

# Treasures saved from rising waters in Turkey

by Molly Moore  
The Washington Post  
November 14, 2000

ZEUGMA, Turkey - Inch by inch, the rising waters of the newly dammed Euphrates River have been swallowing this ancient city of the Roman Empire: the 2,000-year-old public piazzas, the lavish villas with their exquisite mosaic tile floors, the still-undiscovered buildings with unknown treasures.

For four months, nearly 200 archaeologists worked frenetically to record and save artifacts from one of the best-preserved Roman cities ever uncovered. Last month, the race ended, with the waters of an artificial lake lapping at the last visible remnants of ancient stonework.

The archaeologists rescued 10 complete mosaics depicting scenes from mythology and literature, the largest collection of Roman government seals - more than 50,000 - ever found at a single site, bronze statues of Venus and nearly 2,000 other antiquities.

"The degree of preservation and quality of the artifacts we're uncovering could be compared to Pompeii," said Robert Early, senior project manager for the British-based Oxford Archaeological Unit, which specializes in salvaging endangered ancient sites.

Now the water has submerged a third of Zeugma, including buildings and artifacts archaeologists simply ran out of time to explore and others that they preserved in mortar and sand to be rediscovered if ever the dam is

taken out of service. The race to explore and preserve Zeugma - once a wealthy trading city and military post on the Silk Road, ancient Rome's route to China - is part of a broader struggle between Turkey's drive to modernize its economy and scholars' efforts to save rare treasures from 10,000 years of history here in the ancient region of Mesopotamia.

To provide electricity to its energy-starved cities and irrigate a broad swath of the arid, impoverished southeast, the Turkish government is building a network of 22 dams and 19 hydroelectric plants and canals, at a cost of about \$34 billion, across the Euphrates and Tigris river valleys.

But the dams of the Southeast Anatolia Project will inundate hundreds of ancient archaeological sites, only a few dozen of which researchers say they have any hope of salvaging from the reservoir waters. In the areas that will be submerged by just the next two dams built, archaeologists say they have identified 250 significant sites, only 30 of which are scheduled to be surveyed or partially excavated.

"As a result of modernization, archaeological evidence is being destroyed in an irreversible way," said Numan Tuna, a Turkish professor involved in surveying the newly threatened sites. "Culture needs to be protected. For many of our sites, it is already too late."

Of all the threatened historical sites, none has attracted more international attention than Zeugma, a city that disappeared 800 years

ago. Archaeologists say the intact best finds of their kind from Roman days. One shows the sea god



For four months, nearly 200 archaeologists worked frenetically to record and save artifacts from one of the best-preserved Roman cities ever uncovered; last month, the race ended, with the waters of an artificial lake lapping at the last visible remnants of ancient stonework. Workers pictured here clean a rare stone tablet showing the 1st century king Antiochus I clasping hands with Apollo, the sun god.

mosaics found here, which adorned the floors of reception rooms and hallways in the city's most opulent villas, are some of the

Poseidon perched in a golden chariot drawn by a pair of silver horses.

Although archaeologists - and

thieves - slowly chipped away at Zeugma's mysteries for nearly four decades, it was not until June that scientists began racing the rise of a 17-square-mile lake behind the Birecik dam, a half-mile away. With only four months remaining before the lake would claim Zeugma, the California-based Packard Humanities Institute offered \$5 million to finance an emergency rescue effort.

"Normally excavations are planned years in advance and take years to complete," said David W. Packard, president of the institute. "This was compressed into a very brief period, with an extremely intense rush of activity."

Archaeologists estimate they accomplished in four months here what usually would take about 10 years. Even so, they excavated only the one-third of Zeugma to be submerged. No funds are available to explore the rest of the city.

Archaeologists were amazed by what they discovered beneath 15 feet of khaki-colored soil and orchards of leathery-leaved pistachio trees. Zeugma contained more extraordinary relics and was far better preserved than had been believed.

"This site is special because of the level of preservation" and the scale of the find, said Early. "This was about an entire city, not rooms in a house. We have a representative sample of the city of Zeugma from evolution to decline."

Whether it was destroyed by earthquake or invasion - archaeologists and historians cannot yet say - Zeugma remained relatively untouched by later civilizations. The last of its estimated 50,000 inhabitants disappeared so quickly that archaeologists have discovered expertly crafted figurines of copper alloys, coin-filled leather purses and a gold ring for sealing official documents - all items that normally would have been pilfered from such a site centuries ago.

Those artifacts will give historians extraordinarily detailed insights into the way the early Romans lived, worked and played. Already, archaeologists have examined the remains of what they ate - olive pits, lentils and wheat grains - and glimpsed the lifestyles of the wealthy traders and military commanders who resided in the city's poshest suburbs.

## Lott challenged to unite a divided Senate

by Helen Dewar  
The Washington Post  
November 14, 2000

WASHINGTON - With his margin of control sharply reduced by last week's elections, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., is coming under pressure from both parties to abandon confrontational tactics that contributed to the chamber's paralyzing partisanship over the past few years.

Hard as it was to run the Senate this year with a 54-46 GOP majority, lawmakers say, it will be even more difficult for Lott to move legislation now that voters have given him the closest Senate margin in nearly a half-century: no more than a vote or two to spare.

"We simply cannot continue the status quo," said Sen. Olympia J. Snowe of Maine, a leading Republican moderate, referring to the gridlock that occurred during the 106th Congress when Democrats pushed for votes on their initiatives, Lott blocked them and they retaliated with stalling tactics.

Although he does not face a challenge to his reelection as majority leader, at least not so far, Lott is in a vise. He has to deal with Democrats to get anything done and satisfy GOP moderates, but if he tilts too far to the left, he could face an uprising on his right flank that could jeopardize his job.

In comments since the election, Lott has sent mixed signals about his intentions.

Lott took a couple of jabs at Sen-elect Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., prompting some angst in both parties. But by the weekend he was indicating - at least in general terms - that he is ready to work with Democrats.

"There are some things we can do together, and we'll have to," Lott said on Fox News Sunday. Senators reported that, within days of Tuesday's elections, Lott was soliciting views of colleagues by phone.

As a result of the balloting, Demo-

crats are emboldened. Republicans are demoralized and restive, and moderates of both parties - despite few successes in recent years - are poised to push both parties toward compromises that neither would choose if left to its own devices.

Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle, D-S.D., whose clout was significantly enhanced by Tuesday's vote, has called for "power-sharing," including equal or near-equal representation on committees, a voice for Democrats in scheduling Senate votes and an end to the GOP practice of blocking votes on Democratic amendments. Daschle's staff is already deep into research on how other legislative bodies divide power when the parties are closely balanced.

Unless Lott gives Democrats the power their numbers warrant, "We will have total legislative chaos," Daschle said in a post-election interview.

Perhaps more significant, some Republicans, including conservative mavericks as well as moderates, are urging a vastly more cooperative approach by Lott and other GOP leaders.

"There's got to be more cooperation ... more consultation," said Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., who intends to pursue the reform agenda from his presidential campaign when the new Senate convenes in January. "The entire leadership has to change the way it does business," including giving Democrats more committee seats and allowing allowing votes on their amendments, he said. GOP leaders must schedule action on major issues, some of which they tried to thwart this year, such as strong HMO regulations, a prescription drug benefit for seniors, tighter budget controls and "a reasonable approach to gun control," McCain added.

When a Republican leadership that pushed for a filibuster-proof, 60-vote majority only a few years ago is now straining to keep 51 votes, "You've got to know something's wrong," said McCain.



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