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Mosaic Programmes in Domestic Contexts at Zeugma
Zeugma Konut Kontekstlerinde Mozaik Dekorasyon Programları

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For Zeynep, Ela and Cem

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Abstract

This article reassesses mosaic programmes in domestic contexts and in private spheres in the houses at Zeugma and in some other Greco-Roman cities. The starting point of the argument in the article is a mosaic inscription which was found in a Roman house in Zeugma. The mosaic pavement itself decorates the floor of a chamber decorated with geometric patterns and the inscription in the middle. The inscription is an epithalamium, a wedding song, written for a newly-wedded couple, probably residents of the house, whose names are also partly preserved in the poem. The inscription suggests that the theme and iconography of the mosaics and frescoes in public dining rooms and private rooms in the domestic context are associated with the stories of the gods, goddesses or other well-known couples related to the concept of ideal marriage in mythology and in literature. These marriage-related themes are accompanied by images of Dionysiac domesticity and Bacchic frenzy. This article proposes that many of these mosaics, which are much more permanent than the rest of the decoration, may have been commissioned as part of marriage preparations, perhaps as gifts to the wedded couple. The subjects are chosen according to the intellectual background of the house-dwellers and their milieu, from literary and mythological narratives that are meant to protect the new family's happiness and union, serve as a reminder of marriage and symbolize the perpetuity of the family's progeny and its prosperity.

Keywords: *Zeugma, Mosaic, epithalamium, iconography, marriage rites.*

Öz

Bu makalede, Zeugma Antik Kentinde ve diğer bazı Greko-Romen merkezlerde özel hayatın geçtiği konutlardaki mozaik dekorasyon programı ele alınmaktadır. Tartışmanın çıkış noktasını ise Zeugma'da bir Roma konutunda ortaya çıkarılmış yazıtlı bir mozaik oluşturmaktadır. Mozaik üzerinde geometrik desenler arasında bir panoda yer alan yazıtta, mozaiğin bulunduğu bu evde yaşamış ve isimleri kısmen yazıtta da korunmuş olan yeni evli bir çift için yazılmış bir evlilik şiiri, bir epithalamium (gerdek şarkısı) yer alır. Bu yazıt, özel konutlarda yer alan yemek odaları ve mahrem odalardaki mozaik ve duvar resimlerinin konularının, antik dönem edebi metinlerinde ve mitolojide ideal evlilik kavramıyla özdeşleşmiş tanrı, tanrıça veya diğer tanınmış sevgililerin hikayeleriyle bağlantılı olduğunu düşündürmektedir. Bu kavramların resmedilmesinde, özellikle evlilikle bağlantılı Dionysos ve Bakhik ritüel betimlemeler de ana sahneye dahil edilerek vurgulanmaktaydı. Makale, özel hayatın geçtiği konutlarda genel dekorasyonun önemli bir parçası olan ve diğer dekorasyona göre çok daha kalıcı olan bu mozaiklerin birçoğunun evlilik hazırlıkları içinde ısmarlanmış, hatta bazılarının evlilik hediyesi olarak yapılmış olabileceğini ortaya koymaktadır. Konular genellikle ev yaşayanlarının veya çevresinin entelektüel altyapılarına göre seçilmiş, kurulan yeni ailede mutluluğu ve birlikteliği koruyacak, evliliği hatırlatacak ve ailenin soyunun devamını ve bereketini sembolize edecek edebi ve mitolojik hikayeler ile ilgilidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Zeugma, mozaik, epithalamium, ikonografi, evlilik gelenekleri.*

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Figure 1
Zeugma, the mosaic inscription.

Recent research on several mosaic pavements at Zeugma revealed that the choice of specific scenes and iconography in some reception rooms in the houses may be associated with wedding preparations in these spaces. To discuss this idea, let me start with a crucial mosaic find as the starting point of my argument[1].

This important mosaic pavement was found in a Roman house complex which was unearthed in the salvage excavations carried out in the eastern residential sector of the city (Early 2003: 55; Aylward 2013: 15)[2] (Fig. 1). The house is

[1] These ideas were presented first time in 2012 in the Archaeology Seminars in the Ioannou Classics Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies and in the Roman Discussion Forums in 2017 at the University of Oxford and briefly mentioned in previous publications. Görkay 2011: 291; Görkay 2012a: 548-549; Görkay 2012b: 15-16; Görkay 2015: 54, 74, 116, 128, 130, 146, 148. I am grateful for the invitation and for the comments of the audience and especially of three of the organisers, Bert Smith, Maria Stamatopoulou and Andrew Wilson. My thanks also go to those who gave feedback after subsequent presentations, especially Angelos Chaniotis, Katherine Dunbabin and William Slater. Main presentation about this subject was held in the 1st International Meeting *RoGeMoPorTur* in Alter de Chão in Portugal for which I am grateful to Maria de Jesus Duran Kremer and Mustafa Şahin, especially for their invitation and outstanding organisation.

[2] The House is entered from the east by a gate which connects the house to a NW-SE oriented street. At the south of the entrance, is an adjacent room which probably functioned as a small domestic bath

located at the shoreline of the dam-reservoir and therefore the state of preservation of most of its architectural remains is rather poor. The mosaic pavement decorates the floor of a large rectangular chamber which appears to have been one of the public rooms of the house. The house was burnt down during the Sasanian sack of the city in 252/253 AD. The mosaic has two large geometric patterns with an inscription in the middle. The inscription has five lines and is rather well preserved. The text is an "epithalamium", a wedding song previously unknown. The poem itself was written in reasonable dactylic hexameters although the last line is pentameter. Despite some lacunae in the mosaic inscription, a good deal of reconstruction was possible thanks to the remaining parts.

The translation of the inscription is[3]:

Nymphs and Charites, come hither with dances inside the bridal chamber,
which you have made! Sing the wedding song! Come hither! So that all of us,
[---] sing wedding songs for the joyful events.
[Pro]teas (e.g.) has now married, as his wife, Artem[---], of his own kin,
and may he see her soon mother of good children.

As part of festival poetry, epithalamia emerged from wedding poetry and were composed for certain wedding occasions, in which unions of mythical and divine characters were allegorically praised with speeches and wedding songs[4]. The epithalamium mosaic, dated to the first half of the third century AD, has a similar formula to some other known epithalamia of the 6th century AD, especially the ones compiled by Dioscorus of Aphrodito[5], who follows the prescripts recommended in the Treatises of Menander of Laodicea, known as Menander Rhetor[6]. Several of Dioscorus' poems are epithalamia and they are for real people whose names are generally mentioned in the poem. The genre in the Zeugma epithalamium is also reminiscent of Nonnos' *Dionysiaca* (Nonnos, *Dion*, 47. 453-469) but the Zeugma epithalamium is much earlier than these examples. It seems to be one of the earliest examples on mosaic and the text is probably derived from Hellenistic poetry, (Verhelst 2017: 37). Generally, in epithalamia, the first lines often begin with mention of Charites, Nymphs and Muses or Gods and Goddesses related to the concept of marriage, as well as romantic couples that are praised for their devoted love and loyalty to each other. As is the case in the Zeugma example, Epithalamia in general possess an exhortation to newlyweds – they contain messages such as: "bring children to the world and provide offspring!", which is also something in the Treatises of Menander Rhetor[7]. Menander advises elder members of the family to give the following advice to the bridegroom:

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chamber. Since the chamber has hypocaust system underneath, the whole house was interpreted as a bath complex in the salvage excavations.

3 The epigraphic evaluation of the inscription will be published in a longer version of this article. Here, I would like to express my special gratitude to Angelos Chaniotis and William Slater who have contributed greatly to the initial transcription and completed the inscription.

4 Such as epithalamia for Peleus and Thetis of Catullus, *Cat*. 64.323-381; Theocritus' Epithalamium for Helen (*Idyl* 18), see Gow 1973: Vol. I, 140-144; Epithalamium for Achilles and Deidameia, which was once ascribed to Bion, see, [Bion] 2, *Bucolici graeci*, (ed. Gow, OCT); for general see, Wheeler 1930: 205-223; Keydell 1962: 927-943; Pavlovskis 1965: 164-177.

5 MacCoull 1988: 88-89, H21; 81-84, H24; 86-88, H.25: (dances of the nine Muses); 108-110, H.22, (dancing of the Graces); see also Fournet 1999: 431-442.

6 MacCoull 1988: 111, H23; 111, H23; see also Russell – Wilson 1981: VI-VII, "the Epithalamium and Bedroom Speeches", 135-159.

7 Russell – Wilson 1981: 404.27; 407.7-9; 407.15-17; 407.23-24; 408.6-8; 411.15-17; 411.20-21; for Pseudo Dionysius, see Russell – Wilson 1981: 271, "Epithalamios".

> "*Young man, we have made the preparations for this marriage, the enormous expenditure, the assembly of the best people, simply because we want you to make a demonstration of the prowess and strength you possess, so that your family and we who are your contemporaries can feel proud of you",* (Russell – Wilson 1981: 404.10-15.)

Two Latin marriage contracts on papyri from Egypt speak about an agreement upon which the bride's father gives his daughter in marriage "for the sake of producing children", (Fink 1966: 9–17; Evans-Grubbs 2007: 80; Evans-Grubbs 2010: 84). We do not know whether the installation of the whole mosaic pavement with the poem was part of the marriage agreement, however, what we know is that the kinship of the newlyweds was intentionally underlined in the poem, to emphasize the familial nobility as well as the production of noble offspring[8]. It is also likely that the kinship was highlighted in the poem to make the newlyweds remember their familial affinity in order to sustain the harmony in matrimonial union. Since there is no indication that the inscription was added later, it is obvious that the whole mosaic pavement was laid right before the wedding ceremony as a gift to the couple mentioned in the inscription. The song was composed and probably sung during the wedding of the couple; but by that time, it may have been already inscribed in the mosaic, and become a commemorative epigram of the wedding. It was certainly inscribed at the vestibule or entrance room, that served as a nuptial chamber, but the room probably had later changed its function.

No other epithalamium on mosaic is known to me particularly with such stereotypical content of wishes regarding procreation of offspring and the perpetuation of the family line. An inscription with a similar message, though not epithalamium, is found on the mosaic pavement of a chamber in the so-called "House of the Dionysus Mosaic" in Cyrene in Libya (Venturini 2005: 122, fig. 6, see also Luni et al. 2005: 145-146; Venturini 2006: 508-511, fig. 52; Olszewski 2010: 317 fig.3 pls. 26-27). The mosaic decorates a relatively large chamber and has geometric patterns and a figured panel in the middle depicting Dionysus and Ariadne at Naxos with an inscription above the figures (Olszewski 2010: 318). Clearly visible joining lines at the borders of the panel suggest that the figures and the inscription might have been laid later than the rest of the otherwise geometric mosaic pavement. The inscription above the figures reads:

> "εἰς αἰῶνα τὸ γένος Καμπανοῦ, τῇ ματρώνα Επὶκριτα",
>
> "*Long live the descendants of Campanus, for mother Epikrita*"[9].

The scene in the panel is an eternal divine union, which is metaphorically associated through the inscription with the real-life couple, for whom this was made, thus wishing the perpetual progeny. The message of the mosaic seems to be associated with the Dionysiac domesticity and the room was probably decorated for the sake of the domestic bliss of Campanus' family. The whole mosaic, or just the figural and inscribed panel, might have been laid as a gift for the matrimonial union of Campanus and Epikrita, encouraging them to be a good husband and a good wife with a good future. And of course, the good future meant lots of children.[10]

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8 Plut. De Herod. Malign. 32, 321; Plut. Lac. Apopth. 16 fr, 355; noble birth and breed were also praised in Dioscorus' epithalamia and encomia, see MacCoull 1988: 63, H6; 81, H24; 96, H.13; 111, H23; 134, H2;

9 I am indebted to W. Slater for the refinement of the translation. For "*matrona*" see, Redfield 1982: 182.

10 I would like to thank W. Slater and C. Roueché for the connection of Dionysiac domesticity.

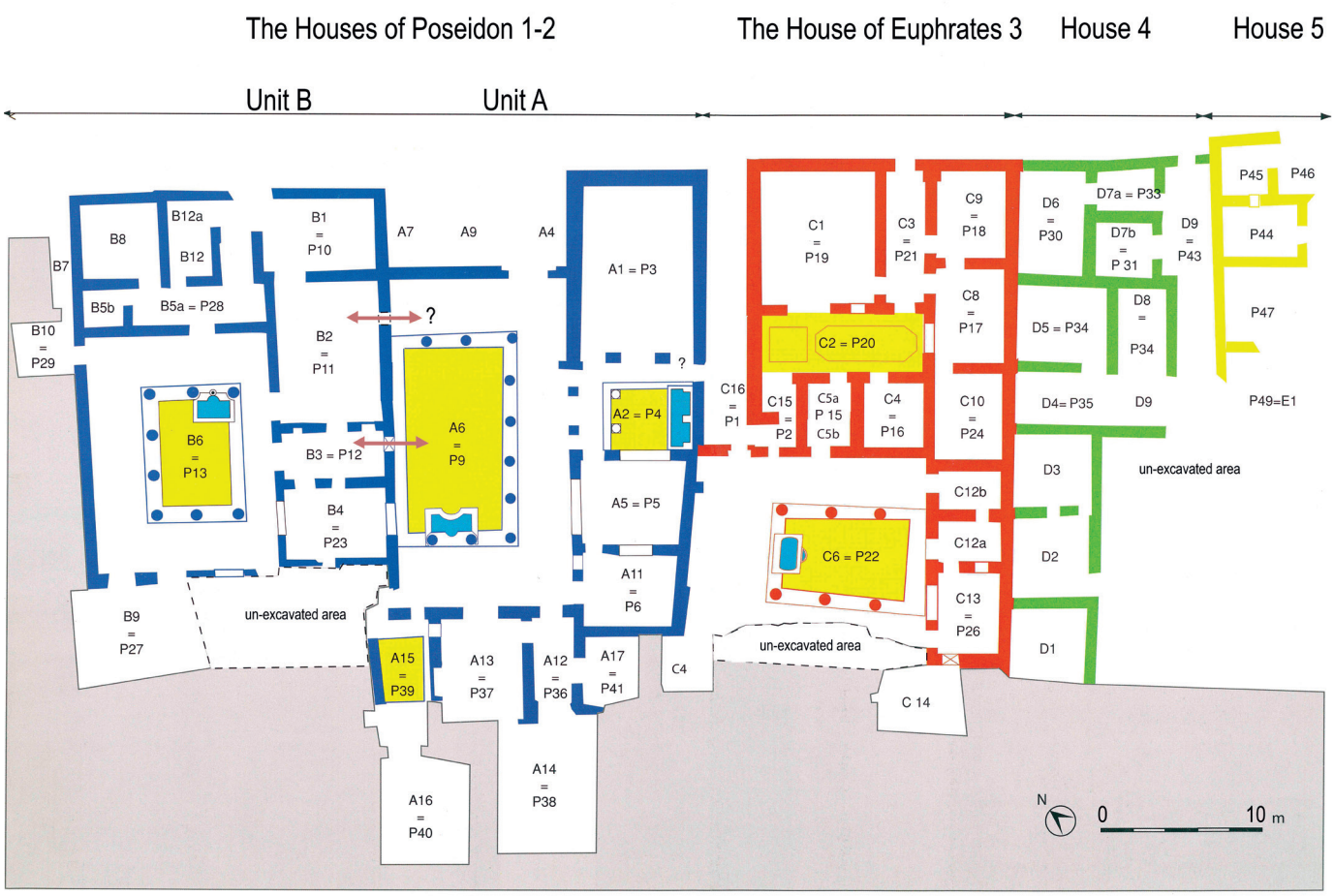

Figure 2
Zeugma, Plan of the Houses of Poseidon and Euphrates, including adjacent houses. (Barbet 2005: pl.E).

Menander also describes the preparations of the bridal chamber before a wedding. He says: "*The city has assembled, it all joins the feast. The alcoves are prepared, such as no one had before. The chamber is adorned with flowers and paintings of all kinds; it is full of the charms of love.*" (Russell – Wilson 1981: 404.17-23).

The room where we find the Zeugma epithalamium was most probably designed as a reception room of the house but was furbished as a bridal chamber for this marriage. If such a highly private and individual text, which evokes private memories and meaningful moments, was put here in this more public space of the house, then perhaps we should consider that other decorated mosaic scenes related to the marriage concept in the reception rooms in other houses could also have been laid for similar occasions (in his *Nymfarum Domus* J-P. Darmon already mentioned such a possibility for the mosaics in the House of Nymphs, see Darmon 1980: 204-227, 242-246; see also Muth 1998: 307-309; Balty 2005: 1307-1315).

Now we can return to the question of what mosaic scenes we have in the houses of Zeugma, which we might associate with this argument. The so-called "House of Poseidon" appears to have consisted of two units designated as unit A and unit B. Unit A and Unit B were designed separately but then they were joined (For the plan of the houses, see Barbet 2005: pl. E, see also Önal 2012: 65-182 plan horse-texte; Abadie-Reynal 2012: 183-237; see also Önal 2013: 12 fig. 2; Two units were joined with an opening in the room P12, B3, see, Barbet 2005: 37-41, see also in the general plan (plan hors texte); Önal 2012: 113-117 fig.110; Önal 2013: 50-51, (room B3)) (Fig. 2).

Figure 3
Zeugma, Mosaic of Perseus and Andromeda.

The date of this integration process is not clear; however, these two units appear to have been separated again after a while, just before the Sassanian sack of the city in 252/253 AD (Aylward 2013: 29-31). The mosaic pavements in the chambers of these houses are diverse, in terms of their subject matter, quality and date of production (Dunbabin 2013: 159-151). In Unit B, figural mosaics decorate three chambers (Önal 2012: 119 fig. 114 pl. 23; Önal 2013: 50 fig. 4). These include two small private receptions rooms, and one larger public reception room in the middle. All three rooms are decorated with frescoes as well as mosaics.

In accordance with its function, the main reception room was decorated with frescoes showing figures of servants on the walls, while the mosaic pavement depicts Perseus and Andromeda in its centre (For the frescoes: see Barbet 2005: 25-37 pl. E; for the mosaic, see Önal 2012: 107-116) (Fig. 3). The scene shows the moment when Perseus liberates Andromeda from her chains after he has dispatched the sea-monster Ketos. Perseus assists Andromeda down from the rocky promontory by holding her wrist, in a gesture called "*kheir epi karpoi*" which usually grooms practice when they lead brides to their house. In the scene, Ketos lies dead at Perseus' feet. Perseus grasps the gorgon's head by the hair while his sword rests in the crook of the same hand. In the other depictions of the scene in the Greek iconography, Andromeda is represented well dressed and bejewelled, sometimes with a tiara in her coiffed hair, and accompanied by some elegant appendages such as a toilette box and a garland (*LIMC* Andromeda I,1, (K. Schauenburg), 776-777, nr. 10-11, nr. 13, nr. 15-17 pls. 625-625). However, in the Zeugma scene, she appears with unusual adjuncts, such as a nuptial hydria, for ablution, a shell of Venus and a mirror[11], (Darmon 2005: 1287; see also,

[11] The mirror was tentatively interpreted as fan by Schaeunburg. See, *LIMC* Supp. 2009, Andromeda I, (K. Schauenburg), 63.15, pl. 34 (add.15), In another depiction of the scene Aphrodite is represented

Figure 4
Zeugma, Mosaic of Antiope, Satyros, Galatea.

Taylor 2008: 175). As emphasised by Jean Pierre Darmon and Rabun Taylor, the mirror, which stands vertically erected in the scene right beneath the joining hands of the couple should be associated with *dextrarum iunctio* (joining of right hands) of matrimony[12], (Darmon 2005: 1287; Taylor 2008: 175). In Greek art, the bodily domination of the bride by the groom was a common theme. As the groom led her to his house he would somewhat forcibly take his bride by the wrist, not by the hand. The presence of the nuptial hydria, the shell and the mirror in the composition of this specific plot speaks to a strong allegoric reference to matrimonial union.

Two other smaller rooms with mosaic pavement are located at two sides of the main reception room[13]. The southern room functioned most probably as a *gynaikeion* and was decorated with frescoes as well as this mosaic pavement.

with Cepheus, Hermes and perhaps Casiopeia, see *LIMC* Andromeda I no. 8) with is depicted in another symbolic figure which inspired Perseus with love for Andromeda is Eros, who is represented on an Apulian loutrophoros as helping him to defeat the Ketos. Perseus' challenge with Eros is well portrayed in Euripides's play pointed out by Ogden 2008: 77-78, also see, (fr. 136 *TrGF*).

12 Joining of the right hands can also be interpreted as Concordia, a marital harmony.

13 Barbet 2005: see general plan of the Houses, (plan hors-texte).

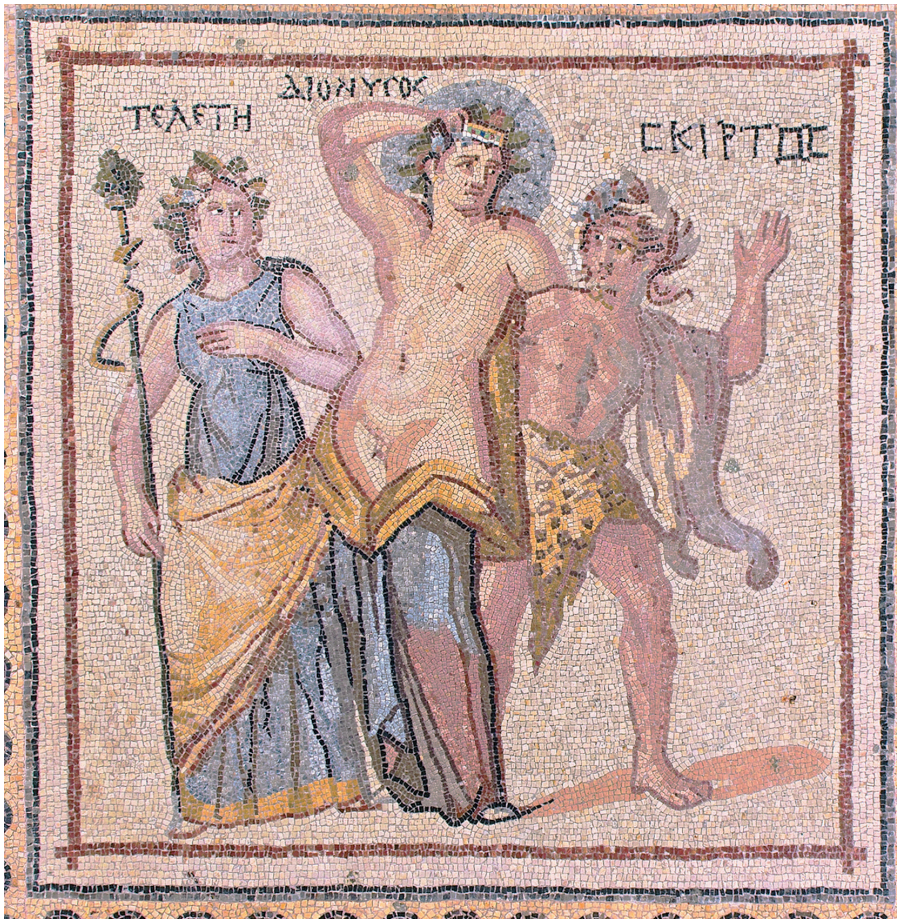

Figure 5
Zeugma, Mosaic of Dionysus, Skirtos, Telete.

The frescoes of the room probably depict famous Heroines, who are praised for their loyalty and chastity in Greek mythology and literature[14], (Görkay 2015: 35-36; for frescoes, see Barbet 2005: 174-175 fig.112 pl. XIII pl. K, C.) On the floor, a rectangular mosaic pavement consists of two figured panels which were positioned towards the onlookers reclining on the couches. The panels shows Antiope and Zeus in the guise of Satyros at the top, and at the bottom Galatea, one of the daughters of Nereus. In the Metamorphoses of Ovid, Galatea and her loyal lover Acis were presented as the symbol of power of love that destroys the jealousy of Polyphemos[15]. Figures in either panel allude to the idea of strong commitment with divine and passionate love, and possess subtle dramatic elements which would perfectly suit a private space reserved for women (Figs. 4-5). The floor mosaic in the northern room, which is almost the same size as the southern room, depicts Dionysus, Satyros (Skirtos), and Telete, the marriage goddess who accompanies Dionysus as if she was his Maenad wearing a long tunic and a cloak, wreathed with vine leaves and holding a thyrsus, (Ergeç 2006: 132-135; Önal 2013: 79-80; Görkay 2015: 114-115). According to Katherine Dunbabin, this perfectly fits Telete's description in Nonnos' *Dionysiaca*, dressed perhaps a little more elaborately than an ordinary maenad (Dunbabin 2008: 211).

14 Mural decoration of the rooms reserved for women, i.e. *gyneikeion*, are generally decorated with Heroines from the Greek plays and mythology such as the Heroine figures in the House of Euphrates where only Deidameia and Penelope are recognisable thanks to preserved captions of their names.

15 Ovid, *Meta*. XIII, 738-897; Polyphemus' or Pan's love for Galatea was subjected to an epithalamium as a symbol of power of love, see Cavero 2008: 39-40 nr.8, P.Lit.Lond. 38 [P.Lond . 3.970] = MP3 1814 = LDAB 5313; In Nonnos' *Dionysiaca* Galatea twangs a marriage dance and sings the marriage verses, for she had learnt well how to sing, being taught by Polyphemus with a shepherd's syrinx. Dion. 43.372-393.

Figure 6
Zeugma, Mosaic of Pasiphae.

In Unit A of the House of Poseidon, apart from the main public reception room, three small private rooms were paved with mosaics. The main reception room was decorated with a TU form triclinium mosaic whose salutatory rectangular panel depicts the dramatic story of Pasiphae (the scene's association with a theatre play, see Görkay 2015: 98-103; Dunbabin 2016: 102-103) (Fig. 6). This story illustrates the unbridled nature of female passion as described by Ovid in his Ars Amatoria and the irresistible power of love that grows with extremes of emotions that captivate her, (Ovid, *Ars*, 1. 289-326). In the panel in the inner part of the room, Dionysus was depicted on his chariot accompanied by a dancing Bacchant. The relationship between wine, celebration and Bacchic frenzy is underlined in Nonnos' *Paraphrasis* (*Par*. 2.12.-20), where un-Bacchic (ἀβάκχευτος) meant lack of wine on the table and joyless atmosphere among the wedding guests, (see Vian 1990: 345; Doroszewski 2014: 288; Doroszewski 2016: 335-336). In the large rectangular panel, right next to Pasiphae, Himeros (Desire) is included to symbolize the contribution of Aphrodite to the whole incident. This particular vigorous dramatic plot most probably emerged from the tragic play of Euripides known as "Cretans" which is known to us from a papyrus fragment only (Euripides, Kretes, Fr.472e K). It is as natural to link the presence of Dionysus in the other panel to the passionate desire of Pasiphae, as it is to associate wine with love. Other mosaics in the house are found in small rooms and they depict Eros and Telete, The Birth of Aphrodite, and Antiope and Satyros, (see Görkay 2015: 116-117; 106-107; 112-113). These scenes are mostly related to love and desire, which are more suitable for private rooms and may have been intended to contribute to domestic bliss.

In one of these small private rooms, the mosaic pavement depicts the wedding of Eros the god of love, and his bride Telete (Fig. 7). Katherine Dunbabin has made

Figure 7
Zeugma, Mosaic of Eros and Telete (1).

a great contribution to the interpretation of the iconography and the subtle meaning of the scene, emphasising the scene's relation with marriage and its association with Dionysiac cult and rites, (Dunbabin 2008: 193– 224). Her publication includes an immense compilation of examples related to this issue, but I would like to mention briefly only two examples.

One is also from Zeugma, and the other one is from a private collection. This rather damaged mosaic pavement from Zeugma, probably decorated the floor of a nuptial chamber in a house of the Roman period, (Ergeç 1998: 89 fig.5.12, 5.13; Dunbabin 2008: 213-214 fig.19; Görkay 2015: 146-147) (Fig. 8). The mosaic has the same scene in its panel as the one in the House of Poseidon, except for its border decoration. One important difference is that the central scene on the right is surrounded by the personifications of seasons in the corners, which metaphorically imply the cycles of life, and scenes suggesting fruitfulness and

Figure 8
Zeugma, Mosaic of Eros and Telete (2).

prosperity[16]. An affluent scroll decoration with flowers and fruits frames the Eros-Telete scene in the House of Poseidon, gives more or less the same message. It thus appears that both mosaics have the same visual grammar, as well as the same message pertaining to love, marriage and a prosperous and productive life.

An extraordinary mosaic of Telete and Eros from a private collection in New York, introduced to scholarship by Katherine Dunbabin (see, Dunbabin 2008: 212, 215-216 figs.16-18), has more to tell us on this issue (Fig. 9). Provenance of the mosaic is not known; however, it has enough details to locate its provenance

16 In the bedroom speech in the Treatises of Menander Rhetor, Menander advises mentioning seasons, their miracles and assistance to fruitfulness, see Russell – Wilson 1981: 408.8-32; 410.18-23; 410.30-411.4.

Figure 9
Mosaic of Telete, Eros and Aphrodite, New York Private Collection (Dunbabin 2008: 215-216 figs.16-18).

in North Syria. In its present form, it is a longitudinal panel, which is probably from an alcove or from a salutatory emblemata of a *triclinium*. In the mosaic, Charites adorn the bridal chamber with garlands of roses and Telete is depicted as a girl wrapped in a white cloak which veils her head. One of the Graces encourages her towards Eros, who stretches his right hand, as a symbol of marriage proposal, towards her, while he holds a rose in his left hand[17], (Dunbabin 2008: 212, 215-216 figs. 16-17). Beside him, Aphrodite, assisting goddess of marriages[18], crowns Eros with a wreath, proclaiming him the victor of the love contest, as Katherine Dunbabin has already emphasized, (Dunbabin 2008: 212). The iconography in the scene is that of a wedding, where the hesitant bride is introduced to the welcoming bridegroom and is encouraged for the consummation of marriage (Dunbabin 2008: 212). Xenophon of Ephesus, while relating the wedding night of Habrocomes and Anthia, describes Ares as crowned with a wreath like a bridegroom (Xen.Eph.1.8), just as Eros in the scene symbolizing the bride in the New York panel. There are also elements in this scene reminiscent of the exhortations as described in Menander's Rhetor, where he says. *"You may also exhort him by a reference to the beauty of the chamber, which the Graces have adorned, to the beauty of the girl, and to the marriage gods who attend: Aphrodite and Desire will hand her to you, and put her in your hands, that you may produce children like you and like her*." (Russell – Wilson 1981: 407.3-9).

17 Similarly, Eros figures in both Eros and Telete mosaics from Zeugma hold rose in their right hand, see Görkay 2015: 117, 147; Roses are particularly associated with Aphrodite, see Bion's Adonis 66, see also Fantuzzi 1985: Reed 1977: in the Treatises of Menander Rhetor, bridegroom is associated with a rose, see Russell – Wilson 1981: 404.7-8, whereas in Sappho rose is associated with girls; see Russell – Wilson 1981: 316, commentary, 404.8.

18 Russell – Wilson 1981: 400.5; 402.6; 404.25; 407,7; 411,10-15; in Roman Egypt, Aphrodite and Isis Aphrodite statuettes are often mentioned as a part of the *parapherna* (items beyond the dowry), in nine marriage contracts and they are given as present to ensure marital fertility, matrimonial union and domestic bliss, see Burkhalter 1990: 51-60; see also Sanders 1938: 112; Evans-Grubbs 2002: 127 note.103; An epigram (in Theocritus) for a statue of Aphrodite set up Chrysogona, wife of Amphicles, in a domestic shrine, is a good example for the deity's function in domestic bliss, see, Gow 1973: Vol I 246-247 epig.13, for commentary see Gow 1973: Vol II 538; Draped Aphrodite statuettes, holding a crown in her hand and Eros on her shoulder were recently studied by Kropp and classified as "Emesa Type". This type might be associated with the goddess' role in betrothals and marriages and these statuettes were probably product of wedding industry. For the statue see, Kropp 2016: 193-222.

In the background of the scene, *a thalamos*, nuptial chamber, is depicted as separated by curtains[19]. The whole composition, as well as the visual language in the scene evokes an allusion to a poem, as if it was a figural epithalamium. If so, the mosaic itself was paved on the floor of a vestibule or an alcove where perhaps even a part of the actual wedding celebration took place and the mosaic itself stayed there as a commemorative picture. Although it seems much smaller, the couch on which Eros is seated was probably representing the ceremonial marriage bed that was usually placed across the door, like a *lectus genialis* in the Latin marriage ceremonies, (for Latin marriage ceremonies, see Johansson 2010: 140-142).

Another important mosaic from Zeugma depicts a couple from a romantic novel, namely Parthenope and Metiochus, (Görkay 2015: 134-135) (Fig. 10). This mosaic was found in a small private reception room which probably was prepared, again, as a nuptial chamber. When the pavement was found in the salvage excavations, the upper parts of Metiochus and Parthenope had already been looted. They resurfaced in 2000 in a private collection in the United States, then they were brought back to Turkey and reinstalled at their original position. The chamber was entered from the west through a double-winged door, (Kennedy – Freeman 1998: 63 fig.4.4) (Fig. 11) and the scene in the emblemata was oriented towards a couch probably prepared for the couple for whose marriage this chamber was decorated, (Görkay 2015: 134).

There is little evidence that the story of Parthenope and Metiochus was known in the pre-Roman Greek world. From the original Greek text only little has survived, primarily in three papyrus fragments and one inscribed ostraca, (Hägg 1991: 17ff; For papyri and ostracon, see Hägg's compilation, Hägg – Utas 2003: 24-75; see also Hägg 2004: 223-277). References to this story in Greek literature of the Roman period and the depiction of scenes from it in mosaics, one in Zeugma and another from Daphne in Antakya, (Levi 1947: Vol.II pl.c; 20; Maehler 1976: 1–20 pl.1), confirm that it continued to be read and appreciated several hundred years after it was composed. Although the great part of the Greek story of Parthenope and Metiochus is lost, we now know the rest of the story, thanks to Tomas Hägg's contribution, from the later Persian verse epic, Vamiq u Adhra, The Virgin and her Lover, composed by the Ghaznavid court poet 'Unsuri" in the eleventh century AD, (Hägg – Utas 2003: 214ff; Hägg 2004:106). Even though the fate of the couple at the end of the story in the Greek version is obscure, Tomas Hägg believes that they do not come together and Parthenope dies as a virgin, (Hägg – Utas 2003: 249-250; see also Smith 2008: 641), contrary to the happy end in the Persian version, where the lovers reunite and get married. However, the Zeugma piece may speak more about the end of the lost Greek version of the story. Certain plots in the story, as well as the characters, were ideal for stage performances. Lucian of Samosata, best known for his satirical writing in Greek, in his essay "Peri Orkheseos" or in Latin "De Saltatione" of pantomime, mentions that the stories of Parthenope and Metiochus were favoured by pantomime players and danced on stage[20]. According to Hägg, the Daphne and Zeugma mosaics illustrate certain plots from the novel or possibly

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19 This curtain reminds the passage in Apollonius of Rhodes, Argonautes, where Medea and Jason celebrate their marriage in a cave. Apollonius of Rhodes, Argo, 4.1155, according to Hunter, "τεινάμεναι ἐανούς εὐωδεας", "by spreading out fragrant cloths", either to seal off the entrance to the cave, thus creating an according θάλαμος, or by fashioning a kind of bridal canopy (παστος), Hunter 2015: 238,1155; especially for such awnings, see also Xen. Eph. 1.8. 2.

20 Lucian, De Saltataione, 2, 54, ed. M.D. Macleod, Luciani Opera, Vol.III, Oxford 1980, 26; 43ff; Lucian, Pseudologista, 25, ed. M.D. Macleod, Luciani Opera, Vol.III, Oxford 1980, 144.

Figure 10a
Zeugma, Mosaic of Metiochus and Parthenope.

Figure 10b
Zeugma, Mosaic of Metiochus and Parthenope, new proposal.

from a theatrical adaptation of the story, (Hägg – Utas 2003: 7, 58-61). The figures, neither on the Zeugma piece, nor on the Daphne piece, wear theatrical masks. Although there is some evidence that some theatrical plays were performed without a mask, and Parthenope in the Daphne mosaic appears to make a theatrical gesture, there is no clear indication that the Zeugma mosaic depicts a theatrical performance. Rather, it highlights a particular moment in the story.

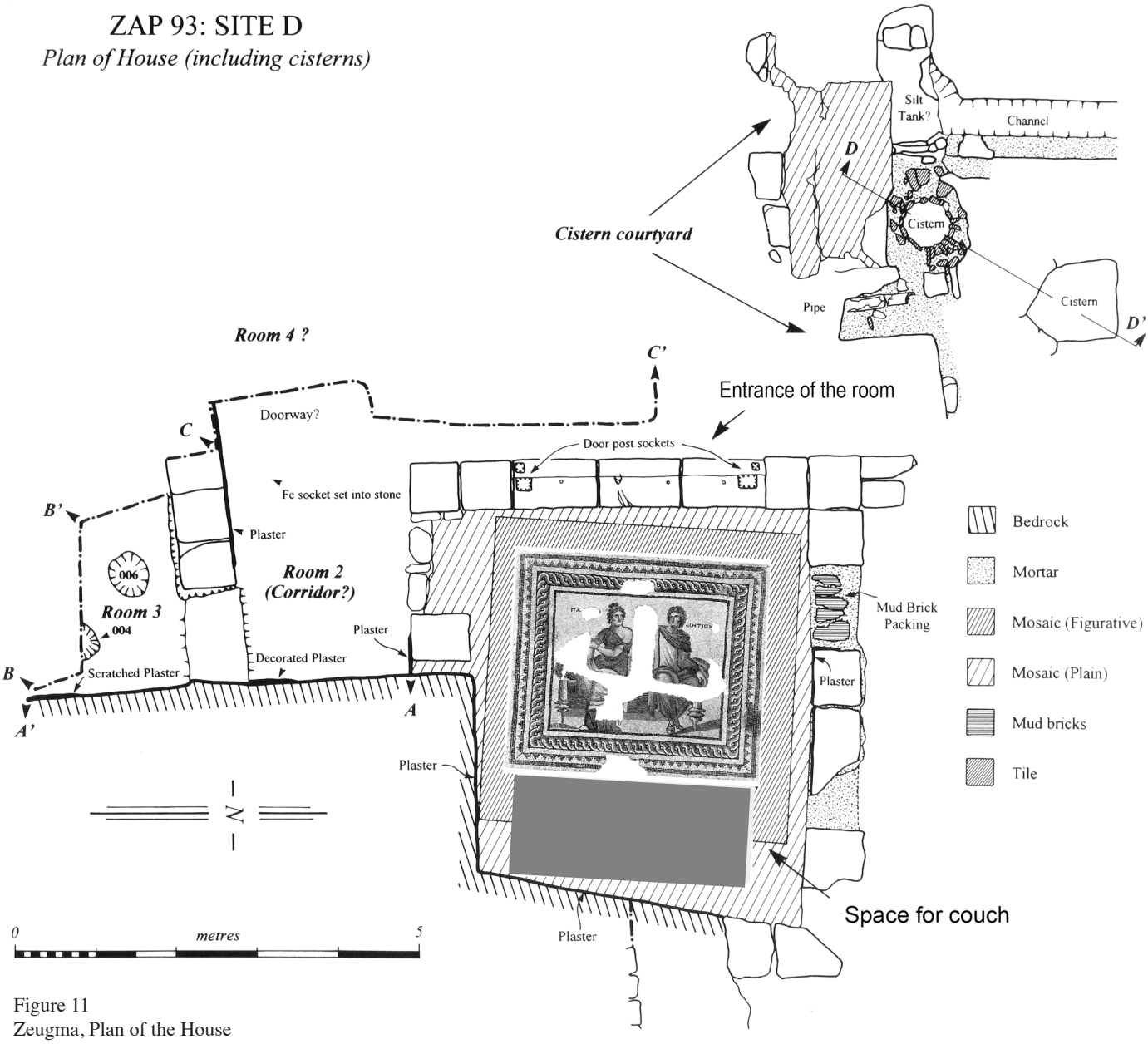


Figure 11
Zeugma, Plan of the House
of Metiochus and Parthenope
(Kennedy – Freeman 1998: 63 fig. 4.4).

Figure 12
Myrina terracotta, Bridegroom
and Bride, "Kline Group"
(Mollard-Besques 1963: pl. 153.d).

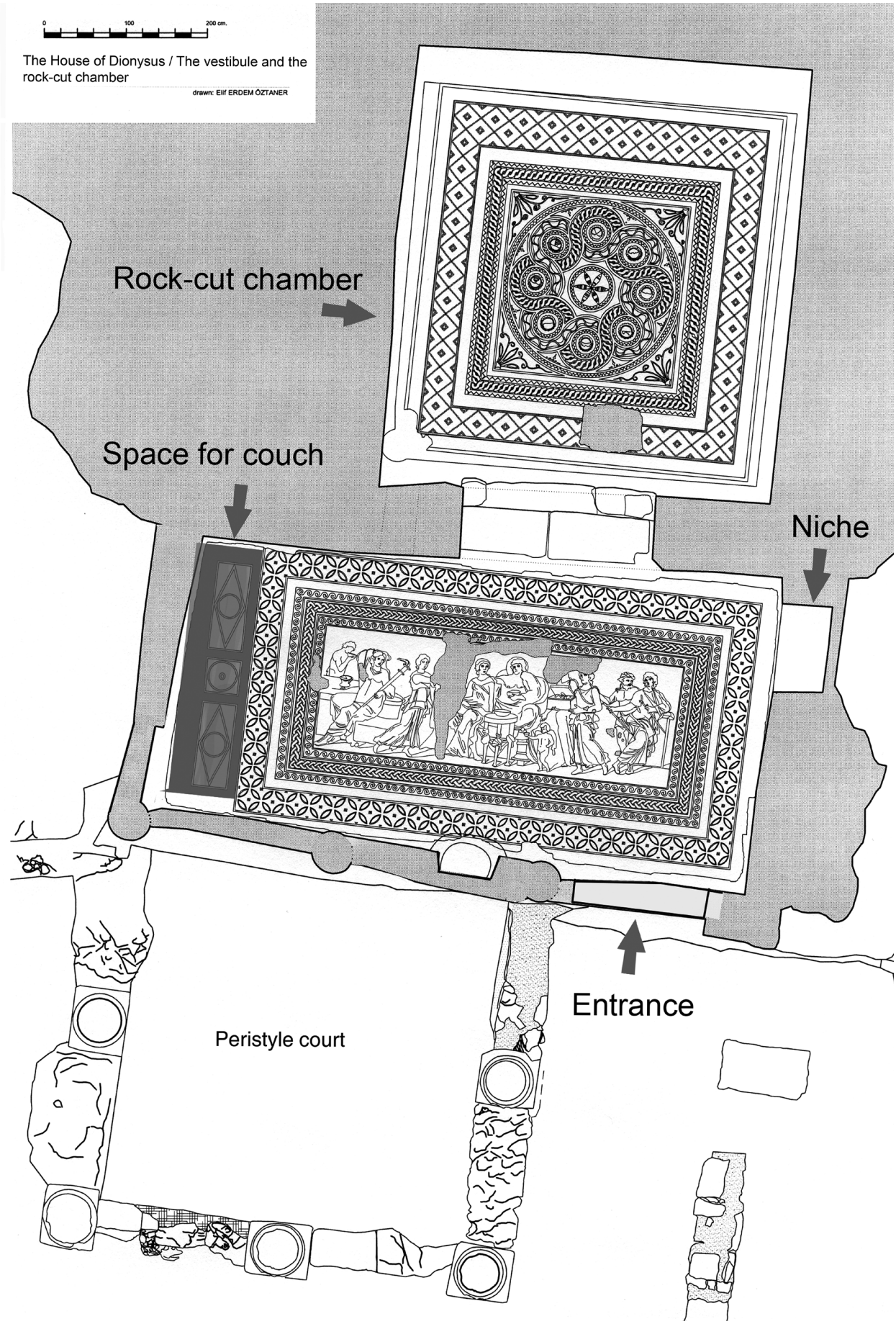
Figure 13
Zeugma, Mosaic of Dionysus and Ariadne, before looting, (Ergeç 2006: 47).

So far the plot on the Zeugma piece was considered to be the moment when Parthenope and Metiochus, early in the story, set eyes on each other in the symposium organized by King Polycrates of Samos in his palace, (Maehler 1976: 18-19; Campbell et al. 1998: 124; see also, Hägg 1985: 92-102; Hägg 1991: 18). However, their depiction as seated on the same couch side by side and in an emphatically amorous position makes this interpretation implausible. If one takes a close look at the space reserved for the letters of Parthenope's name, it becomes evident that in the original mosaic, before it was looted and then reinstalled, the couple must originally have been seated much closer to each other. The letters in Parthenope's name would require much more space than the restoration has allowed.

So her original seated position was probably closer to Metiochus as shown in Figure 11b in this article. That apart, the upright posture of the right shoulder of Metiochus as well as the stretched folds on his tunic towards his right shoulder indicate that he has a hand on Parthenope's back, while he gazes at her face. Meanwhile, Parthenope allows her tunic to slip down her arm leaving her left shoulder naked towards Metiochus. Considering the function of the room in which the scene was depicted on its floor, as well as the archaeological evidence, the scene most probably depicts the couples' first physical contact and the final episode of the whole story in the lost Greek version. I believe the scene represents the re-union of the romantic couple on a couch, as it is a highly appropriate scene that would have been preferred for decoration of a bridal chamber, which would then function as a private reception room and cubiculum for the married couple. Such scenes are known from other media in the Classical and Hellenistic Greek world, as is shown in a Hellenistic terracotta figurine from Myrina representing a bride and a groom, (Fig. 12), (Mollard-Besques 1963: pl. 153.d, for *kline* group, see pl. 70, 71), which we might surmise was a product of the wedding industry.

In the House of Dionysus in Zeugma, the *vestibule* next to the peristyle was decorated with a mosaic depicting the marriage of Dionysus and Ariadne, with servants bringing in wedding presents and musicians celebrating the marriage, (Campbell et al. 1998: 109-117; Campbell 1999: 711-712) (Fig. 13). The theme is very well known to be symbolic of divine marriage and it was the subject of a considerable number of literary works as well as visual depictions on various

Figure 14
Zeugma, Plan of the House of Dionysus. Courtyard, vestibule and the rock-cut room. (right page)


0
100
200 cm.
The House of Dionysus / The vestibule and the rock-cut chamber
drawn: Elif ERDEM ÖZTANER
Rock-cut chamber
Space for couch
Niche
Entrance
Peristyle court

media[21]. The scene represents the *epaulia* stage of the wedding in which the gifts are presented to the couple after *anakaluptêri*a[22], but here I think the mosaic itself was a gift for a couple that lived in this house[23] (Görkay 2015: 72-74). The mosaic was laid on the floor of the vestibule, which functioned as an alcove or *pastadas* right before entering the rock-cut nuptial chamber, which changed its function later as reception room. It's not unlikely as well that the impact of this highly divine and Hellenistic-style royal wedding scene could have been supplemented with a wedding hymn or nuptial song probably sung as the newlyweds entered the vestibule[24]. Thus, the whole setting would have given an exhortation and boost to newlyweds before entering the rock-cut nuptial chamber. So, the mosaic would not only function as a salutatory scene for newlyweds, but also would function as a commemorative scene for their entire life. It is more likely that the relatives and acquaintances of the newlyweds had it made as a gift with a great deal of expenditure[25]. Later, the mosaic could have functioned as a salutatory scene in the room where the couple would entertain their guests. The rectangular panel decorated with geometric patterns at the left edge of the mosaic pavement was probably intentionally designed to leave a space for a couch put here during the wedding (Fig. 14). The couch might have functioned like a *lectus genialis*, since the couch is oriented towards a niche in the wall of the vestibule, which probably functioned like a *lararium*[26] where images of the household Gods, as well as ancestral objects had been set up, some of these were found in the excavation[27].

I would like to suggest, as a possibility, that some mosaics in other places in Roman Syria may also contain messages to newlyweds. Three mosaics in a Roman house in Shahba-Philippopolis are indeed associated with a marriage programme by Janine Balty, (Balty 1981: 347-429 pl.46.1, 422-425; Balty 1995: 65, 143, 148, 341 pl. IX; for latest article, see Balty 2005: 1307-1315). The first one, on top, shows a newly married couple represented at the banquet, like Dionysus and Ariadne, in a circular composition framed by figures of Victories.

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21 Dionysus and Ariadne is standard example for marriage, Xen. *Symp*.9.2ff; Diod. 4.61.5, Catullus 64, 116ff; Russell – Wilson 1981: 400.15; Choricius, *Or*. 6. 12.

22 see Campbell et al. 1998: 115-117; for *anakaluptêri*a see, Oakley 1982: 113-118; Redfield 1982: 192; Bérard 1989: 97-103; Oakley – Sinos 1993: 25ff, especially for poetic metaphor and origin of *anakaluptêri*a, see Ferrari 2003: 32-35 note 53; According to Pollux, *prosphthegtēria* '*gifts of salutation*' was an alternative name for the *anakaluptêri*a gifts, see, Pollux 3.36.

23 for former idea, see, Campbell et al. 1998: 109-117; "*Since we do not know who owned the house at Zeugma, it must be read in the first instance simply as a wedding scene, perhaps of nostalgic or sentimental import to the owners of the house since the panel is just outside the door to a room which may well have functioned as a bedroom*", see also Campbell 1999: 711-712.

24 The scene might be associated with hymn or nuptial song sung during wedding i.e. wedding of Dionysus and Ariadne, to create an allegoric link with Hymenaios.

25 Although Will Wootton's meticulous study gives a good deal of understanding about the labour time for mosaic production, it is still difficult to estimate the approximate cost of a figured mosaic, see Wootton 2015: 261-282. I am indebted to Will Wootton for sharing his ideas with me.

26 In Zeugma, so far only one *lararium* was found in the House of A, which is an adjacent house at the upper level of the House of Dionysus, Görkay 2012: 286; Architectural evidence shows that these two houses were incorporated sometimes before the Sasanian sack of the city in c.252/253 AD (Görkay forthcoming). Two unpublished bronze statuettes of *Lares* and *Genius* which are being kept in Gaziantep Archaeological Museum may indicate the adapted Roman culture or even perhaps presence of Latin residents billeting in houses. As for the function of *Lares* and *Genius* in Roman wedding rituals, see Johansson 2010: 136-147.

27 Excavations carried out by the Gaziantep Archaeological Museum have unearthed bronze objects from the vestibule. Although no information was provided about their exact find spots of these object, most of them were unearthed in the *vestibulum* near the niche. The finds include, bronze statutes of an Eros, a Hermes, a Herm and probably an Aphrodite. For the finds, see Başgelen –Ergeç 2000: 20-27; Alagöz 2012: 20-25. These statues might be the part of the dowry presented to the house owners and were set up here for maintaining good luck in the matrimonial life and domestic bliss. See also, footnote 18.

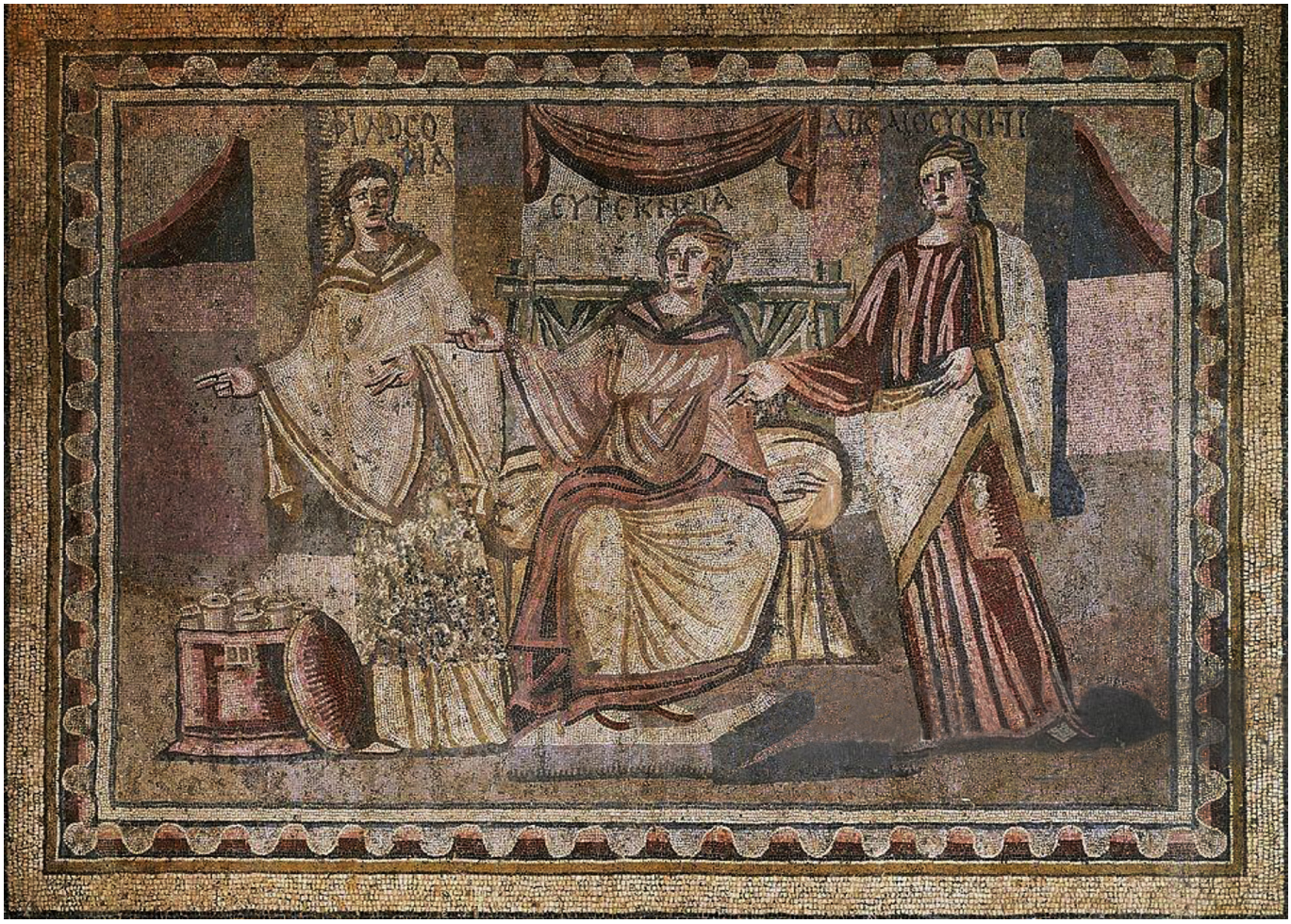

Figure 15
Shahba-Philippopolis,
Mosaic of "*Euteknia*"
(Balty 1995: pl. IX;
Balty 2005: 1307-1315).

The second one, at the bottom, represents the wedding of Thetis and Peleus. It depicts, Balty argues, the newlywed couple transposed into the myth, borrowing the iconographic patterns from the ritual of Roman marriage and emphasizing the importance of offspring.

The third refers to the exhortation to procreation, which, as I mentioned, is customary in epithalamia: the idea is symbolized by the personification of *Euteknia* ("good procreation of children"). *Euteknia* is accompanied here by *Dikaiosynè* (righteousness) and *Philosophia* (evocation of *paideia*) (Fig. 15). Balty associates *Dikaiosynè*, with the specific virtue of high officials and therefore she thinks that the sponsor of the mosaic was a member of the state administration, (Balty 2005: 1315). I think the imagery in the mosaic can be read otherwise. The scene was deliberately chosen to emphasize not only the good virtue that a woman must possess but also her ability in production of offspring as well as having good children[28]. Since the main figure *Euteknia* is shown as seated in the centre, flanked by personifications of *Dikaiosyné* and *Philosophia*, the message in the scene can be read as: "may you have many lawfully legitimate and well educated children!"

[28] For the perception of *euteknia* in antiquity see, Clements of Alexandria (C.150-215 AD) who wrote "The purpose (of marriage) is good breeding of children (*euteknia*)", Clement of Alexandria, 11,10; see also Liddell – Scott 734, *euteknia*: "*having good children, fair children or offspring, the blessing of children, a breed of goodly children*"; for *euteknia*, see also Balty 1986: 231-232.

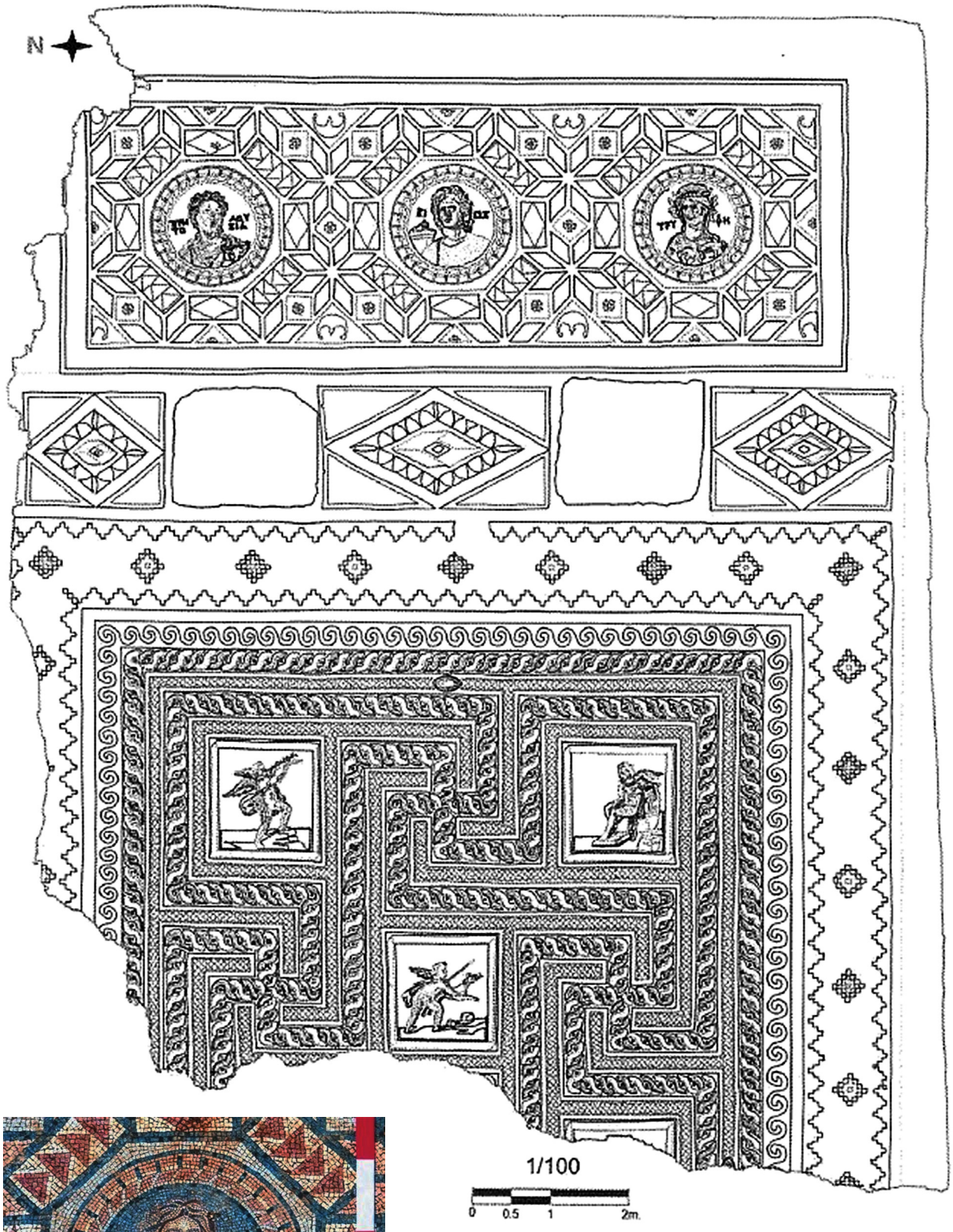

Figure 16a
Olba, Mosaic of Protolousia
(Erten 2016: 83 fig.3 (drawing).

Figure 16b
Olba, Mosaic of Protolousia
(Erten 2016: 85 fig. 8).

A recently found mosaic pavement in Olba, in Mersin, depicts the personifications of *Protolousia*, *Bios* and *Tryphe* in medallions, (Erten 2016: 61-91) (Figs. 16a-b). The chamber in which the mosaic was found, was interpreted to be a part of a roman house, (Erten 2016: 78-79). If it is indeed a domestic space, the personifications may speak more about the intention in choosing such visual concepts. The mosaic itself was designed in two separate main panels in accordance with the plan of the chamber. In the large main square part of the chamber, the floor was paved with geometric patterns, representing Erotes in small square emblematai; whereas in the narrower part of the chamber right behind the pillars, personifications of *Protolousia*, *Bios* and *Tryphe* were depicted with captions, (Erten 2016: 82-83 fig. 2-3). Personifications of *Bios* and *Tryphe* are well known from mosaics in Antioch, however *Protolousia* is entirely new in mosaic iconography, (Erten 2016: 68-69). *Protolousia* is a symbol of the "first bath", perhaps for the newlyweds for their nuptial ablution (*loutr<u>on</u> nymphik<u>on</u>,* see Erten 2016: 68-69), but, I think, most likely it is associated with the first bath of their unborn but expected child[29]. If it is so, the mosaic may have been paved for the newlyweds by their parents and relatives. This part of the room however, may have been especially designed as a birth chamber, in which the personifications symbolize the good wishes and expectations for the family regarding their offspring. The combination of these personifications would then be significant: *Protolousia*: first bath[30], *Bios*: life with full of worldly goods, one's "subsistence, fortune" as was pointed out by Louis Robert, (Robert 1989: 22 note 39), and it therefore suits with *Tryphe*, i.e., wealth. Together these concepts speak about good wishes to the newlyweds, as in "*may you see the first bath of your child, and his or her prosperous and wealthy life*!". Cupids in the square panels in the rest of the mosaic were depicted with a lyre and double flute suitable for wedding ceremonies, and one of them is accompanied by one of the dogs of Artemis, who is the chief protector of birth and newly born children.

The existence of several love-themed mosaic scenes in small private rooms within the same house may be explained based on a papyrus document (*PDura 19*) from Dura-Europos, (Saliou 1992: 65-100; Baird 2014: 50-86; see also Welles – Fink – Gilliam 1959: 104-109 nr.19). This document details the distribution of property amongst the sons of a man named Polemocrates. The property being divided consisted of what had been two houses, one of which Polemocrates had purchased, while the other he had acquired when a bigger house was divided between him and his brother, Apollophanes. We learn from the document that these two houses were made property of four brothers, who were the sons of Polemocrates. The four brothers were to live together in one house but in different rooms. The document does not only give an important clue on family structure in Syria, but also provides crucial information that the rooms of a house could be used as separate private accommodation by children of a family,

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29 Here I would like to thank Emel Erten for allowing me to use the picture and the drawing of the Protolousia mosaic. The depictions of the First Bath of Dionysus, in the House of Aion, in Nea Paphos and in Sepphoris are a good example for the divine first bath of newly-born child, see, Michaelides 1987: 29 nr.27 pl.22 nr. 27; Talgam – Weiss 2004: 57-61 figs. 43 colour plate, I.B; In his epithalamium for Athanasius, Dioscorus of Aphrodito makes an allegory between a new born baby with Dionysus, see, MacCoull 1988: 86-87 H.25; for the First Bath of Achilles, see, Michaelides 1987: 44 nr.50 pl.31 nr.50. I believe, these scenes symbolize divine first bath for immortality, which, in domestic context, allude a reference to unborn noble offspring and eternal breed of a certain family (probably the newly wedded owner of the house). Depictions of Acilles's first bath for immortality becomes popular only in the late antiquity, and therefore depiction of *protolousia* as a personification in a private sphere emphasizes its importance.

30 It should also mean something general related to practical good fortune, very like *Euteknia*, rather than anything too specific. I would like to thank W. Salter for his comments and suggestions regarding the personifications.

probably after they got married. Considering this information, we may propose that the small private rooms in the house of Poseidon, Unit A, might have been refurbished as separate private rooms for the sons of the family when they got married, as gifts to the young newlyweds who would live in these rooms as a part of an extended family[31].

A similar phenomenon perhaps can be traced in the necropoleis of Zeugma where large family graves are located. With portrait statues of deceased family members set up in their vestibules as well as rock-carved bust portraits depicted at their entrances, these graves seem to have been designed to accommodate a large number of members of these crowded families such as the one that lived in the integrated Houses of Poseidon[32].

Like today, weddings were one of the most important public occasions and celebrations for families where parents and relatives made abundant preparations with great expenditure (for dowries as well) and invited guests to show off their familial status as well as identity and wealth. Weddings were also unique opportunities to own a new house or to refurbish a house or a compartment for newlyweds[33], sometimes such properties, usually lands, were mentioned as *prosphora* in marriage contracts[34]. An ample amount of ancient literary and historical accounts underline not only the importance of newly made bridal chambers but also new houses and even palaces for matrimonial unions[35]. Ancient writers indicate that private dinner parties in the houses of the wealthy elites for some occasions such as weddings were also venues for entertainment by musicians, male and female dancers as well as performers of mimes and pantomimes (Jones 1991: 191; Csapo 2010: 86, 173 note. 29, 176). Syria was famous for such mimes and entertainers, who gradually became popular in the Roman world beyond Syria during the eastern campaigns in the imperial period[36].

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31 A "T-U" form *triclinium* in the House of Quintus Calpurnius Eutykhes whose floor paved with the Theonoe-Leukippe and the Achilles in Skyros scenes is a good example for this phenomenon. The large *triclinium* room was transformed into two spaces in different functions, a courtyard and a *loggia*, for the plan see, Önal 2008: 266 fig. 3, the date of this transformation was proposed to be 4th-5th centuries based on coin finds (p.271), however the type of the latterly added fountain suggests a date before 242/243 AD; for papyri evidence for the division of property through inheritance, see *P.Dura 16*, Welles – Fink – Gilliam 1959: nr.16 91-92.

32 The rock-cut *arcosolium hypogeum* grave designated as T91 (K91) in the South necropolis at Zeugma possess more than thirty individual graves, for the plan see, Ergeç 2003: 82, 197 fig. 89.

33 Several houses and their decoration programmes are associated with marriages and weddings, see for instance, Boscoreale, the Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor: Robertson 1955: 62; Simon 1958: 25-26; contrary to this idea, see, Fittschen 1975: 96 ff; for earlier interpretations, see the chapter in Müller 1994a: 23-43, see also appendix II, 139ff; for more clear archaeological evidence for the interpretation of wedding scenes and its connection with Hellenistic Royal weddings, see, Smith 1994: 100-128; Aldobrandini Wedding scene: Müller 1994b: 23-46; chapter III; The Villa of Agrippa Postumus at Boscotrecase: Blanckenhagen – Alexander 1962: 10-12; Anderson 1987: 129 n.8; Mertens 1987a: 103; Mertens 1987b: 38; Blanckenhagen – Alexander 1990: 3; the Villa Farnesina: Beyen 1948: 3-21; Bragantini – de Vos 1982: 23 n. 11; Decoration of the Room 5 of the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Bieber 1928: 306-330; Toynbee 1929: 67-87; Kirk 2000: 11-112.

34 *Prosphora* could include land and slaves, Evans-Grubbs 2007: 83; Salomons 2008: 119-130.

35 Pherekydes of Syros: Schibli 1990: Fr.68 165-167, οἰκία π̣ολλά τε μεγάλλα was translated as "palace" by West, see, West 1971: 52, with a complex of grand chambers; modified version of Freeman, see, Freemann 1948: 14ff; see also Ferrari 2003: 33-34; Iliad and Odyssey: Iliad. 17.36, θαλάμοιο νέοιο, Odyss. 23.192; Thalamopoioi: Sommerstein 2008: 80-83; see also Di Marco 1993: 49–56; Sommerstein 1996: 348; in Theocritus' Epithalamium for Helen, θάλαμος is often newly built or refurbished for wedding, see Theocritus' Epithalamium for Helen, Gow 1973: Vol I, 140.1, for commentary, see Gow 1973: Vol. II, 349; Xenophon of Ephesus, the wedding of Habrocomes and Anthia: Xen. Eph. 1.8.2; Story of Medea and Jason: Apollonius of Rhodes, Argo, 4.1155; Menander of Laodicea: Russell – Wilson 1981: 144, "Epithalamium", 404.18-19; Nonnos, *Dion*. 47.324-326; 47. 453-469.

36 Livy XXXIX.6.8; Cassius Dio, LX, 23 5; Horace, Sat. I, 2, 1-2. S.H.A. Verus 7, 4; 8, 7, 11. (trans. A. Birley)

In Antioch for instance, as well as in Zeugma, mosaic scenes depicting theatrical plots from prominent playwrights of tragedy and comedy were particularly popular. Such scenes are found typically in the *triclinia*, where such performances and recitations often took place as part of after-dinner entertainment. Apart from many such scenes, a large mosaic pavement excavated in 2007 at ancient Daphne, a suburb of Antioch-on-the-Orontes, and published by Katherine Gutzwiller, has more to speak about this issue (Gutzwiller – Çelik 2012: 573-623). The mosaic includes four figured panels representing scenes from comedies by Menander. The panels depict scenes inscribed with the name of the play and the number of the act; *Perikeiromene*, act 1; *Philadelphoi*, act 1; *Synaristosai*, act 1; and *Theophoroumene*, act 3. Gutzwiller's study deals with archaeological, iconographical, and literary aspects to evaluate the contribution of the mosaics to our knowledge of Menander's plays, ancient comic illustration, and the rich cultural life of imperial Antioch (Gutzwiller – Çelik 2012: 573). As conclusion, Gutzwiller states: "*Not just a banal allusion to the famous happy endings of New Comedy, the poet's claim resonates with mosaic scenes from Zeugma and Syria showing Eros marrying Telete (Initiation), which, in Dunbabin's interpretation, represent new, perhaps specifically Eastern ideas, about the benefits derived from the mysteries of marriage. On the divine level, this happy life is represented in numerous depictions of Dionysos and Ariadne, through which the mysteries of marriage are linked to a complex of Bacchic activities, including dining and theater. On the human level, initiation into the blessings of married life could be vicariously experienced through performance of Menander's comedies or visualization of them in illustrations. The new Daphne mosaics present scenes that focus on obstacles to marital bliss, particularly for women; in doing so, they engage the viewer in the play's dramatic tension, to be resolved at the end in happiness for both husbands and their wives*", (Gutzwiller – Çelik 2012: 618; see also Dunbabin 2016: 65ff)

Although it was popular in the Roman East, admiration for such entertainments and performances in private spheres was not always welcomed in religious context especially in the late antique period. Perhaps because of its popularity in the Roman East, John Chrysostom of Antioch, for instance, constantly warned his flock not to hire mimes and pantomimes into good Christian houses for wedding celebrations, considering their performance "the filth of the theatre" [37].

A luxurious country villa at Noheda, near Cuenca in Spain provides a good example of what was meant by John Chrysostom's warnings, (Lledó Sandoval 2010; Valero Tévar 2013: 307-330; Valero Tévar 2015: 439-444; for very recent overall interpretation see, Dunbabin 2016: 11-17). The huge main reception room of the villa has a triconch plan and was paved with extraordinary mosaics around AD 400 – so contemporary with Chrysostom, though at the other end of the Mediterranean. The themes of the long mosaic friezes are concerned broadly with famous couples. The one lateral frieze panel represents depiction of an adultery mime, "the jealous bridegroom", a well-known comic drama mentioned in sources from the first century B.C. to the 6th century AD, (Dunbabin 2016: 121 notes 55-57) (Fig. 17). The other panels include episodes from the story of Paris and Helen (at the top), including the Judgment of Paris, Helen's portrayal as a bride, the flight of Paris and Helen by boat from Laconia, and their

[37] PG 51.212; PG.55.158; PG 62.386; Pope Eusebius warns his bishops not to have stage actors and entertainers during dining, Mansi. 2.426; The canon fifty-four of the Laodicean council of 361 decrees priests attending weddings "*get up and leave!*" before the stage players entered, see Mansi. 2.574; see also Leyerle 2001: 13-41; 67-74; Lada-Richards 2007: 38, 182-183; Webb 2008: 175-176; Csapo 2010: 168ff.

Figure 17
Noheda, Mosaic of
"the Jealous Bridegroom"
(Valero Tévar 2013: 321 fig.15).

disembarkation at Troy with dancing Trojans on hand to welcome them. The middle frieze represents the story of Pelops and Hippodamea. And the bottom panel has a Triumph of Dionysus, in which the god is crowned by Victory and Ariadne and escorted by a cortege of maenads, satyrs, Silenus and pan. Two important aspects of these remarkable new mosaic narratives may be mentioned. First and perhaps most important is the aspect of performance and its novel representation which has been so well studied recently by Katherine Dunbabin, (Dunbabin 2016: 11-17). In the present context, a second aspect may also be highlighted, that of themes and connecting ideas. The mosaic narratives, both those representing mythological stories and those representing staged performance, represent, allude to, and intersect in various ways with themes of different kinds of love-relationship – Helen and Paris, Hippodameia and Pelops, Ariadne and Dionysus, and the bride and jealous bridegroom of the stage performance. The theme of marriage was inscribed into the Noheda mosaic programme in a wide range of iconographic registers[38].

In conclusion, although one should not generalize based solely on one epithalamium mosaic inscription, mosaics which depict scenes related to deities or romantic couples associated with marriage or matrimonial union, such as the Wedding of Ariadne and Dionysus, Andromeda and Perseus, Metiochus and Parthenope, Telete and Eros, Aphrodite, Muses or Three Graces, might have been laid on the occasion of marriage, perhaps as wedding gifts by parents and

38 I express my gratitude to Bert Smith for his help in discussing this matter and formulating these ideas.

relatives to give exhortation to newlyweds. Setting up depictions of such divine characters in domestic context with various media, such as mosaics and wall paintings, aimed to create an allegorical link between the newlyweds and divine characters from mythology in order to create an auspicious atmosphere for the couple's union as well as for domestic bliss and fertility. For instance, in the epithalamia of Dioscorus, gracing of a marriage by associating it with a deity is a method used to repel the evil eye and break spells[39]. Even perhaps, some theatrical depictions on mosaics, such as scenes from comedies or tragedies could be associated with real performances that were staged during these weddings, after which the scenes would allude to memories from these special occasions. I argue that the themes chosen for many of the mosaics were related to the concept of marriage and family, rather than the intellectual or professional interests of the house owners. Although we can't calculate how much they cost, mosaic pavements were arguably an expensive form of decoration, and their permanence (as opposed to textiles and even wall paintings) suggests that the themes were carefully chosen to maintain their meanings throughout a family's future. Although these choices certainly went through an intellectual filter, ultimately, they had to have a profound relationship with the concept of domestic bliss.

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[39] MacCoull 2008: 111 H.23, epithalamium for Isakios; apotropaic figures on the mosaics in Antioch might have been put with similar intention to repel evil eye and to protect the union of the family. For these figures, see Levi 1947: Vol II pl. IV, a-c.

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