

# Zeugma (Commagene)

Coordinates: 37°3′31″N 37°51′57″E﻿ / ﻿37.05833°N 37.86583°E﻿ / 37.05833; 37.86583

**Zeugma** (Greek: Ζεῦγμα; Syriac: ܙܘܓܡܐ) was an ancient Hellenistic era Greek and then Roman city of Commagene; located in modern Gaziantep Province, Turkey. It was named for the bridge of boats, or *zeugma*,<sup>[1]</sup> that crossed the Euphrates at that location.<sup>[2]</sup> Zeugma Mosaic Museum contains mosaics from the site, and is one of the largest mosaic museums in the world.

## History

Zeugma was founded in the early 3rd century BC as the city of Seleucia by Seleucus I Nicator, a Diadochus (successor) to Alexander the Great and Hellenistic Greek founder of the Seleucid Kingdom, on the site where he had the first bridge over the Euphrates built.<sup>[3]</sup> In 64 BC, the Roman Republic gained control of the city. Zeugma was of great importance to the Roman Empire as it was located at a strategically important place. Up to 70,000 people lived in the city, and it became a center for the military and commerce for the ancient Romans.<sup>[2]</sup> In 253 AD, it was destroyed by the Sassanids, but was later rebuilt.<sup>[3]</sup>

In late antiquity, Zeugma was a diocese of the early Roman church, but the place seems to have been abandoned in the 7th century due to Sassanid Persian and then Arab raids by the Umayyad Caliphate. Arabs lived there temporarily in the Middle Ages. By the 17th century the Ottoman Turkish village of Belkis was built near the ruins.

## Preservation

Initially the site was excavated sporadically, but in 2000, the site would be flooded due to construction of the Birecik Dam.<sup>[4]</sup> With only a fraction of the site excavated, archeologists feared that many mosaics would be permanently lost.<sup>[5]</sup> After reading about it in *The New York Times*, and with only few months left, American philanthropist David W. Packard donated USD 5 million to fund an emergency excavation of the archeological site, allowing archeologists to preserve the mosaics that would otherwise be inundated by the dam.<sup>[6][7]</sup> The mosaics that were excavated were initially stored at the Gaziantep Museum, and are nowadays displayed at the Zeugma Mosaic Museum.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Zeugma

Ζεῦγμα



Parts of Zeugma have become submerged in the Euphrates River since the construction of the Birecik Dam



Shown within Turkey

<b>Location</b>	Belkis, <span><span><span><span></span></span> Gaziantep Province, Turkey</span></span>
<b>Region</b>	Commagene
<b>Coordinates</b>	<span><span><span><span><span>37°3′31″N</span> <span>37°51′57″E</span></span></span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>﻿</span></span><span><span>37.05833°N 37.86583°E</span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>37.05833; 37.86583</span></span></span></span></span>
<b>Type</b>	Settlement
	<b>History</b>
<b>Builder</b>	<span><span><span><span></span></span> Seleucus I Nicator</span></span>
<b>Founded</b>	300 BC
	<b>Site notes</b>
<b>Condition</b>	Partially submerged

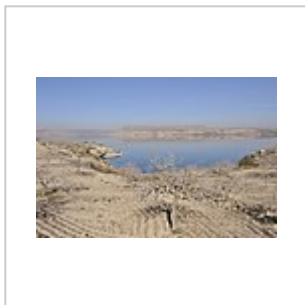
Zeugma has been on the UNESCO World Heritage Site tentative list since 2012. Extant archaeological remains at the site include "the Hellenistic Agora, the Roman Agora, two sanctuaries, the stadium, the theatre, two bathhouses, the Roman legionary base, administrative structures of the Roman legion, the majority of the residential quarters, Hellenistic and Roman city walls, and the East, South and West necropolises."<sup>[9]</sup>

Three large glass mosaics were discovered at Zeugma in 2014, including one depicting the nine muses.<sup>[10]</sup>

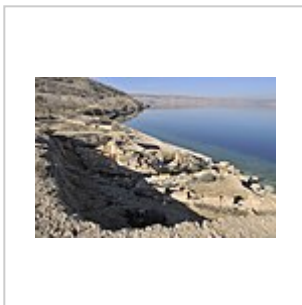
In February 2020, it was reported that the Zeugma Mosaic Museum attracted a record 340,569 visitors in 2019, according to the Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Gallery

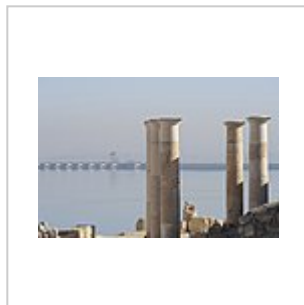
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Zeugma The lake



Zeugma Excavations



Zeugma Excavations and dam



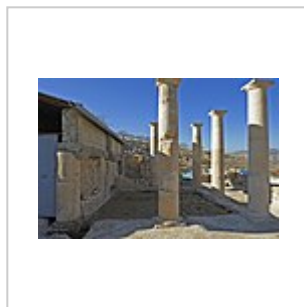
Zeugma The dam



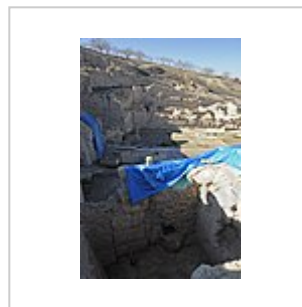
Zeugma Excavations



Zeugma Excavations



Zeugma Excavations



Zeugma Excavations



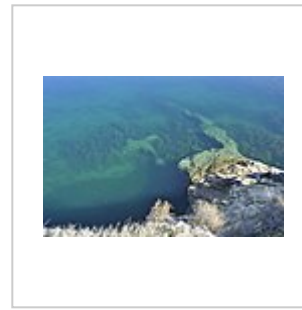
Zeugma  
Excavations



Zeugma  
Excavations



Zeugma  
Excavations



Zeugma  
Excavations

## See also

- [Birecik Dam Cemetery](#)
- [Seleucia at the Zeugma](#)
- [Hasankeyf](#)

## References

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2. "Museum of Roman Mosaics to Open in Turkey" (<https://www.luxurytravelmagazine.com/news-articles/museum-of-roman-mosaics-to-open-in-turkey>). *www.luxurytravelmagazine.com*. Retrieved 2020-03-28.
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10. "Stunning Mosaics Uncovered in Ancient City of Zeugma | Archaeology | Sci-News.com" (<http://www.sci-news.com/archaeology/science-mosaics-ancient-city-zeugma-02307.html>). *Breaking Science News | Sci-News.com*. 28 November 2014. Retrieved 2020-05-05.

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## Further reading

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- Özgen Acar (September–October 2000). "Troubled Waters" (<http://www.archaeology.org/0009/etc/turkey.html>). *Archaeology Magazine*, Volume 53 Number 5.
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## External links

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- This article incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: Herbermann, Charles, ed. (1913). "Zeugma". *Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company.
- "Zeugma, A Roman Town in Anatolia" ([https://web.archive.org/web/20060224135521/http://www.videosoftware.com/video\\_details.asp?id=169](https://web.archive.org/web/20060224135521/http://www.videosoftware.com/video_details.asp?id=169)), a short documentary video
- Zeugmaweb.com (<http://www.zeugmaweb.com/zeugma/english/engindex.htm>)
- Pictures of the Zeugma site (<http://www.pbase.com/dosseman/zeugma>)
- Zeugma (<https://www.livius.org/za-zn/zeugma/zeugma.html>) at Livius.org (<https://www.livius.org/>), article and photos
- BBC: The Secret Treasures of Zeugma (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/science/horizon/2000/zeugma.shtml>)
- UWA Classics and Ancient History Research: Zeugma on the Euphrates ([http://www.classics.uwa.edu.au/about/research/zeugma\\_on\\_the\\_euphrates](http://www.classics.uwa.edu.au/about/research/zeugma_on_the_euphrates))
- Gaziantep Archaeology Museum ([https://web.archive.org/web/20101108084221/http://gaziantepcity.info/en/gaziantep\\_archaeology\\_museum](https://web.archive.org/web/20101108084221/http://gaziantepcity.info/en/gaziantep_archaeology_museum))
- Some photos from the Zeugma Museum (Gaziantep, Turkey) (<http://photos.alishomepage.com/?parameters=Sceneries,13&lang=en>)
- Description of Zeugma on Gaziantep website ([https://web.archive.org/web/20120530102711/http://www.gaziantepcity.info/en/zeugma\\_city](https://web.archive.org/web/20120530102711/http://www.gaziantepcity.info/en/zeugma_city))

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