

AENEAS IN THE TROAS AND LATIUM REGIONS

Mythology and Archaeology

“On the Steps of Aeneas: a common cultural heritage between Italy and Turkey” was funded by the European Union in collaboration with the Turkish Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

The project, developed by the Aeneas Route Association, in partnership with the Sapienza University of Rome and the Municipality of Edremit (Türkiye), as part of the Common Cultural Heritage between the European Union and Turkey (IPA-II), constitutes one of the many international collaboration activities promoted and coordinated by the Association.

In the belief that culture plays a fundamental role in promoting dialogue and cooperation, it integrates two main objectives: the dialogue between civil society and institutions and the enhancement of a common European culture. The project activities include the creation of an interactive digital platform called ARISTE (Aeneas Route Information System for Tourism and Education) on the theme of the journey of the Trojan hero.

One of the main components of the project was the International Conference held in Edremit (Turkey) on October 26, 2021, “Aeneas in the Troad and Lazio: mythology and archeology”: the proceedings are published in this volume. The summary of the conference results will be also available in an informative form through the ARISTE platform for dissemination to a larger audience and to schools.



The Conference participants at Troy excavation

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“Grant Scheme for Common Cultural Heritage:
Preservation and Dialogue between Turkey and the UE-II (CCH-II)”
(TR2016/DG/03/A2-03-EuropeAid/167523/ID/ACT/TR)
“On the Steps of Aeneas: A Common Cultural Heritage
Between Italy and Turkey”

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edited by Sandra Gatti



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“On the Steps of Aeneas: A Common Cultural Heritage Between Italy and Türkiye”

Aeneas in the Troas and Latium Regions: Mythology and Archaeology

Proceedings of the International Symposium
Edremit, 26 October 2021

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Following the certification of the Aeneas Route as Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, the Aeneas Route Association promoted the project ‘On the Steps of Aeneas: A Common Cultural Heritage Between Italy and Türkiye’, in partnership with Edremit Municipality and Sapienza University of Rome. This project seeks to promote and further develop common cultural heritage activities jointly implemented by Turkish and EU Institutions. The overall objective of this grant scheme is to further improve civil society dialogue through culture, arts and cultural heritage as well as international cooperation for cultural heritage and to promote cultural values and assets in Türkiye.

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Aeneas’ Route Association and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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Aytekın Yılmaz

LITERATURE RESEARCH ABOUT THE ANCIENT CITY OF ANTANDROS

“An ancient city waiting to be discovered: Antandros”

Abstract

The masterpiece called *Aeneis* (in Latin language) written by the Latin poet Virgil between 20-19 BC and composed of 12 books and 10 thousand lines which recalls the journey of the Trojan hero Aeneas, considered by the Romans the noble ancestors of their civilisation, remained unfinished due to the premature death of the poet. Virgil, who through his masterpiece reaches the level of the most famous Latin poet describes the struggle of the Trojans with the Latins taking example from Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, down to the one-on-one struggles of the heroes. The epic, which forms the basis of the Roman identity, by basing the history of the founders of Rome on Troy, it embraced the Anatolian heritage, by uniting and reconciling the East and the West, it also contributed positively to the growth of the Roman Empire. The legend of the hero Aeneas, who escaped from the city of Troy, begins in Antandros and this little-known archaeological site in the city of Edremit enriches the scientific and cultural importance of Balıkesir region. The natural and cultural value of Ida Mountain represents the most important heritage of our region, together with the Roman villa, the necropolis and some of the city walls which were unearthed during the excavation of the archaeological site of Antandros. This present comprehensive study aims to underline the findings of the archaeological excavations of City of Antandros deepening the mythological, cultural and historical importance of the site, mention as well the support given by the Turkish public institutions of the region to the cultural heritage in question.

Keywords: Antandros Ancient City, Aeneas, Aeneid, Cultural Routes

The present article has been prepared with the support of the “European Union and Foreign Relation Office” of the Governorate of Balıkesir.

Introduction

Culture includes elements such as art, language, religion, history, architectural structure and lifestyle created in the process of historical and social development. Cultural tourism, on the other hand is an important element in the development of intercultural communication, the preservation and sharing of natural, historical and cultural heritage and transferring it to future generations¹.

International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), explained the concept of cultural route and the monumental values of archaeological and industrial heritage as a system that should be interpreted within a route, in a way that will increase their value and their intangible cultural heritage elements. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) evaluated the concept of the cultural route as a part of the world heritage, and explained it through the concept of inheritance path. ÇEKÜL (Foundation for the Protection and Promotion of Environmental and Cultural Values) has defined the cultural route as national or international paths of connections that were alive in a certain period of history or that will be built in the near future, developed for different purposes and that bear the value of cultural and natural resources². “European Cultural Routes” studies initiated by the Council of Europe in 1964 in order to better perceive the continent’s own cultural heritage gained momentum in 1987 when Spain proposed Santiago de Compostela as the first cultural route. The concept of cultural route gained an international dimension and became institutional in 1991 with the establishment of the International Committee on Cultural Routes Committee of International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS-CIIC) aimed to emphasize, define and develop the importance of cultural routes. In the final declaration of the experts meeting of UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee convened in Madrid in 1994, the criteria for the cultural route were determined³. Council of Europe Cultural Routes⁴ are an invitation to travel and discover Europe’s rich and diverse heritage, bringing people and places together

¹ ÖZTÜRK, İŞİNKARALAR, YILMAZ, İHTİYAR 2020.

² ÖZTÜRK, İŞİNKARALAR, YILMAZ, İHTİYAR 2020.

³ GÜL, YILMAZ 2020.

⁴ About this topic: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/home>, 25.05.2022

in shared networks of history and heritage. Council of Europe, through the Cultural Routes Programme implements many values such as human rights, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, which are accepted as the common value of all humanity, through practices. The Council of Europe's more than 40 Cultural Routes provide a wealth of recreational and educational activities for all citizens in Europe and beyond and are essential resources for responsible tourism and sustainable development. They cover a range of different themes, from architecture and landscape, to religious influences, gastronomy and intangible heritage, to prominent figures of European art, music and literature.

The "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certificate is a guarantee of excellence. Networks implement innovative activities and projects related to the five main priority action areas as follows: cooperation in research and development; development of memory, history and European heritage; cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans; contemporary cultural and artistic practice; cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development. Council of Europe offers a model for transnational culture and tourism management through its program and provides synergies between national, regional and local governments and a wide range of associations and socio-economic actors.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey became part of EPA Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes on January 15, 2018, which is the legal basis for the implementation and standards of the European Cultural Routes programme of the Council of Europe. Every year, EPA gives "Council of Europe Cultural Route" certification to applicants who meet the criteria determined according to the resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CM/Res/(2013) 67).

I. Epic of Aeneid

It is the name of the verse epic (Latin *Aeneis*), written by the Latin poet Virgil, between 20-19 BC, with 12 books and 10 thousand lines of typography. although it is about the journey of the Trojan hero Aeneas, who will be considered the ancestor of the Romans, to Italy, the work was left unfinished with the death of the poet. In this work, which brought him to the level of the most famous Latin poet, Virgil took Homer's Iliad and Odyssey as an example, after a long journey, he described the struggle

of the Trojans with the Latins, down to the one-on-one struggles of the heroes⁵.

Aeneas, who survived the Trojan War sailing from Troy to Hesperia to find a new home, lost some of his ships near the Epirus due to the harpies. When he landed here, he encountered the Trojan Helenus and Hector's ex-wife Andromache. Helenus advised him to look for a white pig with 30 cubs. The hero encountered the Cyclops in Sicily, after been cast away on the North African coasts after a storm. There he fell in love with the queen of Carthage, Dido, and after many adventures, he arrived in Italy. The hero and his companions entered into a relentless struggle with Etruscans and Latins and these last events laid the foundations of the Roman Empire⁶.

This epopee, which forms the basis of the Roman identity basing the history of the founders of Rome on Troy, embraces the Anatolian heritage, and also contributes positively to the growth of the state by uniting and reconciling the East and the West. The Aeneid was so loved and embraced in its time because the emperor Augustus sincerely believed that his ancestors were the sons of Aeneas. The hero, who is mentioned as "Pius Aeneas" (respectful Aeneas) in the Aeneid, detached from the motif of the Homeric hero and is more adapted to the Roman values. In addition, the nationalist winds blowing in Europe in the 19th century which led European writers to write national epics based on fairy tales, legends and historical events in their own cultures, made the Aeneid of Virgil's a reason of inspiration. The Nibelungenlied, which was written anonymously in the 13th century, was unearthed in Germany during this period. The epics of Elias Lönnrot, Kalevala (1835-1836) in Finland, Kalevipoeg (1857-1861) by F.R. Kreutzwald in Estonia, and Lačplesis (1888) by Andrejs Pumpurs (1888) in Latvia were created to contribute to national consciousness⁷.

The mythical epopee of the Aeneid written by Virgil, which deals with the events of Aeneas, who played a major role in the defense of Troy against the Greeks is also one of Dante's sources of inspiration. Dante Alighieri and his work "The Divine Comedy" is a masterpiece created

⁵ ÖZTÜRK 2016.

⁶ ÖZTÜRK 2016.

⁷ ÖZTÜRK 2016.

under the influence of many philosophical, literary, theological and mythological sources. In addition to the extraordinary place descriptions in the work, this mythical epic, which is the source of mythical elements and depictions of life after death, combined with Dante's imagination, emerged a masterpiece of creative thinking⁸.

II. Antandros archaeological excavation, brief history and geographical location

Antandros Ancient City is a city of the ancient region of Troad, located in Altinoluk, a town in the Edremit district in Balıkesir province. The city is located on the southern slopes of Mount Ida, which hosted the mythological episode that caused the Trojan War. The city, which is in a position able to control the road connecting Mysia and Aiolis to Troas, is located on the summit of Kaletaşı Hill and on its western slopes⁹.

Rescue excavations of the city were started by Bursa and Balıkesir museums in 1991, and continued at regular intervals until 1995. It has emerged, as a result of the studies, that the area was used as a necropolis area (Fig. 5) from the 7th century BC to the 2nd century BC. The survey of the city was carried out in 2000 by the Department of Archeology, Faculty of Letters of the University of the Aegean. This department conducted the scientific excavations of Antandros between the years 2001-2006¹⁰.

Antandros Ancient City is an important source of archaeological data. Excavations carried out since now are concentrated on two main sectors: settlement area and necropolis. The Roman villa (Roman house), city walls and necropolis area unearthed during the excavations are important cultural assets worth seeing. During the excavation and soil survey works carried out in the settlement area, it was determined that Antandros was founded in the late 8th century BC and it has been proven that it was inhabited uninterruptedly until the beginning of the 7th century AD. It was determined that the city was abandoned during the Arab Raids and its inhabitants moved to Şahinkale in Şahindere Canyon, located in the north

⁸ YILMAZ 2022.

⁹ YILDIRIM ULUSOY, KILIÇ, AVCIKURT 2020.

¹⁰ YILDIRIM ULUSOY, KILIÇ, AVCIKURT 2020.

of Altınoluk District. It was understood that Antandros was settled with a small population in the 10-11th century AD and that the city was completely abandoned after the 13th-14th century¹¹.

III. Antandros throughout the testimonies of ancient historians

Antandros, located on the southern slopes of Mount Ida, is reported to have different origins according to ancient sources. Virgil mentions Antandros as a Phrygian settlement, while Herodotos refers to the city as a Pelasgian settlement. Strabon, one of the ancient writers reported about Antandros in his book *Geographika*; Alkaïos, an ancient writer, states that Antandros was a Lelegian settlement. He mentions the words of Demetrius of Scepsis according to who the city was a Cilician establishment. Strabo also gives information about the geography features of Antandros. According to him the coast from Lekton to Kanaia is called Adramytteion bay. Gargara is located on the cape, which is the starting point of this bay. Next to Gargara, in the inner part of the region there is Antandros and the Alexandraia Mountain, where it is believed that the Judgment of Paris took place. In addition, also the harbour of Aspaneus where the timber of Ida Mount is traded, is also located here. In the near village of Astyra, is reported the presence of a sanctuary for "Artemis of Astyrene". Near Astyra there is the city of Adramytteion, colonized by the Athenians, which had a harbour and a naval base. Along with Strabo's geographical references, Stephanus of Byzantium states that the city had side names such as Edonis and Cimmeris. Aristoteles says that the city of Antandros was first named Hedonis because of the settlement of Hedones, a Thracian person, and that it was named Cimmeris because of the Cimmerian settlement that lasted for a century¹².

IV. Brief information about the Roman villa, necropolis and walls unearthed

One of the areas studied during the systematic excavations started in 2001 under the scientific responsibility of University of the Aegean and the su-

¹¹ YILMAZ 2022.

¹² ÜNEY 2009



Fig. 1 - Antandros Archaeological Site, Roman villa; Portico (photo provided by Governorate of Balıkesir)



Fig. 2 - Antandros Archaeological Site, Roman villa; Triclinium (photo provided by Governorate of Balıkesir)

pervising of the presidency of Balıkesir Museum was the necropolis. The necropolis is approximately 400 meters to the west of Kaletaşı Hill, where the inhabitants' settlement is located and is more precisely situated in the width of 50 meters between the hill slopes and the plain areas on the coastline which extending parallel to it. The works were started at the eastern border of the modern residential site called Melis Site and since 2008 and amount of 277 graves have been identified. In the excavations previously carried out by the Bursa Museum, it was assumed that the necropolis was used uninterruptedly for about 500 years. Nevertheless, according to the recent excavations, it has been understood that the necropolis was used uninterruptedly from the early 7th century BC to the end of the Hellenistic period, for approximately 700 years. The reason why the necropolis could be used for so long is that the burial area is located on the slopes of the hill. The location of the necropolis allowed the new burials to be buried in a short time due to erosion which facilitated the construction of new burials sites. However, this situation caused the destruction of previous burials and the use of the same graves several times, especially during the construction of new burials in the upper layers¹³.

Excavation and restoration works continues in the Roman villa. It has been determined that the villa was built in the early 4th century AD and revealed by the studies that it was used with some modifications until the 6th-7th century AD. The villa, which has six main spaces with a view of the sea, shows the richness of the Roman period¹⁴.

Extending on a magnificent terrace overlooking the sea, the villa consists of numerous rooms arranged around an inner courtyard, and its walls are decorated with magnificent polychrome mosaics and frescoes (Fig. 1, Fig. 2). On the lower terrace, there is the villa's bath and cisterns.

Room 1: possibly the winter triclinium (dining room). On the walls of this large room of the villa enriched with frescoes, servants carrying trays of food are depicted between stylized columns. The floors of the room consist of an unusual and elegant polychrome mosaic. The edges of the mosaic decorated with meander, wave and weave motifs are the frame of a large circle covered with triangles; right in the middle there is a picture of two birds drinking water from a large golden vase (Fig. 3; Fig. 4).

¹³ YAĞIZ 2009.

¹⁴ YILDIRIM ULUSOY, KILIÇ, AVCIKURT 2020.



Fig. 3 - Antandros Archaeological Site, Roman villa; Triclinium (photo provided by Governorate of Balıkesir)

Room 3: The entrance of this room, which opens to the portico overlooking the sea, is decorated with two columns. There is still a magnificent floor made with the technique of *opus sectile* (Fig. 5), (material such as marble, stone or glass on the floors by cutting them together in a special way); there are remains of marble coatings on the walls. It is to pass through a dressing room (apodyterium, n. 8), which is divided into two parts and covered with polychrome mosaics with geometric motifs, towards the entrance of the bath.



Fig. 4 - Antandros Archaeological Site, Roman villa; Triclinium mosaic detail (photo Irfan Kolçak; provided by Edremit Municipality)



Fig. 5 - Antandros Archaeological Site, Roman villa: opus sectile detail (photo provided by Governorate of Balıkesir)

In the middle of the apodyterium, there is an inscription in Greek, written in mosaic technique¹⁵ (fig. 6).

With the excavations that have been going on since 2001, most of the wall that borders the north of the six rooms of the villa has been unearthed. There is no other wall connected from the north to this wall whose a section of approximately 30 m has been opened. Excavations were started in the northeast corner of the villa in order to understand how far this wall, which borders the villa from the north, continues and in order to determine the possible transition to an upper terrace. After the study, the zone number 6 of the villa was all exposed and its base consisted of roughly levelled bedrock. In the soil surveys carried out in front of the threshold stone of the area, it was seen that a thin channel obtained by carving the bedrock. The top of this channel was covered with “spolia” marble pieces. This situation revealed the late period renovations made on the floor of the above mentioned zone. This canal must also be related

¹⁵ About the Greek inscription see the text by prof. Lavinio Del Monaco, *infra*.

to the fact that the spaces of the villa were partially destroyed by ground water infiltrations coming from the north as revealed in the previous studies. In fact the first construction phase of the villa revealing the intention of the architects to take into account the ground water problem and in order to prevent the damage caused by the infiltrations with small drain channels under the floors¹⁶.

V. Brief description of the finds (coins, figurines, ceramic products, etc.) unearthed during the excavations and the Museums where they are preserved

The excavations in the ancient city of Antandros carried out by Bursa Museum Directorate between the 1989-1995 years took place in the necropolis area (Fig. 7; Fig. 8). All of the artefacts found in this period were taken to the Bursa Museum Directorate. Some findings are preserved in the warehouses of Bursa Museum, while others are exhibited in the museum showcases. The artefacts unearthed in the excavations since 2001 were brought to the “Balıkesir Kuva-yi Milliye” Museum Directorate, some of them are preserved in storage and others are exhibited in showcases. The most numerous artefact comes from the necropolis (cemetery) area. These grave goods, mostly of terracotta, are figurines, fragrance bottles, pieces of



Fig. 6 - Antandros Archaeological Site, Roman villa; Apodyterium: detail of the mosaic inscription (photo provided by Governorate of Balıkesir)

¹⁶ Ministry of Culture and Tourism - General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums, 30th Excavation Results Meeting, vol. 4, 39–61.



Fig. 7 - Antandros Archaeological Site, necropolis (photo provided by Governorate of Balıkesir)



Fig. 8 - Antandros Archaeological Site, necropolis (photo İrfan Kolçak, provided by Edremit Municipality)

jewellery, coins, and burial remains from the 4th and 5th centuries BC¹⁷ (Fig. 9; Fig. 10).

VI. Antandros Ancient City History

Antandros Ancient City is located within the boundaries of Altınoluk neighbourhood, on the northern shore of Edremit Gulf, 20km west of Edremit District. The city, which is located on the summit and western slopes of Kaletaşı Hill, with an altitude of 215 meters lying perpendicular to the sea facing the seaside on the Edremit-Çanakkale road¹⁸. The first studies conducted for the localisation of the city were made by Heinrich Kiepert, who visited the region in 1842. Kiepert determined



Fig. 9 - Antandros Archaeological Site, necropolis pithos (photo İrfan Kolçak, provided by Edremit Municipality)

the location of the city on the basis of on an inscription he found in Avcılar village. During his second visit to the region with Fabricius in 1881, following the same route of the previous expedition, Kiepert came across a second inscription in which the name Antandros was mentioned. This finding proved the correctness of his views on the localization of the city. The inscription in question was later seen by Schliemann. Antandros was later visited by John Manuel Cook twice, once in 1959 and once in 1968. Cook stated that as a result of his research, the settlement was located on the western slopes of the hill¹⁹.

¹⁷ YILMAZ 2022.

¹⁸ YILMAZ 2022.

¹⁹ COOK 1973.



Fig. 10 - Antandros Archaeological Site; necropolis excavation area (photo Irfan Kolçak, provided by Edremit Municipality)

The first studies on the determination of the necropolis were carried out by Walter Leaf²⁰. Leaf, who learned that some graves were opened by the villagers who owned the fields in the western part of Kaletaşı Hill, concluded that the necropolis of the city was in this area. During the modern construction activities that started with the development of the region in 1989, graves were found in the area where the residential site called Melis is located today. Between 1991 and 1995, rescue excavations were carried out by the Museum of Bursa. These studies revealed that the necropolis had an uninterrupted use from the 7th century BC to the 2nd century BC²¹.

²⁰ LEAF 1912.

²¹ YAĞIZ 2009.

VII. Importance of recognition of Antandros Ancient City; affiliated projects (Aeneas Cultural Route) and the support of the public institutions of the Republic of Türkiye to the Ancient City

Aeneas Cultural Route²² can be considered mostly as a sea route. Nevertheless, even if almost 2/3 of the route is located outside the Anatolian lands, the homeland of the main theme of the project is the ancient cities of Troy and Antandros, the city where the hero spent his time for the construction of his ships. For this reason, the mythical journey of Aeneas starts from the Gulf of Edremit, in the northern part of the Aegean Sea. The gulf located within the provincial borders of Çanakkale and Balıkesir is situated at the intersection points of the regions called Troas, Mysia and Aeolis in the ancient times. Today, the borders of the gulf are Bababurnu in the north and the cape known as Lekton in antiquity; in the south, one of the islands of the Ayvalık district, the “Büyük Maden” Island, is bordered by Pyrgos, a part of the Hekatomnos Islands according to its ancient name. The specified geographical area is a very wide geography, which corresponds to approximately 80 km. in length and 30 km. in width. The region is bordered by Kaz Mountain (Ida Mountain) in the north and at north-east in the interior and Madra Mountain (Pindaros Mountain) in the south and southeast²³.

As a result of the efficient cooperation with the municipalities and local institutions of Türkiye, Greece, Tunisia, Albania and Italy involved in the Project, Aeneas Route has been certified by the Council of Europe. Among the 45 certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, Aeneas Route is the first one starting from Türkiye. As the official stakeholders of the project, the following institutions provided support to the project; Balıkesir Governorate, Balıkesir Provincial Directorate of Culture, Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality, Edremit Municipality, Çanakkale Municipality, South Marmara Development Agency, Troy Archaeological Museum, Balıkesir University, 18 Mart Çanakkale University and Çanakkale Regional Tourist Guides Chamber (ÇARO).

Aytekin Yılmaz

Director of Balıkesir Kuva-yi Milliye Museum

²² [HTTPS://WWW.COE.INT/EN/WEB/CULTURAL-ROUTES/AENEAS-ROUTE-4](https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/aeneas-route-4)

²³ SAKA 2017.

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<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/home>, 25.05.2022

The mosaic inscription

The mosaic inscription made with black tiles on a white background and delimited by *tabula ansata*, also being with black tiles, is located *in situ* and represents the doorway of access to the *apodyterium*. The text consists of three lines of perfectly-aligned writing within the epigraphic field: the rows from 1-2 consist of 19 letters, the third of 13 letters slightly larger in height and width.

Αὔξει ὦ Ἀσταρεῖτα φιλά-
 δελφε ὦ ἔτα τοῦ κτίστου
 τῷ ἑῶνι εὐτυχῶς

Grow, oh Astareita lover of brothers, oh relative of the founder, happily for the eternity.

Both the shape of the letters (*epsilon*, *sigma*, *omega* square; note the *csi* of line 1, where the middle stroke is embellished with a small circle) and the rendering of some vowel elements, which reflect late phonetic characteristics (for example the monophthong of the diphthong AI in E, as can be seen from ἐῶνι = αἰῶνι), allow to date the epigraph to the 4th century AD, confirming the chronology established on an archaeological and numismatic basis for the entire building.

The text belongs to a typology widely diffused among the mosaic epigraphs, that is, the one containing a formula of good wishes for the prosperity of the house: the *incipit* with the verb Αὔξει (2nd singular person of the imperative of αὐξέω, the late form from αὐξάνω) refers precisely to the “growth” of a woman (little girl?) named Ἀσταρεῖτα, invoked immediately after, that obviously evokes the whole family, and therefore the same house. Ἀσταρεῖτα is connoted first with an adjective (φιλά | δελφε, “lover of brothers”), then with the expression ἔτα τοῦ κτίστου; the vocative ἔτα derives from the former Homeric noun ἑτης (“relative”, “family”, “allied”) and is specified by the genitive τοῦ κτίστου. The latter, of whom Ἀσταρεῖτα is a relative (daughter? granddaughter?), is the one who “founded” the house, that is, the owner. In fact, the term κτίστης is similar to the Latin *conditor* which in the epigraphic lexicon can

indicate the constructor of a building, for example the house or the baths, as two epigraphs from Rome attest: in CIL VI 1490 *Q(uintus) Pompeius Falco Sosius Priscus*, consul in 193 AD, lays a dedication to his *proavus* indicating it as *domus suae conditor*, while in CIL VI 31916 *Naeratius Cerealis*, consul in 358 AD, is called *conditor balnearum*.

As a whole, the mosaic epigraph reveals the excellent relations between the members of the family, moreover expressed through terms of poetic ancestry, in the name of that harmony which is the necessary premise for the prosperity of the house. In fact, the serenity of the present is projected into the future thanks to the typical good wish formulas $\tau\tilde{\omega}\ \epsilon\tilde{\omega}\nu\iota$ ("for eternity") and $\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\tau\chi\tilde{\omega}\varsigma$ ("happily") which can be read in line 3.

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