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### **THE INVESTIGATIONS IN 2003 'AT MEYDANI' AND SURROUNDINGS**

M. Hartmann and M. A. Speidel

The sixth archaeological campaign investigating Roman military installations in the immediate vicinity of ancient Zeugma was conducted between February 18<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> and from April 28<sup>th</sup> to June 6<sup>th</sup> 2003. It was under the direction of Dr. Hamza Güllüce of the Gaziantep Museum and of Dr. Martin Hartmann, project leader of the Swiss Team. The team also included Prof. Mahmut Drahor with his team from Dokuz Eylül University,<sup>1</sup> Ahmet Beyazlar (Gaziantep Museum), the archaeologists Dr. Jürg Ewald and Werner Rutishauser, as well as Prof. Dr. Michael A. Speidel (University of Bern),<sup>2</sup> co-project leader, and 15 local workmen.

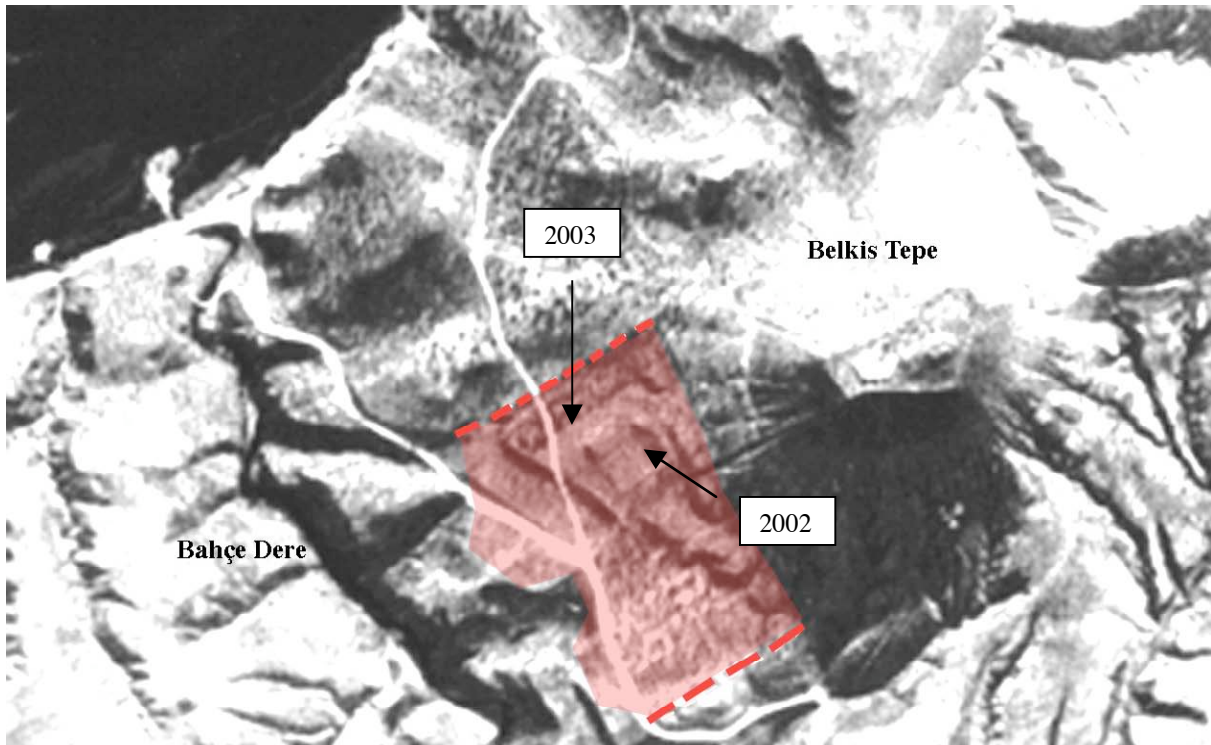


Fig. 1. Russian satellite photograph showing the presumed area of Roman military occupation with the areas of archaeological investigation in 2002 ('At Meydani' plateau) and in 2003.

In 2002, our investigations led to the discovery of several Latin inscriptions and numerous Roman military tile stamps all from within a large area of c. 20 ha in the immediate vicinity of the ancient city of Zeugma, and distinctly separated from it (fig.1). A geophysical survey and trial trenches on the 'At Meydani' plateau NW of Belkis Tepe further revealed the clear outlines of architectural structures that match those of Roman military installations as well as many fragments of Roman military equipment of the late first to the fourth century AD. The results of the 2002 campaigns have recently been published.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, this was a discovery of great archaeological and historical importance and required further investigations.

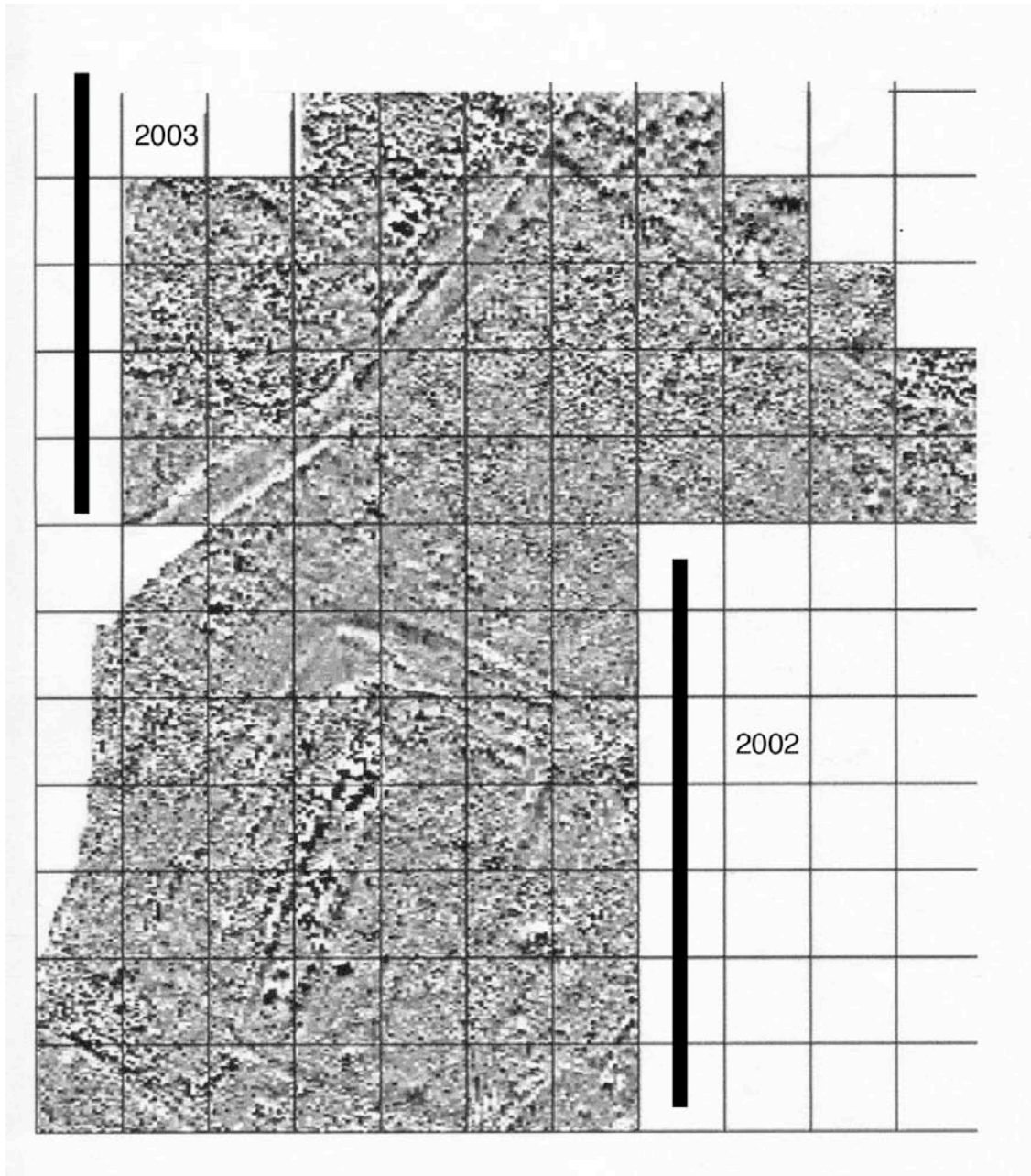


Fig. 2a. Large-scale gradiometer image of 'At Meydani' area in Zeugma, after despiking, low-pass 3x3 and sun relief 0° (2002 and 2003 combined).

In February 2003, therefore, a second geophysical survey was carried out in the fields adjacent to the 'At Meydani' plateau. The aim of this survey was to collect further information on the nature of the archaeological remains in the area of Roman military occupation.

The geophysics team was led by Prof. Mahmut Drahor from Dokuz Eylül University at Izmir. The team carried out a geophysical survey in February 18-27, 2003 in area of

100x200m. Both gradiometry and resistivity methods were applied and a full report was delivered in April 2003. The image produced by the gradiometry data shows a variety of architectural structures in NW-NE and NE-SW directions (fig.2a). The resistivity profiling data was collected in 1m intervals along 10 N-S profiles by the Wenner type array ( $a = 1, 3, \text{ and } 5\text{m}$ ). This data was processed by inversion and interpreted via electrical resistivity tomography (ERT) in order to obtain true resistivity and depths in the study area (fig.2b).

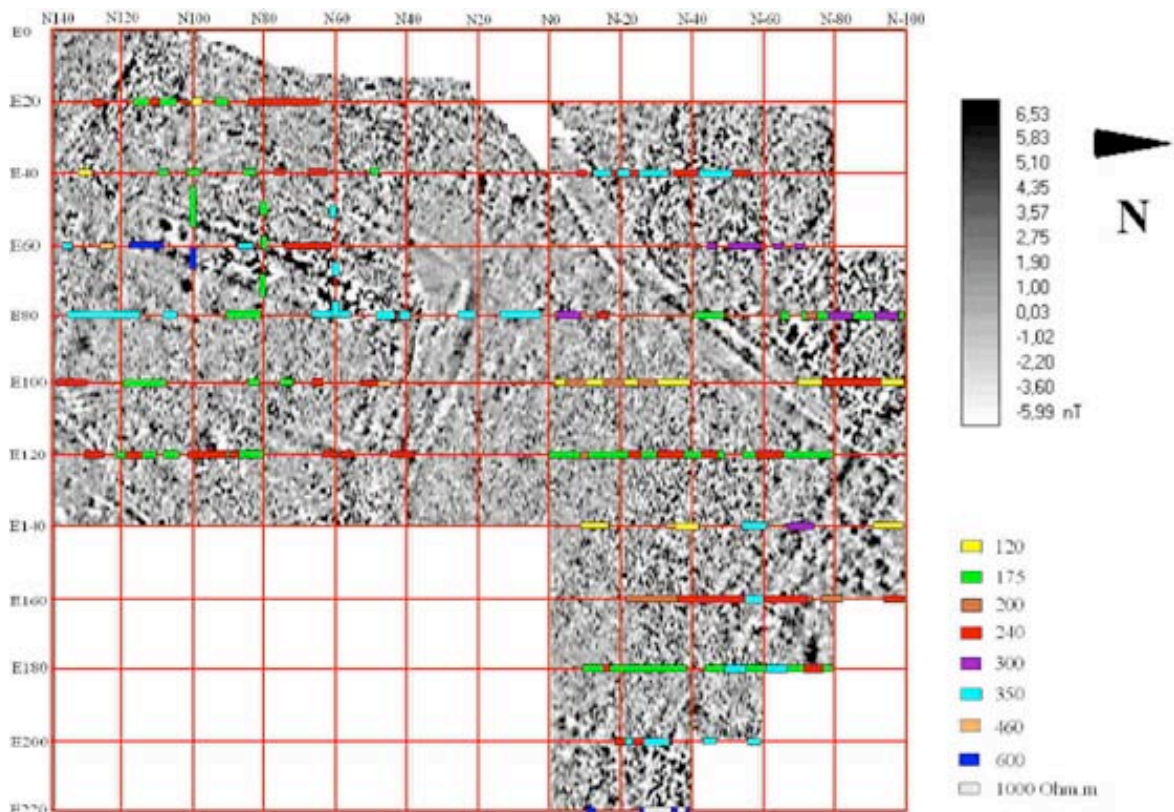


Fig.2b: Magnetic gradiometer image together with true resistivity (2002 and 2003 combined).

The results show a significant correlation between the resistivity and the magnetic data, both clearly supporting each other. This indicates that each method by itself successfully revealed the archaeological features in the investigated area. The results of both methods were superimposed (fig.2b) and served as an invaluable guide for the archaeological field work. It was now clear that the archaeological structures, in general, are fairly close to the surface (0.5 - 1 m), though some particularly in the northern and western sections of the field are deeper (2 - 2.5m).

In May and June 2002 seven trenches were dug in order to verify and clarify the geophysical results (fig.3).

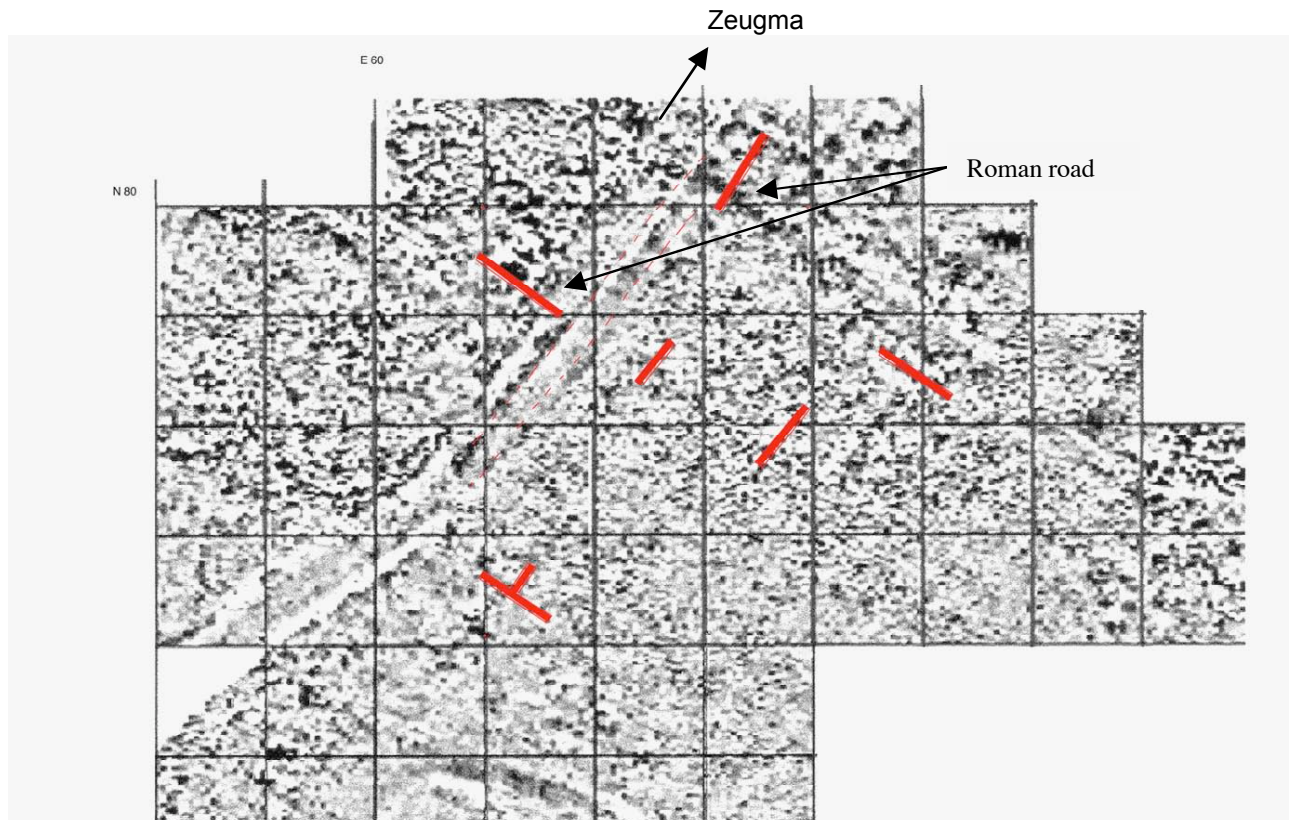


Fig. 3. The position of the trial trenches of the 2003 campaign.

The soundings clearly verified the features detected by Prof. Drahor's geophysical survey. Thus, as expected from the gradiometer image, we uncovered roadway structures in trenches 1 and 4. One of the roads seems to have been a main road, as it leaves the area of military occupation and leads directly to the centre of ancient Zeugma. Trench 1 also revealed the remains of workshops (fig.4), and trenches 1 and 3 of a complicated system of clay pipes (fig.5). As in 2002, walls constructed of large rectangular blocs of stone were also discovered (fig.5).



Fig. 4. Roadway structures and workshop in trench S 1.



Fig. 5. Wall of large blocks of stone and system of clay pipes in trench S 3.

Fragments of a *latrina* and the remains of a two-coloured mosaic in trench 6 appear to indicate the existence of a bath house (fig. 6).



Fig. 6. The remains of a *latrina* in trench S 6.

The stratigraphy in the trenches, as well as the small finds point to an occupation of the area from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> to at least the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (fig. 7). As yet, no underlying structures preceding those of the Roman military occupation could be observed.



Fig. 7. Three coins illustrating the rang from the 2nd to 5th century AD.



Fig. 8. A selection of Roman military equipment from the 2003 campaign (scabbards, mantrap, axes, parts of a catapult).

The significant amount of Roman military equipment (arrow- and spearheads, armour scales, scabbards, mantraps, mail shirts, helmets, parts of a catapult etc.) from the trenches, reconfirm the conclusions drawn from the numerous stamped tiles collected during the surface survey in the investigated area and prove the assumed Roman military nature of these archaeological remains right.

In parallel with the archaeological field work we continued our surface survey between April 28th and June 6th 2003 in the area we defined as one of Roman military occupation in 2002 (fig.1). Again, this survey led to the discovery of nearly 80 stamped tiles and several fragments of Latin inscriptions. This year, some fragments of inscriptions were also excavated from the trial trenches (fig. 9).





Table 1: Roman military units attested at Zeugma

Units:	by tile stamps	by inscriptions
Coh 00 Maurorum		X
Legiones P(annoniae) Inf(erioris)		X(X)
Legio I	X	
Legio I Adiutrix		X
Legio I Italica	X	
Legio II	X	
Legio II Adiutrix		X
Legio III (Augusta?)	X	
Legio IIII (Flavia?)	X	
Legio IIII Scythica	X	X
Legio VII	X	
Legio VII C.p.f.	X	X
Legio X Gemina		X
Legio XIII Gemina	X	
Equites scutarii Aureliaci	X	

It is clear from the number of stamped tiles that *legio IV Scythica* was by far the most active legion in the investigated area (table 2). Of a total of now 190 stamped tiles, of which our team found 153 in 2002 and 2003 only 20 are not of *legio IV Scythica*, whereas 170 were stamped by this legion.

Table 2: tile stamps of legions found at Zeugma in 2002 and 2003

Leg I	2
Leg I IT	1
Leg II	1
Leg III	6
Leg IIII	1
Leg IIII SCY	133
Leg VII	2
Leg P IN	1
Leg XIII (?)	3
Leg (?)	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>

## Conclusions

These results further confirm last year's analysis and add additional information to the findings of the 2002 campaign.<sup>3</sup> The results from both campaigns were presented to the international scholarly community at the 14.th International Roman Frontiers Congress in Pécs, Hungary in September 2003, and attracted the undivided interest of all those present.

We appear to be dealing with a large area which was reused at different occasions by the Roman army between roughly the late first to the fourth century AD. The stamped tiles show that most of the building activities in the described area were undertaken by the local *legio IV Scythica* whose permanent base in the wider surroundings of Zeugma still remains undiscovered. However, other units mainly from the Danube provinces, but also from North Africa were also involved in building activities in the same fields, albeit on a much smaller scale. The many fragments of Latin inscriptions found during the campaigns in 2002 and 2003 clearly show the military and official nature of the place and several fragments show parts of imperial titulatures. Almost all of these fragments will have belonged to honorary monuments or building inscriptions. The great amount of Roman military equipment dating from the same period clearly confirm this picture. The inscriptions and the constructions in stone, as well as the likely existence of a richly decorated bath highlight the extraordinary quality of at least some of the buildings and indicate that they had been constructed with the intention of reuse.

The exact functions and chronology of the buildings remain yet to be investigated. It seems clear, however, from the undeniable military nature of the findings that their construction was occasioned by the repeated wars between Rome and Parthia or Persia. Until the end of the second century at least, the investigated area may have served as a gathering point for the Roman expeditionary forces, in particular those from the Danube provinces and Northern Africa. Here they would have awaited their commanding general. On occasion this would have been the Roman emperor himself. Here he would have addressed his troops, performed all necessary religious

ceremonies, and from here he would have led them into enemy territory. Even after the empire's frontier had moved further East the investigated area could have continued to serve the same basic purpose. During military campaigns the area and its buildings may have served manifold logistical purposes.

As yet, the investigated area with its assumed central military purpose, its repeated reuse over many centuries and its massive stone constructions, some of surprisingly high quality, is unique to Roman archaeology! Already, the achieved results are of the greatest archaeological and historical importance! They shed new light on the history of the ancient Near East, on Roman foreign and international relations with its eastern neighbours and its greatest rival, on the organisation of the eastern frontier and of military campaigns, on the Roman army in general and its relations to the local population etc. However, further and detailed information as towards the exact chronology, the function and purpose of the architectural remains can only be obtained by future investigations and large scale excavations.

### **Out-look**

Much of what made Roman rule so enduring in these extremely diverse regions of the East with Rome's great rival neighbour just beyond the empire's borders remains unknown. Our written sources are plagued with gaps and tend only to illuminate short episodes. In particular, archaeological and epigraphic sources remain, as yet, extremely scarce. There are only very few archaeological excavations on the Euphrates investigating the Roman period. Yet, none of these specifically aim to increase our knowledge of the Roman imperial foreign and security policies, integration and frontier strategy on the Euphrates. It is, however, only by uncovering new archaeological and epigraphic sources that we can hope to further our understanding of these issues. The recent and ongoing debate amongst historians of the ancient world on the nature of Roman frontiers, strategy and the role of the Roman army in the East therefore largely relies on hypotheses and speculation until new sources further illuminate these questions.

Therefore, the results so far achieved prove beyond any doubt, as we believe, the enormous potential for many further far-reaching and extraordinary archaeological and historical findings and conclusions. It is therefore, in our view, highly desirable and to the greatest benefit of our science and our understanding of all aspects of this ancient frontier to continue this investigation of a unique archaeological and historical site. Many answers related to issues which lay at the core of the Roman Empire's history may be found here.

The results of the campaigns in 2002 and 2003 now allow to draw up a detailed programme for the completion of the investigation of the entire area described in fig. 1 above. The results of this full investigation would both reveal further exciting and far-reaching results and, at the same time, create all necessary information for any future full scale excavation.

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<sup>3</sup> M. Hartmann and M.A. Speidel, *The Roman Army at Zeugma: recent research results*. In: R. Early et al., Zeugma: Interim Reports. Journal of Roman Archaeology. Supplementary Series no. 51 (2003) 100 – 126.