

A Monumental Building in Trench 15

William Aylward

INTRODUCTION

Trench 15 is unique among areas of excavation in the rescue campaign of 2000 for two reasons. It was the only area surveyed by geophysical prospection that was later tested by excavation, and it is one of very few areas where the excavators found monumental, and decidedly nondomestic, architecture (Plates 132–148).¹

DESCRIPTION AND RELATIVE PHASING

Remains of the southern side of a monumental building came to light in the rescue excavations of 2000 and in the survey of the shoreline along the Birecik reservoir in 2001, which I present elsewhere in this volume.² In the rescue campaign, excavators discovered two foundation walls of solid ashlar construction spaced about 5 m apart (Plates 137, 142). The location of the inner wall is indicated only by the rock-cut channel for its lower courses, which have been robbed away. The outer wall is preserved to 17 m long on the south (15020) and 5 m long on the east (15181). The maximum preserved width is 1.10 m. To the west, the wall is founded directly on purposefully leveled bedrock. To the east, the excavators revealed at least six foundation courses at the building's southeast corner. The south and east outer walls were preserved to just over 3 m high, with each course contributing about half a meter to the total height. Rising water prevented investigation below six courses (Plates 137, 143). Of the visible courses, the lowest three were made of ashlar blocks laid almost entirely as headers. Above these, ashlar blocks were arranged in a somewhat haphazard alternation of headers and stretchers. Extensive robbing appears to have been responsible for missing parts of the foundations, and no part of any course above foundation level remains in situ. The best evidence for dating the robbing activity is part of an early Byzantine lamp that may have belonged to a robbing trench on the east side of wall 15181 (Plate 138B).³ Robbing of the monumental building down to the foundations destroyed deposits that might have demonstrated the fate of the building in the Sasanian sack of A.D. 252/253, if it was standing at that time.

The ashlar blocks in surviving parts of wall 15020 form a pattern too regular to have resulted from robbing. The thickness of the wall alternates between about 0.55 and 1.10 m wide (Plate 132). The thicker sections of the wall, each about 1.20 m long and spaced between 1.0 and 1.80 m apart, are composed of pairs of blocks set side by side as headers or stretchers. The thinner sections are aligned with

the wall's outer face and correspond to the thickness of one stretcher (ca. .55 m). A wall composed in this way suggests a foundation for regularly spaced columns, as in a portico or peristyle. Also significant is the placement of one of the thicker sections of wall directly opposite the corner of the inner foundation wall. For a temple, such a configuration in the foundations makes sense if the builders had intended the third columns in the lateral pteron to align with the end of the cella building.

Parts of walls near the building's southwestern corner were discovered in the survey of the shoreline in 2001.⁴ These consist of shallow bedrock cuttings and ashlar blocks on the same alignment and orientation as the walls in Trench 15 (Plates 154, 155A–B, 156A, C). These discoveries reveal the full length of the building's southern side. The outer foundation wall was 36.40 m long and the inner foundation wall was 26.20 m long.⁵ Results of investigations in 2000 and 2001 are the basis for the restored partial plan of the building in Plate 134A.

The full width of the building is unknown, but it cannot have extended too far to the north, especially given the rather steep slope down to the Euphrates River. Cuttings for the inner foundation wall on the west side of the building show how builders manipulated the bedrock to support walls built on sloping terrain (Plate 156A). Accordingly, the entire northern half of the building would have rested on foundations of substantially greater depth, perhaps supported in part by artificial terracing. All of this suggests that the building probably had a rectangular shape and an east-to-west orientation, consistent with a conventional Graeco-Roman temple.

The excavators found a large area of limestone paving on the south side of the monumental building, surviving to at least 9 m across from north to south and at least 10 m across from east to west (Plate 142).⁶ The paving slabs were of rather consistent size, measuring about 1.80 m long, 0.65 m wide, and 0.10 m tall. The level of the pavement corresponds to the highest preserved foundation course for the monumental building, and this suggests contemporary construction. A long narrow section of the paving along the south wall of the monumental building had been robbed away.

The excavators also found the round apertures for two rock-cut cisterns in the southwest corner of the trench (Plates 142, 146A–B).⁷ Each one had been fed by a network of rock-cut channels or terracotta pipelines. The channels for cistern 15264 had been put out of use by the limestone paving on the south side of the building, and this suggests that the rock-cut cistern is earlier than the monumental

development of this area. About 2 m to the north, cistern 15293 lay directly in the path of wall 15020, which had been robbed away down to bedrock. Consequently, it is not possible to know if the cistern predates the wall or postdates the robbing, and it is even possible that use of the cistern belonged to both periods of time. In any case, if the drain on the north side of the cistern (15299) was connected to a pipeline to the east that crosses over the top of wall 15181, this would indicate use of the cistern after the monumental building's outer foundation wall went out of use.

To the east of these cisterns, the bedrock beneath the foundation walls and paving sloped down rather precipitously to the east. Wall 15111, preserved to a length of at least 17 m, oriented north-south, and aligned with the paving and the monumental building, was probably designed as a terrace wall to retain the deep construction fills below the paving and around the building's foundation walls.⁸ The wall was built from rubble construction to a width of 0.85 m, and its preserved height was at least 2.35 m (Plates 139B, 144A). The excavators did not discover its base level. Another terrace wall may have functioned in the same way (15006). It is parallel to 15111 and also made of rubble construction, but it is much wider (2.40 m) and located 25 m to the east. If the two terrace walls belong to the same period, they may have been designed to support a broad terrace on the east side of the monumental building.

A number of other features in Trench 15 clearly belong to later periods of time. For example, at some point the space enclosed by the inner foundation wall was filled in with mortared rubble similar to Roman-style concrete. Piers made of ashlar blocks were set within the mortared rubble packing at regular intervals, and these formed a curve within the limits of the monumental building's inner foundation wall (Plates 132–133, 144B–C).⁹ The change to the building's inner substructure may have also involved a change to the building's orientation. This is at least suggested by the installation of a number of large terrace walls to the east, which were also built of mortared rubble. The largest of these (15005) is 1.75 m thick and over 30 m long. It is on the same orientation as the monumental building, and the excavators uncovered only its eastern extent. The other east-west terrace walls lie parallel to this, further to the north (15115 and 15202).¹⁰ A substantial drainage conduit made of mortared rubble with a waterproof interior lies on a similar orientation to wall 15115, immediately south of it. The channel may have served to drain runoff away from the southeast corner of the monumental building. In no instance did the excavators complete excavation of the vast construction fills found behind these walls. In some place the fills were over 3 m deep, and the excavation notebook indicates concern about unsafe conditions. Context 15095, on the north side of terrace wall 15005, was 3.5 m deep and 15 m broad. In shallower fills to the west, wall 15005 was excavated to bedrock, but without recovery of datable material. Nor did the excavators define the relationships, if any, to the transverse terrace walls in this area

(walls 15111 and 15006). A key piece of datable evidence for this phase of building in Trench 15 was a basalt stele of the Commagenian ruler cult, found in construction fill on the south side of wall 15005. The original location of the stele is not known, and a link to the monumental building cannot be ruled out.

A subsequent phase of development appears to belong to the period following the dismantling of the monumental building (Plates 147–148). This includes the northeastern corner of what may have been a house or industrial building (walls 15178 and 15521). The walls are made of mortar bonded with earth, including reused limestone architectural parts from other buildings, and their base level corresponds with the highest preserved course of the monumental building.¹¹ A drain (15027) made from a combination of a terracotta pipeline and a rock-cut channel, and sharing the same alignment as these walls, was built over the top of the remains of wall 15181. The drain may have linked up to the section of terracotta pipe found on the north side of cistern 15293. Between these points the conduit is obscured by a small remnant of limestone paving, perhaps for the interior of the building defined by walls 15178 and 15221. In addition, a mosaic pavement (M27) made of white tesserae was installed on the bedrock terrace between this cistern and cistern 15264. The mosaic pavement corresponds with an area of robbed limestone paving slabs, and the tesserae abut the edges of slabs that remain in situ. Although an earlier date is possible for each cistern, the arrangement of the mosaic around the cisterns suggests possible use at this stage of development.

This building may have also included a room paved with floor tiles (15357) discovered on the south side of the trench, where a large area of limestone slabs from pavement 15025 appears to have been robbed away.¹² The floor tiles measure .42 m x .26 m in size, and each is inscribed by an X motif rendered with fingertips. Foundations for walls are preserved only at the west and south (walls 15019 and 15354), but the tiles appear to define the full extent of the room, which had interior dimensions of 4.5 × 6 m. On the north side of the room, floor tiles had been installed up against the south side of the monumental building. Wall 15019 was founded directly on top of the eastern edge of the surviving limestone paving (15025) and it incorporated a large limestone Doric cornice block (A81).¹³ The tiled floor is unlike floors found in the houses of Zeugma, and it may have therefore served some industrial function. Worthy of note are two sections of terracotta pipe embedded into a mortared-rubble foundation (15018), on the south side of the room. A deposit of white plaster and rubble near the middle of the room may belong to parts of the room's collapsed walls or ceiling.

The relative phasing for Trench 15 is clear. Rock-cut cisterns may be vestiges of the earliest activity. Construction of the monumental building and adjacent terraces put at least one of these cisterns out of use. The monumental building was later modified by the insertion of mortared-

rubble packing in the interior foundation and by the addition of new terrace walls that suggest a reorientation of the building and a possible change of function. The entire area was subjected to intensive stone robbing that involved the removal of some walls down to bedrock. After the robbing episode, the south side of the monumental building was covered over by a sizable building that used limestone spolia in its rubble walls and areas paved with mosaic tesserae and terracotta tiles.

ABSOLUTE DATING

There are several clues in the archaeological record to assist pinning these relative phases on absolute dates. The highest preserved fills into which the foundation trenches for the monumental building's foundations were cut included Hellenistic fine ware and Eastern Sigillata A as the latest datable material, and this suggests that construction need not date later than the third quarter of the second century B.C.¹⁴ A somewhat later date is also conceivable because ESA continues to appear throughout the first century B.C. in the eastern Mediterranean. For the Euphrates frontier, a number of transformative events at 64 B.C. could have sparked building programs at Zeugma. For example, the city was brought into the kingdom of Commagene, Commagene was allied with Rome, and Pompey annexed Syria for Rome.¹⁵ Not long after construction, the monumental building underwent drastic revision. The discovery of a basalt relief of the Commagenian ruler cult in a secondary context belonging to these revisions provides a potential connection between the archaeology of Trench 15 and the historical context of Rome and the kingdom of Commagene after 64 B.C.

The revisions involve the transformation of the building's interior with new mortared-rubble foundations, and the addition of a new, larger terracing system, this time oriented east-west (walls 15005, 15115, 15202). The new orientation for the terrace walls suggests a reorientation of the building, and a change in function is perhaps signaled by the new configuration for the building's mortared-rubble foundations, which encased a curved foundation of piers made of ashlar blocks. No part of the solid mortared-rubble packing in the building's interior was excavated, and the only evidence for placing this phase in time derives from the Tiberian date for the latest datable ceramics found in the substantial construction fills around the new terrace walls.¹⁶ The occurrence of mortared rubble in the East is normally taken to signal Roman connections.¹⁷ Thus the beginning of Roman influence on the Euphrates provides a date after which the addition of the mortared rubble packing within the interior wall of the monumental building is possible. Prior to the middle of the first century B.C. mortared rubble in the East is known chiefly from the west coast of Asia Minor, at sites like Pergamon and Sardis.¹⁸ Later examples in the East are most frequently found be-

hind facing of *opus reticulatum*. There are fewer than 20 examples of *opus reticulatum* known in the eastern provinces, and the majority of these are datable to the Julio-Claudian period, including Herod's Winter Palace at Jericho, the reticulate baths at Elaeusa Sebaste in Cilicia, and the harbor works at Alexandria Troas.¹⁹ A Flavian-era example is known closer to Zeugma in the Urfa Gate of the city walls of the Commagenian capital at Samosata.²⁰ A Tiberian date for the transformation of the monumental building with construction in mortared rubble is consistent with comparanda for mortared rubble in the East.

In retaining fill on the south side of wall 15005, excavators found a basalt stele with a *dexiosis* scene in relief on one side and a palimpsest with two inscriptions of the Commagenian ruler cult on the other (Plate 145).²¹ The stele and its find context shed light on the two principal phases of the monumental building's construction history outlined above. The first inscription on the stele belongs early in the reign of Antiochus I of Commagene, ca. 64 B.C., and mentions the king's dedication of a ruler-cult temenos for worship of the king alongside Zeus Oromasdes, Apollo Mithras Helios Hermes, and Artagnes Herakles Ares (IN1). Later in time the opposite side of the stele was carved with a *dexiosis* scene depicting Antiochus I of Commagene and a god with the iconography of Apollo and Helios. It is conceivable that the monumental building and its terraces were part of the temenos mentioned in the inscription. The inscription also mentions a stone-relief portrait of the king and separate relief portraits of the gods. The discovery of an inscribed stele with a depiction of Antiochus I and Herakles along the shoreline of the Birecik reservoir near Trench 15 in 2004/2005 adds further support for a connection between the kingdom of Commagene and the monumental building.²² Prior to its deposition in the construction fill behind terrace wall 15005, the inscription was erased and a new inscription added in its place (IN2). The content of the new text, which mentions the *dexiosis* scene, indicates a date after Antony's siege of Samosata in 38 B.C. but before the death of Antiochus in 36 B.C.²³ The context for deposition in Trench 15 suggests that the stele was removed from its primary context at some point between the death of Antiochus and the Tiberian period. This is consistent with the demise of the Commagenian ruler cult at Zeugma, which probably coincided with the annexation of Commagene as a praetorian province by Germanicus in A.D. 17.

APPEARANCE AND FUNCTION

The excavators discovered several limestone architectural parts that may have belonged to the superstructure of the monumental building (A69–A92). None was found in situ, and most belong to secondary or surface contexts. Among these are column bases, parts of column drums with cannellated fluting, fragments of Ionic and Corinthian capitals, Doric cornices, and a console bracket for a monumen-

tal doorway.²⁴ All of these are consistent with decoration anticipated for a monumental building, but specific connections between these finds and the building are undermined by uninformative archaeological contexts, phases of construction that may have involved a change in the architectural style, and extensive stone robbing.

The function of the monumental building is as obscure as its original ground plan and appearance. At first glance its foundation walls conform to expectations for a temple, with an inner wall for a cella and a parallel outer wall for a peristyle (Plates 134A, 154). In terms of size, a good parallel for the building is the Corinthian temple of Zeus Olbios at Uzuncaburç, in the southern Taurus Mountains, built by Antiochos IV in the second century B.C.²⁵ This building rests on a stylobate approximately 40 m long and 22 m wide, with a peristyle arranged 6 by 12. With these dimensions as a guide, a width for Zeugma's building proportionate to its established length of 36.40 m would amount to about 22 m. A building this size could have easily accommodated a 6-by-12 peristyle in the manner of the temple at Uzuncaburç. The plan and magnitude of the building in Trench 15 suggest a temple, but specific proof of function is lacking from the archaeological record. Nor is a peripteral temple expected for a Commagenian cult place. A case in point is the palace of the Commagenian dynast Mithradates I Kallinikos at Arsameia, about 20 km east of Nemrud Dagh in the Anti-Taurus Mountains. This was a monumental building on a visible promontory in close proximity to rock-cut cisterns and paved terraces, similar to the topographical situation of Trench 15, but the cult place had the form of a hierothesion, not a conventional Graeco-Roman peripteral temple.²⁶

The evidence for a connection between the end of Commagenian control of Zeugma and the transformation of the monumental building with new components in mortared rubble suggests a new function for the building that may have appealed to Roman interests. The specific function is uncertain. A building of narrower proportions, such as a stoa, cannot be ruled out. The broad paved areas to the south allow for this possibility, as does the evidence from wall 15020 for a south-facing portico, but the curved foundation wall built into the mortared-rubble packing inside the foundations is inconsistent with expectations for a stoa or portico.²⁷ The curved foundation wall may have been designed to support a north-facing seating area, as for an odeion or bouleuterion, but without evidence for other features of such distinct building types, these identifications are suspect.

NOTES

1. See discussion of the geophysical survey by Van Den Hoek and Aylward in this volume. See the chapter by Tobin in this volume for a possible stoa in Trench 4. A paved street and adjacent building with walls of solid ashlar construction were found immediately to the south of Trench 15 in Trench 3, which was managed by the Gaziantep Museum in the rescue campaign of 2000. This is also the so-called archive building, where tens of thousands of clay sealings were also found in 2000; cf. Önal 2000, 30–4; Başgelen and Ergeç 2000, 39.
2. The following conclusions about the date and function of the remains in Trench 15 differ from those published by Early (2003, 11–5), where the scale and north arrow on figure 3 are incorrect.
3. L197, which must be intrusive in context 15232 or else a part of the adjacent robbing trench. A robbing trench at the northern limit of wall 15181 (Plate 137B) contained part of a late-Hellenistic lamp (L4) and part of a Dura-Europos lamp (L103), both from context 15237.
4. See my discussion in this volume's chapter on the shoreline survey.
5. Early (2003, 13 and fig. 3) gives dimensions of just under 37 m (outer wall) and about 25 m (inner wall).
6. Paving 15025.
7. Time did not allowed for the excavation of either cistern.
8. Cf. Early 2003, 11. The excavators assigned separate numbers to the three visible sections of this wall: 15111, 15209, 15203.
9. Wall 15287 built inside mortared rubble 15286. Early (2003, 14–5, figs. 3, 5) gives 30 m as the likely maximum diameter for the ring of piers. But the wall was confined to the interior of the monumental building's inner foundation wall, so the maximum diameter of this round foundation could not have exceeded 23 m. Early also restored at least two concentric rings of piers, but the evidence for the proposed inner rings is limited to a single block. The excavators recorded the presence of drafted margins on these blocks. For bold drafted-margin masonry on the third-century B.C. fortifications at Jebel Khalid on the Euphrates, see Clarke et al. 2002, 3, fig. 2, pl. 3.1, 18.1.
10. The excavators also assigned wall 15356 to this group of terrace walls based on its orientation, but its location at the limit of excavation inhibits full assessment.
11. Among the spolia the excavators note column bases and drums.
12. The excavators note that sections of limestone paving discovered by the Gaziantep Museum in Trench 3 in 2000 had also been paved over by terracotta tiles.
13. Wall 15019: 3.11 m long, 0.64m wide, 0.79 m tall, three courses high, including limestone spolia. The excavators called wall 15354 a "platform," but its location at the limit of excavation hinders full description.
14. Context 15275 (no other finds belong to this context). Hellenistic fine ware was also discovered in fill on the west side of wall 15111 (context 15103), but with intrusive finds: a late-antique lamp (L166) and a late fourth- or fifth-century coin (C217). The excavators also assigned wall 15255 to Hellenistic times, but without specific evidence for dating. The wall, preserved to only a few courses tall, was found on the east side of wall 15111, near foundation level, and on a slightly different orientation.
15. Strabo 16.2.3; Appian *Mith.* 114.559; cf. Seager 2002, 61; Southern 2002, 77.
16. Contexts 15009 and 15095: 15009 is on the south side of wall 15005; 15095 is north of this terrace wall, but probably retained by another wall further north and therefore related to the construction fill for the new terracing. See the chapter by Kenrick in volume 2 for Ceramic Group B (Late Augustan/Tiberian).
17. Waelkens 1989, 77–88; 1987, 94–5, 97. Walls in Chantier 5 dated

- by ceramic finds to the first century B.C. were also built from Roman-style mortared rubble (Abadie-Reynal et al. 1998, 387–8).
18. Pergamon: Conze 1913, 154, 243–5; Boehringer and Krauss 1937, 50–1, 76, pls. 6b, 24c, 33a–e, 42a, 72. Sardis: Hanfmann 1983, 59, 118, 124, 170, 207, 263 n. 50. Hanfmann and Waldbaum 1975, 79.
 19. Jericho: Netzer 1975, 93, and pl. 8.A. Elaeusa Sebaste: Keil and Wilhelm 1931, 222, and fig. 178. In general: Adam 1994, 129–34; Dodge 1990, 109–12, fig. 7.6; 1984, 10, and fig. 2; Deichmann 1979, 474–6; Vann 1976, 138, 170; Blake 1947, 227, 253–75. The example from Alexandria Troas is unpublished; for the harbors there, see Ricl 1997, 225–6.
 20. Zoroglu (2000, 76, figs. 102, 103).
 21. Context 15009 (the stele is only assigned to context 15009 in summative excavation documentation, not in the excavation notebook). See the chapters in this volume by Crowther and Rose; cf. Crowther 2003, 57–67; Crowther and Facella 2003.
 22. The stele is on display in the garden of the Gaziantep Museum. Like the stele found in 2000, the reverse of this stele also bears an inscription carved over an erased text.
 23. See discussion in the chapter by Crowther in this volume.
 24. Doric and Ionic orders were used for parts of the Governor's Palace at Jebel Khalid on the Euphrates, dated to the third and second centuries B.C.; Clarke et al. 2002, 25–31, 42, pl. 11–3 (Doric), and 35–5, fig. 12, pl. 16 (Ionic).
 25. Lawrence 1996, 160; Williams 1974, 405–14.
 26. Hoepfner 2000, 57–73. For the absence of a true Greek-style peripteral temple in Hellenistic and Parthian Mesopotamia, see Downey 1988, 139, 141, 151–2, 161, 177–80.
 27. Geophysical survey in 2000 produced signs of an organized street grid across the plateau to the south of Trench 15, and the excavators speculated about the function of this area as the city's agora. See discussion of Trench 15 in the chapter by Van Den Hoek and Aylward in this volume.

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