

IATL Pedagogic Intervention Grant: 'Performative learning of the techniques of Ancient Roman mosaic'. Final report

The grant was used to host a practical workshop introducing students taking the module 'Domestic Space in the Roman world' to the techniques employed in the construction of ancient Roman mosaics. The workshop was held for 3 hours on Wednesday 26th February and was run by Lawrence Payne of [Roman Mosaic Workshops](#).

The aim of the workshop was to give students experience in creating their own mosaic panels, allowing them to combine their academic knowledge of the iconography of Roman mosaics with practical experience of ancient techniques. Through this performative participation they learnt the constraints and opportunities of ancient mosaic techniques and gained a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the development and choice of Roman mosaics.

Before the workshop Lawrence put up a page on his website explaining to students what they should expect from the workshop. The workshop itself ran for 3 hours; Lawrence gave an introductory lecture on what is known about the techniques of roman mosaic working, before allowing students to choose one of two designs to create themselves: a bird or a 2-strand guilloche. Although we used modern PVA glue rather than mortar, the processes of laying out and positioning the tesserae followed Roman techniques. The aim of the workshop was to allow students to experience for themselves the processes involved in creating complex mosaics, including issues such as the time involved, the practicalities of team working to create larger mosaics, and the possibility for errors to arise.

Feedback forms suggest an overwhelmingly positive response to the workshop; in particular, students commented that it made them realise the time involved in creating mosaics and the logistics involved in creating complex designs. In light of the success of this workshop I am in the process of applying to IATL for further funding to incorporate more practical sessions into a pilot version of my module 'Art and Architecture in Asia Minor' to evaluate the success of different types of sessions and the ways these might be incorporated into the module in future years.

By permission of Lawrence Payne and the participants, the workshop was videoed. An edited version and photographs can be found on the Department's website at

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/students/modules/domspace/mosaic>

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30.4.14