

The Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah in Late Antique Mosaic Pavements of Cilician and Isaurian Church Buildings

Kilikya ve İsaurya Kilise Yapılarının Geç Antik Dönem Mozaik Döşemelerinde Yeşaya'nın Barışçıl Krallığı

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Abstract

This article examines a topic that has been only partially investigated to date, namely that of the iconic depiction of the so-called "Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah" on mosaics located in late antique church buildings in the region of Cilicia (southeastern modern Turkey). These mosaics are sometimes accompanied by the verse of Isaiah 11:6 or 65:25. Many of these Cilician mosaics lie in a state of neglect or have suffered great damage in recent years. Referring, therefore, to the excavation reports and to personal observations, I attempt a reconstruction of the iconography and of the mosaics' locations within their respective Christian buildings, where possible.

Starting with a short introduction on the meaning of the "Peaceful Kingdom" as described in Isaiah 11:6 and 65:25, the article presents a detailed analysis of the Cilician/Isaurian case studies. Similar examples from neighbouring regions in the East and the only identifiable case study in the West (Corsica) are also briefly discussed. Next, possible archetypes from which the representation of animals might have originated and influenced the origin of the "Peaceful Kingdom" motif are considered. In conclusion, after briefly outlining the different interpretations given by scholars on the meaning of the "Peaceful Kingdom" mosaics, an attempt will be made to interpret the Cilician case studies in light of a combined analysis both of positioning within the building and liturgical use.

Keywords: Mosaic, Late Antiquity, paradisiac, Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah, Cilicia.

Öz

Bu makale, bugüne kadar sadece kısmen araştırılmış bir konuyu, yani Kilikya bölgesindeki (modern Türkiye'nin güneydoğusu) geç antik kilise yapılarında bulunan mozaiklerdeki "Yeşaya'nın Barışçıl Krallığı" olarak adlandırılan ikonik (görüntüsel) tasviri incelemektedir. Bu mozaiklere bazen Yeşaya 11:6 veya 65:25 ayetlerinden alıntılar eşlik etmektedir. Bu Kilikya mozaiklerinin birçoğu bakımsız durumdadır ya da son yıllarda büyük zarar görmüştür. Bu nedenle, kazı raporlarına ve kişisel gözlemlere atıfta bulunarak, ikonografinin ve mozaiklerin ilgili Hıristiyan yapıları içindeki konumlarının mümkün olduğunca yeniden yapılandırılmasına çalışıyorum.

Yeşaya 11:6 ve 65:25'te tarif edilen "Barışçıl Krallık"ın anlamı üzerine kısa bir girişle başlayan makale, Kilikya/İsaurya örnek olaylarının detaylı bir analizini sunmaktadır. Doğu'daki komşu bölgelerden benzer örnekler ve Batı'da tanımlanabilen tek örnek çalışması (Korsika) da kısaca ele alınmaktadır. Daha sonra, hayvanların temsilinin kaynaklanmış olabileceği ve "Barışçıl Krallık" motifinin kökenini etkilemiş olan olası modeller ele alınmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, araştırmacılar tarafından "Barışçıl Krallık" mozaiklerinin anlamı üzerine yapılan farklı yorumlar kısaca özetlendikten sonra, Kilikya örnek çalışmaları hem yapı içindeki konumlandırma hem de litürjik kullanımın birleşik bir analizi ışığında yorumlanmaya çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mozaik, Geç Antik Çağ, cennet ile ilgili, Yeşaya'nın Barışçıl Krallık, Kilikya.

Biblical themes often were represented on late antique church mosaic pavements and among these, the so-called “Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah” mosaics seem to have been very popular in the late antique churches of the East. These mosaics, accompanied by the inscribed verses from Isaiah 11:6-7 and 65:25, depict peaceful scenes where pairs of animals acknowledged as natural enemies either serenely face each other or appear to coexist harmoniously in a rural setting surrounded by trees, bushes, and flowers. Numerous contributions mention the existence of such mosaics;¹ however, these contributions fail to describe in detail the scenes depicted in the mosaics, as well as the buildings in which they were placed. Furthermore, the existing literature does not offer comparisons with similar and coeval models from neighbouring regions. Therefore, this article seeks to answer the following questions: how were the mosaics depicting the “Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah” staged inside different religious buildings? What animals were represented? Finally, what concepts did such depictions intend to express to the viewer?

Before focusing explicitly on the specific depictions of each mosaic, let us first consider the verses of Isaiah 11:1-9 and 65:25 as they appear in the Greek Septuagint. Although the mosaics only quote portions of verses 6-7 of Isaiah chapter 11, I quote here the entire paragraph for a better understanding of the text:

- 1 And a rod shall come out of the root of Iessai,
and a blossom shall come up out of his root.
- 2 And the spirit of God shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and godliness.
- 3 The spirit of the fear of God will fill him.
He shall not judge on the basis of repute
or convict on the basis of report,
- 4 but he shall administer justice to a humble one
and convict the humble ones of the earth,
and he shall strike the earth with the word
of his mouth,
and with breath through his lips he shall
do away with the impious.
- 5 He shall be girded with righteousness
around the waist
and bound with truth around the sides.
- 6 *And the wolf shall graze with the lamb,
and the leopard shall rest with the kid,
and the calf and the bull and the lion shall
graze together;
and a little child shall lead them.*
- 7 *And the ox and the bear shall graze together;*

¹ A useful summary of the paradisiac mosaics in Cilicia and Isauria can be found in the *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst IV* (Hild et al. 1990: 336-344). Some more contributions mention these mosaics (Gough 1974: 411-419; Campbell 1995: 125-134; Hachlili 2009: 89-90; Watta 2018: 89).

*and their young shall be together,
and together shall the lion and the ox eat husks.*

8 And the young child shall put its hand over
the hole of asps

and on the lair of the offspring of asps.

9 And they will not hurt or be able to destroy
anyone on my holy mountain,

because the whole earth has been filled to

know the Lord

like much water to cover seas.²

This text describes a heavenly image where harmony reigns among animals and between animals and humans. The presence of the infant seems to tame even the beasts, ushering in a festive atmosphere where life was previously difficult and impossible. However, as previously mentioned, verses 6-7 are the only verses from the larger text which recur partially or totally in the mosaics alongside the depictions.

Although the text differs slightly, the same topic is addressed again in the book of Isaiah in chapter 65:25: “Then wolves and lambs shall feed together, and a lion shall eat straw like an ox, but a snake shall eat earth as bread! They shall not do wrong or destroy on my holy mountain, says the Lord” (Pietersma - Wright 2007: 874). As we shall see below, these verses occasionally accompany the mosaic when two beasts-usually a fierce and a tame one-are depicted in the act of peacefully eating together.

Both of these Isaiah references, which were often used by Christian authors such as Irenaeus (*Demon.* 61, SC 406:172) in the 2nd century AD to express the expectation that people of unequal descent may live in harmony, describe a paradisiacal world where animals of different kinds coexist peacefully (Breytenbach 2014: 759-774). Wild animals (wolf, leopard, lion, bear, cobra) lie down with tame animals (goat, calf, horse, and ox) and they relate quietly even with humans, represented in the text by the little child who guides them and plays with the most dangerous ones (Janowski 2014: 55-70). Moreover, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, theologian and Christian bishop of Cyrrhus (423-457/466³), in his commentary on Isaiah’s book, interprets this passage as a vision of the messianic reign of peace, where predatory and docile animals will live peacefully together (Theodoret *Comm. Isa.* 11, 6-7; Guinot 1982: 46-49).

Although their content is similar, these two Isaiah texts were read at different points in the liturgical calendar, depending on the geographical area. In the Constantinopolitan liturgy, Isaiah 11:6-7 was read on Christmas Eve. In the Antiochene liturgy, Isaiah 11:6-7 could be heard during the evening Epiphany Vigil, while Isaiah 65:25 was read on the day of the Commemoration of the Righteous and of the Fathers.⁴ In any case, it is interesting to emphasise that the verses of Isaiah depicted in the mosaics had a very specific function, namely to emphasise what was already evident when looking at the images depicted: earthly peace between different creatures.

² Electronic edition of the second printing of A New English Translation of the Septuagint, as published by Pietersma - Wright 2007: 833-834; <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/33-esaias-nets.pdf>.

³ The year of the death of Theodoret of Cyrrhus is debated (Azéma 1984: 137-155).

⁴ Data checked on the Online *Thesaurus Antiquorum Lectionariorum Ecclesiae Synagogaeque*.

Mosaic Pavements of the “Peaceful Kingdom” and of Peaceful Assembly of Animals in Late Antique Cilicia and Isauria ⁵

Paradisiac scenes portraying the “Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah” seem to have been very popular in southern Asia Minor in Late Antiquity. In the regions of Cilicia and Isauria (Fig. 1), three late antique church buildings (Karlık in the Cilician Plains, Korykos, and Anemourion in Isauria) with an inscription quoting a passage from Isaiah next to the figurative depiction, feature this motif. A mosaic discovered within the so called temple-church at Elaiussa Sebaste also matches the pacific animal relationships associated with the “Peaceful Kingdom” iconography, but the inscription of Isaiah is unfortunately missing to date (perhaps lost due to the illegal excavations of the building) and the iconographic rendering shows some differences from previous models. Is it therefore possible to include this mosaic within the list of the “Peaceful Kingdom” iconography?



Figure 1
Map of sites mentioned in the article (by the author).

In the present article, I will also shortly mention two additional case studies—the mosaics of Mopsouestia and Dağ Pazarı— with peaceful animal depictions. Although these two case studies cannot be included within those depicting the motif of the “Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah”, both the choice of animals and how they are portrayed shows paradisiac scenes and appears very similar to the four mosaics of Karlık, Korykos, Anemourion, and Elaiussa Sebaste.

Karlık

This mosaic, now preserved at the Archaeological Museum of Adana, was discovered in 1958 by villagers in the small town of Karlık. The mosaic was located in a three-aisled basilica, which was partially excavated by Michael Gough in the subsequent year in cooperation with the Director of the Museum of Ankara.⁶

⁵ I would like to thank especially Prof. Mustafa Şahin for the great support and Prof. Hugh Elton and Dr. Sebastian Watta for the discussion and for the many useful suggestions on the topic.

⁶ Gough was able to excavate only the apse and the stylobate of the church for a total extension of 24.1 m x 17.5 m, since its western part had been covered by modern houses. A short description of the building and of the mosaic can be found in Gough (Gough 1974: 411-419). In 2015, some news reports announced the discovery of a “new” mosaic at Karlık, where an inscription also appears on the west side of the western mosaic. No further information can be found on this mosaic, which still appears to be under study. The similarity with the one found by Gough suggests that it is the same mosaic that was previously completely excavated and can now be seen at the Museum of Adana. I am very

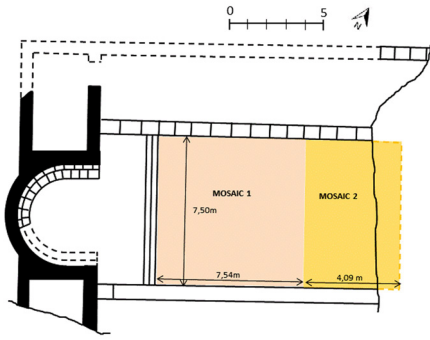


Figure 2
Plan of the basilica at Karlık indicating the position of the panels (by the author).

The basilica (Fig. 2) was a medium-sized building with a hypothesised measurement of 35 x 17.5 m, very close in size to other known Cilician churches such as Çatören, the west church of Alahan, and Hasanaliler. Looking at Gough’s plan and description, it appears that the building was a three-aisled basilica ending to the east with an apse slightly projected out of the eastern wall that encloses the church to the east.⁷ It was flanked by two rectangular rooms, the so-called *pastophoria*, which could only be reached through the aisles. This architectural feature was very unusual, as *pastophoria* usually directly connected to the apse in order to facilitate the movement of the clergy. The area of the apse and *sanctuarium* (or *bema*) were slightly higher than the nave and were covered, as were the aisles, by flagstones. The nave, on the other hand, was completely covered by mosaics (Fig. 3), divided in two panels oriented towards the apse. Both panels were framed by a simple geometric pattern made of red, white, and yellow rhombuses against a background of black squares and triangles (Fig. 4).



Figure 3
“Peaceful Kingdom” mosaic at Karlık (by the author, with the kind permit of the Museum of Adana - Number: E-95351462-155.01[155.01]-4853717, on 06.03.2024).



Figure 4
Detail of the “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaic at Karlık (Foto of the Museum of Adana, with the kind permit of the Museum of Adana – Number: E-95351462-155.01[155.01]-4853717, on 06.03.2024).

grateful to the Museum of Adana for the opportunity to publish the photo of the Karlık mosaic taken by the author in 2019.

Furthermore, I would like to mention that a volume dedicated to the mosaics of the Hatay area will soon be released as a result of the workshop that took place between June 13 and 19, 2022 at Hatay Mustafa Kemal University of Antakya. In particular, with reference to the Karlık mosaic examined in this article, see the article of Ovacık et al. (in press) on the mosaics of the Adana Museum.

7 As the two churches in Bodrum and the one in Kadırlı (Ala Camii).

Upon entering the church, one would have encountered the paradise-themed panel first. Gough was able to reconstruct an approximate measurement of the entire scene, approximately 7.5 m wide and 4.09 m long. Its border motif consisted of double calyces in grey, black, and white colours, similar to those present in the so-called “Barracks House” in Antioch (Campbell 1988: 88 pl. 228). Around the main field is a thinner band of white, red, and grey guilloche on a black background.

The western area of the panel was blocked by a modern dwelling and was not visible at the time of Gough’s excavation; however, now the mosaic can be seen in its entirety in its present location at the Museum of Adana. The western section includes a rectangular box with a geometrically-patterned lower band (black rhombuses on a white background with inscribed white squares and a circular decoration in the centre), above which a *tabula ansata*, flanked by a geometric pattern of small black and white squares on the left and white floral motifs on a black background on the right, is situated. The *tabula ansata* reports the following inscription:

Ἰωάννης πιστικὸς χωρίου Κανδαάαραμον⁸
 ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας ἑαυτοῦ
 καὶ παντὸς τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ
 ἔκαρποφόρησεν ὑφ’ ἰν[δικ]τι[ῶνο]ς βασιλικῆς
 μηνὶ Ἀρτεμισίου ἔτους ἰνδ[ικτιῶνος] ιγ’

John, the shepherd of the district of Kandaaramon for his own salvation and that of his whole house brought forth this fruit under imperial indiction in the month of Artemision in the indiction year 13.

This dedicatory inscription can be combined with the one located on the second panel to the east (see further on). Both inscriptions were laid in the early spring (late March/early April), as the “month of Artemision” suggests. The year of the indiction 13, is enigmatic, unless it is provided a rough guess of the time when the mosaic might have been commissioned. Moreover, it is interesting to note the toponym “Kandaaramon.” As the ancient nomenclature of Karlık is still unknown, it is possible that this “Kandaaramon” might refer to the village of Karlık, from where the shepherd John hailed.

Above the *tabula ansata* is a rectangular field (4.09 m x 7.5 m), decorated with three rows of animals, both tame and wild, living peacefully together. Starting from the first line at the bottom, one encounters on the left a stag intent on nibbling shrubs sprouting from the ground, its gaze turned toward the edge of guilloche. The stag is followed by an elephant and a tiger looking at each other, and by a group of three animals—a peacock in the foreground and two quadrupeds in the background—who frame the scene to the right. The second line above shows four animals divided into pairs: starting from the left, a lion and an ox feed from the same feeder, and to the right a bear looks towards a bull. Finally, the top line can be divided into two scenes by the presence of a flower. On the left, a pair of animals (a lamb eating grass in the meadow and a wolf looking up) face each other. The scene on the right contains two separate pairs of animals who stare intensely at each other: in the foreground a lizard and a viper, and in the background a goat (or a kid) and a leopard. The entire panel, on a white

8 To be read as Kandalaramon or as Kouvraron as an error of the mosaicist? In the *Life of Saint Symeon the Younger* is mentioned a village called Kouvraron in the territory of Seleukeia of Isauria (van den Ven 1962: 194 n. 192).

background, is embellished by shrubs which serve as food for the animals and add an element of decoration to the scene. Two flowers also appear in the last upper row, to the left of the lamb and after the wolf, to divide the scenes.

In each line above the beasts, the verse of Isaiah 11:6 appears, although with slight variation from the Septuagint text. The inscription reads:

Καὶ συνβοσχετήσετε⁹ λύκος μετὰ ἀμνοῦ κὲ πάρδαλις συνναπαύσεται¹⁰
ἐρίφω καὶ λέων¹¹ ὡς¹² βοῦς φάγητε ἄχυρα καὶ βοῦς καὶ ἄρκος ἅμα
βοσκηθήσονται¹³ καὶ ἅμα τὰ πηδία¹⁴ αὐτὸν¹⁵ ἔσονται¹⁶.

And the wolf shall be fed together with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the cow and the bear shall feed together, and their young ones shall be together.¹⁷

As we can see, the text of the inscription seems to contain minor grammatical errors and the animals are different from those mentioned in the Septuagint version of Isaiah 11:6, but the meaning and the reference to the text is quite clear.

The mosaic is not an exact replication of the cast of animals mentioned in the inscription or in Isaiah 11:6, but this was probably not the mosaicist's main purpose. Anyone seeing the mosaic accompanied by the inscription would have probably associated the image with the idea that God's kingdom, here spatially represented by the church, brings peace. In this kingdom, animals demonstrate how living beings with opposite characteristics may coexist harmoniously.

The second panel to the east, only preserved in the western part, is framed by a border decorated with roundels on a white background. Each roundel enclosed an object: geometric figures, palm trees, baskets of fruit, birds, and lizards. A second, thinner border with a wave-crest pattern encircled the western panel, made of a tabula ansata with a dedicatory inscription. It had an overall design of rhomboid figures made of small grey squares and inside a decoration, which recalls the outer border: birds, baskets of fruits, branches of grapes, and goblets. The inscription reports the following words (Gough 1974: 416):

Ἐπὶ Σαββατίου τοῦ θεοσεβ[εστάτου]
πρεσβ[υτέρου] ἡγουμένου καὶ Κουριακοῦ
ἀρχιδιακόνου ἐγένετο ψήφωσις αὕτη
μήνη Ἀρτεμισίου ἰνδ[ικτιῶνος] ιγ¹⁸

This mosaic was laid in the month of Artemision in the thirteenth year

9 It should be transcribed as: συμβοσκηθήσεται. At the time of Gough article was the first part of the line still unexcavated, but now it is clearly visible.

10 To read as συνναπαύσεται.

11 Λέων.

12 ὡς.

13 Βοσκηθήσονται.

14 Παιδία.

15 Αὐτῶν.

16 Τε.

17 Translation of the author. The Greek Septuagint version of Isaiah 11:6 reads slightly differently: Καὶ συμβοσκηθήσεται λύκος μετὰ ἀρνός, καὶ πάρδαλις συνναπαύσεται ἐρίφω, καὶ μισχάριον καὶ ταῦρος καὶ λέων ἅμα βοσκηθήσονται, καὶ παιδίον μικρὸν ἄξει αὐτούς (and the wolf shall be fed together with the lamb and the leopard shall be refreshed together with the kid; and a young calf and a lion and a bull shall graze together, and a small child shall lead them).

18 Transcription slightly modified from Gough 1974: 416.

of the indiction, during the time of the very respectable priest senior Sabbatios and Cyriacus the Archdeacon.¹⁹

This inscription, like the previous one, gives the exact period of the year in which the mosaic was made (spring period, March/April) and also provides us with additional information. It was made at the time of the presbyter Sabbatios²⁰, probably a Jewish name or a local form that unfortunately does not appear in the existing lists of clergy (Le Quien 1958), and of the archdeacon Kyriakos, a name quite common in the region in Late Antiquity.²¹ A precise dating for this mosaic is not possible, but it might be set between the late 5th century and the early 6th century based on a comparison with the style of neighbouring mosaics, especially the baptistery in the church of Mount Nebo (Piccirillo 1976: 55) and the mosaics in Antioch (Campbell 1988).

Korykos

Korykos, a port-city located in the ecclesiastical province of Cilicia (administratively Cilicia I), was situated along the main coastal road that was leading from Tarsus to Seleukeia on the Kalykadnos. Despite its Roman origins, the city flourished during Late Antiquity, when a great number of religious buildings were built (Cortese 2022: 127-157). Unfortunately, modern constructions cover much of the surface of the ancient city and private orchards, which grow upon the already-excavated structures, make it difficult to examine the buildings in detail today. However, in the 1930s Herzfeld and Guyer partially excavated the so-called “Cathedral Church,” which contained a mosaic with paradisiac imagery and an inscription from Isaiah (Herzfeld - Guyer 1930: 94-110). Today this building is almost completely destroyed, except for the north side of the apse and part of the north wall.

The “Cathedral Church” was a three-aisled basilica (Fig. 5). It was entered through a *tribelon* by a narthex ending with an apse in its northern side, probably used as a stoup feed by the nearby cistern located to the north of the structure. Rows of Proconnesian marble columns divided the interior of the church into a nave and two side aisles. The north side of the church was carved into the rock;

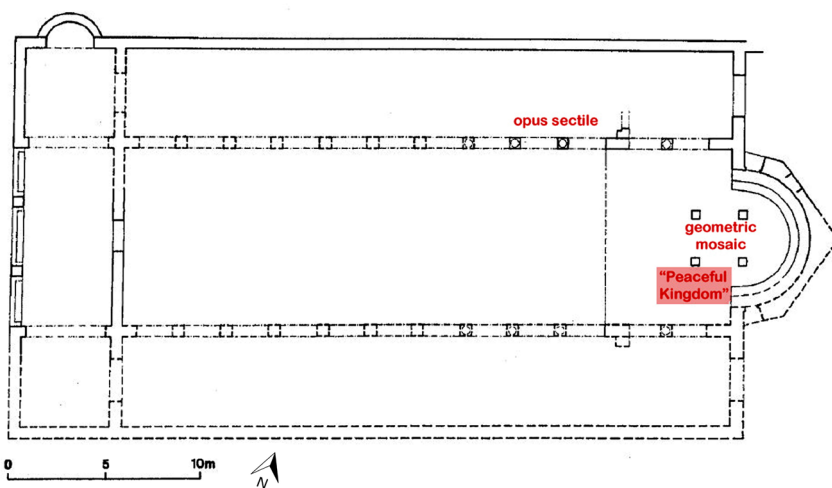


Figure 5
Plan of the “Cathedral Church” at Korykos
(modified after RBK 4, 211, fig. 12).

¹⁹ Translation of the author.

²⁰ The form Σαββάτιος is locally attested in an inscription found on a sarcophagus of a ceramist in Korykos (Keil - Wilhelm 1931: 678; Hagel - Tomaschitz 1998: 207). However, some local variants such as Σανβάτιος (Hagel - Tomaschitz 1998: 453) can also be found in inscriptions of Korasion (Keil - Wilhelm 1931: 114 n. 166; 115 n. 177) and in Korykos (Keil - Wilhelm 1931: 199 n. 686; 206 n. 737; 172 n. 493b).

²¹ Keryakos or Kerykos (Cortese 2022: 198-200).

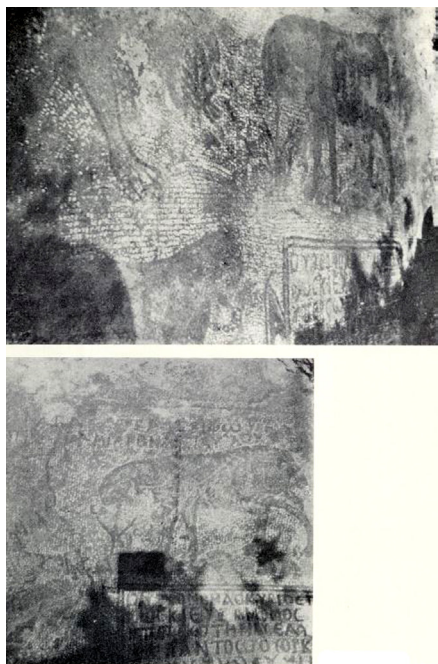


Figure 6
“Peaceful Kingdom” mosaic at Korykos
(Budde 1972: 218 figs. 273-274).

two free-standing piers to the east located at the end of the columns’ stylobates suggest that the church was a transept basilica.²² An opening on the northeastern side of the eastern wall (to be reconstructed also on the southeastern side) suggests that the church had an eastern passage that connected, behind the apse, the two side aisles of the church. Moreover, two doorways on the north and south sides of the apse also led to the eastern passage.

The floor in the north aisle was decorated with *opus sectile*, as were the intercolumns of the aisles, but floors of the apse and the bema (here the centre of the transept) were instead covered in mosaics. Unfortunately, our knowledge of the mosaic is related only to what was stated (very little) or graphically reported by Herzfeld and Guyer, as shrubs and vegetation have now grown over the entire surface of the church, covering and partially destroying the late antique floor. However, a somewhat more detailed description can be attempted.

Only one part of the mosaic appears to have been excavated, allowing us to notice two different types of decoration. The area below the ciborium (represented in fig. 5 within the bases of four squared columns) had geometric motifs (rhombuses, lines, and leaf motifs) enclosed within interlocking looped strips. The mosaic depiction of the “Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah” surrounded this area and also appeared in the apse. Of it only a lioness, a leopard, and a ram amidst floral decorations were visible at the time when the excavations were carried out (Fig. 6). Above them, a fragment of an inscription has been preserved, which was wrongly reported by Herzfeld and Guyer as “καὶ πάρδαλις συναναπαύσεται κηρίῳ καὶ” (Herzfeld - Guyer 1930: 107).²³ It should be instead read, as underlined also by Russell (Russell 1987: 73), as a two-line inscription partially reporting the verse of Isaiah 11:6 with the following words:

καὶ πάρδαλις συναναπαύσεται ἐρίφῳ
παιδίον μικρὸν ἄξει αὐτούς.

The leopard shall be refreshed together with the kid, and a small child shall lead them.

Amidst the beasts is a *tabula ansata* with a dedicatory inscription (Foss 1977: 282-288; Herzfeld - Guyer 1930: 106-107):

οὗ τὸ ὄνομα ὁ Κύριος γι-
νώσκι εὐξάμενος
ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας ἑαυτοῦ
καὶ παντὸς τοῦ οἴκου
αὐτοῦ τὴν εὐχὴν
ἀπέδωκεν.
ψμα(?)

He, whose name God knows, having prayed for his own salvation and of that of his whole house, his prayer was rendered²⁴.

It is interesting to note the unusual arrangement of the mosaic. It does not face, as one would expect, toward the east but rather toward the north, as if designed

22 Not reported in Herzfeld’s plan but in that of Hill (see Hill 1996: 116-120). The fact that the transept is not projected outside the width of the church is not an unusual feature for Cilician churches (see for example the so-called “Transept Church *extra muros*” in Korykos).

23 The same mistake was made by Gough in two articles (Gough 1954: 61, footnote 1 and Gough 1972: 211).

24 Translation by the author.

to be seen by those who came into the transept from the south aisle. Having ascended the bema, the visitor then followed the development of the scenes by proceeding around the apse.

Representations of animals were not only present in the mosaics but also in the limestone capitals of the triumphal arch of the basilica. The northern capital still stands; however, the southern capital was found collapsed. The capitals' decoration is identical. In the lower part, both capitals have acanthus leaves of different sizes (alternating between higher and lower leaves), while in the upper part, above the higher leaves, three animals appear: at the sides two ram heads and in the centre a peacock with an open-wheeled tail. On a stylistic basis, the capitals can be dated in the late 5th century, as comparative cases from Constantinople and Syria suggest (Kautzsch 1936: 93 n. 269; Hild et al. 1990: 211, 337-338; Zollt 1994: 216-218; Peschlow 2004: 76). The visitor was therefore welcomed into the entire sanctuary area by animal depictions that introduced the paradisiac theme, rendered both in stone and mosaic.

Scholars have made numerous conjectures regarding the dating of the mosaic. Herzfeld thought that the church was built at the beginning of the 5th century AD, basing his theory on the dedicatory inscription that concludes with the letters “ψμα.” He proposed that a certain Theognost (interpreted from the translation of the first line) made the dedication of the mosaic in the year 741 of the Seleucid era, that is 429/430 AD.²⁵ However, as underlined later by Foss, there are three objections to these considerations. First, the formula “οὗ τὸ ὄνομα ὁ Κύριος γινώσκει” is very widespread in Late Antiquity and expresses the hope to become one of the elects in paradise. Moreover, Cilicia showed a great variety of chronological systems and the Seleucid era might be only one of the possibilities (Foss 1977: 283). Furthermore, the first of the three letters at the end of the inscription must be read as a sampi rather than a psi, as suggested by Glanville Downley, and, therefore, if we would consider the three letters a temporal indication, the year would be 941 of the Seleucid era, or 629/630 AD (Forsyth 1961: 137).

But how to get out of this complicated question about the dating? An interesting suggestion has been given by Foss, who considered the three letters “ψμα” not a temporal indication, but an isopsephism of the name of the donor or, less probably, as the equivalent of a blessing or prayer (Foss 1977: 284-285). Following this hypothesis, therefore, the only possible dating would be that provided by the above-mentioned capital with animal *protomes* to the end of the 5th century AD, which would place our mosaic perfectly in the period when the other “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaics were produced in the regions of Cilicia and Isauria.

Elaiussa Sebaste

The city of Elaiussa Sebaste was located few kilometres to the north of Korykos, along the coastal road which connected Tarsos to Seleukeia on the Kalykadnos. It reached its greatest expansion between the second and third centuries AD and then in Late Antiquity, when numerous churches were built both on the land strips between the theatre and on the so-called “peninsula.”²⁶

²⁵ Herzfeld interpreted indeed the first letter as a psi (Herzfeld - Guyer 1930: 108).

²⁶ Three volumes and many articles have been written on the archaeological site of Elaiussa Sebaste by the excavation group “Roma La Sapienza” between 1999 and 2019 (Equini Schneider 1999; 2003; 2010).

In the 1st century AD, a peripteral temple of a composite Corinthian order was erected on top of a promontory overlooking the southern side of the urban area (Fig. 7)²⁷. Its prominent location guaranteed its visibility from both land and sea. The temple was dedicated to a deity whose identity has not yet been established. During the early 5th century AD²⁸ a Christian complex,²⁹ was constructed within the already dilapidated temple, reusing most of the material from the earlier pagan structure (Borgia 2019: 366). It consisted of a small chapel built at the centre of the old building, adjacent to an open-air courtyard that was located in the southern area of the podium. A series of rooms was most likely arranged around the courtyard in the northern sector of the cella and of the peristalsis (Elton et al. 2007: 25-29; Borgia 2008: 249-276). The southern side of the cella was fully occupied by the chapel, whose apse wall was formed by filling in the spaces between the reused columns of the temple with *opus quadratum* and also by adding new limestone blocks. Stairs from the lower ground to the new structure were built next to the apse, probably in Late Antiquity.

Figure 7
Temple-Church at Elaiussa Sebaste as seen from above (© Archivio Missione Archeologica Italiana, Università la Sapienza).



Figure 8
Plan of the Temple-Church at Elaiussa Sebaste (© Archivio Missione Archeologica Italiana, Università la Sapienza).



This very small chapel (11.35 m x 7.3 m)³⁰ was made of a central nave and no aisles (Fig. 8) and accessed through entrances on the north and west walls. A wall enclosed the eastern side of the church. Two side chambers were located on the north and southeastern sides of the structure. The north side chamber was a baptistery, attested by the presence of a small baptismal font. The font, made of four large white limestone blocks, was positioned in the southeastern corner of the room. The baptistery floor was covered in polychrome marble and *opus sectile* with geometric motifs (white squares and rhombuses inscribed in grey squares of limestone).

27 All the photos from Elaiussa Sebaste have been published with the kind permit of Prof. Annalisa Polosa (Università Roma “La Sapienza”) 18.01.2024.

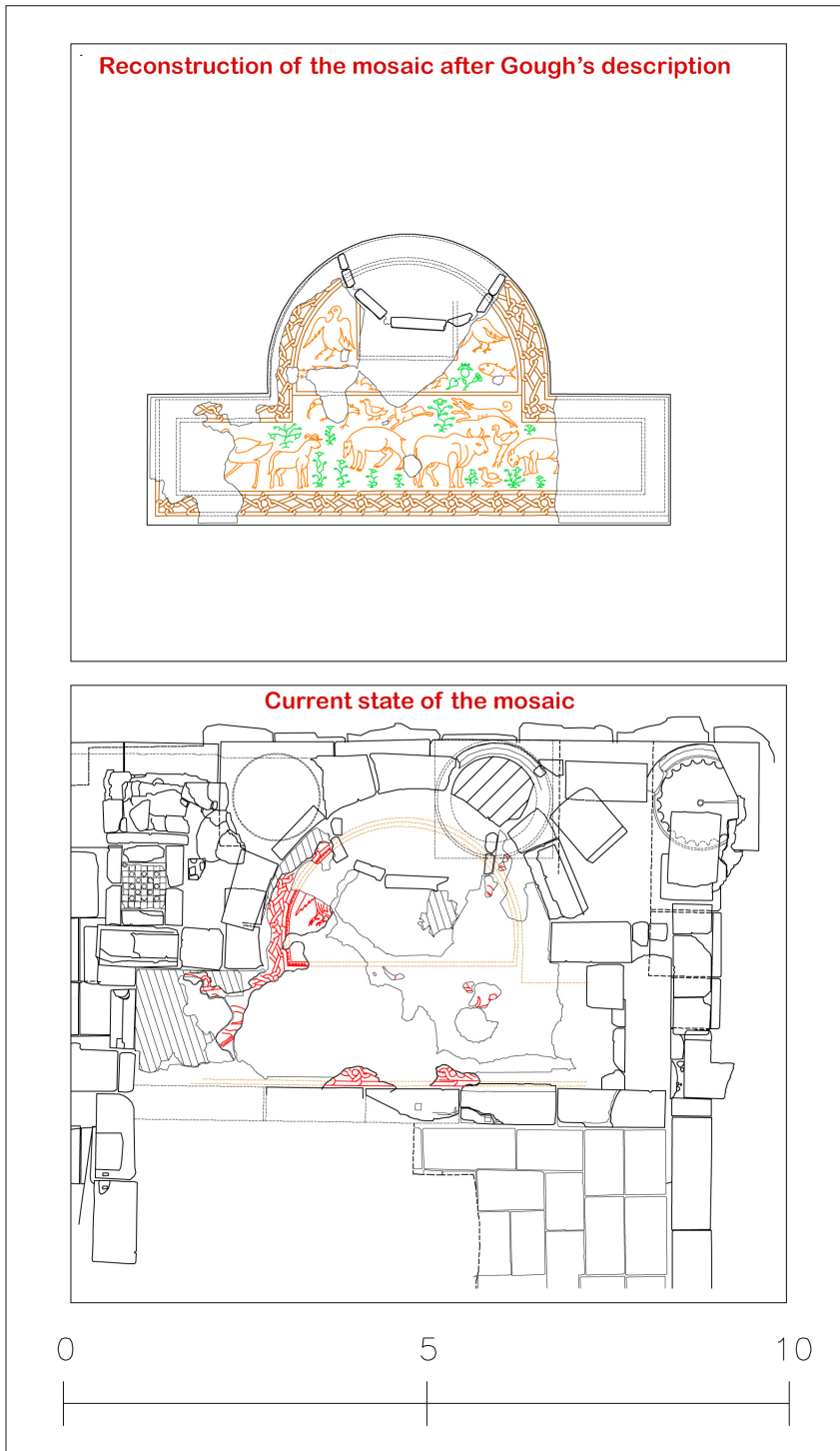
28 The chronology is based on several archaeological elements, which demonstrate an effective revival of the city in this period, both at the stratigraphic level and by comparisons of the mosaic.

29 The complex has not been fully excavated and too little is currently known of the rooms to the north and south, but it would be an interesting case study to deepen.

30 Two very interesting contributions on the temple-church of Elaiussa Sebaste have been recently published by Emanuela Borgia (Università Roma “La Sapienza”), where also a chronological development of the main phases of the building from the early 1st century AD to the post 13th century AD (final destruction due to an earthquake) has been provided: Borgia 2019: 365-384; 2020: 423-432.

The floor of the nave was paved with limestone slabs, while the bema and the apse were decorated with a polychrome mosaic of a paradisiac scene depicting different types of animals. This mosaic, excavated by M. Gough in 1952-1953, has been damaged; only a few fragments remain (Gough 1954: 49-64). Fortunately, Gough's drawing (reported here after the reworking of the Missione italiana "Roma La Sapienza") allows us to partially reconstruct it (Fig. 9).

Figure 9
 Reconstruction of the mosaic at Elaiussa Sebaste after Gough's description (© Archivio Missione Archeologica Italiana, Università la Sapienza).



The whole mosaic is framed by a border made of a two-strand twist in grey, white, red, and pink that forms small decorative circles and rhombuses (Fig. 10). The interior of the mosaic is divided into two fields by a simple strand that

Figure 10
Detail of the two-strand twist of the “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaic at Elaiussa Sebaste (© Archivio Missione Archeologica Italiana, Università la Sapienza).



encloses the upper part, or rather the apse. In this upper field are five birds and a fish. The bird located in the top left is the only one preserved to date (Fig. 11) and can be recognized as an eagle, its wings outstretched and its eyes peering outward from the mosaic. Another bird with elongated wings appears on the

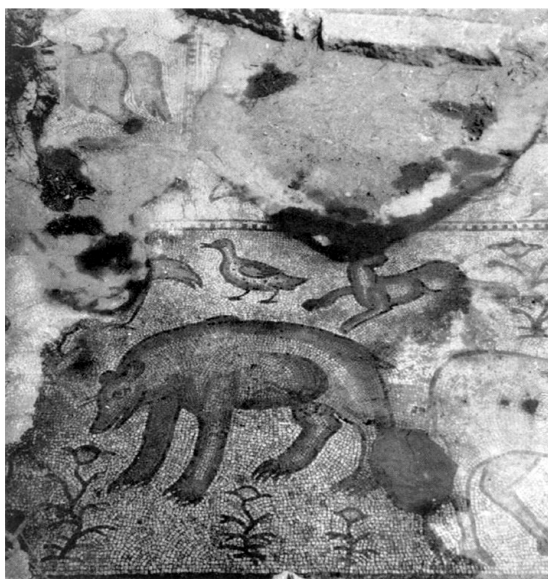
Figure 11
Detail of the eagle in the “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaic at Elaiussa Sebaste (by the author).



opposite side, its eyes looking toward the inside of the mosaic as if to guide the viewer to a central panel surrounded by a border. Even in Gough's time this central panel of the mosaic was not preserved, but it can be reconstructed as the location of an inscription bearing the verses of Isaiah 11:6-7. Looking from left to right in the lower part of this eastern panel, one can see a bird pecking in the ground. Its tail and beak are like that of a crow. This bird faces two others who are placed in the centre of the scene, gazing at each other. On the left side a mushroom, a leaf, and a flower separate the scene from a fish facing the two birds.

The lower panel can be divided in two imaginary lines, not separated by any physical border. In the upper section, looking from left to right a hunting dog chases a curlew (easily recognizable thanks to its long beak), a duck, and a hare. A floral motif separates the hare from the dog. The lower line of the lower panel is lost in its right and left border and only the central animals are preserved. Here, a flamingo walks in the direction of the outer edge of the mosaic, perhaps towards another animal that is no longer visible today, and a goat faces the central field. A bear is surrounded by vegetation (Fig. 12, a) and a bull looks peacefully toward a group of three animals placed on the right side of the mosaic: a duck, an ostrich, and a leopard (Fig. 12, b). The mosaic's decorative elements suggest a date to the late 5th century, such as in the church of Oum Harteyn (Balty 1977: n. 60-61; Hild et al. 1990: 339).

Figure 12
Portions of the mosaic at Elaiussa Sebaste no longer surviving (Gough 1954: pl. V.2, VI.2).



a)



b)

Is it possible to consider this mosaic as being part of the Peaceful Kingdom themed mosaics?

This mosaic at Elaiussa differs partially from the previous ones found in Karlık and Korykos and some considerations must be underlined. First, the spatial organization of the two panels is less defined. Except for the subdivision between an upper panel with flying animals (and a fish!) and a lower panel with land or courtyard animals, there are no linear elements dividing the beasts. They seem rather to coexist all together, separated only by flowers or plant ornaments of various sizes. As for the choice of animals, one finds expected species-leopard, bear, goat, and bull-but there are also new entries: an eagle, a fish, a large

number of birds (unfortunately partly lost), and especially a hunting dog. The latter, in particular, seems to clash with the otherwise peaceful depiction the mosaicist creates. The dog chases a hare that, even as it courses away, turns its gaze worriedly back at its pursuer. Again, however, a plant (larger than the others) separates the two animals, as if to reassure the observer that the hare is safe. And finally, this paradise-themed mosaic had a unique location. It occupied the easternmost area of the nave in its entire width and also the bema and apse of the small chapel. For these reasons, this mosaic cannot be included properly within the list of the mosaics with a “Peaceful Kingdom” theme, rather it would be more correct to include it among the mosaics depicting a *paradeisos* scene, recalled by the peaceful representation of different animals and stylised flowers.³¹

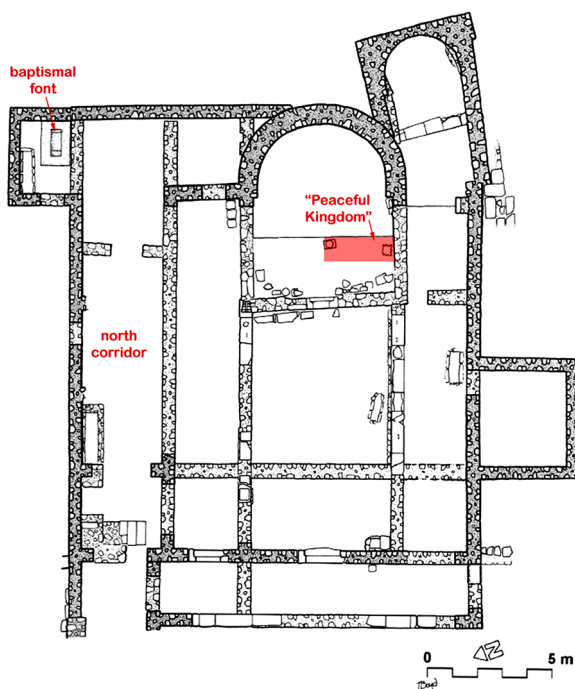
Anemourion³²

Anemourion was a harbour city located at the western end of Isauria. It enjoyed an enviable position; it was on the sea route connecting Isauria to Cyprus, an island to which it was also sacredly and visually linked (Cortese 2022: 41–53). The city probably already existed in the 4th century BC, expanding and growing from its high acropolis in the late Antonine-Severan period. It suffered a setback in the late 3rd century AD, when it was captured by Shapur I in 260 AD. In Late Antiquity, the city flourished anew, evidenced by numerous church buildings in the lower part of the city.

A late antique, three-aisled basilica (25.3 m x 23.5 m, figs. 13-14) was built in the necropolis, located to the northeast of the city. It underwent numerous changes over the centuries. It was first built at the beginning of the 5th century as a simple three-aisled basilica, with a rectangular annex of unknown function to

Figure 13
Plan of the Necropolis Church at Anemourion and location of the “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaic (modified after Russell 2021: 4 fig. 1.3).

Figure 14
Photo of the eastern part of the Necropolis Church at Anemourion with the standing apse (by the author).



31 As underlined by Gough, it might be an interesting derivation of the myth of Orpheus charming the beasts (Gough 1954: 59).

32 The city has been well excavated from 1966 until the mid-1980s by the Canadians. James Russell published numerous reports of excavations in *Anatolian Studies* and a monography (Russell 1989: 1621-1637; Russell 2021).

the south of the south aisle (phase 1). It was then expanded to the north around the first half of the 5th century (phase 2) with the addition of both a northeastern side chamber and a north corridor with mosaics and no direct access to the church. In a third phase, dated around the middle of the 5th century due to the discovery of a coin between the two levels of mosaics dated to the reign of Theodosius II (408-450), the church was monumentalized. In this period a narthex was built to the west, a small chapel was erected in the southeast (behind the apse), and a baptistery was added to the end of the north corridor. Most of the church was abandoned and served as a graveyard in a subsequent phase (phase 4), dated between the end of the sixth and the seventh centuries, after having been destroyed by an earthquake in 580. In this period only the chapel and the eastern half of the south aisle were used for worship. Finally, in a fifth phase (dated in last years of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century), a modest chapel was built on the *sanctuarium* of the late antique church, reusing the apse of the previous church (Russell 1977: 3-5; Russell 2021: 34-39).

The most interesting part of this church that concerns us is the bema, which occupied the eastern part of the nave and was separated by the rest of the nave by a chancel screen (Fig. 13). The stone base of the screen was located directly on a lower mosaic pavement with inscriptions belonging to the first phase of the church and it formed the west edge of the new mosaic, set above the previous one.³³ This mosaic (Fig. 15), probably dating from the mid-5th century, extended up to the apse. Unfortunately, the only remaining fragments visible to date are on the south side. A border decorated with two-strand guilloche in grey/white and pink/white colours encloses a scene depicting the “Peaceful Kingdom.” A dark blue leopard and a kid (made of dark green, brown, and pink *tesserae*), separated by a stylized tree growing on a raised ground, face each other; their muzzles point toward the ground.



Figure 15
Detail of the “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaic
of the Necropolis Church at Anemourion
(Campbell 1998: pl. XV).

Above the tree from north to south runs an inscription with the following words:

[καὶ παιδίον] μικρὸν ἄξει αὐτοὺς καὶ
πάρδ[α]λι[ς] συν[αναπ]αύσει[αι ἐρίφω]

(and a) little (child) will lead them and a leopard will lie down (with the kid)

³³ For a description of the lower mosaic, see Campbell (Campbell 1998: 46, 49).

In this case, we see that the mosaicist chose an abbreviated version of Isaiah 11:6-7, reversing the order of the verses as found in the Septuagint. In fact, the child here is mentioned before the leopard. However, the primary intent of the designer was not a strict adherence to the text, as the previous mosaics have already shown. The image is unfortunately incomplete on the north side, but based on comparison with similar mosaics, it is possible to imagine that another pair of animals—a lion with an ox, or a wolf with a lamb—was depicted here, separated by vegetation.

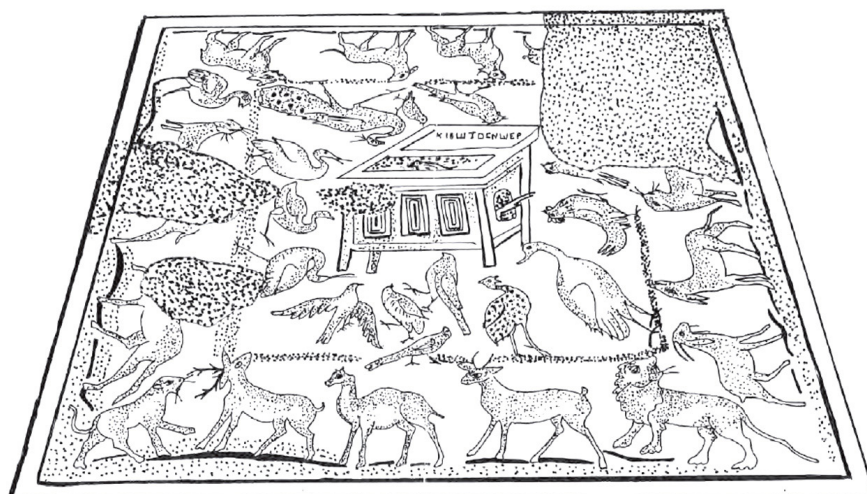
The mosaic was located facing the apse, making it clearly visible to those who looked toward the altar from the nave. In fact, it was meant to cover the entire width of the sanctuary and was placed between the altar and the end of the bema.

Mopsouestia

In 1955, Ludwig Budde and Helmuth Bossert discovered a floor completely paved with mosaics within an *extra muros* structure (37 m x 25 m)³⁴ built outside the city walls of Mopsouestia (Budde 1969). The mosaics were distributed throughout the main hall in the nave and aisles.³⁵

At the centre of the nave, a band of animals was depicted, framed by a simple strand. They move peacefully around the most relevant topic of the mosaic (Fig. 16): a chest bearing the inscription “Κιβωτὸς Νῶε” (Noe’s ark) on the inside of the lid. A dove slips into the chest through an opening in the right side of the chest; a second dove is visible inside the chest. Around this representation of Noah’s ark, animals are lined up in two concentric zones that seem to have the same subdivision as in Elaiussa Sebaste. Various types of flying animals occupy an inner zone closer to the chest. These birds, among which can be identified a duck, a peacock, a chicken, and a goose, are in different poses: some fly, while others walk. Land animals—such as a panther, a deer, a lion, a dromedary, an elk, an ox, a leopard, and an ibex—appear in the outer zone. No plant elements are present to internally divide the two fields, and the land animals are depicted walking over terrain that is alternately flat and hilly.

Figure 16
Noah’s Ark surrounded by animals on the nave mosaic at Misis-Mopsouestia (Hachlili 2009: 67 fig. IV-8).



³⁴ The interpretation of the building is very debated. The scholars are divided between those who retain that it was a Christian Basilica (Budde; Hild, Hellenkemper, Hellenkemper-Salies; Hill) and those who support the hypothesis that it was a synagogue (Kitzinger, Avi-Yonah, Buschhausen). For a short summary on the problematic, see Cortese (Cortese 2022: 241-243).

³⁵ Also these mosaic floors have recently been brought to the Museum of Adana.

This mosaic does not portray the “Peaceful Kingdom” scene from Isaiah 11:6-7, but rather seems rather to be a reference to the story of Noah in Gen. 8: 10-20. At the end of forty days aboard the ark he made, Noah opens a window to send out a dove, who returns to him without finding a resting place. After seven more days, Noah sends the dove out from the ark again; this time she returns, bringing an olive leaf in her mouth. Noah removes the covering of the ark and sees that the surface of the ground is dry. At God’s command, he then brings down his family and every animal from the ark: “And all the wild animals and all the domestic animals and every bird and every creeping thing that moves on the earth went out of the ark according to their kind (Gen. 8:19; Pietersma - Wright 2007: 11)”.

Although the above verse is not quoted on the mosaic with an inscription, anyone observing the Mopsouestia mosaic would have called to mind this scene from Genesis in which Noah carries his family and all kinds of animals to safety. The mosaicist pays great attention to depicting the most diverse types of birds and land animals, both wild and tame. All seem to move harmoniously around their ark of salvation. This mosaic, thus, does not depict the peaceful image of paradise as described in Isaiah 11:6-7, yet it still portrays a tranquil and almost heavenly image of docile and wild animals moving in a unified manner. The ark at the centre of the mosaic may be intended as a representation of the church, which guarantees salvation on personal and communal levels.³⁶

The dating of the mosaic is a controversial topic. L. Budde initially proposed an early dating to the first half of the 5th century AD (Budde 1960: 116), later corrected to the 4th century in his two monographs on the mosaics of Cilicia (Budde 1969: 32-33; Budde 1972: 27). This dating does not find consensus among scholars, who instead support a date to the late 5th or middle of the 6th century.³⁷ In particular, they rely on the similarity of this mosaic to two others: a mosaic with three rows of animals-birds, larger beasts, and smaller animals-discovered in the synagogue of Jerash in Jordan (Clements 2010), and a mosaic found during the 2016 excavation campaign in the fifth synagogue of Huqoq in the lower Galilee (Magnez et al. 2017, 1-7; Magnez 2019: 24-38). In the Huqoq mosaic, two large panels depict Noah’s Ark (2.15 m x 2.86 m) with male and female pairs of animals including a lion and a lioness, snakes, donkeys, camels, ships, elephants, bears, ostriches, foxes, and leopards; the ark appears as a wooden box supported on legs. The location in the nave and the wooden material and pattern of the ark are strikingly similar to that of Mopsouestia, although in Huqoq the scene turns out to be much richer and more densely populated with animals.

Dağ Pazarı

The name of the ancient town that today bears the name Dağ Pazarı has not yet been discovered with certainty;³⁸ we do know, however, that it was an important settlement from the 4th or 5th century BC until at least the 7th century AD. Despite its marginal location in relation to the region’s main arterial roads, due to its proximity to the Pre-Taurus Mountains, it must have had at least three churches in Late Antiquity. In one of these churches-a basilica *intra muros* excavated by

³⁶ The topic “Noah and the Ark in early Christian art” has been treated by Pillinger and Avellis (Pillinger 1978: 97-102; Avellis 2008: 19-45).

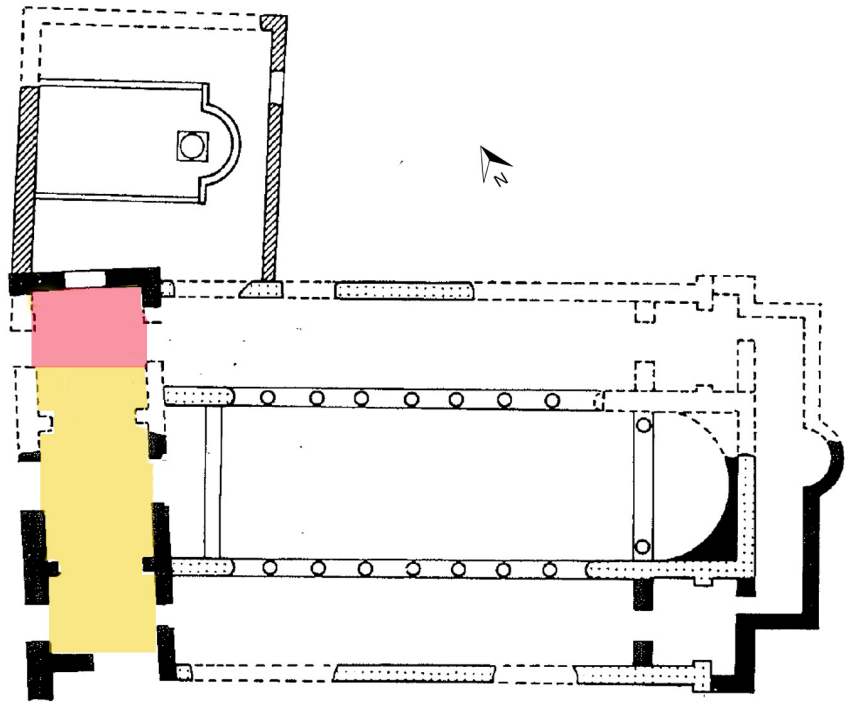
³⁷ For a short summary on the different approaches, see the *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst* IV (Hild et al. 1990: 332-334).

³⁸ Several proposals have been made about it (Koropissos, Dalisandos) but none can be proved with certainty.

Gough between 1957 and 1958³⁹-a mosaic in the narthex depicting animals and vegetation deserves mention. This mosaic, like the previous one in Mopsouestia, cannot be considered as a direct representation of the “Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah.” As we shall see, its scene differs greatly from the motif characterising this genre, being rather included in the so-called “inhabited scrolls” mosaics (Hachlili 2009: 111-147). However, the peaceful depiction of animals, designed as a symmetrical and geometrical pattern within vine branches and trellises issuing from an amphora, makes this mosaic worth considering alongside other Cilician examples, as it is a harmonious depiction of the natural world.

The mosaic was housed within a three-aisled basilica (26 m x 18.5 m), which was separated by colonnades (Fig. 17). To the east, it has an inscribed apse flanked by two side chambers; behind the apse is an eastern corridor with a central subsidiary apse. To the south a narthex,⁴⁰ not aligned with the rest of the basilica, was donated in the time of Bishop John Elpidius and restored by a Bishop Longinus, as reported by two inscriptions (Gough 1965: 409). A coin of Arcadius (395-408) was found below the paving to the east of Longinus’ restoration and for this reason the building was dated to the early 5th century AD. In a later phase, a baptistery with a monolithic octagonal limestone font was built to the northwest of the narthex.

Figure 17
Plan of the basilica *intra muros* at Dağ Pazarı
(Hill 1996: fig. 27).



The main feature of the *intra muros* basilica is the above-mentioned mosaic floor, which covered the entire narthex (16.5 m x 4.94 m). It consisted of two parts; the southern one is a later repair. A rather broad border made of looped circles and ovals containing rhombuses and circles framed the mosaics. The

39 A lengthy report on this building is missing, but some short excavation reports can be found in different contributions of Gough (Gough 1958: 644-646; Gough 1959a: 8; Gough 1959b: 3-4; Gough 1965: 410-411).

40 Gough argues that it is an element added in a second phase, but its obliquity rather suggests, as pointed also by Hill, that it was built together with the church but perhaps on previous structures already present in situ (Hill 1996: 152-153; Hill 1998: 326-330).

northern section (Fig. 17, light red and Fig. 18) has a design of three very regular lines made of interlinked roundels containing different types of birds flanked by vegetation, sacks of fruit (pomegranates, pears, and apples), and chalices from which vegetable tendrils come out. Rhombuses decorate the spaces between the roundels. In the centre of the whole scene is an inscription recording the construction of the narthex and the laying of the mosaic by the Bishop John Elpidius. The mosaic was richly coloured with white, yellow, red, brown, and grey glass *tesserae*. Another inscription is visible near the border with the words: “Lord, aid Anastasius the priest and Abba” (Gough 1958: 645).



Figure 18
Detail of the northern section of the mosaic at
Dağ Pazarı (Hill 1998: 328 fig. 25.10).

The southern part of the mosaic, however, shows a completely different motif (Fig. 17, light yellow, Fig. 19). In the centre is an amphora from which an elaborate vine scroll issues, its branches ending in grape slices. A fat sheep is represented to the right of the amphora. In all likelihood, this sheep must have had its counterpart on the left side of the amphora, yet this section is now lost. Within the scroll are great varieties of birds (turkey, swan, crane, goose, rooster, heron, pelican, duck, flamingo, small sparrows, pheasant, etc.). They rest on the vine scroll branches and are surrounded by decorations made of grape leaves.⁴¹ A hare, easily recognizable thanks to its long ears, feeds on a leaf of the grapevine. This hare is the only animal appearing in the remaining parts of the scene that does not fly. Above the amphora and surrounded by the two central branches is the inscription which records the restoration of the mosaic by Bishop Longinus. This inscription is contained within a red roundel flanked by two doves.

⁴¹ A similar mosaic can be seen in the museum of Bet Ed-Din in Lebanon. There are depicted two amphorae, each with a vine growing from it. Its tendrils form medallions enclosing animals: on one side a gazelle, on the other a sheep, a hare, a wild boar, and a lion (Metzger 2010: 143–170).

Figure 19
Detail of the southern section of the mosaic
at Dağ Pazarı (Budde 1972: 214 fig. 262).



The two bishops mentioned in the inscriptions cannot be identified, but the dating proposed for the two mosaics is the first part of the 5th century for the older one, when the structure was converted into a Christian basilica, and the end of the 5th century for the restored mosaic, suggested by the style of the mosaic itself and the coin of Arcadius found underneath Longinus' repair. A mosaic similar to the repaired one was found in a structure whose function cannot be identified and which was located on the northwest side of the city of Seleukeia on the Kalykadnos (just below the acropolis).⁴² In this case, the mosaic, also dated to the 5th century, reproduces circles made of vine scrolls that enclose figures of animals. Unlike the mosaic at Dağ Pazarı, however, the animals depicted are mainly land animals: a jumping dog with fluttering dog leash, a running goose, a jumping goat, a jumping panther, an elephant, and a horse.

As we have seen, the mosaic of Dağ Pazarı differs greatly from the previously described mosaics of the "Peaceful Kingdom." In this example the animals do not happily graze in the same environment; rather, they are separated from each other by vine racemes. In addition, this mosaic does not depict both wild and docile animals, as usually happens when accompanied by the inscription of Isaiah 11:6-7, but only birds, with the addition of a hare. Furthermore, there is no biblical reference. For these reasons, despite the great similarity of the animals here represented with those of Anemourion, Korykos, Elaiussa Sebaste and Karlık, the Dağ Pazarı mosaic cannot be counted among depictions with a "Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah" motif. Rather, it belongs to a broader category of peaceful animal depictions and combines the motif of the fountain of life or fountain of paradise with the 'populated' vine, which grows out of a crater in the middle of the mosaic field. Finally, a last note regarding the location of the mosaic: it was in the narthex of the church and not in the bema or apse, as we have been able to observe for the "Peaceful Kingdom" mosaics. This fact, as we shall see in the conclusion, is a significant clue to understanding the function of the paradisiacal mosaics.

⁴² Budde calls this mosaic, found in Cami Kebir Mahallesi of Seleukeia in 1969, "Tier-Rankenmosaik Aşarkaya" (Budde 1972: 162-163).

Similar Mosaic Depictions of the “Peaceful Kingdom” from East and West

Mosaics representing peaceful scenes with animals and plants are very widespread in the East and can be attested in numerous structures that have different functions.⁴³ Nevertheless, in this section only those found that reference the verses from Isaiah 11:6-7 or Isaiah 65:25 will be considered, namely the mosaics of Mâ'in, the Meroth synagogue (Fig. 1) and the Mariana church.

In the Church of the Acropolis at Mâ'in (in Jordan, at about 8 km southwest of Mâdabâ), which can be dated between 719 and 720, a mosaic pavement of flanking animals was found in the north annex of the building, accompanied by an inscription from Isaiah 11:7 or by the slightly varied parallel Isaiah 65:25 (de Vaux 1938: 227-258; Piccirillo 1993: 58-59). The mosaic, which is now almost completely destroyed, probably covered the whole annex. It originally featured three fields; however, only part of two adjacent rectangles is left. Both rectangles are framed by two borders: a wide three-strand guilloche border on the outside and a thinner border made of small brown pyramids on the inside, closest to the two panels. The “Peaceful Kingdom” scene is only partially preserved and occupies the eastern rectangle of the mosaic (Fig. 20). The verse “and the lion will eat straw like the ox”⁴⁴ provides an interpretation of the image, today lost due to iconoclastic interventions in the Umayyad or Abbasid period (de Vaux 1938: 256), which modified the scene on the left side of the field (Watta 2018: 88). This lost image consisted of an ox in front of a fruit-bearing tree-later greatly modified with the depiction of a tree trunk covering the ox's body (only two paws, a tail, a bush, a hump, a hoof, and the points of two horns of the animal remained visible)-and flanked on the right by a *kantharos* from which vine scrolls emerge. The entire right half of the field, once probably depicting a lion, has been destroyed.

43 Between the mosaics that depicted paradisiac scenes and that show similarities with the Cilician and Isaurian case studies, I mention here two examples from Asia Minor: the mosaic pavements of the two churches of Akdeğirmen Hüyük and Hülümen (Candemir - Wagner 1978: 205-210 and 218-226). In the first building, a central structure with exedras and a mosaic with a Paradise representation, dated to the first half of the 5th century AD, occupy the central space of the building completely. Tame animals are arranged in rows one above the other; between them are numerous trees and plants. In contrast, the central nave of the basilica of Hülümen, contains larger fragments of two mosaic fields, in which a wide border strip frames a geometrically structured central part (with octagons and meander knots) with animals lined up next to each other. Here, unlike the previous mosaic, there are not only tame but also fierce animals alternating with peaceful beasts, as in the “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaics. However, the inscription of Isaiah 11:6-7 is missing. Another mosaic without inscription but inspired by Isaiah 11:6-7 and depicting a pair of animals facing each other next to a fruit tree was discovered in 2007, in a funerary chamber at Frykia village in northern Syria (Abdallah 2016: 1-9). Here, the paradisiac iconography evokes the notion of eternal life. Moreover, two more examples from Mount Nebo (Jordan) reproduce peaceful scenes. In the western panel of the nave of the Church of the Holy Martyrs Lot and Procopius at Mukhayyat there is a mosaic depicting two bulls flanking an altar, accompanied by the biblical verse from Psalms 51:21: “Then they shall lay calves upon thy altar” (Piccirillo 1993: 164-165 fig. 213). In the threshold area of the western entrance to the “South Baptistery” of the Moses Basilica on Mount Nebo (dated 597 AD), an inscription passage reports the words: “Peace for all [...]” Below the baptismal font in the bema is a heavenly scene with animals of different kinds flanked by trees, peacefully coexisting. Absent from the scene is any inscription of Isaiah 11:6-7, and the only visible animals to date are two gazelles (Watta 2018: 69-70). One more example must be cited. At Khilda, in the western suburbs of Amman, a church dedicated to St. Varus and dated to the end of the 7th century AD, has been excavated in 1994. In the north hall was found a mosaic with a palm tree flanked by a lion and a zebu with no inscription but recalling the “Peaceful Kingdom” theme (Najjar - Sa'id 1994: 547-560). An interesting case study worth mentioning is also the mosaic in the north church of the Huarte complex (located at 15 kilometres to the north of Apamea). In the nave, opposite the bema, is the depiction of peaceful animals in static pose surrounding the figure of Adam (Wisskirchen 2002: 137-156).

44 In Greek the inscription reports the following words: “καὶ λέων ὡς βοῦς φάγ(ονται ἄχουρα)”. The transcription of the inscription comes from de Vaux (de Vaux 1938: 233).

Figure 20
Remains of the “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaic
in the Church of the Acropolis at Mâ’in
(Hachlili 2009: fig. IV.8.b).



This mosaic has similarities with several examples mentioned previously. With its original pre-Iconoclastic forms, the Mâ'in mosaic must have closely resembled the mosaics of Anemourion, where a tree separates a leopard and a kid, and Korykos, where images of a leopard, a ram, and a lioness are shown below the inscription. The quote from Isaiah differs, but the combination of figurative representation and biblical citation thematises and stages the hope of a life in the kingdom of peace instituted by Christ. Moreover, the Mâ'in mosaic bears a certain likeness to the scene reproduced in the middle row of the Karlık mosaic, where a lion eats together with an ox and a trough separates the two figures.

However, the location of the mosaic within the church complex of Mâ'in differs from the examples we have seen from the churches of Cilicia. This particular mosaic is located in a northern annex, and it may have covered only the eastern part of that room.⁴⁵ The churches of Cilicia, as we have seen, often contain pavement mosaics in the main body of the basilica, often in the bema or nave.

In a similar example, a floor mosaic in the hall of the beth midrash of the early 7th century AD synagogue at Meroth (in the eastern part of Upper Galilee) depicts Isaiah's vision of the End of Days as perfect peace over all nature. The

⁴⁵ De Vaux argues that the north annex was used as a baptistery because the verse from Isaiah 11 was used as a reading during baptism (de Vaux 1938: 234). Nevertheless, there is no archaeological evidence to support the function of the annex as a baptistery.

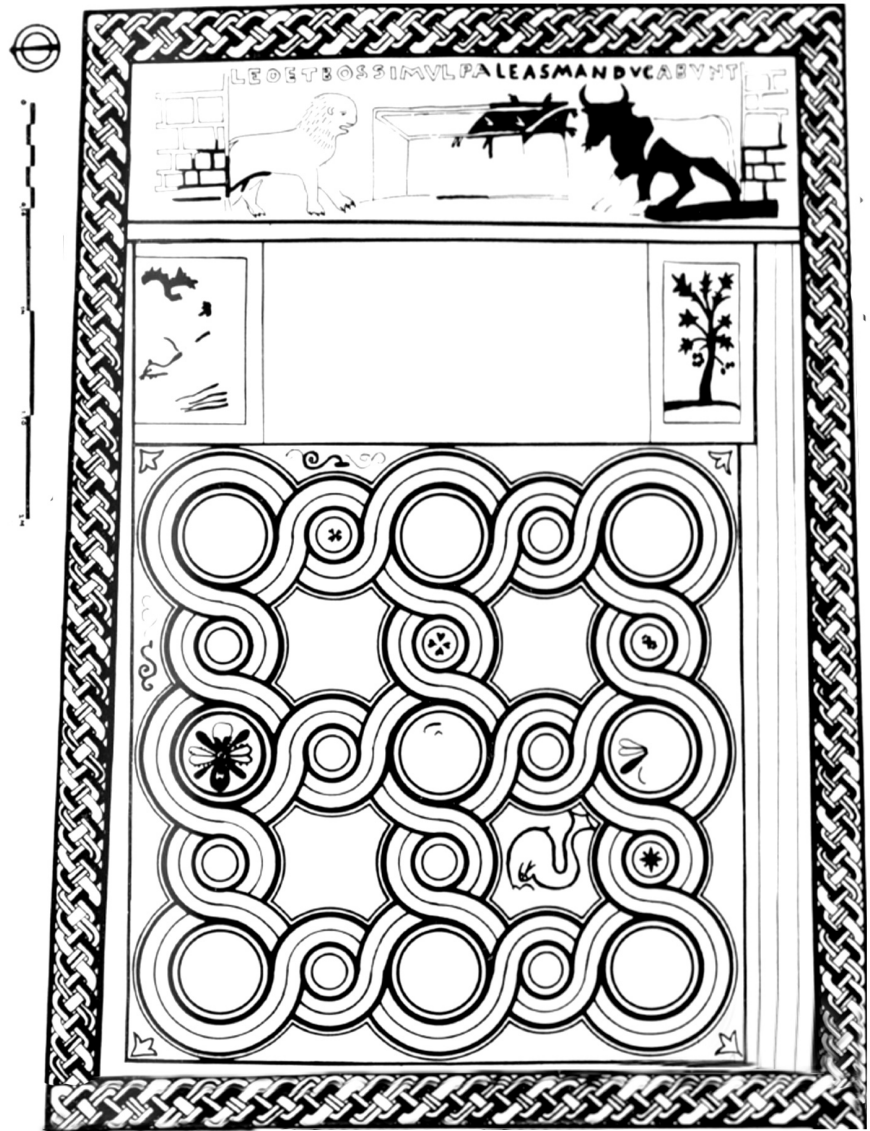
mosaic, which is unfortunately poorly preserved, originally consisted of three panels to the south of the hall. The main panel in the centre shows a scene with the remains of a lamb to the right of an amphora and a wolf to the left, framed by a thin border with rectangles. The building, excavated between 1984 and 1986, was built at the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century (Ilan - Damati 1987: 87-96). The longitudinal axis of the building runs from north to south and the entrance is on the south side. In front of the facade was a portico, which opened into a courtyard that occupied the entire south width and that had a wing flanking the building to the east. An opening in the northeastern wall of the synagogue allowed one to enter from the courtyard into the hall without using the openings in the front. This arrangement enabled one to enter and leave from the side during prayer with minimal disturbance. The prayer hall was divided in three aisles by columns, and on the southwestern side was a squared, vaulted storeroom.

In the first half of the 5th century, the synagogue changed orientation. The facade was transferred to the north side of the building with three doorways. The earlier entrances on the southern wall were sealed and on the west side staircases were built, probably to lead to an upper floor. The courtyard to the south became a study hall (Beth Midrash) completely separated from the synagogue, with no point of access connecting the two areas. In this room, a mosaic was laid in the early 7th century. It is now partly destroyed. It depicts a vessel, with a lamb to the right and a wolf to the left. The scene is framed by two borders: a wider one with double calyces in grey, black, and white colours, similar to those of the basilica in Karlık, and a thinner one with brown dentils. In the centre of the image, above the chalice and the two animals, is an inscription in Hebrew with the following words from Isaiah 65:25: “The wolf and the lamb will graze together” (translation by Hachlili 2009: 227). This mosaic, a century earlier than the mosaic of Mâ'in, thus shows the presence of the paradisiac theme accompanied by the biblical quotation of Isaiah, even in Jewish contexts. However, in this case, the depiction is located not in the main hall of the synagogue, but in the study hall separated from it.

Finally, a last case study very similar to the Cilician and Isaurian ones comes from the West: the mosaic of the late antique basilica of Mariana (Corsica). The basilica was excavated between 1959 and 1961 by Geneviève Moracchini-Mazel, who found a three-aisled building with a cruciform baptistery located southeast of the apse (Moracchini-Mazel 1965: 51-59). The building was accessed through a narthex with two openings located on the north and south sides. A single central entrance led to the main nave, which was separated from the side aisles by columns. On the east side of the basilica was a raised bema with a slightly trapezoidal shape, above which an altar was placed, and a very well-preserved mosaic was located.

The mosaic can be divided into three panels, all included within a guilloche border. The westernmost panel features looped circles, distributed according to a square scheme (five circles each side, alternately small and large, Fig. 21). The core of the panel is made of four octagonal spaces between the branches of a cross, the lines of which curve according to the circle from which they arise. Only one of these octagonal shapes, which contains the design of a dolphin, has survived. The circles are decorated with flowers or stars of various types standing out on a white background. The second panel in the middle housed the altar, of which only a base remains. On either side of the middle panel were floral depictions. A tree replete with leaves and fruit is clearly recognizable on the right; however, the figure on the left is difficult to reconstruct.

Figure 21
Reconstruction of the mosaic covering the bema of the basilica at Mariana (Moracchini-Mazel 1965: 139 fig. 2).



The “Peaceful Kingdom” motif can be found in the mosaic’s easternmost panel. Its central location behind the altar and just in front of the apse is similar to the mosaics from Anemourion, Korykos, and Elaiussa Sebaste. It occupies a rectangular space measuring 3.2 m x 0.9 m. It is in a poor state of preservation, as its left half has almost completely disappeared. The left and right edges of the scene depict masonry, beside which two animals stand opposite one another. Of the left animal, only part of the rear leg is recognizable; of the right animal, an ox the horns, body, and three of its legs can be seen. Separating the two animals is a partially preserved image of a manger filled with hay. The Latin inscription placed between and above the two masonry figures reads:

[Leo et bos simul p]aleas manduc[abunt]

The lion and the ox will eat straw together

Thanks to this inscription, which refers to Isaiah 11:7 and Isaiah 65:25, we can assume that the animal depicted on the left must have been a lion. The quotation in the inscription differs slightly from what is reported in the Latin version of the New Vulgate: “et leo quasi bos comedet paleas” (Isaiah 11:7) and “leo et bos comedent paleas” (Isaiah 65:25). Nevertheless, in the Old Version and in the

Hexaemeron Libri Sex of Ambrose (Ambr. *Hexaem.* 5.2.6) the same words of the inscription appear: “leo et bos paleam manducabunt.” In the West, the mosaic of Mariana is unique since it pairs an inscription from Isaiah 11:7 or Isaiah 65:25 with the depiction of the “Peaceful Kingdom” motif.

Archetypes and Similar Thematic Motifs from Secular Contexts

This section will briefly consider secular instances of animal representation in mosaics, paying special attention to how such representations may inform our understanding of the “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaics. What, if any, might have been the background or the prototype for mosaics with “Peaceful Kingdom” representations?

Mosaics illustrating rural life often include depictions of animals. These pastoral depictions vary, but frequent topics include hunting or chase scenes, the *philia* (friendship) among animals, and scenes occurring in vineyards or farmlands. Hunting scenes were particularly popular motifs on mosaic floors in the Greek and Roman world, and frequently appeared in inhabited scrolls (Lavin 1963: 179-286). The scenes vary in their presentations, but the theme is always the same: a hunter, enclosed in a medallion, appears on foot or mounted on a horse, holding a spear or lance in efforts to strike a wild animal, who is surrounded by a different medallion. However, more relevant to our current examination are two other types of animal depictions: mosaics which represent the *philia* between animals, and mosaics featuring Orpheus or a shepherd, surrounded by or enchanting beasts. Both pastoral depictions bear certain similarities to our “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaics and together, they constitute an archetype.

A 5th century AD mosaic in the “Hall of Philia” at Daphne (modern Harbiye, Turkey, located near Antioch) provides an example of *φιλία των ζώων* (“animal friendship”).⁴⁶ The mosaic, now preserved at the Baltimore Museum of Art, depicts fierce and tame animals facing each other (lion and ox; tigress and boar; leopard and goat; lioness, stag, and bear). Trees separate the animals, and between the lion and the ox, “*φιλία*” is inscribed. The way the animals are arranged in this mosaic (placed facing each other interspersed with trees and plant elements) and the fact that a ferocious animal is flanked by a docile one are all overtly reminiscent of the animal depiction of the “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaics described earlier.

The iconography of Orpheus,⁴⁷ playing his lute to calm animals gathered around him, may serve as an archetype of the messianic vision of peace on earth found in the “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaics. In representations of Orpheus, he is usually located in the centre of the scene, seated on a rock, sometimes in a landscape surrounded by animals (Hachlili 2009: 72-79). He wears a Phrygian cap and is dressed in a short Phrygian tunic or a chiton, as in the 2th century AD mosaic of Edessa or in the 3th century AD mosaics of Tarsus and Adana (Budde 1972: 20-24; Hild - Hellenkemper - Hellenkemper-Salies 1990: 320). This Orphean theme, widespread throughout the Mediterranean basin in mosaic pavements, catacomb frescos, vessels, and sarcophagi, is sometimes interpreted according to the Christian version of the Good Shepherd (Vieillefon 2003). An interesting

46 Another example of mosaic portraying the *philia* between animals is that preserved at the Archaeological Museum of Madaba, formerly part of the Farid el-Masri house. In a central medallion is enclosed a head of male figure surrounded by four fruit trees placed diagonally, which separates four pairs of animals: a lion and a zebu, two geese, two rams and two hares. A further contribution on the topic of the *φιλία των ζώων* is that of Kadar 1968: 257-270.

47 Numerous are the contributions on the iconography of Orpheus (Stern 1974: 1-16; Jesnick 1997; Possekkel 2009: 1-35; Jourdan 2010; Jourdan 2011; Jourdan 2015: 576-613).

case study is the mosaic, dated by Chéhab at the end of the 5th century, found in a villa at Jenah in Lebanon and now preserved at the Maurice Chehab gallery in the National Museum of Beirut (Chéhab 1958: 64-73). In the two lower rows, peaceful and wild animals graze together amidst a rich decoration of trees and shrubs. In the central part of the mosaic, the animals are arranged instead around the figure of a young man (a shepherd). Dressed in a short tunic and cloak, he stands, holding a staff with his right arm and resting his right foot on a rock. He makes special eye contact with a dog placed at his feet. Here, among others, a sheep, a goat, a bear, a duck, birds of different kinds, a bull, and a pheasant stand peacefully side-by-side. The idea of peace is thus thematized with several animals peacefully coexisting and surrounding a human figure who brings concord through the music played by his musical instrument.

As we have seen, beasts were commonly depicted in secular mosaics. They appeared in idyllic landscapes, peacefully coexisting together despite their diversity; they also interacted with humans, who hunted or enchanted them. The mosaics portraying the “Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah” are heir to these very widespread animal scenes, from the hunting scenes still present in Late Antiquity in many profane contexts⁴⁸ to the iconography of Orpheus playing the lyre surrounded by animals. These animal scenes eventually became a favourite topic depicted in late antique religious buildings. The inclusion of verses from Isaiah added a layer of verbal expression to what the visual image already communicated.

Conclusive Remarks: A Unique Interpretation for the “Peaceful Kingdom” Mosaics?

Scholars who address Isaiah’s “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaics base their interpretations either on the spatial arrangement of the mosaic panels within the different church buildings, or rely on the use of the verses of Isaiah in contemporary liturgical contexts. A. Grabar and R. Wisskirchen saw in the depictions, spatially located in proximity to the altar, a reference to the Eucharist, from which the future kingdom of peace would arise (Grabar 1960: 68-71; Wisskirchen 2009: 163). M. Gough attempted to explain the use of the verse from Isaiah 11:6-7 or 65:25 accompanied by peaceful images of animals as a call for peace in times of crisis (Gough 1974: 419). He connected these mosaics to the *Henotikon*, published by the Emperor Zeno in 482 in order to reconcile pro- and anti-Chalcedonians. Sceptical of this interpretation, S. Campbell and K. J. Vriezen sought instead to establish different concrete liturgical reference points for the Isaiah quotations. Vriezen emphasized that both quotations, which were spoken and sung in the liturgy on December 24 from the 5th century onward, were concerned with creating a vision of life in the church; their themes relate both to hoping for a future kingdom of peace and the general unity of Christians in the church (Vriezen 2003: 132). Campbell saw a connection between the scene and the use of these same verses in the Epiphany service, when the baptism was bestowed to the new Christians. In her opinion, the mosaics had a catechetical function: after the candidates have received the baptism, they may follow the attainment of the Peaceful Kingdom, as prophesied by Isaiah (Campbell 1995: 129-132).

But what can be hypothesized by looking closely at the Cilician case studies, paying special attention to the dating and locations of the mosaics within their

48 For example, in the Imperial Palace at Constantinople (Brett 1942: 34-43) or in the private residence complex of Madaba known as “Burnt Palace” (Piccirillo 1986: 333-339; Piccirillo 2007: 151-167).

respective church buildings? The paradise-themed mosaics found at Anemourion, Korykos, and Elaiussa Sebaste show more or less a similar dating, between the late 5th century (the oldest mosaic seems to be that of Anemourion around the mid-5th century) and the early 6th century. Their locations were similar: all these mosaics were concentrated on the bema of the church and were divided from the rest of the building by a balustrade that marked the space dedicated to the clergy from the area that was accessible to the faithful. An exception is the chapel at Elaiussa Sebaste, where the division between the bema and the nave must have consisted, given its small size, not of a physical element such as a balustrade but of an imaginary line that marked the end of the mosaic of the bema and the beginning of the limestone slab pavement. Only at Karlık the “Peaceful Kingdom” mosaic occupies the whole western and central part of the nave continuing, in the eastern part, with a second panel where the depiction of animals is limited to birds inscribed within rhombuses. The cases of Mopsouestia and Dağ Pazarı, partially different from the previous ones as their scenes have no references to the “Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah” but show animals peacefully living together, were located in the centre of the nave and along the entire narthex, respectively. In fact, in Mopsouestia the animals surrounding the ark are meant to recall the theme of salvation, a central motif of the building. In Dağ Pazarı, on the other hand, the mosaic slowly introduces the visitor to an idyllic world, one where animals are enveloped by plant elements originating from a central *kantharos*.

Therefore, for the examined case studies from Cilicia and Isauria the relationship to baptism should be excluded. Their favoured position indeed is not in a baptistery, which would be accessed on the side of the nave at only certain times of the year. In Elaiussa Sebaste and Anemourion, for example, the eastern side rooms housing baptismal fonts do not feature scenic mosaics; they are covered in limestone slabs, as in Elaiussa, or mosaics with geometric patterns and inscriptions, as in Anemourion.

Instead, these paradisiacal mosaics were placed in prominent positions within the church: in the bema, in the apse, or in the nave. They welcome the faithful with a motif recalling earthly peace and the hope for a future, paradisiac peace. In the case studies of Karlık, Korykos (most probably in Elaiussa) and Anemourion, visitor who approached the bema of the church would have associated the visual image of the animals in Paradise, coexisting harmoniously or moving peacefully in an idyllic landscape, with the corresponding biblical texts about eschatological peace read in the liturgy. The combination of text and image, thus, reinforced the association both with an earthly peace, guaranteed by the faith, and with a heavenly paradisiacal peace. This topic of paradisiacal peace was already familiar to the late antique visitor, who would have been accustomed to seeing such portrayals of animals peacefully living together or grouped around a figure (Orpheus or a shepherd). In the church, these images take on a new, Christian, meaning. Therefore, the “Peaceful Kingdom of Isaiah” depictions—centrally located in the nave or near the altar—were images of peace that were meant not just for specific liturgical occasions, but rather to be contemplated by the faithful at all times of the year.

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