xšnaošrahe ahurahe mazdå

Detail from above the entrance of Tehran’s fire temple, 1286/1917–18. Photo by © Shervin Farridnejad
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Hanns-Peter Schmidt (1930-2017) Gedenkschrift

The 6th volume of DABIR is a Gedenkschrift to honour Hanns-Peter Schmidt (1930-2017), an excellent German scholar of Indo-Iranian studies, who mainly worked on the Vedas and the Gāthās, as well as Indian mythology and the Zoroastrian religion.
This volume of Dabir was supported by Ms. Mary Oloumi in memory of her father, Iradj Oloumi
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. 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 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 and seems to belong to the genre of the Fürstenspiegel, being strictly connected with the Persian

1. The present contribution was delivered during the international meeting “Achaemenid Studies Today”. A Societas Iranologica Europaea Mid-Term Conference, held in Naples, 11-13 December 2017, at the Università l’Orientale. I express my thanks to Prof. Adriano V. Rossi and Dr. Gian Pietro Basello for their advice in the elaboration of the present work.
Königsidéologie. On the other hand, its location, so close to Darius’ tomb at Naqš-e Roštām, invites us to take into serious consideration Lecoq’s hypothesis, 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, 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 Ašuramazdā’s creative and cosmogonic force (§§ 1-5), although we must consider the previous text of DNa, where Darius, after a similar introduction, already mentioned the list of satrapies, the legitimating choice made by Ašuramazdā 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 physical extension of the power). The first inscription was closed by the statement that everything done has followed Ašuramazdā’s desire, and by the invocation of divine support, plus the strong injunction directed to the readers of following the right path (pašim tayām rāstām), 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 of the Empire in turmoil. DNb 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 formulary style, so proposing a series of ideal characterizations of the royal figure.

King Darius declares to be “friend to right” (rāstām daišta amī [line 7; § 2 D]) and “not friend to deviance” (miša naj daišta amī [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
antithesis appears also in DB § 63 ("I was not disloyal, I was not a liar, I was not an evil-doer, nor me neither my family, (but) I behaved according to justice" (yaθā naj arika āham, naj draṷjana āham, naj zūrakara āham, naj adam, najmai taṷ mā, upari r̥štām upariyāyam). Then, we find the reference to the abstract principle of mutual respect between the "weak" (škaṷθi/skaṷθi) and the "mighty" (tunuvant(a)-).14 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 škaṷdim 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;15 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 (taya rāståm 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 draṷ janam nai daṷ štā ami [lines 12-13 § 3 B]),17 which evokes again DB § 63. But in this particular sequence, the draṷjana- is implicitly connected with the above mentioned idea of miθah-, n., "what is not correcţ, unjust, deviance, antagonism", equally rejected by the king. While the first term (draṷjana) 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-),20 probably resulting from an Umdeutung or Mißverständnis, as precisely Schmitt writes, of the Iranian adverb *miθah, in its turn corresponding to Av. miθo, "false, hostile".20 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 insightful remarks, but should be linked to the concept of contrast, antagonism, as in the Avestan verb mīθ-, "to alternate" (but with hām "to deprive [acc.] of [abl."]), already Gāthic,23 or in Vedic métati "(he) is angry, hostile",24 which might belong to the family of Latin mútuus and mútāre.24 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.
14- Schmitt 2014: 255.
15- On the social roles connected with these terms see Dandamaev 1976: 230-231.
16- See Lecoq 1977: 222, who rightly emphasizes the opposition with the idea of "lie". Cf. Schmitt 2016: 92.
18- Schmitt 2009: 106.
19- On these adverbs in Indo-Iranian see already Hoffmann (1956: 52-53 = 1976: 347-349); cf. also Herzfeld 1938: 263-264, who dedicated a long discussion with a large collections of data.
20- See Bartholomaeae 1934: 1182.
21- 2007: 258 sub "maltiH "to harm, damage, fade, decrease (?)". According to Cheung mīθa should mean "damage, harm", not "evil", as originally suggested by Kent (1953: 203b).
24- See de Vaan 2008: 398-399.
although Hoffmann has shown that this evolution is not compulsory at all.25

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

\[ \text{miθaoxta-}/\text{miθōxta-}, \text{"said in a false way"}, \]
\[ \text{miθah.vacah-}, \text{"whose speech (is) false"}, \]
\[ \text{miθaog-}, \text{"who speaks in a false way"}, \]
\[ \text{miθō.mata-}, \text{"thought in a false way"}, \]
\[ \text{miθō.varsta-}, \text{"done in a false way"}, \]

and even Gāthic stem \( \text{miθahiia-} \) adj., "false" (Y. 33, 1) and again \( \text{miθahuuacah-} \) adj., "speaking in a false way, liar" (Y. 31, 12).

We must also recall the presence of a triad: \( \text{miθō.mata-}, \text{miθaoxta-}/\text{miθōxta}, \text{miθō.varsta-} \), which cannot have been developed by chance, but that was not simply synonymous with the parallel compounds beginning with \( \text{hu°} \) or \( \text{duš°} \) (or with \( \text{arš}/\text{ərəš} \)). The adverbal 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 \( \text{miθah} \), 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 \( \text{draṷ jana-} \); thus, it involved a condition of reciprocity, as \( \text{mithāḥ} \) "mutually, alternately, reciprocally", in Vedic,33 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.34 I would also like to emphasize a remark already advanced by Herzfeld35 and by Kent,36 who noted that (§ 8, line 7) \( \text{miša} \) (in opposition to \( \text{rāstam} \)) was translated in Akkadian as \( \text{la kit-tum} \), i.e. "not kit-tum", Akk. \( \text{kittum} \) "truth, justice, correctness", etc.,37 being the exact equivalent of \( \text{rāstam} \);38 but again in lines 9 and 11 \( \text{miša} \) was translated with Akk. \( \text{pi-iš-ki} \), whose interpretation was not clear (Herzfeld39 suggested "Not, Drangsal" with reference

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27- Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 193 § 233; the opposite was \( \text{arš.vacah-} \) or \( \text{ərəš.vacah-} \).
28- Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 56 § 81.
34- About this Iranian triad see the pertinent considerations expressed by Haudry 2009 in a special monographic work on the subject.
35- 1938: 263.
36- 1939: 169.
37- See CAD 8 [K], 1971: 468-472.
38- See Borger in Hinz 1969: 57, § 8a, lines 4-5: [... ] šā kit-tum (5) a-ra-ma u la kit-tum a-ze-e-ri [...].
39- 1938: 263.
to Hebr. *psq “Lippen aussperren”, “unbedacht reden”), while Borger translated it as “Unrecht”. Now the form is still read *pi-išt-ki, but better interpreted as *pišku (corresponding to *pirku-), “harm, wrong, fraud”.

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” *(naj mana.uviš ami [line 13; § 3 C]).

“What always happens to me in a fight,” I hold firmly under (my) power by my thinking strength” *(yacimaj pṛtanayā bavati dṛṣṭam dārayāmi manahā [lines 13-14; § 3 D-E])

“I have full self-control on my own” *(uvaipasiyahyā dṛṣṭam 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 etymology, but contrary implications) like mana.uviš and manahā confirm the strong implications attributed also in the official framework of the Achaemenid chancellery to the root man. Here we find mana.uviš, (a compound deeply analysed by Schmitt): it is the nom. sg. of mana.uvi- < *manah-uī < *manas-uī, “impetuous, pursuing passions”, then a compound containing as its second member a radical noun *vi- from the same root of the verb vi “to pursue” < IIr. *yaiH.

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40- Gesenius 1962: 664. See Borger in Hinz 1969: 57, § 8a, lines 9-11. CAD 12 [P], 2005: 403-407. Cf. DB § 63: Voigtlander 1978: 44-45, 61; also Malbran-Labat 1994: 152: sub *manah-. 41- See Borger in Hinz 1969: 57, § 8a, lines 9-11. Gesenius 1962: 664. 42- CAD 12 [P], 2005: 403-407. Cf. DB § 63: Voigtlander 1978: 44-45, 61; also Malbran-Labat 1994: 152: sub *manah-. 43- About pṛtanay-ā (loc. sg. of pṛtana-), n., but feminine in XPl) see Schmitt 1996: 21-22; 2014: 234-235. Kent (1945: 46; 1953: 190) usually interpreted this word as da[ṛ]tanayā, 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. adjectival form with the meaning “scharfartig”, then “ungeühm, 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 *ta[i]jā’u vant-, corresponding to a writing like *te-iz-za-u-ma-in-da; cf. Hinz 1975: 233: *ta[i]ža-uxtanta-, 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 1934: 1125-1126) with a double writing of the -y-, 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-viš, (cf. nom. sg. Ved. manasviš-[viš-], “happy”, O.P. *mana’uviš, “with nom. *manas-viš, 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. -viš- could be a monoglottic Old Indian phenomenon (with reference to Wackernagel – Debrunner 1954, II, 2,99 § 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. manasviš- could be the fruit of a transformation of *manasva- < PIE. *menes-uo- (conferring also to *menerṷ o/ā, the proto-form behind the name of Lat. Menerva/Minerva (on which see Rix 1918: 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 manasvin-, see also Kuiper (1965: 331) who also wondered “whether the nom.sg. manauviš DNB 13 […] may possibly originate in a paradigm *manəvi, gen. *manəvyāh”. 47- Cheung 2007: 413 subst *yai(H) “to see”. Cheung observes that the “IIr. root was nominal in origin, from the noun *yai(H) na- ‘watch, survey(or)’ […]”, with reference to Ved. venā- “watch” and Av. vaēna- “nose”.

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< PIE. root *yeiH-. 48 A. Hintze,³⁹ in her turn, has rightly connected Av. *gaešāviš “looking after possessions”, nom.sg. of *gaešāvī-, to the same family of compounds with a root noun as second compositional element. In Vedic⁵⁰ we find, for instance,⁵¹ 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 “heißeblütig”,⁵² Lecoq as “colérique”,⁵³ 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. Lecoq⁵⁴ 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 *taiža\-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 *taɪza\-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 mainiiu-,⁵⁵ 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 drau\-jana-. So, in two immediately following sentences we find, firstly, mana.uviš, “hot-tempered”⁵⁶ – a negative “quality” which must be expressly contrasted and formally denied (nai... ami) –, then, manahā,⁵⁷ instr. sg. of manah- (and not genitive, as presumed by Herzfeld),⁵⁸ here meaning something like “mental energy”. In this respect, the royal temper, which can dispose of his own manah-, whose correspondence with

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48- Rix 2001 [LIV]: 668-669, n. 5: *"yeil(H)no" "survey" from the root *yeiH; “sein Augenmerk richten auf, trachten nach”.
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”.
53- 1997: 222.
54- 1997: 222.
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,⁵⁹ must be considered,⁶⁰ 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 pariyan-, “behaviour”,⁶¹ 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 Mainius is here directly reflected, but certainly this kind of verbal play, in which what is mišah belongs to the drayjana-s, while their evil actions do not produce an uncontrolled reaction by the side of the king, who actually should never became 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,⁶² 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 pariyan- was explicitly evoked in the last chapter of the (new) inscription dedicated to the marīka-, 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[yw] hlktl “and how your conduct [is]”,⁶³ 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 ki 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)”,⁶⁴ results very significant, because the literal translation of the Persian text insist on the self-control of the king. Very fittingly G.P. Basello⁶⁵ 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.


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 dušmenīh assumed a specific meaning as that of “apostasy” (yazdān dušmenīh, lit. “hostility/disloyalty against the gods” or “treason” (xwadāy dušmenīh, lit. “hostility/disloyalty against the king”); see Macuch 2014: 53.


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: 133-135; Plutarco, ed. Manfredini – Orsi Antelami 1996: 120-121).


⁶⁵- in a personal communication. (October 16th 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 uši(cā),66 probably a duale tantum, designating not the physical “ear”, but the inner ability of comprehension, both to be controlled by the aruvastā-,67 n., again “ability” (Schmitt: “Tüchtigkeit”; Lecoq: “maitrise”). The presence of aruvastā- was used, as Schmitt remarked,68 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 manašcā69 and ušicā 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],70 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.71 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, 30,72 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 σωφροσύνη73 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

68- Ibidem. On the relation between aruvastā- 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 manascā, as emphasized by Schweiger 1998, I: 70, n. 28.
71- Xenophon, ed. Hude 1972: 28, 17/18. I must thank Prof. Christopher Tuplin, who kindly called my attention on this passage.
73- With regard to the different properties, which constitute the “virtue” in Plutarch, see Stronk 2010: 94.
DNb § 8, 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”).

This self-presentation finds a fitting resonance in Plutarch (Moralia 171F), where, as remarked by Schmitt, 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 XPI (probably with an additional replica) and the attestations 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 rhetorical 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 in the parallel text of XPI. 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 XPI, 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 reflected 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, 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 rest 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

76- 2000: 43.
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. May be, 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. 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.

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