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«Musiva & Sectilia» is an International Peer Reviewed Journal,
and it is Indexed in Erih Plus (European Science Foundation).

The eContent is Archived with *Clockss* and *Portico*.

MUSIVA & SECTILIA

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY
OF ANCIENT PAVEMENTS AND WALL REVETMENTS
IN THEIR DECORATIVE
AND ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

18 · 2021



PISA · ROMA
FABRIZIO SERRA · EDITORE
MMXXII

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Rivista annuale · *A Yearly Journal*

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Uffici di Pisa: Via Santa Bibbiana 28, I 56127 Pisa,
tel. +39 050 542332, fax +39 050 574888, fse@libraweb.net

Uffici di Roma: Via Carlo Emanuele I 48, I 00185 Roma,
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Print and/or Online official subscription rates are available at Publisher's website www.libraweb.net

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Autorizzazione del Tribunale di Pisa n. 16 del 15 settembre 2004.

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Stampato in Italia · Printed in Italy

ISSN PRINT 1724-9104

E-ISSN 1828-2415

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ANTIOCHENE ECHOES: TRANSFORMATION AND REPRESENTATION OF NARKISOS AND EKHŌ AT DAPHNE

JENNIFER STAGER

ABSTRACT · This essay explores transfigurations of Narcissus and Echo in the mosaic floors excavated from the seaside town of Daphne (Harbiye) near the city of Antioch-on-the Orontes. These material and sensory transformations are particularly resonant at Daphne, a site named for the nymph who turned into a laurel tree to escape rape by the god Apollo. Of the extant examples depicting their myth at the site, only one includes a depiction of Echo in her physical form. In addition, the non-figural patterns framing these figural scenes mark Narcissus's transformation into flower, collapsing narrative time. Dispersed across different collections since their excavation in the early 20th century, this essay brings together the mosaic fragments from Daphne associated with Narcissus and Echo to analyze the imbricated artistic materializations of their metamorphoses.

KEYWORDS · Stones, Glass, Color, Plants, Metamorphoses, Narcissus, Echo, Antioch, Landscape.

A COLLECTIVE of mosaic artists produced a series of structural floors for residential and public buildings in the second century CE in Daphne, a seaside suburb of the ancient city of Antioch-on-the-Orontes, now modern Antakya, Turkey on the border with Syria.¹ Long a heterogenous city with access to both sea and

jstager1@jh.edu, Department of History of Art, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, United States of America.

¹ I wish to express my gratitude to Ashley Costello, Ella Gonzalez, Andrea De Giorgi, Asa Eger, Angela Elliott, Lael Ensor-Bennett, Hilary Gallito, Federico Guidobaldi, Aaron Hyman, Maya Kahane, Jennifer Kingsley, Christine Kondoleon, Danielle Ortiz, Nandini Pandey, Ünver Rüstem, Kevin Tervalá, Giulia Tozzi, the anonymous reviewers, and the students of the ongoing Antioch Recovery Project for many fruitful conversations about Antioch and the mosaics.

[HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.19272/202108201002](https://doi.org/10.19272/202108201002) · «MUSIVA & SECTILIA», 18, 2021

RECEIVED: 7.3.2022 · REVISED: 13.4.2022 · ACCEPTED: 20.4.2022

overland trade routes and one of the sixteen Antioch's founded by Seleukos Nikator (c. 358-280 BCE), by the second century CE the city and its surroundings were part of the eastern expanse of the Roman empire.¹ Populated by soldiers, mercenaries, and settlers, including Athenians, Thracians, Macedonians, Cretans, Cypriots, Jews, boasting a library to rival Alexandria's, and a local mint producing and circulating Antiochene coins, people living and working at Antioch spoke a variety of languages and maintained diverse cultural, religious, political, and artistic practices.² Daphne, named for the nymph who turned herself into a laurel tree in order to escape rape by Apollo, was also, perversely, a religious center housing Apollo's oracle and temples to the god.³ Several mosaics produced at the site depict the myth of Daphne's transformation into laurel. Over time, mosaic artists working in the city and its surroundings continued to repair and revise earlier floors, as well as to build new floors, often directly on top of earlier ones, resulting in a vast corpus of mosaics produced between approximately the 2nd-6th centuries CE. These mosaics represent a wide variety of themes, materials, and styles. When archaeologists in the early twentieth century excavated many of the mosaic floors, they separated the mosaics including those depicting Narcissus and Echo, into parts now dispersed to different museum collections, atomizing the corpus of mosaics that once populated Antioch and Daphne. Bringing these dispersed parts back together and analyzing them in connection with each other makes visible a series of connections across figural and non-figural parts of individual mosaic floors and across different mosaics produced at Antioch and Daphne.

¹ For a comprehensive study of the region's heterogeneity and relative autonomy under a variety of governing structures, see DE GIORGI, EGER 2021, 11-12.

² DE GIORGI, EGER 2021, 29-31; 39. On the mint, see METCALF 2000, 105-111.

³ OVID, *Met.* 628-783; For a depiction of Daphne's transformation in mosaic, see Panel D, Room 3, House of the Boat of Psyche and Panel B, Room 16, House of Menander. <https://vrc.princeton.edu/archives/items/show/14392>; DE GIORGI, EGER 2021, 12.

The technologies of fitting together materials to craft surfaces, patterns, and images have a very deep history. While mosaics such as those produced at Antioch and Daphne have often been thought of as a late technology developing out of pebble mosaic floors crafted for the homes of the Hellenistic court and updated to use cut stone tesserae instead of uncut pebbles, these mosaic floors actually expanded a set of technologies and practices that had already been artistic priorities for many centuries across the ancient Mediterranean and its contact cultures.¹ As early as the ninth century BCE artists produced mosaic floors at the Phrygian site of Gordion with more examples from the fifth century BCE (Corinth, Sikyon and Olympia), while Mesopotamian and the Ancient Near East sites have been excavated at several ninth century BCE Assyrian palaces, at the Aramaean sites of Asrlan-Tash (ancient Hadatu), and at Tell Ahmar (ancient Til Barsip) in northern Syria.² Mosaic production precedes its technological standardization and rigorous production from the 3rd century BCE through the late Roman Empire and early Middle Ages. Foregrounding this deeper chronology and broader geography for mosaic production fits the abundance of mosaic floors produced by artists at Antioch and its surroundings in the second-early sixth centuries CE into a production and material history as heterogeneous as the population of Antioch in those centuries.

Mosaic artists themselves likely traversed the ancient Mediterranean region, traveling to worksites such as Antioch and sharing expertise with each other and with local collaborators.³ Christine Kondoleon has likened the somatic memory for pattern production of these artists to that of rhapsodes reciting epic, an analogy that resonates with the earlier history of mosaic production sketched above and that offers an alternative to potentially anachronistic presumptions that mosaic artists relied

¹ On mosaic technologies as artistic atomism, see STAGER 2022, Chapter Five with bibliography.

² ROSE 2017, 136-178.

³ KONDOLEON 2000, 65.

on patterns books.¹ Situating pattern production in the somatic memory of working artists offers a more embodied account of their production, one tied to the living and traveling artists themselves.

Ancient artists working with mosaic technologies combined materials sourced locally and traded across distant lands to piece together colorful stones and glass into figural images and patterns that also functioned as walkable floors.² The five different mosaics from the Antioch corpus depicting myths of Narcissus and Echo mobilize many different stone and glass colors, including yellows, reds, blacks, greens, browns, and whites, materials that future conservation analysis might further elucidate. The mosaic artists working at Antioch did not sign their work found at the site, although a signature from a mosaic found at Chania, Crete, may identify a mosaicist from Daphne (Harbiye) and the Antioch region, while stylistic comparanda from Paphos, Cyprus and Sepphoris, Israel, and Zeugma and the Euphrates basin suggest that Antiochene mosaicists traveled to carry out site-specific works.³ Mosaic artists at Antioch and its surroundings produced mosaics over hundreds of years, building networks of commerce and labor, from mining stone locally and abroad to vendors and workshops fabricating colorful stone tesserae, glass, and lime mortar. Each individual mosaic floor thus maps its own production, bringing together a wide range of polychrome materials, different laborers, and variations of myths and stories, staging and shaping the heterogeneity of its historical context. In the specific examples depicting myths of Narcissus and Echo, each mosaic maps its own polyvalence while forging connections across

¹ KONDOLEON 2000, 65. On the creativity of rhapsodes, see GONZÁLEZ 2013, 331-341.

² The conservation science carried out on the corpus of mosaics from Antioch is quite varied, but those mosaics which have received attention from conservators tell stories of material variation and trade. For example, see WYPYSKI, BECKER 2005, 115-176. On the conservation of mosaics at the Baltimore Museum of Art, see <http://antiochrecoveryproject.org/conservation-of-antioch-mosaics/>.

³ KONDOLEON 2000, 64-65.

other materializations of these myths in mosaic, paintings, sculpture, texts, and flora.

Excavations carried out by the Franco-American Committee for the Excavation of Antioch-on-the-Orontes from 1932-1939 uncovered hundreds of mosaic floors throughout the city, the seaside suburb, and the port area of Seleucia Pieria.¹ A team drawing from Princeton, NJ, Baltimore, MD, and Worcester, MA along with archaeologists supported by the French government joined together to carry out excavations at Antioch, originally in pursuit of major early Christian places described in texts, but encountering instead an abundance of mosaic floors associated with primarily domestic architecture.² In Baltimore, the city's contributions to the excavations came from members of the Baltimore Museum of Art's board, led by Robert Garrett, as well as individual contributors from whom Garrett solicited "Antioch subscription funds".³ Despite the lingering effects of the Depression and the looming shadow of World War II, the subscription fund kept the excavations going for seven years. In exchange for these funds, the excavators were entitled to a percentage of the finds per an agreement with the Franco-Syrian mandate governing Antioch at the time.⁴ Half of the mosaic floor fragments lifted from the ground remained in Antakya and are now in the Hatay Archaeological Museum, while excavators divided the other half across the institutions that had supported the excavations and transported them via trucks, ships, and trains from Antakya to museums and institutions in France and the United States.⁵ In recompense for the Garrett's subscription fund, the Baltimore Museum of Art received over thirty-five mosaic fragments from Daphne

¹ KONDOLEON 2000, 5-8.

² KONDOLEON 2000, 63.

³ Baltimore Museum of Art, Garret Archive.

⁴ GONZALEZ, KAHANE 2020b. Anneka Lenssen has demonstrated that in the wake of the League of Nations approving the French mandate over Syria and the question of control of Antioch over the 1930s produced a focus on Arab and Turkish identities at the expense of the many other cultural groups living in Antioch at the time, on which see LENSSEN 2017, 223-258.

⁵ On which see «Baltimore Sun», 1936, cited in GONZALEZ, KAHANE 2020.

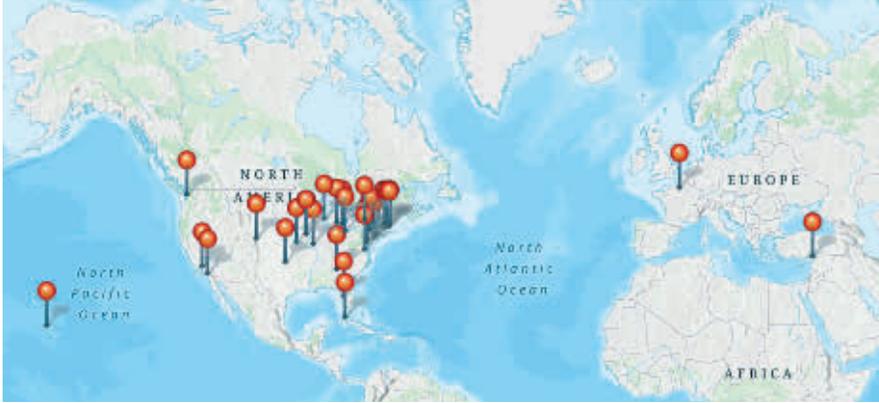


FIG. 1. Modern Antioch Distribution Map, ArcGIS online:
GONZALEZ, KAHANE 2020a.

and Antioch.¹ Most of these are now on display on the walls of the museum's Antioch Court. Among the mosaic fragments shipped to Baltimore, were two pieces of a mosaic floor depicting Narcissus from the House of Narcissus at Daphne.

The initial removal and subsequent de- and re-accessioning of fragments produced an atomized corpus of mosaics from ancient Antioch distributed across the globe, from the Hatay Museum in modern Antakya, Turkey to the Louvre in Paris and over twenty collections across the United States, from Worcester, MA to St. Petersburg FL, to Honolulu, HI² (FIG. 1). This modern atomization reversed the process of assemblage by which ancient artists had produced these mosaics. Sourcing materials – cut stones and glass

¹ Over seventy-five percent of the mosaics in the Baltimore Museum of Art's collection were lifted from Daphne rather than Antioch.

² For an open-access map of the current distribution of mosaic fragments from Antioch see GONZALEZ, KAHANE 2020a. On the Honolulu mosaic and its relationship to the Worcester Hunt mosaic, see KONDOLEON 2000, 158-159. Notably, the 2000 exhibition *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City*, curated by Christine Kondoleon, sought to bring as many dispersed mosaic parts as possible together in the exhibition space. Due to the significant cost of moving mosaic fragments, a first step for future work should be to digitally reunite these fragments. This is one of the goals of the ongoing *Antioch Recovery Project*.

in a variety of colors, lime mortar, and metals – both locally and from places throughout the Roman empire and its vast network of trading contacts – mosaic artists created both figural and non-figural scenes that drew on wide-ranging artistic traditions and polychrome materials.

In removing the mosaics, excavators often cut larger surfaces down into more manageable parts and separated figural and non-figural imagery from the same floors or rooms into fragments, or left the non-figural imagery in the ground, while lifting only the figural sections. Video footage from 1935 shows this process in action.¹ Cut into squares and rectangles that resembled monumental paintings, the extraction process separated the mosaic surfaces from the ancient subflooring laid beneath the tesserae. In order to stabilize the stones for transport, the excavation teams backed the surfaces with rebar and modern concrete. This backing resulted in such heavy objects that moving the mosaic fragments within museums is often prohibitively expensive. For example, archival photographs taken after lifting but before shipment show the Narcissus mosaic to have been lifted in two parts – the first including the full figural imagery and the second including the bottom half of the geometric pattern, pictured here in these color photographs taken in the field before transport. (FIGS. 2-3). Once these two large parts reached Baltimore and were fitted together, museum staff installed the massive panel on the wall of a stairwell just off of the main atrium around which the other Antioch mosaic fragments were installed (FIGS. 4-5).

The reason for separating the Narcissus panel and several other fragments, including fragments of the Hall of Philia mosaics that connect with mosaic fragments installed in the atrium, is not known, but once the Narcissus panel and other mosaic fragments were installed on the walls and held in place by steel

¹ See <http://vrc.princeton.edu/researchphotographs/s/antioch/page/Antioch-films>. See also The Davis Museum at Wellesley College: <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/the-antioch-mosaics-at-wellesley-college-the-davis-museum/CgWB51NC1mDjJw?hl=en>.



FIG. 2. Upper half of the floor mosaic depicting Narcissus from the House of Narcissus at Daphne resting vertically against a stone wall after having been lifted from the ground and backed by rebar and concrete. Antioch (now Antakya, Turkey), 1938. Color photograph: Kidder Smith, 8244. Courtesy of the Antioch Expedition Archives, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.



FIG. 3. Lower half of the floor mosaic depicting Narcissus from the House of Narcissus at Daphne next to a mosaic depicting a personification of a Season and a third mosaic fragment depicting a pattern of flowers resting vertically against a stone wall after having been lifted from the ground and backed by rebar and concrete. Antioch (now Antakya, Turkey), 1938. Color photograph: Kidder Smith, 8249. Courtesy of the Antioch Expedition Archives, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.



FIG. 4. NARCISSUS. Syria (present day Turkey). 2nd century CE. Stone and lime mortar. Top, 82 × 126 in. (208.4 × 320.1 cm.), weight: 3517.5 lbs.
Bottom, 57 × 126 in. (144.8 × 320.1 cm.), weight: 2493.75 lbs.

The Baltimore Museum of Art: Antioch Subscription Fund, BMA 1938.710.
Photography By: Mitro Hood. Courtesy of the Baltimore Museum of Art.

brackets, moving them became a significant engineering expense.¹ In addition, placing mosaic fragments that had been cut into the shape of large canvases on the walls to evoke the later

¹ For a reconstruction of the cut-up mosaic fragments from the Hall of Philia, see ORTIZ 2021: <http://antiochrecoveryproject.org/the-hall-of-phia/>.



FIG. 5. Mosaic fragment of Narcissus *in situ* on the wall of a stairwell in the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD. Antioch Subscription Fund, BMA 1938.710. Photograph: Jennifer Stager.

European painting tradition into which they were often, as at Baltimore, fitted.¹ The mosaic fragments were thus asked to stand in for lost ancient panel paintings and valued for the genealogy they constructed for the later western painting tradition. This narrative, however, misrepresents the heterogenous cultural context in which artists produced these mosaics. A recent book by Andrea

¹ MOLHOLT 2011, 289. Notably, the Baltimore Museum of Art is in the midst of shifting this narration.

De Giorgi and Asa Eger mobilizes a vast array of archaeological and textual evidence to tell a story of enduring heterogeneity, multilinguality, and religious plurality at Antioch, a diversity that persisted into modernity.¹ Despite their wide-ranging modern locations however, the reception histories of the mosaic fragments have produced a very different story, one grounded in a tired narrative of western painting developing in connection with lost paintings from Graeco-Roman antiquity for which the mosaics act as surrogates. Given the centrality of the myths of Narcissus and Echo in later European painting, the artistic representations in mosaic of Narcissus and Echo can be easily absorbed into this history. Instead, interpreting these images within the deeper history of mosaic production sketched above, as well as attending to the material and mythological connections forged by the mosaics themselves, invites a different set of associations in their ancient Roman production and its later receptions. These mosaics produce the very heterogeneity of the cultural context from which they emerged – bringing together laborers, languages, myths, and materials at a site that maintained persistent influence and relative independence over millennia.² Among the tasks for Antioch researchers today is to explore this ancient heterogeneity of the city and its surroundings in and through the mosaics themselves.

In the case of the Narcissus mosaic, its placement on the wall in a stairwell at the Baltimore Museum of Art eventually came into conflict with other curatorial demands, especially as the museum shifted its focus towards more modern and contemporary fields. A modern sculpture that required its own niche eventually moved to the stairwell, blocking the Narcissus from public view.

¹ Anneka Lenssen has demonstrated that in the wake of the League of Nations approving the French mandate over Syria and the question of control of Antioch over the 1930s produced a focus on Arab and Turkish identities at the expense of the many other cultural groups living in Antioch at the time, on which see LENSSEN 2017, 223-258.

² On which see DE GIORGI, EGER 2021, 69-126.

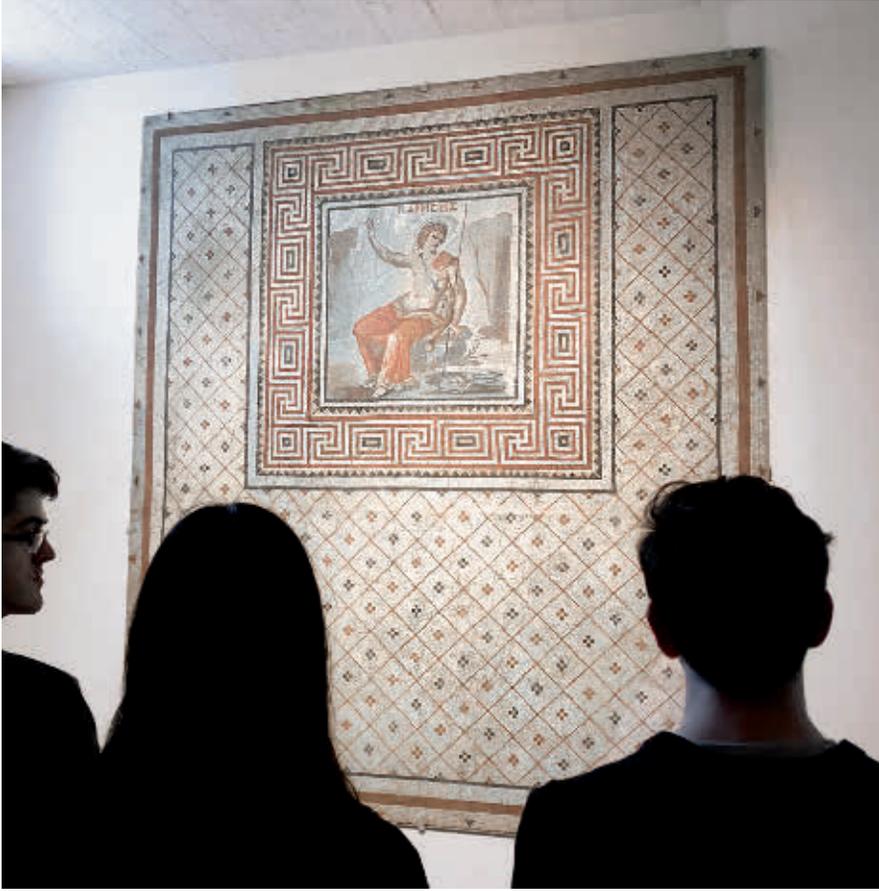


FIG. 6. Mosaic fragment of Narcissus *in situ* on the wall of a stairwell in the Baltimore Museum of Art, viewed from a balcony opposite. Baltimore, MD. Antioch Subscription Fund, BMA 1938.710. Photograph: Jennifer Stager.

Seeing the Narcissus mosaic now requires prior knowledge of its presence and permission from security staff to climb a cordoned off stairwell to a narrow balcony facing it from where one can look directly at the panel (FIGS. 5-7). Such difficulties of installation, expense associated with moving the mosaic fragments once in place, and counter-curatorial demands that emerge over time are not unique to the Baltimore Museum of Art, although the poignancy of Narcissus gazing at his own reflection alone and cor-

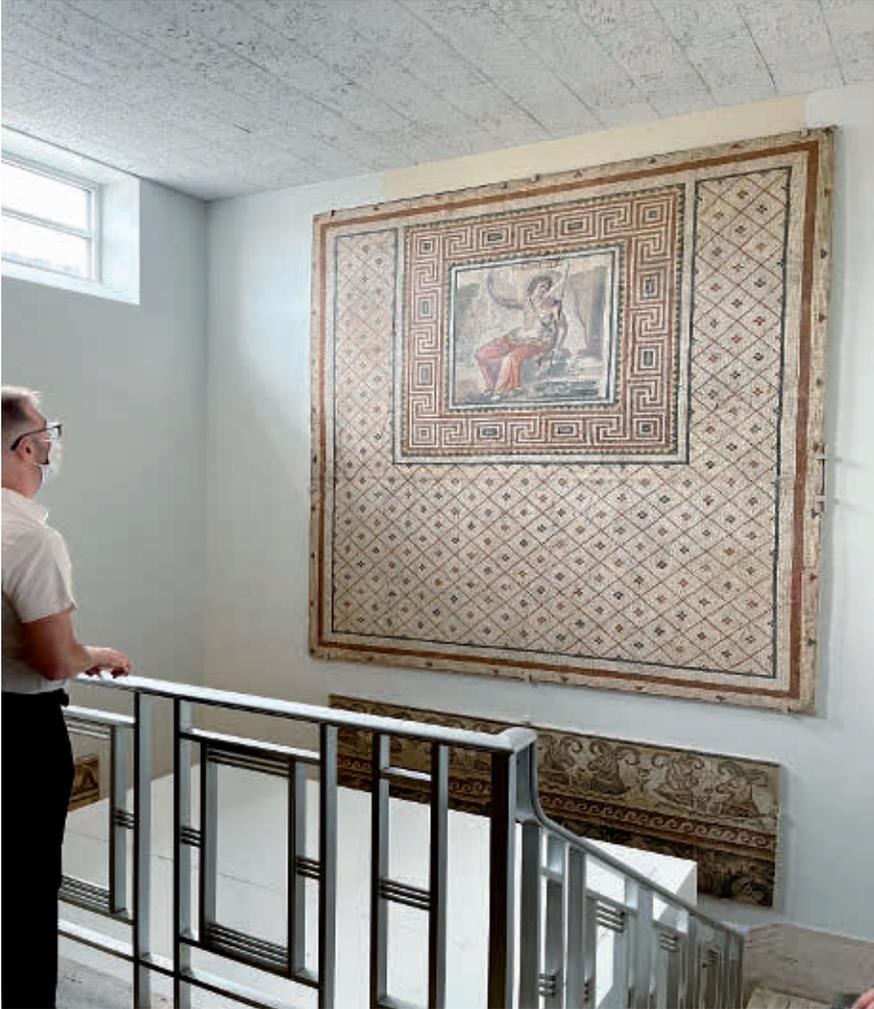


FIG. 7. Mosaic fragment of Narcissus *in situ* on the wall of a stairwell in the Baltimore Museum of Art, viewed from a balcony opposite. Baltimore, MD. Antioch Subscription Fund, BMA 1938.710. Photograph: Jennifer Stager.

doned off from the admiration of others is particular to the myth that this mosaic floor depicts.

Ancient artists produce this mosaic floor for a room in a residential house at Daphne (36.132241, 36.143708) and the house now takes its modern name, the House of Narcissus, from that floor's



FIG. 8. Mosaic fragment of a personified Season or Abundance, 2nd century CE. Stone, tile, and glass. H. 89 in. (226.1 cm); width 99 in. (251.5 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art 38.11.12, Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1938.

imagery.¹ They also produced a separate mosaic depicting a personified Season or Abundance against a geometric background (FIG. 8). Although the two mosaics have now dis-

¹ I would like to thank the Italo-German geographic survey team led by Steve Batiuk and Andrea De Giorgi for the spatial coordinates of mosaic's ancient location: 36.132241 36.143708. The mosaic was excavated from what the excavation team identified as DH-21/22-H.

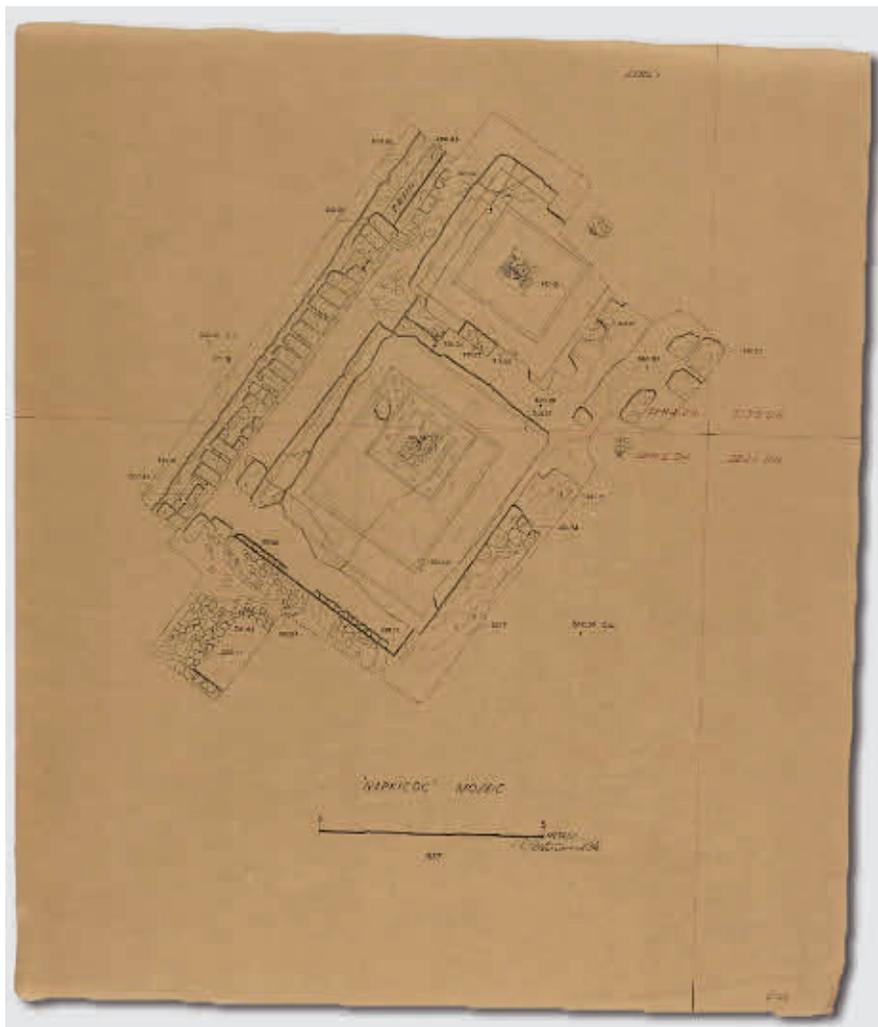


FIG. 9. Trench plan of the House of Narcissus, Level 1,
trench plan with NARKICOC mosaic. Drawing 419. Sector DH-21/22-H.
Courtesy of the Antioch Expedition Archives,
Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.

tributed to two different museums (the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), both a photograph of the two mosaics *in situ* and an associated drawing of an archeological plan show the spatial relationship of the two floors to each other and to the wall of the house (FIGS. 9-10). In 1937, ex-



FIG. 10. House of Narcissus, Daphne, mosaic of Narcissus and mosaic of a personification *in situ*, view to the East. 4/2/1937, Photograph 2979.

Courtesy of the Antioch Expedition Archives,
Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.

cavators from the team lifted both mosaic floors from the ground and distributed them to New York and Baltimore.¹ Produced for use in the same house, the personification of seasonal abundance highlights the outcome of Narcissus's tragedy and abundance of the flower that he became. This connection between the two different mosaic compositions is diminished by their distribution to and display in different museum collections.

Once the two mosaic fragments sent to Baltimore had been fitted back together on site, the central scene depicted a man seated on a rock and gazing down towards a shallow pool of water, the surface of which reflects his upturned face. Ancient Greek letters laid out in dark stones inscribe his name just above his head, labelling the figure *NARKISOS*. This label reduplicates in

¹ On this distribution of the mosaic fragments from the House of Narcissus, see LI 2021: <http://antiochrecoveryproject.org/the-narcissus-mosaic-pavement-from-the-house-of-narcissus/>.

text an identity made clear by the iconography of his watery reflection. The story of the Theban hunter cursed to fall in love with his own reflected beauty until he died would have been widely known by the second century CE.

Depictions of Echo and Narcissus together or Narcissus alone seem to have been especially popular at Antioch and Daphne, in particular. Four depictions of the story are among hundreds of fragments depicting figural scenes that have been discovered.¹ Although the extant mosaics, numbering in the hundreds, do include other repeated themes, this concentration of images of Narcissus stands out. They include several different manifestations of Narcissus's iconography: floors from the House of Narcissus and the House of Menander both depict Narcissus alone with his reflection, the floor from the House of the Buffet Supper depicts Narcissus in the company of Echo and Eros (FIGS. 11 and 12), the floor in the House of the Red Pavement represents Narcissus alone, while the floor depicting a Megalopsychia from the Yakto complex depicts Narcissus in the act of hunting a lion, emphasizing his back story as a hunter from Thebes rather than his famous fate (FIG. 13). Of these four, all but the version in the House of Menander include a Greek name-label.²

A century earlier, artists had painted walls at Pompeii with the story of Narcissus gazing at himself, alone or in the company of Eros.³ They also carved a stucco scene at nearby Stabiae, for

¹ While Molacek identifies five Narcissus mosaics from Antioch, one of the these from the House of the Red Pavement is not a secure identification, lacking either a reflection or a name-label, and has been identified by others as Apollo. "Mosaic of Apollo" *Dumbarton Oaks*: <https://www.doaks.org/resources/online-exhibits/ancient-art-at-dumbarton-oaks/the-classical-world-at-dumbarton-oaks/mosaic-with-apollo>; MOLACEK 2018, 16.

² On the prominence of ancient Greek name-labels in mosaics from the eastern Roman empire, see KONDOLEON 2000, 64.

³ Artists painted Narcissus on the wall of a bedroom in the House of Marcus Lucretius Fronto, as well as on walls in the House of D. Octavius Quartio, the House of the Vestals, and the House of the Ara Maxima, and with Echo and Eros in VI 7, 20, tablinum 7. On the House of Marcus Lucretius Fronto, see MAZZOLENI *et alii* 2004, 274-297, especially 277.



FIG. 11. Mosaic pavement *in situ* depicting Ekhō, Eros, and Narkisos from the House of the Buffet Supper, Daphne. Photograph taken 9/2/1938, 4489. Now in the collection of the Hatay Archaeological Museum, Antakya, Turkey. Courtesy of Antioch Expedition Archives, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.



FIG. 12. Detail of FIG. 11.

which artists molded the body of Narcissus, while they carved his reflection very lightly to suggest its comparative flatness¹ (FIG. 14). In the second century, artists carved Narcissus into a marble wellhead (puteal) from Ostia, the port of Rome.² In this sculptural version, his watery reflection takes shape and seems to lift from the water (surface of the marble) towards him (FIG. 15). In addition to the four mosaics of Narcissus from Antioch, artists also represented him in mosaics from Paphos, and one from the floor of a public latrine in Antiochia ad Cragum³ (FIG. 16). Artists produced images of the story of Narcissus and Echo in painting and mosaic in a variety of contexts and from a range of sites across the Mediterranean.



FIG. 13. Detail, Narkisos spearing a lion from the Mosaic of the Megalopsychia. Villa at Yakto, Sector DY-17/18-H/J. Photograph 5641. Courtesy of Antioch Expedition Archives, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.

NARCISSUS IN STONES

In the mosaic pavement from its eponymous house, Narcissus sits within a landscape setting that juxtaposes vegetation, natural stone, and built architecture (see FIG. 4). The freestanding ruin of a column fills the upper right section of the scene, while a leafless tree branch grows up from the ground in front of the column. Architectural ruins and leafless branches mark the intertwined cyclicity of natural and artistic production from bloom and craft to decay and reuse. Artists used a range of brown-gray stones to

¹ PESCE *et alii* 2004.

² HEMINGWAY *et alii* 2021, 11-12.

³ WEISS *et alii* 2019, 16; MOLACEK 2018, 15-23.

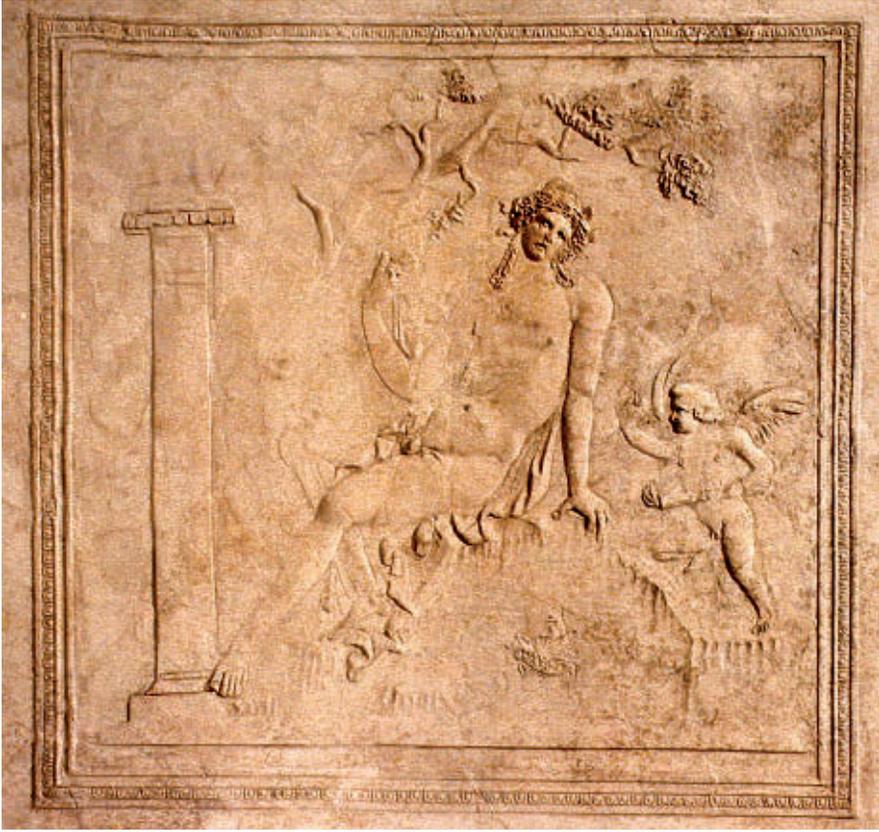


FIG. 14. Narcissus by a pool with Eros from Villa Petrarco, Site (17), Stabiae, ca. 60 CE. Stucco bas-relief. Antiquarium Stabiano, Castellammare di Stabia 61002, Campania, Italy. A. Pesce, ed., *In Stabiano* (Castellammare di Stabia: Longobardi, 2005), cat. 19.

build up column, branch, and other components of the landscape. Leaves grow from a branch emerging from the ground just to the right of the rock on which Narcissus sits. Artists represented the rock as a naturally occurring seat in contrast to the built structural element of the column. Both the rock-seat and the column are structures that the artists have juxtaposed with growing vegetation.¹ Human artistic labor crafted this pictorial world of natural

¹ On natural rocks as seats, see Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1.23.4. See also GISSEN, STAGER, ZARMAKOUPI 2021, 54-55.



FIG. 15. Puteal (wellhead) with Narcissus and Echo, Hylas and the Nymphs, 2nd century CE. Marble. Height: 40 $\frac{15}{16}$ in. (104 cm), Diameter: 26 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (67 cm), Height of base: 8 $\frac{11}{16}$ in. (22 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art 2019.7 Credit: Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace, Howard S. and Nancy Marks, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald S. Lauder, The Jaharis Family Foundation Inc., Philodoroi, Leon Levy Foundation, Renée E. and Robert A. Belfer, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Moran, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Fisch, Annette de la Renta, Beatrice Stern, Frederick J. Iseman, The Abner Rosen Foundation Inc., Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Chilton Jr., Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Barbara G. Fleischman, in memory of Lawrence A. Fleischman, and Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation Gifts; and The Bothmer Purchase and Diane Carol Brandt Funds, 2019.



FIG. 16. Mosaic fragment of Narcissus from the public latrine at Antiochia ad Cragum in western Rough Cilicia. Courtesy of the Antiochia ad Cragum Archaeological Research Project.

and built structures coupled with growing plants and vegetation through the material transformations of the colorful cut stone and glass that they fitted together, forging both the mosaic floor and its picture world.¹ Materials and the labor through which they have been extracted from the earth and shaped into tesserae are always on view in tandem with the scenes that they have been fitted together to depict.

In this scene, artists fitted together stones and glass to produce images of stone – both found and carved – as well as to produce images of landscape, vegetation, the central image of water, and the living flesh of Narcissus, who will eventually return to the elements due to his cursed self-love. The mosaic materializes differ-

¹ On the production of an idea of landscape in Roman art, see ZARMAKOUPÍ forthcoming.

ent transformations by fitting together images of different types of materials from stone tesserae. Wavy locks frame Narcissus's deep-set eyes as they gaze out and down, seemingly at his reflection below, an angle that casts his profile line in shadow. His reflected face, in contrast, floats on the surface of the pool of water and green tesserae circle its edges of his disembodied, reflected face. Artists flattened the modeling of his face to produce its reflection on the surface of the water. Reflection captures a moment in Narcissus's life, but also ensnares his gaze and ensures his death, reminding beholders that reflections mark ephemeral instances of an appearance and in that ephemerality also mark the inexorability of time.

Doro Levi, as Elizabeth Molacek notes, attributed interest in the story of Narcissus at Antioch to the importance of water for the city and its surroundings.¹ Four rivers traversed the region, the Kara Su, Yaghra, Afrin, and the Orontes, which gave navigable access to the Mediterranean sea until the early Islamic period.² Mosaic artists working in the region do seem to have taken pleasure in depicting watery elements in stone, such as processions of sea nymphs, images of Okeanos and Tethys, Erotes riding sea creatures, and various forms of marine life. They crafted these images through fitting together cut stones that had been locally mined or traded (possibly by sea), as well as bright colors in glass created through technical transformation of arrested liquid.³ Water as a resource played an important role at Antioch and especially at Daphne and many houses included nymphaea.⁴ Mosaic artists seized the opportunity to represent watery worlds in stone and glass materials precisely because of the difference between the means of production (stone, glass,

¹ MOLACEK 2018, 15. On the importance of water in the mosaics, see also KONDOLÉON 2000, 71-72, 145; Libanius *Or.* II.244-48.

² DE GIORGI, EGER 2021, 5-6.

³ On glass in antiquity see Theophrastus, *On Stones*, 49; WYPYSKI, BECKER 2005, 115-176. STAGER 2022, Chapter Five. WIGHT 2011.

⁴ YEGÜL 2000, 145-153; DE GIORGI, EGER 2021, 97-98, 107, 455-457.

and lime mortar) and the subjects produced (water deities and sea creatures).

The story of Narcissus, which is one of bodily and material transformation, afforded mosaic artists just such an opportunity to produce not only a small body of water, but also his reflection on its surface in stone.¹ The flattened reflection emerges from and merges with the flatness of the water's smooth surface coming into being only in and on the still water. This flatness and the death that it engineers for Narcissus seems to uphold progressive notions of linear time, but the mosaic disrupts that linearity with its own repeated invocations of cyclicity. Reflection entraps through a kind of painting, one that mosaic artists captured through fitting together stones.

Echo does not appear in this mosaic floor from the House of Narcissus, in contrast with the mosaic floor from the House of the Buffet Supper, and one might understand Echo's absence from the scene in several ways. First, in the version of the myth recounted by Ovid (8 CE) she loses her physical body, reduced not to a flower, but to echoing sound. Echo's disembodiment narratively precedes Narcissus's entrapment by his own reflection, so that the choice to fit together an image of Narcissus without Echo might merely indicate that we are looking at a later moment in the narrative sequence. The embodied experience of this scene on what was also a functional floor means that beholders experienced the imagery within the soundscape of the household, including as a surface with which different materials made contact and produced sounds – the slap of leather sandals or bare feet, the splash water from a bucket, the roll of dice, the shattering of a ceramic vessel against stone² (FIG. 17). These sounds were not quite echoes, so much as aural responses to haptic en-

¹ For an analysis of Philostratus and the viewing dynamics of artistic depictions of Narcissus (especially paintings), see ELSNER 2007, 152-176.

² On capturing sound in relation to mosaic, see the Antioch Recovery Project: <http://antiochrecoveryproject.org/>. On sound in Graeco-Roman antiquity, see BUTLER, NOOTER 2019.

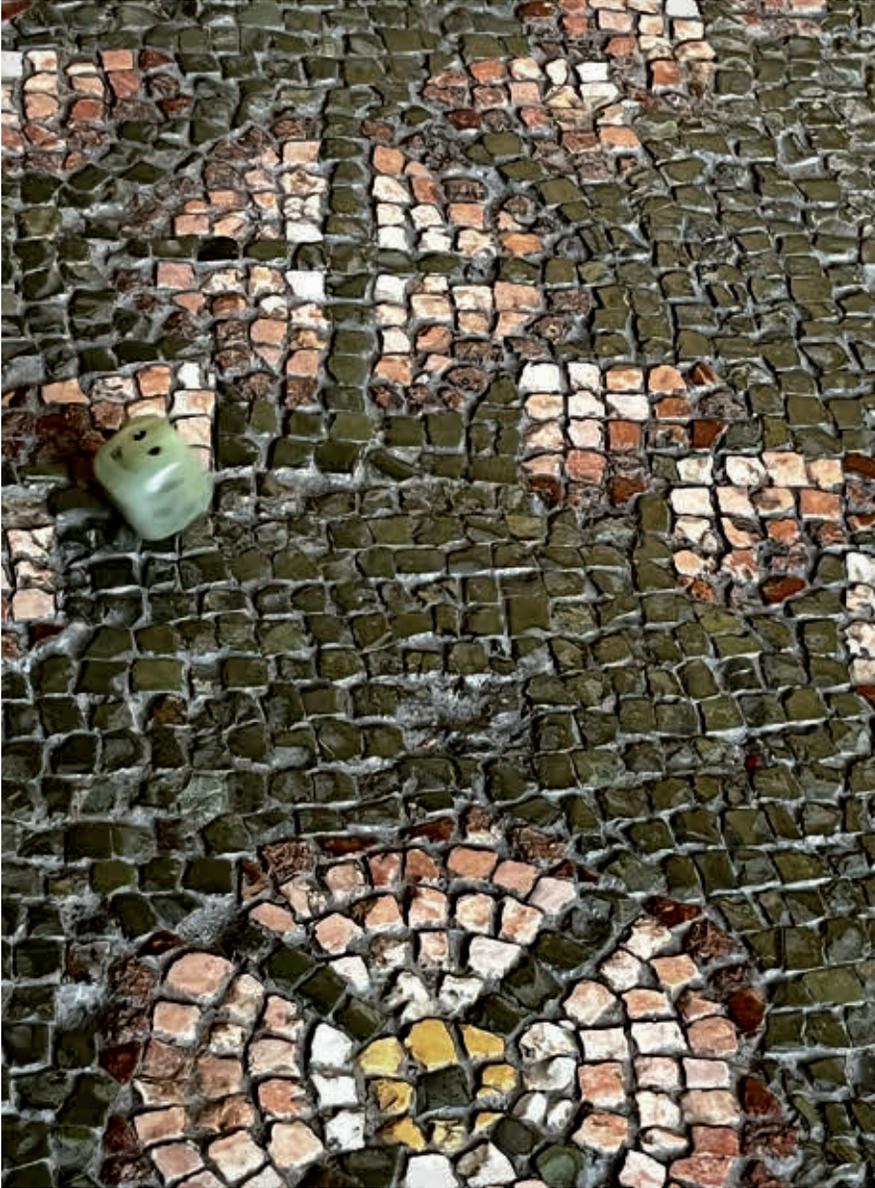


FIG. 17. Modern die on the surface of the House of the Green Carpet mosaic. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC. BZ.1938.75.b.
 Photograph: Jennifer Stager.

counters with the mosaic's surface. Just as echo gives way to reflection, so does touch give way to aural response, producing an

embodied multisensory experience that brings Echo into a scene in which her body is not pictured.¹

NARCISSUS IN LETTERS

As noted above, artists also included a Greek label naming “Narkisos” that floats above his head in the scene. Many of the mosaics produced at Antioch include similar name-labels in ancient Greek and often the letterforms produced by fitting together stones and many of these letter forms look similar in scale and shape.² To date, no study of mosaic letterforms in the Antioch mosaics has been carried out. What we can say, however, is that mosaic artists working at Antioch and across the eastern Roman empire consistently produced name-labels in ancient Greek.³

This use of ancient Greek for artistic and literary purposes often signaled the use of a language of learning, although one taken through conquest and often enslavement of Greek speaking people, including tutors and artists. We cannot determine whether the choice to use ancient Greek letters in the mosaic lay with the patron in whose house each floor was laid, or with the artists working in community to produce them, or through some more centralized regulation of language. As Sarah Bond has argued, such labels might play something like the role of hashtags in contemporary metadata and social media discourse, as a label that signals to its reader to group this scene with others bearing similar labels.⁴ The use of ancient Greek name labels does indicate an enduring attention to ancient Greek at Antioch.⁵ At the

¹ On synaesthesia see BUTLER, PURVES 2013, 1-7.

² An exception to this relative consistency across the ancient Greek letterforms produced in mosaic at Antioch is the inscription “Philia” on the Hall of Philia mosaics, LEVI 1971.

³ For examples of Greek name-labels in other artistic contexts, see HERNÁNDEZ 2018, 193-202. ANDRADE 2017, 42-66.

⁴ S. BOND, *Facebook Before Facebook*, «Medieval Books», 2014: <https://medievalbooks.nl/2014/11/21/facebook-before-facebook-tagging-in-antiquity/>. On the hashtag as a kind of networked map, see ESA and STAGER 2022, 55-89.

⁵ On Libanius and the continued use of Greek amid increasing dominance of Latin see JONES 1963, 13-14.

same time, most people spoke other languages such as Syriac and Latin, so these labels likely stood out as distinct from everyday speech.¹

Labelling Narcissus with ancient Greek also marks the scene in some contrast to the latinized Ovidean version in such wide circulation by the second century CE. This representation of Narcissus, along with other visual depictions of the story of Narcissus and Echo co-produce their myth, alongside these divergent textual accounts of the story produced in different languages and eventually translated by later scholars. Translation under the Roman Empire, as Shadi Bartsch has argued, included both the movement of goods (statues, paintings, and books) from conquered lands as booty, and the transfer of these texts from ancient Greek to Latin.² Bartsch points to the preoccupation of ancient Roman authors, including Pliny the Elder, Pliny the Younger, Horace, and Juvenal, with the feminization that consuming, absorbing, and transforming the visual and literary arts of conquered Greeks brought about for ancient Romans.³ Translation might seem to channel and control source texts and objects (and their authors, readers, and beholders), but these texts and objects actually also shaped and acted on their new audiences.⁴ At the same time, Nandini Pandey has argued for the role that diverse audiences played in shaping each work's reception and that shaping extended to mosaic receptions.⁵ Mosaic technologies are among those arts which the empire translated in this sense, taking up, responding to, and expanding on an artistic practice from the ancient Near East, Anatolia, and Greece.⁶

In the same way, Ovid deliberately corrals ancient Greek and Roman myths into his *Metamorphoses*, bringing together and modifying these stories into a Latin compendium with an empha-

¹ I'm grateful to Andrea De Giorgi for discussion of languages at Antioch and its surroundings.

² BARTSCH 2016, 30-39.

³ BARTSCH 2016, 33.

⁴ STAGER 2022, Chapter Five.

⁵ PANDEY 2018, 114.

⁶ On the deep history of mosaic technologies, see STAGER forthcoming 2022, Chapter Five.

sis on moments of material and categorical transformation.¹ The reception of the *Metamorphoses* circulated Ovidean versions of these myths both textually and visually for millennia. Indeed, the popularity of Ovid's stories have remained central to artistic production, both as source material for artistic compositions and as texts that various artists illustrated.² In its early modern reception, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* circulated a version of the Narcissus myth with which artists directly engaged, and this later reception history compresses some of the literary and visual friction of the stories of Narcissus and Echo in antiquity.³ One might even understand this Latinization of ancient Greek myths as a kind of metamorphosis enacted by Ovid, but one which, as his stories of transformation make clear, operates outside of neat categories of authorial control.

In producing his compendium of ancient myths, Ovid might well have read an earlier *Metamorphoses* written in ancient Greek by Parthenius, who was taken prisoner in 72 BCE during the Third Mithradatic War, taken to Rome, and subsequently manumitted.⁴ A fragment of papyrus, P.Oxy. LXIX 4711, from codex of the sixth century CE from the Egyptian site of Oxyrhynchus records stories of Asteria, Adonis, and Narcissus in ancient Greek elegiac couplets⁵ (FIG. 18). The materiality of this text enacts its own transformations through facture. Papyrus, a paper woven from cut, soaked, and pounded reeds, demands plant cultivation, harvesting, and subsequent transformation of its form into a writing surface, now inked with couplets recounting many different meta-

¹ All translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in this essay come from MARTIN 2004; Stephanie McCarter's new English translation will appear in late 2022, with a particular attention to violence towards women.

² See STAGER 2016, 163-175.

³ For recent analysis of Narcissus in the work of Caravaggio, see BERGER 2020, 612-639.

⁴ WILLIAMS 2012; "Parthenius"; Macrobius *Sat.*, 5.17.18.

⁵ POxy: Oxyrhynchus Online: <http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy/> Although the identity of the ancient author of these couplets remains uncertain, among the suggestions is a pre-Ovidean *Metamorphoses* written by Greek poet Parthenius of Nicaea; HUTCHINSON 2006, 71-84.



FIG. 18. P.Oxy 4711. Papyrus fragment including couplets on Narcissus's *Metamorphoses*. Ink on payrus. 6th century CE.

morphoses, including transformations of human bodies into plants. Written down by a scribe living in Egypt in the 6th c. CE, this fragment attests to the wide circulation of this *Metamorphoses* centuries after Parthenius composed it.

This version of the story of Narcissus, which Ovid quite possibly knew, describes Narcissus alone, rather than as part of a complex community as Ovid narrates.¹ The preserved couplets read:

... god-like ...

.....

He had a cruel heart, and hated all of them,
Till he conceived a love for his own form:

¹ HUTCHINSON 2006, 81.

He wailed, seeing his face, delightful as a dream,
 Within a spring; he wept for his beauty.
 Then the boy shed his blood and gave it to the earth
 ... to bear¹

In this fragment, Narcissus falls in love with himself with no help from Echo and subsequently kills himself, giving his blood to the earth. His blood fertilizes the earth “to bear” presumably the Narcissus flower. This version of the myth keeps all narrative action to Narcissus alone. He hates, he loves himself, he wails, he weeps, he sheds his blood and gives it to the earth. This cycle, which gives rise to the Narcissus flower, does not involve any other actors, save the initial objects of his hatred. If the author of these couplets is Parthenius and Ovid did read a version of these *Metamorphoses* before composing his own, he expanded it in new directions, bringing together Echo’s transformation into sound with Narcissus’s transformation into flower.

Although Ovid’s version is the first extant story to introduce Echo alongside Narcissus, G. O. Hutchinson has argued that the ancient Greek name labels recording both “Narkisos” and “Ekhō” on the mosaic from the House of the Buffet Supper suggest an earlier Greek precedent for their intersecting stories.² This may be the case, but it is also possible that mosaic artists working in the 2nd-3rd centuries CE elected to mark Echo with an ancient Greek name label even if she first appeared in Ovid’s Latin text, executing their own translation in the production of the mosaic floor. Written texts, oral histories, and visual representations together built up expansive accounts of the myth of both Narcissus and Echo.

While Parthenius’s earlier *Metamorphoses* records a short version of the Narcissus myth that isolates Narcissus, Ovid recounts Echo and Narcissus’s stories together. Mosaic artists working at Daphne produced a floor for the House of Narcissus and others that focused on the Theban hunter alone, while artists (possibly

¹ P.Oxy: Oxyrhynchus Online, “New Light on the Narcissus Myth: P.Oxy LXIX 4711” <http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy/papyri/4711.html>.

² HUTCHINSON 2006, 81.

the same collective) working on the House of the Buffet Supper produced a mosaic floor that depicted and labelled both Echo and Narcissus together.

In Ovid's version of the myth in Book III of the *Metamorphoses*, he recounts that at the liminal age of sixteen, between adulthood and boyhood, Narcissus encountered the nymph Echo, whom Juno had punished for covering for Zeus in his pursuit of other women. As punishment, Echo could not initiate speech on her own, but could only repeat the last word that another spoke. After Narcissus rebuffed her, she took refuge in caves, grieving herself to death:

unsleeping grief wasted her sad body, reducing her to dried out skin and bones, then voice and bones only; her skeleton turned, they say, into stone. Now, only voice is left of her, on wooded mountainsides, unseen by any, although heard by all; for only the sound that lived in her lives on.¹

Echo transforms from a fully embodied woman to one who cannot initiate speech to one whose body desiccates until her bones become stones and all that remains is her echoing, disembodied voice.² In the Narcissus mosaic from the House of Narcissus, we might understand Echo to manifest in the scene through sound, no longer embodied or visually represented, but echoing on the stones of the mosaic floor itself. In contrast, in the mosaic from the House of the Buffet Supper, Echo stands fully embodied at the left side of the frame, her name-label floating in the very upper left corner of the frame. Behind her rises a rocky hill, perhaps rendering the caves into which she will seek refuge from her unrequited love. She wears a circlet with a pearl at its center and the short garment of a huntress and she carries a stick in her left hand. To the right and the center of the frame Narcissus, naked from the waist up, sits on a rock regarding his own reflection in a small pool

¹ MARTIN 2005, 106.

² On Echo's disembodiment and elegiac women, see SHARROCK 2002, 95; On her transformation from bones to stones and the echoes of a rocky cavern, see LEVEN 2020, 135.

of water that extends to the right. In this scene, Echo remains embodied, while Narcissus already gazes at himself. Mosaic artists represented both of them in their physical forms, caught in the action of unrequited loving that gives rise to their individual deaths and metamorphoses.

The transformation of Echo's bones into stones creates an interesting tension with the cut stones that artists worked to fit together this image of Narcissus, whose rejection precipitated this transformation. While a figural image of Echo appears in this scene, the stones that craft it could be her bones remade. Certainly, her story also echoes throughout a scene in which she is not physically depicted. Pauline LeVen opens her chapter on Echo with a blank space, arguing "[f]or only a blank space, *locus desertus*, is the proper spot to encounter Echo, to reflect on her essence, and experience the play of presence and absence in the visual and aural realms".¹ Building from this idea, we might understand that by the second century CE Echo may be present in any representation of Narcissus, and more broadly in every stone tesserae fitting together a mosaic.

With similar attention to dematerialization, Ovid describes Narcissus's reflection as an "immaterial hope, a shadow that he wrongly takes for substance" and contrasts that immaterial reflection (hope) with the embodied substance of Narcissus himself, who is "transfixed, suspended like a figure carved from marble, he looks down at his own face; stretched out on the ground, stares into his own eyes" (540) Ovid names this reflection "immaterial", and yet the materiality of water and light forges it. His body Ovid describes as having the stillness of a figure carved from marble, arrested by the sight of his own reflection, with starry eyes, good hair, ivory neck, white cheeks, and rosy blush... "that image of an image, without substance..." (561) Narcissus laments the ways in which his reflection echoes his own movements ("you second all my motions") and he sees his reflection echo his movements, just as he had heard Echo repeat his own words back to him. Among

¹ LEVEN 2020, 107.

the various transformations – bones to stone, body to marble – that Ovid tracks is that of echo as sound into echo as sight.

In his analysis of the Narcissus myth, the Greek-speaking 2nd century CE rhetorician Philostrates opens his passage ekphrasizing a painting of Narcissus in the *Imagines* (1.23.1) with “The pool paints Narcissus and the painting represents the whole myth of Narcissus.”¹ The watery surface reflects back and also paints Narcissus, collapsing narrative time and sealing his fate. Mosaic artists seeking to depict elements of this story in stone played with transformation and petrification of narrative language into composite image and the equally possible movement of images in tessellated stones into literature. Although Echo only appears in physical form in a single mosaic floor from Daphne and the known Antioch corpus, she echoes throughout the other mosaics and even reverberates through Pathenius’s couplets, composed before Ovid’s iteration, yet read in its wake. Dematerialized and circulating as disembodied sound, Echo sets in motion Narcissus’s fate and echoes through its depictions. The surface of the pool in the mosaic floor from the House of Narcissus paints Narcissus and in that reflecting gaze represents the whole myth through fitted together stones. Likewise, the artists who crafted an image of Echo in stones for the House of the Buffet Supper anchored her to a body within the space of the floor and house. And yet, she moves across the other floors, circulating nimbly as sound.

NARCISSUS IN BLOOM

The first literary reference to the Narcissus flower appears in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter (early sixth century BCE). Crafted by Gaia as a lure for Demeter’s daughter, the Narcissus bloom attracts Persephone’s gaze and touch, entrapping her:

She picked lush meadow flowers: roses, crocuses, lovely violets, irises, hyacinths – and a narcissus Gaia grew as a lure for the blossoming girl, following Zeus’ bidding, to please Lord of the Dead. Everyone mar-

¹ Philostratus, *Imagines* 1.23.1.

veled at the bewitching sight, immortal gods and mortal folk alike: from its root blossomed a hundred sweetly scented heads, and all wide heaven above, all earth, and the salty swell of the sea laughed. Amazed, she stretched out both hands to pick the charming bloom – and a chasm opened...¹ (translation Diane Rayor, lns. 6-13)

Reaching up from its subterranean bulb, the flower breaches the surface of the earth. With its many blooming heads, the narcissus plant attracts Persephone, but when she reaches for the flower the earth opens up and traps her in the Underworld, setting off a chain of actions and reactions above and below the earth's surface that shape the seasons. The philosopher Theophrastos (4th c. BCE) also mentions the flower in his *Enquiry into Plants* (6.6.9 and 6.8.1). In Ovid's version (8 CE), after Narcissus has died longing for himself,

The water nymphs, his sisters, cut their locks in mourning for him, and the wood nymphs, too, and Echo echoed all their lamentations; but after they'd arranged his funeral, gotten the logs, the bier, the brandished torches, the boy's remains were nowhere to be found; instead, a flower, whose white petals fit closely around a saffron-colored center. (3.650-658)²

Earlier Ovid described Narcissus's body as "[t]ransfixed, suspended like a figure carved from marble" (538). In death, his body has been transformed into the flower that trapped Persephone.

This flower bloomed across the Mediterranean. In a section within his chapter on flowers, right after he mentions the lilies of Antioch, the Roman author Pliny the Elder (*NH.* 21.12.24) describes different types of narcissus flower. Later in the same chapter, (*NH.* 21.12.24) he describes sixteen remedies derived from the narcissus flower, including as a purgative, an anti-inflammatory, a treatment for epilepsy, and as a sleep aid. Strangely, Pliny also distinguishes between the derivation of the flower-name from the ancient Greek word *narkē* (Lat. *narcē*) "numbness" and, in his argument, the unrelated name for the Theban hunter. This

¹ RAYOR 2014, 17.

² MARTIN 2005, 110-111.

brief clause – “its name being derived from the word *narcē*, torpor, and not from the youth in the myth” – seems to have shaped early modern reception of the Narcissus myth and its relationship to the flower, as Susanna Berger has recently analyzed.¹ Writing long after Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Parthenius’s even earlier *Metamorphoses*, and hundreds of years after the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, Pliny introduced a distinction between the flower and the young man that earlier authors had not made and that later authors absorbed. Pliny’s intervention and its seemingly straightforward subsequent absorption are both curious since it is precisely the plant’s associations with sleep that made it an apt name for the Theban hunter. His name surely foreshadows his transformation.

Just as artistic depictions of Narcissus and Echo and especially Narcissus and his reflection proliferate in Greek and Roman antiquity and its receptions, so do artistic depictions of the Narcissus plant. Two fragments of limestone sculptures from Cyprus date to the fifth century BCE seem to represent bouquets of narcissus flowers, a bloom native to the wider Mediterranean, including Cyprus.² (FIGS. 19-20) One bouquet would once have connected to a large statue and the other fragment of a hand holds a bouquet from a smaller sculpture. Both bouquets have indentations to mark pistils with sharper lines to mark the petals angling out from their centers. The pattern of these petals suggest narcissus flowers although no pigments or colors remain extant on their limestone surface. A limestone statue of a bearded man (475-450 BCE) also from Cyprus wears a crown of narcissus flowers and oak leaves. The figure holds votive offerings and the statue itself once stood as an offering in an ancient sanctuary (FIG. 21).³

Produced by artists hundreds of years before Ovid’s recirculation of the myth, these Cypriot sculptures represent in limestone

¹ “et a nacre narcissum dictum non a fabuloso puero” in PLINY THE ELDER, *Natural History*, W. H. S. Jones, trans. (Cambridge, Harvard University, 1961), 252-253. BERGER 2020, 617-619.

² HERMARY, MERTENS 2013, no. 284 and no. 285, pp. 218-219.

³ HERMARY, MERTENS 2013, no. 85, p. 92. A second sculpture from the same catalogue (#86) also appears to wear a crown of narcissus flowers.



FIG. 19. Limestone bouquet of narcissus flowers. 5th century BCE.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 74.51.2781.
The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874-77.



FIG. 20. Limestone bouquet of narcissus flowers. 500-450 BCE.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 74.51.2717.
The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874-76.



FIG. 21. Limestone statue of a bearded man wearing a crown of narcissus flowers and oak leaves and holding offerings. 475-450 BCE.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, 74.51.2461.

The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874-76.

the flower that Narcissus becomes. Representations of the narcissus flower eventually circulates across a global field. At Antioch, for example, artists framed the scene of Narcissus admiring himself from the House of Narcissus with a pattern of buds connected by diamonds. Renditions of the narcissus flower often include attempts to represent the regularity of plant patterns as they appear in nature, the “hundred sweetly scented heads” that trapped Persephone. This attention to nature’s regularity and repetition, as much as each flower’s unique form, invites us to see the non-figural tesserae surrounding the Narcissus scene as not only a geometric pattern that contrasts with the central figural scene, a juxtaposition of figural and non-figural imagery common across the Antioch mosaics, but also a carpet of narcissus flowers. Understood in this way, the blooms that Narcissus will become frame the scene of that becoming. Formed from cut-stone tesserae, these flower-patterns also hold within them echoes of the mountain nymph’s bones. Attending to both the figural and non-figural parts of the Narcissus mosaic allows a more complex analysis of the whole. Too often, those lifting mosaics from the ground in the 1930s selected and cut out the figural imagery from the larger whole, creating a corpus of painting-like figural mosaic fragments that could be hung on museum walls. These extractions and the subsequent dispersal of these many mosaic fragments has inhibited the kind of analysis that the Narcissus mosaic in its greater preservation invites. For this reason, bringing the dispersed mosaic fragments back together remains a vital part of any future analysis of the corpus.¹

In addition to the circulation of representations of the myths of Narcissus and Echo, artists across a vast geotemporal span depict narcissus flowers, including painters of Song Dynasty China, as well as Ottoman and English scribes. For example, artists such as Zhao Mengjian, who worked during the Song Dynasty in

¹ Notably, the 2000 exhibition *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* (KONDOLÉON 2000) sought to bring as many dispersed mosaic parts as possible together in the exhibition space. Due to the significant cost of moving mosaic fragments, a first step for future work should be to digitally reunite these fragments. This is one of the goals of the ongoing *Antioch Recovery Project*.



FIG. 22. Zhao Mengjian, Narcissus. Mid-13th century CE.
 13 1/16 in. × 12 ft. 3 1/4 in. (33.2 × 374 cm). Handscroll; ink on paper.
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art 1973.120.4.
 Ex coll.: C. C. Wang Family, Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973.

China, painted many images of the narcissus flower, called the “water goddess” (*shuixian*) (FIG. 22). The manuscript tradition of the Pseudo-Apuleius *Herbarium* (written in the 4th century CE and copied thereafter), also includes illustrations of the narcissus flower, as in this example labelled in Latin from the twelfth century CE (FIG. 23).¹ An Ottoman manuscript (1717 CE) includes an image of a narcissus (*narjis*) plant alongside two others (aniseed (*nānkhvā*), and wild rose (*nasrīn*) (FIG. 24).² Without suggesting a linear chronological or geographic expansion, this range of representations of the narcissus flower traces the flower’s bloom across a vast geotemporal expanse.

¹ MS Bodl 130 Folio #: fol. 011r.

² Walters fol. 242a. On the narcissus flower in Ottoman architecture see YÜREKLI 2012, in poetry see MCKINNEY 2004, 221.



FIG. 23. Manuscript of pseudo-Apuleius, depicting a narcissus flower.

Late 11th or early 12th century CE. Ink on paper.

Bodleian-Library-MS-Bodl-130_00015_fol-011r

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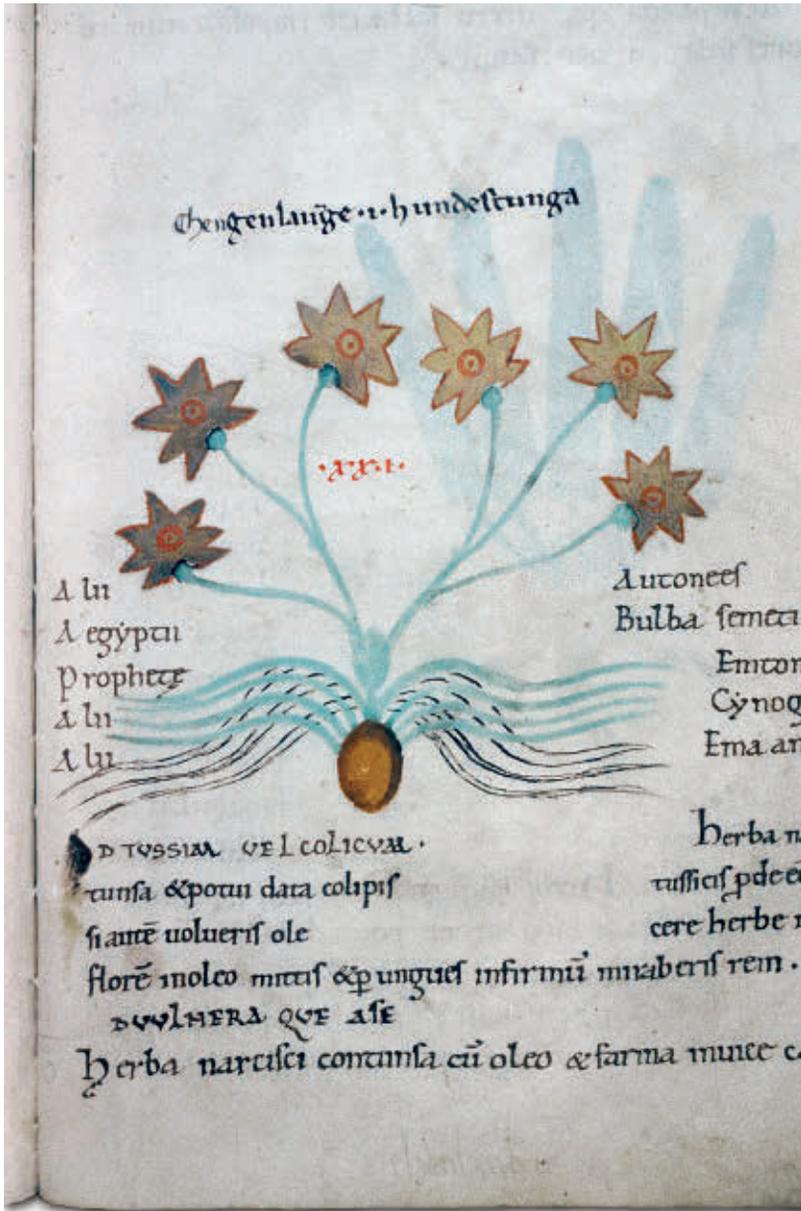


FIG. 24. Zahariya ibn Muhammad Qazwini (author, 12th c. CE) and Muhammad ibn Muhammad Shakir Ruzmah-'I Nathani (scribe 18th century CE), *Three Plants: Narcissus (Narjis), Aniseed (Nankhva), and Wild Rose (Nasrin)*, 1121 CE (text) 1717 CE (manuscript).
 H: 13 × W: 7 7/8 in. (33 × 20 cm). Ink and pigments on European laid paper.
 Walters Art Museum, W.659.242A.

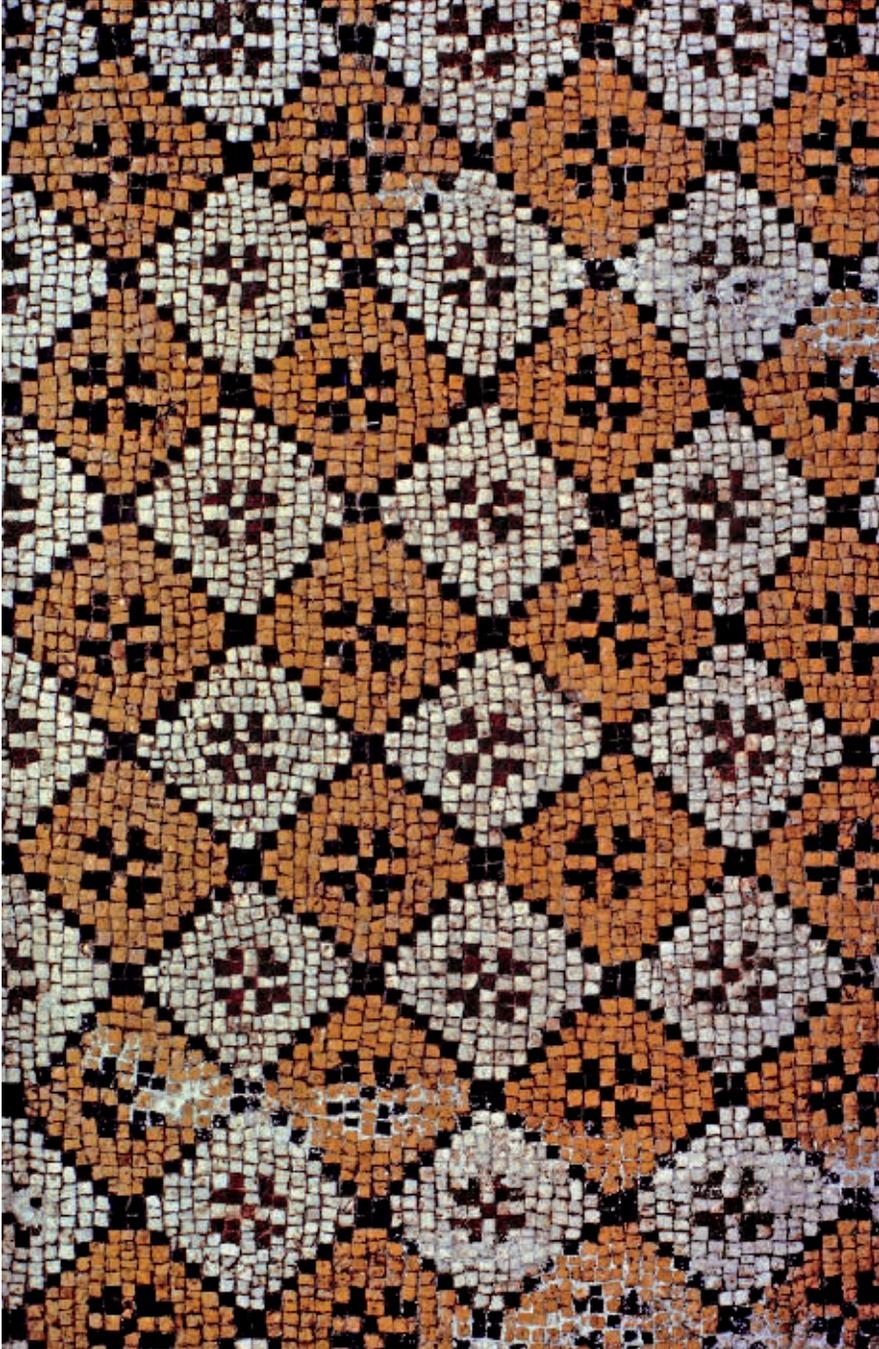


FIG. 25. Detail of non-figural mosaic pattern, Mosaic of Narkisos and Ekhō, House of the Buffet Supper, Daphne. 2nd century CE.

The figural and non-figural imagery of the mosaic of Narcissus from the House of Narcissus work in tandem, fitting together the whole myth with its stones. Narcissus stares at his own reflection while a pattern evoking a carpet of the narcissus flowers into which he will transform frames the scene. The pattern does not depict the flowers in a strictly representational sense so much as present the repeated, regular geometry of the flower. A similar regular geometric pattern set against a tantalizing yellow background, frames the bottom of the mosaic depicting Echo, Eros, and Narcissus from the House of the Buffet Supper. (FIG. 25). In their regularity, these patterns suggest nature's mathematical order to present the outcome of Narcissus's entrapped gaze. The Theban hunter's flesh gives way to flower and lives on. Notably, one of these mosaic pavements (from the House of the Buffet Supper) includes Echo, while the other (from the House of Narcissus) does not. This non-figural framing pictures Narcissus as a flower that germinates, travels, and multiples. In this light, the absence of Echo's embodied form from many depictions of Narcissus pictures her metamorphosis into disembodied voice, an aural presence untethered to the tessellated stones cut from her transformed bones.

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COMPOSTO IN CARATTERE SERRA DANTE DALLA
FABRIZIO SERRA EDITORE, PISA · ROMA.
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Luglio 2022

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