



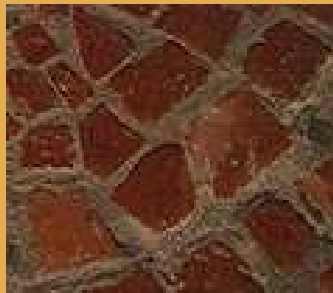


**Exploring the art of...**

# **ROMAN MOSAICS**

# What is a mosaic?

- *Mosaic* is defined as:
- a picture or decoration made of small, usually colored pieces of inlaid stone, glass, etc.
- the process of producing such a picture or decoration.
- *Tesserae* is the plural of "*tessera*", a name given to piece used in a mosaic. Originally tesserae were the cubes of stone used in ancient classical mosaics, but now the term is used for pieces of any kind of mosaic material, whether they are ceramic, stone, pebbles, glass or some other substance.





# How old is this ancient art form?



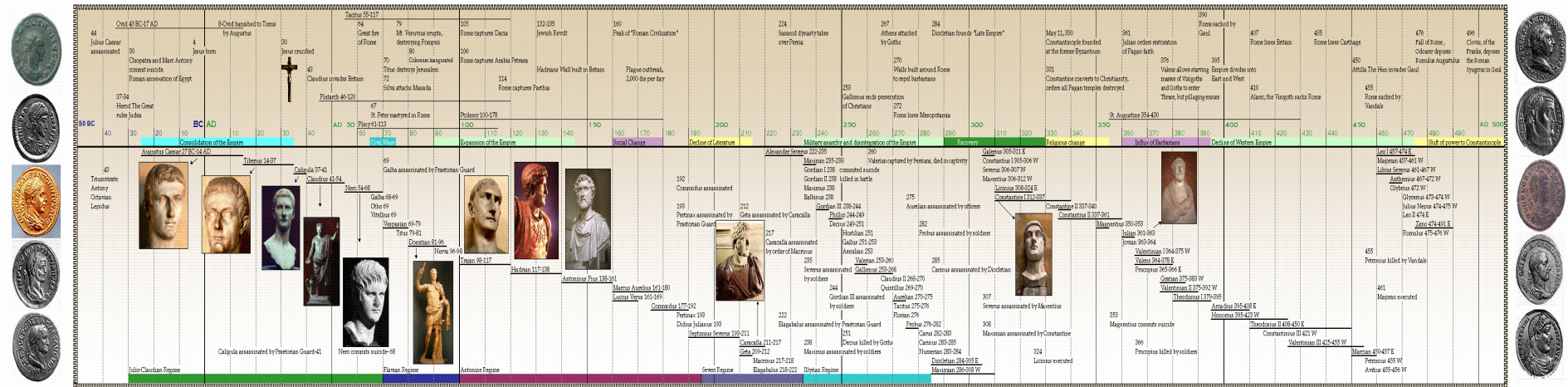
- Where and when were the first mosaics created? What are they made of?
- How are they still around today?
- What do the mosaics show, what do they communicate? What stories do they tell?

# The Roman Empire





# Timeline of the Roman Empire



Coin of Julius Caesar (the dictator), showing Aeneas, making his escape from Troy. Coin from the Westfälisches Römermuseum, Haltern

# Roman Provinces



## Legions



Before 114 A.D.



After 114 A.D.



Temporary Territories

# Types of mosaic patterns

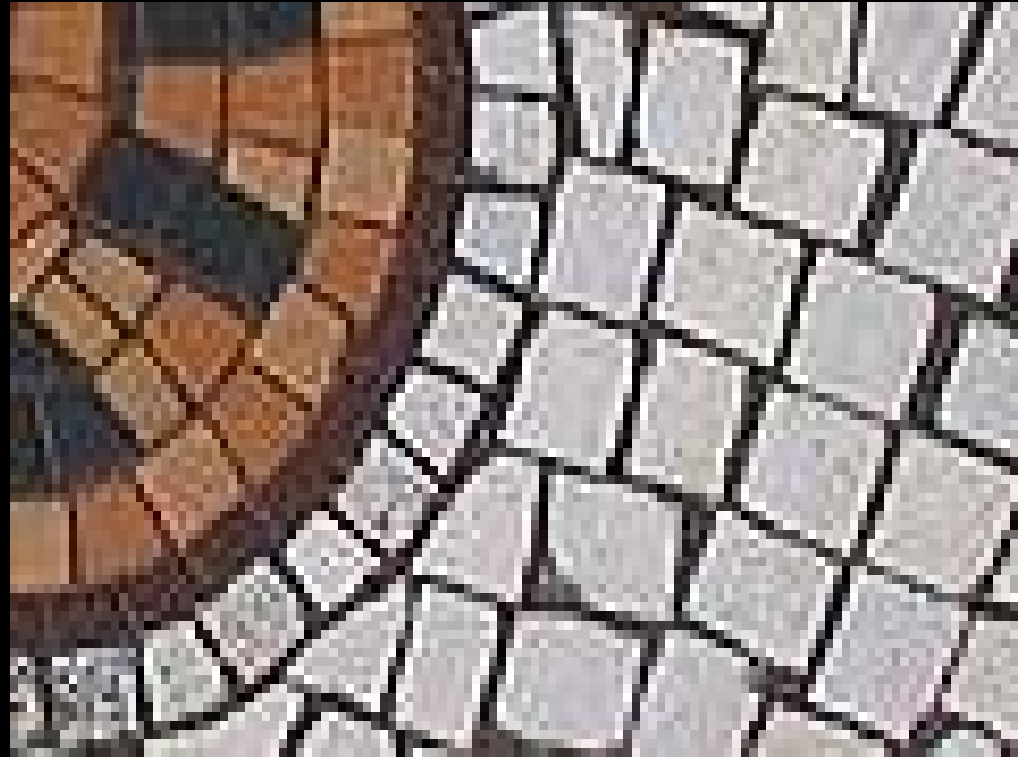
- ‘Opus’ means composition, in Latin...or ‘a work, a composition.’
- Usually relates to music. Also to a work of art, like a mosaic
- Mosaics have different patterns/layouts of tessare, or single pieces of stone, glass, ceramic, porcelain, etc.





# Opus Vermiculatum....

- Opus vermiculatum
    - A single row, or several rows, of tesserae following the outline of a feature (such as a figure or other subject) in a mosaic. The effect is a little like a halo, highlighting the subject and providing contrast against a background with tesserae laid in a different style.
- "Vermiculatum" means "worm-like" and is so called because it curves around the contours of the design.



**Emperor Constantine,  
11th Century C.E.,  
Istanbul, Turkey**









# Opus Regulatum

- As the name suggests, this is a very regular pattern of tesserae, like bricks in a wall, or squares on a chess board.









# Opus Sectile

- This is a technique where, instead of being made up of lots of individual tesserae, shapes in a picture are made from larger, specially cut, pieces (perhaps of tile or stone). Also refers to a style of painted fused glasswork developed in Victorian times.







# Opus Tessellatum

- Opus Tessellatum
- A description of rows of tesserae laid in regular horizontal or vertical lines. This style of placement is generally used in backgrounds.









# ~Opus Paladanium ~

- A random-like, “crazy paving” effect of placement of irregular mosaic tesserae. A great example of this technique is in Antoni Gaudi’s work...









# Roman Mosaics

- **The expansion of the Roman Empire took mosaics further afield, although the level of skill and artistry was diluted. If you compare mosaics from Roman Britain with Italian ones you will notice that the British examples are simpler in design and less accomplished in technique.**
- **Typically Roman subjects were scenes celebrating their gods, domestic themes and geometric designs. The inter-twined rope border effect here is called "guilloche".**







# From Museo Civico Reggio Emilia (Northern Italy)



# Piazza Armerina - the Hunt





# Piazza Armerina - the Hunt









**RAVENNA, ITALY ~ CITY OF MOSAICS**



- Representation of Empress Theodora, Ravenna, Italy

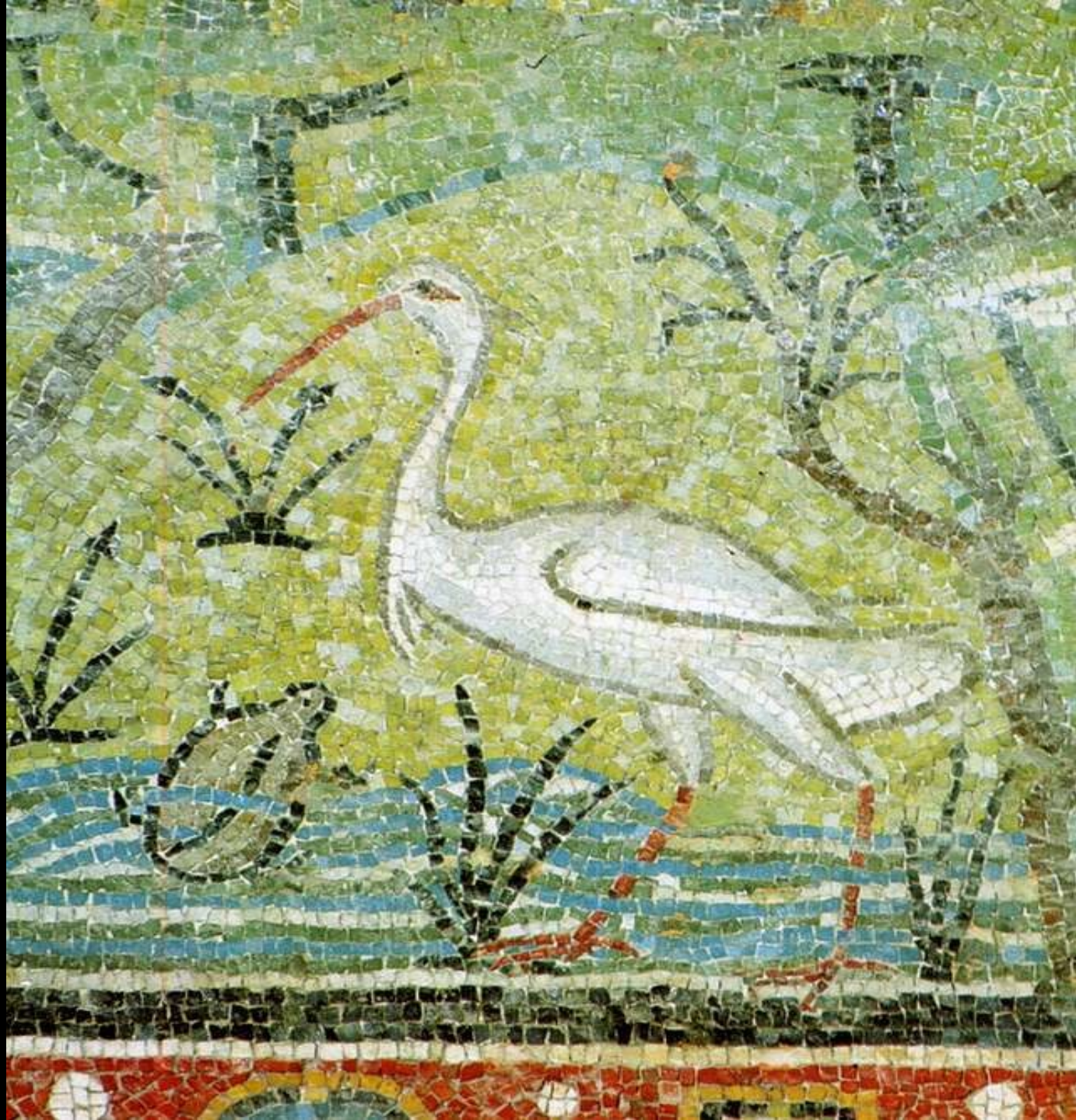




- Detail of Emperor Justinian, Ravenna, Italy
- 527-565 AD
- Byzantine mosaic









# Music of Ancient Rome....

- This is a picture of a woman playing a kithara. Heavier and larger than a lyre, this instrument produced a loud, sweet, piercing sound, with precision tuning ability. From kithara comes our word guitar.



# Music of Ancient Rome....

- Musical instruments played by Romans also included the hydraulis (an organ that worked with water pressure) and the curved trumpet, the Cornu...
- Thanks to the mosaics we can see what musical instruments were like! What instruments do we have today that resemble these?





# Mosaic Artists - Past and Present



# Niki de Saint Phalle

France • 1930 - 2002





# Antoni Gaudi

Architect and Designer • Spain 1852 - 1926







- **Where is this mosaic located? Who is the artist?**





- **Where is this mosaic located? Who is the artist?**



# Some Lions we know...

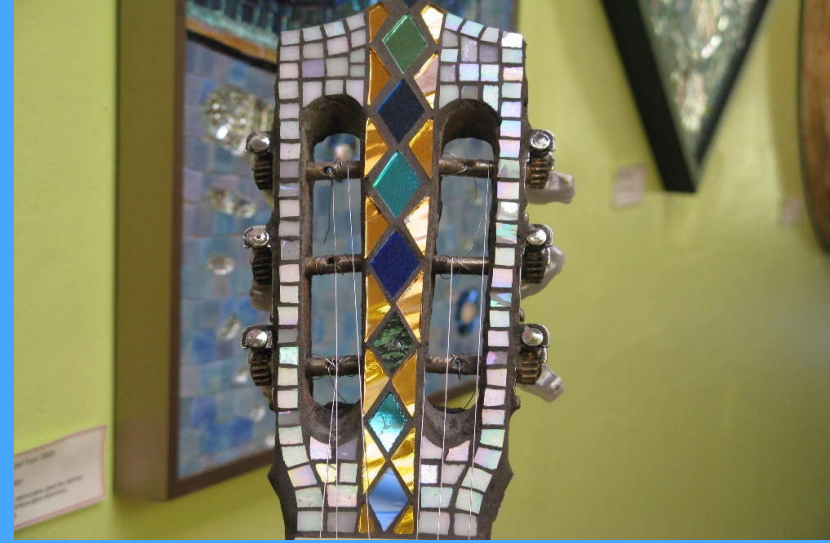




A lion from the past...







- A mosaic guitar from the **Institute of Mosaic Art**, just across the Fruitvale bridge! (detail above)



