

The Bilingual Inscription of Vologeses son of Mithridates

In the spring of 1984 a bronze statue of the standing hero (Gr. Ἡρακλέους, Parth. wrtrgn), with Greek and Parthian inscriptions incised on his thighs, was found by chance in the ruins of Seleucia on the Tigris. On the right thigh there is a complete Greek inscription comprising twenty two lines recording Vologeses carrying of the Statue of “Herakles” from Mesene to the temple of “Apollo” at Seleucia in the year 462 of the Greeks (≈ A.D. 150-151). On the left thigh there is a Parthian inscription the first lines of which are damaged and it records the same event thus: Vologeses transferred the statue of God Vṛθραγν (Av. *vərəθraγna*) from Mēšan to the temple of Tīr (Av. *tīra*). I have already discussed the ceremonial signification of this act.¹

Inscriptions²

Greek³

¹. “پیکر بهرام به بغستان تیر، ارمان، ۱۳۷۰ یزدگردی.

². W.I. al-Salihi : “Mesenes’ Bronze Statue of Weary Hercules”, *Sumer*, 43, (1984), 1986, 219-29. “The Weary Hercules of Mesene”, *Mesopotamia*, 22, 1987, 160-67, fig. 57-67.

J. Black : “The History of Parthia and Characene in the Second Century A.D.”, *Sumer*, 43, (1984), 1986, 230-34.

Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti: “L’iscrizione bilingue greco-partica dell’Eracle di Seleucia”, *Mesopotamia*, 22, 1987, 169-85.

E. Morano: “Contributi all’interpretazione della bilingue greco-partica dell’Eracle di Seleucia”, *Proceedings of the First European Conference of Iranian Studies*, Roma, I-II, 1990, 229-38, with two plates.

A. Invernizzi: “Héraclès à Séleuci du Tigre”, *Revue d’archéologie*, 1989, 65-113.

P. Bernard : “Vicissitude au gré de l’histoire d’une statue en bronze d’Héraclès entre Séleucie du Tigre et la Mésène”, *Journal des Savants*, 1990, 3-68.

D. S. Potter, “The Inscriptions on the Bronze Herakles from Mesene: Vologeses IV’s war with Rome and the date of Tacitus’ *Annales*”, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 88/1991, 277–290.

E. Lipiński : “L’inscription de la statue de Verethragna”, *Medioiranica*, W. Skalmowski & A. Van Tongerloo (ed.), *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 40, 1993, 127-34.

³. Pennacchietti, 171.

ΕΤΟΥΣ ΤΟΥ
 ΚΑΘ' ΕΛΛΗΝΑΣ
 ΒΞΥΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ
 ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ἈΡ
 ΣΑΚΗΣ ΟΛΟΓΑΣΟΣ
 ΥΙΟΣ ΜΙΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ ΒΑ
 ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΕΠΕΣΤΡΑ
 ΤΕΥΣΑΤΟ ΜΕΣΣΗΝΗ
 ΚΑΤΑ ΜΙΡΑΔΑΤΟΥ ΒΑΣΙ
 ΛΕΩΣ ΥΙΟΥ ΠΑΚΟΡΟΥ ΤΟΥ
 ΠΡΟΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣΑΝΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ
 ΤΟΝ ΜΙΡΑΔΑΤΗΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕ
 Α ΕΓΔΙΩΞΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΜΕΣΣΗΝΗΣ
 ΕΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΕΝΚΡΑΤΗΣ ὈΛΗΣ
 ΤΗΣ ΜΕΣΣΗΝΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΚΟΝΑ
 ΤΑΥΤΗΝ ΧΑΛΚΗΝ ἩΡΑΚΛΕ
 ΟΥΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΤΗΝ ΜΕΤΕΝΧΘΕΪ
 ΣΑΝ ΥΠΑΥΤΟΥ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΣ ΜΕΣΣΗ
 ΝΗΣ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ ΕΝ ΙΕΡῶΙ Τῶ
 ΔΕ ΘΕΟΥ ἈΠΟΛΛΩΝΟΣ ΤΟΥ
 ΧΑΛΚΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΠΡΟΚΑ
 ΘΗΜΕΝΟΥ

Text and Translation :

- 1 Ἔτους τοῦ
καθ' Ἑλληνας
βξύ βασιλεύς
βασιλέων Ἀρ-
σάκης Ὀλόγασος,
6 υἱὸς Μιραδάτου βα-
/βα/σιλέως, ἐπεστρα-
τεύσατο Μεσσήνη
κατὰ Μιραδάτου βασι-
λέως υἱοῦ Πακόρου τοῦ
11 προβασιλεύσαντος καί,
τὸν Μιραδάτην βασιλέ-
α ἐγδιώξας τῆς Μεσσηνίας
ἐγένετο ἐνκρατὴς ὅλης
τῆς Μεσσηνίας καὶ εἰκόνα
16 ταύτην Χαλκῆν Ἡρακλέ-
ους θεοῦ, τὴν μετενχθεῖ-
σαν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς Μεσση-
νίας, ἀνέθηκεν ἐν ἱερῶι τῶ-
δε θεοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ
21 χαλκῆς πύλης προκα-

θημένου.

‘In the year 462 of the Greeks, king of kings Arsaces Vologeses, son of Mithridates, made war in Mesene against king Mithridates (of Mesene), son of Pacorus, who had reigned before him, and after having banished king Mithridates from Mesene he became master of the whole of Mesene, and this bronze image of the god Hercules, that he himself had carried from Mesene, he erected it in the temple of the god Apollo, who oversees the Door of Bronze.’

Parthian⁴



Text and Translation:

- 1 [ŠNT iii c xx xx xx xx x]
iiii iii (')[rš]k
wlgšy MLKYN M(L)K'
BRY mtrdt M(L)[K' ḤS]GY
'L myšn BR' mtrdt MLK'
6 BRY pgwr MLKYN MLK' mtrdt
MLK' MN TMH MRDPW • ḥmk
myšn 'ḤDW • ZNH ptkr
wrtrgn 'LḤ' MH MN
myšn ḤYTt nykndy B
11 tyry bgny ḤQ'(Y)MW

<sarδ 397 aršag> valayš, šāhān šāh, puhr mihrdād <šāh
raft⁵> ō mēšān, ba mihrdād šāh, puhr pakur, šāhān šāh,

⁴ . Lipiński, 128.

⁵ . SGY-TWN-t ≈ Pers. rav- : raft 'to go, walk'. Here, this ideogram is used for Parth. raf-: raft 'to attack'

*mihrdād šāh aẓ ōδ stōβēnīd⁶, hamag mēšān grift. im padkar
varθrayn yazd cē aẓ mēšān ānīd nigand andar tīr byin
avišt(ān)ād.*

‘[In the year 397 (of the Parthians)] Aršak Valayš, king of kings, son of king Mihrdād, went to Mēšān attacking king Mihrdād, son of Pakur. He defeated (and expelled) king Mihrdād from there, and he seized all Mēšān. This statue of the god Varθrayn (Varhrān), which he brought from Mēšān, he erects as a treasure in the temple of Tīr.’

Raham Asha

⁶. Cf. Bd 213 *az ānōh stōbīh dād*. Parth. ‘stwyn- ‘to defeat’.