Mosaics of Cyprus
Where is Cyprus?
CYPRUS: The Country

- Island lies at the “crossroads” of the Middle East
- Third largest island in the Mediterranean
- History of the island formed by invaders, settlers and immigrants
- Today two main ethnic groups live in a divided country: Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots
CYPRUS: The Island
Culture

- A long history of influence from outside countries has created the culture of the island.
- Some of the past inhabitants of Cyprus include: Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Venetians, Ottomans, British and Turks.
- Each group has left its mark on the archeological record.
Roman Cyprus

- Alexander the Great took control of the city kingdoms of Cyprus in 333 BC.
- Except for a few short periods, Romans had control over Cyprus for almost 600 years.
- Many public buildings and roads were built during this time.
Mosaics in Cyprus

Many of the Roman archeological sites in Cyprus contain *mosaic* floors.
What is a Mosaic?

- A mosaic is a surface decoration made by inlaying small pieces of colored stone or glass called *tesserae*.
- The *tesserae* are held together with grout. To tessellate then, is to form or adorn a surface with a mosaic.
- *Tessellation*, a word used in areas of art, math, and science means to take these pieces and create a careful pattern.
Tesserae
Mosaics may depict anything from scenes of everyday life, images of various Gods and Goddesses, to detailed designs and shapes.
History of Mosaic Art

- Mosaics date back at least 4,000 years.
- Greeks brought mosaic to an art form and it was later spread by the Roman Empire.
- The earliest mosaics were made of terracotta cones or pebbles pushed into a surface.
Mosaics in Cyprus

- The solid and durable mosaic medium made it an ideal decorative feature for the ambitious projects of the Greco-Roman world. Mosaics decorated walls, vaults, and floors of ancient buildings.

- In Cyprus, some of the most impressive sites are near the towns of Pafos, Episkopi and Famagusta.
House of Dionysos

- Located in Kato Pafos
- Discovered accidentally by a farmer in 1962.
- Named because of the number of time Dionysos appears in the mosaics.
Kourion

- Located near Episkopi
- Leveled by a large earthquake in AD 365.
- People lived in this area long before the Romans.
Salamis

- Located in North Cyprus near Famagusta
- Islands main commercial center during Roman times.
The Karpaz Peninsula

- Located in the western tip of North Cyprus.
Mosaics today?

- Mosaics continue to be an art form today.
- They are made of the traditional materials, new materials and even digitally on computers.
Resources

Utah Museum of Fine Arts, University of Utah,  http://www.umfa.utah.edu

http://www.thejoyofshards.co.uk/history/index.shtml

Cyprus, Lonely Planet

The Rough Guide to Cyprus

Study Trip, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Arizona