'Ar church[375] and Ma'ar Chourin church from north Syria[376]. It was also popular in other eastern provinces, such as Boustan ech-Cheikh nave[377] from Phoenicia and the church of Apostles aisle from Arabia[378]. Nevertheless, only few mosaic panels were decorated with a similar pattern[379]. The most resembling examples are: a panel found in the complex of the House of Porticos in Antioch[380], dating back to Severian period (193-235 AD), and also a panel of the Therapenides mosaic pavement from Apamea (third quarter of the 4th c. AD)[381]. However, they have a slight difference in terms of their compartments which have colored hexagons and not crosses like this panel.

Synthesis and Dating

The five mosaic fragments displayed in the Latakia Museum can be placed within a common chronological framework, as they share geometric patterns characteristic of the 5th–6th centuries AD, with the exception of the at-Tabiyyat panel, which can be dated between the third quarter of the 4th century and the first half of the 5th century AD. Notably, the al-'Ennabeh mosaic (panel 2, fig. 2) departs from standard conventions, featuring a scalloped square without the usual rosebuds or colored tesserae. Furthermore, its multi-strand guilloche frame finds close parallels only in mosaics from Arabia and Palestine.

[372] Balty, 1984, p. 441.
[373] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXXIX-b.
[374] Levi, 1947, pl. CXL a-b.
[375] Abdallah 2018, p.191,195, fig.20,31.
[376] Abdallah 2018, p. 122, fig. 5.
[377] Helou, 2019, fig. 111.
[378] Piccirillo, 1993, fig. 95.
[379] For example: a panel from Basqala (Abdallah 2018, p.195, fig31.); Shavei Zion church south aisle (Ovadiah 1987, pl. CXLVII 1-2).
[380] Levi, 1947, pl XCVIII-c.
[381] Balty, 1972, pl. L 1-2.

2.9. Tall Tweini

Bibl., Badawi M., 2019 Le niveau byzantin de Tell Tweini (chantier B), Tweini II / Niveau 3, *Studia Orontica* XVIII, Beirut, 51-64.

Archaeological excavations conducted between 1999 and 2010 at excavation site B of Tall Tweini in Syria uncovered Byzantine-era remains. Covering an area of 2000 square meters, the site revealed modest architectural structures, including a wine press, indicative of Byzantine occupation. This The site is located 1 kilometer east of the modern city of Jableh. It is situated within the coastal plain of Jableh, a short distance from two other main archaeological sites: Tall Sukas (5 km) and Tall Siyannu (6 km) (Fig. 44,45).

The wine press is located in excavation area B, southwest of the site. It was uncovered directly beneath the modern surface, with much of it damaged by modern agricultural activities. The press has a rectangular shape with dimensions of 14.9 meters in length and 6.12 meters in width, with long sides-oriented northwest/southeast. Constructed primarily from well-cut blocks of sandy stone bound with lime, the press consists of two basins and a well. The first basin has a diameter of 2.53 meters, and the second basin has a diameter of 1.04 meters. Both basins feature interior walls coated with hydraulic plaster and floors paved with utilitarian mosaics made of large tesserae of white limestone, sloping towards the center.

Adjacent to the well, a somewhat damaged floor S was discovered. Its surface is paved with small river stones and represents the bottom of a cistern that extends to square C2. This cistern served as a sufficient water reserve for the entire workshop[382].

Excavations on site B at Tall Tweini unveiled archaeological evidence of a small Byzantine-era farm belonging to a family. This farm complex includes a house, tomb, and press, alongside service areas like wells and outdoor courtyards. These discoveries offer valuable insights into Byzantine-era daily life and agricultural practices in the region[383].

Regarding the wine-making process, it is carried out according to the following steps:

[382] Badawi, 2019, p. 51-2.
[383] Badawi, 2019, p. 56.

The first method: After the grape clusters are trodden underfoot on the mosaic floor, the liquid flows towards the center of the basin, while the residue remains on the sides. These residues can then be collected and used for animal feed or as agricultural fertilizer.

3. Catalogue of Mosaics from Tartus Governorate

3.1. Amrit Tomb

Bibl. ; Abdallah, Komait : Pavement de l'époque romaine en Syrie côtière : la mosaïque d'Amrit » Art *et Archéologie du Proche-Orient hellénistique et romaine : Acte de la journée d'étude du 11 mai 2017, institut catholique de Paris*, édité par C. Arnould-Béhar et V. Vassal, Paris, 2018, p.97-104.

In 1976, the remains of a tomb were accidentally discovered in Amrit site south of Tartus, during public works in the Agricultural Research Center. According to the excavators, the findings included a threshold stone, a mosaic pavement, and two other stones that likely came from the collapse of the vault. The mosaic was later transported to Damascus, where it underwent restoration. Subsequently, in 1979, it was exhibited at the Citadel of the island of Arwad. In 2008, the pavement underwent additional restoration by the mosaic conservation laboratory in Damascus. The sketches produced during the excavation and the mosaic photos captured in situ depict the L-shaped layout of a structure measuring approximately 3 meters from east to west and 2 meters from north to south[384].

The mosaic pavement consists of three panels: two of them depict male and female busts, while the third panel is adorned with a geometric pattern (Fig, 46-48).

3.1.1. The first panel which, like the initial one, is fragmentary, takes on a rectangular form measuring 129 x 64 cm. It features a composition with a bust figure at its center, framed by a ribbon of red waves extending between two black bands. Unlike the first panel, it does not bear any inscriptions (Fig, 46).

The depiction showcases a young man of unidentified identity. His face is almost round. The curly hair partially covers the ear and is gathered at the top of the forehead by a thin band, forming almost a golden diadem. Two small wings rise from his forehead. Behind the preserved wing, a cluster of a few long-pointed leaves rises. The head is topped with a long object with a pointed top, treated as a metallic item.

[384] Abdallah, 2018, p. 97.

Iconography

The male bust, adorned with leaves, bears a resemblance to the river god Alpheus bust from the House of Porticoes in Antioch[385]. However, distinctive features set this bust apart, notably the wings emerging from the forehead and a band with a conical element rising. Abdallah, in his analysis, identifies this figure as Hermes[386], drawing parallels especially with two depictions from Antioch: from the House of Mysteries of Isis[387], in which the head of Hermes bears two wings and pointed leaves mixed with his hair, and particularly to Hermes and Dionysus of Bath D[388]; Whose head is adorned with a band or diadem that encircles the hair, in the middle of which stands an object of conical shape similar to that of our character.

Hermes, assimilated to the Roman god Mercury, a prominent figure in Greek mythology, was born to Zeus and the nymph Maia on Mount Cyllene. He is featured in many well-known Greek myths and is best known in roles as the messenger of the gods, a trickster, and a psychopomp, who leads souls to the underworld[389]. Hermes' attributes are a wand (*caduceus*)[390], a wide-brimmed hat (*petasus*), a purse, and winged sandals *(talaria*) or simply winged head and ankle[391]. In the Judgment of Paris panel from the Atrium House, Hermes is depicted wearing winged sandals, with a pair of wings rising from his temples, and his mantle falling over his shoulder[392]. in another panel from Antioch from the House of the Mysteries of Isis[393] Hermes is portrayed as winged and nearly naked, wearing only sandals. He has a wreath of flowers on his head, with ribbons hanging around his neck. His left hand holds the *caduceus*. In the mosaic from Shahba, Hermes is shown in a scene with Aion, Ge (Gaia), and *Prometheus*, holding the soul of Psyche. He appears as a young figure, beardless, partially covered, with two wings and carrying the *caduceus*[394]. Another mosaic from Edessa portrays Hermes nearly naked, wearing only sandals, with two wings on his forehead resembling horns. In this depiction, he is carrying the soul

[385] Levi, 1947, pl. XVIII-a.
[386] Abdallah, 2018, p. 101-102.
[387] Levi, 1947, pl. XXXIII-a.
[388] Levi, 1947, pl. CLXVI.
[389] Hornblower, 2012, p. 90-91.or Roman, 2010 p. 220.
[390] The *Kerykeion* or *caduceus* is a pair of snakes wound around a wand or sceptre. An interesting article delves into the evolution of Hermes' iconography, with a particular focus on the caduceus and his association with snakes (Frothingham, 1916)
[391]Bauchhenss, 1992, p. 535, for the iconogrphy of Hermes see: Siebert, 1990, p. 285-387; Mercury: Bauchhenss, 1992, p. 500-554.
[392] Cimok, 2000, p 29; Levi, 1947, pl. I-b. p. 16-17.
[393] Levi, 1947, p. 163-4, pl XXXIII-a.
[394] Balty, 1977, p. 28-29.

alongside Prometheus[395]. In the mosaic of Aion at Nea Paphos in Cyprus[396], Hermes is depicted seated, wearing a tunic, with two wings on his forehead and a ribbon encircling his hair. He is also depicted wearing winged sandals.

The depiction of Hermes in the panel under discussion, adorned with a band featuring an object with a pointed upper part. While this depiction may seem unconventional, it aligns with other representations where Hermes head adorned with an *apex* ornament. This interesting object has been a subject of debate, with interpretations ranging from an Egyptian feather to a lotus petal or a leaf[397]. In this panel, the shape of the element resembles a feather, particularly highlighted by a black line in the middle. The context of the figure's placement in a tomb adds weight to Abdallah's suggestion that this may be an Egyptian feather, that could be associated with the Egyptian god Thoth. Accordingly this bust could be identified as Hermes/Thot or Hermès Trismégiste, the Phoenician deity according to Philon de Byblos (2nd c.AD) who called also Taautos(Taautos, three times god) and assimilated with thot[398]. The god of the moon, wisdom, writing, and magic, held a prominent role in the judgment of the dead, and helped souls navigate the afterlife.[399]

Noteworthy, the introduction of Thoth among the Phoenician gods is associated with the scholars of Alexandria during the Hellenistic period. They introduced Thoth into Phoenician mythology as a symbol aimed to convey the ancient Phoenician idea that much of their arts, techniques, and philosophy originated from Egypt. Thoth was never worshipped in the Near East, and there are no recorded theophoric names containing the name Thoth in that region[400].The representation of Hermes in a funerary context is not surprising due to his role as Psychopomp[401]. Usually, Hermes

[395] Balty&Chatonnef, 2000, fig. 1.
[396] Michaelides, 1987, pl. XXII. 27.
[397] Perdrizet, 1903, p. 393; PERDRIZET, 1911, p. 27-30; Chamoux, 1959, p. 34-38; BAUCHHENSS, 1992 p. 535: Bauchhens identifies some as lotus leaves, with some other examples being feathers attributed to the Egyption god Thot.
[398] Abdallah, 2018, p. 102.
[399] Thoth, an ancient Egyptian deity, was a versatile god associated with wisdom, writing, magic, and the moon. Often depicted with the head of an ibis or a baboon, Thoth played a crucial role in Egyptian mythology and religious practices. He was considered a mediator and scribe among the gods, credited with inventing writing and the sciences. Thoth also had a role in the judgment of the dead, helping souls navigate the afterlife. The Greeks later identified him with their god Hermes, leading to the composite figure of Hermes Trismegistus, associated with esoteric wisdom and alchemy in later traditions. (Pinch, 2002, p. 209-211)
[400] Buisson, 1973, p. 76.
[401] For examples of Hermes in a funerary context see; Siebert, 1990, p. 336-337; Chamoux, 1959, pl. XXI-1(Abduction of Persephone).

was depicted as a part of a scene as exemplified by the previous examples. Nevertheless, in this panel he was depicted as individual bust.

3.1.2. The second panel. A small table with a geometric pattern measuring 90 cm in length by 46 cm in width, connected the two figurative panels. It is a pavement adorned with two four-pointed stars, tangent and forming a red diamond against a white background (Fig, 47).

3.1.3 The third panel. Starting from the entrance of the tomb. The first rectangular panel, measuring 195 cm in length and 142 cm in width, contains in its center a figurative tableau framed by a border adorned with a diaper pattern with serrated dotted trellis containing serrated diamonds with an inner yellow cross and a central white dot (Fig. 48).

The central panel is divided into three parts. The central part contains the female bust, while the other two each enclose a red diamond that, in turn, contains an inscription. The one above the female bust is inclusive([M]NHΘH ΚΕΡΔΩΝ), and the second, under the bust, contains (ΒΗΘΝΕ).

The figure in the tableau, identified by an incomplete inscription, represents the bust of a young woman facing forward, with her head turned three-quarters towards the viewer. Curly hair, created with brown and black tesserae, falls on the forehead and the right shoulder. The head is crowned with branches bearing fruits symmetrically arranged on either side of a small *calathus*. A vine branch carries two grape clusters placed on each side of the face, and symmetrically positioned are a pomegranate and a round fruit. Finally, a third branch ends with flowers. Her face is round and plump, adorned with large eyes that gaze obliquely. Her cheeks are marked by pinkish tesserae, as is her nose. The left ear, the only one visible, is adorned with a pendant earring featuring tow beads. Above the right shoulder, a cornucopia is visible, with the lower part now destroyed. From it emerges a rectangular object treated in the same colors as the cornucopia. On either side, there is a pomegranate and an undefined fruit.

Iconography

The female figure in this depiction bears a resemblance to the Earth goddess Ge from both the Apamea panel and Antioch. The portrayal includes a bust in three quarter view, adorned with a crown of fruit, holding a cornucopia—features characteristic of Ge. Notably, the Apamea panel

showcases the goddess with a *calathos* on her head[402], while the Antioch representation lacks this specific feature[403]. In fact, the goddess Ge depicted on the Syrian panels exhibits characteristic elements, as exemplified by the previous examples and further illustrated in the House of the Worcester Hunt Room (3)[404], The Mosaic of Aion house upper level[405], and Ma'arata[406]. These shared features include a cornucopia, a crown of fruits, inscriptions, and cloth laden by fruits. The distinctive aspect here is the absence of a literal crown; instead, branches of fruit emerge from under the *calathus*. An interesting parallel can be drawn with Ge from Ma'arata, where the goddess wears a long-sleeved dress and a cap or diadem from which two scrolls escape, garnished with various fruits, including pomegranates, pears, apples, and grapes

The goddess in this depiction is adorned with a distinctive type of earring known as *crotalia*, referred to by Roman writers and also known in Greek as *krotalia*. These earrings are characterized by a horizontal bar supporting two or more pearl pendants.[407]

Although this depiction may initially appear to represent Ge, the inscription on this panel does not include the word "Ge." The translated inscription above the bust reads as follows (To the memory of Kerdon)[408] . And the inscription beneath the figure appears to start with "BHTH," signifying "house" in the Semitics language, and ends with the two letters "NE." Examples of locality names beginning with "BETH," such as Baethocécé (Βαιτοκαικη) -today Hosn Soleiman- translated as The House of Castor Oil [409]and Beth-maré (Βαιθμαρηι)[410] near Beirut, suggest it might be a place name. In fact, many villages on the Syrian coast still start with the word Beit such as, Beit ‘Alyan near Tartus city, Beit Tayon near Safita city.

However, the possibility of it being a depiction of a place name is not highly likely, especially considering that the bust bears symbols of fertility, including the *calathus*, fruits, and a cornucopia that commonly associated with the Earth goddess. Moreover, its location in a burial tomb further suggests a different significance.

[402] Balty, 1973, pl. XVI, fig. 1.
[403] Cimok, 2000, p. 226-227.
[404] Cimok, 2000, p. 300.
[405] Cimok, 2000, p. 287.
[406] Abdallah, 2018, p. 139, fig. 25.
[407] Ogden, 1990, p. 150.
[408] Abdallah, 2018, p. 98.
[409] Rey-Coquais,1970, p. 54.
[410] Rey-Coquais, 1967, p. 237.

Abdallah suggests that the locality name is theophoric, combining "BETH" with a goddess whose name starts with the two letters "NE," a practice known among the Phoenicians citing bétyle (house of God)[411] as example. He then presumably refers to the Egyptian Earth-Mother goddess Neith who was a sky goddess of war, a virginal mother goddess, and a nurse, and less specifically, a symbol of fertility. Neith is known among the Phoenicians and is associated in Cartage with Astarte (goddess of love and fertility[412]) and Tanit (A hypostasis of Astrate[413]). This logic aligns well, considering that the bust figure bears fertility symbols. Additionally, the depiction of grapes and pomegranate branches extending from beneath the bust *calathos* is characteristic of the fertility symbolism associated with the goddess Tanit, as exemplified on Ghorfa steles in Tunisia[414]. The theonym Tanit is attested in the Levant from the first half of the 8th c. BC[415]. As mentioned earlier, Tanit is considered the hypostasis of Astarte, accordingly linked with fertility. The figure of Neith (Earth-mother) is located at the entrance of the tomb, followed by the star motif, and then by the god Hermes. Abdallah believed that this hierarchical arrangement of the decoration led to the thought that the image of the Earth could personify the locality, probably evoking the earthly residence of the deceased, while that of Hermes/Thoth suggests their celestial, eternal abode after death.

Abdallah's interpretation, which linked the name Tanit to the Egyptian goddess Neith, is questionable because Neith was not widely recognized in the region where Tanit was worshipped. The theonym "Tanit" is attested in the Levant from the first half of the 8th century BC[416], but it was not associated with symbols like grapes and pomegranates. Additionally, the connection between Tanit-Neith and the *callathos* or the cornucopia (a symbol of abundance) lacks sufficient explanation. Moreover, there is no established link between Neith-Tanit and Hermes in their respective mythologies.

[411] Lipiński, 1995, p. 76.
[412] Astarte: Hellenized form of the name of the Phoenician goddess Ashtart, documented in Egypt from Thutmose IV to the end of the 15th century and in Ugarit during the 14th century BCE. Astarte like Aphrodite, and already Ishtar, the goddess of love. Through her relationship with Adonis, she is linked to fertility and fecundity rites. Like the Babylonian Ishtar, she is the goddess of war and an astral deity (Venus, the Ourania Aphrodite) and, as such, the patroness of sailors (Delcor, 1986, p 1077).
[413] Lipiński, 1995, p. 205.
[414] Abdallah, 200, p. 99. for the Tanit figures on Ghorfa steles see; (Bisi, 1978).
[415] Lipiński, 1995, p. 201-202; Trell, 1981, p. 483-484.
[416] Lipiński, 1995, p. 201-202; Trell, 1981, p. 483-484.

The inscription starts with the letters "NE." We propose another suggestion, the inscription under the personification may continue with one (or two) letter(s) only, in case if we count with the dimensions of the area remained on the right. Most probably in this damaged corner also the bottom part of the cornucopia and the curls of the hair originally must be depicted. The existing letters are similarly arranged concerning their distribution (dimensions and spaces); thus the mosaicist surely cannot set long word[417].

Following this hypothesis BHΘNE[M] could be a term, thus this ending can refer to Nemesis, and also can be connected to the burial context as the [NEM-] might recall the root or beginning of the Greek *nemesis* "just indignation, righteous anger," literally "distribution" (of what is due), related to *nemein* "distribute, allot, take, apportion one's due." The notion is "divine allotment to every one of his share of fortune, good or bad[418]."

Accordingly, it is possible that the inscription refers to the goddess Nemesis (NEMΕΣΙΣ) a well-known and common deity in the East, whose worship spread especially during the 2nd and 3rd AD[419]. In the Syrian provinces, devotion to Nemesis is evident both along the coast (in Arados, Ptolemais, and between Ascalon and Gaza) and inland (in Hauran, Gaulanitis, Baalbek, Caesarea-Paneas, Dura-Europos, and Palmyra)[420]. The origins of the cult are unclear, but interactions among Greeks, Egyptians, and the Syro-Phoenician-Palestinian coast likely spread the worship of Nemesis, whose attributes partly resemble those of Ma'at[421].

Nemesis is the goddess and personification of retributive justice—specifically, the act of holding grudges—serves as the avenger of hubris (excessive pride) and the maintainer of the right balance[422]. The goddess Nemesis, associated with retribution and justice, was used in imperial propaganda to reinforce social norms and encourage the elite's public benefaction. Emperors aligned themselves with Nemesis to maintain control and stability, presenting themselves as upholders of cosmic order and benefactors of the people by integrating established religious

[417] Online Etymology Dictionary, s.v. “Nemesis,” https://www.etymonline.com/word/nemesis (accessed 10 March 2026).
[418] Online Etymology Dictionary, s.v. “Nemesis,” https://www.etymonline.com/word/nemesis (accessed 10 March 2026).
[419] Belayche, 2001, p.154
[420] Seyrig,1932, p50-51;Seyrig,1950, p. 242-247; Bru, 2008, p. 293-314.
[421] Bru, 2008, p. 306.
[422] Karanastassi, 1992, p. 733.

traditions into their political strategy, which may explain the popularity of her cult during the High Empire.

The other evidence from Arwad include a dedication to Nemesis on the base of a statue commissioned by a woman named Isodora, attests to the favors enjoyed by the deity[423]. Although Nemesis was not primarily a goddess of the underworld, she possessed chthonic associations, being described as the daughter of Nyx, the goddess of night [424]. This connection is reflected, for example, in an Alexandrian epitaph in which the deceased raises her hands to the Sun and to Nemesis, seeking vengeance for the murder that ended her life.[425]

By the early Roman Empire, Nemesis had come to embody not only vengeance but also fairness and justice. This evolution, which associated her with both Victory and Fortuna(whose vicissitudes give those who are disappointed the hope of a just revenge), would have made her a fitting deity for those seeking equitable resolution or redress for their misfortune or injustice[426]. Furthermore, the cornucopia in this depiction has a distinctive rectangular tool with a fruit on each side, this feature may possibly refer to the scales, an attribute often associated with Nemesis and her role as a symbol of balance and justice.

The goddess depicted bears a *calathos* and cornucopia, symbols commonly associated with the earth goddess Ge in Syrian mosaics as we see above. The *calathus* is a symbol of fertility, not directly linked to the underworld. However, when figures hold the pomegranate fruit or flower, it likely signifies a connection to chthonic divinity(see below)[427]. Examining the characteristics of the goddess in question, we find that the apple and the pomegranate sacred to Demeter[428]. The pomegranate, in particular, connects to the well-known myth of her daughter Persephone, who was kidnapped by Hades. See Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Lines 371-380[429]: In this hymn, the pomegranate seed eaten by Persephone ensures that she will have to return to the underworld for a portion of each year, symbolizing the seasonal cycle. The emphasis on the pomegranate, which we also see in the cornucopia, indicates that this is likely Demeter. This connection is further strengthened by her association with Hermes, who was sent by Zeus to retrieve her daughter then

[423] Renan, 1864, p. 36; Seyrig 1932, p. 50, n. 3 ; Bru, 2008, p. 294.
[424] Hésiode, Théogonie, 223.
[425] Seyrig,1932, p. 54.
[426] Seyrig, 1932, p. 54.
[427] Farnell, 1896, p. 696 and note c.
[428] Beschi, 1988, p. 846.
[429] Rayor, 1998, p. 78.

Hermes, the guide and the conductor, who was to lead Persephone from the Underworld (Homeric Hymn to Demeter 334-340, 371-390)[430]. Although there is no direct assimilation between Nemesis and Demeter, such a connection can be inferred through Isis. The Egyptian goddess Isis who associated with fertility, motherhood, and the protection of the dead. Over time, her cult spread throughout the Mediterranean, where she was often worshiped in syncretic forms that combined aspects of other goddesses, including Demeter[431]. In the ancient world, Isis was often linked with Demeter, the Greek goddess of agriculture, and her daughter Persephone. The connection between Isis and Demeter is easy to understand. Greek writers frequently identified Isis with Demeter, noting their similarities. Herodotus, for instance, used "Demeter" to refer to Isis, and later writers like Diodorus commented on their close resemblance. Both goddesses were associated with crops and the protection of the dead. They each experienced personal loss and undertook journeys to find lost loved ones[432].

In her homeland, Isis could take on the role of Mä'et, representing Truth and Justice. In Hellenistic times, she was also portrayed as Thesmophorus, 'the lawgiver,' similar to Demeter. Under this title, she was seen as a goddess of justice and retribution, akin to Themis and Nemesis. Isis embodied divine justice and was depicted as the all-seeing queen who upheld moral law[433]. The cornucopia is one of Isis characteristic that likely created in the 3rd century BCE[434]. Accordingly, the representation of Nemesis-Isis/Demeter in a tomb aligns with the role of Hermes as the guide of souls to the underworld.

Analysis of Geometric Motifs

The four-pointed star(Fig. 47) has been depicted in Antioch mosaics since the early second century AD, as seen in the House of Polyphemus[435]. In this house, the four-pointed star appeared in its simplest form, enclosing diamonds without any filling motifs Subsequently, it was featured in numerous mosaics from the Antioch region, particularly from the 2nd and 3rd centuries. For instance, in the House of Drunken Dionysus (2nd c. AD)[436], the dado of the Drunken Dionysus panel is adorned with three horizontal series of four-pointed stars in red or grey. These stars are

[430] Rayor, 1998, p. 78-79.
[431] Witt, 1971, p. 20.
[432] Witt, 1971, p. 127-128
[433] Witt, 1971, p. 128.
[434] Tinh, 1990, p. 792, 794.
[435] Levi, 1947, pl. III-c.
[436] Cimok, 2000, p. 50-53.

separated by lozenges, and each star has a small cross of five dots at its center. In the mosaic titled "Narcissus at the Brook" (House of Menander)[437], the area where the couches were placed is decorated with panels featuring four-pointed stars. These stars are alternately red and black, enclosing white and yellow lozenges. Each star contains, at its center, a small cross made of red or black dots on a white or yellow ground and the House of Red Pavement[438]. Furthermore, from Zeugma the House of Danae (first quarter of the 3rd c. AD)[439].

The trellis pattern(Fig. 48, border), characterized by a serrated dotted trellis forming diagonal squares containing invariably repeated filling elements, namely diamonds, was popular on the Syrian mosaic since the second century AD, and has a leading role in the mosaic decoration of the East as a whole[440]. The diamonds in this pattern have a cross of five dots. As a similar example, we cite from Antioch region the panel of Comus (2nd c. AD)[441]: The dado is adorned with a diaper pattern, featuring a large multicolor diamond in each segment. Eros and Psyche from the House of Drinking Contest, features a diaper pattern with a black dotted trellis containing multicolor diamonds. Each diamond includes an inner red cross, and a central black dot[442]also House of the Drunken Dionysus[443].

The band of waves (Fig. 46, border) is another pattern within Greek decoration[444], employed in mosaics during both Roman and Byzantine eras in the East.

Style and Dating

The geometric decoration used in this panel—serrated dotted trellis forming diagonal squares containing a diamond in each segment and the four-pointed star—was popular in Roman mosaics. However, it provides no definitive key for dating.

As for the figurative scenes, we notice the use of smaller tesserae to depicted the details compared to the background tesserae. The dense and compact mass of their hair, composed of black and brown hues, reinforcing the brightness of the face itself. This is especially apparent in

[437] Cimok, 2000, p. 178, Levi, 1947, pl. CIV-b.
[438] Levi, 1947, pl. XCVI-b.
[439] Onal, 2009, p. 120.
[440] Levi, 1947, p. 375.
[441] Cimok, 2000, p. 62; Levi, 1947, pl. XCIV-c.
[442] Cimok, 2000, p. 136-137; Levi, 1947, pl. XXXI-a.
[443] Cimok, 2000, p. 54-55.
[444] Ovadiah, 1980, p. 114-116.

the female figure. Also, the violent contrast between the zones of shadow and light emerges, which we saw in their neck, most visible in the female figures neck and shoulder. And most importantly the Pathetic expressions that animate their faces; the faces of the two figures are dominated by big eyes with a slightly oblique gaze, lost in deep meditation, under which shades accentuation giving a sadder or pathos look. The drooping corners of the mouth only enhance this air of intense sadness; this expression is related to the Severian period[445] as amplified on many mosaics., *e.g*., Iphigenia in Aulis (House of Iphigenia) [446]; House of the Porticoes[447], House of the Drinking Contest[448], House of Dionysus and Ariadne[449] House of the Mysteries of Isis[450] from Antioch region ; The mosaic of Sages of Baalbeck -Suwediye[451]in modern Lebanon, And, most importantly, the Mas'udiye from the Euphrates Bank stands out due to its dated inscription, placing it in the year 227/228 AD. This mosaic serves as a crucial anchor point in the study of stylistic evolution[452]. Taken together, these comparisons support Abdallah's proposal to date the present pavement to the first half of the third century.

3.2. Banyas Northern Corniche

This mosaic was discovered in 2010 accidently during construction work in the northern section of Banyas city corniche, 100m away from the sea, and that followed by excavations in the year of 2010, 2013, 2015. The mosaic is lifted in 2013, and is now preserved on textile role in Tartus museum store (Fig. 49-60).

The site is severely damaged, and the excavation revealed, in addition to the mosaic pavements, remnants of walls, as well as fragments of pavements, canals most of which were concentrated on the northern and eastern sides of the panels. Additionally, a paved floor with stones and remnants of walls in the southwest part of section D has also been uncovered. However, this data, unfortunately, is heavily fragmented and does not provide sufficient information about the nature of the structure. The excavations also yielded a small quantity of non-glazed pottery, and

[445] Levi, 1947, p. 540; Balty, 1981, p. 371.
[446] Levi, 1947, p. 119-126, pl. XXII.
[447] Levi, 1947, pl. XIX, CLI-b.
[448] Levi, 1947, pl. XXX.
[449] Levi, 1947, pl. XXVII-XXVIII, CLIV-CLV.
[450] Levi, 1947, pl. XXXIII-a.
[451] Chéhab,1957, p. 31-43, pl. XIII-2, XV-XX.
[452] Levi, 1947, p. 540, fig. 203; Balty, 1981, p. 369-371, pl. XII-1.

according to the excavation report, Bronze Age coins were found but, regrettably, were not documented.

The excavation report mentioned that this is a bath; however, there was no evidence of bath construction. In fact, the fragmentary nature of the findings prevents any conclusion about the use of the supposed rooms. On the other hand, the layout of the mosaic pavement doesn't match the familiar arrangement seen in church mosaic pavements; it appears to be more suitable for a house or villa. This observation is quite understandable, given the location on the seashore. Still, this is just a hypothesis in the absence of any solid evidence.

The Pavements

There are three remaining parts of the mosaic floor; First part A, located in the east, is measuring 15.80×2.69m and extending north-south, west of which another part B, measuring 5.87×3.10m, extending west-east. West of them is the third part C, measuring 6.20×6m(Fig.50), south of this panel another small one with an area of about 110 cm[453] (Fig. 49).

The tesserae are cut from limestone, with each side measuring 1 to 1.5 on average. The colors are: black, white, red, light orange and medium brown.

The first part “A”, in the east, is a long rectangular pavement divided into six squares, separated from each other by wide white stripes. These squares are decorated with various motifs, from north to south as follow:

A circle with a thick frame which encloses in turn another small one traced also by wide frame and filled with a Solomon’s knot. The space between the two circles is adorned with eight spindles attached to inner side of the big one, and semis white bosses on a red background. As for the spandrels between the big circle and the square is adorned with small red triangles (Fig. 50).
Outlined orthogonal pattern of adjacent crosses and irregular octagons (the axial sides are the shorter), forming oblong hexagons[454] against white background. Each cross contains a small cross in the center, and each hexagon contains another small red one inside. As for the irregular octagons, they are decorated with serrated diamonds (Fig. 51).

[453] Excavation Report.
[454] Ballmelle 1985, pl. 180-b.

A circle encloses a ring of four small circles around a central one. The diminutive circles filled with either a stepped line around a cross or a manifold diamond of gradated tone, and the central circle is adorned with a red thin cross. The spandrels decorated with small white bosses on a red background. Whereas the spandrels between the large circle and the square is decorated with red triangles (Fig. 52).

The panel shows a pattern of four tangent squares enclosing lozenges. Each square is adorned with either a thick zigzag or a solid in perspective, while each lozenge contains another small red diamond. The spandrels are filled with small red triangles (Fig. 53).

This panel shows a six-pointed star formed by two interlacing triangles, which is inscribed in a ring with a double dark outline. Another circle is inscribed in the diamond formed by this pattern and contains a Solomon's knot. The corners between the circle and the square are adorned with small white bosses alternated with an ivy leave on a red background. In the background of the star small red triangles and larger triple line motifs are performed with rainbow style. The scene is like a coffered surface with white positive forms against a red background (Fig. 54).

This panel is decorated with a grid of serrated oblique bands that form squares at their intersections. The bands enclose poised squares, whose free angles are decorated with fan-shaped ornaments. The side intervals show rectangles with a chessboard pattern. (Fig. 55).

The second part "B" to the west is decorated with an orthogonal grid of serrated simple filets[455](Fig. 56). The grid border contains in its eastern part a mostly damaged square enclosing centric circle. The outer circle consists of two- strands guilloches, and the circle around the central disc is decorated with a wave pattern band. The grid pattern could have decorated the space between two panels. The third section "C", is made up of a huge circle enclosing a square that intersect with another curvilinear square (Fig. 57-59). Both of these squares are formed of two-strand guilloche, and at their intersection is a square with a decoration consisting of a diamond flanked by four other diamonds. The curved trapezoids between the two squares are decorated with a tile pattern, and the spandrels are ornamented with a red triangle with a white disc inside. Solids are adorned the four squared flanked a central diamond which enclosed in turn a motif of trifold lotus.

[455] Ballmelle 1985, pl. 124-a.

Analysis of Geometric Motifs

Outlined orthogonal pattern of adjacent crosses and irregular octagons (the axial sides are the shorter), forming oblong hexagons against white background Style: This pattern was found on several Syrian mosaic panels dating back to the 4th c.AD and the beginning of the 5th c. AD, but with a richer variety of filling elements.

Two from Antioch: Mosaic near the House of the Phoenix[456] (end of fourth beginning of 5th c.AD); The principal section surmounted a rectangular dado with geometric decoration, showing the pattern of hexagons and octagons, with each section decorated in rainbow style and with strong accentuation of the cross element, in accordance with which small cross are also inserted in the center of each octagon. And Constantinian Villa[457], Room 3, (first quarter of 4th c.AD). Its pattern is that of the crosses surrounded by hexagons and octagons. The crosses stand forth by means of a white outline around the filling element in rainbow style. Elements in this style also completely dominate all other parts of the pattern. Discs are inscribed in the octagons. Other elements different from those in rainbow style are motifs of goldsmiths' work motifs (orfèvrerie), a large rosette, a looped circle and a floret. From Apamea a panel dated back to the last third of the 4th century AD. This panel comes from a pagan building discovered under the cathedral of Apamea[458]. Each cross is decorated with guilloche cross. the discs inserted in the octagons are decorated with rosette and other motifs, whereas the hexagons contain rainbow style patterns which also dominate the filing motifs of another example from North Syria; a panel from Tall 'Ar church[459]. This panel is dated to the last quarter of the 4th c. AD. In addition to a panel displayed in Ma 'arrat an-Nou 'man museum that have the same pattern, with various filling motifs: motifs inspired by goldsmiths' work (orfèvrerie), rainbow style. The discs inscribed in the octagon are decorated with Solomon's knots[460].

This pattern was also represented on many panels from the nearby Cyprus. The earliest example belongs to the Roman period: the Roman House of Dionysos at Paphos, of the early 3rd century A.D. [461]There the pattern is linear and empty, in contract to the panels from the fourth and fifth

[456] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXIII-b.
[457] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXIII-c.
[458] Balty, 1986, fig. 1.
[459] Abdallah, 2018, p. 191, fig. 21.
[460] Abdallah, 2018, p. 293, fig. 1.
[461] Daszewski& Michaelides, 1988, p. 127, fig. 42.

century, which were, like the previous examples, filled with variety of motifs e.g., the Annex of Eustolios at Kourion, of the 5 th century, it is filled with multicolored geometric motifs[462], and the pavement under the Church of Ayios Spyridon[463].

Interestingly, our panela doesn't resemble any of the previous examples in term of the simple filling motifs.

The pattern of four squares enclosing lozenges goes back to the Hellenistic floor decorations in *Opus sectile* and *Lithostroton* [464]. In the second century and the very beginning of the third, we find it in its simplest form of black and white on several mosaics of Antioch, specifically as four black squares enclosing white lozenges. The squares were filled with either a white cross, as seen in the House of Narcissus[465]and House in DH 25-L[466]. or with a white diamond, as observed in the Geometric Pavement near the Isiac Ceremony[467], the House of the Porticoes-Portico of the Pentathlon[468], and the House of the Triumph of Dionysus[469]. in fact, this pattern is austere and was soon abandoned in mosaic decoration, and the only other example in Syria, with the exception of a filling motif in the southern nave of the cathedral of Hama [470], is our panel, where the pattern is more colorful: the squares are white outlined in black, each contain another filled with either a thick zigzag or a solid in perspective on a dark background, and each white lozenge is thick outlined in medium brown and contain another red one. Same goes for the spandrel's triangles. they are traced by thick medium brown bands; each contain a red triangle in each.

Grid of serrated oblique bands that forms squares at their intersections. A grid of serrated oblique bands forming squares at their intersections. The bands enclose poised squares whose free angles are decorated with fan-shaped ornaments. This pattern is found on several mosaic pavements from Syria dating to fourth and first decades of the fifth century. The first examples show this pattern in its simplest and severest aspect i.e., the squares of the intersection are dark and enclose white twofold square. The poised squares are dark ex; the Building under the Bath F

[462] Daszewski& Michaelides, 1988, p. 128, fig. 43.
[463] Michaelides, 1987, pl. VIII.
[464] Levi, 1947, p. 383.
[465] Levi, 1947, pl. X-a.
[466] Levi, 1947, p. 56, fig. 20.
[467] Levi, 1947, pl. XCIV b
[468] Levi,1947, pl. XCVIII b.
[469] Levi, 1947, pl. XCVIII b, p. 94, fig. 38.
[470] Piccirillo, 2007, fig. 22.

(second quarter of 4th c.AD)[471], the border of room-10 in Bath E, also Yakto complex room -9(mid of the 4th c. AD)[472]. Later on, the pattern is slightly enriched from its earliest as we see in the Necropolis of Mnemosyne-Dig D[473], the double squares are outlined in black, and the inner square is filed with rainbow pattern, the side intervals have a nested small rectangle with the inner rectangle filled in rainbow pattern. The pattern became more colored and richer with various motifs such as Bath of Apolausis[474] in Antioch which has various filling motif; the collateral carpet of the Zahrani church (end of the 4th c. AD) [475]from Phoenicia in which the twofold squares are now superposing another square on a dak background, and filled with various motifs such as Solids in perspective in diverging directions, cross, circle with concave square inside etc.; The narthex mosaic of the narthex mosaic of Dibsi Faraj church (429 AD)[476] from north Syria, the diamonds at the intersection and those inscribed in the bands are now decorated with zigzag, the twofold square is superposed another square on a red background and the inner square is filled with various motif s such Solomon's knot, a circle with concave square inside, the semi rectangles resting in the side intervals are loaded with rainbow style pattern such as zigzag, steppes pyramids as well as Tall Manas mosaic (first third of 5th c. AD)[477] .

The most resemble example came from the cathedral of Hama -Epifania (412) AD[478]. It differs a little bit in term off the filling's motifs; straight gradated line to decorate the side rectangles, and we see also the stepped diamond a filler ornament- This design was also used in the decoration of another panel from the same cathedral, but it was more diverse[479]- and it is almost identical with a mosaic panel from Misis in Cilicia (third quarter of the 4th c. AD) [480]. The only difference is that the zigzag not the checkboard motif was used to fill the nested square.

The composition of a circle within a square is a well-known mosaic ornament. **The circle formed with spindles** is also an ancient motif, we found an example in (Palestine in the pavement of the small bath of a mansion, in which a circle inscribed in a square, the circle

[471] Campbell, 1988, p. 50, plate 144.
[472] Levi, 1947, pl. CXII d.
[473] Levi, 1947, pl. CXX-e.
[474] Cimok,2000, p. 237.
[475] Helou, 2019, p. 120, fig. 122.
[476] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 79, fig. 47.
[477] Abdallah, 2018, p. 290, fig. 2.
[478] Piccirillo, 2007, fig. 6.
[479] Piccirillo, 2007, fig. 12.
[480] Budde,1969, fig. 4, 110.

formed with sex tangent spindles and bearing a sex -petaled flower (Herodian period)[481]. In the border of House of the Boat of Psyches- Agros and Opora room in Antioch[482], where the corner squares of the border are adorned with circles. Each formed by eight tangent spindles and has eight-petalled flower around eight-pointed star that enclosing a circle. It was also used in a smaller size as we see in Oum Jalal mosaic [483](first third of the 5th c. AD), where some of the filling motifs of the eight-pointed star was a circle inclosing concave octagons forming eight spindles, and enclosing either a circle or a Maltese cross. Another variation of this type is the circle contained a concave square forming four spindles ex. House of Menander, room 18 [484].

The composition of a circle encloses the star of David: The pattern of six-pointed star or the so-called star of David considered to be an old decoration, however, it was rarely represented on the Eastern provinces. We have few examples such as the House of Cilicia- Room 1 from Antioch[485], where it was part of the coffered ornaments. Always in Antioch, the House of Ge and seasons [486]belong to the third part of the fourth century which is more similar to our panel, the star was used as a single element inside a circle but it differs in terms of the filling motifs. in the nave of the Catherdral of Hama it was used also as small filler motif.[487] As well as Has church (388-389) [488] where it was used to decorate one of the four circles that flanked the central cross.

Also, it was used as a filling motif on two pavements from Palestine: Roglit church- south aisle[489] and el-Makr church[490] .

The composition of a square enclosing a circle which contain a ring of four small circles around a central one. Secant, interlaced or tangential circles were part of the motif repertoire that became popular on Syrian mosaics since the end of the 4th century[491]. However, **the rings of spaced circles** around a central one is a peculiar ornament, no similar example is found.

[481] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, pl. XCVIII.
[482] Cimok, 2000, p. 171.
[483] Abdallah, 2018, p. 227, fig. 4.
[484] Levi, 1947, pl. CV-g.
[485] Levi, 1947, pl. XCV-c.
[486] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXXII-a.
[487] Piccirillo, 2007, fig. 16.
[488] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p .118, fig. 81.
[489] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, pl. CXXXVII, No. 210.
[490] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, pl. XLVI, no. 76.
[491] Balty, 1984, p. 440-442.

The grid of serrated simple filets forming diamonds is used on Antioch mosaic since the second century A.D. as exemplified in the House of the Evel Eye[492], a thin dotted net forming diagonal squares containing invariably repeated filling elements, namely, diamonds. It was used mostly as frame decoration such as House of Menander[493], House of the Buffet Supper [494]. It was also utilized to adorn the spaces between two panels or the panel and the room's wall, as can be observed in the House of the Boat of Psyches[495], the Amazon mosaic of Apamea[496], the Church of Tel 'Ar in North Syria[497].

This pattern played a significant role in the mosaic decoration of Antioch and the East as a whole. Variations of the pattern include bands of serrated filets made up of four tesserae, as seen in House of Iphigenia[498], Ma'art Masrin[499]. or multi-serrated bands, as seen in a small rectangular panel from Hawa Bath[500] (end of the 5th c. and beginning of 6th c. AD, and the apse mosaic of Goubelleh church[501] (5th c. AD). It's worth noting that the latter became more common only from the fifth century onwards.

This pattern typically featured filling ornaments, including indented diamonds and four-petaled flowers arranged in straight lines. Interestingly, it appears that this panel does not contain any such decorative elements.

The composition of a circle enclosing two intersecting squares one of which is a curvilinear square, and at their intersection is another a square loaded with a design of four squares inclosing a diamond. This is a unique decoration that has no parallel in the eastern province's mosaics. In fact, even the composition of interlaced a square with a curvilinear one is not considered it a common ornament, only few examples were found, all of which from the 6th c.AD: As a small filing motif from the House of the Bird-Rinceau-Upper Level[502] from Antioch. From Phoenicia at the Ghinah church -northern aisle is decorated with a gird of interloped squares each in intersect

[492] Levi, 1947, pl. XCIII-b.
[493] Levi, 1947, pl. XLIV-a.
[494] Cimok, 2000, p. 115.
[495] Levi, 1947, pl. XXIX-a.
[496] Dulière, 1968, pl. I.
[497] Jouejati, fig. 7.
[498] Levi, 1947, pl. XXI.
[499] Abdallah, 2018, p. 224, fig. 1.
[500] Abdallah, 2018, p. 221, fig. 5.
[501] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 88, fig. 56.
[502] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXXVIII-c.

with a curvilinear square. Same as a Geometric carpet from Baptistery of Basilica A, from Cyprus[503].

Filling Motifs

The Solomon's knot is also an old ornament. The Solomon's knot appears in Italian mosaics decoration (Pompeii and Spoleto) in the first century A.D[504]. It spread in Antioch increasingly in the second century AD becoming, without exception, the most common single element[505].

The zigzag and tile-roof motifs are types of the rainbow style patterns that enjoyed great success in the second half of the 4th century[506]. Examples include the Mosaic of Bath A [507]and Yakto complex (Lower level)[508], Kaoussie church[509] from Antioch, as well as the Synagogue (391/392) of Apamea[510] and the geometric panel from the Building under the Cathedral of Apamea[511].

The small white bosses within thick-framed triangles are an imitation of coffered ceilings. They evoke ornate coffered ceilings with square, rectangular, triangular, and various polygonal shapes, as well as circular patterns. According to Levi, the architectural decoration's impact relies on the contrast of colors within the frames of the geometric shapes, which tend to be thick. The bosses mimic metal (gold or brass) with shades of golden-yellow and white, portraying the reflections of light on the metal[512]. In this context, other small decorations on this panel—such as the three-petaled lily flower, the X shape, and the half-white discs—can also be included.

The checkerboard: this is also belonged to Greek-roman repertory; it derives from *opus sectile*. it is known in Syrian mosaic as early as the first century and become common only in the second century[513].

The wave bands and the **guilloche** belong to the Greek roman repertory.[514]

---

[503] Michaelides, 1987, pl. XXXVI-59.
[504] Ovadiah , 1980, pl. XIV-31.
[505] Levi, 1947, 376, Ex ; pl. XCIV-a, CI-b, XVIII-d, XXX-b.
[506] Balty, 1995, p. 82-83.
[507] Levi, 947, pl. CV-d.
[508] Levi, 1947, pl. CXI.
[509] Levi, 1947, pl. CXIII-b.
[510] Balty,1986, fig. 9-12.
[511] Balty,1995, pl. XVIII-1
[512] Levi, 1947, p. 381, 396.
[513] Levi, 1947, p. 378.
[514] Ovadiah A., 1980, p. 110-115.

The Decorative Program

This geometric pattern belongs to the motif style that became popular in the 4th c. AD, especially in the second half of that century. This is evident in the works of the Yakto complex-Lower Level[515] and the church of Kaoussie in Antioch (387)[516], the synagogue of Apamea (392)[517], and the church of Khirbet Muqa in Apamea (394/395)[518]. These examples are characterized by a covering composition based on the repetition of the same geometric patterns, such as cross and octagon compositions, as well as centric compositions such as circles within squares. They are also characterized by the extensive use of rainbow-style patterns as filling motifs, including forms like the thick zigzag and tile roof motifs, to create a colorful and vibrant appearance. In addition, these mosaics also the traditional well-known geometric motifs like solids in perspective, crowstep patterns, and serrated bands.

Nevertheless, it remains an intriguing program, one notable design within this program is the pattern of four squares enclosing a diamond shape. This pattern goes back to the Hellenistic floor decorations in *Opus sectile* and *Lithostroton* [519]. In the 2nd and the very beginning of the 3rd c. AD, we find it in its simplest form of black and white on several mosaics of Antioch as seen in the House of Narcissus[520] and House in DH 25-L[521] . In fact, this pattern is austere and was soon abandoned in mosaic decoration, and the only other example in Syria, with the exception of a filling motif in the southern nave of the cathedral of Hama [522], is our panel, where the artist has revitalized it here by adding bright colors and incorporating filler motifs that were common in the 4th c. AD. The pattern of six-pointed star or the so-called star of David considered to be an old decoration, however, it was rarely represented on the Eastern provinces. We have a few examples such as the House of Cilicia- Room 1 from Antioch[523], where it was part of the coffered ornaments and the House of Ge and seasons (later part of the 5th c. AD)[524] which is more similar

[515] Levi 1947, 279-83, pl. CXI-CXII.
[516] Levi1947, 283-5, fig. 112, pl. CXIII-CXV, CXXIX.
[517] Balty,1986, fig. 9-12.
[518] Donceel-Voute 1988, fig. 132, 133, 135.
[519] Levi 1947, p. 383.
[520] Levi 1947, pl. X-a.
[521] Levi 1947, p. 56, fig 20.
[522] Piccirillo 2007, fig. 22.
[523] Levi 1947, pl. XCV-c.
[524] Levi 1947, fig. 139, pl. CXXXII-a.

to our panel. Apart from a few small filler motifs such as Catherdral of Hama[525], Has church (388-389) [526]from Syria and Roglit church- south aisle[527] and el-Makr church[528] from Palestine.

As for the composition of the circles. The circle itself was a common motif. In fact, intersecting circles are considered ancient decorative elements that have been represented in mosaics in Greece and Italy since the first century BC[529]. The repertoire of circular motifs expanded towards the end of the 4th c. AD to include intertwined and overlapping circles with rosettes, contiguous circles, circles intersecting with squares, and so on[530]. However, we do not find a configuration that matches the circular patterns of this panel. The same applies to the central composition in the third part (C).

While the pattern of adjacent crosses and irregular octagons was quite widespread in the 4th c. AD. Ex, two from Antioch: Mosaic near the House of the Phoenix[531] (end of 4th beginning of 5th c. AD) And Constantinian Villa[532], Room 3, (first quarter of 4th c.AD) another example from North Syria; a panel from Tall 'Ar church dated to the last quarter of the 4th c. AD [533] as well as a panel comes from a pagan building discovered under the cathedral of Apamea, dating to the second half of the 4th c. AD [534]. However, this pattern is represented here in a simpler form. The central cross is decorated with smaller crosses, and the oblong areas have the same pattern in dark colors. This design is apparently intended to mimic the appearance of a coffered roof, which complements the treatment of the other two circles in a similar fashion. Thus, it appears that the artist wanted to emphasize the appearance of a coffered ceiling, which ~~is~~ could be why this design is shown in its simplest form.

Despite the discussion of known motifs, none of them, as mentioned above, is identical to this mosaic motif, except for the oblique bands that form squares at their intersections, which bear a

[525] Piccirillo 2007, fig. 16.
[526] Donceel-Voute, 1988, 118, fig. 81.
[527] Ovadiah 1987, pl. CXXXVII, No. 210.
[528] Ovadiah 1987, pl. XLVI, no. 76.
[529] Ovadiah 1980, p. 157.
[530] Balty 1984, p. 440-442.
[531] Levi 1947, pl. CXXIII-b.
[532] Levi 1947, pl. CXXIII-c.
[533] Abdallah 2018, p. 191, fig. 21.
[534] Balty 1986, fig. 1.

strong resemblance to a panel from Misis in Cilicia (third quarter of the 4th c. AD) [535], and another from the cathedral of Hama -Epifania (412) AD[536].

Dating:

Due to damage and limited discoveries at the site, accurate dating relies on decorative analysis. Key observations include:

The pattern of four squares enclosing lozenges was a common motif in Antioch's mosaics during the 2nd c. AD, where it was typically depicted in a simple black-and-white style. However, in the panel under discussion, this pattern takes on a more vibrant and colorful form. It incorporates elements like solids in perspective and the distinctive "thick zigzag" design, which is a type of rainbow pattern that had been used in Syrian mosaics since the early 4th c. AD, ex, House of the Bird- Rinceau- Lower Level[537], Bath A[538], This design trend gained prominence in the second half of the 4th c. AD, as seen in notable examples like the Synagogue of Apamea[539] and The Mosaic of the Therapnades[540], both located in Apamea. This lively and colorful appearance aligns well with the artistic tendencies of the second half of the 4th c. AD.

The Outlined orthogonal pattern of adjacent crosses and irregular octagons, was found on several Syrian mosaic panels that dating back to the 4th c.AD and the beginning of the 5th c. AD.

The grid of serrated oblique bands that forms squares at their intersections, was used on Syrian mosaic in the fourth and the first decades of the fifth century AD. The first examples were in a simple form that becomes more elaborate later in the 4th c. AD. This design bears a resemblance, especially, to mosaic panels found in Misis, Cilicia, dating from the third quarter of the 4th c. AD, as well as panels from the cathedral of Hama - Epifania, (412-415) AD[541].

The elongated floor, resembling the floor of a portico, divided into squares adorned with alternating circles, This pattern of square division can be seen in the Kaoussie Church[542], and

[535] Budde 1969, fig. 4, 110.
[536] Piccirillo 2007, fig. 6.
[537] Levi 1947, pl. CVIII-a.
[538] Levi 1947, pl. CX-d.
[539] Balty 1986, fig. 5.
[540] Balty 1986, fig. 1.
[541] Piccirillo 2007, fig. 6.
[542] Levi 1947, pl. CXIII-b.

more closely resembles Bath D (second half of the 4th c. AD) [543], as well as in the House of G and the Seasons[544] all of which are found in Antioch.

Conclusion: As previously mentioned, the decorative program of the mosaic seamlessly aligns with the established decorative tradition seen in Syrian mosaics during the latter part of the 4th century AD. This tradition is exemplified by various mosaic panels, including the Yakto complex's lower level (dated to the second half of the 4th c. AD), the cruciform church of Kaoussie in Antioch (387), the synagogue of Apamea (392), the church of Khirbet Muqa in Apamea (394/395. Considering that the pattern of the oblique band bears resemblance to a panel from Cilica, which dates to the second half of the fourth century AD, as well as a panel from the cathedral of Hama - Epifania (412) AD, it is possible to date the mosaic from the second half of the fourth century AD to the first decades of the fifth century A

3.3. Khirbet al- Libneh

Bibl *; A. Chock, 2015, Khirbet el-Libneh" étude architecturale et archéologique des vestiges protobyzantins(Tartous-Syria) ". Thèse de Doctorat ; Aix-Marseille Université, Aix ,* A. Chok**,** 2016**,** "La basilique de Khirbet el-Libneh (sur la côte syrienne): analyse architecturale", in *Acta XVI Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae (Roma, 22–28 septembre 2013),* Città del Vaticano, p. 1591–1606.

The industrial zone of the city is located 5 kilometers east of the island of Arwad (5 kilometers from Amrit) and approximately 5 kilometers southeast of the center of Tartus. According to administrative divisions, this area is a part of what is referred to as Khirbet-al-Libneh. These mosaic panels were discovered in 1998, during the excavations conducted in this industrial area (Khirbet al-Libneh) that took place between (1998-2011) (Fig. 61-73).

Description: According to the excavation report, ten mosaic panels were discovered during the 1998 excavation, forming the pavement of a small church. Excavation works carried out between 1998 and 2011 showed that this church was located near an industrial area, where numerous small rooms containing ovens and olive presses were found. Archaeological finds indicate that

[543] Levi 1947, p. 427, fig. 162.
[544] Levi 1947, p. 347, fig. 139.

the site was inhabited since the Roman period. Nevertheless, no solid evidence confirming the identification of the church is mentioned in the excavation report. However, Anna Chok, an architect, conducted an extensive study of the Khirbet al-Libneh site in her PhD thesis. Therefore, we will rely primarily on her detailed analysis to present the pavement and the function of the building.

Architectural Layout of the Basilica Pavement

At the cleared pavement (Fig. 62), the remains of the north and south walls [Mr. 78-81] are preserved, with mortar covering a 10 × 24 m area, except for a central rectangle of about 40 m². The walls are interrupted in the middle by a gap of approximately 2 m, and the north wall is slightly misaligned. It is unclear whether the walls belong to one or two construction phases. The western end of the hall was destroyed during street development in 1997. In the western half, two pillar bases [Sup. 6-7], spaced 5.5 m apart along an alignment parallel to the south wall [Mr. 80], suggest a second row dividing the hall into three naves along an east-west axis. Additional structural remains [Sup. 8-9, Mr 82] are present but their relation to the main layout is uncertain. Scattered blocks [Mr. 85] in another extension do not allow identification of a wall or its form.

A limestone pavement [Esp. 43] in the southeast corner measures 2.8 × 6 m, bounded to the west by the base of a perpendicular wall [Mr. 83] with a small door threshold [Pt. 23]. Another wall [Mr. 86] may have bordered the north side, separating it from the northeastern mosaic extension.

Adjacent to this pavement, a square installation [Cav. 5] contains a basin 50 cm deep, described in reports as “baptismal”, with two steps and an upper part about 80 cm wide. The basin is framed by a 45 cm border forming a square of 1.7 m[545].

The pavements: The pavement consists of ten carpets arranged in three naves and divided into two parts, east-west. The tesserae appear to vary in size, with those in the western part being finer, as indicated in the excavation report. The only tesserae remaining on site measure 1.5-1.7 cm on each side and are predominantly made of limestone. It is challenging to identify all the colors accurately due to the lack of clear photographs and detailed reports. However, the motifs appear mostly on a white background. One tone seems to be reddish-brown, while the other is interpreted as either blue-gray or green.

[545] Chok, 2015, p. 113-114.

The entire mosaic represents compositions and geometric patterns isotropic, without any botanical or zoological motifs. In the absence of inscriptions allowing for precise dating, it's important to compare the style of each carpet with similar examples found in the region. The mosaic panels were lifted from the ground and transferred to a storage room of the Directorate of Antiquities and Museums in Damascus.

The available photos encompass nearly all the compositions and patterns of this site. To analyze the spatial organization of the room, Ana Chok, in her thesis about Khirbet al-Libneh, restored the pavement (Fig. 61). Based on her work, the ten panels are:

The first Panel (Fig. 63). From the northwest of the northern aisle 270x400 cm, was decorated with a grid of serrated simple filets of squares of four tesserae, the compartments enclosing a parallel polychrome serrated square[546].

The second and fifth Panels (Fig. 64, 67). located in the western part, paved the main nave, their measurements respectively are: 360x360 cm and 360x480cm. They represent a single decoration. It is a polychrome orthogonal pattern of circles in asymmetrically bands interloped tangentially, forming irregular concave squares **[547],** each large circle contains a motif of four florets and the concave squares enclose polychrome squares.

The third Panel (Fig. 65). At the southwest end of the southern aisle,170x220 cm; is decorated with an orthogonal composition of adjacent irregular octagons decorated with squares and forming others. The adjacent sides of the octagons are serrated in fillets of tangent poised group of four tesserae[548]. A similar composition occupies **the fourth panel** (Fig. 66). 264x974 cm, covering the north aisle and therefore located east of the first carpet. Only one detail distinguishes it from the previous one: all the squares are filled with a variety of rainbow pattern such as simple straight lines, overlapping chevron, tiles, serrated nets etc[549].

The mosaic of the sixth panel (Fig. 68). corresponding to the south aisle, 270x950cm. This panel has also the pattern of orthogonal composition of adjacent octagons, forming squares, however, the octagons are decorated with Salomon nods.

The seventh panel (Fig. 69). Appearing at the eastern part of the pavement, it is located on the alignment of the fourth carpet (northern aisle) towards the east, 480cm (east-west) and 285

[546] Balmelle, 1985, p.188- planche 124.
[547] Balmelle, p368 pl. 235.
[548] Balmelle, 1985, p. 252- planche 164.
[549] Chok, 2015, pl. CLXX.

(north-south). According to the excavator's report (circles with blue frames distant from each other and connected by parallel lines or a square with a circle), and to a single image vaguely indicates its decoration. It concludes it is an orthogonal composition of octagons, with four concave sides (forming circles) the octagons are enclosing squares decorated with rainbow style as filling motifs, whereas the circles are enclosing squares on the tips.

The eighth panel (Fig. 70), south of the seventh, seems to be decorated with an orthogonal composition of octagons bearing squares, each surrounded by four small crosses. This decoration is a part of the compositions of squares and octagons that we have already met on the previous panels (3-4 and 6). To the south lies the **ninth panel** (Fig. 71), measuring 645 cm in length (east–west) and 230 cm in width (north–south), aligned with the sixth carpet in the south aisle. It was decorated by all-over pattern of scales with rosebuds, each floret is contained in a scale of white tesserae.

In the northeast extension of the north aisle, extends **the tenth panel** (Fig. 72), having a length of 450cm (east-west) and a width of 330cm (north-south) Its decoration is better documented than the last three carpets. It is an orthogonal pattern of tangent four-pointed stars, forming lozenges alternately recumbent and upright, the stars bearing a square inscribed at 45 to the axes[550]. Decorated with a rainbow style pattern. Whilst the lozenges are filled with so-called goldsmiths' work motifs (orfèvrerie). One of these squares is decorated with an eight-pointed star. The absence of similar examples would give this motif its uniqueness (Fig. 73).

The borders (Fig. 67, border). Most of the borders separating the pavements are made up of a monochrome strip with either an asymmetrical torus or a double net. The one that frames the central carpet (on the north, west and south sides) has, Swastika meander of spaced single-returned swastikas with a rectangular in each space, each rectangle was decorated using checkerboard motifs.[551]

Analysis of Geometric Motifs

Panel 1: Grid of serrated filet of four tesserae, the compartments enclosing a polychrome serrated square: This type of composition which consists of grid of serrated filet (the compartment enclosing various motif: bichrome floret of four tassels, serrated squares and others)

[550] Balmelle,1985, p. 288, pl. 184.
[551] Chok 2015, p. 107.

was used in Antioch to decorate the borders as early as the second century (mosaic of Comus dado from Antioch)[552] and continued to be used in the Proto-Byzantine period. The grid consists of either single serrated filet such as the mosaic of Tall Khanzir church in north Syria dated to the end of 4th and beginning of 5th A. D[553], or triple serrated cubes such as Oum Hartaine church in north Syria (500 A. D[554]). In our panel the grid is a single fillet, consisting of squares of four tassels and the compartments enclosing a parallel serrated square[555], the most similar example is the bordure of the mosaic of Baccus and Satyre from Byblos (the middle of 2th A.D)[556], and the bordure of the of mosaic of a season in Antioch (3th c. A.D)[557], as well as the mosaic of a house in Ma'aret Masrin in north Syria in which the compartment are different. They are inclosing a serrated colored squares also compartment is colored alternately: white and mustard (second half of 4th A.D).[558]

Panel 3-4: **The orthogonal composition of adjacent irregular octagons decorated with squares and forming others. The adjacent sides of the octagons are serrated in fillets of tangent poised group of four tesserae.** The compositions featuring octagons, secant or adjacent octagons, gained popularity in the Near East, particularly since beginning of 5th c. AD. The pattern of secant or adjacent octagons generally serves as a mat. Sometimes restricted to the dimensions of a border or a frame separating the panels, and sometimes to a large simple carpet covering elongated or square surfaces, the location of which is often of secondary importance[559]. This pattern **of irregular octagons adjacent with serrated side, forming squares which decorates the panel 3 and 4.** Similar examples can be found in northern Syria, particularly in the mosaic of Khan el-Sabil dated to 489 A.D[560], the octagons enclose squares with extended angles resembling a rosebud, surrounded by four squares placed on their tips. This pattern is also observed in the Al Rayan church (third quart of 5th c. AD)[561], mirroring the design found in Khan

[552] Levi, 1947, pl. XCIV-c.
[553] Abdallah, 2018, p. 210, fig. 5.
[554] Abdallah, 2018, fig 3; Donceel-Voute, 1988, p.201, fig. 168.
[555] Balmelle, 1985, p.189, planche 124.
[556] Chéhab,1958, pl. IV.
[557] Levi, 1947, pl. L-d.
[558] Abdallah, 2018, p. 224, fig. 1,3.
[559] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 445.
[560] Abdallah, p 111, fig. 6.
[561] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 267, fig. 242.

el-Sabil. Additionally, a similar example can be found in the church of Chhim (498 AD) from Phoenicia[562].

panel 6: **The orthogonal composition of adjacent octagons, forming squares on the tips** is usually used to decorate the border, e.g. Kaoussie church east aisle in Antioch(387 AD)[563], where two row of tangent octagons forming poised square framing the central geometric panel, and Debsi Faraj church south aisle (first quart of 5th c. AD)[564]. A similar example is found in the mosaic of Ma'ar Shourin in northern Syria, dated to the end of 4th A.D[565] .This mosaic has the same composition. However, they are a little different regarding the filling motifs; In Ma'ar Shourin the octagon contains, in addition to Solomon's knot, rainbow-style decorations.[566] Both were part of the common filling motifs, in fact, the Patterns of rainbow style fillings were widespread in this region from the middle of the 4th century. The use of the Solomon's knot motif is indeed an ancient practice[567], but this mosaic stands out as unique due to its exclusive use of the Solomon's knot as a filling motif.

Panel 2-5: The orthogonal pattern of circles in asymmetrically bands interloped tangentially, forming irregular concave squares, is one of the covering decorations that was popular in the mosaics of the East during the 5th and 6th centuries[568].Within this composition, the circles are decorated with various figural or floral motifs. A parallel to our motif appears on a mosaic panel located south of the Biblical inscription mosaic in Sector 10-Q at Antioch,[569] dated to the second half of the 5th century AD[570]. Same pattern is found in a panel from Oum Jalal house in northern Syria, dated to the first third of fifth century[571]. It is also found on the baptistery panel of Zahrani church in Phoenicia[572] (535 A.D) whose circles are decorated with a rose with four petals and the squares decorated with a serrated square on the tip. And also in the

[562] Helou, 2019, p 96, plan 9.
[563] Levi, 1947, pl CXIII-b.
[564] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p 83, fig. 52.
[565] Abdallah, 2018 p 122, fig. 5
[566] Abdallah, 2018 p 123, fig. 6.
[567] Ovadiah,1980, p 144, pl XIV-fig. 31.
[568] Balty, 1989, p. 440-441.
[569] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXX-d, Campbell, 1988, pl. 96.
[570] Levi, 1947, p. 320.Campbell, 1988, p. 34-35.
[571] Abdallah, 2018, p.234, fig 7-8.
[572] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 434, fig. 434 ; Helou, 2019, p. 118, fig128.

church of Mazraat al-Ola (last third of the fifth century) [573].The example most identical to Kherber-el-Libneh motif, as much by the composition as by the filling elements, is visible on the mosaic of the church of Deir Soleib in Apamea region (end of 5th century)[574], which presents the same covering motif whose circles are decorated with a floret with four buttons. While the pattern has roots tracing back to Pompeian stucco decorations and remained prevalent throughout the 5th to 7th centuries, it's typically associated with secondary spaces[575]. In contrast to typical practice, our Kherbet al-Libneh panel was employed to adorn the central nave of the church.

Panel 7. The pattern features an orthogonal composition of octagons with four concave sides, forming circles. These octagons enclose squares. Two similar examples can be found in Antioch, the first one is a border in the Church of Machouka[576](first half of the 6th A.D), where a Scattered fragment of the large surface of the central nave, suggest that this had an all-over mosaic with floral trellis, surrounded by a border with a row of curvilinear octagons formed by two lateral series of semicircles. The second example is found in the church of Kaoussi (first half of the 6th A.D), [577] which has the same type of border motifs. The most identical example to the seventh panel is found in the church Khan Khaldeh church on the lower level (probably mid- 5th century; ca.450-460), with the church abandoned before 503/506 AD. [578]in Phoenicia which has Rows of adjacent outlined octagons with four sides concave forming circles.

Panel 8: The eighth carpet, located south of the seventh, appears to display an orthogonal composition of octagons enclosing squares, each surrounded by four crosslets, each composed of five poised tesserae[579]. This design seems to corresponds to the octagonal compositions previously discussed in the third, fourth, and sixth panels, although the precise arrangement is difficult to confirm from the available sketch.

Panel 9: The pattern of scales mesh, often decorated with rose buds, is one of the most decorative motifs used in Middle Eastern mosaics from the second third of the fifth century to the

[573] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 182, fig. 157.
[574] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 65, fig. 36.
[575] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 445.
[576] Levi, 1947, pl. CXLI-d.
[577] Levi, 1947, pl. CXXXIX-b.
[578] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 390, fig. 375.
[579] Chok, 2015, p. 109.

seventh century [580].There are similar examples in the church of five nave from As-Suwayda in southern Syria, dating back to the end of fifth century[581], and in the church north of the Heit village in As-Suwayda, dating back to the end of the fifth century[582].However the most identical example is found in northern Syria in a church near Houad (568)A.D[583] where the panel was paving an aisle. The main scene is a combat on a white background styled with scales grid contained rose buds

Panel 10: Orthogonal pattern of tangent four-pointed stars, forming lozenges alternately recumbent and upright, creating the effect if tangent and intersecting octagons[584]. The stars bearing square with an eight-pointed star.

This pattern had been used since Roman times, As it was proven by two panels discovered in Antioch, in the House of the Porticoes[585] and in the House of Meander[586] (3th century A.D) which has the same pattern with different filling motifs. Another similar pattern can be found in Antioch, in the House of Ge and season upper level: Ktisis mosaic (third quart of 5th A.D)[587] in which the lozenges are decorated with rainbow style motifs, and the squares are smaller, containing solid motifs. More identical patterns is found in the church of Basqualla[588] in northern Syria (the end of 4th and the beginning of 5th A.D), in this panel the lozenges contain the same motifs as Khirbet el-Libneh panel goldsmiths' work motifs (orfèvrerie) but the squares are decorated with solid motifs. Finally another identical example is found in Chehim[589] mosaic in Phoenicia whose lozenges has the so -called goldsmiths' work motifs (orfèvrerie) alternating with the rainbow pattern that also decorated the squares 498 AD. One of the filling motifs in this panel is distinctive: **The square with an eight-pointed star,** the majority of the stars depicted on mosaics, are designed either by the composition of two or three intersecting squares or triangles, or by the intersection of rhombuses or parallelograms. Here we have a presumably unique example, the star consists of four secant triangles. It is also possible to read this motif as a

[580] Balty,1984, p. 451-456.
[581] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 310, fig. 303.
[582] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 122, fig. 84.
[583] Abdallah, 2018; p. 88, fig. 8.
[584] Balmelle, 1985, p. 288, pl. 184.
[585] Levi, 1947, p. 107, fig. 41.
[586] Levi, 1947, pl. CIV-d.
[587] Levi, 1947, pl. CLXXXI-a.
[588] Abdallah, 2018, p. 51, fig. 4.
[589] Chok, 2015, p. 113, fig. 87; Waliszewski & Rarazi,2002, p. 80.

composition of two of four -pointed stars, intersecting with each other, one connected to the corners of the square, the other one is connecting to the middle of the four sides. This pattern has no equivalent on the mosaic motifs. However, a similar pattern can be found in the lintels curved motifs of Syrian proto-byzantine buildings in the limestone massifs, that are dating back to the 5th -6th centuries A.D, which was found in Cheikh Soleiman and Qalb lozé [590].

The border: Swastika meander of spaced single-returned swastikas with a rectangular in each space each rectangle was decorated using checkerboard motif.

The border design discussed has been in use since Hellenistic times[591], showcasing numerous variations over time. As for this type a similar border in the mosaics of Deir-sharqi[592] in northern Syria, dating back to the first quarter of the fifth century, in which the rectangle contains contain Decorations of rainbow pattern. Another more identical example was found in the mosaic of Howarteh-northern church discovered in Apamea region, While the overall pattern is similar, the rectangular compartments are filled differently, each containing one or two smaller rectangles in contrasting colours. This mosaic dates from the end of the fifth century to the beginning of the sixth century[593].

The Function of the Site

Anna Chok conducted an extensive study of the Khirbet el-Libneh site in her PhD thesis, dedicated the third chapter to draw conclusions about the building with mosaic flooring[594]. According to Chok, the basilical hall at Khirbet el-Libneh was a substantial east–west-oriented building with the western part divided into three naves. The western extension was completely destroyed, while the eastern part survives only in limited, uncertain remains, suggesting it may have been built slightly later. Based on this, Chok proposes three architectural reconstruction options: a basilica with an added eastern room, a basilica extended eastward, or a single hall built in two stages. Key features supporting its identification as a church include a central mosaic-less area, a square basin 50 cm deep in the eastern extension, and two basalt bases in front of this

[590] Chok, 2015, p .132-133, fig. 106-107.
[591] Ovadiah , 1980, pl. XLII, fig. 114.
[592] Balty,1989, p. 510, fig.182.
[593] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 110, fig. 76.
[594] Chok, 2015, p. 113-131,151-153, 155.

central space, likely indicating the location of a bema or double podium commonly placed before sanctuaries in Maritime Phoenician churches.

Comparison with Proto-Byzantine churches, secular halls, and synagogues shows no exact parallel, but the absence of a Jerusalem-oriented aedicule excludes a synagogue, and the central layout and basin exclude a civil basilica. Two functional models, both tentative due to limited evidence, are proposed: (1) a single basilical hall with an unusual eastern sanctuary, where the central space marks a destroyed bema and the basin may have contained a reliquary; (2) a two-room layout, with the western hall functioning as the main church and a later eastern hall containing the basin. Despite its small size, off-axis location, and lack of drainage, the basin could have been used for baptism (without full immersion), as a reliquary, or for other unknown non-religious purposes. Overall, these architectural features strongly support interpreting the building as a church, although it may not have originally been intended for religious use. Despite the challenges posed by limited archaeological evidence, the hall's architectural elements strongly suggest a religious function, possibly as an Early Byzantine church in the Peraia of Arados. along with other small rooms that were mostly workshops, could be part of a village, a town or a rural property that built on either a commercial road or a pilgrim route.

Further research and excavation are needed to conclusively determine its purpose, but the evidence presented offers compelling insights into the historical and architectural significance of the site.

Dating

Based on architecture study and the stylistic analysis, in addition to the excavation report which said that the western part was made up of finer tesserae than the used tesserae in the east part. Chok suggested that those pavements are from two phases, and she divided them into two groups: the western part panels (1-6) and eastern part panels (7-10)[595]. Chok claimed that there are two groups of pavements (east and west), suggesting that the western part group (panels 1-6) should be dated from the end of the 4th till the first half of the 5th A.D. while she gave the eastern part (panels 7-10) a date to the fifth century.[596]

[595] Chok, 2015, P112-113.
[596] Chok,2015, p113.

As for the patterns of the western part motifs—interloped circles, a grid of adjacent octagons, and a grid of serrated fillets of four tesserae—it should be noted that secant and tangent octagons were used in Syrian mosaics before the fifth century and continued to be employed, with some variations, in later centuries. However, their closest parallels date to the fifth century, such as the mosaics of the Debsi Faraj church, south aisle (first quarter of the fifth century AD), Chhim (498 AD), and Khan el-Sabil (489 AD).

The grid of interlaced circles containing motifs of four florets represents one of the compositions that became widespread in Syrian mosaics from the beginning of the fifth century. A comparable example dating to the end of the fifth century AD is found at Deir Soleib in the Apamea region. Other examples dating to the second half of the fifth century AD appear in mosaics such as the panel south of the Biblical Inscription Mosaic in Sector 10-Q at Antioch, and in the church of Mazraat al-Ola (last third of the fifth century).

As for the eastern part, both panels (7) and (8) feature octagonal patterns. Panel (7), in particular, finds a close parallel in the church of Khan Khaldeh church on the lower level (mid- 5th century; ca.450-460). The four-lozenge star motif in panel (10) was already in use before the fifth century; a striking parallel appears in the church of Basqualla, dating to the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century AD, as well as in a panel from the House of Ge and the Seasons (upper level: border of the Ktisis mosaic, third quarter of the fifth century AD). In contrast, the all-over scale pattern decorated with rosebuds appears to have emerged from the second third of the fifth century onward.

Based on these observations, the western part cannot be earlier than the first decades of the fifth century. However, assigning a more precise date within the first half of the fifth century requires additional evidence. If the dating relies solely on mosaic stylistic types, the argument remains uncertain, since many of these motifs continued to be used throughout the fifth century and even into the sixth century.

As for the eastern part, the closest parallels occur in examples dated to the second half of the fifth century, such as the mosaics of Khan Khaldeh church on the lower level (mid- 5th century; ca.450-460), which feature a composition of octagons with four concave sides forming circles, and the mosaic of Chhim (498 AD), where an orthogonal pattern of tangent four-pointed stars forms alternating upright and recumbent lozenges.

Therefore, it is more appropriate to assign the pavement as a whole, a broader chronological range extending from the early decades of the fifth century to the end of the fifth century, or possibly into the first decades of the sixth century.

3.4. Al-Mintar

In 2010, agricultural activities uncovered ruins composed of stones and pottery fragments. Subsequently, a team from the Tartus Department of Antiquities initiated archaeological surveys at the al-Mintar site, situated 25 km south of Tartus city. Following these surveys, excavations were carried out in 2011, leading to the discovery of a mosaic floor. Unfortunately, a significant portion of the mosaic had been damaged due to agricultural work and the successive use of the area as a burial site. In 2013, a team of restorers carefully lifted and preserved this mosaic. Currently, it is housed in the Tartus Museum, stored on a textile roll (Fig. 74-81).

Excavations continued in the subsequent years, specifically in 2012, 2013, 2015, 2018, and 2020, revealing the remains of walls and rooms that date back to the Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic eras. Unfortunately, the floors of these structures have suffered significant damage. Notably, a small room measuring 170 x 210 cm was uncovered, featuring a limestone floor adorned with sixteen limestone plinths, eight on each side, suggesting a possible arrangement for two coffins. Additionally, several individual graves from the Byzantine and Islamic eras were discovered[597]. Among the notable findings were bronze coins, fragments of pottery vessels, glass shards, fragments of caskets, and lamps from the Roman and Byzantine periods. Of particular importance is a pottery lamp found in 2011, situated within a wall. This lamp contained 75 golden coins attributed to several emperors, including Justinianus I (518-527 AD), Tiberius II Constantinus (574 – 582 AD), Mauricius Tiberius (582-602 AD), and Focas (502-510 AD). Fragments of pottery vessels from the Islamic period were also uncovered[598].

[597] Sa'ad Ali, *A summary of al-Mintar site excavations*, Tartus Department of Antiquities archive (Tartus, 2023). Excavations were carried out under the supervision of several archaeologists: 2010-2011: Nazeeh Solaiman; 2012: Ali Salameh; 2013: Bassam Watfeh; 2015 and 2020: Sa'ad Ali; 2018: Lamees Asaad. -Unpublished.
[598] Ali,2023.

While the findings and remains suggest continuous habitation at the site since Roman times, the use of the rooms or the specific building to which the mosaics belong remains unclear due to a lack of sufficient evidence[599].

The fragmentary mosaic pavement measures 8 x 10 m, and the tesserae are constructed from limestone with an average dimension of 1-1.5 cm. The colors used include white, blue-gray, black, red, orange, and ochre. Three distinct remaining parts of the mosaic can be identified:

First part (Fig. 78.79). A rectangular panel framed by three stripes of white and two of black tesserae. The interior scene, executed with diagonally placed white tesserae, features rows of spaced recumbent rosebuds in two colors (blue-gray and red). Various parts of this panel have sustained damage.

Second part (Fig. 78). Adjacent to the previous panel, this part measures 53 x 375 cm. It displays an orthogonal grid of three stepped stripes of tesserae (black - white - black) on a white background, forming two rows of squares. Each square encloses another one with a single black *tessera* in the center. Significant portions of this part have also been affected by destruction.

Third part (Fig. 77, 80). The lower part and the right side of this part have been entirely destroyed, with damage extending to the remaining section. An orthogonal pattern of circles linked by short braids is visible, creating the effect of a pattern of adjacent octagons with four concave sides. The circles themselves contain other motifs, such as circles or flowers of four rosebuds.

Compartments enclose various motifs, including a cross of loops, a circle with loops inside, and a square with fan-shaped ornaments at its angles. The grid is interrupted by a rectangle framing a badly damaged animal scene.

In the depicted animal scene, a gazelle (Fig. 81) is shown on the left side, with the upper part of its hind legs destroyed. The gazelle is adorned with a bell, spreading its front legs apart and bowing its head, possibly towards a plant in front of it. The body is made of colored *tesserae*

[599] By observing the mosaic motifs, it is noticeable the grid of circles is interrupted by a rectangle, which includes two animals on either side of a gap where only part of a circle survives. The placement of the animals suggests that the mosaic is oriented toward the east, and the rosebuds pave a longitudinal panel. One might envision a small church where the nave is adorned with the grid of circles and two animals on either side of an inscription. The aisle could be decorated with rosebuds. A small church surrounded by residential rooms is not surprising. However, this is purely a hypothesis.

(black, gray, orange, ochre, red, and white), outlined by a black line. Destruction extends to the middle part of this rectangle, where several rows of tesserae in a circular arch are visible to the left of a lacuna, and the back of an animal (facing the gazelle?) can be recognized on its right side.

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

The all-over pattern of rosebuds, specifically the use of florets, has been a prominent feature in Syrian mosaics since the first decades of the fifth century AD. This decorative motif gained widespread popularity in the Eastern provinces, including Syria, Arabia, Phoenicia, and Palestine, particularly from the second half of the fifth century AD. This trend endured until the conclusion of the ancient mosaic era in the East[600]. Rosebuds were depicted in mosaics from both geometric and naturalistic perspectives, showcasing various forms such as rhombus, heart, egg-shaped buds, among others[601].

The panel under consideration is adorned with a stylized rosebud design, featuring a rhombus-shaped *calyx* and petals, with the stem composed of two *tesserae*. This particular pattern is observed in several mosaics.

From northern Syria, two notable examples featuring the rosebud pattern are the nave mosaic of Mazra'at al Oula church (end of the fifth century AD)[602] and the sanctuary mosaic of Alqassabiat church (end of the fifth century AD, first quarter of the sixth century AD)[603]. In the former, the background of the animal scene is adorned with rosebuds having a rhombus shape, each with a stem consisting of one *tessera*. A similar pattern is observed in the latter on a white background, where a main scene depicts a vase flanked by two peacocks surrounded by diamond-shaped rosebuds, this time without stems. Comparable examples include a small panel from Tall A'r church (435/436 AD)[604] displayed in the Ma'aret an- Nou'man Museum, where rosebuds with rhombus shapes and stems of two *tesserae* are dotted orthogonally on a white background.

[600] Balty, 1984, p. 453-454.
[601] For more information, see Doro Levi, 1947, p. 436–453.
[602] Donceel-Voûte,1988, p. 179, fig. 149 &150.
[603] Abdallah, 2018, p. 30, fig. 6.
[604] Abdallah, 2018, p. 183, fig. 6.

Additionally, the deer mosaic of Apamea features a background adorned with the same rosebud pattern[605].

The outlined orthogonal pattern of circles linked axially by short braids.

As a matter of fact, the orthogonal pattern of interloped circles formed irregular concave squares, resembling octagons. Adorned with diverse ornaments such as figures, objects, floral, and geometric motifs, this design became widely popular in the provinces of Syria and Phoenicia during the fifth and sixth centuries AD[606]. Oum Hartain church (500 AD)[607], Oum Jalal house in northern Syria (first third of the fifth century AD)[608], as well as Qabre Hiram church aisles mosaics[609] and the baptistery panel of Zahrani church in Phoenicia (535 A.D)[610].

However, the mosaic under discussion stands out as unique. The circles are not interloped but connected by two-strand guilloche, creating the effects of adjacent octagons. It's worth mentioning a panel found in Phoenicia at Khan Khaldeh church on the lower level (fifth century AD)[611]. In this case as well, the circles are not interloped; instead, they are connected by simple fillets, creating the effects of adjacent octagons. Each circle in this pattern has a flower composed of four rosebuds.

The grid of filets forming squares. The mesh of filets forming squares or diamonds, which encloses various filling motifs, has a historical presence in Antiochian mosaics, dating back to as early as the second century AD. Notable examples include the House of the Evil Eye[612] and the House of Menander (Room 13, Room 14)[613]. In fact, the grid pattern, consisting of various elements such as florets, chevrons, filets, etc., gained popularity on Syrian mosaics and the broader East from the onset of the fifth century AD[614].

As for the lattice of filets, often oblique, featured either single filets, as seen in the Amazons mosaic of Apamea[615], the sanctuary mosaic border of al-Tamani'ah church in northern Syria[616],

[605] Balty, p103, fig. 24.
[606] Donceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 445,458.
[607] Abdallah, 2018, p. 154, fig. 5–8.
[608] Abdallah, 2018, p. 227, fig. 7-8.
[609] Helou, 2019, p. 226, fig. 233.
[610] Donceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 434, fig. 434
[611] Donceel-Voûte, 1988, fig. 370, 375.
[612] Levi, 1947, pl. XCIII-b.
[613] Levi, 1947, pl. CV a, d, e.
[614] Balty, 2003, p. 173.
[615] Balty, 1977, p. 115.

the atrium mosaic of Boustan ech-Cheikh church in Phoenicia[617], or multiple serrated filets, exemplified by a small rectangular panel from the Barrak house courtyard panel in Antioch[618], Hawa Bath (end of the fifth century and beginning of the sixth century AD)[619], the apse mosaic of Goubelleh church (fifth century AD)[620]from north Syria, a small panel from Tall Arqa luxury house in Phoenicia[621], Kh. Samra church south aisle mosaic in Palestine[622], the southern area of the presbytery in the Lower church of al Quweismeh[623], and the north aisle mosaic of Rihab church in Jordan[624].

However, fewer examples showcase a grid of straight fillets like the panel under discussion. For instance, the Kaoussie church (387 AD), Room 3 Pistikon, represents a coarse trellis formed by thick, dotted lines parallel to the border, forming rows of squares with a small diamond shape in each one[625]. Room 14 in the House of the Meander from Antioch has a geometric mosaic where the central scene is framed by a grate of two series of squares, each containing a small cross of dots, between two red lines[626]. The most similar examples to the described panel are found in the annex mosaic of Oum Nir al-Qoubleh church, featuring a grid of serrated filets forming squares, with each unit containing a serrated diamond (end of the fifth and mid-sixth century AD) [627], and the annex room mosaic of Dibsi Faraj church (church of the citadel), where the border frames a field of a straight grid, made up of serrated filets, enclosing a square in each partition (first half of the fifth century AD) [628].

Rendering of Figures

The only preserved animal depiction in the mosaic panel features a gazelle (Fig. 7). The body is intricately outlined by a black line, while shades of red, orange, ochre, white, and a stain of black tesserae are strategically employed to mimic the fur of the skin, conveying the musculature and

[616] Jouéjati, 2012, fig. 2.
[617] Helou, 2019, p. 110, fig. 114.
[618] Campbell, 1988, p. 226.
[619] Abdallah, 2018, p. 221, fig. 5.
[620] Donceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 88, fig. 56.
[621] Thalman, 2000, p. 17, fig. 8.
[622] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, pl. CV, fig. 2
[623] Piccirillo, 1984, plate 36, fig. 6.
[624] Piccirillo, 1980, pl. 40, fig. 20 and pl. 51, fig. 35.
[625] Campbell, 1988, pl. 134 & pl. 135.
[626] Levi, 1947, pl. CV-a.
[627] Abdallah, 2018, p. 172, fig. 36–7.
[628] Harper,1975, pl. 10-a.

body mass. This mosaic technique uses color stripes to create the illusion that the body is composed of distinct parts, such as the head, neck, front legs, and back legs. This method of portraying the body as a combination of adjacent parts gained significant prominence in Syrian mosaics in the second half of the fifth century AD, as evidenced by various examples, including the Howarteh-Michaelion (south aisle) mosaic (487 AD) [629], the mosaic of Kafer Tab church's nave[630], and Oum Hartein church's nave mosaic (500 AD)[631].

The depiction of the gazelle in this mosaic shares similarities with other representations in contemporaneous artworks. Resemblances are noted with the gazelles in the animal scene from Mezr'et el-'oulia (last sthird of the fifth century AD) [632] in north Syria , and the animal scene of the Good Shepherd's room at Villa Jenah (end of the fifth century AD)[633] in Phoenicia. However, the most striking similarity is found in the deer depicted in the southern nave of Khan Khaldeh (upper church)[634]. This deer shares the same posture, with its head bent towards a plant in front, and the depiction of the body is nearly identical, except that the deer in Khan Khaldeh is not adorned with a bell.

Iconographical Study

The gazelle and the deer belong to the repertoire of zoology that was popular among the Syrian mosaicists in the second half of the fifth and in the sixth centuries AD. They are represented either eating in peace, e.g., a panel from Friykia [635], in a hunting scene pursued by a beast, e.g., the holy martyrs church south aisle of Tayibat al-Imam[636], in symmetrical composition, where two deer face each other, placed on either side of a tree, e.g., Ma'arata south aisle [637]; an eagle: only one example was found in Ma'art Bitar mosaic[638]or a vase or a kantharos, e.g., Rayan church [639] and a panel from Saraqeb [640]. Here, it is estimated that the gazelle encounters another animal, of which only the hind quarter survives.

[629] Balty, 1977, p. 128–129.
[630] Abdallah, 2018, p. 98, fig. 1.
[631] Abdallah, 2018, p. 157, fig. 18.
[632] Donceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 179, fig. 150.
[633] Maurice 1958, pl. XXXI, XXXIV.
[634] Helou, 2019, p. 58, fig. 54.
[635] Abdallah, 2018, p. 61, fig. 4.
[636] Zaqzuq & Piccirillo, 1999, pl. VIII.
[637] Abdallah, 2018, p.136, fig. 15.
[638] Abdallah, 2018, p. 116, fig. 1.
[639] Donceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 267, fig. 242.

Dating

The grid of filets is one of the decorations that was used on Syrian mosaics since the second century AD, as mentioned above, and which became popular in the Proto-Byzantine period. The rosebud motif was used as early as the first quarter of the fifth century AD[641], thus the mosaic cannot be dated earlier than that. Regarding the composition of the circles linked by guilloche forming adjacent irregular octagons, there is no matching example, the closest example came from Khan Khaldeh, Lower church, dated to the fifth century AD. As for the gazelle, the style of depiction (division of the body into different parts using lines of dark colors), belong to the animal representations style that prevailed in Syria and Phoenicia in the second half of the fifth century AD and became more evident at the end of the fifth century AD. It shows resemblance especially to the gazelles of Good Shepherd's room at Villa Jenah (end of the fifth century AD) and the deer of the southern nave in Khan Khaldeh Upper church (521 AD) (Fig 9).

Considering the various stylistic elements and historical context, the mosaic pavement likely dates back to the period between the first quarter of the fifth century AD and the first third of the sixth century AD.

3.5. Al-Sha’ara

Al-Sha'ara is a village situated in the Al-Qadmus subdistrict, approximately 15 km southeast of Al-Qadmus city. In 2007, while conducting agricultural work, the discovery of a mosaic floor remains prompted emergency excavations, revealing a fragmentary mosaic pavement measuring 2.5 x 7.25 m. The *tesserae*, crafted from limestone with an average dimension of 1 cm, showcased a palette of colors including white, gray, blue-gray, black, red, and ochre.

Unfortunately, the mosaic had suffered significant damage, attributed to both agricultural activities and subsequent burials. The finds recovered from the site included pottery shards from unglazed vessels and coffins, glass fragments, one bronze coin, an iron arrowhead, a door lintel, and remnants of walls. Additionally, three graves were identified (fig. 82). According to the excavation report[642], there was a concentration of pottery fragments in the area, though this was

[640] Abdallah, 2018, p. 286, fig. 2.
[641] Balty, 1977, p. 453–454.
[642] Excavation Report.

not thoroughly documented or photographed. Regrettably, no further excavations or surveys were carried out, and the available finds and ruins are not sufficient to draw definitive conclusions regarding the history or function of the site.

Approximately one-third of this floor has survived. The border, preserved on the north and a tiny bit on the east and west, consists of a looped interlace of strips forming rounded squares with a flower of four rosebuds in the center of each. This is followed by a gemmed band of circles and poised squares on a red background, stretched between two thin strips of white tesserae.

The internal field (Fig. 83) is heavily damaged. In the preserved part, a bull running towards the eastern corner appears on a white background. The body is outlined with a line of black tesserae, and the depiction is highly aesthetic due to the delicate shading. Part of its front legs and head is damaged. The body is represented in profile, while the head is in full view with wide-open eyes fixed on the spectator. The tail stretches out behind, as if it is lashing back and forth. A part of a vegetal motif appears behind him.

To the western corner, a dog is depicted running towards the north, chasing an animal that, unfortunately, has been largely destroyed, with only its front legs (a rabbit?) being preserved. Parts of the dog's back were demolished, and the body is marked by a thick outline. Above it, another animal (a leopard?) is visible, but in a badly damaged state, with only part of the torso remaining, its body gray with black spots.

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

The gemmed band (Fig. 83, inner border).The great attraction for precious metals and colored materials, as well as the shimmering appearance of the gemmed band motifs, was the main reason for using this type of decoration in mosaics[643].This trend became particularly evident in the mosaics of the East, especially in the second half of the fifth century AD, as seen in the churches of Deir es-Sleib[644], Halawa[645], Dibsi Faraj[646], from north Syria, and in the sixth century AD, especially in Arabia province, for example, the church of Bishop Sergius[647], the upper chapel of

[643] Donceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 448.
[644] Mattern &Mouterde &Beaulieu, 1939, pl. XIV.
[645] Donceel-Voûte, 1988, pl. 48, fig. 121.
[646] Donceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 72, 81.
[647] Piccirillo, 1993, fig. 331.

Priest John[648], the church of the Holy Martyrs Lots and Procopius[649], the Theotokos chapel[650], the church of the Apostles[651], and the church of Sunna' in Madaba[652]. This type of linear composition, featuring various shapes of cabochons and ornaments (cabochons, pearls, pellets, squares, leaves with three or five lobes, etc.), is likely to reflect regional or workshop features[653].

As for the gemmed band in Al-Sha'ara, which consists of a sequence of poised squares and circles, non-tangent, an identical example can be found in Phoenicia, at Qabre Hiram church[654] (575 AD), where two intercolumniation carpets were framed by the same gemmed band.

Strapwork of interlaced poised rounded squares enclosing flowers of four rosebuds (Fig. 83, outer border). The chain of such a square pattern was popular in Syria since the second half of the fifth century AD. It exhibits different filling motifs of small squares, as seen in Mezra'at el-Oulia church[655], the Martyrium of the Atrium Church in Apamea[656], the southern church of Soughaneh[657], and the church of Heit[658]. From Palestine, similar patterns can be observed in the border of Guvrin church[659] and the border of the apse mosaic of Saint Stephen church in Umm-al-Rasas southeast of Madaba[660]. However, there is only one identical example in terms of filling motifs—a flower of four rosebuds—which is found in the church of Houad[661] (568 AD) near Mhardeh city in north Syria.

The Iconographical Study

Representations of animals have long been part of the decorative repertoire of mosaics[662]. Their popularity has grown in Syria, especially since the second half of the fifth century AD[663].

[648] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 175, fig. 228.
[649] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 165, fig. 213.
[650] Piccirillo 1994, pl. 19, pl. 24, fig. 7, pl. 25, fig. 8.
[651] Piccirillo, 1993, p. 106, fig. 89.
[652] Piccirillo, 1993, pl. 5, fig. 7, pl. 10, fig. 14.
[653] Donceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 448.
[654] Bagatti, 1963, fig. 2.
[655] Dounceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 179, fig. 150.
[656] Dounceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 217, fig. 197.
[657] Dounceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 315, fig. 307.
[658] Dounceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 122, fig. 84.
[659] Ovadiah, R & A., 1987, pl. VIII, no. 17.
[660] Piccirillo, 1993, fig. 346.
[661] Abdallah, 2018, p. 90, fig. 11.
[662] Dounceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 476.
[663] Balty, 1984, p. 456–457.

Domestic and wild animals were depicted in various postures; unfortunately, the animal scene in this panel has been badly damaged, with the only identifiable animals being the ox and the dog.

The representation of bulls in Syrian mosaics is diverse, showcasing the animal in different positions. Bulls are depicted being chased by wild animals, as seen in Tall Khanzir[664]. They are also portrayed in confrontational formations where they run against other animals, such as a lioness in al-Tamani'ah church apse[665] or a bear on a panel displayed in Ma'art an- Nou'man Museum[666].

Additionally, bulls are featured in symmetrical compositions, as observed in Oum-Hartein church apse[667], where two bulls stand opposite each other on either side of a pillar topped with a vase.

Concerning dogs, their typical portrayals involve chasing either a deer or a gazelle, as seen in the mosaics of Fa'aloul and Howarteh-Michaelion (south aisle) [668]. Dogs may also be depicted chasing a hare, as exemplified in Mezra'a el-Oulia church nave[669] and Oum Hartein church nave panel[670]. In some instances, as observed in Ma'rata church – north aisle panel[671], the dog is attacking a wild boar. However, due to the extensive damage to the scene, it is challenging to determine which specific pattern these animals follow.

Rendering of Figures

The body of the bull (Fig. 84) is outlined with a bold line, and anatomical details are depicted in shades of grey and black. However, the use of light shades and external outlines does not create a true sense of volume; rather, it produces a purely superficial effect where interior details are not intended for realistic anatomy. The front feet are also outlined by a dark line, creating a sense of detachment from the body, while the head and horns are twisted into a full view.

The drawing of the bull bears similarity to the ox depicted in a mosaic panel displayed at Ma'arat an- Nou'man Museum[672]. In this representation, the bull is shown galloping, with both its head

[664] Abdallah, 2018, p. 209, fig 2.
[665] Jouéjati, 2012, fig. 13.
[666] Abdallah, 2018, p. 305, fig. 23.
[667] Abdallah, 2018, p. 153, fig. 3.
[668] Maria-Teresa and Pierre Canivet,1979, p. 65–98, at fig. 18.
[669] Dounceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 179, fig. 150.
[670] Dounceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 195, fig. 172.
[671] Balty, 1995, pl. XXIX-1.
[672] Abdallah, 2018, p. 305, fig. 23.

and horns in full view. The body, along with the front leg, is outlined in black, and the mass of the body is suggested by shades of grey. According to Abdallah, this panel dates back to the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century AD[673]. Similarly, the ox on the nave mosaics from al-Tamani'ah church[674] (last quarter of the fifth century AD[675]) is portrayed running, with the body outlined boldly, and anatomical details shown in shades of gray. The ox depiction also exhibits resemblance to the ox from Hawa Bath[676] (end of the fifth to the beginning of the sixth centuries AD[677]) and Oum Hartein church (500 AD) [678]. The same method was used to portray the dog (Fig. 85), where the body is marked with a bold line, and the mass of the body is rendered in shades of grey. However, there is a disproportional depiction of the body, with the neck, for example, appearing too long in comparison to the overall body proportion.

Dating

In the absence of solid evidence regarding the building to which the mosaic belonged, as well as the condition of the finds (pottery shards of un-glazed vessels and coffins, glass fragments, etc.) not being sufficient or reliable for reaching safe hypotheses, we rely on the geometric motifs and iconographic style.

The border motifs are known from the fifth century AD, particularly from the second half of the fifth century AD onwards. However, there are only two identical examples of the border motifs: the gemmed frame from Qabre Hiram church (575 AD) and the chain of round squares of Houad church- south aisle (568 AD). Regarding the animal scene, the depiction of the bull, not as a single unity but as different parts defined by darker outlines, is characteristic of the stylistic development of Syrian mosaic figures towards the end of the fifth century AD. It shows similarities to the ox representations on the mosaics of al-Tamani'ah church (last quarter of the fifth century AD), a mosaic panel displayed in Ma'arat an- Nou'man Museum (end of the fifth century AD), as well as another in Oum Hartein church (500 AD), and the mosaic of Hawa bath (end of the fifth beginning of the sixth century AD). Accordingly, this panel could not be dated earlier than the last third of the fifth century AD. Given that both identical geometric motifs are

[673] Abdallah, 2018, p. 306.
[674] Jouéjati, 2012, fig. 2.
[675] Abdallah, 2018, p. 45.
[676] Abdallah, 2018, p. 220, fig. 2.
[677] Abdallah, 2018, p .222.
[678] Dounceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 193, fig. 168, 201, fig. 181.

dated to the second third of the sixth century AD, it is likely that this mosaic belongs to a period between the last third of the fifth and the second third of the sixth century AD.

3.6. Tartus City, al-Ghamqah Mosaics.

These mosaic panels were discovered in al- Ghamqah neighborhood of Tartus city according to the museum archive, but there is no information about the place or the date of discovery. They are displayed in the museum garden. Tesserae are made of limestone and pottery, measuring 1.2 cm on each side on average. Based on the stone material used, size and density of tesserae, these two panels are likely belonged to the same pavement or more certainly to the same site.

3.6.1. Panel. 1. Dimensions are 120x110 cm. The colors are white, red and pink. It is decorated with semis of petals, not entire flowers, each within a scale. The petal was made of pink tesserae and red arched upper edge (Fig. 86).

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

The pattern of scales with rosebuds was used on Syrian mosaics as early as the second third of the fifth century AD[679]. Although the rosebud considered as a small motif, it has many variations in the way it was depicted e.g. rhombus, heart etc[680]. As for this panel, there is a distinctive style of representing the rosebud as a petal only, each within a scale. The examples most similar to our panel are found in the mosaics of Sector (14-R, 6th c. AD) from Antioch, [681] Zahrani church nave (535 AD)[682] in Phoenicia, and the narthex of Hanita church[683] (6th c. AD) in Palestine. Where the apex of the adjacent scales is decorated with a stylized petal-like rosebud. In addition to a panel from Jiyeh church[684] south of the apse near Beirut (from Phoenicia) dating back to the 6th c. AD, where the scales are marked in red and contain fan-shaped rosebuds. Although this is a small panel detached from its architectural context with no further information, all examples of petal-like rosebud date to the 6th c. AD. Thus, this panel could also belong to the 6th c. AD.

3.6.2. Panel. 2. Dimensions are 140x110 cm. The colors are: white, red, pink, gray, black and ochre. This panel is decorated with a grid of polychrome orthogonal pattern of circles bands interloped tangentially, forming irregular concave squares, each contains a crossed floret with

[679] Donceel-Voute 1988, p. 456-7.
[680] For the development of this ornament see: Levi 1947, p. 436-53, fig. 167.
[681] Levi 1947, fig. 167 N, pl. CXXXVIII-f.
[682] Helou 2019, fig. 4.
[683] Talgam 2014, fig. 162.
[684] Helou 2019, fig. 98.

black center and gradations of pink and red towards the outer part, creating a background of a white cross. Each concave square contains a serrated square enclosing a small saltire of four tesserae around a central black tessera. (Fig.87).

Stylistic Analysis of Motifs

This pattern, interloping circles forming concave squares, was one of the most popular mosaic decorations in the provinces of Syria and Phoenicia during the 5th and the 6th c. AD[685]. The compartments have diverse ornaments (figures, objects, floral and geometric motifs)[686]. As for our panel, it shows a similarity to Oum Jalal House in northern Syria[687](first third of 5th AD) and Zahrani Church baptistery in Phoenicia [688](535AD), in which the circles contained varied floral motifs (four-petalled rosettes, flowers of four rosebuds and rosebuds), and the concave squares are loaded with poised serrated squares.

Dating. Al-Ghamqah mosaic fragments are likely belonged to the same site. They belong to mosaic ornament style that was on vogue since the 5th c. AD, nevertheless, the all-over pattern of petal-like rosebuds could be dated to a later period to the 6th c. AD

3.7. Hraysoon

This site was discovered coincidentally in the year of 2011. Then an emergency excavation had been conducted there, led by a team from Tartus department of antiquity. The excavation revealed the remains of a structure paved with white mosaics. The northern part measures (390×445) cm, paved with white tesserae of an average size of 2 cm. It is followed to the south by another pavement paved with white tesserae of the same size. This pavement contains a cup-hole with a diameter of 3 m and a depth of 125cm. This hole contains another smaller one. Its top

[685] Donceel-Voute 1988, p. 445.
[686] for example, on the nave pavement of Um Hartaine church in north Syria (500 AD,) the circles were decorated with birds, cages and other objects, whereas the concave squares contained serrated poised squares (Abdallah 2018, p. 154, fig. 5-8); in Jiheh church (6th c. AD) from Phoenicia, on a panel north of the aps, the circles were decorated with diverse animals (a bear, a dog, a duck, a cage etc.) and the concave squares contained either a bird or a floral motif (Helou 2019, fig.96) and in Qabre Hiram church south aisle mosaics, the circle compartments were decorated with busts of months and seasons as well as birds, fish and other animals (Donceel-Voute 1988, fig. 404). Also in Caesarea Maritima church nave in Palestine the compartments were loaded with varied birds (Ovadia 1987, pl. XXXVIII1-2)
[687] Abdallah 2018, p. 227, fig. 7-8.
[688] Chehab 1959, pl. LII.

diameter is 80 cm and its bottom is 50 cm. The walls of both holes are plastered and the bottom of the bigger one is paved also with white tesserae (Fig. 88-89).

These two pavements were separated by a divider which most probably was the trace of a wall. And connecting by a carved stone channel (110×50) cm and 18cm in depth. This channel connected the first pavement to the hole. To the northwest of the second pavement there is another floor, paved with stones and partly covered by plaster.

In the northwestern part of the basin, remnants of a completely damaged mosaic floor were uncovered. According to the excavation report, this structure is part of a winery. Unfortunately, work was interrupted by the weather and has not continued since. Therefore, we cannot be certain about the mechanism of this press or its capacity.[689]

All that can be said is that this structure appears to be a wine press. The mechanical system consists of a treading floor, a vat, and a channel connecting the two. The vat contains a hole that may have been used to collect sediment during the cleaning of the basin, allowing it to be easily removed with a scoop.[690]

Whether they rely solely on bare feet to crush grapes or use another technique (screw pressing system or lever pressing) that was popular in the Roman and Proto-Byzantine periods[691]. Whether or not the third floor is used as storage. Whether this winery was covered or exposed. All these questions cannot be answered, because this site needs further investigation.

Regarding the use of white tesserae to pave the wine press especially the treading floor, the most important reason, is because the rough surface of limestone tesserae makes it easier to crush the grapes when some pressure is applied on them. Besides, as there was no vat under the press in single screw presses, the juice flowed directly to the ground. Thus there was the need for a hygienic floor.[692]

[689] According to the Excavation Report.
[690] Gider &Büyüközer, 2013 p. 26.
[691] Melhem, 1995, p. 32.
[692] Gider& Büyüközer, 2013, p. 28.

The finds were pottery fragments that belong, according to the excavation report, to the proto-byzantine period. These fragments were parts of large jars that could be used to store or transfer the wine.

3.8. Tall Talyn

In 2020, during a survey conducted in Tel Talyn near Tartus city, located to the northwest of the Khirbet al-Libneh site, surveys revealed structures belonging to the proto-byzantine period and pottery fragments dating back to the Roman and Proto-Byzantine times. The surveys uncovered a mosaic pavement of coarse white tesserae paving the floor, next to two basins also paved with smaller white tesserae. In one of them, a small hall appeared, apparently related to a press (Fig. 90, 91).

3.9. Wata Ibtilleh

This site was discovered accidently in the year of 2013, then an excavation was conducted there led by a team from Tartus department of antiquity.

It is located in the Baniyas region, to the southwest of the Banias Refinery and 200 meters west of the Latakia-Tartus highway. It is surrounded on the west, east, and north sides by agricultural fields. The work continued for one season in 2013, revealed a structure that was dated according to the findings (coins and potteries fragments) to the Proto-Byzantine and Islamic periods.[693]

Excavations revealed a structure whose pavements were damaged due to its later use by farmers and secretive excavation.

According to the excavation report, the remnants of the architectural elements indicate that the northern part of the site appears to be an industrial facility (a winery), as evidenced by the remains of a floor paved with small limestone stones and a limestone basin used for macerating and collecting grapes. The southern part includes remains of two furnaces (tannurs), stone walls, paved floors, and a technical pit filled with raw iron blocks.

[693] Excavation report – Tartus department of antiquity.

The winery: excavations revealed a structure whose pavements were damaged due to its later use by farmers and the illegal excavation. In the northern part of this structure, there were remains of white tesserae. Apparently, they were used to pave the floor surrounding a circular stone-carved pit, 110 cm in diameter and 175 cm deep, the inner wall of which was built with medium-sized stones held together by gypsum mortar mixed with riverine grains. This pit was a vat used for sedimentation and collecting the must. However, no other white tesserae were discovered there, nor a channel or any trace that could lead to the treading floor or any other parts of this winery (Fig. 92, 93).

3.10. Tall Darruk

This site is located between Banias and Jableh, 10 km north of Baniyas and 10 km south of Jableh city. It rises 20 km above sea level.

The pavement was discovered accidently between houses in the village, then an emergency excavation was carried out there in 2017. It revealed a mosaic pavement (4×6.20) m. Made of limestone tesserae of the average size of 3.5 cm. All the tesserae were white except for some black and yellowish tesserae in the northern part of the pavement (Fig. 94).

This floor was damaged; its extension could not be traced due to its location between the houses. Therefore, we cannot conclude any information about the function of the room it was paving.

According to the excavation report, the finds were pottery fragments from the Roman, Proto-Byzantine, and Islamic periods. In the absence of any architectural remains or mosaic decoration to hint at the history of this pavement. We can't set a specific date.

3.11. Mosaic panels of unknown provenance

Three panels were confiscated by the customs administration of Tartus, and are displayed in the museum garden. Unfortunately, there are no other details in the museum archives. All of them are on new support made of concrete (Fig. 95-97).

3.11.1. Panel 1. This panel has a curved closure on one side, measuring 204 x 83 cm. The tesserae are cut from limestone, measuring 1×1 cm in average. Colors are: white, shades of green,

red, pink, gray, brown and ochre. It represents scrolls of vines carrying in their rolls from right to left: a bird, a duck and a vase (Fig. 95).

Style: The peopled scroll originated in Hellenistic and Roman art and developed in the mosaic art of North Africa. It appeared throughout the Levant especially in the 6th century, and was inhabited by various animals, birds, objects and occasionally human figures in genre scenes[694]. The peopled vine scroll was commonly used on religious and secular structures, such as a border from the House of Bird-Rinceau, Upper level (second third of 6th c. AD)[695] in Antioch; the mosaic of Oum Hartain church aps (500) in north Syria[696]; a border from Saddiqine church diaconicon (528 AD)[697], and the mosaic of Room M in Jnah villa (6th c. AD)[698] in Phoenicia; the mosaic pavement of Petra church north aisle mosaic in Arabia [699].

3.11.2 Panel 2. Its dimensions are 155x103 cm, the tesserae are made of limestone, measured about 1cm on each side on average. Colors are: white, gray, red, pink and shades of green, ochre. This panel depicts a pomegranate surrounded by two birds (Fig. 96).

3.11.3 Panel 3. Dimensions are 144x98 cm. Tesserae are made of limestone, measured about 1 cm on each side in average. Colors are: white, gray, red, pink, shades of green and ochre. This panel depicted an apple tree surrounded by two birds. The tree is portrayed against white background except for the part to its left, where the tesserae are grey (Fig. 97).

Later Restoration

By observing the two panels, we note the followings:

- Difference in the setting manner: The tesserae are placed at the bottom parts (A) and (B, C) in a different way.

- Traces of brownish colored material present among tesserae, it can be seen in all the panels except for the parts mentioned above (A) and (B, C). The type of the material can be remains of local clayish soil from the original place of the mosaic with minimal traces of mortar, or aged

[694] Hachlili, 2009, p. 111-47.
[695] Cimok, 2000, p. 305.
[696] Abdallah, 2018, p. 157, fig. 18.
[697] Helou, 2019, fig. 136.
[698] Helou, 2019, fig. 83.
[699] Hachlili, 2009, pl. VI 6-8.

material which was used to glue the facing textile on the mosaic surface used for lifting, or these together. Further investigation is needed for the identification of its nature.

- The tree trunk panel 2 (Fig.96) is divided into two parts; the upper part is made of light green while the rest are of various shades of colors. The birds' depiction of panel 2 (Fig. 96) are almost identical to the two birds of panel 3 (Fig. 97) which seems more delicate.

Based on this, we may conclude that the lower parts(A-B-C) could either be later restorations or executed by a different hand. Additionally, upon comparing the three confiscated panels, we may infer that they are likely original and date back to the Byzantine period. They could potentially belong to the same site, primarily due to the use of the same stone material, size, color range, and tesserae density.

4. Synthesis of Iconographic and Decorative Patterns

4.1. Human Representations

The panels depicting human figures all belong to the Roman era, specifically to the Severan period. Four of these panels are from the Ghillineh Bath, and two are from the Amrit tomb.

These panel showcase the artistic method prevailed at in the Severan Period: the violent contrast between the zones of shadow and light emerges, and most importantly the Pathetic expressions that animate their faces. This is especially evident in the Amrit tomb figures, whose faces are dominated by big eyes with a slightly oblique gaze, lost in deep meditation, under which shades accentuation giving a sadder or pathos look. The drooping corners of the mouth only enhance this air of intense sadness.

4.1.1. Ghillineh Bath Panels: Tethys is depicted along with two river gods: Acheloos and Alpheus. Alpheus is identified by an inscription, similar to the fourth panel, which depicts a pastoral scene accompanied by an inscription for a shepherd. These four panels are particularly interesting because they make this bath in the Levant unique in depicting these themes—three marine deities alongside a pastoral scene. This raises intriguing questions about the purpose of these depictions.

The first panel represents Tethys, the sea goddess associated with the fertile power of oceans, identified easily by her indicators of a pair of wings on both sides of her head and a Cetus covering her neck. Tethys in full-body resembling mosaics of the second and beginning of the third century, e.g., Calendar House, House of Tethys and Oceanus, individually in whole-body in Seleucia Pieria (Samandağ), all of which from Antioch and its environ. while the goddess later on depicted as a bust along with other variations, notably depicting Tethys solely without her husband Oceanus whose depiction disappeared from the Eastern province mosaic. This shift in portrayal is notable, especially in contrast to mosaics from North Africa and Europe, where Oceanus is still included in the depictions until the 6th c. AD. Examples of such depictions can be found in the House of Menander in Antioch, dating back to the 3rd century AD, and the House of Poseidon in Zeugma from the same period. An interesting point to note is that the portrayal of Tethys persisted throughout the Byzantine period, evolving over time as it shed its earlier monstrous features like the Cetus and wings, which were heavily associated with pagan beliefs.

This evolution eventually led to Tethys being reinterpreted as Thalassa as seen for instance in Yakto Complex in Antioch and at the Church of Apostles in Madaba, Jordan.

The second panel depicts the Acheloos river, with several observations made:

- Variances in the background's hue and tesserae arrangement, appearing lighter in certain areas.
- Displacement of the plant and chaotic depiction of children in the corner.
- Differences in the shape of the cornucopia compared to Alpheus', suggesting possible later restoration.
- Dissimilar execution of Alpheus' right hand, lacking lighter tones to depict muscles.

One might contemplate the possibility of restoration phases, making it challenging to distinguish whether it is an older or newer restoration.

The depiction of a reclining bearded old man holding a bundle of reeds and crowned with herbs is reminiscent of representations of river deities commonly seen in Roman art, similar to the portrayal of the Euphrates. This figure undoubtedly represents a river god. Janine Balty proposes identifying the figure as the Orontes River, pointing to the presence of a calathus and kaproi (fruits of the earth) to emphasize fertility themes. This interpretation is supported by Gatier, who compares it to another statue found in Seleucia, possibly representing a river god. If this figure indeed represents the Orontes River, Gatier suggests that the iconography of the Orontes in Seleucia and Laodicea may differ from the known depictions portraying him as a beardless young man.

Although identifying the river god as Orontes is plausible, it remains uncertain since Orontes is typically depicted as a beardless youth floating on waves at the feet of a siting woman, and the horns on the figure remain unexplained. The horn-adorned heads, simplifying zoomorphic, a unique element not typically seen in depictions of river figures in Syrian and Antiochian mosaics. In Roman art, it was rare to depict a river with horns, usually appearing only on coins of Greek centers. Moreover, the depiction of the river figure bears a resemblance to Nile representations, particularly in the river plants and the putti, such as one holding a cornucopia—similar to the Nile statues. However, the presence of horns suggests an alternative identity, and it is possible

that the artist drew inspiration from Nile imagery and adapted it for this depiction. Greek art frequently portrayed river gods in either zoomorphic or anthropomorphic forms, with Achelous being one of the most commonly depicted. Achelous, a god associated with the major river in Greece, is often shown as a man-bull or horned head. His role in the Heracles myth, where he shifts shapes and loses a horn in their battle, significantly boosted his prominence. This broken horn became linked with the cornucopia, symbolizing abundance. Given Herodotus's comparison of the transformative power of the Achelous River to the Nile, this connection explains why the figure might be Achelous rather than the Orontes. Additionally, Both Achelous and Alpheus were prominent rivers in Greece and associated with Tethys, and the putti in the mosaic likely symbolize the river's fertility, similar to cubits in Nile depictions.

Regarding the third panel depicting a couple, in fact, without the inscription, one could mistake the scene as depicting other mythological lovers such as Dionysus and Ariadne. The inscription clarifies that the male figure represents Alpheus, which differs from the usual depiction of Alpheus that were mostly in a reclining position, running in pursuit of a nymph named Arethusa or as a bust of both Alpheus and Arethusa. In fact, seated river gods are rarely represented, mostly appearing on coins from Greek centers.

The position of Alpheus with the female figure, of which only two characters remain, identifies her as(Ι̣Π) Pi and raises many questions. Looking at mythology, Alpheus was never associated with a love story with any persona; on the contrary, the common depiction shows him pursuing Arethusa, who fled from him. Additionally, the myth links him with Artemis, which also does not involve mutual love. Goette suggests two possibilities based on this analysis. Firstly, the inscription might represent "Pegai," where Alpheus re-emerges. However, he discarded this interpretation due to the insignificance of Pegai as a location, and the length of the inscription suggests a longer name. Alternatively, the supported the second possibility indicating "Peloponnese" (Ι̣Π[ελοπόννησος]) where the Alpheus flow, supported by the many depictions of landscape.

In fact, both hypotheses are possible, and it's hard to pick one in the light of the absence of any surviving iconography of Pegai or Peloponnese. Although one would think firstly of Pegai, as it is indeed mentioned by Pausanias. Moreover, it doesn't have to be a famous or special place to be pictured in Syria, as Goette considers- which is proven by the depiction of the River-God Eurotas

and his wife Lacedaemonian, also located in the Peloponnese peninsula and mentioned by Pausanias. This panel is found in Bath E of Antioch.Coming to the last panel representing a pastoral scene identified by inscription (ΠΟΙλλΝΕ)

The Ghilineh Bath is indeed intriguing, being the sole bath in the Levant known to depict three marine goddesses alongside a pastoral scene. This raises questions about the purpose behind such an unusual composition.

Goette posits that the Alpheus panel might be remnants of a Telephos cycle, possibly echoing a royal Attalid iconographic program. Additionally, he suggests that the pastoral scene in the third panel may contain references to Pergamon. However, this theory seems improbable as it relies on the assumption that the female figure represents the Peloponnese and that various elements within the panel refer to Pergamon. Even if we entertain this hypothesis, an old black-and-white photo of the site reveals three panels lined up, with one depicting Tethys, unrelated to the suggested myth. Therefore, this hypothesis appears doubtful unless the two panels belonged to an earlier phase, which remains speculative.

It is more plausible, that the depiction represents famous Greek rivers, a fitting subject for adornment in a bathing facility.as for the pastoral scene Unfortunately, the scene is destroyed, so we cannot read it.

One noteworthy aspect is the resemblance between the pastoral scene and the Alpheus panel in terms of the borders, background execution, and careful detailing. Both are identified by an inscription. In fact, all this invites us to consider that one hand executed these two panels differs from the other two. The way the two scenes are portrayed supports Gatier's suggestion that it is possibly a copy of a Hellenistic version.

4.1.2. From Amrit Tomb, two panels depict questionable female and male figures, both depicted in busts in a three-quarter posture. The analysis suggests that the female figure, which resembles the Earth goddess Gaia, is linked to the Egyptian goddess Neith, symbolizing fertility. The second panel suggests a depiction of Hermes.

The female figure in this depiction bears a resemblance to the Earth goddess Ge from both the Apamea panel and Antioch. The depiction initially presumed to represent Ge is revealed to have a different inscription, commemorating Kerdon. Beneath the figure, the inscription begins with

"BHTH," indicating "house" in Aramean, and concludes with "NE." This discovery suggests a different interpretation than originally thought.

Abdallah proposes that the name of the locality is theophoric, combining "BETH" with a goddess whose name begins with "NE," a practice seen among the Phoenicians. He suggests that this goddess could be the Egyptian deity Neith, known for her associations with fertility. Neith is recognized among the Phoenicians and is linked with Astarte and Tanit in Carthage. The bust figure in question bears symbols of fertility, further supporting this association. Additionally, the depiction of grape and pomegranate branches beneath the bust *calatho*s aligns with the fertility symbolism associated with Tanit, as seen on Ghorfa steles in Tunisia. The presence of the theonym Tanit in the Levant from the 8th century BC, considered a hypostasis of Astarte, reinforces this connection. Abdallah's analysis suggests a unique but plausible association between Tanit and Neith in the region. The male bust with no inscription; Abdallah identifies the figure as Hermes, drawing parallels with other depictions of Hermes in Antioch.

The figure identified as Hermes in the panel, associated with the Greek god Mercury, is depicted with interesting features, apart from the usual feature of wings emerging from the forehead, the distinctive band with a conical element resemble the Egyptian feather, that could be associated with the Egyptian god Thoth. It is likely representing Hermes/Thoth or Hermès Trismégiste, a deity assimilated with Thoth in Phoenician mythology, associated with the roles of wisdom, writing, and guiding souls in the afterlife. Abdallah conclude that the figure of Neith preceding Hermes may symbolize the transition from earthly existence to a celestial realm for the deceased.

Noteworthy, the introduction of Thoth among the Phoenician gods is associated with the scholars of Alexandria during the Hellenistic period. They introduced Thoth into Phoenician mythology as a symbol aimed to convey the ancient Phoenician idea that much of their arts, techniques, and philosophy originated from Egypt. Thoth was never worshipped in the Near East, and there are no recorded theophoric names containing the name Thoth in that region[700].

Abdallah's interpretation linking the name Tanit to the Egyptian goddess Neith is problematic because Neith was not well-known in the region where Tanit was worshipped. The name "Tanit" appears in the Levant from the 8th century BC, but without associations to symbols like grapes

[700] Buisson, 1973, p. 76.

and pomegranates. Additionally, the connection between Tanit-Neith and the *callathos* or the cornucopia lacks sufficient explanation. Moreover, there is no established link between Neith – Tanit and Hermes in their respective mythologies.

The inscription begins with "NE," leading to the alternative suggestion that it could refer to Nemesis (ΝΕΜΕΣΙΣ) a prominent deity in the East during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. In the Syrian provinces, devotion to Nemesis is evident along the coast, e.g., a votive from the nearby Arwad include a dedication to Nemesis on the base of a statue commissioned by a woman named Isodora, attests to the favors enjoyed by the deity. Nemesis, associated with retributive justice and balance, was popular in imperial propaganda and had a significant presence in Syrian provinces. Her evolution to embody fairness and justice, as well as her connection to Victory and Fortuna, made her an appealing deity for those seeking resolution for misfortune.

The depiction includes a cornucopia with a distinctive rectangular element, each side bearing a fruit, which might suggest a reference to scales associated with Nemesis. While the *calathos* and cornucopia are typically linked to the Earth goddess Ge, the presence of apples and pomegranates suggests a connection to Demeter, whose sacred fruits and mythology relate to the underworld and seasonal cycles. Demeter's association with Hermes in retrieving Persephone from the Underworld further supports this connection.

The depiction's elements align with syncretic representations of Nemesis, Isis, and Demeter. Isis- The Egyptian goddess associated with fertility, motherhood, and the protection of the dead- often associated with fertility and justice, shows parallels with Demeter, and her worship incorporated aspects of both Demeter and Nemesis. The cornucopia is one of Isis characteristic that likely created in the 3rd century BC. Accordingly, the representation of Nemesis-Isis/Demeter in a tomb aligns with the role of Hermes as the guide of souls to the underworld. This interpretation reflects influences from both Greek and Egyptian mythologies, indicating complex cultural interactions in the ancient Near East.

4.2. Aquatic Scenes

This includes the 'Ain al-Helweh panel, which showcases a marine scene, and from which we recognize species. Approximately twenty-two fish, characterized by a spectrum of colors and

sizes, enhance the mosaic's dynamic and vibrant aquatic representation. The identifiable species, known in Syria, encompass Mullidae, Mugilidae, Barracuda, scorpion fish, Dusky fish, Forage Engraulidae, and a variety of sea bream. This meticulous depiction contributes to a nuanced portrayal of the underwater world, capturing the diversity and vitality of marine life in the region. It is interesting because it is the only scene we have in Syria depicting a marine scene from Hadrian's time. The usual customs were marine goddesses accompanied by fish and other creatures. This raises another question: whether they indeed represent a natural fish scene as seen in Pompeii. Although this is a tempting idea, the division of the panel by two dolphins suggests it was more used for decoration. The fish species depicted are indeed found in the Mediterranean Sea, but assuming they were depicted to reflect part of daily life needs further investigation. It's safe to say they used a well-known marine scene subject to decorate a pavement in a bath or villa, a practice favored by the Romans throughout the Empire, which often attributed to their frequent use in decorating thermal baths, nymphaea, and pools. These aquatic motifs, including fish, were strategically placed where water interacted with or flowed near the mosaics, enhancing their realism and visual appeal. Another interesting aspect is how it reflects the artistic methods in the Hadrian period.

Another marine scene is a panel in 'Ain Salem church: The southeast panel illustrates an aquatic scene, with thick waves emanating from an urn in the lower right corner. Though the left corner is damaged, fish of various sizes are depicted amidst the waves, with some appearing notably large. Dominating the scene is an octopus positioned in the middle.

The fish depiction on the mosaics of the East during Proto-Byzantine period, was most often either in nilotic scenes such as Oum Hartein church in North Syria or it was used as a decorative element such as khan khaldeh church in Phoenicia. Nevertheless, the depiction of fish moving in water streaming from un urn has no equivalence. It worth noting that one of the numerous symbolisms associated with the fish is baptism, and many of the commentaries on the created world have referred to the saving power of the water.

4.3. Animal Representations

Three scenes are represented. The first, from the al-Mintar pavement, depicts a gazelle facing another animal, likely a bird; however, due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence, little can be

inferred from this composition. The same applies to the al-Sha’ra pavement, where a bull and a dog are depicted; however, the panel is also damaged, limiting any further interpretation. The third comes from 'Ain Salem central nave, where there's a large square carpet divided into four rectangular panels, each presenting different animal themes. The northeast panel features animals arranged in three registers: a hair and a goat near a cypress tree at the bottom, a dog and a deer running towards the tree in the middle, and a lion and a leopard near a fig tree at the top. The southeast panel depicts an aquatic scene with fish and an octopus amidst waves pouring from an urn. Another damaged panel shows a peacock near a vase. The remaining panel to the west showcases a diagonal net enclosing crosses, with zigzag patterns and borders.

In fact, the depiction of animals was a common theme in Syrian mosaics and throughout the Eastern provinces during the Byzantine period. While many mosaics depicted hunting scenes or wild animals chasing their prey, there are fewer examples showing scenes of animals living in peace. One such example is found in the Martyrion of Seleucia from Antioch, where various animals including an elephant, a goat, a giraffe, gazelles, a group of lionesses, and birds are depicted in a procession. These animals are accompanied by trees and flower plants, with the background adorned with monochrome scales.

While we can't glean much from the depiction of gazelles in al- Mintar and al-Sha’ra due to damage, the scenes in the church of 'Ain Salem provide a more comprehensive iconographic program.

The floor mosaics found in early Christian churches have been the subject of extensive scholarly debate, particularly regarding their symbolic significance. According to Olszewski, the prevailing view among scholars is that the figural floor mosaics adorning early Christian churches symbolically represent the cosmos. This cosmic representation, divided into spheres of earth, sky, water, and paradise, is reflected in the design and decoration of the church itself. According to Donceel-Voute, drawing on the writings of authors of Syrian origin, proposes an architectural-symbolic interpretation of early Christian church space: the nave (or naves) represents the inhabited Earth, while the sanctuary—particularly its vault—symbolizes the Heavens. Within this framework, Eden is situated at the eastern end of the nave, within the earthly realm yet in contact with Paradise, which is represented either by the choir platform (qestrômô) or by the sanctuary

platform. The ambo-bema occupies the centre of the nave, corresponding to Jerusalem at the centre of the Earth.

Building on this interpretive framework, the eastern floor of the nave is decorated with four panels, of which only three have survived. The first shows an aquatic scene with fish and an octopus emerging from water flowing from an urn, a motif often associated with baptism and salvation, as reflected in early Christian writings such as those of Severian of Gabala and Theophilus of Antioch.

Below it is a panel depicting a peacock beside a vase, a well-known symbol of immortality and eternal life, frequently associated with incorruptibility and imperial funerary contexts. The third panel presents peaceful animal scenes among vegetal motifs, interpreted as an image of earthly paradise, comparable to examples from Mount Nebo, Umm al-Rasas, Khirbat al-Mukhayyat, and Tayibat al-Imam in Syria.

Overall, the three surviving panels form a coherent program on the eastern nave, combining themes of baptismal salvation, eternal life, and paradise, in line with John 3:5. Accordingly, the representation of paradise signifies salvation granted to true believers and their entry into heaven, where they experience eternal life and the presence of God.

4.4. Vegetal Motifs

4.4.1. Grid of rosebuds; this is also one of the new patterns that invaded the mosaic in the East since the fifth century; this pattern was used in one ‘Ain Salem church, intercolumniation panel.

4.4.2. All-over pattern of rosebuds, the use of florets, has been a prominent feature in Syrian mosaics since the first decades of the fifth century AD. This decorative motif gained widespread popularity in the Eastern provinces, including Syria, Arabia, Phoenicia, and Palestine, specially from the second half of the fifth century AD. This trend endured until the conclusion of the ancient mosaic era in the East[701]. Rosebuds were depicted in mosaics from both geometric and naturalistic perspectives, showcasing various forms such as rhombus, heart, egg-shaped buds, among others. This pattern is found in al-Mintar mosaic. In the form of a row of spaced recumbent rosebuds.

[701] Balty, 1984, p. 453-454.

4.5. Geometric Decoration

4.5. 1. The grid patterns

4.5.1.1.A grid of serrated simple filets: The trellis of oblique fillets forming diamond patterns was a common feature in Antioch mosaics since the 2nd century AD. Primarily used as a border decoration, this pattern often comprised either single serrated bands or filets of poised squares mostly of four tesserae. Noting the later became less common in Syrian mosaics after the third century compared to other types, such as single or multiple serrated bands.

In the Syrian coast mosaic, **a grid of serrated simple filets of squares of four tesserae was used on four examples:** as a border of the Shabatliyeh pavement, in which the compartment enclosed four-petalled flowers in straight lines, and in Amrite Tomb (Nemesis panel) with a large multicolor diamond in each segment. As a field decoration in the Bahr al-Midan church, the compartment encloses rosebuds alternating with polychrome diamonds, and panel 1 of Khirbet al- Libenh where we see a grid of serrated filet of four tesserae, the compartments enclosing a polychrome serrated square.

4.5.1. 2. The grid of serrated simple filets forming diamonds is found in Corniche Banyas pavement (Part B).

4.5.1.3. The grid of straight filets forming squares: this pattern was found only in al- Mintar pavement each compartment encloses a square (Part 1). Noting that this pattern is not popular as the previous types on the East and exemplified only on a few examples.

4.5.1.4. Grid of multiple serrated filets: the oblique grid of multiple serrated bands is one of the types that became popular since the 5th c. AD on Syrian mosaic and the whole East in general. This pattern was found on a panel from al- ‘Innabeh area in Latakia, now displayed in Latakia Museum.

4.5.1.5. A serrated and symmetrical band composed of five rows of poised squares, each consisting of four tesserae, **with the middle square always white. In each of the four corners, there are discs**. This pattern is framed in the Achelous panel. While there isn't a direct parallel to this band, it is significant because it could signify the early stages of what later evolved into the cable pattern. The cable pattern is characterized by a color gradient, which first appeared in the

Massudya panel, belonging to the same Severan period. This pattern represents a more developed stage toward the cable pattern, which reached its final development toward the end of the fourth century. Rainbow-style motifs are extensively attested in the church of 'Ain Salem, and Corinche Banyas pavement.

4.5.2. Scale Pattern

4.5.2.1. All-over pattern of scales adorned with rosebuds. The all-over pattern of scales is an ancient motif observed in Greece and Pompeii. It emerged as one of the new trends in motifs prevalent in Syria since the 5th century AD. This pattern was commonly adorned with a rosebud on each scale, although other variations exist[702], albeit less commonly observed. This was found in a fragment of al-Ghamqah (Panel 1), now displayed in Tartus Museum, as well as in the Khirbet al-Libneh pavement (Panel 9), the ‘Ain Salem church and the Bahr al-Midan Church.

4.5.2.2. All-over pattern of scales, adorned with a serrated diamond on each: This pattern, less commonly found, as exemplified by the few examples in the East, was discovered in the Synagogue of Ras al-Bassit.

4.5.2.3. The square scalloped pattern was first used on Syrian mosaics at the end of the 4th century AD and became popular, particularly in Phoenicia and the Arabia provinces. In most examples, the scalloped square was made of white scales loaded with various types of rosebuds. This pattern is found in the al-'Innabeh Panel 2 from the city of Latakia, now displayed in the museum. This panel showcases the same pattern with the scale white and no rosebuds or other filling motifs, making it unique.

4.5.3. Circle compositions

4.5.3.1. Polychrome orthogonal pattern of circles bands interloped tangentially, forming irregular concave squares. This pattern, was one of the most popular mosaic decorations in the provinces of Syria and Phoenicia during the 5th and the 6th c. AD. The compartments have diverse ornaments (figures, objects, floral and geometric motifs). This pattern found in:

[702] See p. 49, note. 175.

al-Ghamqah mosaics (Panel 2), each circle contains a crossed floret. Whereas each concave square contains a serrated poised square. In Khirbet al-Lebenh - panel (2 and 5)- each large circle contains a motif of four florets and the concave squares enclose polychrome squares.

4.5.3.2. The intersect circles: This pattern is an ancient motif and gained widespread popularity across the Levant region. with significant examples found in Antioch region, this pattern is found in Ras al-Bassit old pavement.

4.5.4. Octagon composition:

The compositions featuring octagons, secant or adjacent octagons, gained popularity in the Near East, particularly since beginning of 5th c. AD. The pattern of secant or adjacent octagons generally serves as a mat. Sometimes restricted to the dimensions of a border or a frame separating the panels, and sometimes to a large simple carpet covering elongated or square surfaces, the location of which is often of secondary importance[703]. In the Syrian coast mosaic, we find three types:

4.5.4.1. The orthogonal composition of adjacent irregular octagons decorated with squares and forming others. This style was found in two panel from Khirbet al-Libneh, Panel 3-4. It should be noted that an orthogonal composition of octagons bearing squares is attested in Panel 8 of Khirbet al-Libneh; nevertheless, the exact pattern remains uncertain.

4.5.4.2. The orthogonal composition of adjacent octagons, forming poised squares, a panel in the Khirbet al-Libneh, panel 6, also as a border in the old pavement of Ras al –Bassit, forming triangles (half poised square).

4.5.4.3. The pattern features an orthogonal composition of octagons with four concave sides, forming circles. These octagons enclose squares; This motif is not particularly common in the Levant and is attested only in a limited number of examples, including panel 7 from Khirbet al-Libneh.

[703] Donceel-Vote, 1988, p 445.

4.5.5. Guilloche bands:

4.5.5.1. Guilloche of two strands, serving as the border is a traditional motif from the Greek repertoire, that persisted and continued to be employed in later centuries found in the mosaic of ‘Ain al –Helweh, ‘Ain Salem church and Ras al-Bassit old pavement.

4.5.5.2. Three-Stranded Guilloche as a border in Teyths panel.

4.5.5.3. The pattern of Straight-tongued double guilloche opened to form eyelets. It was popular on the Eastern provinces mosaic in the Proto- Byzantine period, we found it in ‘Ain Salem pavement.

4.5.5.4. Multi-strand guilloche: Although the guilloche is an ancient ornament and one of the most common border motifs on mosaics in the Levant. However, there are only few examples that resemble this type of multi-strand guilloche. One of them al-’Innabeh mosaic, displayed in Latakia Museum.

4.5.6. Swastika meander

4.5.6.1. The border of Swastika meander of spaced single-returned swastikas with a rectangular in each space each rectangle. This type of border had been used since the Hellenistic times, was found in Khirbet al-Libneh church in which the rectangles decorated using checkerboard motif.

4.5.6.2. The border of Swastika-meander of spaced single-returned swastikas, executes in a band of guilloche and a symmetrical cable with a square or rectangle in each space, which contains a variety of filling motifs. This border of swastika-meander, made of cable and guilloche is found on many mosaics from north Syria that belong to the 5th c. and the 6th c. AD. It has many variations and the compartments were decorated with varied filling motifs, found on one of the Latakia Museum panel (Panel 4). This pattern was found in one of the panels displayed in Latakia Museum.

4.5.7. The four-pointed star has been depicted in Antioch mosaics since the early second century AD. This found in Amrit Tomb (Panel 2).

4.5.8. The composition of a circle encloses the star of David: The pattern of six-pointed star or the so-called star of David considered to be an old decoration, however, it was rarely represented on the Eastern provinces. This composition was found in Corniche Banyas pavement (Part, A-5).

4.5.9. Outlined orthogonal pattern of adjacent crosses and irregular octagons (the axial sides are the shorter), forming oblong hexagons against white background Style: This pattern was found on several Syrian mosaic panels dating back to the 4th century AD and the beginning of the 5th century AD, but with a richer variety of filling elements. This pattern is found in one of the panels from Corniche Banyas (Part, A-2). However, the pattern was not filled with motifs like the usual patterns found in Antioch, rather, it was almost empty with smaller crosses adorning the central cross and oblong areas mimicking the appearance of a coffered roof.

4.5.10. A grid of serrated oblique bands that forms squares at their intersections. This pattern is found on several mosaic pavements from Syria dating to fourth and first decades of the fifth century. The first examples show this pattern in its simplest and severest aspect, later on, the pattern is slightly enriched from its earliest, this pattern is found in two panels: Corniche Banyas panels (Part, A-6), and a panel from at-Tabiyyat area displayed in Latakia Museum.

4.5.11. An orthogonal pattern of tangent crosses paty in the cable, creating a pattern of Maltese-cross-like forms. This pattern is not common in the Levant depicted only on a few examples, it was used in the ‘Ain Salem church (Fig. 17).

4.5.12. The gemmed band: The attraction to precious metals and coloured materials, together with the shimmering effect of gemmed band motifs, was a key factor behind the use of this decorative type in mosaics[704]. This trend became particularly prominent in the mosaics of the East, particularly in the second half of the 5th century AD. It is attested in the inner border of al-Sha ‘ara, where it is composed of a sequence of non-tangent poised squares and circles.

4.5.13. Strapwork of interlaced poised rounded squares enclosing flowers of four rosebuds is attested in the outer border of Al-Sha ‘ara. This chain-like square pattern was popular in Syria from the second half of the 5th century AD, often with different internal filling designs, particularly small squares, and less commonly, four-rosebud flowers.

[704] Donceel-Voûte, 1988, p. 448.

4.5.14. The saw-tooth pattern is a widely attested motif within the Greco-Roman repertory. It appears on two panels (Panels 4 and 5) currently displayed in the Latakia Museum. Also attested in Corniche Banyas, Part B.

4.5.15.The twisted ribbon pattern, present in Antioch mosaics since the 2nd century AD, evolved into the Lotus band[705].This motif is found in the Ghillineh mosaic Ghillineh mosaic , specifically in the borders of both the Alpheus panel and the pastoral scene, and is also employed as a filling motif in the swastika composition from Ras al-Bassit (Swastika panel, Fig. 34), a unique example.

4.5.16. The pattern of uniformly elongated crosslet motif —i.e. crosslets formed of a quincunx of squares of four tesserae with two additional poised tesserae to form each arm[706] — alternating with saltires bearing poised serrated squares at their centres. with oblique crosslets; the latter distinguished by poised squares at their centers. The uniformly elongated crosslet motif was commonly found in mosaics in the Antioch region dating back to the Roman period. These crosslets were depicted in various ways, including as filling motifs, all-over motifs, and in outer broad borders. Additionally, oblique crosslets with poised serrated squares at their centres (i.e., saltires with poised serrated squares at their centres) are attested. While similar motifs, such as spaced saltires with poised serrated squares at their centres, occur in other mosaics, there is no evidence of crosslets alternating with saltires with poised squares, as observed in the outer border of ‘Ain al-Helweh.

4.5.17. **The wave-band pattern** is another motif within the Greek decorative repertoire, employed in mosaics during both the Roman and Byzantine periods in the East. It is found in the border of the Hermes panel from the Amrit Tomb. Also attested in of Corniche Banyas, Part B.

4.6. Filling Motifs

4.6.1. The Solomon’s knot is also an old ornament. The Solomon’s knot appears in Italian mosaics decoration (Pompeii and Spoleto) in the first century A.D. It spread in Antioch increasingly in the second century A.D becoming, without exception, the most common single

[705] See Levi, 1947, p 454-6.
[706] Balmelle, 1985, p. 170, pl. 113, h.

element[707]. We see it as filling motif dominating Khirbet al –Libneh, panel 6, Corniche Banyas, Latakia Museum at-Tabiyyat panel.

4.6. 2. Solid in perspective used in Cornniche Banyas.

4.6.3. The rainbow-style pattern, including zigzag, tile-roof, and broken-line variants, enjoyed considerable popularity in the second half of the fourth century. It is attested at the Corniche Banyas pavement. In addition, Khirbet al-Libneh (Panel 4) provides another example, where the motif functions as a filling element in an octagon composition, and it is also found in the swastika composition of the old pavement at Ras al-Bassit and in the decoration of the church of ‘Ain Salem.

4.6.4. The white bosses within thick-framed triangles mimic coffered ceilings, evoking intricate designs with various geometric shapes (square, rectangular, triangular, and various polygonal shapes) and circular patterns. Levi suggests that their impact relies on color contrast within the frames, resembling metal with shades of golden-yellow and white portraying the reflections of light on the metal. In this context, other small decorations such as the three-petaled lily flower, X shape, and half-white discs, can also be included. This style is evident in the Corniche Banyas mosaic and in one of the compositions of the old pavement at Ras al-Bassit (Figure 35).

4.6.5. The checkerboard: this is also belonged to Greek-roman repertory; it derives from *opus sectile*. It is known in Syrian mosaic as early as the first century and become common only in the second century[708]. It is documented as a filling motif in one of the Ghamqah mosaic panels (Panel 2), in the border of the Khirbet al-Libneh pavement, and in the Corniche Banyas pavement.

4.6.6. The filling motif of repeated four-lobed motif, visually readable either as a crosslet with tassel-like terminals[709] or as floret of four tassels[710], was a common feature in Syrian mosaics during the Roman period. It served as elements of pavement borders since the early second century; however, its popularity gradually waned over time, with few examples observed

[707] Levi, 1947, 376, Ex ; PL XCIV-a, CI-b, XVIII-d, XXX-b.
[708] Levi, 1947, p. 378.
[709] Balmelle, 1985, p. 30, pl. 4, j- l.
[710] Balmelle, 1985, p. 189, pl. 124, a-f.

from the Proto- Byzantine era. In the mosaic from the Syrian coast, it is attested as a filling motif in the borders of both Shabtliyeh and the church of Bahr al-Midan. In Shabtliyeh, it appears more like a four-petaled flower arranged in a straight line, while in Bahr al-Midan it takes on a form closer to a saltire with tassel-like terminals.

4.6.7. Loops motif: Cross of loops and circle with internal loops, attested at al-Mintar (Part 3).

4.6.8. Goldsmiths' work motifs (orfèvrerie), is attested in Panel 10 at Khirbet al-Libneh.

4.6.9. Serrated diamonds and squares, are a relatively common motif, mainly used in grid patterns and within octagonal compositions, as mentioned above.

4.6.10. Floral motifs: There are three types:

(1) Flower of four rosebuds, used as a filling motif, is attested at Khirbet al-Libneh (Panels 2–5), the church of Bahr al-Midan, al-Mintar (Part 3), and in the outer border of al-Sha 'ara.

(2) Rosebuds, used as a filling motif in the church of Shabtliyeh.

(3) Crossed floret, attested at Al-Ghamqah (Panel 2) and al- 'Innabeh.

4.7. Unique composition

4.7. 1.The composition of a square enclosing a circle which contain a ring of four small circles around a central one was found in Corniche Banyas (Part, A-1), is a peculiar ornament, no similar example is found.

4.7.2. The composition of a circle enclosing two intersecting squares one of which is a curvilinear square, and at their intersection is another a square loaded with a design of four squares inclosing a diamond. This is a unique decoration that has no parallel in the eastern province's mosaic. Its found in Cornich Banyas (Part C-3).

4.7.3.The pattern of four squares enclosing lozenges goes back to the Hellenistic floor decorations in *Opus sectile* and *Lithostroton* [711]. In the second century and the very beginning of the third, we find it in its simplest form of black and white on several mosaics of Antioch, specifically as four black squares enclosing white lozenges. The squares were filled with either a

[711] Levi, 1947, p. 383.

white cross, in fact, this pattern is austere and was soon abandoned in mosaic decoration, and the only other example in Syria, with the exception of a filling motif in the southern nave of the cathedral of Hama, is Corniche Banyas (Part A-4).

4.7.4. The outlined orthogonal pattern of circles linked axially by short braids: this is a unique pattern was found only in al-Mintar pavement (Part 3).

4.7.5. The star-bearing square with an eight-pointed star—formed by four triangles—is attested at Khirbet al-Libneh, where it appears as a unique filling motif (Panel 10).

4.7.6. Swastika composition of Ras al-Bassit pavement, the swastika used as a single filling element decorating a square, the space is filled with decoration.

4.8. Conclusion

The geometric and vegetal motifs employed generally reflect the decorative trends of their time—such as octagonal compositions, interlaced circles, rosebud grids, and scale patterns—while occasionally incorporating local innovations. Nevertheless, several observations can be made.

The grid of serrated simple fillets of squares of four *t*esserae was not common in Syria during Proto-Byzantine times. Yet, among the available mosaics, we see it used in three examples. Also, it was used in the octagon composition from Khirbet al-Libneh in which the octagon sides are serrated of poised squares (each of four tesserae), which reflect a prevalence of this type of grid.

The square scalloped pattern the scales white and no rosebuds or other filling motifs, making it unique.

There are unique patterns

The composition of a square enclosing a circle which contain a ring of four small circles around a central one.

The composition of a circle enclosing two intersecting squares one of which is a curvilinear square, and at their intersection is another a square loaded with a design of four squares inclosing a diamond.

The outlined orthogonal pattern of circles linked axially by short braids.

The star-bearing square with an eight-pointed star—formed by four triangles (filling motif).

Unfortunately, the available mosaic pavements are not sufficient to determine whether there is a workshop in the Syrian region. However, it is possible to speculate based on the differing prevalence and unique patterns observed, notably exemplified in Corniche Banyas, where old motifs are employed in new variations and new patterns are introduced that are not seen in other places. In fact, the entire mosaic program is intriguing, particularly due to the insistence on the coffering ceiling effect. This insistence is reminiscent of the mosaics found in Cilicia from the second century, although the motifs themselves differ.

Nevertheless, it's more likely that the mosaics of Khirbet al-Libneh and al-Mintar were crafted by the same hand and likely originated from a local workshop. This conclusion is supported by several consistent elements observed in both panels. Firstly, there is a uniform use of a similar range of colors (blue-gray, red, white) with the same sequence in some patterns. i.e., the shape of the rosebuds varies, but a blue-gray color is consistently used for the stem and a red color for the upper part in both panels. Similarly, while the compositions of the overlapping circles differ, they are executed in the same sequence of colors: blue-gray, white, red, and blue-gray again. This consistency extends to the salmon knots as well. Additionally, both mosaics tend to depict patterns with more empty space rather than compact filling, exemplified by the use of simple all-over patterns on a white background, such as the grid of filets, and a grid of circles linked by guilloche in al-Mintar, along with a composition of interlaced and interloped circles and other compositions of adjacent octagons in Khirbet al-Libneh. These recurring elements strongly suggest a common artisan. Additionally, they employ motifs that are not found elsewhere, like the outlined orthogonal pattern of circles linked axially by short braids and the stars bearing square with an eight-pointed star, suggesting the presence of a local workshop.

Regarding the churches, we mentioned, the mosaics were discovered in three churches as part of a group of recent discoveries on the coast of Latakia. These include Baher al- Midan church, along with the churches of Shabatliyeh and 'Ain-Salem church in addition to Ras al-Bassit Synagogue.

As for Tartus, although it was Christianized early on, there is no specific church identified in the discoveries. However, at a site called al-Mintar, mosaic motifs reveal a grid of circles interrupted by a rectangle, flanked by two animals, suggesting a possible church layout with a nave adorned

with the circle grid and animals, and an aisle adorned with rosebuds. Surrounding residential rooms hint at a plausible village or rural property setting.

Regarding Khirbet al-Libneh, despite limited archaeological evidence, the whole architectural elements strongly suggest a religious function, possibly as an Early Byzantine church in the Peraia of Arados. Other small rooms, likely workshops, could be part of a larger settlement along a commercial road or pilgrimage route.

The discovery of wineries, two Baths and churches between Banias and Latakia indicates a prosperous society in the region.

4.9. Notes on Confiscated Panels

Three mosaic panels were confiscated by the customs administration of Tartus and are displayed in the museum garden. Panel 1, depicts scrolls of vines with a bird, duck, and vase, reflecting a style originating in Hellenistic and Roman Art. Panel 2, features a pomegranate surrounded by two birds, while Panel 3, portrays an apple tree surrounded by two birds against a white background. Observations during restoration reveal differences in setting manner, traces of brownish material among tesserae, and variations in the depiction of tree trunks and birds. The lower parts of the panels could be later restorations or executed by a different hand. Comparing the three panels suggests they likely date back to the Proto-Byzantine period and potentially belong to the same site due to similarities in stone material, size, color range, and tesserae density.

It's worth noting that restoration practices in Syria prior to the 1990s sometimes tend to use the original tesserae, resulting in a seamless integration that made it difficult to distinguish between the original and the restored sections. This is evident in panels such as the representation of the seasons in the Oum Jalal mosaic exhibited at the Ma'arat an-Nu'man Museum and the Sarrin mosaic panels on display at the Aleppo Museum[712].

[712] See the whole study about these panels in Balty , 1990.

4.10 Notes on White Mosaics

This was found on many wine presses:

Wata Ibtilleh, Tall Talyn, the mosaic of Hraysoon Village- Banyas and Tall Tweini. The later present a clear example of wine press in the Syrian coast. Tall Tweini belong to installations common in the Jableh region, found both in the plains at Moussaitbeh, Tall Siyannu, and Khirbet Oum al-'Abed, as well as in the mountains, where they are carved into the rock at Bashman and north of the village of Zama[713].

The discovery of these win- press on the Syrian coast was no surprise as many wineries were discovered in the Levant region, most of which dating back to the Roman and Proto-Byzantine periods[714]. In fact, this region was famous for the production of grapes that were crushed to make wine. Due to the Islamic belief in Islamic era, the prohibition of drinking wine caused the fading of this industry and limited to some wineries that relate to churches or to non-Muslims. Agro-industrial interest has shifted to other crops such as sugar and olives[715]. Prior to the classical period, wine presses in the region were simple installations, depending mostly on the technique of treading. During the Roman and Byzantine periods, presses developed into much more sophisticated and elaborate installations.

There are two methods. The first method: After the grape clusters are trodden underfoot on the mosaic floor, the liquid flows towards the center of the basin, while the residue remains on the sides. These residues can then be collected and used for animal feed or as agricultural fertilizer.

[713] Badawi, 2019, p. 52.
[714] Many studies have been done, especially in the south of the Levant (Palestine and Jordan) such as: Ahlstrdm, G. W. 1978, Wine Presses and Cup-Marks of the Jenin- Megiddo Survey. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 231, pp. 19-51; Hirschfeld, Y. 1983 Ancient Wine Presses in the Park of Aijalon. *Israel Exploration Journal* 33, pp. 207-19; Khalil, L. A, and Al-Nammari, F. M. 2000, Two Large Wine Presses at Khirbet Yajuz, Jordan, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, pp. 41-57; Melhem, I. 1995, The Technology of Wine Presses in Jordan and Palestine during the Roman and Byzantine Periods. pp. 29-35 in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan V*, eds. K. CAmr, E Zayadine, and M. Zaghloul. Amman: Department of Antiquities (Arabic); Sari, S., and Molhem, E. 1997, The Technique and the Mechanism of the Wine Press at Sa'ad. Dirastat 24, no. 1, pp. 196-211 (Arabic); Ta'ani, H. 1995 A Wine Press at the Village of Qomn/Irbid. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 39: p. 21-27 (Arabic).
[715] Melhem, 1995. P. 31.

The second method: The grapes are pressed using a vertical wooden press positioned in the middle of the large basin. Similarly, the liquid flows towards the center of the basin, while the residue stays on the sides. The use of the screw press enhanced the speed and efficiency of pressing, resulting in the construction of large wine presses which could deal with large quantities of grapes.

Earlier studies concluded that mosaic floors were not used in installations such as wine presses before the third or fourth century A.D. and that all the earlier presses had plaster floors. Similarly, another study has argued that wine presses with receiving vats that have mosaic floors on the bottoms and steps leading down usually date to the Roman and Byzantine periods[716].

The primary reason for using white tesserae to pave the wine press, particularly the treading floor, lies in the rough surface of limestone tesserae, which aids in crushing grapes under pressure. Additionally, in single screw presses lacking a vat underneath, the juice flowed directly onto the ground, necessitating a hygienic floor.

5. Overview of Lebanon mosaic decorations.

Mosaics have been discovered across Lebanon (old Phoenicia), extending from the northern regions of Tall ‘Arqa and Orthosia to the southern border near Majdel Zoun church, and encompassing the Mount Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley to the east. The largest concentration of mosaics, however, is located approximately forty kilometers south of Beirut. Excavations in this region have revealed at least twelve sites, including churches like ‘Ain es-Samakeh, Khaldeh Shwayfat, Khân Khaldeh (two churches), Jiyeh, Nabi Younes, Chhîm, Anâne, Boustan ech-Cheikh, Zahrani, as well as residences in Ouzaï and Jnah.

Significant discoveries have also been made in other southern and eastern regions, such as Tyre, where notable pavements have been uncovered at Qabr Hiram, Ansariyyeh, Siddiqin, and Majdel Zoun. In the eastern and northern outskirts of Beirut, pavements have been found in Beit Mery, Ghineh, M’aad, Chamat, Ehden, and Enfeh in Mount Lebanon, with further discoveries in the

[716] Khalil & Al-Nammari, 2000, p. 49.

Bekaa Valley at Nebha and Lala. Notably, Baalbek has also yielded a 4th-century house pavement during archaeological excavations[717].

The majority of Lebanon's mosaics were discovered in the first half to mid-20th century, largely due to the efforts of Emir M. Chehab, the former Director General of Antiquities. These mosaics, were excavated from various regions and mostly relocated to the National Museum of Beirut or a garden in the capital. These mosaics date back to the Roman and Proto-Byzantine eras. Around a dozen examples were found, among them panels from the 3rd and 4th centuries depict mythological themes such as the abduction of Europa, the adventures of Jupiter, Calliope and the Seven Sages, and the birth of Alexander. However, mosaic pavements from the Byzantine era are more numerous, often found covering the floors of churches[718].

The early discoveries were studied by Emir M. Chehab in two volume of Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth "Mosaïques du Liban" in 1958/9. The mosaics found in churches were thoroughly examined by Donceel-Voute in her book "Les Pavements des églises byzantines de Syrie et du Liban" in 1988, focusing specifically on Byzantine-era pavements and excluding Roman and of course the more recent ones. These recent discoveries were covered by Helou in her book "Les Mosaïques du Liban" in 2019, which provides insights into mosaics, date from the 4th till 7th AD., discovered in Lebanon up to contemporary times.

In this section we will draw attention to the most notable designs and excluding the filling motifs.

5.1 Decorative Motifs

5.1.1. Centered compositions are rare in the mosaics of Lebanon. We can name three types:

5.1.1.1. A developed octagon: only two compositions with a developed octagon have been documented. These compositions formed in a square and around a poised octagon, of 8 lateral squares adjacent to the octagon, and of 4 lozenges in the corners contiguous to the latter and adjacent to the squares, forming lateral triangle. The squares around the octagon are filled with various motifs (four-pointed stars, four-petal flowers, scale patterns, and rainbow designs). This

[717] Helou, 2019, p. 28.
[718] Helou, 2019, p. 29.

type of composition is found in Ghineh, with an eagle in the central medallion (choir),[719]as well as in Chhîm, with a star made of two interlaced squares inscribed within a circle (composition at the entrance of the nave)[720]. Noteworthy this design was use as decoration for a broad border in Baalbek-Suweydiyah villa[721].

5.1.1.2. Wreath-like pattern in a circle, consisting of circles around a central one, found in Khaldeh Shwayfat Church[722]. The same pattern around a central octagon, all adorned with human figures, found in Suweydiyah Villa of Baalbek[723].

5.1.1.3. A composition of four crosses of interlaced *scuta,* with concave ends that form a central circle, inscribed in a square. We found it in the mosaic of the choir, Jiyeh church (Beiteddine Museum)[724].

5.1.2. Isotropic compositions used as field motifs

5.1.2.1. The grid pattern—whether oblique or orthogonal—composed of single or double serrated lines and embellished with small floral motifs or nested squares, is relatively common in Lebanese mosaics. This design is attested at several sites, including Aïn es-Samakeh (nave and aisle),[725] Nebha (narthex),[726]Qabr Hiram (choir),[727]Khaldeh Shwayfat (south nave and central nave around the choir)[728]Boustan ech Cheik (collateral) [729.]

Equally prevalent is the grid composed of rows of rosebuds, each compartment containing diverse polychrome motifs. This pattern is prominently displayed in Khaldeh Shwayfat (nave),[730]Beit Mery (nave) ,[731]Anâne (nave),[732]and Jiyeh (south sacristy)[733].

[719] Helou, 2019, fig. 142; Donceel-Voute, 1988 fig. 335; Chéhab, 1959, pl. XCVIII-1.
[720] Helou, 2019, fig. 99.
[721] Chehab, 1959, pl. XXII-XXIII.
[722] Donceel-Voute, 1988, pl. h.-t. 15.
[723] Chehab, 1959, pl. XV.
[724] Helou, 2019, fig. 94.
[725] Helou, 2019. Plan 5, fig. 68. Donceel-Voute, fig. 312, 316, Chehab, 1959, pl. CXI-2.
[726] Helou, 2019, fig. 149. Donceel-Voute, fig. 381.
[727] Helou, 2019, fig. 233.
[728] Donceel-Voute, 1988, Pl.h.-t. 15.
[729] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig 331. Hello, 2019, fig. 114.
[730] Helou, 2019, fig. 21; Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 344.Chehab, 1959, pl. LXVI.
[731] Helou, 2019, fig. 61; Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 321,325.
[732] Helou, 2019, fig. 107.
[733] Helou, 2019, fig. 97, 224.

5.1.2.2. Grid of serrated oblique bands that forms squares at their intersections. Found in In the north nave of the church of Zahrani[734].

5.1.2.3. Orthogonal grid of bands with a square at each intersection, each compartment includes an poised square, is attested at Beit Mery (intercolumnar spaces)[735]. At 'Ain es-Samakeh,[736]each compartment enclose a circle.

5.1.2.4. A composition of tangent poised squares, where each square in the central vertical row features an upright square, while each lateral triangle contains a rectangle. All these shapes are adorned with a variety of motifs including rainbow-style patterns, four-pointed stars, perspective solids, compositions of scale squares radiating in four directions, and others. his pattern is attested in the south nave of Zahrani[737].

5.1.2.5. Polychrome pattern of staggered rows of superposed groups of three adjacent lozenges, forming squares in which various species of birds are housed: ducks, hens, sparrows, and others found in the fourth annex of Zahrani[738].

5.1.2.6. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles and poised squares, forming bobbins was found in The north nave of the church of Beit Mery[739].

5.1.2.7. Orthogonal pattern pf tangent four-pointed stars, forming lozenges alternately recumbent and upright, found in The south nave of Chhîm presents a composition[740]. Central nave of jiyeh church[741], also a small panel from Byblos[742].

5.1.2.8. The compositions of intersecting and adjacent octagons: The use of intersecting and adjacent octagons in floor carpets and borders became popular in the Levant from the 4th century onward. Examples of this motif in Lebanon can be found in various churches, such as Zahrani

[734] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 424 ; Chehab, 1959, pl. XLVII
[735] Chehab, 1959, pl CVIII-4; Helou, 2019, fig. 66.
[736] Chehab, 1959, pl. CXII-2.
[737] Chehab, 1959, pl. XLVIII-1; Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 425; Helo, 2019, fig. 121.
[738] Chehab, 1959, pl. LIII, Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 435; Helo, 2019, fig. 129.
[739] Chehab, 1959, pl. CIX; Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 326; Helou, 2019, fig. 64.
[740] Helou, 2019, fig. 103.
[741] Helou, 2019, fig. 93.
[742] Chehab, 2019, pl. VII-1.

church; [743] Ain es-Samakeh;[744] Bostan esh Sheikh,[745]the upper lateral of Khan Khaldeh- Upper church;[746] Khan Khaldeh- lower church;[747] Nebha[748]; Chhîm[749]and Beit Mery Intercolumnar[750] .

5.1.2.9. compositions of Orthogonal pattern of tangent crosses of interlaced *scuta* (shields) with concave ends: provide the ideal framework for figurative representations. They form pointed octagons, which are perfectly suited as medallions to contain a design. Found in two churches Kaldeh Shwayfat-north aisle,[751]Khan Khaldeh- Upper church- south aisle[752].

5.1.2.10. Compositions with secant circles determining quatrefoils

Compositions based on secant circles forming quatrefoils are very common in the Near Eastern provinces, where they are most often employed for small decorative elements such as intercolumnar spaces and borders. Only when executed on a larger scale do they tend to incorporate additional embellishments. Examples in Lebanon include The Abduction of Europe panel –Baaleck;[753]Ananeh church;[754] Ghineh, intercolumniation;[755]Khaldeh Shwayfat;[756] Beit Mery- intercolumniation[757].

5.1.2.11. Composition of Lacis and interlace

The composition of tangent large circles, with inscribed smaller circles tangentially placed in the interspaces. There is only one example found in Tyr necropolis (in situ)[758]. pattern features tangent large circles forming concave squares, with each square including a small circle inside. The large tangent circles inscribing smaller circles, with four adjacent half-circles around the central circle alternating with lily petals. The half-circles are filled with polychrome rays and scallop shells,

[743] Donceel-Voute, fig. 428-9,433; Helou, 2019, fig.119, 121,128; Chehab, 1959, pl. LII, XLIV.
[744] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 312. 316; Helou, 2019, plan 5.
[745] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig 331; Helou, 2019, fig. 111.
[746] Donceel-Vouts, 1988, fig. 358.
[747] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 372, 375.
[748] Helou, 2019, plan 16 ; Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 390, 395.
[749] Helou, 2019, fig. 110-112.
[750] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 321.
[751] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXII ; Helou, 2019, plan 1
[752] Donceel-Voute,1988, fig. 358 ; Helou, 2019, plan 2.
[753] Chehab, 1959, pl. V.
[754] Helou, 2019, fig. 107.
[755] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 334, 337 ; Helou, 2019, fig. 144, plan 15 ; Chehab, 1959, pl. XCVII.
[756] Helou, 2019, fig. 10.
[757] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 321,325; Helou, 2019, fig. 11.
[758] Helou, 2019, fig. 231.

Polychrome orthogonal pattern of large circles interloped tangentially, forming irregular concave octagons (the axial sides the shorter), with an inscribed smaller circle interloped tangentially in the interspace appears in various locations with different filling motifs. In Jiyeh (north nave)[759], the large circles are adorned with birds and flowers, while the small circles feature four-petalled flower. In the south nave of Jiyeh,[760]the large circles contain a star formed by two interlaced squares, each enclosing a circle with a bird or a plant inside, while the small circles are filled with four-petalled flower. In Lala,[761]the small circles are similarly decorated with flower motifs. The same pattern occurs also at Ghineh[762].

Polychrome orthogonal pattern of circles interloped tangentially, forming irregular concave octagons (the axial sides the shorter) composition of tangent interlaced circles filled with flower motifs in various locations. Attested at several sites, including Zahrani[763] (third annex or baptistery), Chhîm (nave)[764], Or filled with animals and objects, as seen in Jiyeh (north sacristy[765]) and Qabr Hiram (collaterals)[766].

Grid pattern of tangentially interloped circles and recumbent lozenges (the circles at the intersection), with an interloped square inscribed in the compartments, is attested in the nave at Nebha[767].

Row of interloped circles and squares (poised and upright) as we see in Khaldeh Shwayfat intercolumniations[768].

Strapwork of circles and vertical lozenges interlooped tangentially Khaldeh Shwayfat Intercolumnar **[769].**

Strapwork of vertical lozenges' and vertical spindles interloped tangentially Khaldeh Shwayfat Intercolumnar [770].

---

[759] Helou, 2019, fig. 88-89.
[760] Helou, 2019, fig. 90.
[761] Helou, 2019, fig. 135.
[762] Chehab, 1959, pl. XCVII; Helou, fig. 144.
[763] Chehab, 2019, pl. LII.
[764] Helou, 2019, fig. 99.
[765] Helou, 2019, fig. 96.
[766] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 404; Helou, 2019, fig. 233.
[767] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 385, pl h.-t,16.
[768] Donceel-Voute, 1988, pl. h-t.15 ; Helou, 2019, fig. 43-44.
[769] Helou, 2019, fig. 43.

Orthogonal pattern of squares interloped at the angles, interlaced with cushion centered on the interspaces found in Ghineh (south nave)[771], Khaldeh Shwayfat (intercolumniation)[772].

A grid pattern of tangent circles and lozenges, with the circles at the intersections creating the effect of a four-pointed star, and an interlaced square inscribed in each compartment. Attested in Jiyeh[773].

A grid of lozenges interlaced at their angles by Heracles' knots as for example in Zahrani (in front of the choir)[774], in the villa of Ouzaï (mosaic of the two sheep)[775] and at Khaldeh Shwayfat[776].

5.1.2.12. The Composition of Sinusoidal Lattices with Circles/Lozenges/ Squares. This patterns were common in Lebanon and used as decor and field motifs the most notable:

An orthogonal grid of interlaced quadrilobes and intersecting circles, creating ellipses and convex curvilinear squares. This pattern is attested at Nebha [777].

A grid pattern composed of tangentially interlaced circles and recumbent spindles (with circles at the intersections), containing either larger interlaced circles or interlaced squares inscribed within the compartments., examples includes Zahrani[778], Ouzaï(mosaic of Leontius, at the Presidential Palace of Baabda)[779] Villa of Jnah[780] and Ghineh (nef)[781].

A grid pattern of tangent circles and recumbent spindles formed by interloped bands(the circles at the intersection) , forming Maltese cross with concave arms and ends, and creating the effect of a pattern of intersecting circles was found in the church of Jbeil[782].

---

[770] Donceel-Voute, 1988, pl. h-t.15.
[771] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 334, 338 ; Helou, 2019, fig. 143.
[772] Donceel-Voute, 1988, pl. h-t.15.
[773] Helou, 2019, fig. 85-87.
[774] Chehab, 1959, pl. XLV ; Helou, 2019, fig. 119.
[775] Helou, 2019, fig. 74.
[776] Donceel-Voute, 1988, pl. h-t.15; Chehab, 1959, pl. LXV-1.
[777] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 384; Helo, 2019, fig. 150- 151.
[778] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 436; Helou, 2019, fig. 120.
[779] Helou, 2019, fig. 75.
[780] Helou, 2019, fig. 79.
[781] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 338; Helou, 2019, fig. 141.
[782] Helou, 2019, fig. 148.

5.1.2.13. The compositions of scales. Scale compositions saw widespread use in Levantine mosaics starting from the beginning of the 5th century. These patterns are always crafted from white or off-white tesserae and are seldom outlined with a darker border.

The most popular form in Lebanon consists of adjacent, monochromatic scales, each adorned with a rosebud motif. This pattern can be seen at many location such as Zahrani church narthex, [783]Khân Khaldeh-lower churches[784].

Less frequently, the same scale motif is found outlined, either in a single or double line, also adorned with a rose. This variation appears in some examples such as the churches Jiyeh,[785]and Saint-Georges-des-Orthodoxes in Beirut[786].

In addition, there is another type of scale composition featuring squares of scales radiating in four directions, forming a grid of spindle lines and a grid of concave square lines ex Khaldeh Shwayfat,[787] ‘Ain es-Samakeh[788]and Anâne church[789].

5.1.2.14. The inhabited covering scrolls

In the Levant, particularly in Lebanon, the inhabited vine scroll motif became widespread in the 5th and 6th centuries. This motif adorned various locations, such as the room m of the villa of Jnah[790], Khan Khaldeh-Lower church,[791]a mosaic from the Beiteddine Museum originating from southern Lebanon,[792] the central nave of Qabr Hiram,[793]and the two antechambers of the church of Zahrani[794]. Whether originating from a vase or an acanthus, these scrolls consistently feature vine.

[783] Helou, 2019, fig. 4.
[784] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 376.
[785] Helou, 2019, fig. 98. 228 a-b.
[786] Helou, 2019, fig. 71-72.
[787] Helou, 2019, fig. 52.
[788] Helou, 2019, fig. 70; Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 313.
[789] Helou, 2019, fig. 107.
[790] Helou, 2019, fig. 83; Chehab, 1959, pl. XXIX.
[791] Helou, 2019, fig. 56-59; Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 373.
[792] Helou, 2019, fig. 212.
[793] Helou, 2019, fig. 214; Donceel-Voute,1988, fig. 403.
[794] Chehab, 1959, pl. I, LI; Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 430-432; Helou, 2019, plan12, fig. 125-127.

5.1.3. Linear Compositions in Border Decoration

5.1.3.1. Guilloche strap work forming spaced horizontal Hercules's knots found in Khaldeh Shwayfat (framing of the north nave)[795].

5.1.3.2. Polychrome row of overlapping chevron-shaded circles. Framing of the composition of the choir is noticeable in Khaldeh, Shwayfat,[796]and Jiyeh.[797]

5.1.3.3. Polychrome band of superposed chevrons is present in the fourth annex of Zahrani;[798]Khan Khaldeh –Upper church[799] .

5.1.3.4. **Line of rosebuds** frames the north aisle in Beit Mery[800] .

5.1.3.5. Wave pattern found in Baalbek –Sweidya;[801]Qabr Hiram (nave);[802]Jnah (mosaic of the hall);[803] Ghineh (choir)[804] and Jiyeh[805].

5.1.3.6. Saw-tooth pattern attested at Chhîm;[806] Anâneh;[807] Jiyeh (around the inscription of the North sacristy);[808]Khaldeh Shwayfat[809] and Khan Khaldeh-Upper church [810].

5.1.3.7. Dentilled simple filet, examples include Anâneh (collateral sud)[811], Chhîm[812]and khaldeh Shwayfat[813]

5.1.3.8. The cable: Serving as a key complement to the relief effects, perspectival treatment, and rainbow-like shading characteristic of the fourth century, the cable motif, though sometimes less

[795] Helou, 2019, fig. 35.
[796] Helou, 2019, fig. 39; Donceel Voute, fig. 348.
[797] Helou, 2019, fig. 94-95.
[798] Helou, 2019, fig. 134; Chehab, 1959, pl. LIII,
[799] Donceel –Voute, 1988, fig. 367.
[800] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 362; Helou, 2019, fig. 223a.
[801] Chehab,1959, pl. XV.
[802] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 403; Helou, 2019, fig. 214.
[803] Chehab, 1959, pl. XXIX; Helou, 2019, fig. 83.
[804] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 335.
[805] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 342; Helou, 2019, fig. 142, 197.
[806] Helou, 2019, fig. 102-104.
[807] Helou, 2019, fig. 109.
[808] Helou, 2019, fig. 96.
[809] Donceel-Voute,1988, fig. 344.
[810] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 364.
[811] Helou, 2019, fig. 107.
[812] Helou, 2019, fig. 106.
[813] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 351-352.

favoured, continued to appear in well-executed pavements where artists aimed, even modestly, to suggest a sense of three-dimensionality[814]. Examples of this can be seen Zahrani[815].

5.1.3.9. Swastika-meander of spaced reverse returned swastikas. The swastika-meander pattern, characterized by spaced recessed reverse-returned swastikas with a rectangle in each space, serves as the border of the animal scene in the Jnah villa, now housed in the National Museum of Beirut[816]. The same pattern with recessed reverse-returned swastika , and with a square in each interval is used to divide the composition of the panel in the mosaic of the south nave of the church of Khaldeh Shwayfat (Garden of the National Museum of Beirut)[817]. Additionally, a meander with swastikas enclosing a central panel featuring a human figure, with four in the corners depicting animals, is observed at the villa of Ouzaï (National Museum of Beirut)[818]. Depending on the scale of the design, the bands are plain in Jnah villa and executed in the two-strand interlace in the other two examples.

5.1.3.10. The wavy ribbon is another linear decoration that suggests a certain perspective. We find for example in Khaldeh-Shwayfat,[819]and The Upper Church of Khân Khaldeh,[820]and Baalbek- mosaic Alexander birth border[821].

5.1.3.11. The Lines in Semis. It is a line of small geometric motifs: serrated poised squares or diamonds are by far the most frequent compared to lines of squares and circles or circles alone, examples include in Zahrani (entrance of the nave),[822] 'Ain es-semkeh and[823] Nebha[824]. Also vegetal designs : superimposed leaves, small flowers such as The line of non-contiguous crosslets or saltire fleurons can in Jiyeh (in the last composition of the central nave)[825]. Also the line of

[814] Donceel-Voute, 1988, p. 447.
[815] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 426.
[816] Chehab, 1959, pl. XXXI; Helou, 2019, fig. 82.
[817] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXII ; Helou, 2019, plan1.
[818] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXXXIX.
[819] Helou, 2019, fig. 28,32, 34 ; Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 346.
[820] Doncel-Voute, 1988, fig. 359.
[821] Helou, 2019, fig. 16.
[822] Chehab, ,1959, pl. L.
[823] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 312.316 ; Chehab, 1959, pl. CXI-2.
[824] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 381.
[825] Helou, 2019, fig. 93.

leaves from Ghineh[826]. Less common is the motif of a line of non-contiguous, serrated poised squares. It is found in Zahrani (entrance of the nave)[827] and in Chhîm[828].

5.1.3.12. Gemmed bands: This pattern was popular in Levantine mosaics during the fifth and sixth centuries. However, it was not common in Lebanon. Examples include Qabre Hiram, where gemmed bands frame the five intercommunion panels[829].

5.1.3.13. The pattern of chevron bands of rainbow pattern, e.g., Zahrani church [830]**.**

5.1.3.14. A row of tangent poised squares interlaced with two undulating bands occurs as a framing device in the south nave of Khaldeh Shwayfat[831].

5.1.3.15.A row of interlaced circles and ellipses is attested at Beit Mery [832] .

5.1.3.16. The scroll:

Some **ivy scrolls** exhibit simple volutes, such as those in St. George's Orthodox Church in Beirut,[833] Chhîm,[834]and both churches of Khân Khaldeh,[835]and in Khaldeh-Shwayfat,[836]Zahrani[837]. However, the majority are gently undulating, featuring a stylized leaf or fruit nestled in the curve of the wave. These motifs are found in both churches of Khân Khaldeh-Upper church,[838] Beit Mery, [839]Zahrani[840] as well as Chhîm,[841] Jiyeh[842]. The leaves are mostly heart-shaped, though some are triangular.

The Vine Scroll: this was not popular in Lebanon, as evidenced by the few examples such as panel from Saddiqine church-diaconicon[843], now preserved at the Beiteddine Museum. It features populated scrollwork framing a large inscription within a central medallion. The composition is

[826] Helou, 2019, fig 140; Chehab, 1959, pl. XCVIII-1.
[827] Helou, 2019, plan 12.
[828] Helou, 2019, plan 9.
[829] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 405-4013
[830] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 435.
[831] Helou, 2019, fig. 42
[832] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 322; Helou, 2019, fig. 63.
[833] Helou, 2019, fig. 73.
[834] Helou, 2019, fig. 101, 217-a.
[835] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 369, 370.
[836] Donceel-Voute, 1988, pl. h.-t. 15
[837] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 328-329 ; Helou, 2019, fig. 119.
[838] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 361.
[839] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 325.
[840] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 434, pl. h.-t.18.
[841] Helou, 2019, fig. 101.
[842] Helou, 2019, fig. 88.
[843] Helou, 2019, fig. 136.

set within a single panel, whose four corners are occupied by kantharoi, from which vines emerge and undulate in serpentine patterns, incorporating birds, baskets, and clusters of grapes. Another example is attested in Nebha-nave[844].

The motif **of the trifold chalice line**, appearing in the first quarter of the 5th century and widely spread in Levantine pavement mosaics, such as the Martyrium of Dibsi Faraj, Goubelleh and Houad[845]. However, it does not appear to have a significant presence in Lebanon. Its occurrence is limited to a single mosaic, specifically in the inscription at Saddiqine [846].

Acanthus scroll; The acanthus, a popular ancient motif, is less common in Lebanese mosaics compared to the Levant region. It appears in the Jnah villa mosaic[847]. This mosaic features acanthus volutes enclosing pursuing animals and hunters. Another acanthus composition is found in the church of Khaldeh Shwayfat[848].

5.1.2. 17. The guilloche there are three types used on Lebanon mosaics**:** two-strand guilloche, three-strand guilloche and polychrome round-tongued double guilloche to form eyelets. Less common multi strand guilloche. They were employed either as border motifs framing a central scene or as compositional elements within the field, enclosing figural or geometric panels.

This motif has been widespread since the Hellenistic period. In Lebanon, it appears in almost all mosaics. The braid and the guilloche are used in framing compositions with figurative or geometric motifs. Notable examples can be found in Saint-Georges-des-Orthodoxes in Beirut,[849]in Saddiqine,[850]in Khaldeh Shwayfat,[851]Khan Khaldeh –Upper church,[852]in Qabr Hiram (framing of the lateral naves and the central nave with double guilloche)[853] in Boustan ech-Cheikh,[854]in Jiyeh, [855] in Ouzaï the Summer mosaic at the National Museum of Beirut)[856], in

[844] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 394.
[845] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 52, 56, 111.
[846] Helou, 2019, fig. 136.
[847] Chehab, 1959, pl. XXX; Helou, 2019, fig. 81.
[848] Helou, 2019, fig. 31.
[849] Helou, 2019, fig. 73.
[850] Helou, 2019, fig. 137-138.
[851] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 346, 347, 349, 352; Helou, 2019, fig. 28, 32,34.
[852] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 364, 367; Helo, 2019, fig. 53.
[853] Helou, 2019, fig. 233.
[854] Helou, 2019, fig. 113.
[855] Helou, 2019, fig. 95, 98.
[856] Helou, 2019, fig. 76.

Zahrani[857]. Polychrome round-tongued double guilloche to form eyelets examples found in Nebha,[858]Jiyeh, [859]Villa of Jnah,[860] in Ouzaï villa[861], Birth of Alexander panel from Baalbek - Sweidyia[862] in Ouzaï (the Leontius mosaic preserved at the Presidential Palace in Baabda[863]. Multi-stade guilloche as a frame of adventure of Jupiter panel from Beirut,[864]GE panel[865].

5.2. Figural Representations

5.2.1 Human Representations: The representation of humans was limited and fell under the following categories:

Mythological scene: from Roman times, e.g., Bacchus of Byblos- Theatre[866] Bacchus and Satyr,[867]and the Abduction of Europa from a house Byblos Byblos,[868]Bacchus and Ariadne-Beirut,[869]The Adventures of Jupiterfrom Beirut[870]. Mosaic of the Birth of Alexander,[871]villa of Suweydie near Baalbek.

Allegorical Figures: Cosmic phenomena and calendar elements represented in human form are rare in Lebanese mosaics. At Qabr Hiram, there are depictions of months, seasons, and winds[872]. Additionally, at the villa of Ouzaï, there is a representation of Summer within a square frame. This portrayal features a bust-length figure of a woman crowned with fruits and bearing fruits, as indicated by a Greek inscription. The scene is flanked by two shepherds and surrounded by various bird figures[873]. Also, from the villa of Suweydiyah in Baalbek, there is a depiction of Ge[874]. In addition, two panels depicting Nile scenes have been unearthed in recent decades in

[857] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 423; Helou, 2019, fig. 118.
[858] Doncee-Voute, 1988, fig. 384; Helou, 2019, fig. 151.
[859] Helou,2019, fig. 85, 86.
[860] Chehab, 1959, pl. XXVII; Helou, 2019, fig. 79,84
[861] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXXXVII; Helou, 2019, fig. 75.
[862] Chehab, 1959, pl. XXII.
[863] Helou, 2019, fig. 75.
[864] Chehab, 1959, pl. VIII.
[865] Chehab, 1959, pl. XIII-3.XIV.
[866] Chehab, 1959, pl. I.
[867] Chehab, 1959, pl. IV.
[868] CHehab, 1959, pl. V; Helou, 2019, fig. 1.
[869] Chehab, 1959, pl. II.
[870] Chehab, 1959, pl. VIII-X; Helou, 2019, fig. 14.
[871] Chehab, 1959, pl. XXII, XXV; Helou, 2019, fig. 16.
[872] Donceel-Voute,1988, pl. h.t. 17 ; Helou, 2019, fig. 233-235.
[873] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXXXV-LXXXVI-2.
[874] Chehab, 1959, pl. XIV.

Jiyeh and Beirut[875]. As a philosophical theme, there are The Mosaic of the Sages and Calliope from the villa of Suweydiyah –Baalbek [876].

Hunting Scene: Hunting scenes were depicted in Lebanese mosaics as a minor subject. These can be found as filling motifs within the populated scroll scene at Qabr Hiram,[877] and similarly in the border of a pavement in the villa of Jnah[878].

Scenes of Rural Life: This category includes various scenes such as grape harvesting, picking, transporting, and treading grapes. It also features depictions of musicians, specifically flute players, as seen in the nave of Qabr Hiram church[879]. Shepherds with their sheep and goats can be found in Khaldeh-Shwayfat[880]. At the villa of Jnah, a distinctive depiction shows a shepherd surrounded by both wild and domestic animals[881]. Additionally, in the villa of Ouzaï, three emblemata are portrayed, with the central one featuring a personification of Summer, symmetrically flanked by two others, each depicting a shepherd[882].

5.2.2 The Animals: Animals are presented against a common background or arranged individually, almost like a catalogue, within the panels of geometric compositions. They would fall under this category:

5.2.2.1. Scenes of Combat such as Pursuit intercolumniations of the church of Qabr Hiram[883]. The panels display panthers, a bear, a dog, a lion, a tiger and a lioness chasing a bull, a horse, a gazelle, and a wild boar. All the animals are shown running on an abstract background, with two bushes and a tree, the latter separating the pairs of protagonists. Another examples found, in the south nave of the church of Khaldeh Shwayfat, there are two pursuit scenes, each depicted within a medallion[884].

5.2.2.2. Isolated Animal Figures in Lebanese mosaics are attested in several notable examples. At Zahrani Church, for instance, the southern annexes are adorned with intricate vine scrolls

[875] Helou, 2019, p. 147-149, fig. 157-158.
[876] Chehab, 1959, pl. XV-XX; Helou, 2019, fig. 15.
[877] Helou, 2019, fig. 245-6.
[878] Chehab, 1959, pl. XXX; Helou, 2019, fig. 81.
[879] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 403.
[880] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 352; Helou, 2019, fig. 352.
[881] Chehab, 1959, pl. XXXI; Helou, 2019, fig. 82, 170, 171.
[882] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXXV; Helou, 2019, fig. 168.
[883] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 305-313.
[884] Helou, 2019, fig. 37-39.

populated by various animal figures[885]. In the north collateral of Khaldeh Shwayfat Church, birds serve as decorative elements within the grid-pattern compartments of a panel[886]. The Mosaic of Leontius at the villa of Ouzai showcases animals intricately placed within geometric patterns[887].

5.2.2. 3. Antithetical compositions are seen on many examples such as Khaldeh Chwayfat, where two stags confront a fountain column Khaldeh Shwayfat where two stags confronting a fountain(colomn)[888]. At the same villa in Ouzai, a mosaic features sheep symmetrically positioned beside a vase [889]. In the central nave of Beit Mery Church, a mosaic depicts two birds flanking a kantharos, with vine scrolls emerging from it[890]. Moreover, the mosaic known as the Good Shepherd from the villa of Jnah, Room C, is prominently displayed in the National Museum of Beirut. This mosaic depicts a distinctive scene where wild and domestic animals surround a central human figure[891].

5.2.3 Fish / Aquatic Scene: Shellfish, starfish, fish, and crustaceans, despite their varied and visually appealing forms, are relatively rare in mosaic art, with only a limited number of examples depicting them. Larger fish are more commonly represented. They are often shown in association with small waterside scenes that include ducks, wading birds, fish, and aquatic plants. Examples include: The mosaic at the entrance of the central nave in Khaldeh intricately portrays a variety of animals, baskets, and plants within its oblique grid. Notably, the border triangles are filled with depictions of both sea and river fish, where larger fish are sometimes shown preying on smaller ones. This inclusion of marine life, alongside shrimp and sailboats[892]. Other examples including ‘Ain es-Samkeh,[893]and Villa of Awzai- Summer panel [894].

5.3. Conclusion

Although the quantity of mosaics from the Syrian coast is much smaller compared to the Lebanese mosaic collection, they are more varied in terms of the locations where they were

[885] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 430-431; Helou, 2019, fig. 124-125.
[886] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXXV; Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 347; Helou, 2019, fig. 40.
[887] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXXXVII; Helou, 2019, fig. 67.
[888] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 349; Helou, 2019, fig. 41.
[889] Helou, 2019, fig. 74.
[890] Donceel-Voute, 1988, fig. 328; Helou, 2019, fig. 62.
[891] Chehab, 1959, pl. XXXI; Helou, 2019, fig. 82.
[892] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXVI-LXVII-LXVIII-5; Helou, 2019, fig. 21-27.
[893] Chehab, 1959, pl. CXIV-2.
[894] Chehab, 1959, pl. LXXXV-1; Helou, 2019, fig. 74.

found. Syrian samples include mosaics that paved baths, a synagogue, a tomb, and churches, as well as others from unidentified places. In contrast, the Lebanese collection includes one panel from a theatre and others from houses during the Roman and Proto- Byzantine periods. Most pavements in Lebanon, however, come from churches, with only a few exceptions from houses.

Regarding human representation, as we have seen before, these are mainly from the Roman era, with four additional panels from the Proto-Byzantine era. These panels depict the Nile River (two panels), the personification of summer, a panel depict a female figure and the Good Shepherd. Unlike in Syria, where panels have been discovered only from the Roman period.

In Lebanon, Roman mosaics showcase famous mythological figures such as Dionysus, Alexander's birth, Orpheus, Jupiter's adventures, the abduction of Europa, the Sages, and Calliope. These themes do not match those depicted on the Syrian coast. In Syria, themes such as those found in the Amrite Tomb have no equivalent in Lebanon. Additionally, the four panels that paved the Ghillineh Bath depict marine gods and a pastoral scene, which are also unique and do not resemble the two marine-themed mosaics in Lebanon, discovered relatively recently in Jiyeh and Beirut, that depict the Nile with its usual attributes and belong to the Proto-Byzantine era.

Both regions followed the motif patterns that were trendy at the time, with some variations that could be considered local inventions. However, these inventions are not identical. Some similarities are manifested in examples such as two motifs from Zahrani Church: the cross, which resembles one of Corinche Banyas panels with different filling motifs, and the chevron, which was used in Ras al-Bassit as an encasement for an inscription. In fact, the chevron is not common in Lebanon, with another example in Khan Khaleh, and it is not common in Syrian mosaics either. The grid pattern in the mosaics of al-Mintar has similarities with those in Khan Khaleh but is not identical. The local inventions show dissimilarities, such as those seen in Khirbet al-Libneh, which might have derived from architectural elements.

Although it is tempting to find more links between these two regions, the available data suggest that there might have been local workshops that did not move to other places.

6. Conclusion

Despite the relatively low quantity of mosaics from the Syrian coast compared to other regions of the Levant, they are diverse in terms of their locations and contexts. Syrian examples include mosaics found in baths, a synagogue, a tomb, churches, and others from contexts that have yet to be identified.

In Latakia city(Laodicea), there are no Roman mosaics; instead, there are five panels likely from the Proto- Byzantine period, discovered during construction work, now housed in the museum, along with a mosaic fragment from Baher al-Midan Church. In the environs, the site of ’Ain al-Helweh is notable for its unique aquatic-themed mosaic in the Levant, featuring a marine scene, dating back to the Hadrian period, possibly from a villa. To the north, there is the church of Shabṭliyeh (Bourj Islam), a Roman mosaic and a synagogue from Ras al-Bassit. To its south is the Ghillineh Bath, which presents three marine gods along with a fourth mosaic depicting a pastoral scene (three are in the Tartus Museum and the fourth in the Damascus Museum). In Jableh (Gabala)city, there is a white mosaic from a bath discovered near its Theatre, and in its environs, there is a church at ‘Ain Salem village. In Banyas (Balanea), there is only one mosaic likely of Proto-byzantine time discovered in its northern Couriche.

In the Tartus region, which encompasses Arwad Isle (Arados) and much of its Peraia. Roman period mosaic finds are confined to a tomb pavement discovered at the Amrite site (Marathos) south of Tartus. Within Tartus (Antarados), an area early Christianized and which rose in the Byzantine period, no specific churches have been positively identified in recent excavations. However, attention has turned to two mosaic pavements found in its vicinity. One of these, located at al-Mintar south of Tartus, has suffered damage to its architectural remains and has recently been subject to illegal excavation, prompted probably by reports of gold coins and mosaic discoveries. This damage complicates efforts to definitively interpret the architectural context to which it belongs. Hypothetically, the layout of the mosaic could suggest a central nave adorned with circle grids and animals, flanked by an aisle adorned with rosebuds. Similarly, at Khirbet al-Libneh, despite limited archaeological evidence, the architectural features strongly suggest a religious function, potentially serving as an Early Byzantine church in the Peraia of Arados. Adjacent small rooms likely served as workshops, indicative of a broader settlement

along a commercial or pilgrimage route[895]. In addition to a few confiscated panels housed in the Tartus museum, there are two white mosaics that likely paved rooms found in Tall Darruk and Tall Talyn. Furthermore, the only mosaic discovered in the interior region is located at al-Sha'ara site in the Qadmus region.

Mosaics were also used to pave wine presses found at various sites on the Syrian coast, including Wata Ibtilleh, Tall Talyn, the mosaic of Hraysoon Village- Banyas, and Tall Tweini. Tall Tweini is a notable example and part of common installations in the Jableh region, found in both plains and mountains. These discoveries align with many wineries in the Levant region, dating back to the Roman and Proto- Byzantine periods, when the area was known for its grape and wine production. However, the prohibition of wine during the Islamic era led to a decline in the wine industry, limiting it to churches and non-Muslim communities. Consequently, agro-industrial activities shifted to crops like olives.

Unfortunately, the available mosaic pavements are not sufficient to determine whether there is a workshop in the Syrian coast region. However, the mosaics discovered in this region, particularly in locations like Corniche Banyas, Khirbet al-Libneh, and al-Mintar, offer intriguing insights into potential local workshops. While the exact determination of a workshop's existence is inconclusive due to the fragmentary nature of available pavements, notable patterns and motifs observed allow for speculation.

In Corniche Banyas mosaic, there are distinctive variations on traditional motifs e.g., The pattern of four squares enclosing lozenges, alongside unique patterns not seen elsewhere e.g., the composition of a circle enclosing two intersecting squares one of which is a curvilinear square. The inclusion of a coffering ceiling effect, reminiscent of a motif trend especially in the second century, adds to the complexity and local flavour of the artwork.

Comparatively, the mosaics at Khirbet al-Libneh and al-Mintar exhibit striking similarities in colour usage and sequence, suggesting they may have been crafted by the same artisan or workshop. Consistent elements such as colour choices (blue-grey, red, white), recurring patterns like salmon knots and compositions of overlapping circles, and a preference for designs with more loose rather than compact filling. Furthermore, unique motifs like outlined orthogonal

[895] According to Chok, see p. 106-7.

patterns of circles linked by short braids and stars bearing square with an eight-pointed star further support the idea of a distinct local workshop producing these two pavements.

The number of mosaic discoveries in the Syrian coastal region is relatively low compared to other areas of the Levant, particularly Lebanon (ancient Phoenicia). Before attempting to find an explanation for this discrepancy, a quick review of the coastline is necessary.

Latakia(Laodicea)thrived during the classical era. The present-day ruins of Latakia date back to the 2nd century according to Sauvaget [896], during the time of Emperor Septimius Severus in 194 AD. After defeating his rival Pescennius Niger, Severus rewarded Latakia for its loyalty by commissioning several notable constructions, including the Triumph Arch, the remains of the Temple of Bacchus, and enhancements to the city's walls, gates, cemeteries, and theatre at the western base of at-Tabiyyat. While the city's layout originally stemmed from Seleucid design, it was further refined and made more aesthetically pleasing under Emperor Septimius Severus. Today, the Classical city's remains are buried three meters below the surface and often uncovered during construction[897].

The Jableh(Gabala) plain was the central focus of research conducted by the Danish Expedition to Phoenicia from 1958 to 1963, led by P.J. Riis. The Expedition concluded that during the Hellenistic period, sites like 'Arab al-Mulk, Tall al-Salib, and Tall Darruk flourished, reflecting prosperity. The region saw increased settlement, driven by intensive agriculture under the Pax Romana. Despite reaching peak prosperity between 50 B.C. and the 2nd century AD., evidence from the Severan period to AD. 333/337 is scarce, suggesting potential crises. From AD. 400 to 654, evidence has been found at sites like 'Arab al-Mulk, Tall Darruk, and Tall Sukas. Nevertheless, the region experienced stagnation and decline by the mid-6th century AD. due to earthquakes and plague, impacting it before the Arab conquest. During the precedent period Gabla remained the region's most important town, evidenced by a theatre built there in the 2nd century AD. And Paltos was the second-most important site, indicated by its monumental architecture[898].

Georges Perrot, in his book "History of Art in Phoenicia and Its Dependencies" published in late 19th century, mentioned the existence of ruins of a few substructures in Banyas. He suggested

[896] Sauvaget, 1934, p. 112-3.
[897] Haydar, nd, p. 11.
[898] P.J. Riis, 2004, p. 82-84.

that, given their proximity to abundant springs, these remains most likely represented the baths from which the village took its name[899]. More recently, a Hungarian expedition led by Balázs Major has been investigating the al-Marqab citadel in Banyas since 2005. Their survey uncovered additional ruins, including a theatre, which provide evidence that Roman Balanea was a notable and intricately adorned town[900].

A valuable indication comes from the polychrome mosaic in the House of the Dauphins at Delos, signed by [Asklé]piadès of Arados. This suggests the existence of a well-known mosaic workshop on the Phoenician coast by the late 2nd century BC. It is likely that a wealthy merchant from Arados in Delos commissioned this work from Asklépiadès rather than a local workshop[901] (the idea that the artist gained his experience in a Delos workshop is not excluded either)[902].

Information about this region during early Byzantine times is limited. Nonetheless, bishoprics in the area date back to the 3rd or 4th century. During this period, bishoprics are known to have emerged in Laodicea,[903] Arados, Antarados, Balanea, Paltos, and Gabala, with the names of their bishops primarily recorded in conciliar documents[904].

So all that prove that the prosperity of the Syrian coast, making the discovery of mosaics quite normal, as they were in vogue since the Hellenistic period. Therefore, accidental discoveries of these mosaics are an entirely plausible explanation. Especially that Tesserae remnants have been found at various sites such as, Khirbet Gisr Sukas, south- east Tall Sukas, Qala ‘at ar-Rüs, Duwair al-Khatib, ‘Arab al-Mulk, Southern Settlement[905]. These discoveries suggest mosaics were either found accidentally or destroyed through extensive use. Additionally, continuous habitation in Latakia(Laodicea) may have led to fewer discoveries, with some mosaics unearthed during construction work suggesting the possibility of other remain buried under modern developments and the debris as we know there was an earthquake in the late sixth century in which 7,000 people are said to have perished[906]. In Tartus (Antrados), In 1999, a mosaic panel was discovered near the Daniel Hotel, located 100 meters south of the cathedral in Tartus.

[899] Perrot, 1885, p. 336 & note3.
[900] Balazs, 2016, p. 118. 378.
[901] Balty, 1955, p. 161 ; Bruneau, 1972, p. 111-112.
[902] Balty, 1955, p. 161.
[903] Devreesse,1945, p. 168.
[904] Rey-Coquais, Jean-Paul, 1974, p. 257.
[905] P.J. Riis, 2004, p. 51, 71,75,91.
[906] Kennedy, 1985, p. 156.

Unfortunately, it was covered up before any documentation could be completed,[907]indicating that other mosaics might have been lost or built over. Moreover, Renan's 19th-century accounts describe locals in Tartus searching for ruins and cut stone to sell, along with the reuse of the ruins, likely destroying many historical sites. In addition to Illegal excavations that continue today, exacerbated by Syria's chaotic situation, as seen in the al-Mintar site where gold coins and mosaics were discovered but later subjected to looting.

The coastal region of Syria preserves mosaic pavements more frequently than the coastal mountainous hinterland, where examples are fewer and more sporadically documented, such as those from al-Sha'ara- Qadmus area, raises questions about the cultural influences and economic conditions during Roman times. Mosaics from Roman times were typically found in large houses or baths, as exemplified in sites like Antioch and Apamea, suggest that the interior region might have been poorer or less influenced by these cultural trends. especially that according to Pliny, who had access to official lists of communities making up the provinces at the beginning of the century. This region was organized into a tetrarchy, indicating a certain degree of independence from the Phoenician coast[908].

Balty suggests, landowners may have lived off agricultural income but resided in cities. This hypothesis stems from observations in the Limestone Massif, where despite elegant facades, houses had few small rooms without defined functions such a dining room, a reception space etc. contrasting with the luxurious urban homes found in Apamea. Noting that the excavations at Apamea reveal large residences which integrated into the urban layout since the city's reconstruction in 115 AD, thrived and developed until at least the first half of the 6th century AD. The sustained prosperity of these urban residences until the 6th century implies a preference among landowners for city life over rural areas. The urban inclination is further supported by the correspondence of Libanius, depicting wealthy acquaintances enjoying vibrant city life and participating in intellectual pursuits.[909] So one wonders whether such urban preference among landowners might similarly apply to the mountainous areas? Unfortunately, our knowledge of this region during the Roman period is limited, necessitating a detailed survey and analysis to

[907] Lembke, 2001, p. 9.
[908] Pline, HN, V, 82; Dussaud, 1900, p. 17.
[909] Balty, 1995, p. 53-54.

understand its societal dynamics at that time. Additionally, this disparity could be due to the current state of archaeological exploration and research limitations.

Another factor to consider is Christianity. The prevalence of mosaics in churches highlights Christianity's role in their distribution. Christianity's weaker penetration in the mountainous regions suggests that these areas, remaining faithful to pagan beliefs and not converting to Christianity[910], did not have churches where mosaics might have been discovered.

Overall, the current distribution of mosaics likely reflects both ancient patterns of settlement and preservation biases rather than an accurate measure of their original extent.

Finally, it's worth mentioning that the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) is currently conducting a survey in Tartus governorate, although it has been interrupted due to the ongoing situation in Syria. Until the survey results are analysed and published, any hypotheses about the archaeological findings remain speculative. Nevertheless, it's clear that the mosaic discoveries in Syria have predominantly surfaced from coastal areas. These regions, deeply influenced by Hellenistic culture, flourished during the Roman and Proto-Byzantine eras. The uncovering of wineries, two baths, and churches along the Syrian coast suggests a prosperous society in this region during ancient times.

[910] Dussaud, 1900, p. 17-19.

Appendix A: Chronological Table of Mosaic Panels

Period	Governorate	Site	Context	Theme	Date
Roman	Latakia	'Ain al –Helweh	Unknown	Aquatic scene	2nd c. AD.
	latakia	Jableh (Gabala)city	Bath	White mosaic	2nd c. AD.
	Latakia	Ghillineh	Bath	Four panels depicting Three marine gods along with a fourth mosaic depicting a pastoral scene (3 panels displayed in the Tartus Museum; 1 in the National Museum of Damascus).	Beginning of the 3rd century AD (Severan period)
	Latakia	Ras al-Bassit	function undetermined	Geometric	3rd c. AD – early 4th c. AD.
	Tartus	Amrite site (Marathos)	Tomb	Mythological figures Hermes and a goddess (displayed in Arwad Museum).	First half of the 3rd c. AD.
Late Roman (Proto-Byzantine) (4th -6th c.AD)	Tartus	Khirbet al-Libneh	Probable church	Geometric and floral motifs.	5th c. AD (possibly early 6th c. AD)
	Tartus	Al-Mintar	Unknown	Damaged animal scene (gazelle remaining), geometric and floral motifs.	First quarter of the 5th – first third of the 6th c. AD.
	Tartus	Al- Sha'ara - Qadmus region	Unknown	Animal scene	Last third of the 5th – second third of the 6th c. AD.
	Tartus	Corniche Banyas – Banyas city	Unknown	Geometric	Second half of the 4th – early 5th c. AD.

Late Roman (Proto-Byzantine) (4th-6th c.AD)	Tartus	Al- Ghamqah neighbrhood-Tartus city	Unknown	Geometric and floral motifs, two panels displayed at the Tartus Museum garden, in addition to fragments stored in a wooden box.	5th -6th c.AD.
	Latakia	Baher al-Midan	Church	Geometric and floral motifs	5th -6th c.AD.
	latakia	Shabatliyeh(Bourj Islam)	Church	Geometric and floral motifs plus an inscription	5th -6th c.AD.
	latakia	ʿAin Salem near Jableh city	Church	Animal and aquatic scenes, with geometric and floral decorations	6th c. AD.
	Latakia	Al-ʿInnabeh area-Latakia city	Unknown	Geometric; 2 panels (on display in Latakia Museum)	5th -6th c.AD.
	Latakia	At-Tabiyyat area-Latakia city	Unknown	Geometric; one panel(displayed in Latakia Museum)	Third quarter of the 4th – first half of the 5th c. AD.
	Latakia	Latakia city-unknown	Unknown	Geometric; 2 panels (displayed in Latakia Museum)	5th -6th c. AD
	Latakia	Ras al-Bassit	Synagogue	Menorah and geometric motifs	6th c.AD.
	Tartus	Wata Ibtilleh	Winery	White mosaic	4th -6th c. AD.
	Tartus	Hraysoon			
	Tartus	Tall Talyn			
	Latakia	Tall Tweini			
	Tartus	Tall Darruk	Unknown	White mosaic	4th-6th c. AD.
	Tartus	Mosaic panels of unknown provenance	Unknown-Confiscated	Birds with vegetal motifs; 2 panels (Tartus Museum Garden)	5th -6th c. AD.

Bibliography

Al- ‘Usn, A.-F., Joundi, A., & Zouhdi, B. (1969). Catalogue du Musée national de Damas. Damascus: Direction générale des antiquités et des musées.

Abdallah, K. (2018). Pavement de l'époque romaine en Syrie côtière : La mosaïque d'Amrit. (é. p.-B. Vassal, Ed.) *Art et Archéologie du Proche-Orient hellénistique et romaine : Acte de la journée d’étude du 11 mai 2017*, 97-104.

Abdallah, Komait. (2018). *Les Mosaiques Romaines et Byzantines de Syrie du Nord, la collection du musee de Maarrat al-Nu‘man.* Beyrouth: Institut Français du Proche-Orient (IFPO).

Abdallah, K., Desreumaux, A. & Al-Kaid, M.(2020). Nouvelles mosaïques d’Osrhoène découvertes in situ en Syrie du nord / Suriye’nin Kuzeyinde in situ Yeni Osrhoene Mozaikleri. *Journal of Mosaic Research*, 13, 1–34.

Ahlström, G. W. (1978). Wine Presses and Cup-Marks of the Jenin- Megiddo Survey. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*(231), 19-51.

Ahmad, M. R. (2019). L’église de Bahr el-Midan Résultats des campagnes de fouilles du service des Antiquités de Lattaquié (2010 à 2016). *Syria*, 17-36.

Akkermans, P. M. (2003). *The Archaeology of Syria: From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies (c.16,000-300 BC).* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Badawi, M. (2014). Les thermes de Gabala (Jablé – Syrie. (S. D. M.-Fr. Boussac, Ed.) *25 siècles de bain collectif en Orient. Proche-Orient, Égypte et péninsule Arabique, Actes du colloque de Damas,2009, 2*, 307-318.

Badawi, M. (2019). Le niveau byzantin de Tell Tweini (chantier B)Tweini II / Niveau 3. (C. N. Michel Al-Maqdissi, Ed.) *Studia Orontica, XVIII*.

Badawi, M. (2019). L’église de ʿAin Salem dans la région de Gabala (Jablé, Syrie). *syria*, 37-56.

Bagatti, P. B. (1963). Il pavimento musivo di Qabr Hiram (Libano). *Rivista di Archeologia Christiana 39*, 93–104.

Balādhurī, a. (n.d.). *Futūh al-Buldān.*

Balmelle, C. et al. (1985). Le décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine : répertoire graphique. Paris : Picard.

Balmelle, C. (1987). Recueil général des mosaïques de la Gaule. Paris.

Balty, J. (1973). Mosaïque de Gê et des saisons à Apamée. *Syria, 50*(3-4), 311-347.

Balty, J. (1977). Mosaïques antiques de Syrie.

Balty, J. (1981). La mosaïque antique au Proche-Orient I. Des origines à la Tétrarchie. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, 2*(12.2), 347–429.

Balty, J. (1984). Les mosaïques de Syrie au Ve siècle et leur répertoire. *Byzantin, LIV*, 437-468.

Balty, J. (1986). *Mosaïques d' Apamée.* Bruxelles.

Balty, J. (1989). La Mosaique en Syrie. *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie, 2*, 491-523.

Balty, J. (1990). *La Mosaique de Sarrin (Osrhoene)* . Paris.

Balty, J. (1995). *Mosaïques antiques du Proche-Orient.* paris.

Balty, J. (1997). Mosaïque et architecture domestique dans l'Apamée des Ve et Vie siècles. (ed. Signe Isager and Birte Poulsen, Ed.) *Patron and Pavements in Late Antiquity. Actes du Colloque de Mai 1995,Halicarnassian Studies 2,*, 48–119.

Balty, J. C. (1981). *Guide d'Apamée.* Bruxelle: Centre belge de recherches archéologiques à Apamée de Syrie.

Balty, J. C. (1986). AXIOS II. *lexicon iconographicum mythologiae(LIMC)III-I*, 68-69.

Balty, J. C. (1988). Euphrates. *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, IV*, 70-74.

Bauchhenss, E. S. (1992). Mercurius. *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, VI*, 500-554.

Beaudry, N. (2004). *La basilique de Ras el Bassit, une église paléochrétienne sur la cote de Syrie du Nord. Thèse, .* paris: Paris : Université de Paris-I Panthéon-Sorbonne ; Montréal: Université de Montréal.

Beaudry, N. (2011). Mosaïques inédites d'une synagogue à Ras el-Bassit, Syrie du Nord. , *O Mosaico romano nos centros e nas periferias. Originalidades, influências e identidades, Actas do X Colóquio Internacional da AIEMA* , 669-678.

Becatti, G. (1967). *The Art of Ancient Greece and Rome.* London: Harry N. Abrams.

Belayche, N. (2001). *Iudaea-Palaestina : the pagan cults in Roman Palestine (second to fourth century).* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck .

Bellefonds, P. L. (1992). Nemesis(in peripheria Orientali) . *LIMC*, 770-773.

Ben Abed Ben Khader, A. (2006). Tunisian Mosaic: Treasures from Roman Africa. (Translated from French by Sharon Grevet). Los Angeles : Getty Publications

Beschi, L. (1988). Demeter. *LIMC, IV-1*, 844-892.

Bisi, A. M. (1978). A proposito di alcune stele del tipo della Ghorfa al British Museum. *Antiquités africaines, 12*, 21-88.

Borumand, S. (2018). Cornucopia: Origins, diffusion and adoption in ancient Irano-Indian semiosphere. *Studies in People's History, Volume 5*(Issue 2), 166–179.

Bounni, A. (1993). Les fouilles archéologiques syriennes à Tell Sianu. *Dirâsât Tarîkhiyyah (Études historiques) in Arabic, 45-46*, 151-164.

Bowersock, G. W. (1989). Social and Economic History of Syria under the Roman Empire. *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie. II. La Syrie de l'époque acheménide à l'avènement de l'Islam*, 63-80.

Bréhier, L. (1918). *L'art chrétien, son développement iconographique des origines à nos jours.* Paris.

Bru, H. (2008). Némésis et le culte impérial dans les provinces syriennes. *Syria, 85*, 293-314.

Bruneau, P. (1972). *Les Mosaïques (Explor. Arch. Délos, XXIX).* Paris.

Budde, L. (1969). *Antike Mosaiken in Kilikien HIER: Band I : Frühchristliche Mosaiken in Misis-Mopsuhestia.* Recklinghausen: Bongers Verlag.

Budde, L. (1972). *Antike Mosaiken in Kilikien. Band II: Die heidnischen Mosaiken.* Recklinghausen: Aurel Bongers,.

Buisson, R. d. (1973). Nouvelles études sur les dieux et les mythes de Canaan. *(Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain), 33*.

Cahn, H. A. (1994). Okeanos. *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, VII*, 31-33.

Cahn, H. A. (1997). Thalassa. *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, VIII*, 1198-1199.

Campbell, S. (1988). *The mosaic of Antioch* . Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.

Cancik, H., Schneider, H., & Landfester, M. (eds.) (1999). Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike, Vol. 6. Stuttgart: Metzler.

Canivet, M. -T. a. (1979). L'ensemble ecclésial de Hūarte d'Apamène (Syrie) (campagnes de 1973-1976). *Syria 56/1-2*, 65–98.

Canivet, P. (1989). Le christianisme en Syrie des origines à l'avènement de l'islam. *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie. II. La Syrie de l'époque acheménide à l'avènement de l'Islam*, 117-148.

Cébeillac-Gervasoni, J.-P. M. (2002). *Histoire romaine.* Paris.

Chamoux, F. (1959). Hermès Parammon. *études d'archéologie classiqueç, 2*.

Chapouthier, F. (1954). Les peintures murales d'un hypogée funéraire près de Massyaf. *Syria, 31*(3-4), 172-211.

Chatonnef, J. B. (2000). Nouvelles mosaïques inscrites d'Osrhoène. *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot, 79*, 31-72.

Chehab, M. (1959). *Mosaiques Du Liban* (Vol. 2). paris: Librairie D'Amerique et D'Orient.

Chock, A. (2015). *Khirbet el-Libneh" étude architecturale et archéologique des vestiges protobyzantins (Tartous-Syria)"*. Aix-Marseille Université.: Thèse de Doctorat.

Chok, A. (2016). La basilique de Khirbet el-Libneh (sur la côte syrienne): analyse architecturale. *Acta XVI Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae: Romae (22-28.9.2013):*

Costantino e costantinidi: l'innovazione costantiana, le sue radici e i suoi sviluppiStudi di antichità cristiana. 1-2, pp. 1592-1606. Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana.

Cimok, F. (2000). *Antioch Mosaics.* istanbul: turizm yayinlari.

Courbin, P. (1978). Une nouvelle fouille française sur la cote syrienne : a-t-on retrouvé l'antique Posideion à Ras el Bassit? *Archéologia,* (116), 48-62.

Daszewski, W. A. (1988). Mosaic floors in Cyprus. Ravenna: Edizioni del Girasole.

Delcor, M. (1986). Astarte. *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, III*, 1077-1085.

Devreesse, R. (1945). Le Patriarcat d'Antioche depuis la paix de l'Église jusqu'à la conquête arabe. Paris : Librairie Lecoffre.

Donceel-Voute, P. (1988). *Les Pavements des églises byzantines de Syrie et du Liban : décor, archéologie et liturgie.* Louvain-la Neuve: Département d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art : Collège Erasme.

Dulière, C. (1968). La mosaïque des amazones. Bruxelles : Centre Belge de Recherches Archéologiques à Apamée.

Dulière, C. (1974). *Mosaïques des portiques de la grande colonnade: (Sect. VII, 16-17)* (Vol. 3). Bruxelles: Centre Belge de Recherches Archéologiques à Apamée de Syrie.

Dunbabin, K. M. (1978). *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage.* Oxford: Clarendon press.

Dussaud, R. (1900). *Histoire et religion des Nosairîs.* Paris.

Dussaud, R. (1927). *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale.* Paris.

Dziewanowski, K.-A. (1971). *Alexandria.* Leipzig: VEB E. A. Seemann Buch- und Kunstverlag, o. A. (1. Aufl.).

Eraslan, Ş. (2011). *Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi mozaik sanatında okeanos ve tethys betimlemelerinin tipolojik ve ikonografik açıdan değerlendirilmesi* (Vol. doktora tezi). Konya.

Eraslan, Ş. (2012). Antik Dönem Sanatında Okeanos Figürleri. *Atatürk Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesi Dergisi*(22), p. 157-166.

Eraslan, Ş. (2015).Iconographic Differences of Oceanus in the Mosaic Art. *XII Colloquio AIEMA,2012*, 195-200. Paris.

Eraslan, Ş. (2015). Oceanus, Tethys and Thalssa Figures in the Light of Antioch and Zeugma Mosaics. *Journal of International Social Research, 8*(37), 454-462.

Ergergeç, R. -Ö.-W. (2000). Seleukeia am Zeugma Euphrat/ Zeugma. *Gottkönige am Euphrat, Mainz am Rhein* , 105–113.

Farnell, L. R. (1896). *The Cults of the Greek States* (Vol. 2). Oxford: Clarendon Press .

Fleischer, R. (1984). Aphodite. *LIMC*, 2-154.

Franck Wojan, M. A. (2013). Le monnayage d'Hadrien à Élis-Olympie. *Revue Numismatique*, 279-328.

Freyberger, K. S. (2001). *Tartus und sein Hinterland : archäologische Forschungen in der syrischen Küstenregion von der Antike bis ins Mittelalter.* Damascus: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut.

Frothingham, A. L. (1916, Apr - Jun). Babylonian Origin of Hermes the Snake-God, and. *American Journal of Archaeology, 20*(2), 175-211.

Gais, R. M. (1978,). Some Problems of River-God Iconography. *American Journal of Archaeology, Vol. 82*(No. 3), 355-370.

Gatier, P.-L. (2016). Géographie mythologique de l'Oronte dans. *Syria*, 249-269.

Gider, Z. & Büyüközer, A. (2013). A Wine Press with Mosaic Pavement from Belentepe. Journal of Mosaic Research, 6, 23–32.

Goette, H. (1991). Alpheios in Syrien : Zu mosaic in Tartus. *Damaszener Mitteilungen, 5*, 71-80.

Goette, H. R. (2001). "Mosaiken aus einer Therme in Gallineh (Lattakia)." In Tartus und sein Hinterland: Archäologische Forschungen in der syrischen Küstenregion von der Antike bis ins Mittelalter, Damascus: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 54–60.

Guimier-Sorbets, A.-M. (2023). The Representation of the Nile on Mosaics: Various Contexts, Various Meanings. *Journal of Mosaic Research(16)*, 239-250.

Hachlili, R. (2009). *Ancient Mosaic Pavements.* Boston.

Harper, R. P. (1975). Excavations at Dibsi Faraj, Northern Syria, 1972–1974: A preliminary note on the site and its monuments with an appendix. Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 29, 319–334.

Haydar, J. (nd). *Latakia. The Main Archaeologican and Tourist Locations* . Latakia.

Hélou, N. (2019). *Les mosaïques protobyzantines du Liban: Iconographie et symbolisme, .* Kaslik: Universite Saint Esprit.

Hesiod. (2006). *Theogony. Works and Days. Testimonia* (Vol. I). (G. W. Most, Trans.) London.

Hesiod. (n.d.). *Theogony.*

Hirschfeld, Y. (1983). Ancient Wine Presses in the Park of Aijalon. *Israel Exploration Journal*(33), 207-19.

Homer. (1925). *The Iliad* (Vol. II). (A. T. Murray, Trans.) london.

Hornblower, S. A. (Ed.). (2012). Hermes. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

Imhoof-Blumer F. and Gardner P. (1964). Ancient Coins Illustrating Lost Masterpieces of Greek Art , a Numismatic Commentary on Pausanias. Chicago: Argonaut.

Jashemski, W. F., & Meyer, F. G. (eds.) (2002). The natural history of Pompeii. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jbaee, M. (2017). A New Mosaic from Ain El-Helwe in Latakia, Syria. *The Conservation and Presentation of Mosaics: At What Cost?Proceedings of the 12th Conference of the International Committee for the Conservation of Mosaics, Sardinia, October 27–31, 2014* (pp. 208-212). Los Angeles: Getty conservation institue.

Jentel, M.-O. (1984). Aphrodite(in Peripheria Orientali) . *LIMC*, 154-166.

Jentel, M.-O. (1997). TETHYS . *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, VIII*, 1193-1195.

Jouéjati, R. (2012). L'église de Temanaa. *Syria*, 235-258.

Jouejati, R. (n.d.). *Les mosaïques d'une église apostolique à Tell Aar.*

Karanastassi, P. (1992). Nemesis. *LIMC, VI-1*, 733-762.

Kennedy, H. (1985). The Last Century of Byzantine Syria: a reinterpretation. *Byzantinische Forschungen, X*, 141-83.

Koehl, R. B. (2006). *Aegean Bronze Age Rhyta* (Vol. Prehistory monographs ; 19). Pennsylvania: INSTAP Academic Press.

L. A, K. A.-N. (2000). Two Large Wine Presses at Khirbet Yajuz, Jordan. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 41-57.

Leclercq, F. C. (1922). *Dictionnaire d'archeologie chretienne et de liturgic, xm, I, Paris, I937, cols. I075-97.* paris.

Levi, D. (1947). *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* . Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Lembke, K. (2001). "Einleitung." In Tartus und sein Hinterland: Archäologische Forschungen in der syrischen Küstenregion von der Antike bis ins Mittelalter. Damascus: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut. pp. 7–10.

Liebeschuetz, W. H. G. (1972). *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire*. London.

Liebeschuetz, W. H. G. (1989). *Antioch and the Villages of Northern Syria in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries A.D.: Trends and Problems*. Nottingham Medieval Studies, 32, 65–90.

Lipiński, E. (1995). *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique.* Louvain: Peeters Leuven.

Lund, J., Riis, P. J., Thuesen, I., & Riis, T. (2004). *Topographical studies in the Gabla Plain [Publications of the Carlsberg Expedition to Phoenicia, 13]*. Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, commission agent : C.A. Reitzel.

Madden, A. M. (2014). *Corpus of Byzantine Church Mosaic Pavements in Israel and the Palestinian Territories (Colloquia Antiqua, 13).* paris: Peeters .

Maguire, H. (1987). *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art.* London : Penn State University Press.

Major, B. (2015). *Medieval Rural Settlements in the Syrian Coastal Region (12th and 13th Centuries).* Oxford: Oxuniprint.

Major, B. (2016). Where Was the Town of Valenia Located in the Thirteenth Century? (K. L. M. Sinibaldi, Ed.) Crusader Landscapes in the Medieval Levant. The Archaeology and History of the Latin East, 117-130.

Malaise, M. (2009). Le calathos de Sérapis. *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur.Bd.38*, 173-193.

Matheson, S. B. (1994). The Goddess Tyche. *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*, 18-33.

Mattern, R. M. (1939). Dair Ṣolaib, I. Les deux églises. II. Mosaïque « prophylactique ». Le décor. Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph, 22(1), 1–48.

Melhem, I. ,. (1995). The Technology of Wine Presses in Jordan and Palestine during the Roman and Byzantine Periods. (E. Z. K. CAmr, Ed.) *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan V*, 29-35.

Michaelides, D. (1987). *Cypriot mosaics.* Nicosia: Department of Antiquities.

Morey, C. R. (1938). *The Mosaics of Antioch.* London.

Murray, J. (1891). Rhyton. *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, II*.

Naval Intelligence Division. Geographical Section (1920). *A Handbook of Syria*. London.

Ogden, J. M. (1990). *Gold Jewellery in Ptolemaic, Roman and Byzantine.* Doctoral thesis, Durham University.

Onal, M. (2009). *A corpus Zeugma mosaics.* Istanbul: A Turizm Yayinlari.

Olszewski, M.-T. (1995). L'image et sa fonction dans la mosaïque byzantine des premières basiliques en Orient: l'iconographie chrétienne expliquée par Cyrille de Jérusalem (314-387). *CA, 43*, 9-43.

Ostrowski, J. A. (1991). *Personifications of Rivers in Greek and Roman Art.* Warsaw : Jagiellonian University Press.

Ovadiah, A. (1980). *Geometric and floral patterns in ancient mosaics : a study of their origin in the mosaics from the classical period to the age of Augustus* . Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider.

Ovadiah, R & A. (1987). *Mosaic pavements in Israel: Hellenistic, Roman, and early Byzantine.* Roma: L'Erma" di Bretschneider.

Ovid. (n.d.). *The Metamorphoses* (Vol. V).

Palagia, O. (1981). Alpheios. *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, I*, 576-578.

Pausanias. (1935). *Description of Greece.* (E. T. Ormerod, Trans.) London : W. Heinemann ; New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Perdrizet, P. (1903). Siriaca. *Revue Archéologique*, 392-400.

Perdrizet, P. (1911). Bronzes grecs d'Egypte de la collection Fouquet. *Bibliothèque d'art et d'archéologie*.

Perrot, G. &. (1885). *History Of Art In Phoenicia And Its Dependencies.* London.

Piccirillo, A. R. (1999). The mosaic floor of the church of the Holy martyrs at Tayibat al-Imam-Hama in central Syria. *Liber annuus, 49,* 443–464.

Piccirillo, M. (1980). Le antichita di Rihab Dei bene Hasan. *Liber annuus, 30,* 317–350.

Piccirillo, M. (1984). Le chiese di Quweishmeh-Amman. *Liber Annuus, 34,* 329–340.

Piccirillo, M. (1993). La chiesa dei Sunna'a Madaba. *Liber Annuus 43* , 277–313, plates 1–16.

Piccirillo, M. (1993). *The Mosaics of Jordan.* American Center of Oriental Research .

Piccirillo, M. (1994). Les due iscrizioni della cappella della Theotokos nel Wadi' Ayn al-Kanisah-Monte Nebo. *Liber Annuus 44,* 521–538, plates 19–26.

Piccirillo, M. (2007). La Chiesa Cattedrale di Hama-Epifania in Siria. *Liber Annuus LVII(LA),* 597-621.

Pinch, G. (2002). *Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt.* New York : Oxford University Press.

Plutarch. (1883). *Plutarch's Morals* (Vol. 5). (P. D. Translated from the Greek by several hands. Corrected and revised by. William W. Goodwin, Trans.) Boston.

Rayor, D. J. (1998). Homeric Hymn to Demeter. *Grand Valley Review, Vol. 18*(1, Artcle 15), 66-83.

Reese, D. S. (2002). Fish: Evidence from Specimens, Mosaics, Wall Painting, and Roman Authors. In F. G. Wilhelmina F. Jashemski (Ed.), *The Natural History of Pompeii* (pp. 274-291). Cambrige: Cambrige University Press.

Renan, E. (1864). *Mission de Phénicie.* Paris.

Rey-Coquais, J.-P. (1967). Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie. *Baalbek et Beqaʿ(Bibliothèque archéologique et historique), 6, Nos 2711-3017.*

Rey-Coquais, J.-P. (1970). Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie- Arados et régions voisines. *Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, 7, Nos 4001-4061*.

Rey-Coquais, J-P. (1974). Arados et sa pérée aux époques grecque, romaine et byzantine. Paris.

Rey-Coquais, J.-P. (1989). La Syrie, de Pompée à Dioclétien : histoire politique et administrative. *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie. II. La Syrie de l'époque achéménide à l'avènement de l'Islam*, 45-61.

Robert, D. (1945). *Le patriarcat d'Antioche.* paris.

Roman, L. R. (2010). *Encyclopedia of Greek and Roman Mythology.* Facts on File.

Sälfund, M.L. (1970). The East Pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. Göteborg.

Sandri, S. (2017). Nilometers - or: Can You Measure Wealth? In H. W. (eds., *The Nile: Natural and Cultural Landscape in Egypt, Mainz Historical Cultural Sciences 36* (pp. 193-214). Bielefeld.

Sari, S. A. (1997). The Technique and the Mechanism of the Wine Press at Sa'ad. *Dirastat 24, no. 1 (Arabic);* , 196-211.

Sartre, M. (1989). La Syrie à l'époque hellénistique. *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie. II. La Syrie de l'époque achéménide à l'avènement de l'Islam*, 30-44.

Sartre, M. (1991). *L'Orient romain: provinces et sociétés provinciales en Méditerranée orientale d'Auguste aux Sévères (31 avant J.-C-235 après J.-C.).* Seuil.

Sartre, M. (2001). *D'Alexandre à Zénobie: Histoire du Levant antique (IVe siècle av. J.-C. - IIIe siècle ap. J.-C.* France: Fayard.

Sartre, M. (2005). *The Middle East Under Rome.* London: Harvard University Press.

Sauvaget, J. (1934). Le plan de Laodicée-sur-mer. *Bulletin d'études orientales, 4*, 81-116.

Seltman, C. (1948). Greek Sculpture and Some Festival Coins. *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens 17*, 71-85.

Seyrig, H. (1932). Monuments syriens du culte de Némésis. *Syria, 13*, 50-64.

Seyrig, H. (1950). Antiquités syriennes. *Syria, 27*, 229-252.

Siebert, G. (1990). Hermes. *In Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, V*, 285-387.

Ta'ani, H. (1995). A Wine Press at the Village of Qomn/Irbid. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan 39(Arabic)*, 21-27.

Talgam, R. (2014). *Mosaics of Faith: Floors of Pagans, Jews, Samaritans, Christians, and Muslims in the Holy Land.* Jerusalem: Penn State University Press.

Tate, G. (1989). La syrie à l'époque byzantine: Essai de synthèse. *Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie. II. La Syrie de l'époque acheménide à l'avènement de l'Islam*, 96-116.

Tate, G. (2004). La Syrie-Palestine. *Le monde byzantin: L'Empire romain d'Orient (330-641), 1*, 373-401.

Tekin, O. (2001). River-Gods in Cilicia in the Light of Numismatic Evidence. *La Cilicie : espaces et pouvoirs locaux (IIe millénaire av. J.-C. – IVe siècle ap. J.-C.). Actes de la Table Ronde d'Istanbul, 2-5 novembre 1999* (pp. 519-551). Istanbul: Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes-Georges Dumézil.

Thalman, J.-P. (2000). Tell Arqa. *Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises, 4*, 5-74.

Tinh, T. T. (1990). Isis. *LIMC, V*, 761-796.

Trell, B. L. (1981). The influence of the Near Eastnon the punic world-the numismatic evidence. *Les cahiers de Tunisie: Revue de sciences humaines; Actes du IIe Congres d'histoire and de civilisation du Maghreb(November 1980), 29*(117-118), 477-494.

Verneuil, M. P. (1897). *Dictionnaire des symboles, emblèmes et attributs.* paris: Henri Laurens.

Wages, S. M. (1986). A Note on the Dumbarton Oaks Tethys Mosaic. Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 40, 119-128.

Will, E. (1966). *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique, 323-30 av. J.-C.* (Vol. 1). Nancy.

Witt, R. E. (1971). *Isis in the Graeco-Roman world.* New York: Cornell University Press.

Yeivin, S. (1960). *A descade of Archaeology in Israel (1948-1958).* Istanbul: Nederlands historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut in het nabije o osten.

Online Etymology Dictionary. (n.d.). *Nemesis*. Retrieved March 10, 2026, from https://www.etymonline.com/word/nemes

Abstract

Mosaic art flourished across Syria during antiquity, as evidenced by numerous discoveries. However, mosaics from the Syrian coastal region have received relatively limited scholarly attention. Early finds include the bath mosaics near Latakia, the mosaics of the Amrit tomb, the Ras al-Bassit mosaic, and several panels now displayed in the museums of Tartus and Latakia.

In recent years, new mosaics have been discovered along the coast, including al-Shaʿara in the al-Qadmus region, al-Mintar and Khirbet al-Libneh near Tartus, and Baher al-Midan, ʿAin al-Helweh, and ʿAin Salem in the Latakia region. Many of these, however, remain poorly documented and insufficiently studied, particularly regarding their decorative programs and iconographic themes.

This study focuses on mosaics from the Syrian coastal region, specifically those originating in the modern governorates of Tartus and Latakia. It analyses both earlier and more recent discoveries, as well as panels preserved in local museums. The research examines the decorative programs, motifs, and iconographic themes of these mosaics, considering their stylistic features and archaeological context. Additionally, it evaluates how the distribution of these mosaics across the region may reflect aspects of local circumstances during the Classical period, providing a comprehensive understanding of mosaic art in this region.

Összefoglaló

Amint azt számos régészeti lelet bizonyítja, a mozaikművészet virágzott az ókori Szíria területén. A szíriai tengerparti régió mozaikjai azonban viszonylag csekély tudományos figyelmet kaptak. A korai leletek közé tartoznak a Latakia közelében feltárt fürdő mozaikjai, az Amrit-sír mozaikjai, a Ras al-Bassit mozaik, valamint több olyan ex-situ panel, amelyeket jelenleg Tartus és Latakia múzeumaiban őriznek.

Az utóbbi években új mozaikokat fedeztek fel a tengerpart mentén, többek között az al-Qadmous régióban található al-Shaʿara lelőhelyen, a Tartus közelében fekvő al-Mintar és Khirbet al Libneh területén, valamint a Latakia régióban található Baher al-Midan, ʿAin al-Helweh és ʿAin Salem lelőhelyeken. E mozaikok közül azonban sok továbbra is hiányosan, vagy alig dokumentált és nem szakszerűen tanulmányozott, különösen díszítő motívumaik és ikonográfiai programjuk tekintetében.

A disszertáció a szíriai tengerparti régió mozaikjaira összpontosít, különösen a mai Tartus és Latakia kormányzóság területéről származó leletekre. Elemzi mind a korábbi, mind az újabb felfedezéseket, valamint feldolgozza a helyi múzeumokban őrzött paneleket. A kutatás során a szerző vizsgálja a jellemző motívumokat és ikonográfiai témákat, figyelembe véve stilisztikai jegyeiket és amennyiben ismert, eredeti régészeti kontextusukat. Emellett értékeli, hogy e mozaikok regionális eloszlása miként tükrözheti a klasszikus kor helyi viszonyainak egyes aspektusait, ezáltal átfogóbb képet nyújtva a térség mozaikművészetéről.

Appendix B: Figures