

REPORT  
ON RESEARCH CARRIED OUT  
IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, ISTANBUL  
APRIL 24, 2013

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## 1. Permission

Following an application by Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen and after consultation with the Curator and the Director of the Museum, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums, granted permission per letter of March 4, 2013, ref.no. 64298988.155.02 (YA.2013.23) – 44166, to study the inscription inventory no. E 1137 in the Archeological Museum, Istanbul (app. 1).

## 2. Background

The inscription inv.no. E 1137, known as the "Gangra oath", "Vezirköprü oath" or "Neoklaudiopolis oath" is one of the most important documents for the cult of the Roman emperor in Asia Minor and one of the few oath texts to be preserved from antiquity. It was seen and recorded by the Belgian scholar Franz Cumont and his brother Eugène Cumont in Vezirköprü in April 1900 and transferred to the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul in October of the same year (app. 2). The stone is substantially complete, although the left edge has been lost along with the last letters of most lines.

All subsequent scholarship on the oath has followed the text presented by Franz Cumont to the Académie des Inscriptions, Paris, in 1900 and subsequently republished (1901, 1910). The 1910 publication also includes a facsimile drawing of the text (app. 3). There are, however, several inconsistencies between Cumont's reading, his description, and the facsimile. For instance, the stone is stated to be trapezoidal in shape, whereas the facsimile shows a rectangular stone; likewise, the letters on the facsimile do not always match the text presented by Franz Cumont. Also, the measurements given by Franz Cumont in different publications are contradictory.

## 3. Research and results

I visited the Museum on April 24 with my assistant, Ph.D. student Søren Lund Sørensen, as previously arranged with the Curator, Dr. Şehrazat Karagöz. We are grateful to Dr. Karagöz and her staff for their helpfulness throughout the entire process.

The inscription is now kept in the storerooms of the Archaeological Museum and was brought out for our inspection. The work took about six hours, during which time the stone was photographed and measured by Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen and two paper squeezes made by Søren Lund Sørensen, who also undertook a detailed inspection of the individual letters using a magnifying glass.

The stone was found to be well preserved, in more or less the same condition as when it was brought into the museum (app. 4). The text is generally easily legible, and it was possible to verify Cumont's reading in most, but not every, case. When compared with the lettering on the stone, the facsimile was found to be inaccurate on several counts. It was definitely established that the stone itself as well as the inscribed panel are rectangular, not trapezoidal. Consequently, in the concluding lines, there is not sufficient space for all of Cumont's emendations. No traces of decoration were found in the top section of the panel.

After our return to Denmark, Søren Lund Sørensen spent two weeks (April 29 to May 10) preparing a revised version of the text, which he compared with other oaths to the emperor of the early Roman period. On this basis, he has produced a detailed line-by-line critique of Franz Cumont's text and a revised edition of the inscription.

#### 4. Publication

The results of our research have been summarized in an article written by Søren Lund Sørensen which will be submitted to the scientific journal *Gephyra* (app. 5). At a later date, the revised text of the inscription will be included in a monograph on the history of Vezirköprü by Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen. Copies of these and any subsequent publications will be sent to the Museum when published.

#### 5. References

- Anderson, J.G.C., F. Cumont, H. Grégoire 1910. *Studia Pontica*, III. Bruxelles: Lamartin.
- Bekker-Nielsen, T. 2013. 350 years of research on Neapolis-Neoklaudiopolis, *Orbis Terrarum* 12 (in press).
- Bekker-Nielsen, T. Neoklaudiopolis' in Araştırma Tarihi Üzerine Notlar (Vezirköprü, Samsun İli), submitted to *Bellesten*, April 2013.
- Cumont, F. 1900. Inscription grecque de Vézir-Keupru dans l'ancienne Paphlagonie (Asie Mineure), *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 44, 687-91.
- Cumont, F. 1901. Un serment de fidélité à l'empereur Auguste, *Revue des études grecques* 14, 26-45.
- Sørensen, S.L. 2013. The oath from Vezirköprü, in R. Czichon et al. (eds.), *Nerik'ten Neoklaudiopolis'e* (in press).
- Sørensen, S.L. A re-examination of the imperial oath from Vezirköprü, submitted to *Gephyra*, June 2013.

This report submitted June 6, 2013

Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen  
Doç.Dr., dr.phil.

## Appendices

1. Letter of permission (2 pages)
2. Transcript of inventory card
3. Drawing of the inscription, made for Franz Cumont and published in 1910
4. The stone in its present condition (photo by Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen)
5. Article by Søren Lund Sørensen, to be submitted to the journal *Gephyra* (9 pages)

## 1. Letter of permission



T.C.  
KÜLTÜR VE TURİZM BAKANLIĞI  
Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü

04.03.2013

Sayı : 64298988.155.02 (YA.2013.23) - 44166  
Konu: Tonnes Bekker-Nielsen

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- İlgi: a) 10/08/1984 tarih ve 18485 sayılı Resmi Gazete'de yayımlanan Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarıyla İlgili Olarak Yapılacak Araştırma, Sondaj ve Kazılar Hakkında Yönetmelik.  
b) 26/01/1984 tarih ve 18293 sayılı Resmi Gazete'de yayımlanan Müzelerle Müzelerle Bağlı Birimlerde ve Ören yerlerindeki Kültür Varlıklarının Film ve Fotoğraflarının Çekilmesi Mulaj ve Kopyalarının Çıkarılması Hakkında Yönetmelik.  
c) Bakanlar Kurulunun 04.04.1988 tarih ve 88/12839 sayılı Kararı ile 06.03.2003 tarih ve 6270 sayılı değişik Kararı.  
d) 27.03.2001 tarihli ve B.16.0.AMG.0.10.00.01/707.Gn-2487 sayılı Genelgemiz.  
e) 26.02.2004 tarihli ve B.16.0.AMG.0.10.00.01/707.Gn-4221 sayılı Genelgemiz.  
f) 17.05.2004 tarihli ve B.16.0.AMG.0.10.00.01/707.Gn-10987 sayılı Genelgemiz.  
g) Bakanlığımız, Döner Sermaye İşletmesi Merkez Müdürlüğü'nün 12.04.2012 tarihli ve B.16.0.DÖS.0.05.00.00/153.01-81612 sayılı yazısı.  
h) Doç. Dr. Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen'in 17.12.2012 tarihli başvurusu.  
i) İstanbul Valiliğinin 18.02.2013 tarihli ve 58757180-152.2.0.0-1997 sayılı yazısı.

Güney Danimarka Üniversitesi Tarih Enstitüsü'nden Danimarka uyruklu Doç. Dr. Tønnes BEKKER-NIELSEN'in Søren Lund SØRENSEN ile birlikte İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri Müdürlüğü envanterine E 1137 numarasıyla kayıtlı yazıt üzerine 2013 yılı Nisan ayında çalışma yapma ve yazıtın estampajını alma talebiyle ilgili olarak,

- Çalışmanın ilgi (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) ve (g)'de kayıtlı yazı, genelge, yönerge ve yönetmelikler kapsamında gerçekleştirilmesi,
- Çalışmanın başlayacağı tarihin Müze Müdürlüğüne 15 gün önceden bildirilmesi ve randevu alınarak çalışılması,
- Müze Müdürlüğü'nün belirleyeceği şartlara uyulması ve gerekli güvenlik önlemlerinin alınması
- Çalışma sonunda hazırlanacak olan yayının bir nüshasının Müze kütüphanesine verilmesi

koşullarıyla ilgililerin 2013 yılında araştırma yapması ve fotoğraf çekmesi ilgi (i) yazıyla iletilen Müze Müdürlüğü görüşü doğrultusunda Bakanlığımız Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğüne uygun görülmektedir.



T.C.

**KÜLTÜR VE TURİZM BAKANLIĞI**  
Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü

Araştırmacının çalışmayı tamamlamasını müteakiben 1 ay içinde ilgili müze müdürlüğünce hazırlanacak konuya ilişkin rapor ile araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanacak araştırma metni, çizim, fotoğraf vb. belgeyi içeren, mümkünse CD ortamına aktarılmış çalışma raporu ile ileride yayımlanması halinde kitap ve ayrıntıların ilgili Müze Müdürlüğüne ve Bakanlığımıza gönderilmesi gerekmektedir.

Söz konusu çalışmanın tamamlanamaması ve 2014 yılında da araştırmaya devam edilmek istenmesi halinde, öngörülen çalışma tarihinden 3 ay önce olmak üzere, 31 Aralık 2013 tarihine kadar başvuruda bulunulması; farklı bir konuyla ilgili yeni bir araştırma düşünülmesi halinde ise araştırmacının mensubu bulunduğu bilimsel kurum veya kuruluş aracılığıyla talepte bulunması gerektiği ve ayrıca bundan sonraki başvurularda doldurulması istenilen Başvuru Formunun (Application Form) bilgisayar ortamında ve Türkçe doldurularak gönderilmesi hususunda bilgilerinizi ve gereğini rica ederim.

  
Zülküf YILMAZ  
Bakan a.  
Daire Başkanı

EK:

1- Başvuru Formu Örneği (4 sayfa)

DAĞITIM:

- İstanbul Valiliği  
(İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü)  
(Ek konmadı)
- İçişleri Bakanlığı  
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(Ek konmadı)

## 2. Transcript of inventory card

Env. no. 1137 Müzedeki yeri D14(Eio) A-18

Adı: Yazıtlı stel

Malzeme: Sıyah kalker

Boyutlar: yük. 89-96 cm gen. 45-51 cm kal. 13-15 cm

Müze ye giriş tarihi: Ekim 1900

Müze ye nasıl geldiđi: Buluntu

Buluntu yeri: Merzifon-Vezirköprü

Devri --

Kat.no. --

Neg.no.: 10461

Durum:

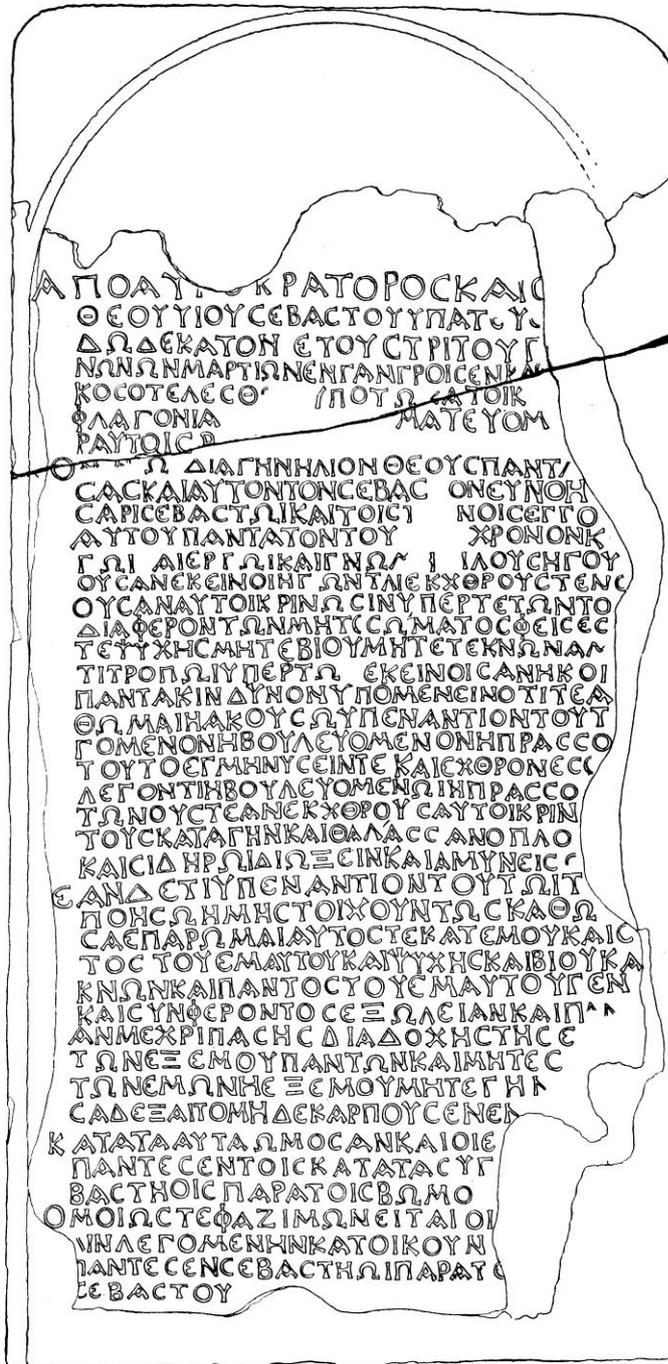
Sađ kenar kırık. Alınlıkta kesintisiz kopuk mevcut. Diđer kenarlarda yer yer kırıklar mevcut. İki parça halinde olup birleş.

Tanım: Yarım daire alınlıklı olup kenarları alşak konturla sınırlandırılmıştır. "42" satır yazıt içermektedir.

(foto)

Etiketi var.

3. Facsimile of the inscription, from *Studia Pontica* 3 (1910)



#### 4. The stone in its present condition



Photo by Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen, April 2013, no. E 1137-1

## 5. Article to be submitted to *Gephyra*

*A re-examination of the imperial oath from Vezirköprü*

By Søren Lund Sørensen

### Introduction

During his stay in Vezirköprü (Samsun province), the Belgian historian Franz Cumont on April 16, 1900 found an inscription, which contains an oath taken to the emperor Augustus on March 6, 3 BC by the inhabitants of Paphlagonia and Neapolis (the ancient predecessor of Vezirköprü).<sup>1</sup>

Since its publication more than a century ago,<sup>2</sup> the oath from Vezirköprü has played a large part in scholarship on ancient Paphlagonia and Pontos, the imperial oath and emperor worship, but the Greek text of the inscription has not been studied anew. Since Dittenberger, no one has questioned the many restorations made to the text by Cumont or the conclusions drawn from these restorations and Cumont's text has uncritically been reprinted.<sup>3</sup> This is without doubt due to Cumont's scholarly reputation.

However, the inscription merits a re-examination for several reasons:

- From his diary we can gather, that Cumont was in a hurry. Cumont recorded several inscriptions in Vezirköprü and its environs before travelling to Havza (Samsun province) and did not have much time to study the inscription.<sup>4</sup>
- The dimensions of the stone, as given by Cumont, are not correct and more importantly, Cumont claims that the stone was trapezoidal with a rounded top. From Cumont's edition we are informed, that Cumont had the famous Mesha Stele in mind, when he prepared his edition. This stele, carrying a text in the Moabite language, is somewhat trapezoidal with a rounded top and does a first glance look like the stone from Vezirköprü. Cumont's statement concerning the shape of the stone does not agree with the drawing of the stone accompanying Cumont's edition, where the stone is rectangular. The supposed shape of the stone from Vezirköprü determined Cumont's reading of the text.
- On more than one occasion, there are discrepancies between the text as shown on the drawing and Cumont's printed text.

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<sup>1</sup> Cumont 1900; Cumont 1901; Cumont – Cumont 1906, 133-134; Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 75-86 no. 66 = *OGI* 532; *IGRom.* 3.137; Dessau, *ILS* 8781.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont's edition was based on his notes, two photographs and a squeeze, cf. Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 75; Bonnet – Krings 2008, 316-317.

<sup>3</sup> *OGI* 532 (1905). Dittenberger reproduced the text of Cumont 1901 and added a commentary.

<sup>4</sup> In the entry for April 16, 1900 Cumont simply writes: "Lundi 16 Avril. Copié inscription église grecque – été kaimakam. Commandant militaire avec armenien Simsarian. Après midi inscription cimetièrre arménien et moulin et nouvelles casernes." The diary is kept in the Franz Cumont archives at the Academia Belgica in Rome. Thanks are due to the librarian at the Academia Belgica, Pamela Anastasio, for providing scans of the relevant parts of Cumont's diary. The inscriptions recorded by Cumont in Vezirköprü and its environs from April 16 to 17 are found in Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, nos. 28, 50, 66, 67, 71a, 73, 74, 78, 79, 86.

The present author applied for and obtained permission to study the stone together with Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen (University of Southern Denmark) on April 24, 2013.<sup>5</sup> The examination of the stone indicated that for most of the text, Cumont's readings are correct. The drawing, however, often indicates letters visible on the stone but neglected by Cumont in his edition.

Nonetheless, the examination proved that the drawing is not infallible: it does not include all the preserved letters on the stone and reproduces an erroneous reading for some lines. The drawing is a facsimile of a squeeze made by Cumont,<sup>6</sup> but the draughtsman has more than once overlooked a letter, and on one occasion he has made a hypercorrection by indicating a letter that was not carved onto the stone.

Furthermore, the many restorations made to the text by Cumont were examined by the present author, and at least three of these were found to be unfeasible, either because they exceed the space available on the stone, or because they overlook remains of letters that are in conflict with Cumont's restorations. All these findings indicated to the present author the necessity of a thorough re-examination of the inscription from Vezirköprü.

The re-examined text is printed below with a translation and a textual commentary comparing the inscribed text with the edition of Cumont.<sup>7</sup> A historical commentary on the text will be published separately.

## Description

After its discovery in April 1900, the stone was transported to the museum in Constantinople, now the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul, and entered the collection in October the same year where it was given the inventory number E 1137. For some years the stone was on display but is now in storage.

The Greek text is inscribed on a stele of reddish sandstone measuring 92x51/50x13/15 cm. The dimensions provided by Cumont are incorrect.<sup>8</sup> The shape of the stone is rectangular (fig. 1). Cumont erroneously seems to have thought that the stone was trapezoidal with a rounded top.<sup>9</sup> According to Cumont, this shape is uncommon in Greece, and Cumont drew a parallel between the stone from Vezirköprü and the

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<sup>5</sup> Many thanks are due to Dr Şehrazat Karagöz (Archaeological Museum, Istanbul) for the permission to study and publish the inscription.

<sup>6</sup> Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 75: "Nous donnons un cliché d'un agrandissement de la photographie et un fac-similé exécuté d'après l'estampage. Le dessinateur n'a pas reproduit tout à fait fidèlement la forme des lettres, mais leur disposition et leur lecture est exacte."

<sup>7</sup> Letters and words visible at the time of Cumont's discovery but no longer visible have been underlined, cf. McLean 2002, 35.

<sup>8</sup> In Cumont 1901, 26; Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 76 the height of the stone is indicated variously as 190 cm and as 109 cm. 190 is most likely a typographical error for 109, but even 109 cm conflicts with the actual dimensions of the stone.

<sup>9</sup> Cumont 1901, 26-27 "La pierre ... est une stèle de grès rougeâtre, bordée par une moulure plate, et qui va en se rétrécissant de la base au sommet, lequel est cintré." So too are Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 75: "La stèle est une plaque épaisse, bordée par une moulure plate et qui va se rétrécissant de la base au sommet, lequel est cintré." How this misunderstanding arose is unclear. Perhaps Cumont had forgotten the shape of the stone by the time he wrote the article for REG. Possibly the error stems from the photograph accompanying Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, p. 77, where the stone appears to be trapezoidal. The accompanying drawing in Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 79, however, indicates the real shape of the stone.

Mesha Stela.<sup>10</sup> The Mesha Stele, carrying a text in the Moabite language, was found in 1868 in Jordan and has a rounded top.<sup>11</sup>

The stone from Vezirköprü has suffered substantial damage on the right side. Furthermore, the stone is fractured diagonally (fig. 2 & 3). The surface of the stone is very fragile and large bits have flaked off at the top of the stone as well as in the area around the diagonal fracture. The back of the stone is smooth, and there is nothing to indicate that it formed part of a building at any time. The bottom of the stone is equally smooth, with no traces of e.g., a plinth.

The inscription is framed on three sides. The frame commences at the very top with an arch and continues to the base. The frame, though damaged on the right side, is clearly symmetrical. In the arch itself an empty field carries no text. There are no signs of further decoration: if any existed it has disappeared due to the damage that the stone has suffered. The text itself has a left margin of 3 cm from the inner edge of the frame. The original width of the inscribed area will therefore have been ca. 39 cm. The inscription carries 42 lines of Greek text, which has been divided into five different paragraphs of unequal length by the use of initial letters inscribed in the otherwise empty margin between the text and the edge of the frame. All lines have been damaged at the right hand edge with ll. 28-29, the longest remaining lines, running to 37 cm. In these two lines, the number of missing letters can be determined as three. Thus we can safely assume that there was a margin of 3 cm on the right-hand side as on the left. The stone was already broken in two at the time of its discovery, and the surface of the stone had suffered damage in ll. 5-7 and 9-12.<sup>12</sup> Since Cumont's edition, the stone has suffered additional damage in ll. 1-2, 7-9 and 28.<sup>13</sup> The letter height is uniform (1.2 cm), the five initial letters in the margin being somewhat higher (1.7 cm). In l. 1 the letters are higher than in the other lines (1.5 cm). The letters have been elegantly cut, and most letters carry moderate but pronounced serifs. Occasionally, the letterforms vary. The vertical hastae of the mu are mostly upright, but sometimes they splay out towards the bottom. Epsilon and sigma are lunate. The central bar of epsilon is not always attached. Alpha has a broken crossbar, its crossbar touching the baseline, and carries apex. Omega is always large, the rounded part varying in shape from very open at the bottom to (practically) circular. Theta always carries a stroke in the circle. There are no ligatures.

Ἀπὸ αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος]

θεοῦ υἱοῦ Σεβαστοῦ ὑπατεύ[σαντος τὸ]

δωδέκατον ἔτους τρίτου, π[ροτέραι]

4 νωνῶν Μαρτίων ἐν Γάνγροις ἐν [.]λ[--- ὄρ-]

κος ὁ τελεσθ[εῖς] ὑπὸ τῶ[ν] κατωικ[ούντων Πα-]

φλαγονία[ν καὶ τῶν πραγ]ματευσ[μένων πα-]

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<sup>10</sup> Cumont 1901, 26; Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 75.

<sup>11</sup> The remains of the Mesha Stele are kept in the Musée du Louvre, and a photograph of the stele can be found on the museum's homepage: [http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=car\\_not\\_frame&idNotice=21796](http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=21796).

<sup>12</sup> Cumont 1901, 27; Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 75.

<sup>13</sup> It is hard to say when this happened. The additional damage is clearly visible on a photograph of the stone taken by Eckart Olshausen (University of Stuttgart) in the 1980s when the stone was on display in the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul. When examining the stone, this author was allowed to see the dossier on the stone. This includes a photograph, the date of which is uncertain, which seems to bear witness to this additional damage. If this photograph was taken at the time of the stone's entry into the museum's collection, we may conclude that the stone suffered the additional damage during transport from Vezirköprü to Istanbul.

ρ' αὐτοῖς Π[ωμαίων].  
 8 Ὅμνύω{ι} Δία Γῆν Ἡλίον θεοὺς πάντα[ς καὶ πά-]  
 σας καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Σεβασ[τ]ὸν εὐνοή[σιν Καί-]  
 σαρὶ Σεβαστῶι καὶ τοῖς [έκ]νοις ἐγγό[νοις τε]  
 αὐτοῦ πάντα τὸν τοῦ [---] χρόνον κ[αί λό-]  
 12 γωι [κ]αὶ ἔργωι καὶ γνώμη[ι, φί]λους ἡγού[μενος]  
 οὓς ἂν ἐκεῖνοι ἡγῶνται ἐκχθρούς τε νο[μίζων]  
 οὓς ἂν αὐτοὶ κρίνωσιν· ὑπέρ τε τῶν το[ύτοις]  
 διαφερόντων μήτε σώματος φείσασ[θαι μή-]  
 16 τε ψυχῆς μήτε βίου μήτε τέκνων, ἀλλ[ὰ παν-]  
 τὶ τρόπῳ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκείνοις ἀνηκόν[των]  
 πάντα κίνδυνον ὑπομνεῖν· ὅ τί τε ἄ[ν αἴσ-]  
 θωμαι ἢ ἀκούσω ὑπεναντίον τούτ[οις λε-]  
 20 γόμενον ἢ βουλευόμενον ἢ πρᾶσσό[μενον],  
 τοῦτο ἐγμηνύσειν τε καὶ ἐχθρὸν ἔσ[εσθαι τῶι]  
 λέγοντι ἢ βουλευομένῳ ἢ πρᾶσσο[ντι τού-]  
 των· οὓς τε ἂν ἐκχθροὺς αὐτοὶ κρίν[ωσιν, τού-]  
 24 τοὺς κατὰ γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν ὄπλο[ις τε]  
 καὶ σιδήρῳ διώξειν καὶ ἀμυνεῖσθ[αι].  
 Ἐὰν δέ τι ὑπεναντίον τούτῳ τ[ῶι ὄρκῳ]  
 ποιήσω ἢ μὴ στοιχούντως καθῶ[ς ὤμο-]  
 28 σα, ἐπαρῶμαι αὐτός τε κατ' ἐμοῦ καὶ σ[ώμα-]  
 τος τοῦ ἐμα<u>τοῦ καὶ ψυχῆς καὶ βίου κα[ί τε-]  
 κνων καὶ παντὸς τοῦ ἐμαυτοῦ γέν[ους]  
 καὶ συμφέροντος ἐξώλειαν καὶ παν[ώλει-]  
 32 αν μέχρι πάσης διαδοχῆς τῆς ἐ[μῆς καὶ]  
 τῶν ἐξ ἐμοῦ πάντων, καὶ μήτε σ[ώματα τὰ]  
 τῶν ἐμῶν ἢ ἐξ ἐμοῦ μήτε γῆ μ[ήτε θάλασ-]  
 σα δέξαιτο μηδὲ καρποὺς ἐνέγ[κοι αὐτοῖς].  
 36 Κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ὤμοσαν καὶ οἱ ἐν [τῆι χώρῃ]  
 πάντες ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὰ CVI [--- Σε-]  
 βαστήοις παρὰ τοῖς βωμοῖ[ς τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ].  
 Ὅμοίως τε Φαζιμωνεῖται οἱ [τὴν καὶ Νεάπο-]  
 40 λιν λεγομένην κατοικοῦντ[ες ὤμοσαν σύμ-]  
 παντες ἐν Σεβαστήῳ παρὰ τῶ[ι βωμῶι τοῦ]  
 Σεβαστοῦ.

*“When the emperor Caesar Augustus, son of the god [Julius Caesar] had been consul for the twelfth time, in the third year, March 6, in Gangra in ..., the oath was taken by those who dwell in Paphlagonia and by the Romans who pursue their business among them.*

*‘I swear by Zeus, the Earth, the Sun, all the gods and goddesses and by Augustus himself that I will be favourable towards Caesar Augustus and his children and descendants all the time of ... in word, deed and intention. I will reckon as friends those whom they might reckon as friends and regard as enemies those that they might judge to be enemies. And in defence of their interests I will spare neither body, nor soul, nor life, nor children but take any risk, whatever kind it may be, for their interests. Whatever I might perceive or hear being said, planned or done against them, I will disclose, and I will be an enemy of one who says, plans or does any of this. Those that they judge to be enemies, I will pursue them with weapons and iron at land and sea, guarding myself against them.*

*If I should do anything against this oath or not precisely as I have sworn, I will raise for myself, my own body, soul and life, children, all of my family and my possession, destruction and utter ruin extending to all those that succeed me and all my descendants. The land and the sea shall neither receive the bodies of my children or descendants, nor shall they bear them fruit.’*

*All those living in the countryside swore according to the same terms at the altars of Augustus in the sanctuaries of Augustus that are in the ...*

*Likewise did the Phazemonitae, who dwell in what is also called Neapolis, all swear in the sanctuary of Augustus at the altar of Augustus.”*

## Commentary

II. 1-2. Cumont: Ἀπὸ αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος | Θεοῦ υἱοῦ Σεβαστοῦ ὑπατεύ[σαντος τὸ]. Because of the subsequent damage to the stone, it is no longer possible to read these two lines exactly as Cumont and the draughtsman did. Alpha in αὐτοκράτορος can partially be read.

Cumont restored ὑπατεύ[οντος in 1901 and ὑπατεύ[σαντος in 1910, possibly under the influence of Dittenberger’s comments. Cumont’s reading of 1910 seems preferable to that of 1901, among other things because it fits the available space better. The drawing indicates the bottom part of a circular letter after the second upsilon of ὑπατεύ.

I. 3. Cumont: π[ροτέρα]. A vertical hasta and an upper horizontal hasta can clearly be seen on the stone and on the drawing. The vertical hastae of the Π are thinner than those of the Γ. Therefore this letter must be taken to be a Π. Cumont proposed either π[ροτέρα] or πρὸ μιᾶς.<sup>14</sup>

I. 4. The word following ἐν was left blank by Cumont in 1901. The drawing shows what appears to be a kappa followed by a triangular top of a letter. Haussoulier proposed π[α]νηγύρει, but Cumont thought this word was too long to fit within the lacuna.<sup>15</sup> Dittenberger conjectured [τ]ἀ[γορᾶ] but gave no explanation for his choice. Cumont rejected Dittenberger’s restoration on the grounds that the proposed crasis was uncommon at the time of composition. Bücheler suggested [κ]ἀ[στροις] to Cumont, and this reading was included in the text of 1910. Furthermore, Grégoire suggested Κ[α]ισαρήω,<sup>16</sup> and Munro proposed the

<sup>14</sup> Cumont 1901, 27; Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 80. Cf. also OGI 532.

<sup>15</sup> Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 80.

<sup>16</sup> Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 80-81.

restoration ἐν [Γ]αλατία.<sup>17</sup> All these restorations, however, have to be rejected. All that can be read is Λ, which can be interpreted as either the upper part of a lambda or an alpha (but not a delta in this inscription). The alpha carries an apex throughout almost the entire inscription. This is not the case with the lambda or the top of the letter preserved in l. 4. The lambda is cut with a flat top.<sup>18</sup> For this reason this letter is very likely to be a lambda.

l. 5. Cumont: ὕπὸ. An upsilon can be read on the stone and on the drawing. The text of this line has suffered additional damage since its discovery.

l. 6. Cumont: πραγ]ματευομ[ένων. Only the first half of the the second mu is presently visible.

l. 7. Cumont's restoration Ῥωμαίων first and foremost rests on a phrase found in the oath from Assos (AD 37): καὶ τοῖς πραγματευομένοις παρ' ἡμῖν Ῥωμαίοις.<sup>19</sup> Though there is additional room for further words, Cumont's restoration can be accepted.

l. 8. Cumont and the draughtsman clearly overlooked a visible but superfluous iota after ὀμνύω. Perhaps the stonecutter inserted an iota adscriptum by mistake.

Cumont: πάντα[ς. The second alpha is not clearly visible on the stone nor on the drawing.

ll. 7-10. A large piece of the stone has flaked off creating new lacunas to the text.

l. 10. Cumont: τ[έκ]νοις. The tau is not clearly visible on the stone nor on the drawing.

Cumont: ἐγγό[νοις. There is sufficient room for the plural ἐγγόνοις. The singular ἐγγονος would result in an empty space at the end of the line.

l. 11. Cumont: πάν[τ]α. The tau in πάντα is visible on the stone as well as on the drawing.

Cumont: [τ]ὸν. The tau is visible on the drawing. The omicron is, however, no longer clearly visible.

Cumont: βίου. Since a vertical hasta with an upper serif can be seen immediately in front of the chi of χρόνον, Cumont's restoration cannot be retained.

Cumont: κ[α]ί. The kappa is no longer clearly visible.

l. 13. Cumont: ἡγῶντα[ι]. The iota is clearly visible on the drawing but only partially visible on the stone.

Cumont: ν[ο]μίζων. The omicron is clearly visible on the stone and partially visible on the drawing.

l. 14. Cumont: ὑπέρ. A piece of the stone has flaked off producing ὑπέρ.

Cumont: τ[ο]ύτοις] but the first omikron is clearly visible on the stone and on the drawing.

l. 15. Cumont: μήτε σώματος. The epsilon is not clearly visible on the drawing.

l. 17. Cumont: τῶ[ν]. The two vertical hastae of the nu can be discerned. These are not visible on the drawing.

Cumont: ἀνηκό[ντων]. The first vertical hasta and the beginning of the diagonal bar can be discerned (fig. 4). Only the vertical hasta can be seen on the drawing.

l. 21. Cumont: ἔσ[εσθαι]. On the drawing the beginning of a lunate letter can be discerned after the first sigma.

l. 22. Cumont: πράσσο[ντί τι τού-]. There is not sufficient space for τι. Though Cumont's reconstruction is grammatically preferable, πράσσοντι needs to be constructed with τούτων and without τι.

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<sup>17</sup> Letter from Munro to Cumont dated April 15, 1901. The letter is kept in the Cumont archives in the Academia Belgica in Rome, catalogue number 2590.

<sup>18</sup> Compare the lambda and alpha of l. 6: φλαγονία[ν].

<sup>19</sup> Sterrett 1882, 50 no. 26 = *IGRom.* 4.251 = *OGI* 797; Cumont 1901, 27; Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 82.

I. 24. There is sufficient space for the reading ὄπλο[ις πᾶσιν] proposed by Cumont in 1901. In Dittenberger's and Dessau's texts we find the reading ὄπλο[ις τε, later printed in *Studia Pontica*. The reason for doubting Cumont's original proposal is given by Dittenberger: "Sed 'armis omnibus' insolite dicitur." Though not stated, the reason for settling for the much shorter τε seems to be provided by a linguistic parallel with the oath from Aritium, cited by Dittenberger and Cumont.<sup>20</sup> This τε does, however, not seem to fill up the space after ὄπλο[ις.

I. 25. The final iota of σιδήρωι is standing unprecedentedly close to the omega.

Cumont: ἀμυνεῖσ[θαί]. A damaged circular letter is visible after sigma on the stone and on the drawing.

I. 29. Cumont: ἔμαυτοῦ. The stone clearly reads ἔμαυτοῦ. Both Cumont and the draughtsman failed to notice the missing upsilon (fig. 5).

I. 31. Cumont: παν[ώλει-]. The drawing indicates that alpha and nu were already very hard to discern at the time of the discovery of the stone.

I. 34. Cumont: μ[ήτε θάλασ-]. Only a vertical hasta and the beginning of a diagonal bar can be discerned on the stone and on the drawing.

I. 35. Cumont: ἐνέγ[κοι. The drawing indicates a partial nu after the second epsilon, but the stone clearly shows a vertical hasta with a horizontal bar on top of it.

I. 36. Cumont: οἱ ἐ[ν]. A vertical hasta can be seen on the stone but not on the drawing.

Cumont: [τῆιχώραι]. In a letter to Cumont, Munro proposes the restoration οἱ ἐ[ν Πόντῳ].<sup>21</sup> There is sufficient space for either restoration.

I. 37. A piece of the stone has flaked off resulting in additional damage to the text in this line.

Cumont: πάντες ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὰς ὑ[παρχίας? Σε-]. In the notes accompanying the publications, Cumont stated that what could be read at this point was CYI and conjectured συνέδρια. The drawing, however, indicates a vertical hasta with the initial parts of a horizontal hasta on top of it. In the stone's present condition only a vertical hasta after upsilon can be read. ὑ[παρχίας is a restoration proposed to Cumont by Theodore Reinach.<sup>22</sup> There is sufficient space for either restoration, but neither of these seems to exploit the full length of the line (fig. 6).

I. 38. Cumont: βωμοῖ[ς. The iota can neither be seen on the stone nor on the drawing accompanying Cumont's edition.

I. 39. Cumont: οἱ. Only a vertical hasta with no apparent serifs can presently be seen on the stone.

Cumont: [τὴν νῦν Νεάπο-]. There does not appear to be sufficient space for Cumont's restoration (fig. 7). Furthermore, νῦν is redundant. According to Strabo, the city of Neapolis was founded close to the village of Phazemon by Pompey the Great in 64 BC. There was no need to refer to Neapolis as a "new" city sixty years later.<sup>23</sup>

There is, however, sufficient room for the word καί. Not only is this grammatically correct, it is also reminiscent of the phrase used by Ptolemaios: "Ἀνδραπα ἢ καὶ Νεοκλαυδιόπολις."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *CIL* II 172, 8-9 = Dessau, *ILS* 190, 8-9 (AD 37).

<sup>21</sup> The letter, dated April 15, 1901, is kept in the Cumont archives in the Academia Belgica in Rome, catalogue number 2590.

<sup>22</sup> Cumont 1901, 29-39; Anderson – Cumont – Grégoire 1910, 85. ὑ[παρχίας was suggested to Cumont in a letter dated February 9, 1901. This letter is kept in the Cumont archives in the Academia Belgica in Rome, catalogue number 2539.

<sup>23</sup> Strabo 12.3.38.

<sup>24</sup> 5.4.6.

I. 40. Cumont: κατοικοῦν[τες. The edge of a vertical hasta with a serif turning downwards can be seen on the stone but not on the drawing.

I. 41. Cumont: τ[ῶι. The leftmost part of an omega is visible. The omega can also be discerned on the drawing accompanying Cumont's edition.

## Conclusion

This re-examination of the oath from Vezirköprü is made on the basis of autopsy, photographs and squeezes of the stone taken in Istanbul. It will, however, be evident from even a cursory reading that the present author generally agrees with the edition of Franz Cumont. There are reasons for this. The obvious reason is that the stone was in a better condition in 1900 than today. Several pieces have flaked off, and letters clearly visible on the drawing accompanying *Studia Pontica* can no longer be discerned. Furthermore, Cumont's proposed restorations of the lacunae are mostly sound and based on Cumont's firm grasp of Greek as well as his impressive knowledge of epigraphic and literary parallels. Cumont's restorations have all been checked to see whether they fit the available space on the stone, and the result is that in most cases they do.

In several cases, the present author was able to improve Cumont's edition and confirm readings where Cumont had been in doubt by examining the stone and comparing it with the drawing accompanying Cumont's edition (ll. 5, 11, 13, 25, 41). In eight instances the re-examination of the inscription revealed letters that had either been placed within square brackets or were missing from the drawing (ll. 13, 14, 17; 25, 35, 36, 40). Additionally, there are a few instances where Cumont read letters that can neither be seen on the stone nor on the drawing (ll. 8, 10, 31, 34, 38).

The drawing, which was obviously made from a good squeeze, was found to be imperfect in some instances: In l. 8 the eye of Cumont (and the drawing) slipped and a letter went unnoticed (l. 8). In l. 29 Cumont and the drawing failed to notice a missing letter.

Not all of Cumont's restorations, however, are valid or indeed feasible. The upper part of a letter in l. 4 (^) cannot be retained as an alpha, and the proposed restorations by Haussoulier, Grégoire, Dittenberger, Bücheler and Munro have to be rejected. In l. 11 Cumont's proposed [βίου] has to be rejected as well, and in l. 22 there is not sufficient space for the word τι. Finally, in l. 39 the restoration v̄v̄ cannot be retained. Rejecting the v̄v̄ changes the meaning of this sentence, and the consequences of the new restoration καί will be further addressed in a forthcoming historical commentary on the oath.<sup>25</sup>

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