

RITUAL TEXTS AND CONTEXTS
PHILOLOGY, PRAGMATICS, AND CULTURAL HISTORY

EDITED BY JENS E. BRAARVIG AND VELIZAR SADOVSKI

№ 1

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‘TO LIE’ BETWEEN MYTH AND HISTORY:
SOME REMARKS ON THE MEANING OF THE OLD PERSIAN VERB
DURUJ- IN THE LIGHT OF AVESTAN MYTHOLOGY

Flavia POMPEO

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to analyze the semantics of the Old Persian verb *duruj-*, usually translated as ‘to lie’, to deceive’.¹ In order to better understand the semantic nuances and the contextual meanings of the Old Persian verb and to offer a comprehensive – albeit concise – description, this paper is divided into two main sections. The first part is devoted to a brief overview of various cultural-historical aspects starting from Iranian mythology, which – as is known – is closely linked to the world of ritual. Here, a key Indo-Iranian origin myth, that of Yima/Yama, is a significant example of the importance given to ‘lying’. The Old Persian verb *duruj-* will then be briefly framed within the Ancient Near East scenario which, as recently shown, presents interesting similarities with Old Persian. The second part of the work reviews occurrences of the verb *duruj-* in the light of contemporary semantic theories, showing that the verbal Indo-Iranian root was probably characterized by a particularly fuzzy semantics, which likely caused the formal variation that can be observed in the ancient languages of the group (Avestan, Old Persian and Vedic).

2. ‘LIE’ AND ‘TRUTH’ IN THE ANCIENT IRANIAN WORLD

It is well known that the idea of the ‘lie’ is one of the core concepts of the ancient Iranian world: the forces of chaos are manifest in the Lie (**drugh-*, Avestan *druj-*, *draoga-/draoγa-* ‘the lie’, ‘the disorder’, Old Persian *drauga-*, Old Indian *druh-*, *drógha-*),² the cosmic deception, which threatens to disrupt all things and is the evil counterpart to *aša-* (‘the order’, ‘the right’; cf. PANAINO 2015: 236), Old Persian *rta-* (*arta-*) corresponding to Old Indian

¹ I wish to thank Antonio PANAINO and Velizar SADOVSKI for their very useful remarks and suggestions on this paper. The responsibility for any remaining shortcomings is mine alone.

² Cf. SKJÆRVØ (2003: 397) and PANAINO (2015: 236).

ṛtá- (see below). It is beyond the scope of this paper to review the discussion regarding these fundamental concepts, which, according to KELLENS (2011), “underlay all aspects of the religion, including, ritual, and eschatology, and thus appears to have been the foundation of Mazdean dualism”.³ Similarly, we will not evaluate the various interpretations proposed by eminent scholars, to whom the reader is referred.⁴ As a necessary introduction to what follows, we will thus briefly observe that the Avestan *aša-*, with its corresponding Vedic form *ṛtá-*, belongs to the common Indo-Iranian tradition. There are three different means of interpretation: a) ‘truth’; b) ‘order’ as “cosmic, social, liturgical and moral order”; c) ‘organization’ or ‘lay-out’, as the “principle of cohesion of the universe” (KELLENS 1995a).⁵ Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the Iranian scenario partly diverges from the Vedic one.⁶ In particular, we can observe that, in contrast to the Vedic literature, where there are also the two terms *ṛtá-* and *ánṛta-*, in the Iranian texts *anarəta-* is opposed to *aša-* only once in *Y.* 12.4, while the ancient Indo-Iranian opposition between **ṛta-* and **druj^h-* becomes systematic (PANAINO 2004: 83ff.). It is also notable that, as Panaino observes (2004: 91), the emphasis on the meaning of *druj-* ‘tromperie, mensonge’ is typical of ancient Iranian texts. Thus, Iranian *druj-* does not primarily express opposition to *aša-* intended as ‘order’, but carries forward “une idée indo-iranienne de la faute liée à la sphère sémantique de la parole”.

It is worth mentioning that in Achaemenid inscriptions the term *ṛta-* is never attested. There is only one possible well known exception in *XPh*,

³ The semantic fields of the above-mentioned terms will be analyzed in more depth in a future study.

⁴ Among others, see SKJÆRVØ (2003 and 2014), PANAINO (2004) and HAUDRY (2014). There is a huge body of literature devoted to various aspects of the religious, ethical and cultural concepts of ancient Iran, and Zoroastrianism in particular. Among others, in addition to the works quoted in this paper, we should mention the recent comprehensive *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism* by STAUSBERG – VEVAINA (2015). Each chapter of the latter finishes with a list of extremely useful bibliographical references regarding the specific issue under discussion, and with critical remarks and suggestions for further reading. Moreover, the fact that the references from the individual chapters are also given at the back of the book means that we currently have up-to-date complete bibliography with regard to Zoroastrian scholarship.

⁵ In addition to the works previously mentioned, the reader is referred to KELLENS (1995a) and SCHLERATH – SKJÆRVØ, (2011) among others. Moreover, see the recent paper by MASSETTI (2013/2014 and the bibliographical references contained therein) for the etymology of *aša-/ṛtá-* compared with the Ancient Greek word ἀρετή.

⁶ In this respect, the analysis in PANAINO (2004: 77–95) is particularly useful.

where the sequence *ṛtācā brazmaniya* occurs three times in a much discussed expression (*XPh* 41, 50–51, 53–54).⁷ However, *ṛta-* forms part of the following Old Persian words: *ṛtāvan-* ‘selig’,⁸ the anthroponym *Ṛtavardiya-* ‘durch die Wahrheit bzw. gemäß der Wahrheit wirkend’ and the royal name Artaxerxes, *Ṛtaxšaça-*, which literally means ‘dessen Herrschaft/Reich sich auf die Wahrheit gründet’ (SCHMITT 2014: 240–241).⁹

2.1 ‘To lie’ as a sin in the origin myth

As observed by Jean KELLENS (2000: 246), Yima is a hero of particular importance in Iranian origin myths and rites for several reasons. First of all, Yima partly shares two characteristics with Zarathustra. In fact, as written in *Yasna* 9.4, Yima – like Zarathustra and two other heroes – was born from the pressing of the *haoma* (Vedic *soma*), a plant of fundamental ritual significance. This was enacted for the first time by Yima’s father Vīuuaṇ’hant, ‘the one who shines far and wide’ (SKJÆRVØ 2012), as a reward for this sacrificial act.¹⁰ Subsequently, and just like Zarathustra, Yima had the special

⁷ Cf. SCHMITT (2014: 240–242), s.v. **ṛta-* ‘Wahrheit’ and *ṛtu-* ‘rechte Zeit’. For a brief analysis and discussion on the interpretation of this expression, see SCHLERATH – SKJÆRVØ (2011) and the corresponding bibliographical references.

⁸ For a discussion on the meaning of this word, among others, GNOLI (1979).

⁹ The importance of “not-lying” for the Persians has echoes in ancient Greek literature. In this respect, it is worth mentioning, for example, that Herodotus (I, 136) writes that *παιδεύουσι δὲ τοὺς παῖδας ἀπὸ πενταέτεος ἀρξάμενοι μέχρι εἰκοσαέτεος τρία μῦνα, ἰχνεύειν καὶ τοξεύειν καὶ ἀληθίζεσθαι*, ‘They (*scil.* Persians) educate their boys from five to twenty years old, and teach them only three things: riding and archery and *honesty* (lit. *speaking the truth*)’ (text and translation are taken from *Herodotus*, with an English translation by A. D. GODLEY, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1920). In a similar way Strabo (XV, 3.18) observes that *ἀπὸ δὲ πέντε ἐτῶν ἕως τετάρτου καὶ εἰκοστοῦ παιδεύονται τοξεύειν καὶ ἀκοντίζειν καὶ ἰππάζεσθαι καὶ ἀληθεύειν*, ‘From the age of five to twenty-four years they are taught to use the bow, to throw the javelin, to ride, and to speak the truth’ (the Greek text is from *Strabo*, ed. A. MEINEKE, *Geographica*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1877; the translation is from *The Geography of Strabo. Literally translated, with notes, in three volumes*. London, George Bell & Sons, 1903). As observed by Amélie KUHRT (2007: 629, n. 1), with regard to Herodotus’ passage, *ṛta-* should probably be understood “as learning [...], encapsulating the duties of subject to king and with them the maintenance of the social, political and moral order”. Other Greek texts on this topic are quoted and discussed in PANAINO (2004: 78ff.).

¹⁰ On this anthroponym, see PANAINO (2014: 135, n. 330).

status of confidant of Ahura Mazdā, since “il est le seul homme dont Ahura Mazdā ait fait l’interlocuteur de ses «entretiens» (*frašna*)”.¹¹

Furthermore, Yima and his deeds are extremely important from the perspective of reconstructing Indo-European mythology, a field that still today – as is well known – is characterized by much more uncertainty and grey areas than its actual linguistic reconstruction. As Jean KELLENS (2000: 243) observes, “même dans un domaine aussi soudé par la langue et la culture que le domaine indo-iranien, les mythes auxquels on peut sûrement assigner une origine commune sont très rares”. From this perspective, a major role is played by the myth of the Iranian Yima and the Indian Yama, i.e., the myth that can be best reconstructed as regards a common Indo-Iranian patrimony.¹² Indeed, the two mythological figures are closely related and share many characteristics attributable to the ‘original’ hero, starting with their names that etymologically signify ‘twin’.¹³ According to KELLENS (2012:

¹¹ KELLENS (2000: 246).

¹² The literature on this mythical figure and the relationship with Yama, his Indian counterpart, is vast and heterogeneous. This is unsurprising, given the importance that Yima has in the Iranian mythological tradition, the intricacy of intercultural relations, and the complexity of the Iranian textual tradition. Here, in addition to the works quoted in this paper, we will limit ourselves to mentioning CHRISTENSEN (1934) and the recent work edited by AZARNOUCHE – REDARD (2012), which contains several interesting papers on various aspects of the “history” of Yima.

¹³ Cf. KELLENS (2000: 242–243) and also HUMBACH (2004: 46), who quotes the Avestan word *yāma-* ‘twin’, and Middle Persian *jomāy* ‘twin’ from **yama-āyva-* ‘twin-’. The Pahlavi legend of the wedding between Jam and his sister Jamag in some way contributes to confirming the validity of the proposed etymology, as does the Vedic tradition. Furthermore, there is another Iranian pair of twins relating to the Indo-Iranian myth, that of Mašya and Mašyāne attested in the *Bundahišn* (PANAINO 2014 and 2015). It is notable that the existence of a female twin is one of the differences between the Iranian and the Vedic traditions, since only sources from the Sassanian period overtly mention Yima’s twin, while the Indian Yamī, the female twin of Yama, is already mentioned in the *R̥gVeda* (KELLENS 2000: 251, SKJÆRVØ 2012 and PANAINO 2014, among others). However, this situation is different, as demonstrated by PANAINO who has discussed this topic in depth (PANAINO 2014 and 2015). Indeed, he shows that Yima’s twin-sister and the theme of primordial incest are only apparently absent in the *Avesta*, and consequently constitute archaic components of the Indo-Iranian myth of Yima/Yama, despite the Indian sources being less clear in recognizing the incest between the twins. According to PANAINO, these motives can be detected in the complex – and in some aspects still obscure – relationship between Yima and the *daēnā-* in *Vd.* 2. 1–5. The *daēnā-*, which in Iranian texts of later periods has been interpreted as the “Mazdean Religion”, may be, in fact, the female double of Yima’s soul; the joining of the twins thus represents a sort of

12), Yima and Yama have three main features in common: 1) both belong to “human mythology” (rather than that of the gods); 2) their deeds date back to the beginning of human history; 3) in some way, but only partially (see below), Yima can be considered as a “first man” since he lives “dans un monde encore modelable et qu’il va modeler”, while Yama is the first man since he is the first to die. Finally, we can add the both Yima and Yama are closely linked to sacrifice and death.¹⁴

However, despite the clear similarities between the two heroes – leading some scholars to hypothesize there was a common original Indo-Iranian mythical figure – there are also such considerable differences between Iranian Yima and Vedic Yama that we agree with most scholars in saying that they represent two distinct types of hero of origins.¹⁵ To mention just one of the most important aspects, Yima, as hinted above, is unlike Yama in that he cannot be strictly considered the first man: in fact, according to the various textual sources, he belongs to somewhere between the fifth and the ninth generations of men.¹⁶ Moreover – and this is the most important point for our analysis – Yima commits a sin three times,¹⁷ losing the *xʷarənah-* “le pouvoir sur l’abondance”¹⁸, and, what is more, his sin is strictly related to the *draoga-*, even if the exact details are not clear.¹⁹ In this respect, it is useful to cite KELLENS (1997–1998: 746): “Il est à craindre que nous ne connaissions jamais dans toutes ses nuances la triple faute de Yima. [...] La faute de Yima est de toute façon une faute de parole. Il a dit une mensonge – ou prononcé le mot «mensonge» – dans une circonstance qui s’est reproduite trois fois”.²⁰

Before continuing with the analysis of the myth, it is necessary to take the textual tradition into consideration. In this respect, most scholars agree that the Vedic myth is generally the more conservative one, and that the content

mystic union, that is, “the re-composition of the animical complex (*uruuan-* plus *daēnā-*)” (PANAINO 2014: 85ff.).

¹⁴ In addition to the literature quoted above, see CANTERA (2012) and PANAINO (2014: 121–122) among others. KELLENS (2000: 244), in turn, observes that “Yima n’a pas de fonctions funébres”.

¹⁵ Cf., among others, KELLENS (2012: 11).

¹⁶ KELLENS (2000: 244; 2012).

¹⁷ On the importance and frequency of triadic patterns in the cycle of Yima, see PANAINO (1997 and 2012).

¹⁸ KELLENS (2012: 14). On Yima and the *xʷarənah-* see, among others, PIRAS (2017).

¹⁹ In this respect, as observed by PANAINO (2014: 122), the motif of the ‘lie’ can be found in another Vedic figure, in the cycle of the Vasu Uparicara.

²⁰ The same observation occurs in a more recent paper (KELLENS 2012: 14).

of the textual sources is also more consistent than that regarding Yima.²¹ Indeed, in the case of the Iranian hero the sources are so varied – and often inconsistent with each other – that rather than a single myth, we appear to be dealing with a “complex of myths”.²² According to the majority of scholars, in fact, the Indo-Iranian mythological material underwent “a process of continuous re-elaboration”, in a “progressive zoroastrianization” of Yima’s cycles.²³ The cause of this process was most likely to have been the need for the cycle to be adapted to the Zoroastrian doctrine of the millennia,²⁴ “l’innovation philosophique décisive qui structure la pensée mazdéenne de l’Avesta récent” (KELLENS 2012: 14). In this context, Yima is the mythical figure that characterizes the first millennium.

In particular, it is worth noting that the most important texts concerning Yima’s deeds, *Widēwdād* 2 (V2) and *Yašt* 19, outline two very different scenarios. In fact, the first of these is essentially positive, while *Yašt* 19 focuses on Yima’s sin and its consequences, putting the hero in a very bad light.²⁵

As for the ‘lie’, *Yt.* 19. 33–34, quoted below in (1), is the most interesting passage.²⁶ Indeed, despite not attesting forms of the Avestan verb meaning ‘to lie’, *Yt.* 19. 33–34 is noteworthy not only for the importance of its content, but also because the meaning of the word *draoga-* ‘false, deceptive’, which here

²¹ Cf. KELLENS (2000: 251–252; 2012: 14); PANAINO (2014). In turn, however, the tradition of the Indian myth is not wholly linear; see, for example, PANAINO’s remark on Vedic and later Hindu sources (2014: 141, n. 351).

²² The figure of Yima, with its many re-elaborations, spans the millennia of Iranian literature, from Avestan texts through to the Pahlavi tradition – which is of major importance since it includes translations, commentaries and exegetic texts – and on to Persian literature (among others, see SKJÆRVØ 2012 and the bibliographical references contained therein). Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that, according to HUMBACH (2004: 45), “the names of the king of the Golden Age of mankind” (Middle Persian *Jam* and *Jamšēd*, New Persian *Jamšīd*) derive from Old Persian **Yama* and **Yama* **xšaita* ‘majestic Yama’ or ‘bright Yama’, for which there is a corresponding Avestan expression, *Yima xaēta*. As HUMBACH notes (2004: 45–46), the Old Persian **Yama* **xšaita* has been reconstructed by GERSHEVITCH (1969: 245), who also quotes “Av. *Yimō xšāētō*”, on the basis of the anthroponym *Yamakšēdda* that occurs on an Elamite tablet of the Fortification Archive in Persepolis.

²³ PANAINO 2014: 122 and 141, n. 351.

²⁴ Cf., among others, KELLENS (2000: 252–253) and PANAINO 2014, whose opinions differ from the earlier proposals of CHRISTENSEN (1934) and DUMÉZIL, as observed by KELLENS (2012: 14).

²⁵ According to PANAINO (2014: 141, n. 351), the older patterns and versions are those of *Widēwdād*.

²⁶ The text and translation are taken from HUMBACH (2004: 50–51).

seems to be an adjective and not a noun, appears to mean the same as *drauga-* in the Bīsotūn inscription. Just as OP *drauga-* denotes a “rebellion by a wrong claimant to the throne”, Yima’s sin consists of “his claim to be acknowledged and worshipped as god, the creator and supreme ruler” (cf. HUMBACH 2004: 51). Interestingly, this interpretation is confirmed by Pahlavi texts.²⁷

(1) *Yt.* 19. 33

*yejhe xšaθrāda / nōiṭ aotam āṅha nōiṭ garəməm / nōiṭ zauruua āṅha
nōiṭ mərəiθiūš / nōiṭ araskō daēuuō.dāiō / par<ō>²⁸ anādruxtōiṭ / para ahmāṭ yaṭ
hīm aēm / draogəm vācim aṅhaiθīm / cinmāne paiti.barata*

‘[Yima] under whose reign / there was neither cold nor heat, / neither old age nor death, / nor the envy created by the daēvas / **owing to not-lying** / before he reproduced **the false speech** [suggesting to him] to strive after untruth’.

Yt. 19. 34

*āṭ yaṭ hīm aēm / draogəm vācim aṅhaiθīm / cinmāne
paiti.barata vāēnəmnəm ahmaṭ haca x^varəno / mərəyahe kəhrpa frašusaṭ*

‘when Yima had reproduced the **false speech** [suggesting to him] to strive after untruth, / the Glory, in the shape of a bird, flew away from him visibly’.

3. ‘TO LIE’ IN THE ACHAEMENID INSCRIPTIONS

The scenario changes when we consider the Achaemenid inscriptions, and the meanings of both the Old Persian noun *drauga-* and the verb *duruj-* appear to be strongly “political” concepts, as noted by various scholars.²⁹ Among them, for example, STAUSBERG (2002: 170) observes that the Achaemenids

²⁷ Cf. HUMBACH – ICHAPORIA (1998: 109–110) and HUMBACH (2004: 51–52).

²⁸ Regarding this correction of the transmitted form *para*, see HUMBACH – ICHAPORIA (1998: 109); HUMBACH (2004: 50, n. 11); see also HINTZE (1994: 186–187), who considers the transmitted *para anādruxtōiṭ* as a “logischer Fehler”. In a recent paper devoted to this expression, DURKIN-MEISTERERNST (2017) is in agreement with BARTHOLOMAE (1904: col. 123a) but not with PIRART (1992). After having considered comparable expressions in Middle Iranian (especially in Middle Persian and Parthian), DURKIN-MEISTERERNST suggests that *para anādruxtōiṭ* is not a mistake, but the correct form, and probably an archaic relict. Indeed, he argues that a possible innovation is the deletion of the negation in the verbal sentence that follows, which would make the relationship between the two parts “illogical” (DURKIN-MEISTERERNST 2017: 97).

²⁹ See, among others, WIDENGREN (1965: 142ff.), GNOLI (1974), PANAINO (1986 [1987] and 1993: 71), CERETI (2002), STAUSBERG (2002), WIESEHOFER (2013), HAUDRY (2014), SKJÆRVØ (2003 and 2014), SCRIGNOLI (2018). In particular, on the compounds with °*druh-* and °*drogha-*, see SADOVSKI (2005: 535; 2017: 724–725 and 720 with n. 9).

achieved a “Politisierung’ avestischer Konzeptionen” in the area of royal politics, adapting Younger Avestan religious-ethic concepts to it. This fundamental transformation mostly involved the idea of a godhead, Auramazda, and dualistic beliefs. Auramazda is re-conceptualized as a god who bestows sovereignty on the Achaemenid kings (above all, on Darius I; see below) and upholds it. The king, in turn, acts according to the god’s wishes and through his favour (*vašnā Auramazdāhā* ‘By the favour of Auramazda’), and has the task of maintaining justice and the correct political order.³⁰

This leads us to the political adaptation of dualistic beliefs and to ‘the lie/ ‘to lie’ (Old Persian *drauga-* and *duruj-*). Indeed, in the Achaemenid inscriptions, as observed by Gherardo GNOLI³¹, it is worth noting that, apart from meaning ‘lie, falsehood’, the noun *drauga-* has a special contextual or connotative meaning of ‘betrayal’, inasmuch as it generally refers to any attempt at rebellion or usurpation. The verb *duruj-*, in turn, denotes the activity of rebels and usurpers, who do not respect the divinely chosen authority of the Achaemenid king – Darius I in particular. This often constituted the greatest danger to his sovereignty. The king’s fight against the ‘lie’ is thus politically charged, that is, it is a fight against any disloyal kings who follow the lie, and endanger the order and the peace of the empire.

3.1. ‘To lie’ in Ancient Near Eastern traditions: a brief overview

Interestingly, as WIESEHOFER (2013: 46) observes, the ruling ideology of Persian kings, while maintaining its own peculiarities³², was deeply rooted in Ancient Near Eastern traditions, particularly as regards “forms of ruler legitimization, especially in their religious foundation and in the royal commitment to justice and law that was necessary to gain legitimacy”. In this respect, it is worth noting that the motif of ‘lie’, used in circumstances of rebellion in order to vilify the enemies of the king – and, at the same time, underline the sincerity of the ruler –, and justify any military reaction on his part, was quite widespread in the Ancient Near East. This state of affairs spanned nearly 2,000 years, as Beate PONGRATZ-LEISTEN (2002) demonstrates. In this respect, and referring the reader to her paper for the complete analysis, we will

³⁰ See, among others, STAUSBERG (2002: 170–174) and WIESEHOFER (2013: 48), who both provide a detailed analysis and bibliographical references.

³¹ Gherardo GNOLI (1974: 68, fn. 63).

³² A similar observation can also be found in GNOLI (1974) and PANAINO (1986 [1987]), among others.

briefly review some of the most significant data, starting from the fact that the first occurrence of the motif of ‘lying’ in the sense of ‘being rebellious’ is in an inscription of Sargon of Akkade (second half of the third millennium B.C.), a text which can be considered “the ideological self-presentation of the kings” (PONGRATZ-LEISTEN 2002: 218).³³ This motif then occurs in the Old Babylonian epistolary literature of the second millennium B.C., in particular in the archives of Shemshāra (14th century B.C.), in the area of northern Mesopotamia and Syria. Interestingly, in some of the letters, the meaning of word ‘lie’ (*awātu sarru*) implies not only ‘speech’ but also treacherous action. Similar considerations apply, albeit in a different way, to the Amarna letters (14th century B.C.), as well as to Hittite royal inscriptions (second half of the second millennium B.C.) and treaties and to northeastern and northwestern Syrian historiography (8th century B.C.) where a blending of religious arguments and the political context can be observed. These motifs were to strongly characterize Middle Assyrian and, in particular, late Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions; in the epic literature, the link clearly appears between the religious sphere and rebellion and the breaking of treaties, seen as an act of falsehood: political actions against rulers are transformed into sins against the gods (PONGRATZ-LEISTEN 2002: 226ff.). It is worth mentioning that the “rhetorical device of the lie” is clearly employed in the inscriptions of Sargon II (8th century B.C.), again to justify the repression of rebellion, where – and this is a significant element – the ideological link between the religious and the political dimensions (“the gods and the king as complementary elements”) acquires a special meaning. Strikingly, moreover, we find the motif of the ‘lie’ in the introductory section of the dedication for the palace of Esarhaddon (7th century B.C.) at Nineveh – and this is an element that reminds us very closely of the Bīsotūn inscription and its historical-political context – regarding the king’s ascent to the throne, of which his legitimacy in the line of succession was, in fact, doubtful (PONGRATZ-LEISTEN 2002: 229). In this inscription, the political, ethical and religious spheres are clearly linked, and the equivalence between falsehood, rebellion against the king and disobedience towards the god’s will is clearly made.³⁴

³³ Given the subject of this paper, an interesting point which deserves to be mentioned is that, unlike the Bīsotūn inscription text, the earliest Mesopotamian commemorative inscriptions involved an anonymous narrator and, consequently, were third person narratives. In the rare cases in which there is direct speech in the first person, it serves as a hint that what was said was false (SELZ 2019: 60).

³⁴ This concept of lie is also attested in the sections of the Old Testament which refer to the Achaemenid domination (PONGRATZ-LEISTEN 2002: 239ff.).

In conclusion, we can observe that the motif of the ‘lie’ is widespread and spans a lengthy period of time, acquiring a particular impetus in the Achaemenid era.

3.2. ‘To lie’ in the Bīsotūn inscription

Bearing in mind the above, it is certainly no coincidence that all the occurrences of the verb *duruj-* are exclusively attested in the Bīsotūn inscription³⁵, where it is found 25 times, both in the main text and in the legends that identify the so-called “liar kings” depicted on the rock relief.³⁶

Indeed, the Bīsotūn inscription is unique and of the utmost importance for various reasons, starting with the fact that it is the only Achaemenid text which – with the exception of the fifth column – narrates historical events.³⁷

³⁵ As observed by SCRIGNOLI (2018: 140), all the Old Persian forms related to the root *duruj-* only occur in inscriptions of Darius I. In addition, we can observe that the only occurrence of a form of this root in inscriptions of other Achaemenid kings is found in *XPl* 13, inscription which is a near identical replica of *DNb*.

³⁶ At the time, the site where this monument was carved was significant for several reasons. Indeed, not only was the Bīsotūn mountain an important religious site for the ancient Iranian people, as conveyed by the Old Persian oronym **bagastāna*, which most likely means ‘place or stand of the god(s)’ (see SCHMITT 1991: 17; SCHMITT 1990a: 289–290), but it was in this area that one of the key events of Darius’s ascent to power took place: the assassination of Gaumata, the pretender to the throne (WIESEHOFER 2001: 13; SCHMITT 1990b: 299). Moreover, the monument was in a lofty position, clearly visible from the road that connected Susa to Ecbatana, despite being difficult to read as it was located on a cliff face about sixty meters above the spring-fed pool on the plain. It cannot be excluded that Darius’s decision to create a monumental rock relief was also influenced by the existence of a similar relief in north-western Iran, i.e., the triumphal monument of a king of the Lullubi tribes dating back to 2000 BC (an in-depth recent discussion on the relationship between the monument of Bīsotūn – considering both the relief and the type of text – and earlier models from the third millennium BC onwards is presented by ROLLINGER (2016), to whom the reader is also referred for bibliographical references; for a more general overview of this issue, see, among others, WIESEHOFER (2001, p. 13); SCHMITT (1990b: 299); finally, on the influence of Elamite royal inscriptions on the first phase of the monument, see ROSSI 2000, among others). Furthermore – as SCHMITT (1990b: 299) observes – Urartian kings also ordered rock inscriptions to be made.

³⁷ The literature on the Bīsotūn inscription is extensive and involves several research fields. For a detailed introductory description of the monument, the reader is referred above all to SCHMITT’s (1991) useful introduction to the edition of the Old Persian version and to the bibliographical references therein. See also SCHMITT (1990a; 1990b), LECOQ (1997, pp. 83–96), which also contains the French translation of the Old Persian inscription and

The content of the inscription can be defined as a sort of *res gestae*, listing accomplishments of the king (Darius I), its aim being to provide “a form of royal self-portrayal and propaganda” (WIESEHOFER 2001: 13) in a style which, albeit reminiscent of the Assyrian Royal Annals, has some of the characteristics of oral poetry (HARMATTA 1982).

The specific historiographical characteristics of this monument have recently been investigated by Robert ROLLINGER (2014), who observes that the content of the first four columns can be best explained if we consider Darius’s urgent need, having usurped the throne of Teispids in several civil wars, to legitimize his rule by presenting an official, and as accurate as possible, version of the events which saw him as protagonist and which led to his rise to power. Indeed, the precision of the description and the attention to historical detail contribute to the truthfulness of the narrated events, and play a significant role in the strategy of legitimation of power that Darius had undertaken. Similarly, the lines devoted to genealogy and ancestors at the beginning of the first column are – as ROLLINGER observes (2014: 197) – part of Darius’s attempt at historical construction by legitimizing his rule through reference to the past, that is, through his predecessors. Finally, the dissemination of the content of the Bīsotūn inscription to the various regions of the Achaemenid empire in different languages also supports this drive for legitimization.

4. ‘TO LIE’ IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY SEMANTIC THEORIES

Finally, reference to contemporary semantic theory with regard to the meaning of ‘lying’ can help us to better understand the semantics of Old Persian verb *duruj-*. It also highlights what, in my opinion, is a fundamental to its meaning: a marked vagueness.

The definition of *lying* has attracted much interest over the centuries, from the reflections of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle to the recent publication of *The Oxford Handbook of Lying* (MEIBAUER 2018), which takes an integrative approach. In the huge literature on the topic, “not surprisingly, many types of lying and deception have been identified, resulting in a number of taxonomies” (MEIBAUER 2018: 2). However – and this is also not unexpected –, there is no definition of lying that is unanimously accepted by scholars. Leaving aside the moral considerations and bearing in mind that lying is culture-specific, what is

mentions the Elamite, Babylonian and Aramaic variants, pp. 187–217), WIESEHOFER (2001, pp. 13–21 and p. 255 for bibliographical references) and BRIANT (2002, *passim*).

interesting here is that there is a close link between lying and deception. In fact, as is often noted in the literature on the topic in various disciplines (philosophy, psychology, linguistics, etc.), lying is a form of deception.³⁸

Obviously, semantic studies are of particular interest to us. In this research field, the meaning of lying appears complex, and is characterized by various components that are seen as relating to each other in various ways according to the specific semantic approach adopted. In this respect, it is no coincidence that the meaning of ‘lie’ has been discussed in terms of prototypical analysis as in COLEMAN – KAY’s (1981), widely recognized classic study, considered one of the cornerstones of prototype semantics. According to them (COLEMAN – KAY 1981: 28),

“This gives us the following definition of a ‘good’ lie, where the speaker (S) asserts some proposition (P) to an addressee (A),

- (1) a. P is false.
 b. S believes P to be false.
 c. In uttering P, S intends to deceive A”.

The link between ‘lie’ and ‘deception’ is clearly made, since, as COLEMAN – KAY observe (1981: 28), “The prototypical lie, then, is characterized by (a) falsehood, which is (b) deliberate and (c) intended to deceive”.

In a work that critically discusses COLEMAN – KAY’s paper, Gaetano BERRUTO (2010) reassesses the contribution of the componential analysis of meaning, and examines the Italian words *mentire/menzogna* ‘to lie, lie’. He maintains that the meaning of these words undergoes variations depending on the particular conceptual representation that is activated in relation to a specific referent or a certain state of affairs. What is notable is that the semantic variation, according to BERRUTO, does not imply a different selection or choice of the semantic features (“*semi*”) involved in the meaning of a given word (“*semema*”). Indeed, the semantic components are always the same. What changes is the importance of the features, which are hierarchically organized in a different manner depending on the different conceptual representations. BERRUTO (2010: 28) schematically represents his analysis with the following formula³⁹:

“‘mentire’ = /+asserzione, <-vero>_γ, <+consapevole>_α, <+per ingannare>_β/”.

³⁸ Note, however, that not all scholars agree on the need to involve deception in a formal definition of the lie (see, among others, CARSON 2010).

³⁹ Adopting the graphic conventions of Labov’s variational linguistics, BERRUTO indicates the variable features by placing them in curly braces (BERRUTO 2010: 28).

Given this, and leaving aside any conflict between componential analysis and prototypical semantics, two points should be highlighted:

- 1) both approaches include the element of ‘deception’;
- 2) both approaches, albeit in different ways, start from the semantic variability of lying. Consequently, we could say that lying has a particularly ‘fuzzy’ meaning.

5. OLD PERSIAN DATA

Given these premises, we can now take into account the semantics of the Old Persian verb *duruj-*, usually translated as ‘to lie, to deceive’ (cf. KENT 1953: 191; SCHMITT 2014: 170, ‘(be)lügen, trügen’)⁴⁰, which appears in the present stem of the verbal root *draug-* (Indo-Iranian **d^(h)raug^h-* ‘(be)lügen’, cf. SCHMITT 2014: 170; PIE **d^hreug^h-* ‘trügen, täuschen’, cf. LIV²: 157).⁴¹ This stem comprises the root *draug-* in zero-grade and the outcomes of the Indo-European suffix **-je/o-*; the endings are always active. Noticeably, the present stem is the only form of this root attested in Old Persian, if we exclude the participle. Particularly significant cognate verbal forms attested in other Indo-European languages are: Old and Young Avestan *draog-* ‘(be)lügen’ and especially the present stem *druža-* (< **druj-ja-*) in Young Avestan; Vedic *druh-*, from which the present stem *druhya-* is derived (SCHMITT 2014: 170); Old Saxon *bi-driogan* ‘trügen’, Old High German *triogan* ‘trügen’ (IEW: 276).

In order to better understand the meanings of the Old Persian verb, some important aspects of the cognate forms in Avestan and in Vedic need to be highlighted, if only fleetingly.

Starting with the Avestan data, which are relatively scarce, it is worth noting that Avestan texts, apart from an adjective deriving from a participle in Old Avestan, show verbal forms of the root **d^(h)raug^h-* only in the Young Avestan period. These have exactly the same formation as the Old Persian *durujiya-*: a present stem *druža-* (< **druj-ja-*) made up of the root in zero-grade and the outcomes of the Indo-European suffix **-je/o-*; moreover, this verb has only active endings.⁴² KELLENS (1984: 120) defined this verb as ‘clairnement d’un type hérité’. Avestan *druža-* can occur without any preverb or

⁴⁰ For a detailed analysis of morphosyntactic and the morphological aspects, see POMPEO (in press a).

⁴¹ See also IEW (1959: 276, s.v. **dhreugh-*, ‘trügen, listig schädigen’).

⁴² HOFFMANN – FORSSMAN (2004: 185); KELLENS (1984: 13 and *passim*).

with the preverb *aiβi*, apparently without any difference either in meaning or distribution.⁴³ In the former case, it is found either in objectless constructions or with a second argument encoded by the accusative. When a second argument is expressed, the compound verb also presents an accusative.

As far as the semantics of this verb is concerned, there are various meanings attested in the literature: BARTHOLOMAE (1904: 768–769) translates Avestan *druža-*, as ‘lügen, belügen, betrügen, ‘bösllich, dolos handeln, (Jemandem) ein Arg antun’, while KELLENS (1984; 1995b: 32) translates *druža* as ‘tromper’, that is, ‘deceive’. It is worth noting that the accusative is mostly *miθrəm*, that is, the common noun which means ‘contract’, or the name of the god (*Miθra-*) who, according to THIEME (1975: 28), is the ‘contract’ personified: the god who ‘protects those who keep their contractual word and punishes those who break it’. Consequently, THIEME (1975: 26–28), in part agreement with BARTHOLOMAE (1904: 768), maintains that the expression *miθrəm druj-* is an Avestan idiom that means “‘to belie a contract’ (actually: ‘to show, by breaking a contract, the contractual vow one has given at the conclusion to have been a lie’ or ‘to turn into a lie’)”.

Turning now to Vedic, there is a greater quantity of data and a wider diachronic distribution. In fact, the forms of the root *druh-* are attested both in Vedic texts and in later linguistic stages, as a simple verb or with the preverb/particle *abhi*.⁴⁴ In particular, in the *Rig-Veda* texts we find verbal forms of the root stem *druh-* (simple or with *abhi*), such as the perfect *abhi dudróha* or the aorist *abhi druhan*. Once again, forms comparable with the Old Persian verb *duruj-* are attested only at a later linguistic stage, in the post-Rigvedic texts, where we find forms of the verb *druhya-ti*, which belongs to the fourth class. The formation of *druhya-ti* is exactly the same as in Old Persian and Young Avestan, and, as in the other languages, it is found either in objectless constructions or with a second argument encoded by the dative (cf. SEN 1928: 36 and, in particular, KULIKOV 2012a: 565).

⁴³ In this respect, a preliminary examination of Avestan data has shown that the occurrences of the simple verb with an accusative as a second argument are fewer (2) than those where an accusative occurs with a compound verb. Moreover, the occurrences with the simple verb are attested only in the *Yašt* 10, where there is also, however, the other type.

⁴⁴ Vedic *abhi* and Avestan *aiβi* are both outcomes of an Indo-Iranian form **abhi* which – as is known – expresses “directionality”, can have a transitivizing function (although to different degrees in the various languages; for Vedic, see KULIKOV 2012b; CASARETTO 2010), and can be compared with the preverb *bi-* of the Old Saxon verb *bi-driogan* ‘trügen’ mentioned above.

As far as semantics is concerned, there are various meanings attested in the literature for the root *druh-*: ‘deceive’, ‘lie’, ‘harm (‘to seek to injure’, SEN 1928: 136)’, and, according to KULIKOV (2012a: 564), ‘deceive, be/become deceitful’. The meaning of ‘harm’, as most scholars including THIEME (1973: 339–340) and DI GIOVINE (1990: 299) believe, is likely to be the result of a semantic change from the primary meaning of ‘deceive’, ‘lie’. Indeed, as observed by THIEME, also on the basis of comparative data, ‘we can be certain that at least in prehistoric times, the verb possessed a more specific, morally tinged signification’.⁴⁵

Turning now to the internal diachronic perspective, and considering the later stages of Iranian languages, which have yet to be thoroughly investigated, a preliminary examination of the main dictionaries available reveals a heterogeneous scenario, since the various Middle Persian developments from the Old Persian *draug-* are classified as transitive or intransitive.⁴⁶ Interestingly, from a brief examination of the Pahlavi texts, the meaning ‘to break a treaty’ seems to be the most widespread (*mīhr druxtan* ‘to break a treaty / a covenant’), while the meaning ‘to lie, deceive’ is very rare (Ela FILIPPONE, p.c.). Finally, in Modern Persian there are no verbal outcomes of this root.

Let us consider the Old Persian scenario. As already observed, the Old Persian material at our disposal is limited: the verb *duruj-* occurs 25 times in the entire corpus of Achaemenid inscriptions, and exclusively on the Bīsotūn monument.

However, despite the relatively small number of occurrences, three different constructions are documented for this verb: a) a ‘Nominative construction’ (18 occurrences), as in example 2;⁴⁷ these are always followed by another clause containing the verb form *aθanha*, meaning ‘he said, declared’; b) a ‘Nominative-Genitive’ construction, with only two occurrences (*DB* 1.38–39 e 3.80), as in example 3, where the genitive, which in Old Persian is a syncretic case, has a dative function; and (c) a ‘Nominative-Accusative construction’, again with only two occurrences, in examples 4a and 4b respectively. The three remaining occurrences (*DB* 3.89, 4.44–45, 4.49–50.) are forms of the participle in *-ta-* (example 5) with an adverbial or objective predicative complement function, which are not strictly relevant for the purposes of the present study.

⁴⁵ For a detailed morphological and morphosyntactic analysis, see POMPEO (in press a).

⁴⁶ Cf. MACKENZIE (1971); NYBERG (1974); DURKIN-MEISTERERNST (2004).

⁴⁷ The occurrences of the nominative construction are: *DB* 4.8, 4.10–11, 4.13, 4.16, 4.18, 4.21, 4.24, 4.26–27, 4.29 in the main text; *DBb* 2–3, *DBc* 2–3, *DBd* 2, *DBe* 3–4, *DBf* 1–2, *DBg* 2–3, *DBh* 2–3, *DBi* 2–3, *DBj* 2–3 in the legends.

- (2) *haṣ adurujiya avaθā aθanha*
‘he lied; thus he said’ (SCHMITT 1991: *DB* 4.8)⁴⁸;
- (3) *haṣ kārahyā_{GEN} avaθā adurujiya*
‘He lied **to the people** thus’ (SCHMITT 1991: *DB* 3.80);
- (4a) *kāram_{ACC} avaθā adurujiya*
‘**To the people** thus he lied’ (SCHMITT 1991: *DB* 1.78),
cf. Kent (1953: 120), ‘thus he deceived **the people**’;
- (4b) *taya imaj kāram_{ACC} adurujiyaša*
‘because these (men) lied **to the people**’ (SCHMITT 1991: *DB* 4.34–35),
cf. Kent (1953: 131), ‘so that these (mn) deceive **the people**’.
- (5) *naṣim ima vṛnavātaj, duruxtam maniyātaj*
‘(and) this should not convince him, (but) he regards it as **false**’ (SCHMITT 1991: *DB* 4.49–50).

Leaving aside the sequences with the participle, it is worth mentioning that the remaining 22 occurrences show very little variation, something which might suggest a certain formulaic nature of this kind of expression, a phenomenon which is not rare in Achaemenid texts. Moreover, in the great majority of cases, the sequence with *duruj-* introduces direct speech. Another very interesting aspect is that both the genitive and the accusative express the entity to whom one lies or who is deceived, apparently without any difference. Finally, there is another element which, in my opinion, merits our attention. In occurrences where no second argument is expressed, the form of the verb *duruj-* is always followed by another clause that is juxtaposed and contains the verb form *aθanha*, meaning ‘he said, declared’. In cases where the Addressee is expressed with the verb *θa(n)h-*, it is always encoded by the genitive(dative), as with *kārahyā* in example 6.

- (6) *kārahyā_{GEN} avaθā aθanha*
‘**To the people** thus he said’ (SCHMITT 1991: *DB* 2.10).

The distribution of the different *duruj-* constructions (nominative construction vs. genitive and accusative constructions respectively) can be explained, as has

⁴⁸ The Old Persian text of the inscriptions of Behistun (Bīsotūn), Naqsh-e Rostam and Persepolis is quoted according to SCHMITT’s editions (1991; 2000). As far as the remaining inscriptions are concerned, we referred to the volume edited by SCHMITT (2009), which is the most recent edition and includes the entire corpus of the Achaemenid inscriptions. The English translations of the Old Persian texts, where possible, are also taken from SCHMITT’s editions (1991; 2000).

been demonstrated (POMPEO in press b), on the basis of the different type of focus deriving from the different conceptualization of the event at a pragmatic and discourse level in the various sections of the inscriptions. Indeed, the mono-argumental construction (the “nominative construction”), where the focus is precisely on the action itself, is in “summary” sections of the inscription, characterized by a “list structure”, as well as in the extremely concise legends. In contrast, the constructions with the genitive and the accusative occur in those sections of the text with content of a fundamental ideological and political importance. In these passages, the focus involves the whole event in all its components, including the Addressee of ‘lying’, which is encoded by the genitive or by the accusative. Moreover, in these occurrences, unlike those that attest the nominative construction, the forms of *duruj-* are never followed by forms of *θa(n)h-* ‘say’, coherent with focus on the specific event.

As far as the alternation between accusative and genitive construction is concerned, scholars who have considered this issue – in varying detail – have either limited themselves to translating the forms of *duruj-* with the accusative and the genitive as ‘deceive’ or ‘lie’ respectively, or have labelled the different constructions as ‘transitive’ or ‘intransitive’, or have interpreted this alternation as a case of stylistic variation (SCHMITT 2016: 106). They have not, however, provided a detailed account of the phenomenon. Neither the morphosyntactic level proper, nor its semantics, whether in synchrony or diachrony, have been considered.⁴⁹

The hypothesis of a stylistic variation has been mainly based on: (a) the great similarity of the Old Persian contexts and (b) the information provided by the so-called ‘versions’ in Babylonian and Elamite. Indeed, the Babylonian and Elamite ‘versions’ do not mirror the differences in the Old Persian text. The various sentences are translated in roughly the same way, although the Elamite text shows a formal variation that is still not fully explained (POMPEO in press a).

Even though the scarcity of Old Persian documentation does not allow us to formulate a robust hypothesis, various elements suggest that the alternation between the Genitive and the Accusative constructions attested for *duruj-* can be explained as a consequence of the particularly *fuzzy* semantics of the verb considered here, and, possibly, of the PIE **d^hreug^h-*. Moreover, it is important

⁴⁹ However, interesting new results can also emerge from a more detailed analysis of the absolute use of *duruj-* (cf. POMPEO, in press b).

to recall that, at a sentence level, this type of meaning is characterized by a low degree of semantic transitivity.⁵⁰

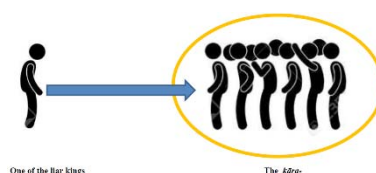
The first point to consider is the particularly *fuzzy* meaning of ‘lying’ from the perspective of some contemporary semantic theories. As illustrated above (§ 4), bearing in mind that ‘lying’ is also culture-specific, various studies have shown that its meaning is complex, and that its various components interrelate in different ways, depending on how the specific conceptual representation is activated by a certain referent or state of affairs. Even though these analyses have been based on different semantic approaches, it is important to recall that the ‘deception’ component is often – if not always – present.

So what do the different meanings of ‘lie’/‘deceive’ imply at the level of the event in the Old Persian scenario? In short, we can say that at least two different conceptual representations of the event are at stake, as schematized in the figures below:

a) The genitive-dative scheme



b) The accusative scheme



Here the genitive-dative case represents a (human) Goal/Addressee of the ‘lying’, while the accusative case is the entity not only reached by the lie, but also, in some way, involved in the event and its consequences to a greater degree. In other words, the accusative represents the entity affected by the “deception”.⁵¹

Second, on the genealogical side, the comparison of Old Persian *duruji-* with Avestan and Vedic data – and possibly with the Old Saxon verb *bidriogan* – suggests that this Indo-European root was probably already charac-

⁵⁰ Cf., in particular, the ‘interaction verb’ class, as formulated in BLUME (1998); see also POMPEO (in press a).

⁵¹ It is worth noting that there is another example of case alternation in the Old Persian inscriptions: this is with the verb *dar-* ‘hold, keep, dwell, stay, live’, which shows a variation between instrumental in DNb and locative in XPI. M.C. BENVENUTO (2012) discusses this largely – though not exclusively – from a cognitive and semantic perspective. This might confirm our hypothesis that case alternation with the same verb was possible in Old Persian.

terized by both a high degree of semantic fuzziness and a low degree of transitivity from the earliest stages, the meaning likely alternating between ‘to tell a lie to someone’, and ‘to lie to someone having an effect on him/her’, that is, ‘to deceive someone’.⁵²

In this respect, we should consider the following data:

- (a) Avestan and Vedic cognate forms have exactly the same formation as the Old Persian *duruj-*, and, above all, their endings are always active;
- (b) in all three languages under consideration, the verbs are found either in objectless constructions or with a second argument expressed; in particular, the second argument is encoded by the accusative in Avestan, by the dative in Vedic, and by both cases in Old Persian;
- (c) Young Avestan and Vedic evidence a strong tendency for this verbal root to form compounds with a directional preverb (Avestan *aiβi* and Vedic *abhi*)⁵³; in other words, the verbs underwent a process of formal redetermination.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that typological and genealogical comparative linguistic data, both from a diachronic and a synchronic perspective, support this hypothesis. Indeed, similar alternations are mostly attested for verbs, which, just like *duruj-*, involve two animate entities and are characterized by a low degree of semantic transitivity.⁵⁴

Prior to drawing conclusions, there is one other aspect to consider: the possibility of detecting a relationship between the ‘lie’ and the breaking of a contract in the Old Persian inscriptions. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, in Avestan the expression *miθrəm druj-* ‘to belie a contract’ is the expression in which this verb occurs more frequently. Furthermore, the meaning ‘to break a treaty’ (*mīhr duxtān*) seems to be the one that is most widespread in the Pahlavi texts.⁵⁵ Interestingly, as far as Old Persian is concerned, SKJÆRVØ (2003: 384) observes that “[t]hose possessed by the Lie break the rules and the law and form contracts with others, leaving the king out, as in DB 3.25–28: *hauv hacāma hamiçiya abava*, which literally means: ‘he concluded contracts with (others) away from me’”. In fact, according to SCHMITT (2014: 189), the word *hamiçiya-*, usually translated as ‘rebel’ (noun) or ‘rebelli-

⁵² See POMPEO (in press a).

⁵³ Cf. also the Old Saxon verb *bi-driogan* ‘trügen’.

⁵⁴ POMPEO (in press a) and the bibliographical references contained therein.

⁵⁵ In addition, we should also mention the following compounds quoted in PANAINO (2004: 88): Vedic *drógha-mitra-*, m., ‘ami trompeur’ (which is a *hapax*; 10, 89, 12⁶³); Avestan *miθrō.druj-* ‘qui trompe le pacte’ (*Yt.* 10, 2); Parthian *drwxtmyhr* ‘qui rompt le contrat’.

ous'⁵⁶, can be traced back to the compound form **hama-miç-īya-*, which underwent haplology and is made up of the following elements: *hama-* 'same'; **miça-* 'contract', comparable with Old Avestan and Young Avestan *miθra-* 'contract'; the suffix *-īya-*.⁵⁷ The original meaning of the reconstructed form was "zum gleichen (Bündnis-) Vertrag gehörig, mit denselben Vertragsbindungen". In contrast, on the basis of the Babylonian and Elamite terms that correspond to Old Persian *hamiçiya-*, DE BLOIS (2006: 49–51) proposes the meaning of 'enemy' and agrees with HERZFELD's (1938) etymology (from **miθ-ra-* with a *-ra-* derivative, cf. Old Persian *miθah-* 'falsehood', Avestan *miθō* 'contrarily, wrongly', etc.).⁵⁸

Leaving aside the etymology of this word, which requires further in-depth analysis, what is interesting, in my opinion, is the textual distribution of *hamiçiya-* compared to that of the verbal forms of *duruj-* considered above. Indeed, with the obvious exception of the extremely concise legends, in any passage where there is a form of *duruj-*, *hamiçiya-* is always present, either before or after. The example (7) is a clear illustration of this:

(7) *utā navā xšāyaθiyā agrbāyam aīva Gaumāta nāma maguš āha haṃ adurujiya
avaθā aθanha adam Brdiya ami haya Kūrauš puça haṃ Pārsam hamiçiyam akunauš*

'and [I] captured nine kings: One (was) a magus, Gaumāta by name; he **lied**; thus he said: "I am Smerdis, the son of Cyrus". He made Persia **rebellious**' (SCHMITT 1991: DB 4.7–10).

6. CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, 'lying', as is known, is one of the core concepts of the ancient Iranian world. In this respect, the Iranian origin myth of Yima offers us a significant example, since the mythical hero commits a sin strictly related to the *draoga-* three times, thus losing the *x^varənah-*. In the inscription of Bīsotūn, in turn, the Old Persian verb *duruj-* expresses a political concept, since it denotes the activity of rebels and usurpers, who do not respect the divinely appointed authority of Darius I. In addition, the ruling ideology of Persian kings, while having its own particularities, was deeply rooted in An-

⁵⁶ Cf. SCHMITT's (1991: 64) translation of the same passage: 'that became rebellious from me'.

⁵⁷ Cf. SCHMITT (2014: 188–189, s.v. *hamiçiya-*) and references therein as well as SKJÆRVØ (2003: 428, n. 6).

⁵⁸ HERZFELD (1938: 184ff., 259–261). See also the interesting observations in Basello (2012: 95ff.).

cient Near Eastern traditions, where the motif of ‘lie’, used in circumstances of rebellion to vilify the enemies of the king and justify any military reaction on his part, was quite widespread. This state of affairs spanned a period of almost 2,000 years.

Moreover, from a linguistic perspective, in the light of some contemporary semantic theories together with the evidence examined in the last part of the paper, it can be deduced that the Old Persian verb *duruj-* (and, possibly, the PIE root **d^hreyǵ^h-*) was characterized by a particularly fuzzy semantics and, at a sentence level, by a low degree of semantic transitivity. Conjointly, this produced the alternation between the Nominative-Genitive and Nominative-Accusative constructions.

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