

Terracotta Figurines

Jeffrey Gingras and William Aylward

DISCUSSION

The terracotta objects discussed in this chapter were found in Trenches 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18 and 19 during the rescue excavations at Zeugma in 2000.¹ Trenches 2 and 18 had the greatest concentrations of terracotta objects, with six and five items, respectively. Only one archaeological context had more than a single terracotta represented. This was context 9301, which yielded part of a draped figurine (TC7) and a fragment with vegetal ornament (TC20).

In addition to these two artifacts, five other terracottas belong to contexts dated to the Sasanian sack of A.D. 252 / 253 (TC1, TC2, TC4, TC13, TC16).² Among these are part of a half-draped Aphrodite statuette (TC1) from context 18108, a fragment of a draped figurine (TC2) from context 18083, a Papposilenus figurine (TC4) from context 2158, and a fragment of a miniature theatrical mask (TC16) from context 9073. Other terracotta figurines datable by their contexts are TC18 (late Augustan or Tiberian) and TC9 (seventh century A.D.).³ The latter is probably residual. Thus, the terracottas from the dated contexts suggest the Roman period up to the sack of A.D. 252 / 253 as the principal phase of use of terracotta figurines at Zeugma. None of the terracottas need be Hellenistic.

Over half the terracottas are fragments of anthropomorphic figurines (TC1–TC14, TC17, TC19). Five are whole or partial female heads (TC10–TC14), and two are fragments of miniature theatrical masks (TC15, TC16). A bird, probably a dove, is the only example of an animal (TC18). Architectural ornament may have been the function of TC20. The two fragments of theatrical masks (TC15, TC16) and the Papposilenos figurine (TC4) are welcome evidence in support of a theater, a building that is suspected but not yet proven for Zeugma by archaeological excavation.⁴

The Zeugma terracottas are worthy of comparison with terracottas from Dura-Europos, more for their differences than for their similarities.⁵ Plaques are well represented at Dura-Europos, but are absent at Zeugma. Theatrical masks of the type found at Zeugma were not found at Dura-Europos. The predominant animal among the terracottas at Dura-Europos is the horse, which does not appear in the Zeugma corpus. Most terracottas at Dura-Europos were handmade, but mold-made figurines at Zeugma are in the majority.⁶ Reasons for these rather stark differences undoubtedly lie in the Parthian culture of Dura-Europos and the dominant Roman influence at Zeugma. Still, it seems that neither site had a particular proclivity for terracotta figurines.⁷ It would be rash to conjure up the absence of

local clay sources to explain the cause of such disinterest at Zeugma, especially since the ceramics at Zeugma attest to the mining of local clay.⁸ Local stone may have been the preferred medium for sculpture at Dura-Europos, but at Zeugma stone sculpture has not been found in amounts sufficient to support a similar conclusion. Most of the figurines at Zeugma are mold-made, and the mass production implied by these finds suggests that more terracottas are probably to be found elsewhere at the site. Indeed, the dearth of terracottas found in the rescue excavations of 2000 reflects the focus of excavation in a residential district of the city. Terracotta figurines are by no means foreign to private domestic contexts, but, in their primary function as votives, they are likely to be present in greater numbers at sanctuaries. Yet excavations in the sanctuary identified in Trench 15 at Zeugma yielded only three terracottas, and these add little to the epigraphic and sculptural evidence for the ruler cult of the Commagenian kings found there. Among these figurines, only the bird belongs to a context securely dated to the lifetime, albeit the very end, of the Commagenian ruler-cult sanctuary.⁹ The other two terracottas from Trench 15 (TC6, TC19) may be intrusive.

More evocative for religion at Zeugma are the five fragments that preserve female heads. Regrettably, these are all rather worn, and without clues for specific attribution. Regional goddesses of great popularity—Dea Syria, Tyche, Cybele, Atargatis—seem to be ruled out by the absence of their distinctive headgear.¹⁰ Only the dove, like the one preserved in TC18, is an occasional component of their iconography.¹¹ For the female heads, Aphrodite seems a possibility, particularly because of the Aphrodite Anadyomene terracotta figurine from Trench 18 (TC1). She must have been of some importance at Zeugma if one considers that the excavators found three other representations of her in the rescue excavations of 2000: two in bronze (BR153, BR154) and one in animal bone (B29).¹² TC14 may represent Hermes, but only on the basis of the striking comparison of the youthful facial features and star-shaped wreath to a well-preserved Hermes from Tomb 24 at Dura-Europos, where he appears as psychopompos with caduceus. TC14 was a surface find from near the heart of the city, and so an original funerary context is unlikely. If the figurine does depict Hermes, then he perhaps appeared as patron of the marketplace at Zeugma.

CATALOGUE

All dimensions are in cm; the following abbreviations are used:

- M.P.H. = maximum preserved height
- M.P.W. = maximum preserved width



Figure 1. TC1.

TC1 (SF 3455, context 18108)
Fragment of draped figurine
 M.P.H. 8.7 cm; M.P.W. 4.6 cm; wall thickness .4–1 cm FIG. 1

Three fragments that join. Preserves torso, arms, and legs above the knees. Head, lower legs, and part of back missing. S-shaped pose with left hand obscuring pudenda. Drapery tied in a knot just below the hips. Nipples and naval rendered by small dimples. Fingers articulated on hands. Fingerprints visible on interior. The pose and drapery are consistent with statuettes of half-draped Aphrodite. For the type in other media at Zeugma, see BRI153–154, B29.

Similar: Lang-Auinger 2003, TK1; Downey 1977, 158–9, nos. 11–14; Delivorrias et al. 1984, no. 689; Burn and Higgins 2001, nos. 2305, 2306; Muller 1996, 878; Grandjouan 1961, nos. 3, 6, 20; Rostovtzeff 1944–, pl. XVII fig. 2; Mollard-Besques 1963, nos. a-LY 1546, b-MYRINA 1033, c-LY 1588, d-B° 127, e-B° 80, f-MYRINA 965, a-MYR 19, a-LY 1553, b-MYRINA 1026, c-B° 95, d-MYR 20, e-M 10, f-B° 53, e-MYRINA 961, d-MYRINA 24.



Figure 2. TC2.

TC2 (SF 3384, context 18083)
Fragment of draped figurine
 M.P.H. 3.7 cm; M.P.W. 3.65 cm;
 wall thickness .2-.7 cm

FIG. 2

Fragment of draped figurine with belt and traces of head-gear (Phrygian cap?) preserved on shoulders. Well-preserved details. Mold-made. Fingerprints visible on interior. Pose and accoutrements are somewhat similar to figurines of Attis.

Similar: Burn and Higgins 2001, no. 2183.



Figure 3. TC3.

TC3 (SF 2150, context 2038)
Head and upper torso of draped figurine
 M.P.H. 8.9 cm; M.P.W. 7 cm; wall thickness .8 cm

FIG. 3

Two fragments that join. Preserves head, part of upper body, and one arm. Trace of drapery preserved at neck. Object held in arm is not identifiable. Very worn. Preserves

only traces of mouth, nose, eyes, and hairline. Mold-made. Preserves trace of seam for connection between front and back. Fingerprints visible on interior and exterior. Parallel: Higgins 1954, nos. 121–4, 288, 290, 336, 337, 655, 657–9, 811, 940, 1208; Török 1995, no. 114.



Figure 4. TC4.

TC4 (SF 2227, context 2158)

Fragment of draped figurine

M.P.H. 10 cm; M.P.W. 4.4 cm; wall thickness 3.5 cm FIG. 4

Papposilenus figurine. Preserves torso, legs, and part of both arms; broken at neck and feet. Left arm holds a cane and a sack, or perhaps a tambourine. Proper right arm was raised at least to shoulder height. Chest covered by long beard.

Parallel: Burn and Higgins 2001, nos. 2257, 2379, 2656, 2658, 2787, 2788; Davidson and Thompson 1943, no. 68; Grandjouan 1961, nos. 505, 507; Merker 2000, no. I42; Mollard-Besques 1963, no. c-MYR 670; Muller 1996, no. 1091; Robinson 1952, nos. 380 A–C; Vafopoulou-Richardson 1991, nos. 42, 43.



Figure 5. TC5.

TC5 (SF 4126, context 7002)

Fragment of draped reclining figurine

M.P.H. 3.4 cm; M.P.W. 5.3 cm; wall thickness .4 cm

FIG. 5

Preserves draped right arm and shoulder of a reclining figurine, perhaps a banqueter. Arm draped by a himation; hand holds a decorated two-handled cup, probably a kantharos. Fingerprints preserved on back.

Similar: Grandjouan 1961, no. 2371; Fjeldhagen 1995, no. 95.



Figure 6. TC6.

TC6 (SF 4319, context 15103)

Fragment of draped figurine

M.P.H. 6.45 cm; M.P.W. 4.35 cm;
wall thickness .4-.9 cm

FIG. 6

Preserves front and small part of back (left) of draped figurine on a base. Drapery (himation?) obscures the feet. Mold-made. Fingerprints visible on interior.

Similar: Thompson 1963, nos. 94, 152.



Figure 7. TC7.

TC7 (SF 3081, context 9301)
Fragment of draped figurine
 M.P.H. 4.85 cm; M.P.W. 4.2 cm;
 wall thickness .2-.5 cm

FIG. 7

Preserves lower part of draped figurine on a base. Feet protrude from below the drapery. Back is slightly convex and without detail. Mold-made.

TC8 (SF 4317, context 19006)
Fragment of draped figurine
 M.P.H. 4.25 cm; M.P.W. 3.6 cm; wall thickness .7 cm

Fragment of drapery, perhaps part of a kolpos. Very worn.
 Similar: Merker 2000, nos. C24; Muller 1996, no. 31.



Figure 8. TC9.

TC9 (SF 4321, context 12011)
Fragment of draped figurine
 M.P.H. 4.5 cm; M.P.W. 4.9 cm;
 wall thickness .1-.2 cm

FIG. 8

Preserves part of drapery, perhaps from the upper torso.
 Mold-made.
 Similar: Thompson 1963, no. 4; Muller 1996, no. 1.



Figure 9. TC10. Photo (left) and drawing (right).

TC10 (SF 921, context 18014)**Head of female figurine**

M.P.H. 6 cm; M.P.W. 4.5 cm; wall thickness .4 cm FIG. 9

Preserves head of female figurine with possible Knidian coiffure. Broken at neck; very worn. Over-sized eyes and mouth, robust cheeks. Venus rings on neck. Earlobes (or earrings?) rendered by small protuberances. Hair falls to shoulders and is articulated by small indentations. Mold-made.

Similar: Bonanno 1979, no. 18; Burn and Higgins 2001, no. 2253; Fjeldhagen 1995, no. 143.



Figure 10. TC12.

TC11 (SF 504, context 7003)**Head with petasos**M.P.H. 5.35 cm; M.P.W. 3.4 cm;
 wall thickness .15-.5 cm

FIG. 10

Preserves head of figurine with petasos, broken at neck.
 Mold-made. Preserves trace of seam for connection between front and back. Fingerprints visible on interior.
 Similar: Török 1995, nos. 216, 217; Lang-Auinger 2003, TK65.



Figure 11. TC12.

TC12 (SF 876, context 18110)

Head of female figurineM.P.H. 3.35 cm; M.P.W. 3.15 cm;
wall thickness .2 cm

FIG. 11

Preserves front half of head with vestiges of red paint; hair crowned by a stephane. Broken at neck. Preserves fingerprints on back. Similar in fabric, scale, and workmanship to TC1.

Parallel: Mollard-Besques 1963, nos. f-MYRINA 979, c-B° 165, e-IHA 6; Grandjouan 1961, nos. 372, 337, 353; Thompson 1963, nos. 253–71; Török 1995, nos. 216, 217; Higgins 1954, no. 123; Downey 2003, no. 51.



Figure 13. TC14.

TC14 (SF 3412, context 19000)

Fragment of head of figurineM.P.H. 4.85 cm; M.P.W. 4.2 cm;
wall thickness .5–1 cm

FIG. 13

Preserves proper right side of head. Broken at back. Somewhat abstract facial features. The head is framed by a star-shaped wreath, with rays perhaps meant to depict broad triangular leaves. Wreath has incised lines and impressed dots. Mold-made.

Similar: Fjeldhagen 1995, no. 127; Downey 2003, no. 57.



Figure 12. TC13.

TC13 (SF 2131, context 2014)

Head of female figurine

M.P.H. 5.6 cm; M.P.W. 4.6 cm; wall thickness .2 cm

FIG. 12

Head of a female figurine, broken at neck. Very worn. Mold-made. Preserves trace of seam for connection between front and back.



Figure 14. TC15.

TC15 (SF 1015, context 1056)

Fragment of miniature theatrical mask

M.P.H. 5.5 cm; M.P.W. 4.7 cm; wall thickness .4 cm

FIG. 14

Preserves nose and mouth; broken on all sides. Stylized mouth and wide nostrils. Spalling below mouth.

Parallel: Mollard-Besques 1963, nos. a-MYR 347, b-MYR 349; Török 1995, no. 232; Grandjouan 1961, no. 528.



Figure 15. TC16.

TC16 (SF 134, context 9073)

Fragment of miniature maskM.P.H. 10.5 cm; M.P.W. 7.5 cm;
wall thickness .4-.8 cm

FIG. 15

Two fragments that join. Preserves parts of forehead, nose, and chin with a trace of what may be a beard. Two protrusions from the forehead are consistent with representations of Pan and Silenus. Pierced in middle of forehead. Burnt interior. Mold-made. Small fragment of iron attached to nose, probably postdepositional.

Similar: Burn and Higgins 2001, nos. 2267, 2462, 2833; Davidson and Thompson 1943, no. 78; Török 1995, nos. 234, 235, 237; Thompson 1963, no. 132.



Figure 16. TC17.

TC17 (SF 919, context 18015)

Fragment of anthropomorphic leg

M.P.H. 4 cm; M.P.W. 3 cm; wall thickness 1.6 cm FIG. 16

Preserves foot and part of calf. Worn; break difficult to distinguish.

Similar: Burn and Higgins 2001, nos. 2451, 2820, 2821; Thompson 1963, no. 141; Török 1995, no. 321.



Figure 17. TC18.

TC18 (SF 591, context 15009)

Bird

M.P.H. 4 cm; M.P.W. 7.5 cm; thickness .9 cm

FIG. 17

Bird with folded wings, perhaps a dove, with details for wing, beak, and eye; broken at end of tail. Mold-made, solid construction. Bird figurines similar to this one in construction, but resembling a rooster in appearance, were discovered in Trenches 3 and 8.

Similar: Higgins 1954, nos. 183, 275, 569, 692; Burn and Higgins 2001, 2409, 2410, 2856; Grandjouan 1961, no. 846; Davidson and Thompson 1943, no. 95.



Figure 18. TC19.

TC19 (SF 599, context 15002)
Fragment of an anthropomorphic head
 M.P.H. 6 cm; M.P.W. 3.6 cm

FIG. 18

Fragment of anthropomorphic head. Hand-made. Very worn.
 Similar: Downey 2003, no. 78.

TC21 (SF 633, context 7139)
Unidentifiable
 mpl 6 cm; M.P.H. 5 cm

Fragment of a terracotta object — either the lower edge of a draped figurine or part of a stand for a figurine.

TC22 (SF 4127, context 2000)
Unidentifiable
 mpl 8 cm; M.P.H. 9 cm

Fragment of a terracotta object. Perhaps a stand for a figurine.

TC23 (SF 2210, context 2043)
Unidentifiable
 Dimensions not recorded

Fragment of a terracotta object. Perhaps a stand for a figurine.

TC24 (SF 2373, context 2081)
Unidentifiable
 M.P.H. 8.9 cm; M.P.W. 7 cm; wall thickness .8 cm

Fragment of a terracotta object. One side smooth with no detail; opposite side has two bumps. Very worn. Mold-made. Preserves trace of seam for connection between front and back.



Figure 19. TC20.

TC20 (SF 841, context 9301)
Fragment of vegetal ornament
 M.P.H. 7.4 cm; M.P.W. 6.7 cm

FIG. 19

Fragment of terracotta with vegetal ornament, perhaps architectural. Preserves one "leaf" with break at base of stem. Mold-made, solid construction.

NOTES

1. Many thanks are due to Sarah Bauer, who examined the terracottas firsthand with William Aylward in 2002, and who compiled descriptive information for each specimen. Terracotta objects were also found in Trenches 3 and 8, managed by the Gaziantep Museum. The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of The Packard Humanities Institute and the Hilldale Undergraduate/Faculty Research Fellowship Committee at the University of Wisconsin.
2. See “Context Descriptions” in volume 1 and the chapter by Kenrick, this volume, for Ceramic Group D. For two terracottas from Zeugma dated to the early empire, see Gschwind 2003, 326–7, cat. 2–3.
3. TC18: context 15009 in Kenrick’s Ceramic Group B. TC9: context 12011 in Kenrick’s Ceramic Group F.
4. See further discussion in the section on public buildings in the chapter by Aylward, volume 1.
5. For the Dura-Europos terracottas, see Downey 2003, esp. 8–21.
6. For handmade figurines at Dura-Europos, see Downey 2003, 9.
7. At Dura-Europos, local stone was the primary medium for sculpture: Perkins 1973, 70.
8. See the chapter on pottery by Kenrick, this volume, especially the section on fabrics.
9. For the dating of the sanctuary, see the chapters by Crowther, Rose, and Aylward in volume 1.
10. For the iconography of Atargatis, see Bilde 1990, 168.
11. As in Bilde 1990, fig. 7 (from Jordan).
12. See further discussion in the section on religion in the chapter by Aylward in volume 1.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bilde, P. 1990. “Atargatis / Dea Syria: Hellenization of Her Cult in the Hellenistic-Roman Period?” in *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, edited by P. Bilde, 151–87. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- Bonanno, A. 1979. “Terracottas.” In *Excavations at Sidi Khreish Benghazi (Bereneice)*. Vol. 2, edited by J.A. Lloyd, 65–90. Tripoli: Department of Antiquities.
- Burn, L., and R. Higgins. 2001. *Catalogue of Greek Terracottas in the British Museum*. Vol. 3. London: British Museum.
- Davidson, G.R., and D.B. Thompson. 1943. *Small Objects from the Pnyx*. Vol. 1. *Hesperia Suppl.* 7. Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens.
- Delivorrias, A., G. Berger-Doer, and A. Kossatz-Deissmann. 1984. “Aphrodite.” *LIMC* 2.1:2–151.
- Downey, S.B. 1977. *The Stone and Plaster Sculpture*. Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology.
- . 2003. *Terracotta Figurines and Plaques from Dura-Europos*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Fjeldhagen, M. 1995. *Catalogue of Graeco-Roman Terracottas from Egypt: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek*. Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.
- Grandjouan, C. 1961. *Terracottas and Plastic Lamps of the Roman Period*. Athenian Agora 6. Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens.
- Gschwind, M. 2003. “Hellenistische Tradition contra italische Mode: Ein frühkaiserzeitlicher Keramikkomplex aus den türkischen Rettungsgrabungen in Zeugma am mittleren Euphrat.” *Damaskener Mitteilungen* 13: 321–59.
- Higgins, R. 1954. *Catalogue of the Terracottas in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, British Museum*. London: British Museum.
- Lang-Auinger, C., Hrsg., *Hanghaus 1 in Ephesos: Funde und Ausstattung*. Vienna 2003.
- Merker, G.S. 2000. *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*. Vol. 18, pt. 4, *The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: Terracotta Figurines of the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*. Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens.
- Mollard-Besques, S. 1963. *Catalogue Raisonné des Figurines et Reliefs en Terre-cuite Grecs et Romains II Myrina*. Paris: Musée du Louvre.
- Muller, A. 1996. *Les Terres Cuites Votives du Thesmophorion: De l’Atelier au Sanctuaire*. Etudes Thasiennes 17. Paris: École Française d’Athènes.
- Perkins, A. 1973. *The Art of Dura-Europos*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Robinson, D.M. 1952. *Excavations at Olynthus Part XIV: Terracottas, Lamps, and Coins Found in 1934 and 1938*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.
- Rostovtzeff, M., et al., eds. 1944–1952. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Preliminary Report on the Ninth Season, 1935–6*. 3 pts. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Thompson, D.B. 1963. *Troy: The Terracotta Figurines of the Hellenistic Period*. Suppl. Monograph 3. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Thompson, H.A., and D.B. Thompson. 1987. *Hellenistic Pottery and Terracottas*. Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens.
- Török, L. 1995. *Hellenistic and Roman Terracottas from Egypt*. Rome: “L’ERMA” di Bretschneider.
- Vafopoulou-Richardson, C.E. 1991. *Ancient Greek Terracottas*. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum.