

MENAS' INSCRIPTION AND CURUPEDION

The only visual testimony to the great campaigns of the Seleucids are the terra cotta of Myrina, probably depicting an episode of the battle between Antiochus I, "the Saviour", and the Galatians,¹ and the stele of Menas usually considered to relate to Curupedion, the decisive battle between Lysimachus and Seleucus I (281 B.C.). As no record of the course of this latter battle itself has survived,² there is special interest in re-examining the contents of the stone and its historical background.

The stone was discovered by G. Mendel towards the end of the 19th century in the Turkish village of Pazarköy, north of Lake Ascania (Iznik Gölü)³ and is now in the Archeological Museum in Istanbul.⁴ It has been discussed on several occasions⁵ and published in some collections of epitaphs and verse inscriptions.⁶ The upper part of the relief at the top of the stone is broken and has to be reconstructed from the evidence of the inscription, which consists of an epitaph made up of two elegies. The inscription reads as follows:⁷

I am grateful to Miss Joyce Reynolds, Mr. G.T. Griffith and Dr. W.H. Plommer of Cambridge University for reading the article and suggesting a number of improvements, and to Mr. A.G. Woodhead for his help in dating the paleography of the inscription.

¹ S. Reinach, "Fouilles dans la nécropole de Myrina, *BCH* 9 (1885) 485-489; and his *La nécropole de Myrina* (Paris 1887) 318, and see pl. 10. On this battle see recently: B. Bar-Kochva, "On the Sources and Chronology of Antiochus I's Battle against the Galatians", *Proc. Cambr. Phil. Soc.* 199, N. S. 19 (1973) 1-8.

² The surviving information refers to the site of the battle, the fate of Lysimachus and some events in Asia Minor before and after the battle, see: App. *Syr.* 62, 64; Euseb. *Chron.* 1. 234 (ed. Schoene); Nepos *reg.* 3; Justin 17. 2; Memnon 8.12; Pomp. *Trog. Prol.* 17; Polyb. 18.5.4; Pausanias 1.10.4; OGIS 335, l. 135; Polyaeus 3.7.3; 4.9.4; 6.12; 7.57.

³ G. Mendel, "Inscriptions de Bithynie", *BCH* 24 (1900) 379-382.

⁴ Id. *Cat. sculpt. Mus. Ottom.* (Constantinople 1912) No. 1972 (Vol. 3, p. 307).

⁵ B. Keil, Kόpov Πέδov, *Rev. de Phil.* 26 (1892) 256-262; E. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus* (London 1902) 1. 383; K.J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* (Berlin 1927) 4. 2, 458-461; E. Pfuhl, "Zwei Kriegergrabmäler", *Arch. Anz.* 46 (1932) 5-6; M. Launey, *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques* (Paris 1949) 1. 433; D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton 1950) 2. 727 n. 5.

⁶ J. Geffcken, *Griechische Epigramme* (Heidelberg 1916) 190; F. Hiller v. Gaertringen, *Historische Griechische Epigramme* (Bonn 1926) 91; W. Peek, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften* (Berlin 1955) 613; Id. *Griechische Grabgedichte* (Berlin 1960) 268-269, no. 457.

⁷ Cf. the photograph, plate I (taken from Pfuhl, *loc. cit.*). The facsimiles published by Mendel, *loc. cit.* are far from good reproductions of the original relief, especially of the lettering.

εἰ καὶ μευ δολιχὸς περιαίνυται ὅστέα τύμβος,
 ξεῖνε, τὸ δυσμενέων γ' οὐχ ὑπέτρεσσα βάρος·
 πεζομάχος δ' ἱππεῖας ἐνὶ προμάχοισιν ἔμεινα,
 4 ὁππότε περ Κούρου μαρνάμεθ' ἐμ πεδίῳ·
 Θρήικα δὲ προπάρειθε βαλὼν ἐνὶ τεύχεσιν ἄνδρα
 [κ]αὶ Μυσὸν μεγάλας κάτθανον ἄμφ' ἀρετᾶς.
 τῷ τις ἐπαινῆσειε θοὸν Βιοήριος υἱά
 8 Βιθυνὸν Μηνᾶν, ἔξοχον ἡγεμόνα.
 ἄλλο.

[δ]άκρυα μὲν δειλοῖς τις ἰὼν ἐπιτύμβια χεῦοι,
 [ν]ώνυμον ἐγ νούσων δεξαμένοις θάνατον.
 αὐτὰρ ἐμὲ Φρυγίῳ παρὰ ῥόον ἄμφι τε πάτρης
 12 ἄμφι τε κυδαλίμων μαρνάμενον τοκέων
 εὐκλέα δέξατο γαῖα μετὰ προμάχοισι δαμέντα,
 δυσμενέων πολλοὺς πρόσδε δαΐζαμενον.
 Βιθυνὸν τῷ τις Βιοήριος υἱέα Μηνᾶν
 16 αἰνῆσαι με, ἀρετᾶς φέγγος ἀμειψάμενον.

The epitaph, permeated with Homeric phrases and associations, celebrates a Bithynian officer named Menas, son of Bioeris, who took part in a battle at Curupedion, on the banks of the Phrygios. Posted as an infantry officer among the advance cavalry,⁸ he was slain after having himself killed two combatants, a Thracian and a Mysian, and then was slain in turn. He is glorified for sacrificing himself for the "fatherland" and his "noble ancestors".

On the relief the two combatants killed by Menas lie on the left. The different shapes of their large shields suggest that the men belonged to different national units of the infantry. The opposite side of the relief shows traces of enormous legs belonging to a standing warrior, certainly Menas himself. Their size indicates the gigantic dimensions of the body (unfortunately, on the missing upper part of the stone) which was doubtless the sculptor's way of equating Menas with the Homeric heroes as the writer of the epitaph did. Pfuhl suggested, on the analogy of the stele of Dexileos from Athens, that the upper left-hand side of the relief showed a cavalier on a galloping horse who was probably responsible for the death of the hero of the epitaph.⁹

⁸ See 1. 3; Peek's reading ἱππῆας, and consequently his translation ("Als Fusskämpfer habe ich den Reitern gestanden"), are wrong. The letters EI are quite clear, and the relief itself does not support his reading (see below). The military term ἱππεῖας itself is a bit surprising in an "Homeric" elegy, but what else could the "poet" have used, given what he wanted to say? The ΑΣ at the end of the word seems somewhat difficult from the photograph, but inspection of the inscription reveals that the stone is worn in the lower part of the legs. The Σ has been corrected from Ε, an occurrence not altogether rare (given that Ε follows) when workmanship is of this rather mediocre standard.

⁹ See Pfuhl, *loc. cit.* (n. 5 supra).

MENAS' INSCRIPTION - GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND



by internal strife,¹⁸ and whose position in 281 constituted a very minor threat to Bithynia. It would make sense for the Bithynians, despite their independence of Lysimachus, to ally themselves with him against Seleucus. The previous career of Zipoites, the Bithynian, confirms that he would not have managed to survive so long if he had not made rather shrewd political calculations. And indeed the Bithynians had to defend themselves against Seleucus and Antiochus I shortly after the battle of Curupedion.¹⁹ The possibility of Menas being a mercenary serving with Seleucus may be ruled out: the glorification of the dead officer for sacrificing himself for the "fatherland" suggests that he served in the Bithynian army, or a Bithynian unit when Bithynia was fighting as the ally of a great power.

Secondly, there is the question of topography. The stone was found near Lake Ascania. At the beginning of the Hellenistic period the Bithynian territory was bordered by the Sangarios and the city of Astacos on the Gulf of Izmit,^{19a} and there is no evidence of any Bithynian expansion southwards before 281.^{19b} On the contrary, as Nicaea, named after Lysimachus' wife, was of central importance to Lysimachus' control in Asia Minor, one would not have expected him to allow the Bithynians to settle west of Nicaea - a move which would have interrupted the line of communication between Thrace and the city. In the 280s the Bithynians were perhaps able to exploit the weakness of Lysimachus and move south west to cut Nicaea off, but I doubt if in this case Menas' bones would have been carried such a long way to the newly occupied region and not buried with his ancestors in Bithynia proper.

Another indication for a later date is provided by the shape of the shields in the relief: the oval shield with the iron boss and the median rib is typically Galatian, and could have appeared in the Greek world only after the Galatian invasion in 279-8 B.C. which followed the downfall of Lysimachus. Fraser and Rönne in *Boeotian and West Greek Tombstones*^{19c} argue that the oval shield may well have been Greek before it was Galatian, but they do not provide decisive evidence for the introduction of the oval shield in Greece and Asia Minor at an earlier date. The oval shields on an Euboean stone dated by Fraser and Rönne on epigraphical grounds as not "earlier than the early

¹⁸ Memnon 5. 6-7; Justin 17. 1.1-2; Pausanias 1.10.4; on the rebellion of the cities in Asia Minor see also Polyaeus 3.7.3; 4.9.4, 12; Strabo 14.1.21 (640); and W. Hünnerwadel, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Königs Lysimachos von Thrakien* (Zurich 1900) 104-5; Niese, *op. cit.* 1. 404; F. Geyer, *RE*, Bd. 14.1 (1928) s.v. Lysimachos, 1, col. 21.

¹⁹ Memnon 6.3; 10; 12.5 (*FGH* 434).

^{19a} Ernst Meyer, *Die Grenzen der hellenistischen Staaten in Kleinasien*, (Göttingen 1925) 108.

^{19b} Ernst Meyer, *ibid.* 109-110; Keil. *op. cit.* 258; and Beloch, *op. cit.* 4. 2. 387, conclude from Menas' inscription that the area round Lake Ascania was occupied by the Bithynians in 281, but as Meyer admits, there is no further evidence for this assumption.

^{19c} P.M. Fraser and T. Rönne, *Boeotian and West Greek Tombstones* (Lund 1957) 69-70.

third century"²⁰ and the terra cotta votive oval shield from Corinth, which according to the date of the rest of the deposit may be as early as the middle of the third century,^{20a} could have been adopted by the Greeks who were much impressed by the Galatian appearance and style of warfare during the seventh decade of the third century (which is still "early third century"). Or, perhaps, they were part of the considerable booty taken by the Greeks. At any rate, a "parallel" independent development in Greece is quite unlikely. The same applies to the epigraphical and literary material which refers to the beginning of the second half of the third century at the earliest.²¹ By this time, the armies of the Greek states would have had the opportunity to modify their style in the direction of the Galatian which actually had become a tactical necessity: the Galatian style was to a certain extent, an intermediate stage between the arms and armour of the traditional Greek hoplite and the Macedonian phalangite. The hoplite was no match for the phalangite, being just as heavy due to his heavier shield, but less protected as the long pike was missing. The Galatian warrior, though no less protected than the hoplite, was much lighter and more flexible. This substitution did not last long; for the Greek armies, under pressure of phalanx troops, overcame their reluctance and adopted the Macedonian style.²² The armies of Asia Minor followed suit, hence the appearance of the oval shield, carried by Pisidians and other unidentified troops, in the steles of Sidon which may be dated to the end of the third century.²³ And indeed, Pausanias states that up to the reform of Philopoemen the Greeks carried an oblong shield *κατὰ τοὺς Κελτικοὺς θυρεοὺς* which, in light of the references in the same sentence to the Persian *γέρρα* and Argolid *ἀσπίς*, indicates that the Greek oval shield was moddled after the Galatian one. Be this as it may, the curved rectangular shield with the slightly rounded corners in the middle of the relief, recalls the Roman *scutum*, and, to a certain extent, also the Galatian hexagonal shield,²⁴ but never appears in third century Greece.

²⁰ "A Hadra-Vase in the Ashmolean Museum", *JEA* 39 (1953) 89 n. 1. See the stone in K.J. Vollmoeller, "Über zwei euböische Kammergräber mit Totenbetten" *MDAI(A)* 26 (1901) 360 ff, fig. 9, pl. 15.

^{20a} G.R. Davidson, "Hellenistic Deposit at Corinth", *Hesperia* 11 (1942) 118, fig. 9 no. 42. On the chronology, see pp. 105-6.

²¹ For the sources, see Fraser-Rönne, *Boeotian Tombstones*, 69 n. 8-10. On the chronology see J. Beloch, "Griechische Aufgebote", *Klio* 6 (1906) 43-4; M. Feyel, *Polybe et l'hist. de B'eoitie* (Paris 1942) 196-7.

²² See esp. Plut. *Philop.* 9. 2-5; Beloch and Feyel, *loc. cit.* (previous n.).

²³ See the steles: G. Mendel, *Cat. Sculpt. Mus. Ottom.* (Constantinople, 1912) No. 102-8; On the dating see E. Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris 1938) 88-91; M. Rostovzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 1940) 1 pls. 19.2; 57.1-2 and pp. 474, 1401 n. 137; M. Launey, *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques* (Paris 1949) 1.474.

²⁴ See the various Galatian shields in P. Couissin, "Les armes gauloises figurées sur les monuments grecs etrusques et romains", *RA* 25 (1927) 307.

The helmet is indeed of the Corinthian type, but the horizontal peak at the back and the single cheek piece are rather strange and figure also in the fragment of the Greco-Galatian war at Delos.²⁵ All in all, the shields and helmets have fairly close parallels on the balustrade of the precinct of Athena at Pergamon which commemorates one of Attalus I's victories over the Galatians.²⁶

Secondary to the political, topographical and archeological-military considerations are the style of the relief and the paleography of the inscription. Although these criteria are very uncertain, I feel that in this case they rather tend to support later dating. Pfuhl, in a separate article devoted to the stylistic features of the relief, dated it as *von entschieden späthellenistischen Charakter*. He even goes so far as to suggest Caesar's period.²⁷ Paleographical examination of the inscription does not entirely discount the accepted dating of 281 B.C., but comparison with material from Asia Minor (disregarding Athens and European Greece; regions are liable to differ considerably in such assessments) makes a later dating more probable. The 'broken' crossbar of the alpha,²⁸ the wider lower curve of the beta,²⁹ the small, rather flattened delta,³⁰ the short crossbar of the theta,³¹ the parallel hastae of the mu,³² the omission of the vertical in the xi,³³ the "parallel" form of the sigma,³⁴ the vertical stroke of the tau connected with the horizontal at a position to the right of the centre,³⁵ and the high juncture of the upper arms in the epsilon³⁶ *taken together* all

²⁵ Id. *RA* 26 (1927) 47, fig. 106.

²⁶ See: *Alterthümer von Pergamon* (Berlin 1890) 2. pls. 31, 44, 47.

²⁷ E. Pfuhl, *AA* 46 (1932) 751-754. Cf. also the pillar of Aemilius Paulus at Delphi *Fouilles de Delphes* 4 (Paris 1942) pl. 78; H. Kähler, *Der Fries vom Reiterdenkmal des Aemilius Paulus in Delphi* (Berlin 1965).

²⁸ See e.g. C.B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* (New Haven 1934) LII; cf. W. Larfeld, *Handbuch der griechischen Epigraphik* (Leipzig 1902) 2.2. 472.; The alpha with the broken cross-bar is predominant in this inscription, although there are some exceptions which may be attributed to poor craftsmanship.

²⁹ Ll. 1.2.4.5.7.10.16. See Welles, *ibid.*; C. Paeche, *De Pergamenorum literatura* (Rostock 1906) 35.

³⁰ Ll. 2, 10, 11, 14.

³¹ Ll. 4, 10; and perhaps also 15. See Welles, *loc. cit.* (n. 28 Supra); Paeche, *loc. cit.* (n. 29 supra).

³² Ll. 1,2,3,4; but the old form is still to be found in ll. 10.11,12,14. According to this and other differences between the two parts of the epitaph, it seems to me that they were engraved by two different craftsmen. On the forms of the mu see Welles, *op. cit.* pp. LII. CI; A.G. Woodhead, *The Study of Greek Inscriptions* (Cambridge 1967) 64; cf. Larfeld, *loc. cit.* (n. 28 Supra).

³³ Ll. 11.14.16; the old form in ll. 2, 9; see Woodhead, *loc. cit.*

³⁴ Ll. 2,3,5,6,7. The old form — ll. 1,2,7,10,11,12,15,16,17. See Welles, *op. cit.* (n. 28 supra) LII; Paeche, *op. cit.* (n. 29 supra) 36; cf. Larfeld, *loc. cit.* (n. 28 supra).

³⁵ Ll. 1,5,10,11,12,16. The tau appears in this inscription also in other forms; see Welles, *op. cit.* LIII. CI.

³⁶ Ll. 1,2,6,7,10,11,12,13,14,15,16; cf. Welles, *ibid.*

tend to suggest the early second, rather than the early third century B.C. Although some of these new forms already appear toward the end of the second half of the third century,³⁷ they were more widely used in the second century. The lay-out and the crowding of the lettering point in the same direction. Generally speaking, the inscription shows an impressive similarity to some Ptolemaic and Pergamene material of the first half of the second century.³⁸ Nevertheless, it must always be remembered that an inscription of the third century may show features typical of the second, and vice versa. This is even more so in the inscription under discussion, imposing additional difficulties: we do not possess internal paleographical evidence for the dating of Bithynian inscriptions,³⁹ and comparison with Pergamene or Milesian material cannot always be decisive; the two parts of the epitaph were engraved by two different craftsmen, of which the lower seems to be the more old fashioned, but both products exhibit bad craftsmanship so that it is rather difficult to make convincing comparisons with good work, either of the third or second century.

In view of these considerations an alternative dating of the inscription seems desirable. Bevan, who was the only one to doubt the accepted dating, tentatively related the inscription to the war between Prusias I and Eumenes II between 188 and 183 B.C.,⁴⁰ but the scanty surviving information on that campaign and the political background do not support his view. Hostilities broke out following Eumenes' bid to restore his rule in Phrygia Epictetos, the province separating Bithynia from Mysia.⁴¹ The geographical position of the disputed region between the two kingdoms suggests that it was the theatre of most of the military operations, while the decisive battle is known to have taken place

³⁷ See e.g. Paeche, *op. cit.* 35–6; L. Robert, "Notes ...", *BCH* 57 (1933) 490 n. 3; Welles, *op. cit.* LI–LIII.

³⁸ E. Breccia, *Catalogue général des Antiquités égyptiennes* (Cairo 1911), especially pl. VIII, no. 22 (Text: No. 34, p. 18) of the period 181–186. See the second-century texts from Pergamon in O. Kern, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, (Bonn 1913) 38, and Welles, *op. cit.* p. 245. To see the contrast cf. for instance the inscription from Didyma of the years 280–270, in *Didyme*, 2. 259, 261 (although p. 296 abh. 104 of 250s or so bears some resemblance to Menas' inscription) or the inscription from Magnesia ad Sipylum (*OGIS* 229 at the Ashmolean Museum) of 244 B.C.

³⁹ For a collection of Bithynian inscriptions see F.K. Dörner, *Inchriften und Denkmäler aus Bithynien* (Berlin 1941). But the dating of most of the material is uncertain.

⁴⁰ *The House of Seleucus* (London 1902) 1. 323, followed by P. Roussel, *Alexandre et l'hellénisation du Monde Antique* (Paris 1938) 372.

⁴¹ On that campaign, see: C. Habicht, "Über die Kriege zwischen Pergamon und Bithynien", *Hermes* 84 (1956) 90–110; Id. *RE*, Bd. 23.1 (1957) s.v. Prusias, col. 1098–1101; E.V. Hansen, *The Attalids of Pergamon* (Ithaca 1947) 92 ff.; R.B. Mac Shane, *The Foreign Policy of the Attalids of Pergamon* (Illinois 1964) 159–161. On the campaign round Phrygia Epictetos see esp. the discussion, Habicht, *Hermes* (1956) 90–3.

near Mount Lypedros in Bithynia proper in 184 B.C.⁴² Even if Prusias had tried to attack the centre of the Pergamene kingdom — a remote possibility in itself in view of the Roman protection granted to Eumenes — he would not have done it by way of Magnesia, any more than the German army would have tried to invade London by way of Glasgow. An attempt to occupy territories in the Hermos valley is no less improbable, as it does not accord with the clear statements that only Phrygia Epictetos was at stake.

Among the various campaigns carried out by the Bithynians in the second century, the war between Prusias II and Attalus II (159–154 B.C.) seems the most promising for our purpose.⁴³ Prusias tried to take advantage of the temporary disagreement between the Romans and Pergamon caused by Attalus' territorial expansion,⁴⁴ and after failing to occupy Pergamon itself, he turned southwards devastating several settlements, including Thyateira at the entrance to the Hyrcanian valley, Hieracome on the bank of the Phrygios and Heraclea ad-Sipyllum.⁴⁵ Of the cities Prusias invaded, only Elaea is reported to have resisted the Bithynians, but the account is fragmentary and elliptic. Prusias' fury, and especially his destruction of temples, can best be explained by the tough opposition he had to face all over Lydia. Menas' inscription may refer to some clash near Heraclea or Hieracome. In this case, the Thracian and Mysian would have belonged to the small Pergamene army; the first would have been a mercenary, possibly serving in a garrison, the second could have been levied as a subject or a mercenary, or perhaps recruited from among the Mysian military settlers.⁴⁶ The posting of the Thracian and Mysian in one unit, the variety of armour in that unit depicted by the stone relief, and Menas' role as an infantry officer among the advance cavalry are also factors which indicate a skirmish rather than a large-scale battle. The high-flown style of the writer of the epitaph should not mislead us, for Homeric associations

⁴² *OGIS* 298; Habicht, *RE s.v.* Prusias, col. 1099, hesitates unduly over the identification of this battle with the Pergamene victory celebrated by the Telmesseans (*Jacopi Clara Rhodos* 2 (1932), 172. no. 2). The inscription from Telmessos refers to a naval as well as to a land battle like *OGIS* 298. The thanks offered Eumenes are by no means an indication that he personally, and not his brother Attalus, defeated the Bithynians in the land battle.

⁴³ Further details on the campaign, Habicht, *Hermes* (1956) 101–110 (v. n. 41 Supra); Id. *RE s.v.* Prusias coll. 1115–20; Hansen, *op. cit.* (n. 41 Supra) 123–128; MacShane, *op. cit.* 186–189; D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton, 1950), 27, 116, 772–775.

⁴⁴ See MacShane, *op. cit.* (n. 41 Supra) 187–9.

⁴⁵ Polyb. 32.15; 33.12–13, and see L. Robert, *Études Anatoliennes* (Paris 1937) 111–2. On the identification of Heraclea see also W.M. Ramsay, "Contributions to the History of Southern Aeolis", *JHS* 2 (1881) 297; Id. *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor* (London 1890) 12–13, 109; J. Keil, *JOEAI* 1913, beiblatt, 164–169; on Hieracome, M. Foucart, "Exploration de la plaine l'Hermus per M. Fontrier", *BCH* 11 (1887) 93.

⁴⁶ On Thracians and Mysians in the service of Pergamon, G.T. Griffith, *The Mercenaries of the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge, 1935) 171–172, 175–176, 179.

were regularly inserted in Greek grave-epigrams to glorify trivial and insignificant events,⁴⁷ as may be also suggested by the gigantic dimensions of Menas in the relief.

BEZALEL BAR-KOCHVA

TEL-AVIV UNIVERSITY

⁴⁷ See W. Peek, *Griechische Grabgedichte*, 9–12; R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Roman Epitaphs* (Illinois 1942) 17, etc, on the Homeric style of grave-epigrams.