

## Temper and self-control in the Persian King's ideal Portrait

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The Old Persian inscription of Darius classified as DNb is one of the most interesting from the point of view of the auto-representation of the king.<sup>1</sup> The royal image, in fact, is shaped according to a series of patterns, whose target was the determination of a self-portrait of the perfect king: not only “right” in front of the law, but tempered and given with a remarkable self-control. R. Schmitt<sup>2</sup> has shown how this document should not be strictly considered as a biographic kind of *Grabinschrift* of Darius, because its contents do not constitute any *Unikat* in the panorama of the Achaemenid official documents. Actually, the text is not isolated<sup>3</sup> and seems to belong to the genre of the *Fürstenspiegel*, being strictly connected with the Persian

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2- 2009: 105. Cf. also Schmitt 2000: 33-44, *passim*.

3- See the replica of Xerxes Pl and the fragment of XPl<sup>b</sup>; Schmitt (2009: 105) makes references also to a fragment of brick from Susa (already mentioned by Mayrhofer 1981: 132). The final paragraph (§§ 11 and 12) have also an Aramaic version (see Sims-Williams 1981; cf. Schmitt 1996 and 2009: 110-111), embedded in the Aramaic version of the text of DB. Schweiger 1998, I: 66-77; II: 193-230. Older literature in Kent 1939; 1945.

*Königsideologie*. On the other hand, its location,<sup>4</sup> so close to Darius' tomb at Naqš-e Rostam,<sup>5</sup> invites us to take into serious consideration Lecoq's hypothesis,<sup>6</sup> that Xerxes himself might have been the authority emitting this portrait. The possibility that also Xerxes' tomb were located east-northeast of the tomb of his father, makes such a solution more consistent, in spite of the fact that in this inscription king Darius was speaking in the first person and at the present. If so, in fact, the text should be considered as a sort of *manifesto* of the intrinsic qualities belonging to the royal dignity, fixed on the personality of the founder of the new branch of the imperial family, but shared and incorporated, at least ideologically, by his followers, or better, projected on their own future lives. The use of the present time, then, would enforce the paradigmatic permanent force of the speech: the body of the king should be considered eternal in his official dimension, *mutatis mutandis*, as in Kantorowicz' model,<sup>7</sup> while only his physical dimension is transitory, although the inspiring model and his quality remain in the legitimacy of the dynastic succession.

In the context of the present approach, and after having considered the general climax of the whole inscription, I will focus on the terminological choice here attested, which reveals a number of intriguing reflections that will be concentrated, at least in this occasion, on the pertinence of some expressions and their semantic mutual implications.

The text starts with the usual *incipit*, presenting A<sup>h</sup>uramazdā's creative and cosmogonic force (§§ 1-5), although we must consider the previous text of DN<sub>a</sub>, where Darius, after a similar introduction, already mentioned the list of satrapies, the legitimating choice made by A<sup>h</sup>uramazdā in making him king, followed by the reference to the 30 sculptures bearing the throne as a witness of the Persian domination and expansion (ideally connected with the image of the Persian spear, which has gone forth, a solution that offered a rhetoric play in which the evocation of the spear with its length ideally involved the physic extension of the power).<sup>8</sup> The first inscription was closed by the statement that everything done has followed A<sup>h</sup>uramazdā's desire, and by the invocation of divine support, plus the strong injunction directed to the readers of following the right path (*paθim tayām rāštām*), i.e. the one of obedience to the (royal) superior power. We may assume that the central argument of the first inscription was that of the royal legitimation, based on a clear stress put on the pacification<sup>9</sup> of the Empire in turmoil. DN<sub>b</sub> *de facto* continues this legitimating speech, in spite of the fact that these two texts were meant to stay in direct connection each other or not, but reveals a certain originality, at least with respect to the inevitable standardization of the Achaemenid formula style, so proposing a series of ideal characterizations of the royal figure.

King Darius declares to be "friend to right" (*rāštam dauštā ami* [line 7; § 2 D]) and "not friend to deviance" (*miθa naj dauštā ami* [lines 7-8; § 2, E]); both concepts of "right" and "deviance" can be taken at the same time in a religious, moral and legal sense. Very interesting the use of the negative sentence ("not friend"), instead of the adoption of an adjective meaning "hostile" or something similar; the stylistic pattern of the

4- See Lecoq 1997: 120-122.

5- See already Kent 1939; 1945. Cf. in particular Schmidt 1970.

6- 1997: 221; cf. XPL (Lecoq 1997: 105-106).

7- Kantorowicz 1957.

8- On the symbolic implications connected with the image of the spear, see Piras 2000; 2010; cf. already Stackelberg 1904 with reference also to some Armenian sources with an Iranian background. For the O.P. text see Schmitt 2000: 29, 30.

9- Lecoq 1997: 219.

antithesis<sup>10</sup> appears also in DB § 63<sup>11</sup> (“I was *not* disloyal, I was *not* a liar, I was *not* an evil-doer,<sup>12</sup> *nor* me *neither* my family, (but) I behaved according to justice” (*yaθā naj arīka āham, naj draujana āham, naj zūrakara āham, naj adam, najmaj taumā, upari rštām upariyāyam*). Then, we find the reference to the abstract principle of mutual respect between the “weak” (*škauθi-/skauθi-*)<sup>13</sup> and the “mighty” (*tunuvant(a)-*).<sup>14</sup> No one should behave in a deviating or hostile way (*miθa*) against another one, while the king guarantees that social peace is his own first desire and pleasure (*kāma-*). The same principle was stated again in DB § 63, after the lines we have already mentioned, but without reference to *miθa*. There we actually find: *naj škauθim naj tunuvantam zūra akunavam* (§ 63, I) “I did not make violence nor against the weak neither against the mighty one”. Thus, as we will see better later, what is done in a way defined as *zūra-* or *miθa* has not social limits or implications; the rich and mighty one can do negative things as well as the weak and poor person;<sup>15</sup> in such a case what they do is equally a fracture of the order and the law that goes beyond social bounds.

It follows that the king likes what is right and legal<sup>16</sup> (*taya rāstam ava mām kāma* [line 11 § 3 A), and the official statement that he was “not a friend to the man who is a Lie-follower” (*martiyam draujanam naj dauštā ami* [lines 12-13 § 3 B]),<sup>17</sup> which evokes again DB § 63. But in this particular sequence, the *draujana-* is implicitly connected with the above mentioned idea of *miθah-*, n., “what is not correct, unjust, deviance, antagonism”, equally rejected by the king. While the first term (*draujana*) is patently rooted in the Avestan lexicon, the latter (*miθah-*) could appear less familiar. Actually, it has been explained as a neutral neo-formation, a substantivization occurring only here (*miθah-*),<sup>18</sup> probably resulting from an *Umdeutung* or *Mißverständnis*, as precisely Schmitt writes, of the Iranian adverb \**miθah*,<sup>19</sup> in its turn corresponding to Av. *miθō*, “false, hostile”.<sup>20</sup> The semantic field covered by this word is probably not exactly the one we usually adopt in current translation, i.e. “wrong” or “evil”, as Cheung<sup>21</sup> insightfully remarks, but should be linked to the concept of contrast, antagonism, as in the Avestan verb *miθ-*, “to alternate” (but with *hām* “to deprive [acc.] of [abl.]”, already Gāthic,<sup>22</sup> or in Vedic *méthati* “(he) is angry, hostile”,<sup>23</sup> which might belong to the family of Latin *mūtūus* and *mūtāre*.<sup>24</sup> At this regard I must remark that, if the influence of the syntactic structure of sentences like *miθah(-) kar-* “to act badly (against)” / “to contrast” has been certainly relevant for its determination, the possibility that a new substantive as *miθah-* could be created, is not so implausible,

10- As remarked by Lecoq 1997: 222; see also Schmitt 2016: 26-27.

11- Cf. Lecoq 1997: 210; Schmitt 2009: 82-83.

12- On *zūra-* and *zūrakara-* see Schmitt 2014: 295; cf. already Hoffmann 1956: 51-53 (= 1976: 346-349).

13- Schmitt 2014: 243-244; cf. also Schmitt 1990: 46-47, and 2016: 104-105.

14- Schmitt 2014: 255.

15- On the social roles connected with these terms see Dandamaev 1976: 200-201.

16- See Lecoq 1977: 222, who rightly emphasizes the opposition with the idea of “lie”. Cf. Schmitt 2016: 92.

17- See Schmitt 2016: 48.

18- Schmitt 2009: 106.

19- On these adverbs in Indo-Iranian see already Hoffmann (1956: 52-53 = 1976: 347-349); cf. also Herzfeld 1938: 260-261, who dedicated a long discussion with a large collection of data.

20- See Bartholomae 1904: 1182.

21- 2007: 258 sub \**maiH* “to harm, damage, fade, decrease (?)”. According to Cheung *miθa<sup>h</sup>* should mean “damage, harm”, not “evil”, as originally suggested by Kent (1953: 203b).

22- Kellens – Pirart 1990: 287.

23- Mayrhofer 1963: 682-683; 1996: 375-376.

24- See de Vaan 2008: 398-399.

although Hoffmann has shown that this evolution is not compulsory at all.<sup>25</sup>

In the *Avesta*, we can find a very pertinent series of verbal and nominal expressions, whose semantic field results strictly connected with dualistic anti-demoniac situations: see adjectival stems as

*miθaoxta-/miθōxta-*, “said in a false way”;<sup>26</sup>  
*miθah.vacah-*, “whose speech (is) false”;<sup>27</sup>  
*miθaog-*, “who speaks in a false way”;<sup>28</sup>  
*miθō.mata-*, “thought in a false way”;<sup>29</sup>  
*miθō.varšta-*, “done in a false way”;<sup>30</sup>

and even Gāthic stem *miθahiia-*,<sup>31</sup> adj., “false” (Y. 33, 1) and again *miθahuuacah-*,<sup>32</sup> adj., “speaking in a false way, liar” (Y. 31, 12).

We must also recall the presence of a triad: *miθō.mata-*, *miθaoxta-/miθōxta*, *miθō.varšta-*, which cannot have been developed by chance, but that was not simply synonymous with the parallel compounds beginning with *hu*<sup>o</sup> or *duš*<sup>o</sup> (or with *arš/ərəš*). The adverbial and adjectival uses, in particular as first element of a compound, would have easily favoured the creation of a neutral secondary stem. We may presume that the acts connected with *miθah*, as adverb, but also as a derived substantive, remained inscribed not only and strictly in the field of the social deviance, i.e. in the political framework, but primarily in a religious domain. Thus, the “deviance” was so because it represented a sort of antagonism against the true thought and the true speech and the true action, as we expect in the evil behaviour of a *draujana-*; thus, it involved a condition of reciprocity, as *mitháh* “mutually, alternately, reciprocally”, in Vedic,<sup>33</sup> but with a dualistic implication. In this respect the terminology chosen by (or better *for*) the Persian king reflects a reformulation of an archaic background, which finds its roots in a tradition that was not extraneous to the Young Avestan one.<sup>34</sup> I would also like to emphasize a remark already advanced by Herzfeld<sup>35</sup> and by Kent,<sup>36</sup> who noted that (§ 8, line 7) *miθa* (in opposition to *rāštam*) was translated in Akkadian as *la kit-tum*, i.e. “not *kittum*”, Akk. *kittum* “truth, justice, correctness”, etc.,<sup>37</sup> being the exact equivalent of *rāštam*,<sup>38</sup> but again in lines 9 and 11 *miθa* was translated with Akk. *pi-iš-ki*, whose interpretation was not clear (Herzfeld<sup>39</sup> suggested “Not, Drangsal” with reference

25- See again Hoffmann 1956 (= 1976: 339-349).

26- Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 123 § 148.

27- Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 193 § 233; the opposite was *arš.vacah-* or *ərəš.vacah-*.

28- Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 56 § 81.

29- Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 122 § 148.

30- Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 123 § 148.

31- Kellens – Pirart 1990: 287.

32- Kellens – Pirart 1990: 287. Cf. Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 219 § 275.

33- Mayrhofer 1963: 634-635; 1996: 355.

34- About this Iranian triad see the pertinent considerations expressed by Haudry 2009 in a special monographic work on the subject.

35- 1938: 260.

36- 1939: 169.

37- See CAD 8 [K], 1971: 468-472.

38- See Borger in Hinz 1969: 57, § 8a, lines 4-5: [...] *šá kit-tum* (5) *a-ra-ma u la kit-tum a-ze-e-ri* [...].

39- 1938: 260.

to Hebr. *pšq* “Lippen aussperren”, “unbedacht reden”),<sup>40</sup> while Borger translated it as “Unrecht”.<sup>41</sup> Now the form is still read *pi-iš-ki*, but better interpreted as *pišku* (corresponding to *pirku-*), “harm, wrong, fraud”.<sup>42</sup>

We must also observe that the strategy of the negation of bad qualities instead of the adoption of open declarations of hostility against them, appears again with the three immediately following statements:

“I am not hot-tempered” (*naḫ mana.uvīš ami* [line 13; § 3 C]).

“What always happens to me in a fight,<sup>43</sup> I hold firmly under (my) power by my thinking strength” (*yacimaḫ pṛtanayā bavati dṛšam dārayāmi manahā* [lines 13-14; § 3 D-E]).

“I have full self-control on my own” (*uvaḫpašiyahyā dṛšam xšayamna ami* [line 15; § 3 F]).

These sentences are so dense that I will dedicate to them most of my present discussion. First of all, the presence of two stems (with a clearly related etymon, but contrastive implications) like *mana.uvīš* and *manahā* confirm the strong implications attributed also in the official framework of the Achaemenid chancellery to the root *man*.<sup>44</sup> Here we find *mana.uvīš*,<sup>45</sup> (a compound deeply analysed by Schmitt):<sup>46</sup> it is the nom. sg. of *mana.uvī-* < \**manah-ū-* < \**manas-ū-*, “impetuous, pursuing passions”, then a compound containing as its second member a radical noun \**vī-* from the same root of the verb *vī* “to pursue” < Ir. \**uaiH*.<sup>47</sup>

40- Gesenius 1962: 664.

41- See Borger in Hinz 1969: 57, § 8a, lines 9-11.

42- CAD 12 [P], 2005: 403-407. Cf. DB § 63; Voigtlander 1978: 44-45, 61; also Malbran-Labat 1994: 152: sub *pirki* “violence”.

43- About *pṛtanay-ā* (loc. sg. of *pṛtana-*, n., but feminine in XPI) see Schmitt 1996: 21-22; 2014: 234-235. Kent (1945: 46; 1953: 190) usually interpreted this word as [*da*]rtanayā, loc. sg., “anger”.

44- Cf. Stüber 2002: 128-129.

45- Unfortunately the Elamite version still preserves only an unclear word, that according to the reading of Hinz (1969: 61) could be interpreted as [*X*]iz-za-ma-in-da. Hinz, who translated *manauviš* as “jähzornig” (a meaning already established by Hinz himself in 1941: 106), suggested that it could correspond to an Elamite spelling of an Old Persian word in *-vant-*, and D. Weber (apud Hinz 1969: 61, n. 42) advanced the reading [*te*]iz-za-, assuming the presence of an O.P. adjective like \**taiža-vant-* with the meaning “scharfartig”, then “ungestüm, heftig”. In his turn, Schmitt (1972: 57) has observed that this solution is formally difficult, and that it would be better to postulate a compound like \**taija<sup>h</sup>uvant-*, corresponding to a writing like \**te-iz-za-u-ma-in-da*; cf. Hinz 1975: 233; \**taižaxvanta-*, adj.; El. [*te*]iz-za-ma-in-da; see also Hinz 1976: 232. On this problem, see Schweiger 1998, I: 67, n. 7.

46- See Schmitt 1987. For older interpretations of this compound see: Herzfeld 1938: 242-243: an *-i-* derivative built on a verbal present stem \**manau-* (of the root \**man-* “to think”) similar to Av. *manaoθrī-*, f., “Gemahnerin an” (Bartholomae 1904: 1125-1126) with a double writing of the *-u-*, and with a meaning like “memor, irae memor”, then, as suggested by Kent (1939: 170) “revengeful”; another hypothesis has been suggested by Kent (*ibidem*), who observed that an *-i-* adjectival derivation for a present stem in *-au-* seems improbable, and then preferred an explanation from \**manas-vin-* (cf. nom. sg. Ved. *manasvī(-vīn-)*, “happy”, O.P. \**mana<sup>h</sup>uvī-*, “with nom. \**manas-vī*, with added *-s* in O.P., as in *Harauvatiš* = Skt. *sarasvatī*, etc. [...].” Kent (1945: 42) preferred the translation “hot-tempered”. Brandenstein – Mayrhofer (1964: 131) maintained a prudently critical position with regard to both solutions (see already Brandenstein 1958: 119), also noting that Ved. *-vīn-* could be a monoglottic Old Indian phenomenon (with reference to Wackernagel – Debrunner 1954, II, 2,919 § 733e) and the comparison with the Old Persian stem presented in a doubtful form. It is to be noted that K. Hoffmann has later shown that Ved. *manasvīn-* could be the fruit of a transformation of \**manasva-* < PIE. \**menes-uo-* (conferring also to \**meneruo/ā-*, the proto-form behind the name of Lat. *Menerva/Minerva* (on which see Rix 1981: 111-112 and de Vaan 2008: 380-381), and as explained again by Schmitt 1987: 365, n. 9 (with additional bibliography). Against the old connection with Vedic *manasvīn-*, see also Kuiper (1965: 301) who also wondered “whether the nom.sg. *manauviš* DNb 13 [...] may possibly originate in a paradigm \**manāvi*, gen. \**manāvvyāh*”.

47- Cheung 2007: 413 sub \**uai(H)n* “to see”. Cheung observes that the “Ir. root was nominal in origin, from the noun \**uai(H)na-* ‘watch, survey(or)’ [...]”, with reference to Ved. *vená-*, “watch” and Av. *vaēna-* “nose”.

< PIE. root \**uei*H-.<sup>48</sup> A. Hintze,<sup>49</sup> in her turn, has rightly connected Av. *xgaēθā.vīš* “looking after possessions”, nom.sg. of *gaēθā.vī-*, to the same family of compounds with a root noun as second compositional element. In Vedic<sup>50</sup> we find, for instance,<sup>51</sup> *padma-vī-*, “pursuing the track”, or *deva-vī-*, “turned towards the gods”. But this O.P. adjectival compound did not simply refer to a, so to say, psychologically unmarked meaning like “looking after the mind/thought”, but it should be understood as “having inclination toward a mental reaction”, and, in fact, Schmitt has translated it as “heißblütig”,<sup>52</sup> Lecoq as “colérique”,<sup>53</sup> i.e. with adjectives describing a mental drive produced by deep concern (Fr. “*courroux*”; It. “*corrucio*”) or anger, in which the subject results worried and at the same time furious. Lecoq<sup>54</sup> also insisted on the Akkadian translation of the passage, which again emphasizes the idea of anger, which, in spite of its increasing strength also in the king’s mind, can be intimately dominated by a superior person as that of the king. Equally fitting the Elamite solution, if the suggested reading \**taižā<sup>h</sup>vanta-*, “pointed”, “having a sharp character”, must be really accepted, although in this case the mental implications of the O.P. original definition are no more evident. In any case, it is interesting to observe that on the synchronic level a *mana.uviš* temper was considered synonymous with respect to \**taižā<sup>h</sup>vanta-*. Very relevant for the semantically negative development of this Old Persian compound must have been the second compositional element, which implies a sort of progressive pressure on its governed first term, *manah-*, as it could grow and explode. This semantic result confirms the amphibole meaning of words like *manah-* and *mainiu-*,<sup>55</sup> which can be “good” or “bad” according to the high or low power of self-control possessed by the thinking/speaking/acting subject in opposition with the behaviour of any *draujana-*. So, in two immediately following sentences we find, firstly, *mana.uviš*, “hot-tempered”<sup>56</sup> – a negative “quality” which must be expressly contrasted and formally denied (*naḵ... ami*) –, then, *manahā*,<sup>57</sup> instr. sg. of *manah-* (and not genitive, as presumed by Herzfeld),<sup>58</sup> here meaning something like “mental energy”. In this respect, the royal temper, which can dispose of his own *manah-*, whose correspondence with

48- Rix 2001 [LIV]: 668-669, n. 5: \**uei(H)no-* “survey” from the root \**ueih-*, “sein Augenmerk richten auf, trachten nach”.

49- 2009: 181-183.

50- With regard to the different uses and constructions attested for the root *vī-* see the overview offered by Schmidt 1967, who has also analysed the special meaning “sich gegen jemanden wenden”.

51- Cf. Scarlata 1999: 496-501.

52- 2009: 106; 2014: 210.

53- 1997: 222.

54- 1997: 222.

55- See the discussion by Panaino 2012. About Ved. *manyú-*, see in particular Malamoud 1968 (=1989: 179-194). On the multiplicity of drives covered by the semantic field of Ved. *mánas-* see already Manessy 1961: 231 § 280, and Schmitt 1967: 103-104.

56- In Akkadian *igāga* “(one who) becomes angered [...]”; cf. Herzfeld 1938: 242-243; Kent 1945: 47; Berger apud Hinz 1969: 57, 8b, line 9); *igāga* and *a-ta-ag-ga* are two forms of the verb *agā* “to be angry, to flare up in anger” (CAD [A], I, Part 1, 1964: 139-40). Cf. also Schmitt 2000: 41.

57- In Akkadian *i-na lib-bi-ūa* “in my hearth” (cf. Herzfeld 1938: 242; Kent 1945: 47; Berger apud Hinz 1969: 57, 8b, line 9: “meinen Zorn”).

58- Herzfeld (1938: 240-242) suggested that *manahā* should be a genitive sg. of *manah-* showing an analogical extension of *-ā*. See the critics already advanced by Kent (1945: 45-47).

Gr. μένος, “mind, energy, courage”, but also “urge, rage, fury”, in the semantic sphere,<sup>59</sup> must be considered,<sup>60</sup> the force of the *manah-*, in fact, must be managed, without falling into violent or irrational reactions, and this power of self-control was assumed as a fundamental quality. In this choice, we can wonder whether its origin belongs to a prototypical model, a sort of ideal *pariyana-*, “behaviour”,<sup>61</sup> in which the control over the mental sphere must be directed and properly managed. I cannot state in a direct form that the pattern of the choice made by the two Primordial Mainiius is here directly reflexed, but certainly this kind of verbal play, in which what is *miθah* belongs to the *draujana-*s, while their evil actions do not produce an uncontrolled reaction by the side of the king, who actually should never become *mana.uviš*, corresponds to a very significant ideal religious archetype. The education to a sort of *ataraxia*, as a behavioural model, was perhaps part of the royal *paideia*, if not part of the royal initiation,<sup>62</sup> in which the ritual dimension trained the king to balance his temper as a mean through which he should obtain a privileged access to the divine sphere. On the other hand, we know that these ideal ethical-and-moral values became also political patterns in the Achaemenid framework, so that a ritual dynamic can show practical aspects. I must insist on the fact that the *pariyana-* was explicitly evoked in the last chapter of the (new) inscription dedicated to the *marika-*, which probably was not strictly referred to a “subject” of king Darius, but to his legitimate successor, or at least this is the impression deducible after the Aramaic version of the same source, where *w'[ywk] hlktl* “and how your conduct [is]”,<sup>63</sup> seems to concern a royal tenure of the king’s successor. With regard to the Akkadian version of DBn. the sentence *ul mamma ša i-ga-a-gu anaku u kî a-ta-ag-[ga-] ina libbija ukalla* “I am not one to become angry (easily), and even when I have become angry, I keep control of myself (lit: I keep it in me)”,<sup>64</sup> results very significant, because the literal translation of the Persian text insists on the self-control of the king. Very fittingly G.P. Basello<sup>65</sup> has called my attention on the fact that already the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions adopted this verb in order to express the fury of the king. Here, the Achaemenid terminology seems to introduce a subtle contrast with respect to the Assyrian background, if the choice has been deliberate. The king, in fact, can become angry, but he must keep secretly in his own hearth his own distress and fury.

59- See Nowicki 1976: 89-90, 179; Schmitt 1967: 103-112, *passim*: 1987: 364; cf. already Herzfeld 1938: 243.

60- Adjectives like Gr. δυσμενής, “evil-minded, hostile”, Av. *duš.manah-*, “evil-minded”, and Ved. *durmanas-*, “sorrowful”, perfectly agree both from the formal and semantic points of views; see Beekes 2010, II: 930-931. In Pahlavi legal literature the term *dušmenih* assumed a specific meaning as that of “apostasy” (*yazdān dušmenih*, lit. “hostility/disloyalty against the gods” or “treason” (*xwadāy dušmenih*, lit. “hostility/disloyalty against the king”); see Macuch 2014: 50.

61- See Sims-Williams 1981: 4; Schmitt 2014: 227.

62- We do not know the details of the Achaemenid royal initiations, but we can suspect that they were a sort of secret matter, protected and administered by a restricted group of Magi; at least this is what we can deduce from the allusive references preserved by Plutarch in the *Life of Artaxerxes* 3, 1-2 (cf. Plutarque, éd. Flacelière – Chambry 1979: 17; Plutarch, ed. Perrin 1975: 130-131; Plutarco, ed. Manfredini – Orsi Antelami 1996: 120-121).

63- Sims-Williams 1981: 2, 4; cf. Gershevitch 1979: 122-124, 130; Porten apud Grenfield – Porten 1982: 3.

64- CAD [A], I, Part 1, 1964: 140.

65- in a personal communication. (October 16<sup>th</sup> 2017).

I would also like to insist on the fact that the following reference to the cooperative spirit of the people evoked in DNB § 4 finds also a certain echo in the DB § 63 (see the parallel use of the verb *ham-taxš-*), where equally prize and punishment are attributed according to the principle of equity. The rest of the inscription to which I do not want here to dedicate a longer discussion offers a large presentation of the royal qualities, and in particular insists again on the *manah-* of the king, united with the *ušī(cā)*,<sup>66</sup> probably a *duale tantum*, designating not the physical “ear”, but the inner ability of comprehension, both to be controlled by the *aruvasta-*,<sup>67</sup> n., again “ability” (Schmitt: “Tüchtigkeit”; Lecoq: “maitrise”). The presence of *aruvasta-* was used, as Schmitt remarked,<sup>68</sup> in direct (but formal, not ethical or moral) opposition to *xratu-/xraθu-*, in order to enforce the idea of bodily ability. In this respect the *manašcā*<sup>69</sup> and *ušīcā* represent internal forces of the mind and of the instinct that can be put in action, and that need to be controlled and directed in the physical dimension. This is the key-point thanks to which the text starts to move in the direction of the emphasis of the bodily power of the king, which is not mentioned in the first position, but just referred to as for its manly quality connected with and related to a superior mental force. It is actually from that inner strength that his character, his tenure, his spiritual profile derive, and that his bodily force, eventually his bravery, when necessary, will descend.

Before to present my conclusion, I must observe that the Greek sources give a direct witness of the way in which the O.P. idea of the royal *temperantia* was perceived outside of the Empire, or at least in its Western borders. In my opinion, a certain resonance can be seen in the usage of the term σωφροσύνη with reference to king’s behavior and education. If we recall the most pertinent passage of the *Alcibiades* I [121e],<sup>70</sup> a work attributed to Plato, but perhaps of one of his pupils, dedicated to the education of the royal princes, we read that among the “four men chosen as the most highly esteemed among the Persians of mature age” one was expressly the most temperate one (σωφρονέστατος), whose duty was that of teaching the young prince “not to be mastered by even a single pleasure, in order that he may be accustomed to be a free man and a veritable king, who is the master first of all that is in him”. These few words agree perfectly with the essential meaning of the self-representation of the ideal king in the O.P. inscriptions. The term σωφροσύνη is explicitly chosen in chapter 9 of the first book of Xenophon’s *Anabasis* with direct reference to the education of the young nobles and princes in Persia.<sup>71</sup> This character clearly belongs to the ideal portrait of Cyrus the Younger, but it was also emphasized in the framework of the *Cyropaedia*, in particular in VIII, I, 30,<sup>72</sup> where “temperance” (σωφροσύνη) assumed again a remarkable importance. Here this virtue was presented as an example for weaker persons against any sort of excesses (ὑβρίζειν). I insist on this general comparison because from the Greek point of view σωφροσύνη<sup>73</sup> was in direct opposition with ὑβρις, so assuming the importance of the greatest virtue, as shown also in a significant fragment (n° 112) attributed to Heraclitus. As stated in

66- Schmitt 2014: 267. Cf. Kent 1945: 43.

67- Schmitt 2014: 138; 2000: 39, 40. Cf. Meillet – Benveniste 1931: 66. Cf. also Kent 1939: 169, and in particular the special excursus in Kent 1945: 50-52.

68- *Ibidem*. On the relation between *aruvasta-* and *xratu-* in DB § 7 lines 3-4, see already the discussion in Herzfeld 1938: 82-86.

69- Note that in XPl 39 we find *manašcā*, as emphasized by Schweiger 1998, I: 70, n. 28.

70- See Platon, ed. Croiset, 1953: 90; ed. Burnet, 1901.

71- Xenophon, ed. Hude 1972: 38, 17/18. I must thank Prof. Christopher Tuplin, who kindly called my attention on this passage.

72- Xenophon, ed. Miller, 1914, II: 320-321; ed. Marchant 1910 *ad locum*.

73- With regard to the different properties, which constitute the “virtue” in Plutarch, see Stronk 2010: 94.



DNb § 8,<sup>74</sup> Darius strongly emphasizes his own spiritual superiority, which, thanks to his intelligence and (self)-command, gives him the force to withstand and dominate panic (*afuvā*-, f., “panic fear of death”).<sup>75</sup> This self-presentation finds a fitting resonance in Plutarch (*Moralia* 171F), where, as remarked by Schmitt,<sup>76</sup> Darius’ prudence in battle and in danger is referred to. Here, properly again, the very tempered and prudent behaviour of the king is described as φρονιμώτερος.

In conclusion, I would like to insist on the fact that this text shows the presence of an ideological repertory of ideal, moral and personal qualities, considered fundamental in the profile of a legitimate king. Crossed references with other texts as § 63 of Darius Bisutūn, the presence of a parallel source in XPL (probably with an additional replica) and the attestation of another variant in Aramaic, at least for the final chapters, which were appended to the Aramaic version of Bisutūn, simply show the existence of an oral and written rhetoric patrimony. The public image of the king, based on a *temperantia* supported by *iustitia* and a *virilis fortitudo*, was probably matter for compositional exercises, performed by a new generation of scribes and singers, who had the duty of celebrating the royal power in a political, multicultural, dimension. In this way, old and new materials were joined, shaped, and re-fashioned. For this reason we should not be stupefied by the presence of a number of grammatical (and probably dialectological) variants<sup>77</sup> in the parallel text of XPL. The basic score was common, while the written realization reflected different habits of the final redactor. But this difference, partly due to a lower level of competence of the scribe who engraved XPL, cannot be considered only as a corruption (which of course might have occurred). It confirms the presence of a living variant (the mistakes paradoxically show the genuineness of the text, whose memory was maintained and reflexed in a later transmission), as a manifestation of endurance of a commonly shared vision of the king and of his textual presentation. In particular, if the impulse to the redaction of these texts was due to Xerxes’ administrative ambiance, the differences would be perhaps explicable in various ways, level of the scribes, personal varieties, geo-linguistic difference, etc. In any case, the existence of a similar text confirms the force of a *Vorlage*, and of a tradition of speakers and writers, who were probably free to introduce their preferred linguistic style, at least in the limits of what was considered to be a polite, formal speech, fitting still for a royal inscription.

Thus, if DNA, DNb and the last chapters (with an Aramaic correspondence) do not properly represent the standard form of a funerary inscription, their location, so close to the tomb of Darius, was not meaningless. Although we cannot establish *a priori* who decided to engrave them, whether Darius himself or his son, and even in the case that only Xerxes should be responsible for this final decision, we may reasonably assume that the content of the text reflected and continued an oral tradition,<sup>78</sup> in which the ideal of the right monarch was already fixed in conformity with certain well established patterns. Thus, fixed the main musical theme, the rests was left to inevitable variations. While Gershevitch was sure that it was Darius to dictate his own text, I am not so optimistic, and I would not insist on the performative speech of the king as the first of composers, but I prefer to suggest that this kind of composition was a professional work for a

74- See Schmitt 2000: 39, 40, 43; 2009: 109.

75- Hoffmann 1955 (= 1975, I: 52-57); Schmitt 2014: 126.

76- 2000: 43.

77- See Lecoq 1997: 105-106, 121-122, 259-261. For the text cf. also Schweiger 1998, I: 40-47; II: 111-144.

78- On this subject see already Huyse 1990: 177-184; Skjærvø 1985; 1999; 2005-06. For the Indo-European background see again Schmitt 1967.

single well-trained author or for an educated group of specialists. Of course, royal taste and king's approval were necessary (and then the text became proper of the king via his direct legitimisation), but it would be perhaps too romantic to imagine an Achaemenid king, *inter tela volantia*, spending time in the technical elaboration of rhetoric compositions. Maybe, but a pinch of scepticism can be admitted, especially if we assume that these documents, although in prose, contained a sophisticated texture, fruit of a long oral tradition, now facing the impact of a world in which scripture and written literacy had a different relevance.<sup>79</sup> The Achaemenid court and administration was certainly one framework in which a multicultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic chancellery convened and had to work together in a new dimension. This melting pot inevitably compelled Iranian composers, orally trained according to an archaic repertory, to face a different millenary tradition, in which writing involved and produced particular forms of abstraction and speculation. This meeting was certainly dramatic and for a certain extent shocking, but produced new syntheses, whose results and consequences we must still evaluate in all their complexities: a challenge that would have certainly delighted our regretted friend and colleague Hanns Peter Schmidt, whose doctrine will accompany our further paths in this terra incognita.

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79- On this remarkable difference see Van De Mieroop 2016: 3-58.

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