The Bilingual Inscription of Vologeses son of Mithridates

In the spring of 1984 a bronze statue of the standing hero (Gr. Ἡρακλέους, Parth. wtrgn), 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 Vṛθraγn (Av. vaθraγna) from Mēšan to the temple of Tīr (Av. tīra). I have already discussed the ceremonial signification of this act.¹

Inscriptions²

Greek ³


³. Pennacchietti, 171.
Ἐτούς τοῦ Ἐλληνας βασιλεὺς βασιλέων Ἀρ-σύκης Ὀλόγασος,

υἱὸς Μιραδάτου βα-βα/βαι/σιλέως, ἐπεστρε-τεύσατο Μεσσήνῃ κατὰ Μιραδάτου βασι-λέως υἱοῦ Πακόρου τοῦ προβασιλεύσαντος καὶ, τὸν Μιραδάτην βασιλέ-α ἐγηδώξας τῆς Μεσσήνης ἐγένετο ἐνκρατής ὅλης τῆς Μεσσήνης καὶ εἰκόνα ταῦτῃ Χαλκήν Ἡρακλέ-ους θεοῦ, τὴν μετενχθεί-σαν ὑπὸ ἀυτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς Μεσσή-νης, ἀνέθηκεν ἐν ἱεροῖς τῶ-δε θεοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ 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.’

Parthian

Text and Translation:

1 [ŠNT iii c xx xx xx xx x]
   iii iii (’)řš[k
   wlgšy MLKYN M(L)K’
   BRΥ mtrdt M(L)[K’ ḤS]GY
   ‘L myšn BR’ mtrdt MLK’

6 BRΥ pgwr MLKYN MLK’ mtrdt MLK’ MN TMH MRDPW • ḫmk
   myšn ḫDW • ZNH ptkr
   wrtrgn ‘LḤ’ MH MN
   myšn HYṬ nykndy B

11 tyry bgny ḫQ(Y)MW

<šard 397 aršag > valaγš, šāhān šāh, puhr mihrdād <šāh raft> o mēšān, ba mihrdād šāh, puhr pakur, šāhān šāh, mihrdād šāh až òò stōbēn dād, hamag mēšān grīft. im padkar varthrāyn yazd cē až mēšān ānīd nigand andar tīr byin avist(lā)nād.

‘[In the year 397 (of the Parthians)] Aršak Valaγš, 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

4. Lipiński, 128.
5. SGY-TWN-t ≈ Pers. rav-: raft ‘to go, walk’. Here, this ideogram is used for Parth.raf-: raft ‘to attack’
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