



# EPIGRAPHY II. GREEK INSCRIPTIONS FROM ANCIENT IRAN

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### ii. Greek inscriptions from ancient Iran

*Introduction.* In April 1815 the Prussian Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin enthusiastically accepted the proposal by August Boeckh to produce a comprehensive thesaurus of inscriptions that would include all Greek inscriptional material published to date. When in 1853 Johannes Franz published the third of four folio volumes of this *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* (*CIG*), its twenty-eighth chapter contained five inscriptions of Media and Persia then known (III 4673-6). Of these, the two short early Sasanian inscriptions in Naqš-e Rostam (nos. 4675a+b; see below) are the ones mentioned earliest in modern western literature, having been registered by several travelers in the second half of the 17th century.

Since those early days of modern Greek epigraphy, the number of known Greek inscriptions from ancient Iran (that is, all countries which once had a population that spoke some Iranian idiom) has enormously increased. The geographic boundaries of Greek epigraphy of the “*Extrême-Orient grec*,” a term coined by Bernard Haussoullier in 1903, have been transferred much



farther to the east in Bactria and Arachosia (qq.v.). As these inscriptions represent an invaluable and varied source of information about the encounter of the Greek and Iranian civilizations, it is regrettable that no corpus yet exists. Such a collection has been planned within the framework of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, however, for more than thirty-five years. Louis Robert had started work on it (Robert, 1960, p. 86, n. 2), but unfortunately, he did not live to complete it. His preliminary work was continued by Paul Bernard and Jean Pouilloux (Bernard, 1987, p. 111) and is now in the hands of Bernard and Georges Rougemont (personal communication from N. Sims-Williams).

In view of this situation, a chronologically arranged survey of Greek inscriptions from Iran will have to suffice. The following inscriptions have been recorded so far (for a more detailed survey on these and other inscriptions, see Huysse, 1995):

The Achaemenid period.

*Persepolis.* a) Five graffiti of the 6th-5th centuries B.C.E. from the limestone quarries on the Kūh-e Raḥmat near Persepolis, of which the owner inscription by one Pytharchos seems to be the most important (Carratelli, 1966, pp. 31-34). b) A clay tablet from Persepolis of about 500 B.C.E., mentioning the wine measure *maris* (Fort. 1771 in Hallock, p. 2).

*Susa.* a) An early Milesian dedication to Apollo from the 6th century B.C.E. on a large bronze *astrágalos*. It was carried off in 494 from Didyma to Susa by Darius's soldiers and now is in the Louvre (Rehm, ed., p. 7; Bravo, pp. 833-35). b) An inscription of "Nikoklēs, son of Nikoklēs, Sinopian" which may belong to the 4th century B.C.E. or earlier (Cumont, 1928, pp. 79-80, no. 1).

The Hellenistic period (Seleucids, Greco-Bactrians, etc.).

*Persis.* a) Five inscriptions on altar stone slabs dedicated to the Greek gods Zeus Megistos, Athena Basileia, Apollo, Artemis, and Helios (first mentioned by Ernst Herzfeld in several publications; for details, see Robert, 1946-47, no. 225). b) A milestone from Pasargadae (Lewis apud Stronach, pp. 160-61).

*Media.* a+b) An important inscription of June 193 B.C.E., now in the Mūza-ye Īrān-e bāstān, Tehran, recording an edict by the Seleucid king Antiochos III the Great (223-187 B.C.E., q.v.) for the polis of Laodikea (Nehāvand) on the appointment of a high priestess for the cult of Queen Laodikē (Robert, 1949,



pp. 5-29); two copies of this inscription to other addressees are extant, one in Phrygian Dodurga of May 193 B.C.E. (*ibid.*), the other in Kermānšāh of February/March 193 B.C.E. (Robert, 1967, pp. 283-96; *idem*, 1989, pp. 471-84). c) A short honorary inscription from Laodikea, now also in the Mūza-ye Īrān-e bāstān for Menedēmos, governor of the Upper Satrapies, and named in (a) above (Robert, 1949, p. 23; *idem*, 1950, pp. 73-75). d) An epitaph for Eumenēs, son of Demetrios in Kermānšāh, which has now disappeared (first noticed by Herzfeld; see Robert, 1967, pp. 295-96; *idem*, 1989, pp. 483-84). e) An apotropaic inscription of about 300-250 B.C.E. engraved above the door of a chamber in the cave complex at Karaftū (Bernard, 1987). f) A dedication of a relief of Herakles Kallinikos at Bīsotūn (q.v.), dated 148 B.C.E., by Hyakinthos, son of Pantauchos, for the well-being of Kleomenēs, governor of the Upper Satrapies (Robert, 1963, p. 7; *idem*, 1989, p. 615).

*Susiana/Kūzestān.* The French excavations at Susa have brought to light numerous interesting Greek inscriptions from the 3rd to 1st centuries B.C.E., some containing decrees or honorary inscriptions (*SEG VII*, 2-8). Others include a dedication to the goddess Māh from the end of the 3rd century B.C.E. by one Apollodōros, son of Krateros (*SEG VII*, 10); a short 3rd-century dedicatory poem in elegiac distichs on the base of a statue of Apollo, now in the Louvre (*SEG VII*, 11); a series of manumissions records, for the most part from the 2nd century B.C.E. (*SEG VII*, 15, 17-26; see also Robert, 1936; Koshelenko and Novikov); a few fragments of inscriptions on terracotta pottery and a couple of Rhodian sealings (*SEG VII*, 28-34); and a short inscription with the title *archiereús* (Cumont, 1938).

*Hyrkania.* A manumission record of Hermaios, son of Euandros, from the time of the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochos I (281-261 B.C.E.; q.v.) and dedicated to the Greco-Egyptian god Sarapis. The exact place where the inscription was found remains unknown (Robert, 1960).

*Drangiana/Sīstān.* A selection of five ostraca, including a long but unfortunately very fragmentary ostrakon of twelve to thirteen lines, from Qal'a-ye Sām (Carratelli, 1966, pp. 34-35). Other ostraca remain unpublished (cf. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, p. 80).

*Bactria.* a) A short Greek inscription in a cave at Qara Kamar in northern Bactria, on the frontier of modern Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Ustinova). b) The majority of Greek inscriptions in Bactria have been found during excavations by the Délégation Archéologique Française at Āy Kānom (q.v., i.e.,



Alexandreia Ōxeianē) from 1965 onward. Apart from a large collection of graffiti on storage vases both in and outside the treasury house (Rapin, 1983 [= *SEG* XXXIII, 1220-46]; idem, 1987, pp. 52-59), two finds are particularly noteworthy: the dedication of two brothers to the gods Hermes and Herakles found in a gymnasium (Robert, 1968, pp. 417-21; idem, 1989, pp. 511-15]), and a base of a statue near the *hērōon* with two inscriptions, one in two elegiac distichs stating that a certain Klearchos had made a careful copy of the Delphic maxims of the Seven Sages, the other containing the last five of these maxims (Robert, 1968, pp. 421-57; idem, 1989, pp. 515-51; Schmitt, pp. 55-56). c) A six-line fragment in elegiac distichs, on a terracotta plaque, probably belonging to a funerary epigram, found at Jīgā Tepe near Delbarjīn (q.v.; Kruglikova, pp. 425-26). d) A dedication to Oxos of the mid-2nd century B.C.E. from Taḳt-e Sangīn (Litvinskiĭ, Vinogradov, and Pichikyan). e) The so-called Palamēdēs inscription from Sork Kotal near Baġlān (Curiel, pp. 194-97). f) Some fragmentary graffiti on jars from Tepe Nemlīk/Namalīk (west of Balk), Emšī Tepe (near Balk), and Garaw Qal'a/Javān (Rapin, 1983, p. 316, no. 5; Schmitt, p. 53, no. 44).

*Arachosia*. a) Two edicts from Qandahār (probably Alexandreia en Arachosia) by the Indian emperor Aśoka (r. ca. 268-232 B.C.E., q.v.) of the Maurya dynasty, admonishing his subjects to piety and abstinence. One is a bilingual Greco-Aramaic inscription (ed. Pugliese Carratelli, 1958 [improved version 1964] and, independently, Schlumberger, Robert, Dupont-Sommer, and Benveniste); the other contains the remaining parts of a Greek translation of the Prakrit Rock Edicts XII and XIII, discovered in 1958 and 1964, respectively (ed. Schlumberger, 1964; on both texts, see Schmitt, pp. 43-51). b) A fragmentary 3rd-century B.C.E. metric dedication on an alabaster base of a statue group (for further analysis and literature, see Schmitt, p. 51, nos. 37-38).

The Parthian period.

*Bīsotūn*. a) An inscription on a relief showing the Parthian king Mithridates II (r. ca. 124/3-87 B.C.E.) honored by four dignitaries (Dittenberger, ed., 431; Kawami, pp. 155-57). b) An inscription on another relief immediately to the right of (a), showing the Parthian king Gotarzes (II; r. ca. 38-51 C.E.) defeating his adversary in a cavalry battle (Franz, ed., III, 4674; Kawami, pp. 157-59).

*Susa*. a) Two poems in elegiac distichs in honor of Zamaspēs, *stratíarchos* of Susa during the reign of the Parthian king Phraates IV (38/7-2 B.C.E.), expressing gratitude for his irrigation works on the river Gondeisos (*SEG* VII,



12-13). b) A letter of December 21 C.E. from the Parthian king Artabanus II (r. 12-ca. 38 C.E., q.v.) to the magistrates of Susa, concerning the validation of a contested city election. It is now in the Louvre (Welles, pp. 299-306, no. 75). c) A hymnus for Apollo of the 1st century C.E., now in the Louvre (*SEG* VII, 14). d) A portrait of a queen with an inscription of the artist Antiochos, son of Druās, on the crown (Cumont, 1939). e) An inscription on a mosaic, bearing the female name Mousa (Ghirshman).

*Nisa*. An inscription on a rhyton (Bernard, 1985, esp. p. 90).

The Sasanian period.

*Naqš-e Rostam*. a) A short trilingual (Middle Persian, Parthian, and Greek) inscription of the Sasanian king Ardašīr I (r. 224-241 C.E., q.v.) under an investiture scene (Back, p. 281). b) A very short trilingual (Middle Persian, Parthian, and Greek) inscription under a relief of Ahura Mazdā (q.v.; reign of Ardašīr I; Back, p. 282). c) A long and extremely important inscription of Ardašīr's son Šāpūr I (r. 241/2-272 C.E.) on the Ka'ba-ye Zardošt near Naqš-e Rostam, also called "Res Gestae Saporis." The king introduces himself and his empire, boasts of his victories against the Romans, and enumerates his foundations of sacred fires (Maricq; Back, pp. 284-371; Huyse, forthcoming).

*Naqš-e Rajab*. A short trilingual (Middle Persian, Parthian, and Greek) inscription on the belly of a statue of the horse of Šāpūr I (Back, pp. 282-83).

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