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TWO OVERLOOKED ROMAN MOSAICS FROM BULGARIA: CYPARISSUS AND ALCESTIS

Abstract: The subject of the paper are two overlooked mosaics dating back to the 2nd–3rd century AD which have been discovered in the Roman provinces of Thracia and Moesia Inferior in the territory of present-day Bulgaria. The first one, now lost, is in fact the mosaic floor of a building discovered near the wall of Augusta Traiana; only the upper right corner of its frame are completely preserved. In the outer border, there are three Greek inscriptions, the most indicative of which - ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ – will provide the key for interpretation of both the composition and the message of the mosaic. As for the second mosaic illustrating Cyparissus' myth in Ulpia Oescus, despite its numerous mentions, it has not hitherto received any analytical study of its composition, including the replacement of Apollo's figure with this of his sister Artemis, and the Latin inscription CYPRESVS.

Keywords: mosaics, Cyparissus, Alcestis, Augusta Traiana, Oescus

The first mosaic (**Fig. 1**) was discovered during rescue excavations in Stara Zagora in 1986, 100 meters east of the fortress wall of Augusta Traiana in a building with a long axis, oriented east-west. It has not been preserved and is known only from the drawings of the discoverer Krassimir Kalchev, who does not give exact dimensions and descriptions of the colors of the tesserae. The mosaic floor inside the building has an area of 20 m² and is executed in *opus testatum* and in *opus sectile*.¹

Only the upper right corner of the frame are completely preserved. It consists of three borders, of which the outer is monochromatic, filled with white tesserae, while the middle is decorated with a “running wave” and the inner – with meanders.

¹ К. Калчев, *Спасителни разкопки на ул. „Васил Левски“ при сградата с мозайка в Стара Загора*, Археологически открития и разкопки през 1986 г. XXXII Национална конференция по археология. (Разград 1987), 146. I am thankful to Vanya Popova for providing me with the drawing.

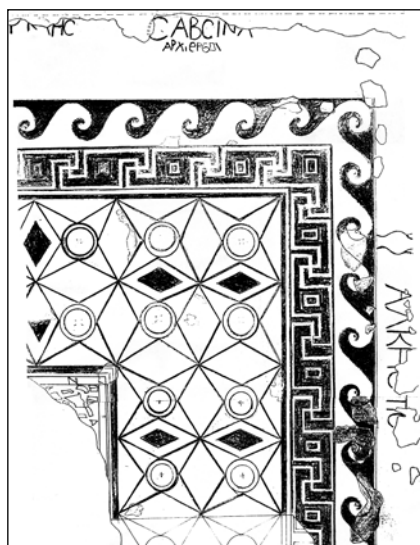


Fig. 1. The upper right part of the mosaic with the inscriptions from Augusta Traiana

Сл. 1. Горњи део мозаика са натписима из Августе Трајана

In the outer border, there are three inscriptions – two are located at the outer edge of its upper side, and the third one – on the right, adjacent to the middle border.

The inscription on the right, ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ (Ἀλκῆστις), is written with beautifully outlined and proportionate letters closer to the end of the border and parallel to its right side, the sigma is lunar. This is a label-inscription, and it apparently denotes one of the characters depicted in the inner unpreserved panel of the mosaic floor. It is logical to assume that the name of another mythological character, most likely Admetus (ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ, Ἄδμητος), was symmetrically written on the left missing side of the border.

Two other inscriptions containing proper names are located at the top of the border. The distance at which they stand apart, if the principle of symmetry has been observed, presupposes the presence of other unsaved inscriptions along the border on the left. The letters are visibly smaller than those of the first inscription; they are not the same size and are not aligned. The awkwardness of the

ductus suggests that they were improvised on the spot and added to the existing model of Alcestis' mythological plot. Their purpose was to indicate the names of persons who had any portraits or busts, probably placed in special niches. The right inscription is two-line and contains the name of the high priestess Sabina: CABEINΑ / APXIEPEIA (Σαβεῖνα ἀρχιέρεια). The first three letters of Sabina's name are larger than the others, and her title of the second line is written in much smaller letters, the sigma and epsilon are lunar. The long iota in the proper name is written with the characteristic postclassical Greek substitution of I with EI, which had the same pronunciation. Sabina is a trivial name in Roman anthroponymy which occurs in lapidary epigraphic monuments of Augusta Traiana.² Priestesses of the imperial cult in the city are not rare as well. At least six other notable women are known to have performed duties maintaining the imperial cult in the city.³

To the left of Sabina's inscription, four letters at the end of another anthroponym written on one line are partly preserved. Only the last two of them are certainly read – ΗΣ. As for the previous two, no more than their lower part is visible. If their lines are rendered correctly by Kalchev, then the second letter may be

² The name appears in two epigrams – on a sarcophagus of the late spouses Sabina and Emilius in Augusta Traiana (G. Mihailov, *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae*, vol. III, 2, Serdica 1964, №1609, line 2) and on a tombstone erected by Sabina for her late husband Mucapouris in *mutatio* of Carasura in its territory (ibid., №1633, lines 2–3).

³ Буюклиев, Хр. *Интересна находка от Августе Траяна, открита в центъра на града от строители*. 80/80. Христо Буюклиев и Августе Траяна, ред. Светла Димитрова (София, 2016), 143–145.

M or ΚΛ (endings -MHΣ or -ΚΛHΣ respectfully), while the restoration of the first one is problematic. It resembles Φ or Ψ, but there is no such letter combination at the end of a Greek name.

Both the presence of a high priestess in the inscription and stylistic features of the mosaic eloquently support a dating at the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century A.D.

Given the name of Alcestis, the location of the inscription and the known iconographic models in antiquity, the plot of the mosaic in the inner unsaved panel could most likely represent Heracles and Alcestis or Admetus and Alcestis.

The first plot, “The Return from Hades”, represents Heracles bringing Alcestis out of the Underworld, a scene symbolizing the triumph over death. Such is the multi-figure composition from a tomb in the necropolis of Porto (Isola Sacra), which depicts Heracles with a crook and the veiled Alcestis – she comes out of the kingdom of Hades and stands before two male figures, one of whom is apparently Admetus (**Fig. 2**).⁴ A similar scene, but with a different iconography (Heracles with the lion skin, Cerberus, and Alcestis stand in front of the seated Admetus) is also known from the catacombs of Via Latina (**Fig. 3**).⁵

The other well-known iconographic motif represents the figures of Admetus and Alcestis – either their wedding or the farewell of the spouses at the descent of Alcestis into Hades. The motif “The Wedding of Admetus” is widespread in ancient mosaic practice and decorates the triclinia of rich Roman houses (**Fig. 4**) such as that of Nîmes in *Gallia Narbonensis*.⁶ It is a suitable candidate for the central panel in this case, as the narrative suggests two figures.⁷ The farewell



Fig. 2. Floor mosaic from the Harvest Tomb, necropolis of Porto (Isola Sacra)

Сл. 2. Подни мозаик из некрополе у Порту (Исола Сакра)

⁴ I. Baldassarre, Ir. Bragantini, A.-M. Dolciotti, C. Morselli, Fr. Taglietti, *Le ricerche 1968-89 : ripercorrendo un'esperienza*. Ricerche su Ostia e il suo territorio. Necropoli dell'Isola Sacra, editors M. C beillac-Gervasoni, N. Laubry, F. Zev, Publications de l' cole fran aise de Rome (Rome 2018), 22, Fig. 16.

⁵ W. N. Schumacher, *Die Katakomben an der Via Dino Compagni*, *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 50, 1974, 335–341, Fig. 3.

⁶ C. Balmelle, J.-P. Aarmon. *La mosa que dans les Gaules Romaines*, Paris 2017, 128 and fig. 159.

⁷ The mosaic of N mes, however, represents, in addition to Admetus seated on the throne and Alcestis standing behind him a group of men, led by Apollo, returning from hunting and greeting them. Apollo's figure is important in the narrative of this mosaic, as it is he who agrees with his offended sister Artemis on how Admetus should redeem his life (cf. Apoll. 1.9.15).



Fig. 3. *The Return from Hades*, a fresco from the catacombs of Via Latina

Сл. 3. Повратак у Ад, фреска из катакомби на Вија Латина



Fig. 4. *The Wedding of Admetus*, floor mosaic in a Roman house, Nîmes, Gallia Narbonensis

Сл. 4. Адметусово венчање, подни мозаик у римској кући, Ним, Gallia Narbonensis

of the spouses, on the other hand, has been a popular motif in vase painting since the Classical period (Fig. 5), as evidenced by the Etruscan red-figure crater from Vulci (4th century B.C.).⁸

Both scenes – the wedding and the death – symbolize the emotional experience of the married couple and the marital devotion. The choice between the two iconographic motives is hampered by the lack of a reliable interpretation of the function of the room. Nevertheless, the chosen mythological plot suggests the involvement of the provincial elite of Augusta Traiana in the contemporary visual culture in which Alcestis was a symbol of family commitment and sacrifice.

The expressive power of mythology, transformed into a kind of cultural language for communication in the first centuries of the Roman Empire⁹, was used here to immortalize love and affection in the family of the high priestess Sabina.

As for the second mosaic (Fig. 6), that of Cyparissus, it was discovered

⁸ Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, Paris (inv. 918). See more in L. C. Pieraccini, M. A. Del Chiaro. *Greek in Subject Matter, Etruscan by Design: Alcestis and Admetus on an Etruscan Red-figure Krater*, *The Regional Production of Red-figure Pottery: Greece, Magna Graecia and Etruria*, editors S. Schierup, V. Sabetai, (Copenhagen 2014), 304–310.

⁹ K. M. D. Dunbabin, *Mythology and Theater in the Mosaics of the Graeco-Roman East*. *Using Images in late Antiquity*, editors St. Birk, Tr. M. Kristensen, B. Pulsen, (Oxford and Philadelphia 2014), 244–246; 247.

in a large building dating back to the time of Septimius Severus during rescue excavations led by Teofil Ivanov 25 m north of the northern fortress wall of Oescus II in 1956.¹⁰ The floor of the room which was not entirely excavated is 18 m² and is covered with multicolored mosaic.

An octagonal panel on a white background shows the metamorphosis of Cyparissus. The composition consists of the figure of Cyparissus himself turning into a tree on the left, Artemis on the right and a shorter tree next to her in the right corner of the panel. The deer pierced by an arrow is depicted at the feet of Cyparissus. The mosaic is placed directly on the compacted soil. The tesserae in the background and in the figures do not differ in size, but vary between 0.008–0.010 m and are in seven colors – black, white, pink, brick red, yellow, light green and blue.¹¹

Artemis is represented in $\frac{3}{4}$ profile in a rapid movement to the left. She steps on terrain, hinted at by a line of black tesserae in two rows. The weight of her body falls on her right leg, which is slightly bent at the knee and brought forward, while her left leg is stretched back. The goddess is clad in black leather *embades* – low, calf-length boots with the typical outward-facing lapel, depicted without fringe or decoration. They are not open at the front and the goddess' toes are not visible. Probably of eastern origin,¹² the *embades* are typical shoes in the Greco-Roman pictorial repertoire not only for Artemis, but also for other deities and characters who are active outdoors because the foot enters comfortably in them and is well protected.

The left hand with which the goddess holds the bow is visible between its upper curve and the bowstring. The hand is bent at the elbow, and its inner contour is more clearly delineated with reddish tesserae.

Artemis' big bow with strongly bent shoulders is depicted with the same tile-red tesserae.¹³ One of its twisted ends (*κορώνη*), through which the tendon (*νευρή*) was pierced through a special ear reaches her left knee below, and the other protrudes above her left shoulder. The bowstring is depicted with yellow



Fig. 5. *The farewell of Admetus and Alcestis*, Etruscan red-figure crater from Vulci

Сл. 5. Растанак Адметуса и Алкестиса, етрурски црвенофигурални кратер из Вулција

¹⁰ R. Ivanov, *Roman Cities in Bulgaria*, vol. 1, (Sofia 2012), 43–44.

¹¹ T. Ivanov, *Römische Mosaiken aus Colonia Ulpia Oescensium (Bulgarien)*, IV^e Colloque international pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique (Trèves, 1984), (Paris 1992), 155–164.

¹² P. Paris, s.v. *embas*, *DarSag* II/1, (Paris 1892), 593–595.

¹³ The bow of such a shape, often resembling a retrograde Σ , is called Scythian because the Greeks borrowed it from the Scythians (E. Saglio, s.v. *arcus*, *DarSag* 1873 I/1, (Paris 1873), 388–391. According to Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* (Call. *Art.* 3), Artemis' bow was made by the Cyclops and its flexibility was often emphasized by the ancient authors, e.g. *εὐκαμπέα τόξα* and *παλίντονα τόξα* (Hom. *h.Art.* 27.12;16) or defined as *Cydonian* after the Cretan city of Cydonia famous with its skilled archers, *Κυδώνιον τόξον* (Call. *Art.* 3.81).



Fig. 7. A fragment of a red-figure pelike representing Cyparissus' metamorphosis, Corinth

Сл. 7. Фрагмент са Кипарисом, метаморфоза, Коринт

tesserae, well traceable at both ends of the bow, but covered at the waist by the folds of the chiton fastened under her breast. The quiver, represented by black tesserae, is visible behind the right shoulder of the figure. The usual iconography of Artemis Agrotera shows the goddess reaching for it with her right hand to draw an arrow and looking in the direction of the upcoming shooting, while here she is turned to the right and her right hand is outstretched.

Teofil Ivanov, the discoverer and the first publisher of the mosaic, believes that the goddess keeps with her right hand the spear visible in front of her.¹⁴ However, after a closer look, the viewer notices that there is no trace of Artemis' grip on it and that the

spear actually passes in front of her hand to rest in the curve of Cyparissus' left hand.

Artemis is wearing a white sleeveless chiton that reaches to her knees and allows free movement of the legs. It has a V-neckline, which shows the contours of the neck. The chiton is belted below the chest with a narrow belt, under which the upward fold of the chiton (*ἀπόπτυγμα*) falls down to the waist. The edges, the belt and the rough folds of the garment are depicted with black tesserae, and some of the folds are further highlighted in yellow. A wrap slung over the right shoulder behind the figure's back and transferred to her left arm behind the bow flutters to the goddess' right. It is depicted by tile red tesserae, and its contours and folds – by black ones.

The details of Artemis' face are difficult to detect, partly due to the large size of the tesserae used. The right cheekbone of her face is well outlined. Black tesserae allude to the eyes, nose and mouth; the hair is parted on the left and fastened at the nape of the neck.

To the right of the goddess' figure, a tree is depicted on the terrain, thickened with another row of black tesserae. Its crown resembles a cypress, whose branches and trunk are represented by black tesserae, and the leaves – by green ones. The forest landscape, against which the metamorphosis of Cyparissus is developing, is also marked by the greenery, among which the deer hit by the young man's arrow hides. It is shown schematically in the lower left part of the composition in profile to the left by only black outlines. The snout is sharp, and the two branched horns reach up to the inscription. Its front left leg is visible, and the arrow protruding from his back is marked. The body is not preserved, but obviously the wounded animal is in a bush, from which two branches and greenery protrude in the direction of the goddess' figure.

¹⁴ T. Ivanov, R. Ivanov, *Ulpia Oescus. A Roman and Early Byzantine City* (in Bulgarian with an English summary), (Sofia 1998), 199–211.

Behind the deer hit by the arrow, the young man changing into a cypress is depicted in profile to the left. Only the right part of his body is preserved. One can see the curve from the arm and waist to the thigh, represented by black tesserae. Beneath it, the right leg, outlined with two rows of reddish tesserae, is slightly bent at the knee and brought forward. With his right hand bent at the elbow, the young man touches the crown sprouting from his head. The trunk of the emerging tree is represented by vertical lines of tile-red and black tesserae, and the body is hinted at by pale red tesserae. The challenge of depicting a figure changing over time probably forced the mosaicist to sketch this part of the composition in advance, as a triangular contour for laying the tesserae between the trunk and the right leg of the Cyparissus can be seen.¹⁵ Such a preliminary sketch can be postulated for young man's face as well (in the unsuccessful representing of the fleshy nose, the chin, the ear and the protruding locks of hair from the head, which turn into twigs).

Among the rare ancient images of the metamorphosis of Cyparissus, the hair and the gesture of the right hand, which touches it, are similarly depicted on a fragment of a red-figure pelike from Corinth (**Fig. 7**), dating back to the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 4th century BC.¹⁶ The branches sprouting from the head are represented by black tesserae, while the green ones form their leaves. The mosaicist has skillfully depicted their thickened lower and pointed upper part, which absolutely corresponds to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the young man's transformation in cypress is narrated.¹⁷ However, Ovid presents a version of the myth in which a young man from the island of Keos, son of Telephus and grandson of Heracles, inadvertently kills his beloved animal not throughout an arrow but throughout a sharp spear (*iaculo acuto*, *ibid.*, verse 130).

Rare ancient visualizations of Cyparissus' myth predominantly depict the animal shot with an arrow. Cyparissus is depicted with a bow in his hand directed



Fig. 8. Cyparissus with the deer, mosaic from Leicester

Сл. 8. Кипарис са јеленом, мозаик из Лајкастера

¹⁵ For more on this pre-mosaic technology, see in Π. Ασημακοπούλου-Ατζακα, *Ψηφοδοτά δάπεδα. Προσέγγιση στην τέχνη του αρχαίου ψηφιδωτού*. Δεύτερη έκδοση, (Θεσσαλονίκη 2019), 210–214.

¹⁶ C. G. Boulter, J. L. Bentz. *Fifth-Century Attic Red Figure at Corinth*, *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Oct. – Dec. 1980), 306, frg. 36.

¹⁷ *Ov. Met.* 10. 138–140:
et, modo qui niuea pendebant fronte capilli,
horrida caesaries fieri sumptoque rigore
sidereum gracili spectare cacumine caelum.



Fig. 9. Cyparissus with a spear next to an arrow-pierced deer, fresco from the Villa of the Vetii, Pompeii

Сл. 9. Кипарис са јеленом прободеним стрелом, фреска из Виле Вети, Помпеји

against a deer in the mosaic from Leicester¹⁸ dating back to the 4th century AD (**Fig. 8**) for example, and the fresco from the Villa of the Vetii in Pompeii depicts him with a spear in his right hand, seating next to an arrow-pierced deer (**Fig. 9**).¹⁹ In the mosaic of Oescus, Cyparissus is presented in a similar way, although not at rest, but in the process of his metamorphosis. He has a spear in his left hand, from which only the curve of the elbow is preserved and in whose inner part it rests, and the deer shot by an arrow is in front of him.

The most important specification of the mosaic in question is the absence of Apollo, the other character in the traditional myth of Cyparissus,²⁰ and his replacement by Artemis / Diana. Overwhelmed by the death of his beloved animal, Cyparissus begs Apollo to turn him into a cypress, as the constantly flowing drops of resin on the trunk of this tree are likened to his inexhaustible tears of sorrow for the deer.²¹

The unusual replacement of Apollo with Artemis / Diana could be interpreted in several ways – mythographic, iconographic and sociocultural one.

In terms of the mythological plot, the replacement of Apollo with Artemis is logically explained both by the kinship between them as brother and sister and the traditional idea of Artemis as a hunter, wandering in forests and mountains – a landscape against which the metamorphosis of Cyparissus takes place. In addition, the deer is a sacred animal of Artemis, and although the traditional version of the myth presents the deer unrelated to her, a connection between Cyparissus and Artemis' deer could be expected. It is possible ever to look for a parallel version of the myth in the mosaic of Oescus – that Cyparissus has killed Artemis's sacred animal by accident, and she runs in horror to the scene.

As for iconography, such an image of Artemis the Hunter is almost non-existent. When not in a static position, she is traditionally presented either in a movement to the left shooting with a bow or with a bow in the left hand while the right hand either raises to the quiver on the back²² or stretches backwards.²³

¹⁸ Ancient *Ratae Corieltauorum* (Jewry Wall Museum).

¹⁹ See more in W. C. Archer, *The Paintings of the Casa dei Vetii in Pompeii* (PhD dissertation, University of Virginia 1981).

²⁰ According to the ancient sources, Cyparissus was a favorite boy of other deities and heroes as well – of Zephyrus (Nonn. *Dion.* 11.363–365) and of Silvanus (Servius *ad Verg. Georg.* 1.20; Servius *ad Verg. Aeneid* 3.680.).

²¹ Cf. *Ov. Met.* 10.135 (*ut tempore lugeat omni*).

²² As in the mosaics of Bizerte and El Djem in Tunisia.

²³ As presented in the relief of Leptis Magna in Libya.

In another metamorphosis' mosaic depicting Apollo and Daphne, dating back to the late 3rd century AD from Antioch, there is a striking parallel with Artemis' pose from Oescus, but in profile to the opposite left side and with the right hand outstretched. (Fig. 10).²⁴

The unusual composition of the mosaic is complemented by its epigraphic characteristics. Although there are two figures, there is only one preserved inscription in Latin to the left of the figure of Cuparissus. Diana's name, if it was written at all, can be assumed to have been read in the unsaved part of the mosaic – either above her head or at the bottom left between the two figures. The inscription in two lines is a type of label announcing the name of the depicted character: CVPRE / SVS (Cupresus). The letters on both lines are well aligned. More space is left in the first line after the first letter C and before the last letter R, so that the three middle letters VPR occupy a central place, below which the other three letters of the name – SVS – are symmetrically placed on the second line. Apparently, the letters in the white background created a difficulty for the mosaicist, as can be judged from the way in which he surrounded the black tesserae of the letters with the white tesserae in the background.

The inscription reveals a certain illiteracy and clumsiness.²⁵ In the high Latin literature, the transliteration from the ancient Greek CYPARISSUS (< Κυπάρισσος) is used for the personification of the cypress, and the Latinized Mediterranean loanword *cupressus* is used for the name of the tree. In the mosaic in Oescus, however, the name of the tree, not that of the young man is written with a simplified geminate SS > S. The simplification of the geminates in the Vulgar Latin of the epoch is a banal feature, but that of SS is relatively rare, because when pronouncing this combination, the syllable boundary usually naturally passed between the two consonants.²⁶



Fig. 10. *Apollo and Daphne*, mosaic from the House of Menander, Antakya (Antioch)

Сл. 10. Аполон и Дафне, мозаик из Куће меандра, Антакија (Антиохија)

²⁴ Today in the Princeton University Art Museum.

²⁵ V. Popova associates the illiterate and simplistic inscription in Latin with the origin of the atelier that made the mosaic, which is most likely Greek (V. Popova. *Itinerant and Local Workshops: the Problem of Direct Work and Indirect Influences on the Roman Mosaics in Bulgaria*. – Luz Neira Himénez (ed.). *Estudios sobre mosaicos antiguos y medievales*. “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 2016, 118, note 5.

²⁶ И. Венедиков, *Фонетика на латинските надписи от българските земи*, Известия на семинарите при Историко-филологическия факултет на университета „Свети Климент Охридски“ в Кн. 1, (София 1942), 239.

As for the socio-cultural context of our mosaic, the choice of such a hybrid iconography of Cyparissus with Artemis and not with Apollo deprives the composition of its homoerotic message and is indicative of the predominant tastes in Ulpia Oescus. The presentation of this version of the myth proved to be more appropriate to the atmosphere of a Roman colony, the establishment of which was linked to the settlement of Roman legionaries and veterans. Its cult architecture, discovered artifacts, and epigraphic monuments suggest adherence to such traditional Roman values as *virtus* (virtue), *pietas* (piety), *dignitas* (dignity), and *gravitas* (solemnity). The unusual combination of Cyparissus with Artemis is indicative also of the manner of the mosaicists' work and the opportunity of combining different parts and personages of different patterns in accordance with the taste of the commissionaires.

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ДВА ЗАНЕМАРЕНА РИМСКА МОЗАИКА ИЗ БУГАРСКЕ: КИПАРИС И
АЛКЕСТИС

У раду се дискутује о два занемарена мозаика који по свим приликама датирају из 2. или 3. века нове ере. Мозаици су откривени у римским провинцијама Тракија и Доња Мезија на територији данашње Бугарске. Први мозаик, данас изгубљен је подног типа и налазио се близу зида Августа Трајана. Само је горњи део комплетно сачуван. Састоји се из три бордуре од којих је спољна монохроматска, попуњена тесерама, док је средња попут мотива таласа, а унутрашњу чине меандри. Код спољашње бордуре су три грчка натписа. Два садрже тачна имена и налазе се на врху бордуре: свештеница Сабина *САΒΕΙΝΑ / ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΙΑ* (Сабина главна свештеница), а од другог се може прочитати *ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ* (Алkestис). Логично је претпоставити да је реч о митским карактерима, и да је уз натпис Адметус (*ΑΔΜΗΤΟΣ*), све у вези са натписима било изведено симетрично. Вероватно су натписи пратили одговарајуће композиције, сасвим могуће композицију Херакле и Алkestис или Адметус и Алkestис. Обе сцене које садрже и венчање и смрт симболизују емотивно искуство у браку и брачну посвећеност.

Други мозаик је из времена Септимија Севера и налази се у Оестусу. Патос собе није у потпуности истражен али је јасно да је реч о делу композиције где се препознаје метаморфоза Кипариса. Композиција садржи фигуру Кипариса који се претвара у дрво са леве стране и Артемиде са десне стране. Ту је и јелен прободен стрелом поред стопала Кипарисових. Упадљиво је да нема Аполона који се везује за ову тему. Натпис је у два реда:

CVPRE / SVS (Кипарис). Ово је написано уместо пуног назива: *CYPARISSUS* (< *Κυπάρισσος*). Овде, јасно је, написано је име младића а не дрвета. Избор овако хибридне иконографије Кипариса са Артемидом а не са Аполоном има скривену хомоеротску поруку. Комбинација са чудним латинским натписом свакако је показатељ укуза у Улпија Оестус. Представа свакако указује и на атмосферу у овој римској колонији везаној за римске легионаре и ветеране, а исто тако сведочи и о укусу поручилаца.