350 Years of Research on Neoklaudiopolis (Vezirköprü)

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Introduction

After the defeat, flight and death of the last Pontic king, Mithradates VI Eupator, the victorious Roman commander Pompey "the Great" was entrusted with the task of organizing Rome's conquests in northern Anatolia. Some fringe areas were handed over to local princelings, while the core area of the Pontic kingdom and the port cities of the coast were merged with the former Kingdom of Bithynia into the province Pontus et Bithynia. The royal castles and strongholds that had dominated inland Pontos were razed, their water supply filled in with stones to prevent re-occupation. Their function as centres of control was taken by the new poleis created by Pompeius, forming a chain from Eupatoria-Magnopolis in the east to Pompeiopolis in the west, and each administering a large rural territory. One of these new cities was Neapolis, whose genesis is described by Strabo:

After the land of the Amisenians, and extending to the Halys River, comes the Phazemonitis, which Pompey named Neapolitis, elevating the settlement near the village Phazemon to the status of a city and naming it Neapolis. The northern side of this region is bounded by Gazelonitis and the lands of the Amisenians; the western by the Halys river; the eastern by the Phanaroia and the remaining side by my country, that of the Amaseians. (translation adapted from Jones, LCL)

Pompey’s Neuordnung was undone by Mark Antony, who assigned large chunks of inland territories to local dynasts. After Antony’s defeat at Actium, Octavian made no attempt to reclaim these lands for Rome. Only with the death of the last ruler, Deiotaros II Philadelphos, in 5 BC did Neapolis return to Roman rule.1 At the mid-first century AD, the city’s name was changed to Neoklaudiopolis in honour of the ruling emperor, and this is how it appears in Ptolemy’s Geography.

And the side towards the Black Sea is inhabited by those from Paphlagonia; in their inland district the following cities and villages … Andrapa, which is also called Neoklaudiopolis 63°15' 42°20' 

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1 Marek 2003, 44.
Over time, Andrapa, presumably the original name of the indigenous settlement elevated to the status of a city, entirely displaced Neoklaudiopolis. In late antiquity, Andrapa was used to identify both the city and its bishopric. Later Turkish-speaking conquerors called the city Köprü, ‘bridge’. The famous traveler Evliya Çelebi (1611–1682) visited Köprü in 1648, and if his account can be trusted – which is far from always the case – he found a large and prosperous community there:

The town of Köprü consists of six thousand houses covered with bricks of two stories, the lower story being built of stone and the upper of oak whitened with chalk … The principal building of stone in the castle is the Serai of Elhâj Yûssûf Aghá built by Koprilí Mohammed Páshá; there are altogether seventy palaces, and twenty mihrâbs, in eleven of which the khutbeh is performed. In the stone castle is the mosque of Hájî Yûssûf Aghá, with a water basin, a jet d’eau, and a minâreh covered with lead. Of the convents the first is that of the great Sheikh, that of the Káderites, and of the Khalvetí, but there are none of the Mevleví. The people generally are friendly to Dervishes. There are eleven khâns, two imârets, and five colleges, because its lawyers, divines, medical men and students are numerous. The schools for boys are forty-eight, that of Hájî Yûssûf is covered with lead and richly endowed. There are various baths, the best of which is the double one of Ahmed Páshá, a thousand shops, and a strong bezestán with four gates. Yûssûf Aghá may be called the last builder of this town which he enriched by a great many endowments; the bezestán was also his building.2

Köprü is also said to have been known under the names Kedi Kalah,3 Ghedakara,4 Kedaghara, Gidaqrâ5 or Karakede.6 Among its native sons the most famous were a line of grand viziers who derived their family name, Köprülü, from their hometown. In their honour it was renamed Vezirköprü, the name that it still carries today. Its Roman past and Greek name, on the other hand, were largely forgotten by its inhabitants, and to the scholarly world, Vezirköprü was of so little interest that none of its ancient names found a place among the headwords of John Lemprière’s Classical Dictionary (1788).

Numismatists

Modern research on Neapolis-Neoklaudiopolis began with its coins. The earliest and not entirely successful investigations into the city’s history were undertaken by two French numismatists, the chevalier Jean Tristan de Saint-Amant (1595–1656) and the Jesuit Jean Hardouin (1646–1729). Both were scholars of great erudition and strong opinions; Hardouin’s numismatic and textual researches eventually led him to conclude that most of the so-called classics – the works of Horace and St. Augustine, for instance – had been written by a team of late medieval forgers.7

Tristan’s Commentaires historiques contenans l’histoire générale des empereurs, impe- ratrices, cæsars et tyrans de l’empire romain is an emperor-by-emperor digest of Roman history with examples of inscriptions and coins of each reign. The chapter on Caracalla runs to over one hundred pages and includes a single coin with the image of an altar and a serpent

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3 Ainsworth 1839, 260.
4 Ainsworth 1842, 94.
5 Taeschner 1924, 222 n. 1.
6 Hammer 1830, 3.
7 Grafton 1999, 248–251.
on the reverse, with the legend ΚΑΑΥΔΙΟΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ ΝΕΟ (fig. 2).\(^8\) **Tristan** read the inscription as NEΟΚΑΑΥΔΙΟΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ, of the Neoklaudiopolitans and identified this Neoklaudiopolis with Isaurian Klaudiopolis (Ninika), hypothesizing that it had taken the prefix Neo- to distinguish itself from Bithynian Klaudiopolis. In **Tristan**’s view, the Isaurian city was identical to Ptolemy’s Andrapa/Neoklaudiopolis, which the geographer had accidentally misplaced in Paphlagonia.

**Tristan**’s interpretation was challenged by **Jean Hardouin** in his *Nummi antiqui populorum et urbium illustrati* (1684), a catalogue of ancient coins arranged alphabetically by cities. There is no entry for Neoklaudiopolis but several for Klaudiopolis. **Hardouin** claims to have seen a coin of Antoninus Pius bearing an image of Asklepios on the reverse along with the legend ΚΑΑΥΔΙΟΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ ΝΕΩΚ and argues that NEO on the coin cited by **Tristan** is merely a misspelling of ΝΕΩ(κόρων); thus the reading ΝΕΟΚΛΑΑΥΔΙΟΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ is rejected. **Hardouin** concludes that both coins must refer to a cult of the emperor in Bithynian Klaudiopolis.\(^9\)

Whereas **Tristan** and **Hardouin** seem to have spent most of their working lives at their desks, **Jean Foy-Vaillant** (1632–1706) traveled as far afield as Egypt and Sicily in his search for ancient coins. He was the author of erudite works on the coins of the Seleucids, Ptolemies and Parthians as well as three volumes on Roman imperial coinage. The third of these, *Numismata imperatorum, Augustarum et Caesarum, a populis, Romanae distributionis, Graece loquentibus*, is devoted to the coins of the Greek East and appeared in its second edition in the year 1700. No more than one coin from Neoklaudiopolis, however, is included. It is stated to be in the collections of the Sainte-Geneviève monastery in Paris and to bear the reverse image of an altar and a serpent. Although he was clearly familiar with the earlier work of **Tristan** (whom he follows in locating Klaudiopolis in Isauria), **Foy-Vaillant** gives the reverse legend as ΚΑΑΥΔΙΟΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ ΝΕΟ, not ... NEO.\(^10\)

Ninety years later, the Italian numismatist **Domenico Sestini** (1750–1832) published the collection of the British ambassador to Istanbul, Sir Robert Ainslie. On one of these coins, unknown to any of the previous three authors, **Sestini** found the image of an altar and serpent with the reverse legend ΝΕΟΚΛΑΑΥΔΙΟΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ, of the Neoklaudiopolitans.\(^11\) He goes on to point out the similarities between this coin and the two cited by **Tristan** and **Foy-Vaillant** respectively (which **Sestini** takes to be one and the same coin, notwithstanding that one was reported to read NEO, the other NEΩ). On this basis, **Sestini** rejects **Tristan**’s and **Foy-Vaillant**’s attribution of the coin(s) to the mint of Isaurian Klaudiopolis in favour of Neoklaudiopolis. Where his predecessors had identified the emperor on the obverse – correctly – as Caracalla, **Sestini** takes him to be Marcus Aurelius.

By the late eighteenth century, under the influence of the Enlightenment, numismatics was developing from a mere cataloguing of coins into a historical science. One of the leading figures of the new age was an Austrian Jesuit, **Joseph Eckhel** (1737–1798). In his eight-volume *Doctrina numorum veterum* (Vienna, 1792–1798) we find two pages devoted

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8 Tristan 1657, 214 (no. 30); cf. Dalaison, Delrieux 2015, no. 34a.
9 Hardouin 1684, 253; cf. Dalaison, Delrieux 2015, no. 14a; 15a; 15b; 16a.
10 Foy-Vaillant 1700, 102.
11 Sestini 1790, 101.
to Neoklaudiopolis. Eckhel passes quickly over the myopic discussion of whether the legend on the altar-and-serpent coin reads NEO or NEΩ, citing other examples where a stamp-engraver has O in place of Ω. Instead he introduces an argument typical of the new systematic approach to coin studies: Bithynian Klaudiopolis ceased using this name on its coins around the mid-second century AD and reverted to calling itself Bithynion. It is therefore highly unlikely that a coin of Caracalla should bear the inscription ΚΑΑΥΑΙΟΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ – and as no other city by that name is known to have struck coins, the altar-and-serpent type must be assigned to Neoklaudiopolis.12

Théodore-Edme Mionnet (1770–1842) devoted his working life to two great projects: creating a catalogue of ancient coins to parallel Eckhel’s, and collecting casts of the individual coins. On the title page of his Déscription des médailles antiques grecques et romaines, Mionnet boasts of having accumulated more than 20,000 casts, but to this day, his modus operandi, his objectives and the full extent of his activities remain something of a mystery.13 On the other hand, his Déscription des médailles in fifteen volumes (six volumes, followed by nine volumes of supplements) is quite conventional. In the second volume (1807), Neoklaudiopolis is represented only by the altar-and-serpent type. Apparently Mionnet did not possess a cast of this coin and based his description on Sestini, whom he also followed in assigning the coin to the reign of Marcus Aurelius.14 By the time that the fourth volume of the Suppléments appeared in 1829, four more Neoklaudiopolitan coins had come to Mionnet’s attention.15

The first author to draw attention to the significance of the civic era used on the coins was Augustin Belley (1697–1711). He noted that the era used in Neoklaudiopolis was the same as that of Germanikopolis and concluded – against the view of Foy-Vaillant – that they belonged to the same province, Paphlagonia.16 Eckhel and Mionnet, too, appreciated the importance of the era used on the coins. Two of Mionnet’s Neoklaudiopolitan coins carried dates in the Milesian notation. The reverse of the more recent coin displayed an eagle and military insignia and the year CϹ (206) according to the civic era; on the obverse, the portrait of Septimius Severus. The older bore the image of Asklepios on the reverse. Hardouin had dated a similar coin to the reign of Antoninus Pius17 and Mionnet correctly identified the emperor’s portrait on this specimen as that of Antoninus Pius; he misread, however, the year as ΡΩΑ (191) instead of ΡΞΑ (161).18 This led him to postulate two civic eras for Neoklaudiopolis, one commencing in 45 BC, the other (following Eckhel) in 7 BC.19 In the light of later evidence, notably that of an inscription found in

12 Eckhel 1794, 388f.
13 Laubier, Amandry 2008, 60.
14 Mionnet 1807, 398 (Paphlagonie no. 65).
15 Mionnet 1829, suppl. IV, 568 (Paphlagonie no. 104–107); of the last two, Mionnet had taken impressions. The Neoklaudiopolitan origin of no. 107 is doubtful; it is assigned to Ninive by Imhoof-Blumer 1890, 594; to Isaurian Klaudiopolis (Ninika) by Dalaison, Delrieux 2015.
16 Belley 1764, 326, 377. The point was taken up by Eckhel 1794, 389 who identified the era with that of Amaseia.
17 Hardouin 1684, 252.
18 Recueil, 190 n. 2 (for no. 4; read no. 5). For an alternative explanation of Mionnet’s error, MacDonald 1899.
19 Mionnet 1829, 56.
1899 (see below), the two-era theory was eventually abandoned and the first year of the Neoklaudiopolitan era identified as 6/5 BC.\textsuperscript{20}

Volume V of Mionnet’s \textit{Supplément}, published 1830, includes one further coin of probable Neoklaudiopolitan origin, showing an altar and a serpent on the reverse. The source is given as Foy-Vaillant; Mionnet had evidently not had access to the actual coin, as he has not been able to take an impression.\textsuperscript{21} He follows Foy-Vaillant in dating the coin to the reign of Caracalla, but assignes it to the mint of Bithynian Klaudiopolis. Surprisingly, Mionnet chooses to ignore Eckhel’s argument that by the reign of Caracalla, Bithynion had long since ceased to use the name Klaudiopolis and he does not seem to have noted the similarity of this type to that published by himself in 1807.

The number of known coins from Neoklaudiopolis continued to increase; a century later, the \textit{Recueil général des monnaies grecques d’Asie Mineure} lists nineteen coins spanning the period from Trajan to Septimius Severus.\textsuperscript{22} Today, more than fifty are known.\textsuperscript{23} In the course of the nineteenth century, however, the focus of scholarly attention shifted from the coins of Neoklaudiopolis to its physical remains and especially its inscriptions.

\textbf{The age of explorers: the early nineteenth century}

In the first half of the nineteenth century, several European travelers visited the inland districts of Pontos and published reports of their journeys. One of the more intrepid was John MacDonald Kinneir (1782–1830) who left England in 1813 and, undaunted by an ongoing European war, travelled overland through the Balkans to Constantinople. In May of the following year, he passed through Vezirköprü on his way from Boyabat to Samsun:

\begin{quote}
Vizir Kapri (literally the Vizir’s bridge) called also Geda Kara, from an old castle of that name, is a small town, situated on a brook which flows into the Kizil Ermak, and is the capital of a rich district … It is said to contain two thousand families, thirteen mosques with minarets, a khan, and two public baths, and a well supplied bazar; for the town has no less than forty-six dependent villages. Vizir Kapri is six hours from Marsawan, and twelve from Amasia; on the road to which is a place called Gouza [Havza], famous for its mineral baths.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

In August 1814, Kinneir reached Baghdad, whence he continued onward to India. The journal of his voyage was published in London in 1818. His original plan had been »to visit all the countries through which a European army might attempt the invasion of India«\textsuperscript{25} and if he did not achieve that goal, he did collect a large amount of geographical and topographical information. In his time, first-hand accounts of life in central Anatolia were rare indeed, and it seems that Kinneir was the first non-Turkish traveler to describe Vezirköprü in print. In his \textit{Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches}, published 1830, Joseph von Hammer draws heavily on Kinneir’s account which he combines with that of Ev-

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[20]{SP III, no. 67 (see below); Marek 1993, 130; Leschhorn 1993, 170–175.}
\footnotetext[21]{Mionnet 1830, 19 (no. 97); Foy-Vaillant 1700, 102.}
\footnotetext[22]{Recueil, 189–192.}
\footnotetext[23]{Dalaison, Delrieux 2015.}
\footnotetext[24]{Kinneir 1818, 298.}
\footnotetext[25]{Kinneir 1818, vii.}
\end{footnotes}
To paint a vivid picture of urban life in Vezirköprü at the time of the Köprülu viziers.26

William J. Hamilton (1805–1867), secretary of the Geological Society of London (founded 1807) spent the years 1836–1837 travelling in Asia Minor and the Levant. Hamilton’s group left London in July 1835 and wintered in İzmir, then sailing via Constantinople to Trabzon and continuing overland. After reaching Kars and Armenia, Hamilton and his companions returned on a route that took them to Sinop, then over the Dramaz pass and through Boyabat and Durağan.27 The party followed the left bank of the Kızılırmak downstream to the crossing near Çeltik;28 here they stayed for a night, entering Vezirköprü on July 31, 1836. Though his stay in the city was brief – he continued to Lâdik the very next morning – Hamilton managed to find and copy four Greek inscriptions in the town, with enthusiastic help from the locals:

On entering the town, I was struck with the width and regularity of its streets, but the houses were as usual poor, and in a ruinous condition. In my search for antiquities I was followed by a numerous trains of idlers, whose curiosity was excited by the unusual sight of a Frank, accompanied by a Tatar, wandering about in search of old stones, for what purpose they could not guess. I was followed by several hundred persons of all classes and ages, but without the slightest insult or inconvenience; on the contrary, several were anxious to point out inscriptions in the interior of houses and shops, besides those which are in the walls of the Bezestan.29

Where other scholars had assumed that Vezirköprü occupied the site of ancient Gadelon or Gazelon, Hamilton is the first to identify the city as ancient Phazemon, though not without some reservations:

Vezir Keupri has been supposed to stand upon the site of the ancient Gadelon, the capital of the district Gadelonitis or Gadelotus, placed by Strabo between the mouth of the Halys and the district of Saramene which contained the city of Amisus. I am, however, rather inclined to believe that it falls within the boundaries of the district of Phazemonitis, the situation of which is so well described by Strabo … Every feature of this description can be recognized in the surrounding country, but whether the antiquities of Vezir Keupri mark the site of the representative of Phazemon or Neapolis, or whether they have been derived from the neighbouring hot-baths of Cauvsa, is uncertain.30

William F. Ainsworth (1807–1896) was a medical doctor and, in 1830, a founding member of the Royal Geographical Society. His exploring career began as medical officer of an expedition to Mesopotamia. In 1837 he was appointed to direct an expedition «to the Chaldean Christians» sponsored jointly by the R.G.S. and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The party left London in the spring of 1838, passing through Vezirköprü late in the year, and returned in 1840. An interim report of Ainsworth’s journey as far as Ankara appeared in the Journal of the R.G.S. in 1839, while the full journal of his voyage was published in two volumes in 1842, the same year that Hamilton’s journal appeared,

26 Hammer 1830, 2–4.
27 Hamilton 1842, I, 314–324.
28 Hamilton 1842, I, 326f.
29 Hamilton 1842, I, 328. The inscriptions are found in Hamilton’s Appendix, vol. II, p. 411f.: no. 64 (=SP III, no. 77); 65 (=no. 81); 88 (=no. 87a); 67 (=no. 85).
30 Hamilton 1842, I, 330.
likewise in two volumes. A German one-volume translation of the latter was published in 1843.

Ainsworth travelled overland from Ereğli to Kastamonu, then followed the valley of the Gök Irmak through Taşköprü and Boyabat to its junction with the Kızılırmak. After an abortive attempt to find a passage leading upstream to Hacihamsa the party followed the left bank of the Kızılırmak downstream for some distance and were ferried across near Çeltik. Ainsworth spent two nights in Vezirköprü before continuing towards Osmancik. Like other scholars of his time, he identified the town with ancient Gadelon, a name that he assumed to be preserved in Vezirköprü’s early modern name Ghedakara. Ainsworth also copied an inscription and recorded some observations on the size and appearance of the city. He notes that no standing ruins can be seen, but numerous spoils and architectural fragments:

There are no ancient buildings in the town, but some of the hewn stones alternating with tiles, which have been used in the construction of the baths, appear to be of better quality than are generally found in mere Mohammedan buildings. Fragments of columns are also not infrequent.34

… We did not remark any buildings of importance in the present town, but remnants of such are common. Fragments of columns are not infrequent.35

On his return journey in the summer of 1840, Ainsworth once again passed through Pontus. He spent one night in Havza (›Gozo‹ in Ainsworth’s transcription) and the following night in Merzifon, which he identified with ancient Phazemon (›Pharnezon‹).37

The two-city theory

Thanks to the work of these and other scholarly travelers, by the mid-nineteenth century geographical knowledge of Anatolia had reached a level where it became possible to produce comprehensive maps of its ancient towns and cities. The most ambitious and most influential of these projects was that of Heinrich Kiepert (1818–1899), whose Atlas antiquus, first published in 1854, went through twelve editions and was translated into several languages. In the 1869 edition, we find Gadilon at the same location as modern Vezirköprü and Phazemon at Merzifon, while there is no attempt to locate Andrapa. This reflects the scholarly consensus of Kiepert’s time, which can be summarized in three points:

1. ancient Phazemon was located at modern Merzifon,
2. ancient Gazelon was located at modern Vezirköprü,
3. Phazemon-Neapolis and Andrapa-Neoklaudiopolis were two distinct cities.

The identification of Phazemon with Merzifon was apparently derived from the superficial similarity of the place-names Phazemon and Merzifon, but it found support in Strabo’s de-
scription of the Phazemonitis as »bare of trees and productive of grain« (Strab. 12.3.38). Once it had been accepted that the plain of Merzifon was the Phazemonitis, it followed from Strabo’s text that the adjoining region to the north must be the Gazelonitis; in which case Vezirköprü, with its ancient remains, was the obvious candidate for Gazelon. It furthermore followed that since the western limit of the Phazemonitis was the Halys (Kızılirmak) and Ptolemy places Andrapa-Neoklaudiopolis in Paphlagonia, of which the Halys was the eastern border, then these must be two cities located on opposite sides of the great river.

In a presentation to the Berlin Academy of Sciences in November 1883, the archaeologist Gustav Hirschfeld (1847–1895) described the visible antiquities at İskilip (Çorum province) and argued for identifying these with Tavion, an important ancient city and road junction.38 This drew a sharp reaction from Kiepert, who devoted an eleven-page paper to refuting Hirschfeld’s arguments in favour of Tavion. In conclusion, Kiepert cautiously voiced the idea that since İskilip was not Tavion, perhaps it might be Andrapa:

Seine [Hirschfeld’s] Gründe für die antike Bedeutung der Ortslage von İskilip bleiben dadurch unberührt, aber welchen Namen sie wirklich führte (denn der heutige, nicht aus dem Türkischen erklärbare, scheint nur etwa auf ein Ἀσκληπιεῖον zu weisen), wird einzig einmal der günstige Zufall eines Inschriftfunden lehren. Ist es erlaubt, eine ganz unbestimmte Vermuthung auszusprechen, so könnte man unter den in der ptolomeischen Karte verzeichneten Städten nur etwa an die dort zu Paphlagonien gezogene Ἀνδράπα καὶ Νεοκλαυδιόπολις denken.39

This obiter dictum was enthusiastically taken up by William Mitchell Ramsay (1851–1939), professor at the University of Aberdeen, in his monograph The Historical Geography of Asia Minor:

... and Andrapa, which is by Ptolemy said to bear also the name Neoklaudiopolis. The last of these is identified by Kiepert with great probability as the modern İskilip ... I find no definite passage to locate Andrapa, but general considerations make me accept Kiepert's assignation with confidence. A city is wanted at İskilip and there seems no other to place there except Sora and Andrapa.40

Hirschfeld reiterated his original standpoint in 1886,41 but when he was called upon to write the article on ›Andrapa‹ for the first volume of the Real-Encyclopädie (1894), he cited Kiepert’s suggestion that Andrapa was located at İskilip, adding that Asklepios was depicted on the coins of the city.42

Kiepert had expressed the hope that a lucky chance find of a new inscription (»der günstige Zufall eines Inschriftenfunders«) would settle the İskilip question. Four months after his death in 1899, the first of two inscriptions came to light which effectively demolished the three assumptions on which the communis opinio had been based and vindicated Hamilton’s conjecture of 1842.

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38 Hirschfeld 1883, 1253–1255.
39 Kiepert 1884, 57.
40 Ramsay 1890, 320f.
41 Hirschfeld 1886, 17.
42 RE 1, 1894, 2134.
The decade of great discoveries: 1899–1909

The last of the nineteenth-century explorers to visit Vezirköprü was J. G. C. Anderson (1870–1952), a Scottish classicist who had been one of Ramsay’s students at the University of Aberdeen. He was accompanied by two other British scholars, J. A. R. Munro and F. B. Welch. Their route took them via Lâdik and Havza to Vezirköprü which they reached on August 10, 1899.

In the spring of 1900 they were followed by the Belgian brothers Franz (1848–1947) and Eugène (1869–1945) Cumont who in the course of four days traveled from Havza to Vezirköprü and back. In 1907, their work was followed up by the explorations of a fellow Belgian, the philologist Henri Grégoire (1881–1964), who spent four days in Vezirköprü collecting inscriptions and checking the notes of his predecessors; he also recorded a number of unpublished inscriptions in the surrounding villages.

Their combined findings were published in the three-volume Studia Pontica (Brussels, 1903–1910) which a hundred years later remain essential reading for anyone studying the history of ancient Vezirköprü. Whereas Hamilton’s travel report of 1842 contained four inscriptions from the city and its region, the third volume of Studia Pontica includes more than sixty.

In 1899, Anderson had begun his journey of exploration in İskelip, which he, following the received wisdom of his time, assumed to be Neoklaudiopolis. In the middle of August, he reached Vezirköprü, where he searched for epigraphic evidence to corroborate Hamilton’s hypothesis that Phazemon-Neapolis had been located there:

For our own part, we were so confident about the correctness of this [Hamilton’s] identification that we eagerly scanned each new inscription that we came upon to find documentary evidence in support of it; and when at last we found one (no. 67) with the promising formula ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος followed by Νεο... we rushed to conclusion Νεοπολειτῶν but were forced to spell out Νεοκλαυδιοπολειτῶν and let our hopes be dashed! It was a great surprise to find at Vezir Keupru the name for which I had vainly hunted at İskelib ...

The inscription in question was a decree of the »council and people of Neoklaudiopolis« honouring the Caesar Carinus. Since it had been set up in the year 282/283 AD, its date according to the local civic era (288) confirmed that the era of Neoklaudiopolis was reckoned from the year 6/5 BC. It also appeared to identify the site of Vezirköprü as that of ancient Andrapa-Neoklaudiopolis. This identification, however, raised two obvious objections. First, that according to Ptolemy, Andrapa-Neoklaudiopolis was located in Paphlagonia, while Vezirköprü lay east of the Kızılırmak. Second, that according to the two-city the-

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44 SP I, 1.
45 SP II, 125; Leriche, Gaborit 1999, 648–652.
46 SP III, Avertissement; Préaux 1965, 1194. The account of Préaux gives the impression that Anderson, the Cumonts and Grégoire travelled together, but this was clearly not the case.
47 A second fascicle of volume III was planned, but never reached publication. In the year before his death Henri Grégoire entrusted the British philologist Timothy B. Mitford with the task of publishing the material collected by the team (Mitford 1971, 377; 1991, 181).
48 SP I, 1.
49 SP I, 91.
50 SP III, 86 (no. 67).
ory, if Vezirköprü were Andrapa-Neoklaudiopolis, then it could not also be Phazemon-Neapolis.

In two separate papers published in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Anderson and Munro addressed these potential objections. According to Anderson, the western part of the Phazemonitis, including Neoklaudiopolis, had been included within Paphlagonia. Munro proposed that since Vezirköprü was Andrapa-Neoklaudiopolis, and thus could not also be Phazemon-Neapolis, the latter city should be identified with Havza.

Nine months after Anderson’s visit, the Cumont brothers arrived in Vezirköprü. The city’s Orthodox bishop drew their attention to an inscribed stone which had eluded Anderson and his team. In the courtyard of the church, they found an inscription nearly fifty lines long giving the text of an oath of allegiance to the emperor Augustus (fig. 3). The last seven lines read as follows:

> Κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ὤμοσαν καὶ οἱ ἐ[ν τῇ χώρᾳ]
> πάντες ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὰς ὑ[παρχίας(?) Σεβαστήοις]
> Ὁμοίως τε Φαζιμωνεῖται οἱ [τὴν νῦν Νεάπο]
> λίν λεγομένην κατοικοῦν[τες ὤμοσαν σύμ]
> πάντες ἐν Σεβαστήῳ παρά τ[ῶι βωμῶι τοῦ]
> Σεβαστοῦ.


In a private letter to Franz Cumont in April 1901, Munro expressed his regret that he had not learned of this sensational find before submitting his manuscript to the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. Assuming that both inscriptions originated from Vezirköprü and had not been transported from afar, taken together they appeared to prove once and for all that Neapolis and Andrapa-Neoklaudiopolis were one and the same city. This was the hypothesis that Anderson put forward in the first volume of *Studia Pontica*, published in 1903. Reviewers praised the volume as a whole, as an important step forward in the historical study of Pontos, but where Vezirköprü was concerned, some were reluctant to abandon the two-city theory. How could there be no less than four names, of which two were indigenous and two Roman, for one and the same settlement? The geographer Joseph Partsch (1851–1925) expressed it succinctly in his review of the first volume of *Studia Pontica* (1904) for the *Berliner Philologische Wochenschrift*, citing Munro’s article of 1901 in support:

> Aber die Erscheinung zweier Doppelnamen für einen Ort ist so befremdlich, daß wohl viele mit Munro Bedenken tragen werden, sie als richtig anzuerkennen.

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51 Anderson 1900, 152. In the 1903 edition of the *Atlas Antiquus*, the boundary of Paphlagonia has been adjusted in accordance with Anderson’s theory.

52 Munro 1901, 60f. At the time of writing (autumn 1900) Munro had not learned of the discovery of the inscription giving the text of the oath (SP III, no. 66).

53 Cumont 1901, 26.

54 SP III, no. 66, ll. 36–42, ed. and trans. by Franz Cumont.

55 Personal letter from Munro to Cumont, 15 April 1901, now in the Cumont archive at the *Academia Belgica*, Rome (no. 2590).
Walther Ruge (1865–1943), a schoolmaster with an interest in historical geography who in the course of his career contributed a large number of articles to the *Real-Encyclopädie*, raised the same point in his review in the *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum*. His conclusion was that Vezirköprü was Neapolis, but not Neoklaudiopolis:

Man muß also, wenn man, wie üblich, die auf den Inschriften erhaltenen Namen auf den Fundort überträgt, alle vier Namen auf den einen Ort beziehen. Das tun Cumont und Anderson in der Tat, nach jenem haben sich die Namen folgendermaßen abgelöst: Phazimon, Neapolis, Neoklaudiopolis, Andrapa. Ich kann das nicht für richtig halten … Ich glaube, daß einer von den beiden Steinen verschleppt worden ist, und daß man nur einen für die Benennung der alten Siedlung benutzen darf. Phazemon-Neapolis scheint die größere Berechtigung zu haben. Andrapa-Neoklaudiopolis mag in der Nähe gelegen haben, mehr läßt sich vor der Hand nicht sagen.57

Reviewing the third volume of *Studia Pontica*, Guillaume de Jerphanion (1877–1948) followed the same line of reasoning as Ruge, but to the opposite conclusion:

L’attribution des quatre noms à une même localité me semble difficile à admettre, Phazimon et Andrapa étant deux toponymes anciens … Quant à l’identité de Phazimon et d’Andrapa, elle repose uniquement sur l’hypothèse que les deux inscriptions 66 et 67 ont été trouvées *in situ*. Ceci me paraît vrai de 67 mais non de 66: la pierre était »deposée dans la cour de l’église orthodoxe«, d’où je conclus qu’elle avait été apportée par quelqu’un qui en aurait soupconné l’importance à la seule longueur du texte. Mais que les deux sites fussent assez voisins pour qu’on puisse dire que Néocladiopolis a remplacé Néapolis, c’est ce que j’accepte pleinement.58

In actual fact, these concerns had already been addressed by Anderson59 who correctly stressed that in the text of Strabo, Andrapa and Phazemon are not synonymous: the ancient writer clearly distinguishes between the Φαζημῶν κώμη and the unnamed κατοικία (=Andrapa).

While most scholars now came to accept that Andrapa, Neapolis and Neoklaudiopolis were indeed different names for the same settlement, a few diehard adherents of the two-city theory stuck to their guns. The last phase of the battle was played out as late as the 1930’s in the columns of the *Real-Encyclopädie*. The headword »Neoklaudiopolis« had been assigned to Walther Ruge and his entry is almost entirely devoted to the two-city controversy, which he summarizes as follows:

Es entsteht nun die Frage, ob nur einer der beiden Doppelnamen Andrapa-Neoklaudiopolis und Phazimon-Neapolis auf Vezirköprü zu beziehen ist oder beide … Cumont nimmt an, daß die Siedlung nacheinander die Namen Phazimon, Neapolis, Neoklaudiopolis und Andrapa geführt hat. Diese Vermutung haben aber abgelehnt Partsch Berl. Phil. W. 1904, 175 ..., Jerphanion Mél. Faculté Orient. Beyrouth V (1911) ... Ruge N. Jahrb. 1905 [sic], 308f. Es spricht vor allem dagegen, daß bei dieser Reihenfolge ein einheimischer Name durch einen anderen einheimischen Name abgelöst worden sein soll.60

In Ruge’s somewhat tendentious rendering, Partsch had not just expressed concern (*Bedenken*) but rejected (*abgelehnt*) the interpretation of Cumont and Anderson. As for Jerphanion, Ruge seized on his remark that the inscription bearing the text of the oath

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56 Partsch 1904, 177.
57 Ruge 1906, 304f.
58 Jerphanion 1911, xxxvi.
59 SP I, 92f.
60 RE 16, 1935, 2394.
(SP III, no. 66) was not found in situ to reverse his own conclusion from 1906. Ruge’s chain of arguments now leads him to the conclusion that since Vezirköprü is in fact Andrapa-Neoklaudiopolis, it cannot also be Phazemon-Neapolis.

In that case, where should one look for Phazemon? The answer can be found in vol. 19 (1938) of the RE and the author is Albert Herrmann (1886–1945), a colourful personality who had been a schoolmaster before being appointed to a chair of historical geography in Berlin in 1934. It was said that in his youth he had published a science fiction novel, and among his later works one finds a monograph arguing that the lost continent of Atlantis had been colonized by the Frisians. This is what Herrmann has to say about Phazemon and its territory:


Herrmann’s ideas of Pontic geography seem somewhat vague, perhaps understandably so since his main field of expertise was the historical geography of China. That the obvious incongruities in his description – e.g., Merzifon and Amaseia being separated by the Kızılırmak – did not catch the critical eye of the RE editors may perhaps be taken as an indication of the low level of scholarly interest in Pontos during the inter-war period. The British and Belgian scholars who had produced the Studia Pontica had gone their separate ways into other fields of research, and no new generation had taken their place.

Roads and bridges

Almost without exception, nineteenth-century explorers arrived at Vezirköprü either from the west, via Durağan, or from the east, via Havza; to them, the road Durağan-Vezirköprü-Havza was obviously an east-west road. Some British travelers viewed it in a wider context: just as the British possessions in the Indian subcontinent were held together by the Grand Trunk Road across the vast spaces of northern India, so Rome’s Anatolian territories were linked by an east-west highway:

… a road from Nicopolis (Kara Hissar), Neo-Caisarea (Niksar) to Kavsa: there it forked, one branch going by Mersifun to Tchorum … The other branch went by Vezir-Keupru, crossed the Halys by a Roman bridge which I am told still exists, and went on … towards Constantinople.

So ended on August 14th our joint exploration of 106 or 107 miles of the great trans-Asiatic road from the Bosporus to the Euphrates … It took a long time for the newly conquered country to reach the standard of civilization necessary for definitive incorporation into the Empire; but when at length, after a period of pupilage as a client-state, one district after another was deemed fit for admission, and the bounds of the empire gradually advanced to the Euphrates, the Pontic highway must at once spring into prominence.

Thus from the headwaters of the Lycus to those of the Amnias, throughout the entire length of the land, nature has marked out an easy line of communication. This was the grand trunk road of the kingdom of Pontus. One might almost say that Pontus consists of two roads, this great trunk

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61 Herrmann, 1934.
64 SP I, 86f.
road and the commercial highway from Amisus to Zela. Along them moves the main history of the country, and most other roads may be regarded as mere loops to them.\(^{65}\)

The foregoing review of campaigns has sufficiently indicated the military importance of the main roads and especially of the trunk road through the heart of the country. This great road was guarded in Mithridatic times not only by a chain of castles ... When Pompey organised the conquered territory after the final expulsion of Mithridates, he planted no less than five of his cities on the trunk road.\(^{66}\)

The problem, which had already been pointed out by Ramsay in 1890,\(^ {67}\) is that this hypothetical trans-Asiatic highway is not mentioned in any ancient source. Whereas Rudyard Kipling eloquently described India’s Grand Trunk Road in poetry and prose, no Roman writer has left us any account whatever of a highway through Vezirköprü, nor does it appear in any of the itineraries that have been preserved.\(^ {68}\) Nonetheless, according to Anderson —

Though this road is not described in any ancient document, its importance for the Roman period is amply proved by a remarkably complete series of milestones, erected or re-erected by successive emperors between Nerva and Constantine, which we discovered last summer [1899] between the Halys and Neocaesarea. In modern times it cannot claim any such importance.\(^ {69}\)

The milestones certainly confirm that the Roman road passing through Vezirköprü was a \textit{via publica} of some significance. Its origins may go back to the Hittite empire.\(^ {70}\) Under the later Mithradatids, the highway will have been important as a south-north link between the former capital at Amaseia and the new royal residence in Sinope. In Pompey’s time it provided an inland connection between Pontus and Bithynia. These points, however, does not qualify it as the ‘great trans-Asiatic road’ of the Roman Empire; that distinction should be reserved for the southern route passing through Ankara.

The systematic study of the Pontic roads and their milestones was initiated by Ramsay, who made several visits to the region and organized a survey for ancient roads on a larger scale in the years 1890–1891. In the event, illness prevented Ramsay from participating in the 1891 expedition, which reached Havza towards the end of August\(^ {71}\) but did not pass through Vezirköprü. The report was published in 1893 by D. G. Hogarth and J. A. R. Munro.

Travelers’ descriptions of the ruined\(^ {72}\) bridges across the Kızılırmak are especially valuable, since the structures themselves are now submerged below the waters of the Altınkaya

\(^{65}\) Munro 1901, 54.

\(^{66}\) Munro 1901, 60.

\(^{67}\) Ramsay 1890, 45.

\(^{68}\) Olshausen 1999, 111.

\(^{69}\) Anderson 1900, 151.


\(^{71}\) Hogarth, Munro 1893, 737–739.

\(^{72}\) The second-hand report of the British consul-general in Ankara, Sir Charles Wilson (cited by Ramsay 1882, 157) that one of the bridges on the Kızılırmak was still standing can be discounted. Possibly Wilson or his informant was referring to the Kurt Köprüsü; see below.
Barajı. Hamilton, Ainsworth and Anderson all noted the remains of an old bridge a short distance to the west of the ferry crossing at Çeltik.73

The bridge is now a total ruin: a fragment of a pier on the western side and the massive abutment on the eastern bank overhanging the river in solitary inconsequence are all that remains of what must have been a fine structure. The abutment consists of a core of small stones cemented in a mass and enclosed in a casing of large, carefully worked blocks fitted together without mortar. From the high spring of the abutment the river would appear to have been spanned by a single arch, which must have been over 100 feet in diameter.74

From Anderson’s description of its construction, the bridge would appear to be of Roman date. A span of over a hundred feet would be exceptional for a Roman bridge, but not unique; a bridge of the third century AD at Kahta in south-eastern Anatolia spans 34.2m (112 English feet).75

There was a second ruined bridge further upstream. Kinnier relates how he crossed the Kızılırmak at a point forty English miles76 from Vezirköprü, »on a large flat bottomed boat, at a spot where its breadth is contracted, and near the ruins of a fine old bridge«.77 The remains of this bridge were still visible near the village of Kemerbağçe as late as 1978, most conspicuously on the left bank where a pier remained standing to a height of several metres.78 Travelers en route from Durağan to Vezirköprü must have passed close by it; it remains a mystery why it is mentioned by KINNIER, but not by Hamilton, Ainsworth or Anderson.

Equally enigmatic is the bridge known as the Kurt Köprüsü (›bridge of wolves‹) spanning the İstavros Irmak south-east of Vezirköprü, near the village of Tahna (Kayabaşı). The Cumont brothers, who visited the site in 1900,79 dated it to the Seljuk period; another possibility – which can only be tested by excavation – is that a Seljuk or even Ottoman superstructure rests upon Roman foundations.80 Its purpose remains unclear. The Cumonts hypothesized that it might belong to a »chemin de traverse de Vézir-Keupru à Samsoun«.81 In 1907, Grégoire attempted to trace a possible Roman direct road from Kayaköprü to Vezirköprü via the Kurt Köprüsü, but without success.82

The Roman highway from Thermai to Neoklaudiopolis crossed the İstavros Irmak at the village known today as Köprübaşı, formerly also as Stavros-Köprü or İstavros. Anderson and the Cumonts report that in their time, the river was spanned by a wooden bridge.83 Just north of Doyran, the road crossed the Esenli Çay. Neither the Cumont brothers nor

73 Hamilton 1842, 326f.; Ainsworth 1839, 259; Anderson, SP I, 85. Hamilton gives the distance from the bridge to the ferry as 75 minutes, Anderson »about an hour« and Ainsworth as »a short distance«. Wilson 1960, 368 gives the distance as three English miles.
74 Anderson, SP I, 85.
75 O’Connor 1993, 127–129.
76 C. 63 kilometres, but Kinnier tends to overestimate his distances.
77 Kinnier 1818, 295.
78 Eckart Olshausen, personal communication 2012; Biller 1987, 217.
79 SP II, 129.
80 Alkim 1975, 6.
81 SP II, 129.
82 Grégoire 1909, 7f.
83 SP I, 83f.; SP II, 128.
Grégoire mention a bridge in Doyran\(^\text{84}\) and it is possible that this small stream was crossed by means of a ford.

At Vezirköprü, the road crossed the Ulu Çay. When the Cumont brothers visited the town in 1900, they found a wooden bridge across the stream, and on its upstream side »débris de constructions romaines«\(^\text{85}\) that had been used to reinforce the banks of the channel. Today, there are three road bridges across the Ulu Çay; just upstream of the westernmost bridge, remains of an older abutment can be seen. If this is the substructure of the wooden bridge seen by the Cumonts, the Roman bridge will have been located some distance further upstream, to the north-west of the city.

Physical remains of the actual roads have rarely been reported. Both Munro\(^\text{86}\) and Anderson\(^\text{87}\) describe a stretch of old road visible in their time, running parallel to the nineteenth-century chaussée between Havza and Kavak; according to Munro, »in some places even the pavement« was »preserved intact«. Near Aşağı Narlı northwest of Vezirköprü, Anderson observed »remnants of paving here and there, which may possibly belong to the old road«.\(^\text{88}\)

The Nerik controversy

Research on Vezirköprü after World War II reflects the general changes taking place in the scholarly world and society at large: new agendas and priorities, and new approaches drawing not only on the tradition of classical humanities but on the natural and social sciences, both of which were expanding rapidly in the post-war decades. Historians abandoned the focus on political history and administrative geography and began to inquire into the social structure and economy of ancient Pontos, while archaeologists increasingly focused on the »non-classical« periods of Anatolian history such as the Byzantine and, above all, the Hittite.

In 1959, the publication of The Geography of the Hittite Empire, co-authored by John Garstang (1876–1956) and his nephew Oliver Gurney (1911–2001) set in motion a discussion that was to be ironically reminiscent of the İskilip controversy a century earlier.

Its crux was the location of the Hittite city of Nerik and its shrine to an important weather-god associated with water. From its frequent appearance in Hittite texts, the city of Nerik appears to have been of considerable importance, implying a substantial settlement.\(^\text{89}\) Garstang’s proposal to locate Nerik south-east of the Hittite capital at Hattuša-Boğazköy was rejected by Albrecht Goetze\(^\text{90}\) and Hans Güterbock,\(^\text{91}\) both of whom held that Nerik should be found north of Hattuša and not far from the banks of the Kızılırmak. According to a Hittite text quoted by Güterbock, the storm-god of Nerik »turned« the Marassantas river (Kızılırmak) »and made it flow toward the Sun«. This could be taken as a

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84 SP II, 127; Grégoire 1909, 14.
85 SP II, 133.
86 Hogarth, Munro 1893, 738.
87 SP I, 50.
90 Goetze 1960, 46.
91 Güterbock 1961, 86.
reference to the Kızılırmak bend near Kargı where the river indeed makes a sharp V-turn that makes it flow due east, toward the rising sun.  

As with the İskilip theory of the nineteenth century, the crucial problem was the lack of field evidence. Starting in 1971, a team from the University of Istanbul directed by U. B. AlkIm carried out an archaeological and topographical survey of Samsun province, later extended southward to include Durağan, Kargı, Osmancık, Gümüşhacıköy and Merzifon. The preliminary survey results from the extended area were published in 1974 by A. M. Dinçol and J. Yakar. A great deal of new archaeological evidence had come to light, tripling the number of known Bronze Age sites. For the adherents of the Kargı hypothesis, however, the results were disappointing:

In the triangle of Durağan-Kargı-Osmancık we could find only one mound, and that is Cıntepe III … situated 10km west of Kargı and approximately 1.5km south of the village Yeşilköy … The mound is elongated in shape. On its northern and western slopes natural rock formations can be seen. There are no architectural remains on its surface. Potsherds were not abundant on the surface of the mound.

Instead, based on their analysis of the military campaigns recorded in the cuneiform sources, Dinçol and Yakar proposed to search for Nerik in the Vezirköprü region:

Thus, we believe that Nerik has to be sought north of the line Boyabat-Durağan-Vezirköprü, between Kızılırmak and the western continuation of the Isfendiyar mountain range … In fact, there are about 20 mounds, on the hills on both sides of Kızılırmak in the region between Bafr and north of Vezirköprü, some of which bear the characteristics of big towns with fortifications. On almost all of them, there are pottery forms of the first and second halves of the second millennium. To determine which one of the mounds could be Nerik is very difficult … Without getting hold of Vezirköprü, which is the gate to the northern regions, no military operations from Central Anatolia are possible in the Middle Black Sea Region.

The authors noted that 7km north of Vezirköprü, at Oymaağaç village, there was »a mound with remains of a city wall and a postern« and remains dating to the second millennium BC. In a paper published in 1977, Massimo Forlanini argued along the same lines. Like Dinçol and Yakar, he noted that according to Hittite textual sources, Nerik was a frontier city that had been lost to the Kashka people whose homeland were in the Pontic mountains. Therefore Nerik must have been situated in northern Anatolia and near the lower Kızılırmak. Forlanini points to Oymaağaç as the most likely location:

L’area geografica immediatamente contigua a quella di Zalpa (zona di Bafr) e bagnata dal Kızılırmak è quella di Vezirköprü dove U. Bahadir AlkIm segnala alcuni insediamenti etei. Fra questi particolarmente notevole è il sito di Hüyük Tepe presso Oymaağaç, a pochi km. dal fiume, che presenta mura massicce dell’epoca, una galleria sotteranea con entrata monumentale e una sorgente … Molta probabilmente si tratta proprio di Nerik.

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93 Ögün, AlkIm et al. 1973, 63–65.
94 Dinçol, Yakar 1974, 574.
95 Dinçol, Yakar 1974, 577.
96 Dinçol, Yakar 1974, 580f.
97 Dinçol, Yakar 1974, 581; also Ögün, AlkIm et al. 1973, 64.
98 Forlanini 1978, 200.
99 Forlanini 1978, 201.
Forlanini’s proposal was readily accepted by many colleagues, but opposed by J. G. MacQueen in Anatolian Studies for 1980, a volume dedicated to Oliver Gurney. While MacQueen did not attempt to revive Gurney’s location of Nerik at Kargı, neither did he accept Forlanini’s suggestion. Instead, he proposed a re-reading of the cuneiform text quoted by Güterbock; according to MacQueen, the point of the text was that the Kızılırmak did not change its course at Nerik. Furthermore, Nerik was not located on the Kızılırmak, but on another river:

We must, I think, take it not that Nerik lay close to the Marassantas, but that although the waters of the Marassantas (or of a tributary of the Marassantas), thanks to a sudden bend, flowed sufficiently close to Nerik to make it conceivable that a god had once intervened with the intention of making them flow past the town, Nerik was in fact sited on or near another river, the Nakkiliyatas, which was therefore in a position to transport the Weather-god of Nerik when transport to or from the sea was required. In other words we have to look for the site of Nerik in an area close to the watershed which divides the valley of the Kızılırmak from that of another stream, a stream the waters of which eventually find their way to the Black Sea.100

This »other stream« MacQueen identifies with the Tersakan Çayı, a tributary of the Yeşilırmak, and the shrine of Nerik with the site of the hot springs at Havza. One among several objections to MacQueen’s hypothesis is that while the waters of the Tersakan Çayı do eventually reach the Black Sea, this is not at all obvious to an observer standing on the river bank at Havza and watching them flowing south. Perhaps MacQueen’s first-hand knowledge of the area was limited, since he states that »there is no sharp bend of the Kızılırmak in the immediate vicinity of Oymağaç«101 – there is – and his description of the landscape around Havza, running to a page and a half, is taken in its entirety from Hamilton. He concludes »I cannot help feeling that the area described by these authors [Hamilton, Anderson and the Cumont brothers] fulfils all the requirements which are necessary for the identification of the Nerik region.«102

While MacQueen acknowledges the absence of archaeological evidence for a Hittite shrine at Havza, he argues that if this had been located over the spring, it would in any case »have been either totally destroyed or heavily overlaid by the extensive building works of later periods«.103 As an afterthought, it is speculated that the image of Asklepios on the Roman coins of Neoklaudiopolis refers to the healing properties of the hot springs at Havza;104 while this might well be the case, it is hardly relevant to the situation in the mid-second millennium BC.

Despite MacQueen’s objections, the scholarly consensus continues to favour Oymağaç as the candidate for ancient Nerik and systematic excavations have been going on here since 2005, directed by Rainer Czichon and Jörg Klinger of the Free University of Berlin.105 Finds from the site include cuneiform texts, but none of these identify the settlement by name. So far, however, the results of the excavation support the hypothesis that

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100 MacQueen 1980, 182.  
101 MacQueen 1980, 181.  
102 MacQueen 1980, 185.  
103 MacQueen 1980, 186.  
104 MacQueen 1980, 187.  
105 Czichon 2007; 2008; 2009; Czichon et al. 2006; 2011. Further references and reports of the ongoing excavation can be found on the website www.nerik.de.
Hittite Nerik was located at modern Oymaağaç. Hopefully, the controversy about the location of Nerik, like that surrounding the identification of Neapolis-Neoklaudiopolis, can eventually be laid to rest.

A wider picture

Roman provincial archaeology and history of the postwar decades, from the 'fifties to the 'eighties, was characterized by an increased interest in the economy and a desire to see the individual city or province as part of a larger picture, an understandable reaction to a prewar tradition was felt to have been focused on narrow issues and blinkered by the textual sources. Through the application of quantitative methods in archaeology, the new approach brought dramatic new insights to the study of the Roman economy in Africa or the western provinces. That a similar effect is not observed in Pontic studies may be attributed to a variety of factors, the most serious of which was that little new fieldwork took place – or if it did take place, was not published. The Oxford dissertation of D. R. Wilson, submitted in 1960, is an instructive example. Its title is The Historical Geography of Bithynia, Paphlagonia and Pontus in the Greek and Roman Periods: a new survey with particular reference to surface remains still visible. In his 'Introduction', the author sets out the task ahead as follows:

For the student of historical geography … there is not the evidence available for any single moment nor for any narrowly limited period. This leads him to take his material from a much longer period and to follow the processes of change and development throughout that period without reference to any single date or time … The historical geographer observes processes in action against a background of semi-permanent conditions. He is thus not merely studying the geography of an age before his own; he is recording the history of the economic and ecological developments within it.106

Coming after such a programmatic and visionary statement, Wilson’s chapter on Neapolis-Neoklaudiopolis107 is somewhat anticlimactic. It runs to six pages of typescript and is – with the exception of one or two new finds in the Havza area – entirely based on texts, inscriptions and coins that were already known at the time of compilation of the Studia Pontica. Much of the text is devoted to the two-city hypothesis and Mark Antony’s territorial arrangements; what little we are told about the economy – fish, agriculture – is taken directly from Strabo.108 Wilson’s description of the 'grand trunk road' includes a list of milestones, every single one of which was already known in 1910.109 For the details of the bridge across the Kızılırmak and the road remains at Asağı Narlı, Wilson cites Anderson.110 It is difficult to accept that no new evidence had been discovered in the intervening fifty to sixty years; certainly many milestones have been published since Wilson’s time, and new stones continue to turn up to the present day. The crucial problem was lack of publication and in that respect, too, Wilson’s work constitutes an example, for this important contribution to the

106 Wilson 1960, 1.
108 Wilson 1960, 189f.
110 Wilson 1960, 368.
study of Pontos was never printed. To this day the mass of information collected, systematized and analyzed by Wilson remains available only to those who have access to a photocopy.

Twenty-four years after Wilson’s thesis, the situation had not changed significantly. Two important German works appeared in the year 1984. One was Helmut Weimert’s doctoral dissertation *Wirtschaft als landschaftsgebundenes Phänomen*, a case study of Pontos which has several points in common with Wilson’s thesis. Like Wilson, Weimert asks new questions; and like Wilson, he is forced to answer them by means of well-worn sources, above all Strabo’s *Geography*. Most of what Weimert has to say about the economy of the western Phazemonitis is derived from Strabo, while his description of the physical landscape is based partly on autopsy (he had visited the Phazemonitis in 1982) and partly on the work of Anderson, the Cumonts, Hamilton, Munro and Wilson. The potential contribution of archaeology is briefly discussed, then dismissed:

*Archäologische Quellen: Diese für meine Arbeit besonders wichtige Quellengattung kann fast gar nicht ausgeschöpft werden, da bislang nur sehr wenige planmäßige Grabungen in Pontos durchgeführt worden sind.*

In the same year as Weimert’s book a Beiheft to the *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (TAVO) appeared, co-authored by Eckart Olshausen and Joseph Biller. The first part of the volume is descriptive and the two authors have much to say that is new, based on their own travels and researches in the region. The last part (*Index Ponticus*) is a place-by-place digest of Pontic topography with extensive, and extensively researched, references to previous work in the field which remains an invaluable tool for the student of ancient Pontos.

Taking a hundred headwords selected randomly from the *Index* with a total of 171 references to published research, then breaking these down by decade, we gain a good impression of the changing fortunes of Pontic studies (fig. 4). The number of publications cited peaks in the first and second decade of the century, which together account for 40% of the total. The 1920’s are well represented (thanks to Walther Ruge’s numerous articles in the RE) as are the 1950’s (mainly references to Magie’s *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*) but the number of citations for the other decades of the twentieth century is disappointing by comparison. It is especially striking that half the references are to works that were more than 75 years old at the time. Having flourished before the First World War, the study of ancient Pontos lapsed into a semi-lethargy that lasted from the ’twenties into the ’seventies, when the Samsun region was described »one of the least-thoroughly explored regions of Anatolia«.

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111 Weimert 1984, 76f.
112 Weimert 1984, 195 n. 514.
114 Ögün, Alkim et al. 1973, 63.
Recent and future research

From the 'eighties onwards, a resurgence of research interest in Pontos has taken place. Much of this work has been carried out under the aegis of the University of Stuttgart, where Eckart Olshausen held the chair of ancient history from 1976 to 2008. Though the geographical focus of his research lay further east, Olshausen and his collaborators, Joseph Biller and Gerhard Kahl, visited Vezirköprü several times and recorded a number of previously unknown or unpublished inscriptions, among which another decree of the »people and council« of Neoklaudiopolis.117

At the University of Zürich, Christian Marek118 and his student Marco Vitale119 have addressed the question of the spatial and political organization of the Roman territories in northern Anatolia. The ongoing excavation of Neoklaudiopolis’ sister city Pompeiopolis by Lâtife Summerer (University of Munich) promises to provide important comparative evidence for Neoklaudiopolis.120

In the study of the region’s rural economy, a paper by Gerhard Kahl (1992) and the doctoral dissertation of Deniz Burcu Erćiýas (2001) point away from the traditional reliance on Strabo towards archaeologically and ecologically inspired approaches more in line with the work taking place in other provinces of the Roman Empire.121 This is, however, hampered both by a general lack of data and the absence of a uniform set of criteria for comparative purposes. As Erćiýas writes, reflecting on her own experience:

I expected the survey projects conducted in the region since the first half of the 20th century to include studies of ecological evolution. Unfortunately, none of them did, nor was there any drilling to determine the region’s ancient vegetation, types of crops, and fauna in the Black Sea region. The gap in studies of ecology is a symptom of the lack of a holistic approach to the region. This requires a critical approach to the data from regional survey projects. The methods of collecting and dating, the choice of survey areas, and the criteria used to identify sites and presentation methods vary from project to project. 122

In this respect, the Nerik project (see above) of the Free University of Berlin has marked a major step forward as far as the Vezirköprü region is concerned. Though the project is primarily focused on the Bronze Age in the immediate area of Oymağaç, the results of paleobotanical and archaeofaunal analyses on the Nerik site are obviously relevant to the wider area of the Phazemonitis. Furthermore, topographical surveys undertaken under the aegis of the Nerik project have yielded important new finds from the Roman period as well.123

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116 Olshausen 1987; 1989. Olshausen 1987, nos. 2 and 4 were found in Vezirköprü (E. Olshausen, pers. comm.).
119 Vitale 2012.
120 Summerer 2011.
The roads leading to Vezirköprü are briefly dealt with in studies of the larger road network of Pontos (Eckart Olshausen) and Paphlagonia (Klaus Belke). More, locally focused, studies will be required to clarify the development of the roads converging on Neoklaudiopolis and their relationship to the roads of earlier periods, especially those of the Hittite empire. Some thirty Roman milestones are known from the Vezirköprü region, half of which were already known to the editors of the Studia Pontica. All milestone finds up to 1988 are recorded, with their publication history, by David French in his Interim Catalogue of Milestones (1988). This forms a preliminary to the same author’s Corpus of Anatolian milestones of which the first two volumes were published in digital form in 2012. A further three milestones discovered in the course of a survey by the Nerik project were published in 2010.

At another level, the publication in 2008 of the volume Geçmisten Günümüze Vezirköprü (‘Vezirköprü from yesterday till today’) and in 2012 of a guidebook to the city and its region, are encouraging signs of a growing local interest in the city’s history – even if the sections on Roman Neoklaudiopolis are very brief and not entirely free of errors. Raising awareness of the city’s ancient heritage is important to ensure that new finds are reported and preserved. Since Vezirköprü has no free-standing ruins from antiquity, it is easy to forget that an ancient city is located under the feet of today’s inhabitants. Above ground, there are hundreds of architectural fragments and spoils scattered throughout the city on streets, in gardens and buildings but their sheer quantity only becomes apparent to those who attempt to count them.

Though primarily focused on the Hittite period, the Nerik project – based in Oymaağaç, only seven kilometres from the city – has acted as a spur to the investigation of Vezirköprü’s history in the Roman period. Since 2010, the chronological scope has been extended to include the Roman and early Byzantine period, which is being studied by a team from the University of Copenhagen and the University of Southern Denmark. Among the results so far is the discovery of a building complex, possibly an early Byzantine martyrion, on the northern fringe of the city which has been mapped by georesistivity survey, but not excavated. There is still a great deal to be learned about ancient Neoklaudiopolis.

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129 See the website www.biaa.ac.uk.
131 Gönen dik, Kivrak 2012.
133 For further information, see the website www.sdu.dk/halys.
Abbreviations

LCL: Loeb Classical Library
LEMPRIÈRE, Classical Dictionary: *Bibliotheca Classica*, or, a Classical Dictionary, containing a full account of all the Proper Names Mentioned in Antient Authors, London 1788
SP I: J. C. G. ANDERSON, A Journey of Exploration in Pontus, Bruxelles 1903 (Studia Pontica I)
SP II: F. & E. CUMONT, Voyage d’exploration archéologique dans le Pont et la petite-Arménie, Bruxelles 1906 (Studia Pontica II)
SP III: Recueil des inscriptions grecques et latines de Pont et de l’Arménie publiées par J. G. C. ANDERSON, FRANZ CUMONT, HENRI GRÉGOIRE (fascicule I), Bruxelles 1910 (Studia Pontica III)
TAVO: Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: The location of Neoklaudiopolis (map by Richard Szydlak from Bekker-Nielsen 2013)

Fig. 2: From the second volume of Tristan’s Commentaires historiques: coin of Caracalla showing an altar and a serpent on the reverse (The Royal Library, Copenhagen)
350 years of research on Neoklaudiopolis (Vezirköprü)

Fig. 3: The Neoklaudiopolis oath (from SP III, p. 79)
Fig. 4: Citations in 100 randomly selected headwords from the TAVO Beiheft (Olshausen, Biller 1984), by decade of original publication

Fig. 5: Spoils abound in the townscape of Vezirköprü (author’s photo)
Fig. 6 Plan of a cruciform structure with forecourt, revealed by georesistivity survey in April 2010 (Harald von der Osten-Woldenburg)

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