

Rüdiger Schmitt and Achaemenid Iran

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Vari problemi inerenti all'epoca dell'introduzione della scrittura OP, all'autenticità della più antiche iscrizioni reali achemenidi, all'interpretazione del § 70 dell'iscrizione DB/OP (e corrispondente iscrizione elamica DB/L) e alla questione della natura della lingua cosiddetta 'meda' vengono riesaminate alla luce della discussione scientifica che l'autore ha condotto con Rüdiger Schmitt nel corso dei passati decenni.

Several issues regarding the introduction time of OP writing, the authenticity of the oldest Achaemenid royal inscriptions, the interpretation of § 70 belonging to the DB/OP inscription (and the corresponding Elamite DB/L inscription) and the question of the nature of the so-called Median language are reviewed on the basis of the scientific discussion that the author carried out with Rüdiger Schmitt over the past decades.

When one mentions the name of Rüdiger Schmitt, all thoughts—especially in Iranological environments—turn to Achaemenid Iran, although we all know that his interests reach far beyond this scientific domain.¹ Even within Achaemenid studies *stricto sensu*, a somewhat limited field of research, it would anyway be very difficult to trace an exhaustive, synthetic profile of his multifarious and tireless activity, from his masterly editions of the Old Persian (OP) inscriptions to the Viennese volumes systematizing practically all of OP onomastics, to the innumerable studies on precise epigraphic details, specific aspects of OP morphosyntax, particular problems of translation, in which his admirable capacity to explain a minor detail by means of an overall principle always emerges clearly.

I am therefore particularly glad to have the opportunity to express, together with some Italian friends, my great personal affection and my deep admiration for a scholar who honours European and international Iranology.

I will dedicate to Rüdiger some remarks on a subject which represents one of the links between our common scientific interests, i.e. the sociolinguistic description of the Achaemenid world, although in fact we have a series of further convergent approaches in common—such as a specific attention to the phonetic level underlying a script, the balanced usage of IE etymology in explaining OP lexical difficulties, the interlinguistic insights that come from the comparison of OP lexicon and morphosyntax with Elamite, Babylonian and Aramaic, etc.

¹ Professor Schmitt's bibliography already reached approximately 2000 titles twenty-five years ago, see his *Selected Onomastic Writings* (Schmitt 2000: 225 ff.).