

REVISITING BORDERLANDS OF EMPIRES IN WESTERN ASIA: REVIEWS AND A PHOTO ESSAY

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As students of the Silk Roads are aware, often the most interesting evidence regarding cultural and economic exchange is to be sought on the margins of the great political entities which occupied the various parts of Asia. Of course seeking such evidence may be one thing, finding it and interpreting it another matter. Early explorations too frequently were burdened with the baggage of pre-conceptions, which shaped the focus of the search and the interpretation of the finds in ways that have had a lasting, if at times unfortunate, impact on later understandings of the material. Moreover, it was a common feature of early excavations to employ methodologies which, by today's lights, were crude and often ignored or destroyed evidence which, with modern analytical techniques, might prove hugely informative. Few major sites have ever been exhaustively examined, which then leaves a great deal to be discovered by renewed work on them, work which may include new excavation, but also, importantly, a careful review of the evidence contained in often un-published or only partially published earlier excavation records. New techniques of conservation may recover evidence obscured by older methods and encourage us to take a fresh look at important material as we ask questions never posed by the original discoverers. And, of course, there are still stunning new discoveries to be made even if under the irrational timelines imposed by modern development. The books examined below, which focus on important, but very different sites in western Asia, provide insights into all these issues. For each case I have supplemented these review notes with a selection of photographs taken on site or in museum collections in 2010.¹

I. "POMPEII ON THE EUPHRATES"

Dura Europos: Crossroads of Antiquity. Edited by Lisa R. Brody and Gail L. Hoffman. Chestnut Hill, MA: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2011. 406 pp. ISBN 978-1-892850-16-4.

Edge of Empires. Pagans, Jews, and Christians at Roman Dura-Europos. Edited by Jennifer Y. Chi and Sebastian Heath. New York: Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011. 124 pp. ISBN 978-0-691-15468-8.

Even if not another Pompeii, as enthusiastic headlines labeled it back in the 1930s, Dura Europos is arguably one of the most important urban sites on the routes of Western Asia whose remains date to Hellenistic, Parthian and Roman times. Located in what is now Syria and strategically situated on the Euphrates River, the city was in the first instance a military outpost founded on a site of much earlier habitation by Seleukos I Nikator, Alexander the Great's successor in the Middle East. Dura's location on routes of communication (one leading westward to the famous caravan city of Palmyra) meant that it was also a

crossroads for merchants and throughout much of its existence was what we would term "multi-cultural."

The visitor to Dura today arrives at the ruins of its western walls (the main defensive rampart on the side not protected by topographic features) after a long drive through a flat desert landscape. As with so many important urban remains of antiquity, especially those constructed of now eroded mud brick, what is left inside does not impress, beyond the extent of the space enclosed by the walls and the small citadel overlooking the river. A view from the air (see the photos in the catalogues here) is needed to encompass everything in a single glance and appreciate the local topography of the position on a high bank above the river and defended on north and south by ravines. The maps and archaeological reconstruction drawings (reproduced in the NYU volume, *Edge*), which have been refined by the most recent excavations, inspire an appreciation of how the settlement developed from a single castle to a Hellenistic town on a Hippodamian grid plan, to a densely populated Roman city. Except for a modest selection of artefacts and drawings to be seen in the small on-site museum, the major collections from Dura Europos must be viewed elsewhere.

The books under review here were produced for exhibitions of material from the Dura Europos collections at Yale during the renovations of the Yale

University Art Gallery, which, when re-opened this December, will provide them with the permanent space they so richly deserve.³ While the modern discovery of Dura Europos in 1920 was by British military men, the excavations there were begun in the 1920s by the French and then continued down through the 1930s under the supervision of archaeologists from Yale. The artefacts were divided primarily between Yale and the National Museum in Damascus. Since the mid-1980s, new excavation and study at Dura Europos has been carried out by a joint Franco-Syrian project. Material from the current excavations goes to the collections of the museum in Deir ez-Zor, the nearest sizeable modern city, where one hopes they will survive the civil war that is raging in Syria. The excavations of the 1920s and 1930s were summarized in a series of preliminary reports and at least partially analyzed in detailed topical final report volumes appearing ever since.⁴ Preliminary reports of the recent excavations have been published, but more detailed studies are only beginning to appear. The volumes under review consciously have been planned to complement one another and taken together introduce for a general audience the history and importance of Dura Europos and its modern study. The essays in the Boston College volume (*Crossroads*) are in many cases very substantial examinations of specific topics where modern re-interpretation is questioning the emphasis of the earlier studies. As the curators of the exhibitions hoped, the occasion of mounting them was an opportunity to assess the current status of the study of the site and its artefacts and to suggest directions for further study.

For the history of the discovery and excavations, one might still wish to read the classic narrative, *The Discovery of Dura Europos* (1979) by Clark Hopkins, who for a time directed the excavation. In *Crossroads*, Lisa Brody summarizes the Yale involvement and Carol Snow discusses conservation of the material on site and when it first arrived at Yale. For the renewed excavations and conservation work, Pierre Leriche et al. (in *Edge*) provide a clear summary in which, in passing, he notes his disagreement with what he terms “speculations” about whether the Sasanians briefly held the city before the final conquest and whether they employed “chemical warfare” during its siege (as argued compellingly in *Crossroads*, with evocative illustrations, by military historian Simon James). While many of the original excavation photos are reproduced in both volumes, those in the selection at the back of *Edge* are larger and the far more elegantly printed. Margaret Olin’s general essay in *Crossroads* on the sometimes blinkered interpretations of the first excavators and analysts of the material makes for particularly interesting reading and is essential

background for any who would consult some of the early studies of the Dura Europos material.

A lot of attention in these volumes is directed to issues of identity – ethnic, religious, linguistic – although the authors wisely avoid jumping into the quicksand of weighing competing theoretical models in order to devise some new interpretive scheme. Rather, the emphasis is to move inquiry into new directions by a re-examination of specific topics and their historiography in ways that simply will illustrate the complexities which still invite full analysis. There are no simple answers to many of the difficult questions; in a sense what we are left with here is not an impression of how much has been learned, but how rudimentary our knowledge still is.

To a considerable degree, it was the discovery at Dura of important early murals and related sculpture from several religious traditions which first excited the scholarly world and some of the broader public. Ironically, the material had been preserved thanks to the desperation of the city’s defenders as it was about to fall to the Sasanians in the middle of the third century. To prop up the western walls, they built an earthen ramp that covered substantial parts of the buildings that had been built close to them on the inner side. While in the process parts of those buildings were destroyed, that which was buried survived and was protected from the elements and from human depredations. Here the excavators found some of the earliest Christian art in a small house that had been converted to worship space for an arguably small population of Christians. Not far away was a larger synagogue, whose walls displayed the earliest known Jewish pictorial imagery related to scriptures. This discovery was truly revolutionary, in that previously it had been thought such imagery had been forbidden by Jewish strictures against idolatry. Further along the wall were the remains of a Mythraeum, with imagery devoted to the god particularly favored by the Roman military, and beyond that was a major temple dedicated to the regional Semitic gods, with depictions including worshipping members of the local elite. Quite apart from the now substantial literature debating the relationship between image and scripture and attempting to contextualize the imagery with reference to visual representations found elsewhere, the religious art of Dura raises important issues about the degree to which the local residents of the city may have interacted, despite their religious differences. Among other things, graffiti on the walls of the buildings raise questions about the ethnicity of the devotees.

To a considerable degree, all of the essays focusing on religious practice and imagery in *Crossroads* ask

us to revise older views about religious rivalries and instead to consider that there may have been some fluidity in religious identities, especially where the visual evidence reveals discrepancies with what from a later perspective might be deemed canonical norms. Pamela Berger and Tessa Rajak address different aspects of the interpretation of the synagogue paintings, where certain details might seem to be “un-canonical” for Judaism and whose inclusion might have been a deliberate affront to adherents of the other faiths as well, should they have seen the imagery. As they explain, there are various ways to imagine viewer response and audience which do not necessarily contradict any assumption that the various communities within close proximity of one another interacted peaceably. Michael Peppard reminds readers that the Christian paintings found in the room that was the baptistery were made at a time when there was still no stable canon of the New Testament. Thus one should not assume (as most have done) that women depicted on part of the wall are processing to the tomb of Christ. Rather, he argues with ample textual support, it can logically be interpreted as a procession to a bridal chamber. A theological emphasis on baptism as death developed at a later time. Charles McClendon’s comparative essay on the relationship between the imagery and architecture in the Christian building and in the synagogue moves us beyond purely iconographic considerations into an understanding of sacred space. Maura Heyn’s careful delineation of the layers and placement of the images in the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods shows how important it is to keep in mind the chronology of an evolving set of images and to consider the placement of particular images within the architectural space. This then explains why earlier analysis failed to uncover a coherent iconographic scheme – there probably never was one. Patricia DeLeeuw’s attempt to find common elements in the worship spaces and rituals of the Christian building, synagogue and the Mythraeum also invites us to consider carefully the relationship between architecture and its decoration, even if she really ends up without clear proof of her contention that the prevailing mood in the Roman period (at least in Dura in the 3rd century) was indeed one of mutual tolerance of others’ religions, not resistance and competition. While there is important evidence regarding the presence of Palmyrenes in Dura (the Roman legion stationed there near the end was a Palmyrene one), as Licinda Dirven shows in her summary of her separately published monograph, the Dura material does not indicate they simply replicated the religious beliefs of their home city. In her argument, merchants away from home might readily be influenced by beliefs and worship of the region in which they were living, and the soldiers could just as

easily accommodate themselves to prevailing beliefs in the Roman army.

Most of these essays make full use of the excavation photos, some of which preserve details subsequently lost or obscured. *Crossroads* illustrates the synagogue paintings from the color reproductions made at the time of their discovery by Herbert Gute and now housed in the Yale collection (the original paintings, but for some of the ceiling tiles, are in the National Museum in Damascus and have not been publicly accessible during its major renovation). Thelma Thomas’s consideration (in *Edge*) of broader art historical issues regarding the paintings and some of the other visual material from Dura serves as a very timely reminder of the importance of the archival records, since, as she illustrates, one of the key images from the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods has tended to be analyzed from a version of the first photo that had been altered by removal of “extraneous” detail and colorized – photoshopping before the digital age, if you wish. One of the tasks of the recent Franco-Syrian collaboration has been to do a proper restoration of this image of Conon and his family performing a sacrifice (compare Ill. 1-19, p. 32, with Ills. 2-1, 2, 3, p. 43).

As several essays point out, any consideration of “identity” must perforce examine languages. Yet such evidence can be misleading, as names of individuals may not reflect their ethno-linguistic origins, and vagaries of preservation (as with the preponderance of Roman-period written material at Dura, much pertaining specifically to military matters) can provide a skewed perspective on language use. Jean Gascou’s essay (in *Edge*) on language diversity at Dura explains very clearly, with some well-selected examples, the nature of the evidence. One of the reasons Dura is so important is its having yielded so much written material, not all of which (notably the epigraphic material) has yet been properly published and analyzed.⁵ While around a dozen languages are attested, Greek was the “lingua franca” even in the Roman period; so he feels it is inappropriate to speak of the “Levantization” of the city. There was a clear hierarchy of languages, with all but Greek confined mainly to spheres of private life and some of them probably rapidly falling out of use.

We really could use more here on many of the other subjects which the rich finds at Dura could illustrate. Jennifer Baird’s essay on houses at Dura (in *Crossroads*) opens a fascinating subject which can be studied properly only by a careful re-examination of all the earlier expedition materials and by the results of new excavations. For it is critical to place artefacts in their original context and study the assemblage of the material, which must be reconstructed (for the

earlier excavations) on the basis of the unpublished field notes. The buildings were substantially altered and their uses often changed dramatically over time. If considered out of context, artefacts may seem to tell a very different story about their possible owners and the way they were used than if contextualized in what often turns out to be a complex mix of styles, origins, and identifiers. As Baird suggests, we have barely begun to get a full picture of life in Dura. While there is precious little specific to Dura in another of the essays, by Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow on the varied landscape of Roman practice and culture regarding water, latrines and baths, she poses interesting issues about the likelihood that Roman innovations might have faced considerable obstacles in entrenched local cultural practices.

Given that Dura was not first and foremost a commercial emporium, it is perhaps appropriate that evidence of long-distance exchange receives so little attention in these essays. What is here though is suggestive. Richard Grossmann offers a brief discussion of glass objects, opening for discussion the possibility production even at Dura might have served other locations along the Roman frontier such as Zeugma on the upper reaches of the Euphrates.⁶ A few distinctive bronze fasteners (of what is now best termed La Tène style) found at Dura point to some interesting possible connections as far away as Britain. Here though, as Nancy Netzer suggests, we are probably not talking about commerce but rather objects transported by Palmyran legionnaires who returned home after assignment on the northern Roman frontier. Sebastian Heath's all too short survey of some of the other evidence we might use to discuss external contacts of Dura focuses on ceramics and coins. Unfortunately in early excavations, there was no systematic and complete recording and preservation of potsherds, but what we have points to connections all along Rome's eastern frontier, from distant locations in the Mediterranean, and, surprisingly, the Pontus area in the Black Sea. Coins from Dura have been carefully preserved and catalogued; the site yielded several sizeable hoards.

The excavations at Dura, which surely rank amongst the most important archaeological projects of the 20th century, began in conditions of political instability, which, unfortunately, has returned to the region and very likely is interrupting the fruitful continuation of that pioneering work. One can hope though that eventually we will have an even fuller understanding of the site than we do to date on the basis of so much serious scholarly effort. Integrating the material into the broader patterns of Eurasian history is a very important task for the future.

II. SAVED FROM THE WATERS

Belkis/Zeugma and Its Mosaics. Ed. Rifat Ergeç. Istanbul: Sanko Holding, for the Gaziantep Museum, 2007. 224 pp. ISBN 978-975-9011-08-6.

Although now in print for several years, this book, of a genre that is designed to empty the wallets of visitors to the museum shop, is worth noting as an introduction to a spectacular assemblage of material recovered from recent archaeological salvage excavations. The site is that of Belkis/Zeugma, located in Turkey at a point on the Euphrates River where it separated into channels around some islands, thus facilitating easy crossing. The remains there first were identified in the 1970s as belonging to Zeugma and its sister city across the river, Apamea (not to be confused with Apamea in Syria, though named for the same lady). Evidence of looting and then the threat posed by the imminent construction of a dam just downriver led to serious excavations in the 1990s, which were just in time to salvage striking material from villas destined to be submerged in the rising lake. The material was taken to Gaziantep, restored, and can now be viewed in a new museum, to which the mosaics were transferred in 2011 from the old Archaeological Museum where I viewed a good many of them in 2010. (One might note the comments in this book about the museum exhibition space are now dated and somewhat confusing.) Since much remains at Zeugma above lake level, the expectation is that further excavations will reveal a lot which then will be left *in situ* in the protected environment of an open-air museum.

The book is of value first of all for its excellent color images, showing photos of the material *in situ* and then the mosaics after restoration. The arrangement is by individual villa; accompanying text describes what is in the mosaic and provides at least cryptic information on the excavation of it along with a sketch map of the building and the location in it of the mosaic. There is a useful chronology of the history of Zeugma as reported in the ancient sources, and a too short narrative account of why the site was important.⁶ The couple of pages on the excavation projects are cryptic, but at the end is a bibliography of publications concerning the site (through 2006).

While the city owes its formal establishment to Seleukos Nikator, Alexander's successor, the mosaics all date from the Roman period – probably late 2nd-early 3rd centuries – not long before the Sasanian conquest which also swallowed up Dura Europos downriver. Specialists on the Roman East presumably would find little surprising at Zeugma, since it was long known to have been an important hub on the

routes of communication and an administrative (later, in the post-Roman period, a church) center. Isidore of Charax's itinerary in his "Parthian Stations" (1st century CE) started here. For those of us new to this material, to find such striking evidence as mosaics of superb quality out along the frontiers of empire is a revelation. While Zeugma was only one of many possible crossing points on the Euphrates, it seems to have been of particular importance, often preferred to a more direct route east from Antioch (modern Antakya) via the desert route and Palmyra, given the logistical and political difficulties that could impede that latter road.⁷ For this northerly route, one might see Zeugma and Antioch as pivotal locations, the one pointing the way down into Mesopotamia, the other into the Mediterranean. In the excitement over the mosaics from Zeugma, it is easy to lose sight of the other important evidence which the excavations have yielded and which was included in the displays in the old Archaeological Museum along with other interesting material found elsewhere in this archaeologically rich region of southeastern Turkey. For example, there were large quantities of coins and seals, attesting to the city's prosperity and trade connections.

A close comparison of the material from Zeugma undoubtedly will reveal connections with Antioch, where the material we see in the museum there is primarily that unearthed by the Princeton excavations of the 1930s. In the more than half century since the Antioch mosaics went on display, a great deal has changed in thinking about museum exhibitions. Assuming that the Zeugma exhibits as I saw them in 2010 have retained their best features in their new home, the visitor will learn a great deal more about the context of the panels than is currently possible in Antakya. At Zeugma, where possible, some effort was made to preserve the walls around each mosaic floor, since many of the walls were decorated with murals. The sites around Antakya apparently were less well preserved and did not lend themselves to that kind of display. The Antakya museum thus crowds every inch of the high walls with panels which do not have an obvious connection to one another, and the captioning provides little help in understanding. In Gaziantep, apart from the careful reconstruction of the contexts of some villas allowing us to see the mosaics as if *in situ*, the captioning contains a lot of helpful information not only on the images themselves but on their location at the site, in each case reproducing the site plan for the villa in which the mosaics were found.

Of course both locations – Zeugma and Antioch – with their rich array of elite Roman villas are not exceptional for the Roman East. Above all what I think we learn from the inspiration of seeing this

material is how important it would be to develop a full understanding of the "eastern frontiers" of the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine worlds. These zones were ones of conflicting political ambitions, as evidenced in the substantial investment made in fortresses such as Dura, Halebiye and Resafa whose remains still impress. Some of the newer interpretations of the Roman frontiers see such fortifications which have survived to this day as more than defensive barriers protecting the empire against foreign incursion. Rather, they can be viewed as locations from which border communications might be monitored and exploited and from which Roman influence could be projected into the regions beyond.⁸ These were the zones of cultural and economic interaction. The Byzantine presence from the time of Justinian is very important, coming precisely when we learn of overtures from the Turk Empire which allegedly brought silk to Constantinople. What we call the Silk Roads did not stop somewhere in Central Asia but went on West; the objects of Hellenistic and Roman provenance which made their way into East Asia surely must have passed through these frontier zones and probably in most cases originated just west of them, not way off in the central Mediterranean.

III. "LET US WEEP, RECALLING A LOVE AND A LODGING BY THE RIM OF THE TWISTED SANDS"⁹

Claude Vibert-Guigue and Ghazi Bisheh, with a contribution by Frédéric Imbert. *Les peintures de Qusayr 'Amra. Un bain omeyyade dans la bâdiya jordanienne*. Beyrouth: l'Institut français du Proche-Orient, 2007. x + 228 pp. ISBN 970-2-35159-049-2.

I first heard of Qusayr 'Amra in a lecture by Oleg Grabar as part of his survey course in Islamic Art in the 1960s. When the opportunity finally came to travel in Jordan in 2010, seeing this remarkable site was no less exciting a prospect than visiting Petra. In the history of early Islamic art, Qusayr 'Amra occupies an important place. Though hardly unique for what it reveals, its extensively preserved murals are important, as Ghazi Bisheh states in his introductory essay, "in that they offer a wealth of iconographic themes unrivalled in any other contemporary monument and because they represent a key historical period when Islamic art was still in its formative stage" (p. 14). Even though located in the heart of the Umayyad empire, Qusayr 'Amra was still very much in a cultural "frontier zone." First discovered by a European in 1898 and first published in 1907, it is certainly well known (having received World Heritage Site designation in

1985), but its interpretation is as yet controversial. As at the Mogao Caves, some pieces of the murals were cut away and taken off to Western collections. Also, as at Mogao, the soot from those who camped out in the enclosure blackened some parts of the walls. Modern efforts at conservation and restoration have both helped and hindered our understanding of what was there. Hence the need for the volume under review, which seems to have escaped the attention it so richly deserves.

One drives about an hour away from Amman or Madaba into an increasingly stark desert terrain to arrive at the site, which would easily be missed if one happened to sneeze or momentarily glance in the opposite direction. In the spring a nearby wadi has flowing water, but otherwise its residents had to rely on a deep well, whose apparatus has now been reconstructed. The building is a bath house, built probably for the libertine Caliph Al-Walid II in the early 740s CE, a retreat in an area where he might have enjoyed hunting.¹⁰ Its murals would suggest that here he would entertain important guests (and thus was concerned to have imagery reflecting his pretensions as a ruler), and the entertainments might well involve libertine excess (as witnessed by the several images of naked or semi-naked women entertainers and bathers). The imagery draws on various traditions – notably late Roman/Byzantine, but also with some apparent influence of Sasanian themes. Some scenes seem to pertain to particular dynastic concerns of the Caliph, others to his larger world-view of his position in a very broad political landscape. There are scenes of the hunt, depictions of craftsmen at work, scenes drawn from stock imagery of Classical art (even if the sources were not always understood). A remarkable domed ceiling depicts a sky map with constellations and zodiac images.

The substance of this book is the large-format catalogue of illustrations, based on Vibert-Guigue's dissertation research in which he carefully documented the structure and its decoration. This undertaking had long been needed: some of what had been depicted in the first photographs taken a century ago in very difficult conditions had since been damaged or removed, and the Spanish conservators in the 1970s often went overboard in their "restorations." As his brief introduction explains in its review of this earlier history, what Vibert-Guigue has done is to try to peel back (figuratively and by photography and drawing) the accumulated damage, and then reconstruct as best possible what can be reasonably documented about the original images. Thus, he has meticulous "archaeological drawings" showing what is currently visible, which then can be juxtaposed with reconstructions to which

he has brought all the evidence available from the earlier documentation and his minute examination of every square centimeter of the surface. He separates out the unfortunately abundant later graffiti, which have damaged the surface; he provides the clearest possible renderings of the important inscriptions in Arabic and Greek (concerning which Frédéric Imbert contributed here); his photos, in color and black and white provide closeup detail; and he has drawn hypothetical renderings of what he thinks was their original color scheme.

Even though for the casual visitor (such as I was in 2010) there is much that is clearly visible (see my photos below), important imagery is often quite difficult to make out without the assistance of the reconstructions. I think it is safe to conclude that few will question Vibert-Guigue's visual documentation. It will be indispensable for any future analysis of the imagery, which will continue to invite a range of interpretations. Rarely, I think, has any effort at visually documenting an important site been done with such meticulous care and been so well published.

Some of the introductory material in the book – most importantly Ghazi Bisheh's essay – is printed here in French and English (his essay also in Arabic). Otherwise, everything is in French. However, for those who do not read the language, that should serve as no impediment to mining the book for its impressive visual documentation. In the visitor center at Qusayr 'Amra, there are very informative trilingual displays, illustrated in part with some of the same drawings found in this volume and obviously a product of the project, in which Vibert-Guigue played an important role, co-sponsored by the Institut français du Proche-Orient and Department of Antiquities of Jordan.

Notes

1. My site visits were made possible thanks to a generous Emeritus Fellowship from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.
2. In connection with the exhibitions in 2011, the Yale Art Gallery created a very informative website, which includes a lot of the original excavation photographs and drawings: "Dura Europos: Excavating Antiquity" <<http://artgallery.yale.edu/duraeuropos/>>.
3. A bibliography listing the excavation reports, preliminary and final, and a selection of the other literature on Dura Europos may be downloaded from: <<http://artgallery.yale.edu/duraeuropos/Dura-Europos-resources.pdf>>.
4. Descriptive cataloguing (and in many cases the full texts) of the papyri can be accessed by searching under P.Dura at <<http://papyri.info/>>. Good images of a few are in Gascou's article.
5. Grossmann has compiled an informative guide to ancient glass in the Yale collections, which may be downloaded at

<http://artgallery.yale.edu/pdf/perspect/ancient_glass.pdf>.

6. For a lot more detailed information, including a chapter containing a compendium of the ancient sources, see David Kennedy, *The Twin Towns of Zeugma on the Euphrates: Rescue Work and Historical Studies*. Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary Series No. 27 (Portsmouth, RI: 1998).

7. A detailed exploration of the routes on the Euphrates around Zeugma, based on aerial photographs and ground survey is Anthony Comfort et al., "Crossing the Euphrates in Antiquity: Zeugma Seen from Space," *Anatolian Studies* 50 (2000): 99-126; idem, "Following the Euphrates in Antiquity: North-South Routes around Zeugma," *Anatolian Studies* 51 (2001): 19-49.

8. See the discussion in a very recent popular account, Andrew Curry, "Roman Frontiers," *National Geographic* 222/3 (September 2012), esp. pp. 117, 122. He goes on to cite Dura Europos as a prime example of a town on the Roman frontier (pp. 122-3, 126).

9. Imru' al Qays, *Mu'allaqa* 1-2, tr. Arberry, quoted by Garth Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (Berkeley etc.: University of California Press, 2004), p. 85.

10. I am following here the fascinating if often highly speculative account by Fowden, who was aware of Vibert-Guigue's dissertation that served as the basis for the volume under review here.

DURA EUROPOS

All photographs © Daniel C. Waugh



(left) *The Palmyrene (west) Gate.* (above) *The Palace of the Dux Ripae, looking south along the Euphrates*

(below) *Two composite images: 1) The Citadel; 2) View to the west across main part of the city.*





The now denuded remains of the Christian house (left) and the synagogue (right)



Two ceiling tiles from the synagogue. Collection of the National Museum, Damascus.



Mural depicting an onager hunt, with details showing Palmyrene graffiti and the Greek inscription dating the painting to 194 CE. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Gift from Yale University, 1935. AO 17310.



(left) Cult stele to the god Aphlad from the Temple of Aphlad at Dura, ca. 53/54 CE. Damascus National Museum.



(right) Statue of Aphrodite from the Temple of Artemis, at Dura 2nd-3rd century CE. Musée du Louvre, AO 20126.

(below middle) Cult relief of Shalman's son from the Temple of Bel. Deir ez-Zor Museum.



(bottom) Mural depicting Conon's sacrifice from the naos of the Temple of Bel. Photograph made from a hand-colored negative, on display in the site museum at Dura.



ZEUGMA

All photographs © 2010 by Daniel C. Waugh,
taken in the Archaeological Museum in Gaziantep



An aerial view of the salvage excavation



The "Gypsy Girl" (a maenad), the fragmentary mosaic that has become the symbol of Gaziantep



*(above) Poseidon
(below) Okeanos and Tethys*



A bronze statue of Mars



Three views of the room in the Poseidon Villa displaying on its floor the Birth of Aphrodite



(left) Cupid and Psyche

A dolphin





Euphrates and the river gods



The Abduction of Europa

QUSAYR 'AMRA

Photographs *in situ* © 2010 Daniel C. Waugh



View from the north



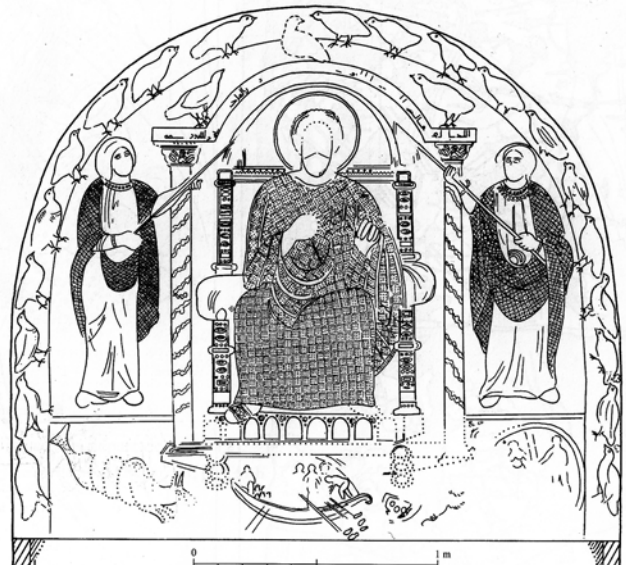
In the central aisle of the reception hall:

(above) detail of the vault painting.

(left and below) the enthronement scene on the south wall — below the photograph is Vibert-Guigue's "archaeological drawing" and next to it his reconstruction drawing.



Drawings © l'Institut français du Proche-Orient and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, from Vibert-Guigue and Bisheh, *Les Peintures*, Pl. 15. Reproduced with permission.





Murals on the west wall of the reception hall. Along the top is a hunting scene, with animals being driven into a net around which are men with torches. Below on the left is a poorly preserved group of the six kings symbolic of those whose territories the Umayyads claimed. To their right is the bathing scene with the semi-naked woman Fowden thinks is a captive Sasanian princess. Further to the right are gymnasts. The image below is Vibert-Guigue's reconstruction of the original appearance of the mural.



Painting © l'Institut français du Proche-Orient and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, from Vibert-Guigue and Bisheh, *Les Peintures*, Pl. 118. Reproduced with permission.



(above, left to right): the "Sasanian princess" on the west wall; a woman bearing a dish on the south soffit of the east arch; a dancing girl on the south soffit of the west arch.

(right) carpenters, one of a set of images of craftsmen on the vault of the east aisle.



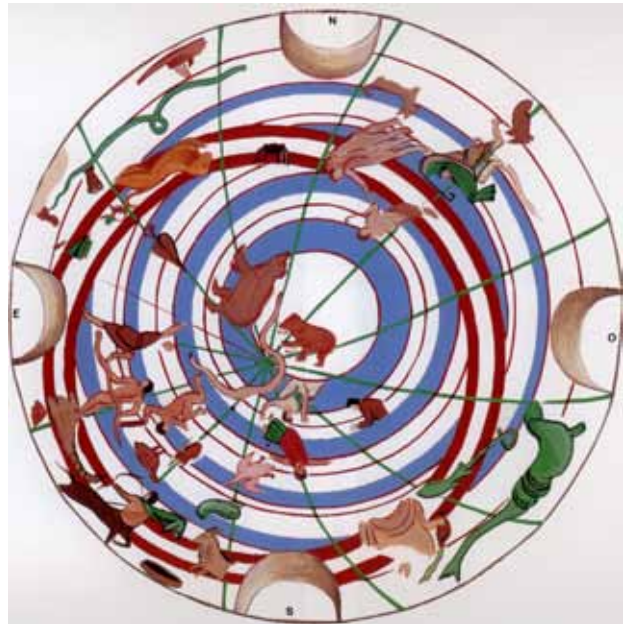
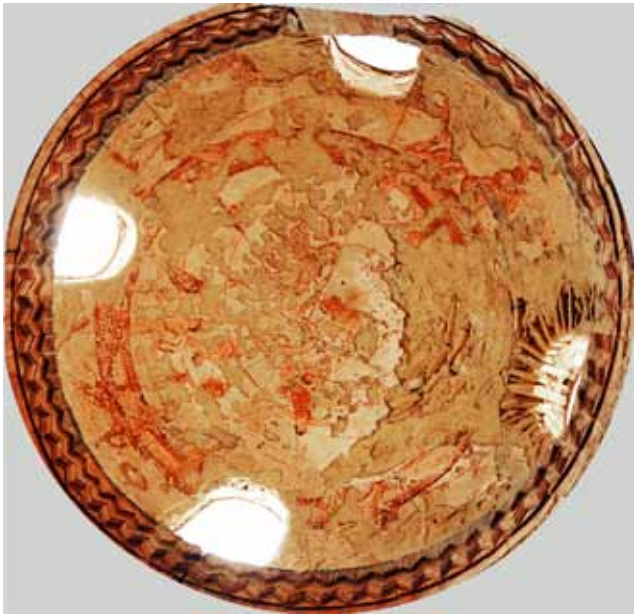
(below) pensive woman with Eros, central aisle, northwest spandrel.





Bathing scene on the southern lunette of the tepedarium (warm room of the bath).

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Cupola of the caldarium (cold room) with the sky chart and signs of the Zodiac; on right Vibert-Guigue's reconstruction; below details including (left) Andromeda and (right) Orion.

