The Bilingual Inscription of Vologeses son of Mithridates

In the spring of 1984 a bronze statue of the standing hero (Gr. ῾Ηρακλέους, 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 Ὀρθράγνα (Av. vorθraγna) from Mēšan to the temple of Tīr (Av. tīra). I have already discussed the ceremonial signification of this act.¹

Inscriptions²

Greek³

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³ Pennacchietti, 171.
Text and Translation:

1 "Ετος του
cαθ ’Ελληνας
βζύ βασιλεύς
βασιλεών Ἄρ-
σύκης Ὄλογας,

6 νιός Μιραδάτου βα-
/βα/σιλέως, ἐπεστρα-
τεύσατο Μεσσήνη
κατὰ Μιραδάτου βασι-
λέως νιόν Πακόρου τοῦ

11 προβασιλεύσαντος καὶ,
tὸν Μιραδάτην βασιλέ-
α ἐγιώξας τῆς Μεσσήνης
ἐγένετο ἐνκρατής ὀλης
tῆς Μεσσήνης καὶ εἰκόνα

16 ταύτην Χαλκῆν Ἦρακλέ-
ους θεοῦ, τὴν μετενχθεί-
sαν ὑπ’ αυτοῦ ὑπ’ τῆς Μεσ-
νής, ἀνέθηκεν ἐν ἱερώι τὸ-
δε θεοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ

21 χαλκῆς πύλης προκα-
‘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]
i̱i̱i̱i̱i̱i̱ (‘)rš]k
wlgšy MLKYN M(L)K’
BRY mtrdt M(L) [K’ ḫŞ]GY
‘L myšn BR’ mtrdt MLK’
6  BRY pgwr MLKYN MLK’ mtrdt
MLK’ MN TMH MRDPW • ḫmk
myšn ‘ḤDW • ZNH ptkr
wrtrgn ‘LḤ’ MH MN
myšn ḤYTt nykndy B
11  tyry bgny ḤQ (Y)MW

<sarō 397 aršag > valaŋš, šāhān šāh, puhr mihrdād <šāh raft³ > ō mešān, 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’
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

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