

## The Susa priestess of Seleukid-queens-cult decree of year 136 (177-76 B.C.) (SEG VII, 2)

editio princeps : B. Haussoullier in Buckler & Calder (eds.) *Anatolian Studies Presented to Sir William Ramsay* (Manchester, 1923), 189-93 + Pl.VIII.

Franz Cumont, “Inscriptions grecques de Suse, publiées d'après les notes de Bernhard Haussoullier”, *MMAP* 20 (1928) no. 3, pp. 81-84, Pl.IV, no. 3 (photograph of the back of a squeeze)

*MMAP* = *Memoires de la mission archéologique de Perse*, XX: *Mission en Susiane* (Paris, 1928)

cf. Oliver D. Hoover, “A Dedication to Aphrodite Epekoos for Demetrius I Soter and his Family,” *ZPE* 131 (2000), 108

D. T. Potts, *The Archaeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State* (1999), Table 10.1

Cumont calls it (his no. 3, p. 81, using one of the B.C. years) **Décret de l'année 176**

He reproduced (as stated at p. 81, n.4) the substance of Haussoullier's 1923 first edition.

When Cumont wrote, the stone was at the Louvre in the Salle du Mastaba : Inventory A.S.6758.

The text has Greek letters for year 136 (6, 30, 100) = Oct 177-Sept 176 B.C.

Probably in Hyperberetaios (see commentary), so Aug/Sept 176 B.C., a year before Seleukos IV was assassinated.

Left side piece of a limestone block, complete on left and in height; 2.2 cm from top of stone to line 1. Left edge and rear face both unsmoothed (undressed for cutting).

Max. height 17.6 cm, width 7.5 cm; thickness varying from 3.2 to 5 cm.

Letters are slender but were enhanced with red colouring, traces of which remained (when the stone was found) in lines 9, 10 and 11.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΟΝ[-----	Βασιλεύον[τος Σελεύκου ἔτους]
[ΛΚΑΙΡΜΗ[-----	[ Λ καὶ Ρ, μη[νὸς <i>month name</i> ]
ΕΝΣΕΛΕΥΚ[-----	ἐν ΣελευΚ[εῖαι δὲ τῇ πρὸς τῶι]
ΕΥΛΑΙΩΙΑ[-----	Εὐλαίωι Α[ρχοντων <i>gen. PN</i> καὶ] short name like Zoilou, Amynta
5 ΑΜΜΩΝΙ[-----	Ἀμμωνί[ου· ἔδοξε τῇ ἐκκλησίαι] perhaps <i>dēmos</i>
ΜΕΤΑΤΗΣ[-----	μετὰ τῆς [τοῦ τε γραμματέως]
ΔΗΜΗΤ[-----	Δημητ[ρίου καὶ τῶν πρυτάνεων]
ΓΝΩΜΗ[-----	γνώμη[ς· ἐπειδὴ <i>nom. fem. PN</i> ]
ΑΤΤΑΛΟΥ[-----	Ἀττάλου [ἀρχιέρεια Λαοδίκης]
10 ΤΗΣΣΕΛΕΥ[-----	τῆς Σελεύ[κου βασιλέως γυναικὸς]
ΚΑΙΛΑΟΔΙΚΗ[---	καὶ Λαοδίκη[ς τῆς πρεσβυτέρας]
ΤΗΣΜΗΤΡΟ[----	τῆς μητρο[ς τῆς Σελεύκου καὶ]
ΛΑΟΔΙΚΗΣΤ[----	Λαοδίκης τ[ῆς νεωτέρας τῆς]
[ΑΔΕΛΦΗ]Σ[-----	[αδελφῆ]ς [τῆς Σελεύκου . . . ]

An important point for restorations (made by Cumont 1928, p. 81) is that no names or words are split across two lines; every line begins with a new word or name.

Line 2.

The first number I've represented [ is a digamma (also represented F, or f) = 6.

Cumont thought there is room for both month name and day number ; more likely just a long month name (in genitive) like ΥΠΕΡΒΕΡΕΤΑΙΟΥ (13 letters; long enough for the EN which begins line 3 not to be included on line 2).

Line 4.

Cumont thought that the lacuna contained the local month and day at Susa (different from the Makedonian Calendar of the king), then *epi* concluding the line, i. e. ἐπι] / Ἀμμωνί[ου Wrongly - not nearly enough room, especially because the month would have to be prefaced with μηνός (see line 2), which cannot be reconciled with the lambda. Also we now know (as Cumont did not in 1928) from the **Letter of King Artaban stele** that unlike some other Hellenistic colonies in the east (e. g. Antioch in Persia) **Susa did not have its own civic calendar but used the Makedonian Calendar of the royal court**. The same early 1st century Parthian period document also shows that Susa used the Seleukid Era for dating its internal affairs (even at the expense of the Arsakid Era then in use at the royal court and admin. circles) and that it had two eponymous archons. So no need for repetition of the royal year and month date.

The last extant letter of line 4 which Cumont and Haussoullier represent as a lambda should be an incomplete or erroneously cut alpha, and the office and names of two archons restored, of whom Ammonios was the second.

Lines 9-14.

The restorations must be controlled by the extant date, year 136 = 177-6 B.C. (and most likely Hyperberetaios 176 B.C.), late in the reign of Seleukos IV (assassinated by Heliodōros in Sept 175 B.C. as attested by the Sachs/Wiseman Babylonian King List of Seleukids). Therefore the current queen was Seleukos' second wife Laodike.

Cumont stresses (pp. 83-4) that the marriage of the royal daughter Laodike to the Antigonid king Perseus had been celebrated with considerable magnificence (in 178 or early 177 B.C.), the whole Rhodian fleet having been mobilized to escort her to Makedonia (Polyb. 25, 4.8-10, cf. Liv. XLII, 12.3 mentioning the marriage itself). The chief minister Heliodōros (perhaps himself a Rhodian) appears to have been the bride's chaperone, as he was honoured in several dedications during a stop over at Delos. Cumont thinks the announcement of the news of the wedding may have been the occasion of the Susa inscription honouring the priestess of the royal women. Unlikely, especially if the correct date was Hyperberetaios 176 B.C. Nor is it remotely likely that living daughters who never attained queenly status within the Seleukid realm could have cult status.

Although Cumont's restorations usually make a nice enough fit for each line, it seems odd that among three Laodikai the queen mother and her grand-daughter would be described as “the elder” and “the younger”. These terms would better suit mother and daughter homonyms. If those restorations are correct (and they look fine in epigraphic terms of filling the lines) then the younger should be Seleukos' sister, formerly a queen in Asia, while his daughter (sent to Makedonia to become Antigonid queen) was irrelevant to any Seleukid dynastic cult, especially this far east.

So the text is most likely honouring a (name lost) daughter of Attalos, priestess of the cult (established in Susa) for three queens, Seleukos'

(current and living) queen wife Laodike,

his (deceased) mother Laodike of Pontus, the former queen of An. III

and his (deceased) sister Laodike, the former sister-queen (including at Susa) of Antiochos Neos.

Presumably the priestess being honoured at Susa (daughter of Attalos) belonged to an eminent family of Susa, or was an Attalid princess settled there (daughter of Attalos I Soter).

M.K.P. Sept 2012