

Wall Painting

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INTRODUCTION

Thousands of frescoes survive in fragments across the Roman Empire, but few are recorded in situ together with mosaics and other objects. Zeugma offers an urban context for interior ensembles with a rare terminus ante quem, the Sasanian sack of A.D. 252/253. Although most of the frescoes at Zeugma may not compare to the floor mosaics in craftsmanship or complexity, several wall paintings demonstrate impressive skill. The primary value of the Zeugma frescoes is contextual, for they provide an index of how Greek-speaking cities of Roman Asia Minor shaped interior space in the second and third centuries A.D.

As is true for the rest of the Roman Empire at this time, most of the frescoes at Zeugma do not depict figural subjects, which instead appear on floor mosaics. Especially popular on interior walls were painted imitations of inlaid marbles and simple designs with white walls decorated with plant and bird motifs. A few rooms had more elaborate walls painted with scenographic architecture and human figures standing between illusionistic columns. Such frescoes may be seen to reflect status, for their multiple layers and numerous pigments, and the skill required for complicated illusions, show a much greater investment of time and money than do the simpler, white plaster walls embellished with quickly sketched garlands. However, since both types of decoration appear in buildings where intricate mosaics were laid, it seems unwise to assume the function of a house or the status of a patron merely from fresco remains.

This chapter publishes frescoes found in situ by archaeologists during the rescue excavations at Zeugma in 2000.¹ Important companions to this chapter are reports in this volume on the houses and mosaics by Jennifer Tobin and Katherine Dunbabin, respectively. Before the inundation of the archaeological site by the Birecik reservoir, the frescoes were documented in photographs and drawings, then conserved, consolidated, and plastered for protection under water by the Centro di Conservazione Archeologica-Roma.² None was lifted from the walls. I did not see the material published here during the rescue excavations of 2000, and this study therefore depends on documentation of the wall paintings prepared by the excavators and conservators. Also in 2000, other wall paintings excavated by the University of Nantes and the Gaziantep Museum were removed from the site.³ For purposes of comparison to the wall paintings published here, I was able to study some of these wall paintings at the Gaziantep Museum in 2003.

The wall paintings from all the trenches excavated at Zeugma share a similar style and subject matter, indicating that for their walls, as for their mosaic floors, the town's inhabitants used local workshops. Furthermore, many walls were in the process of being renovated or replaced at the time of the sack of A.D. 252/253. Because the terminus ante quem is not balanced by a terminus post quem, the date of the frescoes must be conjectured from the combined evidence of the architecture, mosaics, and other finds. The homogeneous nature of wall paintings at Zeugma and the lack of firm external criteria make a precise chronology difficult. Traditionally, scholars have dated frescoes based upon visual similarities of style and motif, thereby following the method established for walls of the first centuries B.C. and A.D. in Pompeii. Of late, however, the model of the Four Pompeian Styles has proven problematic even for Pompeii, and the situation is even more difficult for paintings in the provinces or in contexts dating to the middle and late Roman Empire. Resemblance of style or motif among frescoes in different parts of the Roman Empire does not necessarily indicate a close date; this has become especially clear in the case of the murals in the terrace houses at Ephesos, which offer some of the closest parallels to the paintings at Zeugma. In 1977 Volker Stročka proposed dates for the Ephesian frescoes based upon parallels with walls in Rome and elsewhere; recently, he has revised those dates based on context finds. It is clear that the paintings at Zeugma, like the frescoes at Ephesos, share a *koine* of patterns and motifs with the rest of the Roman Empire.⁴ However, the selection of certain colors and subjects, and the manner of their execution or their style, are distinctive at each place. Zeugma thus employed a common pictorial vocabulary but had its own distinctive style of mural painting.

The frescoes at Zeugma adhere to a few basic wall designs:

- The most popular design displays geometric shapes in various colors. Many appear to simulate marbles with their individual hues and patterning, a mode of wall painting that began in the classical period and is often called “the First Style” or the “International Incrustation Style.” The earliest known examples of this mode were found in Macedonia in the third century B.C., and by the second century B.C. it had become popular on Delos, in Alexandria, and in Italy. In the Hellenistic East, Roman examples survive at Pergamon and elsewhere, and they continued to appear as parts of wall designs across the Roman Empire and throughout the Imperial period.⁵ Most common on the dado, the mode sometimes

appears in the main zone and in rare cases above. It is thought that such painted walls were meant to reproduce the ornate interiors of aristocratic homes. Often, however, painters seem to have been less interested in realistic simulations and more in fantastic effects achieved with broad brushstrokes and new color combinations, producing unusual forms such as the blobs of color called “fried eggs.”⁶

Among the evidence published here, the best examples of imitation marble inlay survive in Room 13A of Trench 13. Stunning yellow panels marked with red striations (*giallo antico*) alternate with purple panels dotted with white flecks (*porphyry*) between white marble pilasters. Similar arrangements were found in Zeugma trenches excavated by the University of Nantes, including inventive mock incrustations in blue-green and pink stones. In a variation on the common inlay of square and rectangular blocks, the walls of several rooms evoked more complicated *opus sectile* designs, with variously colored, intersecting geometric shapes, such as a circle within a star within a series of squares. Still other frescoes depict simple juxtapositions of geometric color fields without any apparent reference to stone, a seeming abstraction of inlay that occurs elsewhere throughout the Roman Empire, notably at Ephesos.

- More ambitious are walls painted with illusionistic architecture, specifically with projecting facades of podia, columns, pediments, and doors rendered in three dimensions and multiple planes of depth, replete with highlights and cast shadows. The so-called Second Style, or Architectural Style, long thought to have evolved naturally from the First Style in Italy, was widespread in Greece and throughout the Hellenistic and Roman East.⁷ Three rooms published here preserved remains of a scenographic façade inhabited by large standing, sometimes striding, figures. Such wall designs occur on painted walls at Rome, in the western provinces, and in the East from the second century A.D.⁸ The closest counterparts come from Zeugma itself, where the figures are explicitly named with painted inscriptions or, more commonly, are servants moving forward with an object like a tray or a platter in their arms; these, too, find parallels throughout the Roman Empire between the second and fourth centuries. In one notable arrangement at Zeugma, the walls depict male servants standing between projecting columns on a stage-like base, while a colorful mosaic on the floor showed Perseus rescuing Andromeda; the combination within one space of large, three-dimensional figures on all surfaces is very unusual for Roman interiors.⁹
- A simpler yet elegant mode of painting found at Zeugma that apparently dates to the early or mid-Roman Empire divides the white walls in the central zone into vertical rectangular panels framed by red and green borders; within the panels are suspended green and red garlands, their attached ribbons flapping in a breeze

and birds alighting on verdant plants. The use of basic white lime to cover extensive surfaces is typical of frescoes from all periods, and such airy compositions are quite common in the second and third centuries. Some rooms vary the scheme and even introduce figures. One wall painting excavated by the University of Nantes, now in the Gaziantep Museum, preserves a stunning series of female figures in paratactic display on a white background: Two are identified by inscriptions in Greek as the mythological wives of heroes, Deidameia and Penelope.¹⁰

The wall designs at Zeugma thus follow a few standard schemes, which muralists varied from room to room. Unlike some mid-Imperial frescoes in the western part of the Roman Empire, the designs always retain a relation to structure and do not tend toward the fantastic. Although certain geometric shapes suggest an abstraction of marble inlay, one does not find a negation of the wall through the illogical fantasies that were popular in the so-called Pompeian Fourth Style and employed in later centuries in the West. The fresco technique applied throughout the city is familiar from elsewhere around the Roman Empire. Craftsmen worked in phases called “*giornate*,” beginning at the top of the wall, proceeding to the largest, middle section, and finishing with the *dado*. As a rule, at Zeugma two foundation layers of mortar were applied before the application of a top layer composed primarily of lime. In some cases there is evidence that linear guidelines for the design were impressed into fresh plaster with some kind of cord. Pigments included Egyptian blue, red ochre, and, more rare because more expensive, cinnabar.¹¹ The style of the Zeugma frescoes is characterized by large and free brushstrokes, especially noticeable in the execution of imitation marble panels and plants. One painter’s name, Zeu[xis], is preserved on a white wall with garlands, discovered by the University of Nantes. The scenographic paintings clearly demanded the most skill and precision and were probably designed and at least partially painted by specialists in the workshops. Many walls that were undergoing repainting when the houses were destroyed in the Sasanian sack of A.D. 252/253 show hasty applications of plaster and paint.

CATALOGUE

Most, if not all, the built surfaces at Zeugma were once covered with plaster. This catalogue selects only those frescoes that bear evidence of some decorative design. Many of these, as well as undecorated walls with plain mortar or plaster, are also mentioned in Tobin’s chapter about the architecture of the houses in this volume. Information about size and state of preservation is provided when it was recorded by the excavators.¹² The numbers used to identify

the frescoes published here are the same as the context numbers assigned to them by excavators.

Trench 2

Numerous frescoes were found in situ on walls in three of the four partially excavated courtyard houses in Trench 2, located in what may have been the heart of the Roman city (Plates 11–12). Construction of these walls has been dated to sometime between the late first and mid-second century A.D.¹³ Several rooms were modified in later years and preserve extensive evidence of repainting.

The House of the Peopled Plaster

Only the northern section of this house was excavated, and it is not possible to determine the house plan or the entire extent of rooms. Remains of quite elaborate scenographic frescoes were found in Rooms 2C and 2D. The floors of both rooms had hard-packed white mortar, suggesting that the mosaics had not yet been laid or had been removed.

ROOM 2B

The northern parts of three walls were excavated. Each had two to three layers of painted plaster, indicating successive phases of decoration. Three layers of plaster survived on the northwest wall (fresco 2206): a top layer 4–5 mm thick with green and brownish black pigments; a middle layer, light gray to white with cement bonding; an earlier layer the same as the middle layer. Multiple layers survived on the northeast wall (fresco 2207): a fine-textured early layer, 4 mm thick; a gray-colored and coarser middle layer, 7 mm thick; a top layer painted with parallel, horizontal running bands in off-white and dark brown. The southeast wall had two layers of plaster of uncertain appearance (fresco 2208).¹⁴

ROOM 2C

This room appears to have had a continuous scenographic design on all four walls. Remains of plaster were found on the southern side of the doorway in the southwest corner of Room 2D, especially on the lower parts of the northwest wall (fresco 2268) and southwest wall (fresco 2257). Preparatory traces of horizontal lines were visible to the excavators (Plates 12, 14A, 22B–C).

Plaster about 10 mm thick survived on the southwest wall (fresco 2257). This was painted with alternating green and red color fields separated by borders. Against a red background, the lower parts of two robed figures stand on a green podium. A female figure, indicated by her lower torso and right leg and foot, is dressed in a long violet robe with a mantle of lighter color. She stands in *contrapposto*, her body turned toward her left and her head probably once inclined to face right. Her right arm is bent at the elbow, and she carries a platter in her left hand, suggesting that she is a servant figure. Two layers of painted plaster

cover the northwest wall (fresco 2268), continuing the pattern on the southwest wall.

The painted scheme of illusionistic architecture with figures was popular in what appear to be the more representational rooms of houses at Zeugma. Frescoes discovered by the University of Nantes and the Gaziantep Museum depict mythological female figures clad in colorful dress, standing against a white background between red borders, their names painted beside their heads.¹⁵ Closer in color scheme are red-ground walls that are populated by females, again with identifying inscriptions. Other walls feature male servants positioned between projecting columns on a stage-like base surrounding a colorful floor mosaic depicting the mythological couple Perseus and Andromeda.¹⁶

Outside Zeugma, similar wall schemes occur in Antonine and Severan buildings across the Roman Empire: at Rome, Libya, Ephesos, and Trier. At Ephesos, the walls are much more elaborate: standing figures alternate with theatrical scenes below an upper zone with a figural frieze of mythological battle scenes.¹⁷ In Rome the fragments from several rooms in the Villa Negroni complex, particularly the “salone” of the Domus and the frigidarium of the Severan period, show scenographic wall designs with striding servant figures dressed in tunics bearing objects.¹⁸ Ling sees “the popularity of standing figures in ceremonial dress or uniform in aristocratic villas, as a form of self-advertisement through service.”¹⁹

ROOM 2D

This room had wall decoration similar to Room 2C. The same design appears to have adorned all four walls (Plates 12, 13B, 22A).

One large fragment about 2 mm thick was preserved in situ on the northwest wall; it measured 4.02 m long by ca. 1.42 m high (fresco 2291). A few smaller fragments were also found on other parts of the same wall. The painted scenographic design is divided into sections: in the middle stands a column painted in yellow with dark red and white for the fluting and the base; in the center, a male figure is preserved from the waist down against a dark red background. Dressed in a yellow tunic with purple or dark red stripes, he lifts his right foot off the ground in a dynamic, striding pose, moving towards his left, while probably turning his head and upper body to his right. In his arms he carries a large round platter, indicating his status as a servant. The scene is rendered in careful perspective, with the two framing columns casting shadows onto the green floor, itself an elevated, stage-like space, and highlights on the architecture and figures emphasizing their three-dimensionality. A similar design was recovered in Trench 6 by the University of Nantes.²⁰

On the northeast wall thin, light-gray and sandy wall plaster was preserved, 2.12 m long, 1.28 m high, and 2 mm thick (fresco 2292). Two stages of painting were visible, with the earlier layer picked so that the next layer would

adhere to it. The dado shows gray squares, surmounted by white panels.

At the south end of the southwest wall, plaster measuring 1.10 m long and .90 m high was painted with an unusual design (fresco 2267) (Plates 12, 22E). The dado is composed of white panels framed with black lines. In the middle zone of the wall the excavators noted two stages of painting. In an abstract interplay of geometric shapes and various colors, a central large square of purple is nested within vertical and horizontal frames of dark red, green, and light red, and the whole appears within a dark red border. The composition suggests the spatial recession like that of a shelf or window.

At the southern end of the southeast wall, fresco 2266, measuring .38 m long and .50 m high, formed a corner with fresco 2267 (Plates 12, 22D). The excavators noted yellow, green, red, and white pigments and a second layer in dark red.

The House of the Helmets

Only the southern part of this house was excavated. It was built in the Flavian period and destroyed in the mid-third century A.D. Several rooms were repainted and given new mosaics in the mid-second to early third centuries. Sometime thereafter the house was subdivided, doors were blocked, and the spaces between columns in the peristyle filled in. Although four mosaics were discovered in the house, these were not in the rooms where frescoes survived.

ROOM 2G

This large room had frescoes on three walls, all painted white, with sections framed by yellow and red borders.²¹ Inside these framed areas were red garlands and green ribbons and plants, creating an airy, light design (Plates 11, 23).

Dado decoration was not found on the northwest wall (fresco 2548), but the middle section preserved an illusionistically rendered, crenellated column with an elaborate Corinthian capital and what appears to be an architrave above it. At mid height, to the left of the column, a recessed area was painted in a darker shade, possibly brown. The excavators observed a bottom red border overlying the white and light green central zone that may belong to a later phase of painting, as is the case on other walls in this house.

The east end of the southeast wall preserved a light, whitish-gray plaster with sandy inclusions up to .5 mm thick (fresco 2434 and 2445). Unlike the surfaces of most rooms, these do not appear to have been resurfaced or changed during occupation, although the excavators note that they were marked with graffiti. The dado and middle zone are painted white and framed by a red border on all sides; in the center is a metal candelabrum with three legs, painted in perspective.

On the south end of the southwest wall (fresco 2480) fragments of thin, lime-based plaster reveal evidence of

painted architecture, possibly a door on the left and on the right a female figure in a schematically painted red dress standing on a green podium before a white background, her upper body probably turned slightly to her right.

The House of the Bull

The House of the Bull, an elaborately decorated house at the southern part of the complex of four houses, was originally built in the Flavian or early Trajanic periods. It underwent three main phases of renovation, with additions of new mosaics and frescoes in the Middle Imperial period; a more precise dating of these renovations is not possible. The house contained at least twelve mosaic floors (M8–M19). Dunbabin dates the mosaics between the late second and mid-third century A.D. and agrees with Tobin that there was more than one phase of refurbishment, the last one probably just before the Sasanian sack of A.D. 252/253, but she warns that the mosaics are too fragmentary and in some cases too hastily executed to offer a firmer dating. The walls, which evidently were painted at the same time, do not allow for a closer dating.

ROOM 2J

This room had frescoes on all four walls. In the Middle Imperial period the floor received a geometric mosaic (M8), whose mortar covers, and thus postdates, the wall painting. The design is white, with yellow and red borders articulated by thin red and green vertical lines (Plates 11, 33, 34A).

On the west end of the northwest wall was preserved a damaged layer of fine plaster about .50 m long, .40 m high, and 1.5 cm thick (fresco 2399). Although destroyed at the bottom, the painted wall appears to be abutted by the mosaic, dating it to an earlier phase of decoration, possibly in the Early Imperial period. A later layer (fresco 2390), about 1 m long and .80 m high with plaster about 2 cm thick, was badly damaged and not cleared by conservators, so that no design was discernable beyond red and dark-blue or black areas. This darker design apparently replaced an earlier one in white, yellow, red, and green (fresco 2399) that was probably contemporary with the painting of the vaulted room (Room 2L).

The room's other walls were not described by the excavators, although the notebooks and photographs show that these also preserved remains of two layers of painted plaster like those discovered on the northwest wall.

ROOM 2K

This room appears to have been rebuilt in the Middle Imperial period, when an arch was added, the floor raised, and a new black-and-white geometric mosaic laid (M10). Remains of the impost on the south side of the doorway on the southeast wall suggest that the doorway opened through an arch onto the loggia to the southeast (Room 2M). Of the two plaster layers that were found, the earlier, thinner layer, with red and green patterns on a white sur-

face, resembles walls in neighboring Room 2J. The later layer is a darker, purple-blue design, applied after mosaic M10 was laid.

Two stages of painting are also preserved on the southeast wall, specifically on the dado and in the middle zone on the south side of the door (Plates 11, 17C, 36). Conservators removed much of the later layer (fresco 2306) to reveal the earlier one (fresco 2280).²² This earlier layer, a large section of painted plaster, about 1 m long, 2.07 m high, and 10–12 mm thick, featured a white panel on which red fillets and garlands suspended by green ribbons are framed by red, yellow, and green borders. A vine leaf motif runs up the north edge of the wall and recurs on the opposite side of the doorway. This mode of wall painting was found in Trench 12 by the University of Nantes, now in the Gaziantep Museum.²³ Despite variations on the basic scheme, the walls from both trenches comprise a white dado, a middle white zone divided into vertical rectangles by bright red borders and containing red garlands and fluttering green ribbons, juxtaposed with narrower white panels containing stylized green plants. On other walls in Trench 12, however, draped female figures stand before the large white panels and are flanked by the narrow fields with green plants; in these examples, there is more elaborate architecture and variety in the plants and forms of fluttering green ribbons.²⁴ A later layer of fairly thick (maximum 5 cm), purple-blue plaster on the southeast wall appears to have been painted rather sloppily and runs the entire length of the wall (fresco 2306).

The same two layers of painted plaster were preserved on the northeast as on the room's southeast wall. A trace of the earlier layer was visible in only a few areas of white and green paint (fresco 2426). A second layer of plaster, preserved to 2.20 m long and .80 m high, repeats the fairly thick, purplish-blue plaster, reaching a maximum thickness of 7 cm, especially where it was unevenly applied (fresco 2401 and 2053) (Plate 37B).

The design described above for fresco 2280 continues across the southwest wall (here fresco 2392), but is almost entirely obscured by the same purple-blue layer applied slightly later than the laying of mosaic M10 (here fresco 2406). Fresco 2392 is 2.20 m long and .80 m high. Fresco 2406, with traces of burning, measured about 2.34 m long and 1 m high (Plates 17B, 34C).

ROOM 2L

This vaulted room with a mosaic floor (M11) was connected to Room 2K. It was only partially excavated but revealed two layers of painted plaster. The earlier layer (fresco 2264) was white with green decoration and a red border, similar to the earlier painting on the northwest side of Room 2K. At some point the vault was repainted with the same monochrome layer of purple-blue seen in nearby rooms, about 3–5 cm thick (fresco 2405) (Plates 37C–D).

COURTYARD

Two fresco layers survived on the northwest and southwest walls in the courtyard, which was also decorated with a monochrome, grayish-white mosaic (M15). The later painted scheme featured white walls subdivided into rectangular fields by parallel red lines. A roundel encircled by parallel red lines was painted in the center of each rectangular field. A circle painted to imitate red porphyry was painted in the center of each roundel.

At the north end of the northwest wall, an earlier layer of painting with red and green pigments was covered by a porphyry circle surrounded by a red and white ornamental border, all set within a vertical rectangular yellow panel, another decorative red and white border, and a red background (fresco 2486).²⁵ The dado was also red. Graffiti was scrawled at the lower edge of the roundel (Plates 11, 18C, 40B–C).²⁶

Although not facing the courtyard proper, the southeast side of a pier on the southwest wall, facing doorway 2481, had wall painting that probably represents an earlier decorative scheme of the courtyard (fresco 2416). A geometric design featured a red square enclosed within a green inner border and a darker red outer border (Plates 19A, 41C–D). The decoration recalls the geometric design on the southwest wall of Room 2D.

The frescoes in the courtyard are noteworthy for a later phase of wall painting with imitation marble. This is unusual among the Zeugma frescoes, because most later paintings tend to be less ambitious and less skillfully executed. Many walls across the Roman Empire show similar geometric, colorful designs that invoke *opus sectile*. An early example survives in the mid-first-century B.C. palace at Samosata, where a wall in one room was painted with a square containing a diamond with red and yellow borders; walls in another room displayed alternating red and yellow color fields separated by lines.²⁷

ROOM 2N

This room had the only figural mosaic discovered in the house, mosaic M17, probably laid at the same time as the room's only surviving frescoes. Painted red and white borders ornament the southwest wall (fresco 2418) (Plate 42B).

ROOM 2O

Two plaster layers are preserved on the exterior walls of a small barrel-vaulted structure that was installed on the southwestern side of Room 2O after the laying of mosaic M15. The frescoes of these walls would have been visible from the inside of Room 2O and from the courtyard, which had similar wall designs (Plates 11, 48C).

The west face of the northwest wall had two layers of painted decoration. The second layer featured imitation red and yellow veined marble around a central violet roundel with a decorative border of pearls and pirouettes (fresco 2288). An adjacent panel was composed of two superimposed compartments in gray or faded green.

The northeast wall of the latrine, visible from inside Room 2O, also had two layers of wall painting. The earlier layer, fresco 2502, was not described. The later layer, fresco 2498, had a rectangular panel with red border.

Walls from other trenches at Zeugma had similar motifs to those on the exterior of this latrine in Room 2O. For example, a fragment from an elaborate peristyle fountain now in the Gaziantep Museum depicts a colorful design of yellow, green, red, white, and purple imitating different marbles.²⁸ In the center is a red circle within a star of yellow, red, and white; the star is embedded within a green circle with a white border, and this green circle is in turn placed within a square imitating giallo antico; below this, a border emulates porphyry with purple and white flecks. The similarity of the walls in Room 2O to the geometric designs in Trench 2 suggest that these abstractions ultimately refer to opus sectile, whereby stones of various colors are cut to form cubic designs. Painted walls with such designs are found throughout in the Roman Empire.²⁹

Trench 9

The houses in this trench appear to be more modest than those preserved in Trench 2, and Tobin assigns a partially commercial function to some of the rooms. Nevertheless, a couple of rooms had frescoes of stunning impact (Plate 54).

House of the Tesserae

This house was only partially excavated, but evidence from the five rooms that were uncovered suggests a function as a shop with living quarters. Construction dates to the Early Imperial period, and three rooms preserve evidence for painted decoration.

ROOM 9A

Traces of plaster on the east wall and the west wall show evidence of burning (fresco 9069 and 9094, respectively). The south wall also had traces of burning on a broad section of unpainted plaster preserved to 3 m long and 2.4 m high (context 9068). Graffiti were also preserved here. A handprint suggests that the wall was probably being prepared for a later layer of plaster. A few small areas preserve paint from an earlier layer: three patches of beige and, near the middle of the wall, vivid colors of red, pink, white, above a green podium that had been picked for resurfacing. A small section of painted plaster at the lower southwest corner (fresco 9095), appears to have been painted after the mortared floor (context 9080) and may represent the only trace of the ultimate layer of painted plaster in the room (Plate 61A).

ROOM 9D

Traces of two layers of plaster are preserved on the walls of this room: an unpainted gray undercoat was covered in places by white painted plaster with remains of an occasional vertical red line (fresco 9123, 9125, 9126) (Plate 56B).

ROOM 9E

The best-preserved section of painted plaster (2.90 long and 1 m high) appeared on the south wall, where white fields were divided into panels by green and red borders and the whole outlined in black (fresco 9330) (Plates 62C–D). The excavators also observed sections of unpainted gray render on the west wall (fresco 9189) and plaster on the south wall that had been blackened by fire or applied as unpainted gray render in preparation for painting (fresco 9164, 9201).

The House of the Hoards

At least three rooms in this house had elaborate decoration, as suggested by a mosaic (M21) in Room 9F and frescoes in Rooms 9G and 9I. The overall plan of the house, which was not completely uncovered, is unclear. At some point before the Sasanian sack of A.D. 252/253 the house appears to have been abandoned. The wall painting on the north wall of Room 9G was defaced with graffiti, which is described in this volume in the chapter by Benefiel and Coleman.³⁰

ROOM 9G

The north wall preserved fine-grained plaster with graffiti scratched across most of the surface, especially the west side of the wall (fresco 9280). The painted wall featured a large black geometric design along the base and a middle section of white divided into panels by red borders. A green vegetal motif survives at the east end of the wall (Plates 54, 57B, 63C–66).

The east wall had the same scheme as the north wall, but the plaster was blackened by fire (fresco 9281). A large black geometric design appears along the base, with wide red vertical and horizontal bands forming a frame around white panels articulated inside by vertical double black lines (Plate 67A).

The south wall was only partially excavated. Two patches of plaster met at the room's southeast corner, with white panels articulated by thin vertical lines and red vertical bands in the room corner (fresco 9310). Underneath appeared two earlier surfaces, the bottom layer having been picked for resurfacing (Plate 67C).

ROOM 9I

At the west end of the north wall, fine-grained plaster was preserved (about .85 m. long) with traces of pigments in green, red, pink, and dark blue or faded black (fresco 9317). The design aligned with fresco 9318, a small piece of painted plaster adhered to the east end of the same wall, and both were probably part of the same decoration. Random pick marks across the face of fresco 9317 and 9318 suggest that the room was being prepared for redecorating when the house was destroyed (Plates 58B, 67E).

At the southeast corner of the room the decoration was the same as on the north wall: a white field subdivided by a series of vertical lines, first a wide black band, then a thin white line, followed by a wide red stripe, and a black one

(fresco 9319). This was the most damaged fresco in the room, with chisel marks across the top of the wall.

Trench 11

Excavations in this trench revealed parts of two structures with an alley between them. The northern structure, the House of the Fountain, had a fountain in a suite of rooms decorated with mosaics and wall painting (Plate 78). The courtyard with adjacent loggia found here is also seen in Trench 2. This house plan has roots in Hellenistic Delos and suggests a lasting Greek influence in Zeugma's Roman houses.

The House of the Fountain

COURTYARD

Traces of wall painting on the east side of the courtyard, on wall 11011, reveal red and yellow borders around white panels, in a design that appears to have been similar to that in Room 11D.

ROOM 11D

This well-lit, colonnaded loggia with a figural mosaic pavement (M23) opened off the courtyard to the south and measured about 4.95 m by 3 m in plan. Colorful frescoes survived on the south and east walls and were replaced in later times.³¹ The orientation of the mosaic, which covered the entire floor space, is somewhat surprising, as it faces the back of the room instead of the courtyard. Dunbabin suggests that the mosaic was intended to be seen from the south, but there is little room here for couches.³² It is conceivable that the loggia had an additional entry on the west side of the room, which was not excavated. The dating of this room is unclear; through comparison with other mosaics at Zeugma, Dunbabin believes the mosaic was laid during the last of several renovations and alterations, possibly when the fountain was installed in the courtyard in the A.D. 230s or 240s. It is probable that the walls were painted at the same time. Surrounding the colorful scene of two Nereids riding on sea monsters are numerous frames with alternating geometric motifs. When painting the frescoes, the muralist played off the motifs on the floor by painting a colorful variety of ornamental borders (Plates 81A, 87B–C).³³

The east wall preserved two layers of painted decoration. The later layer, fresco 11063, had a decorative scheme with a column and a decorative border (Plates 88A–B). The earlier layer, fresco 11073, was preserved to almost 6 m long and 2.95 m high, with three horizontal sections in paint: a green-blue dado; a middle zone of white, red, yellow, and black; a cornice painted in white below white sections framed by red borders. The largest, middle zone had a red background before which stood three illusionistic white marble columns with bases and capitals. Between these were vertical rectangles in blue on the left and yellow on the right, framed by ornamental borders of various

designs. The border of the left blue panel had a white scalloped pattern on black, while the border of the right yellow panel was a red-and-white zigzag pattern composed of red circles and lozenge shapes. With all three walls painted in this variegated polychromatic design surrounding an even more intricate play of patterns on the floor, the well-illuminated space must have offered a vivid and resplendent haven for leisure. Painting on the south wall (also numbered fresco 11073) preserved traces of similar decoration in blue, red, white, and yellow.

Trench 18

This trench revealed a large multiroom domestic structure, perhaps with two courtyards, but only few remains of painted plaster (Plate 107). In Room 18A the excavators record masonry-style painted stucco in relief (fresco 18131). To the right of the doorway on the north wall of Room 18G (fresco 18033) are the remains of a colorful wall design with red, yellow, and white borders. A decorative rosette-like motif inside the framed panel was very poorly preserved. On the west wall of Room 18F, plaster was preserved to 1.70 m long and .60 m high (fresco 18024). The excavators also noted a few traces of brown paint over an earlier layer of plaster (fresco 18025) that had been picked in preparation for the application of fresco 18024 (Plates 109C, 114B).

Between Rooms 13F and 13G, a pier (18035) at the west end of wall 18037 preserved painted plaster on three sides (Plates 113, 114A). The north side, facing Room 13F, had plaster preserved to .50 m wide, 1 m high, and 10 mm thick (fresco 18029). The south side, facing Room 13G, had plaster in red, yellow, and white, possibly representing a column (fresco 18030). The west side, facing the doorway, had plaster preserved to .53 m wide, 1.04 m high, and 10 mm thick (fresco 18031).

Trench 13

Two walls with elaborate wall painting were found in Room 13F, only partially excavated, and located on a terrace above and to the west of the principal structure discovered in this trench, the House of the Tunnel. Room 13A in the House of the Tunnel also had well-preserved frescoes (Plate 118).³⁴ The room was not excavated in full. The presence of at least three other rooms in the house with elaborate geometric mosaics suggests that Room 13A may have also once had a mosaic pavement. The style of the mosaic pavements and the destruction contexts recovered from Rooms 13A and 13F and elsewhere in the trench show that the wall paintings belong to the decades leading up to the Sasanian sack of Zeugma in A.D. 252/253.

ROOM 13F

Only two walls of this room were excavated, and these had well-preserved frescoes from two phases of decoration. The excavators suggest that the room had a floor mosaic, but

that it had been removed. As in other rooms at Zeugma, this space displayed scenographic architecture with figures standing between columns on a projecting podium. Although only part of one figure survives on the east wall, we can assume that at least one other figure appeared in the room, if not one on each wall (Plates 127B, 128).

Painted plaster was preserved to 1.60 m long, .40 m high, and 1–2 cm thick on the east wall (fresco 13010). The western part of this wall was destroyed by fire. Only the lower part of a male figure survives. Wearing a dark green tunic that falls just over his knees, the man has stocky brown legs and his feet, seen from the side, are clad in brown leather sandals. The background is red, with two columns in dark red or purple and what appear to be purple-brown wooden partitions or doors behind the columns, with an opening above indicated in green, a common feature in architectural frameworks.

On the north wall was preserved a section of fresco about 1.10 m long by .40 m high, and 1 cm thick. Near the northeast corner appeared two dark red-purple columns of different widths, with prominent bases and shafts, all against a red background (fresco 13005). The dado has three borders, one in deep red or purple (12 cm wide), one yellow, and the other black, running along the bottom of both walls. Beneath the painted surface, the excavators observed a coating of brownish green paint.

House of the Tunnel

ROOM 13A

About half of this room was carved from bedrock. Although not fully excavated, the walls indicate an entrance on the south, a doorway or window on the east, and possibly two windows on the north, so that the room was well illuminated. Two circular pits near the east wall may have held basins or clay pots. The floor had been removed, and

the excavators note that it may have been mosaic or marble. The walls had vibrantly colored frescoes imitating marble inlay (Plates 119, 122D–124B).

On the south wall, the main zones were painted in what appears to be red and yellow ochre imitating marble panels (fresco 13039). The types of marbles alternate, so that porphyry panels, simulated with dark-red fields dotted with white flecks, are framed by borders of giallo antico and white marble. A red border with a black outline frames another panel of giallo antico, painted with bold strokes in four different shades of yellow and four of red. Between the porphyry and giallo antico panels are white piers or columns with red marbling, outlined in black, with a red Corinthian capital articulated with black volutes. Above the porphyry panel were traces of a cornice painted in white with dark red and black details. The corners of the room were painted with a red panel that continued onto the adjacent walls.

The design preserved on the west wall (fresco 13024) is very similar to that on the south wall, with a well-preserved mottled giallo antico panel at the north end of the wall. Only one area of fresco survived on the north wall (fresco 13025), and it repeated the design on the opposite, south wall with a red panel in a marbled frame. An earlier phase of painted plaster was found near ground level (fresco 13037), painted to emulate colorful masonry with rectangular blocks of red (perhaps porphyry), green, and white with red marbling. The east wall was only partially excavated in 2000 but later exposed when water levels in the Birecik Dam were temporarily lowered in October 2002 (fresco 13026). The fresco was preserved to 1–1.5 m high, taller than preserved on the room's other walls, and it featured a central zone with a large giallo antico panel framed by a mottled red border, outlined with black, and an illusionistic white cornice above.

NOTES

1. The trenches excavated were Trenches 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9–13, 18, and 19, but painted plaster was only found in Trenches 2, 9, 11, 13, and 18.
2. See the chapter by Nardi and Schneider in this volume.
3. Dussauge (2000) has short descriptions of some of the frescoes published here. For the wall paintings removed to the Gaziantep Museum, see Sener, Eskici, and Cetin 2001. Since I wrote this chapter, a volume by Alix Barbet (2005) on Zeugma frescoes has appeared; some frescoes found in the excavations published in the present volume are briefly described there (193–226) but independently of their architectural and decorative contexts, and the house names differ from those used in the present volume.
4. The provincial frescoes have not been systematically examined as a group. On the problems of dating by comparison with Italian frescoes, the case of the Ephesos terrace houses offers a warning. In 1984 more than forty painted rooms were dated by Strocka to A.D. 380–450; recent finds and research indicate, however, that the latest walls were painted in the third century: Zimmerman 2002; Strocka 2002, 285–98. Both visually and chronologically these offer the closest parallels to the frescoes at Zeugma. On Roman painting after the first century, see Dorigo 1971; Ling 1991, 175–97; Moormann 1996; Ellis 2000, 121. On Roman painting in the second and third centuries outside Italy, see Mielsch 2001.
5. Ling 1991, 192. The Pergamon paintings are dated to the late third century. The universality of this mode of wall painting may be seen in the many examples found around the Roman Empire, for example at Ampurias (Nieto 1979/1980, 279–332); at Aquincum in Hungary, where imitations of various marbles, including yellow, appear on the socle of a residence in a military compound dated to the second and third centuries A.D. (Szirmai 1991, 203–6); in a second-century Roman house in Knossos (Sackett and Jones 1979); in an Antonine house at Verulamium in Britain, where illusionistic columns alternated with panels of fictive alabaster and breccia; in a house under the church of Giovanni e Paolo in Rome, where walls were divided into brightly colored square, diamond-shaped, and circular panels; in a house under the Baptisterium of the Lateran Church, built on the site of a bath that was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 191, and turned into a baptisterium in A.D. 313. Apparently the Tetrarchic period saw an increased use of the mode.
6. Bingöl 1997, 97. On the cost differences between opus sectile and fresco, see Laidlaw 1985; Corcoran and DeLaine 1994. The House of the Faun in Pompeii and the Capitolium of Brescia are two early examples that seem to imitate more expensive interiors, such as those found in the Ptolemaic harbor and the Tumulus of Alexander at Alexandria.
7. Bingöl 1997, 111–8 describes a distinctively eastern Second Style as at Ephesos (SR 6 in WE 1). A well-preserved room with a similar wall scheme in a room with a figural mosaic was found at Kos (Morricone 1950; Sirano 2005). But parallels also survive at distant points in the Roman Empire, for example at the Residence in Trier, where single figures stand between illusionistic pilasters (Simon 1986), in the Domus Praeconum (House of the Heralds) in Rome, painted in the second quarter of third century A.D., where a series of imperial attendants and officials stand before a large-scale scenographic backdrop, and in the Palatine Antiquarium (Ling 1991, 186; Wirth 1934, 125–9, pls. 29–31; Cagianò de Azevedo 1947–9, 253–8; Mielsch 2001). In Rome, the House on the Caelian Hill (called Biblioteca Agapit) with an apsidal hall was discovered and destroyed in 1557; two panels, entirely preserved, and a third more fragmentary panel dated to first half of the fourth century A.D. are now in the Naples Museum (Inv. 84285, 84286, 84284) showing as many as seven large figures, probably servants; cf. Dunbabin 2003, 446.
8. Ling 1991, 178, following Strocka, claims that the monumental scheme of large fields articulated by columns in the Theatre Room at Ephesos (H2/SR6) reflect Antonine and Severan painting in the capital. Zimmerman redates the walls of Terrace House 2 to the second quarter of the third century and sees parallels in Ostia. Again, the compositional mode occurs at other sites distant from Rome: the House of the Tragic Actor in Sabratha at Libya preserves scenographic compositions with projecting wings and receding colonnades (Aurigemma 1962, 100–11, pls. 93–118; Mielsch 1981, 243 for dating).
9. For a view of the frescoes in context, see Wagner 2000, 112–3, figs. 165–6. For painting, see Hansen 1997, 111–24, esp. 118–9.
10. Wagner 2000, fig. 166; Barbet 2005, 144–57. Figures labeled with inscriptions occur as well in painted tombs in Egypt and the Levant: Ling 1991, 183. The closest is a painted tomb in Sidon with inscriptions besides figures: Barbet, Gatier, and Lewis 1997, 141–53. Imitation marble inlay appears on the socle below the female figures that stand against a red background where appear painted inscriptions in Greek: I. López García et al. 1994, 164–8. I am grateful to Helene Eristov for this reference. One female represents the personification of Mauretania Caesarensis; the other has a crocodile appear behind her feet and the inscription, painted in white on cinnabar red, states AIGYPTO. Thus, it may have been a room with representations of African provinces; on the floor was the Muse of dance, also with an inscription.
11. Barbet 2005, 303–4.
12. Documentation was necessarily conducted under intense time pressure. Accordingly, the excavation notebooks are sometimes sketchy about detail and lacking in information about size, material, and color.
13. The West House of the Pelta Mosaic had three floor mosaics, but frescoes are not mentioned in the excavation reports.
14. The excavation notebooks are unclear about the appearance of these layers.
15. House of Poseidon, Room P23: Barbet 2005, 49–52, pls. 5–6, C.
16. Wagner 2000, 112–3, figs. 165–6. For the figures, see House of Poseidon, Room of Perseus and Andromeda: Barbet 2005, 26–34, pls. 1–3, A; for comparable architecture, see House of Poseidon, peristyle: Barbet 2005, 75–85.
17. Zimmerman 2002, 102, pl. 62.4, 96.28.
18. Barbera and Paris 1996, 125, 162–4, figs. 2, 5, pls. 1–2, and, for the development of fresco painting in the mid Roman Empire, 64–9.
19. Ling 1991, 194; Dunbabin 2003, 443–68.
20. Trench 6, Room 13: a green and red podium supporting yellow columns, all over a painted gray masonry dado; light appears to reflect off the shaft. Barbet 2005, 297, suggests that servants may have been identified by name in white painted letters.
21. All walls preserved painted surfaces except the northeast wall, only partially excavated, where the excavators noted an unusually thick layer of lime-based mortar, possibly evidence of repair to damage caused by fire (context 2558).
22. The excavators assigned context 2492 to a thin layer of plaster, only visible at the top of the wall, that was identical to fresco 2280. This was covered by the same purplish-blue monochrome plaster (fresco 2306) found elsewhere on the wall, but which the excavators here labeled context 2493. Early (2003, 40) and Barbet (2005, 196) note three phases of painting: one high up on the wall and the two overlying layers.
23. House of Poseidon, Room of Germanus: Barbet 2005, 110–15.
24. House of Poseidon, Room of Perseus and Andromeda: Barbet 2005, 26–34.
25. The excavators also observed another fragment of wall painting on an unspecified wall: a small fragment of plaster with a similar design of a red border around a central panel.
26. See the chapter by Benefiel and Coleman in this volume.
27. Wagner 2000, 81, 111–2; Bingöl 1997, 78–83.
28. House of Poseidon, peristyle fountain: Barbet 2005, 93–4, pl. 14.

29. This is perhaps a version of the sun motif, which first appears in Asia Minor in the Augustan opus sectile floor of Peristyle House III in Pergamon: Bingöl 1997, 125; cf. *Case romane* 2004, figs. 8–9. An imitation porphyry circle within a rhomboid decorated a house in Narbonne in the late second or early third century: *Peintures romaine* 1993, 56, fig. 61a; a close parallel for the imitation marble circle-and-star motif appears in Rome in the house under the Basilica of SS Giovanni e Paolo on the Caelian Hill, painted in the late third century.
30. The excavators also observed, but did not describe, a small section of painted plaster in Room 9H.
31. The excavators assigned the same number to the painting on both walls (context 11073).
32. Dunbabin, this volume, mosaic M23; cf. Early 2003, 28–33.
33. Cf. Early 2003, 28–34.
34. Early 2003, 18–22.

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