



ARTICLE

The value /me/ of the sign <MAN> in Achaemenid Elamite

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to show that in Achaemenid Elamite the sign <MAN> had a secondary phonetic value /me/. The evidence collected in support of this claim consists mainly in Elamite transcriptions of Iranian words in the Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions and in the Persepolis administrative texts, which are impossible or very difficult to account for only contemplating the usual value /man/.

Keywords: Elamite; Old Persian, Achaemenid Inscriptions; Persepolis Fortification Tablets

Introduction

It has long been noticed that in some Elamite transcriptions of Old Persian words the Elamite sign <MAN> seems not to reflect the Old Persian sequence *man* or *van*, as expected. The most quoted examples are the following:

- *Dātavahya-* (d-a-^ht-v^l-h-y-h-y-a, DB IV, 85):¹ this anthroponym is rendered as *Da-ad-du-MAN-ia* in Elam., but the attestations in other languages (Bab. *Za-'tu-'a*, Aram. *zwhy* etc.)² and the etymology (**jātavahya(h)-* ‘born better’) speak against the existence of a -n- in the OP form.
- *patiyāvahyai* (p-t-i-y-a-v-h-y-i-y, DB I, 55): this verbal form is transcribed as *bat-ti-ia-MAN-ia-a* in Elam., but, again, there is solid evidence to suggest that the OP verb had no nasal. In my view, the most plausible etymology proposed for this verb is *pai-ā-vah-*, from the same root as Av. *vahma-* ‘prayer’, Inscr.MP *ptwh-*, Man.MP *pywh-*, Man.Parth. *pdwh-*, all meaning ‘to pray, to beg’, and Bactr. *πιδουυ-* ‘to request’.³ A possible alternative, accepted by Kent⁴ is to take the

¹ The reading <d-a-^ht-v^l-h-y-h-y-a> was established by R. Schmitt, *The Bisitun Inscriptions of Darius the Great: Old Persian Text* (London, 1991), whereas previously this name was read as <d-a-^ht-u-v^l-h-y-h-y-a>; cf. R. G. Kent, *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon*, 2nd edn [hereafter OPG] (New Haven, 1953), p. 189a and M. Mayrhofer, *Die altiranischen Namen* (Wien, 1979), vol. ii, p. 19.

² Cf. J. Tavernier, *Iranica in the Achaemenid Period (ca. 550–330 B.C.): Linguistic Study of Old Iranian Proper Names and Loanwords, Attested in non-Iranian Texts* (Dudley, 2007), p. 68.

³ Cf. J. Cheung, *Etymological Dictionary of the Iranian Verb* [hereafter EDIV] (Leiden, 2007), pp. 405f. with further literature.

⁴ Kent, OPG, p. 173a.

verb as a denominative from OP **avah-* ‘help’ (Av. *auuah-*, Ved. ptc. *avasyant-*).⁵ Wackernagel tried to explain the Elamite spelling with <MAN> reading the OP form as *patiyāvanhyai* (with pre-consonantal nasal regularly unwritten), a ‘futurum historicum’ of a verb *ā-van-* (to be compared with Ved. *ā-van-* ‘to beg’).⁶ Despite being embraced by Schmitt,⁷ this hypothesis is quite uneconomic because it requires postulating both an isolated root in the Ir. languages and an isolated morphological formation in OP (the future) endowed with a marginal semantic nuance.

- **Ṛštivaiga-*: it is commonly accepted that the Ir. name of the Median king Astyages (Gr. Ἀστυάγης and Ἀστυίγας, Bab. *Iš-tu-me-gu*) should be interpreted as a compound **Ṛštivaiga-* ‘spear-shaker’ (or, as Schmitt humorously pointed out, ‘Shake-speare’),⁸ following a proposal first put forward by Markwart.⁹ The identification of this anthroponym with the Elam. forms *Ir-iš-ti-MAN-ka₄* or *Iš-ti-MAN-ka₄* from the Persepolis administrative texts, first proposed by Cameron, has been widely accepted,¹⁰ and the alternative explanations advanced so far are not very convincing.¹¹ New evidence supporting the association of the quoted Elam. forms with Ir. **Ṛštivaiga-* comes from the spelling variants *ʾIr²1-iš-ti-mi-ʾka₄²1* and *ʾIr²1-iš-ti-mi-ka₄-na* found in the unpublished tablets Fort. 1005-101 and Fort. 2329-104, which seem to refer to the same individual elsewhere named *Ir-iš-ti-MAN-ka₄*.¹²

There have been many different attempts to justify these puzzling Elam. spellings. Cameron simply listed the phonetic values *vai* and *vah* among the ‘normal Old Persian equivalents’¹³ of the Elam. sign <MAN> besides *man* and *van*. Gershevitch thought that the unexpected nasal in the Elam. transcriptions was the only detectable trace of a nasalisation before *h* in OP similar to the one attested in Avestan.¹⁴ Although this position is questionable in several respects,¹⁵ it allowed Gershevitch to put forward some convincing

⁵ Cf. M. Brust *Historische Laut- und Formenlehre des Altpersischen: mit einem etymologischen Glossar* (Innsbruck, 2018), pp. 128f. with further literature.

⁶ J. Wackernagel, *Kleine Schriften* (Göttingen, 1956), vol. i, pp. 444–447.

⁷ R. Schmitt, *Wörterbuch der altpersischen Königsinschriften* [hereafter WAKI] (Wiesbaden, 2014), pp. 275f.

⁸ R. Schmitt, *Iranische Personennamen in der griechischen Literatur vor Alexander d. Gr.* [hereafter IPNB V/5A] (Wien, 2011), p. 142.

⁹ J. Markwart, *Das erste Kapitel der Gāpā uštawati (Jasna 43)* (Roma, 1930), p. 13. See also R. Schmitt, *Iranische Anthroponyme in den erhaltenen Resten von Ktesias’ Werk (Iranica Graeca Vetustiora. III)* [hereafter *Ktesias*] (Wien, 2006), pp. 92–94 and *idem*, IPNB V/5A, pp. 140–143 for exhaustive literature.

¹⁰ G. G. Cameron, *Persepolis Treasury Tablets* [hereafter PTT] (Chicago, 1948), p. 66, fn. 31. Cf. É. Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres en iranien ancien* (Paris, 1966), p. 85 and M. Mayrhofer, *Onomastica Persepolitana: das altiranische Namengut der Persepolis-Täfelchen* [hereafter *OnP*] (Wien, 1973), pp. 108–112, 171 and the literature cited in fn. 9.

¹¹ Cf. W. Hinz, *Altiranisches Sprachgut der Nebenüberlieferungen* [hereafter *ASN*] (Wiesbaden, 1975), p. 207 and Tavernier, *Iranica*, p. 291, who reconstruct **Ṛštimga-* ‘glorifying the spear’, on which see below.

¹² W. F. M. Henkelman has kindly alerted me to these readings. For the prosopographical identification, cf. W. F. M. Henkelman and M. B. Garrison ‘Sigillophobe suppliers and idiosyncratic scribes: local information handling in Achaemenid Pārsa’, in *The Art of Empire in Achaemenid Persia: Studies in Honour of Margaret Cool Root*, (eds) E. R. M. Dusinberre, W. F. M. Henkelman and M. B. Garrison (Leiden, 2020), p. 197, fn. 58.

¹³ Cameron, PTT, p. 75.

¹⁴ Cf. I. Gershevitch, ‘Amber at Persepolis’, in *Studia Classica et Orientalia Antonino Pagliaro Oblata* (Roma, 1969), vol. ii, pp. 170f. On nasalised *h* in Avestan, cf. K. Hoffmann and B. Forssman, *Avestische Laut- und Flexionslehre* (Innsbruck, 1996), pp. 106f.

¹⁵ In my view, the most critical problem is that the evidence collected by Gershevitch only includes anthroponyms containing the Elam. sign <MAN> whereas there are no certain examples of the alleged group *-ḡh-* preceded by a syllable not starting with *m-* or *v-*. On the contrary, Elam. transcriptions such as *da-a-ia-u-iš* (OP *dahyāuš*) and *a-ia-a-e* (OP *ahyāyā*) are quite strong counterexamples against the postulation of a nasalisation in OP: cf. R. Schmitt, ‘Kritische Bemerkungen zur Deutung iranischer Namen im Elamischen’, *KZ* 84.1 (1970), p. 18.

etymologies (especially containing *-vahyah-* ‘better’ as a second element; see below for some examples) which enlarged the number of problematic occurrences of the Elam. sign <MAN>. Schmitt, polemically replying to Gershevitch’s hypothesis, tried to explain all the problematic forms adopting different Iranian etymologies (for example, Elam. *-man-ia* for Ir. **-vanya-* ‘winning’ or **-manya-* ‘having power, authority’, Elam. *-man-ka₄* for Ir. **-manga-* ‘offering’, on which see below).¹⁶ Most of his proposals were accepted in subsequent publications dealing with Ir. personal names in the Persepolis administrative texts,¹⁷ but, as Schmitt himself recognised in more recent publications, this approach did not solve all the existing difficulties. J. Harmatta proposed to recognise a secondary value /ma/ for the Elam. sign <MAN>,¹⁸ in analogy with a tendency shown by the Assyro-Babylonian syllabary to lose the nasal coda in <CVm> and <CVn> signs. Despite not being very likely from a historical point of view,¹⁹ Harmatta’s proposal was probably going in the right direction by attributing a <mV> value to Elam. <MAN>. A significant step forward towards solving this matter has been made by Schmitt in some recent works. First, he proposed to explain some spelling oscillations in the Elam. transcription of the OP month-names postulating a secondary value /mi/ for Elam. <MAN> (for example, MAN-ka₄-na-āš to be read as /mi/-ka₄-na-āš for OP **Viyax(a)na-*).²⁰ Then, he acutely linked this idea with the spelling *Ir-iš-ti-MAN-ka₄* suggesting, albeit with some hesitation, that a reading *Ir-iš-ti-/mi/-ka₄* could match the etymology **Rštivaiga-*.²¹ Finally, he adduced the Elam. form hitherto read as *ab-ba-nu-ia-ak-ka₄-kam-MAN*, rendering OP *apaniyāka-mai* in A²Sa, as a further piece of evidence supporting a value /mi/ for the sign <MAN>.²²

A value *me*₀ for <MAN>

In my view, Schmitt’s solution is the most convincing so far. However, as he himself admitted, such a proposal «solte [...] einmal an dem gesamten Belegmaterial überprüft werden».²³ The purpose of the following pages is to slightly adjust and definitively demonstrate Schmitt’s hypothesis. To do so, we are going to start exactly where he left off, namely from the Elam. version of A²Sa.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

¹⁷ Hinz, ASN and Tavernier, *Iranica*.

¹⁸ J. Harmatta *apud* Mayrhofer, *OnP*, pp. 110–112.

¹⁹ Harmatta failed to provide evidence that the Elam. syllabary actually inherited from the Assyro-Babylonian syllabary the optional denasalisation of <CVm> and <CVn> signs as a functioning rule and applied it to <MAN> independently. To my knowledge, in the Assyro-Babylonian syllabary a value /ma/ for <MAN> is never found: cf. R. Borger, *Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexicon. Zweite, revidierte und aktualisierte Auflage* (Münster, 2010) pp. 184f.

²⁰ Cf. R. Schmitt, *Meno-logium bagistano-persepolitenum: Studien zu den altpersischen Monatsnamen und ihren elamischen Wiedergaben* [hereafter *Menologium*] (Wien, 2003), pp. 22f., fn. 48 and p. 24, fn. 63, and R. Schmitt ‘Neue Namen aus Persepolis’, *Orientalia* 84.2 (2015), pp. 164f. discussing the name **Vahyaskara-* on which see below.

²¹ Schmitt, *Ktesias* p. 94, fn. 104. As was mentioned above, this clever intuition has been serendipitously confirmed by the emergence of the spellings *ʾIr²l-iš-ti-mi-ʾka₄²* in Fort. 1005-101 and *ʾIr²l-iš-ti-mi-ka₄-na* in Fort. 2329-104.

²² R. Schmitt, ‘Zu den elamischen Inschriften der späteren Achaimenidenzeit’, in *Festschrift für Gernot Wilhelm anlässlich seines 65. Geburtstages am 28. Januar 2010*, (ed.) J. C. Fincke (Dresden, 2010), p. 291. Here, Schmitt rightly rejected the idea put forward by F. Vallat, ‘*Corpus des inscriptions royales en élamite achéménide*’, (unpublished dissertation, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1977), p. 256, that *-man-* could represent a deformation of the OP pronoun *manā*. The extra *-ka-* in *ab-ba-nu-ia-ak-ka₄-kam-MAN* should probably be interpreted as a merely graphic device employed by scribes to clarify the reading of potentially ambiguous <CVC> signs, called ‘phonetic complement’ (so F. Vallat, ‘Les compléments phonétiques ou graphiques en élamite achéménide’, *AION* 49.3 [1989], pp. 219–222) or ‘plene writing’ (so M. W. Stolper, ‘Elamite’, in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World’s Ancient Languages*, (ed.) R. D. Woodard [Cambridge, 2004], p. 68).

²³ Schmitt, ‘Zu den elamischen Inschriften’, p. 291, fn. 10.

As I argued elsewhere,²⁴ the last word of A²Sa should be interpreted as Elam. /me/-ul-ka₄-in (a form of the verb *melka-* ‘to damage’). However, the first sign of the word is clearly not <ME> (532),²⁵ but rather <MAN> (471), that is, it is identical to the last sign in *ab-ba-nu-ia-ak-ka₄-kam-MAN*.²⁶ This not only constitutes a further example of the usage of <MAN> to convey a different phonetic value than usual, but also allows us to improve our knowledge of what this phonetic value could be. In Elamite a phonological opposition between the vowels /e/ and /i/ surely existed, even though it was not always represented in writing.²⁷ Therefore, it is likely that in this case <MAN> expresses /me/ rather than /mi/, as suggested by Schmitt. At a closer look, all the examples quoted so far are compatible with an Elam. sign with an /e/ vowel: in *ab-ba-nu-ia-ak-ka₄-kam-/me/* (OP *apaniyāka-mai*)²⁸ and *Ir-iš-ti-/me/-ka₄* (**Ṛštivaiga-*) it would reflect the Ir. diphthong /ai/ or its monophthongised outcome /ē/, and in *Da-ad-du-/me/-ia* (OP *Dātavahya*) and *bat-ti-ia-/me/-ia-a* (OP *patiyāvahyai*) it would reflect the Ir. sequence /ahya/, which in Elam. is regularly rendered leaving *-h-* unwritten.²⁹

Quite ironically, the only attestations that do not support unambiguously a value /me/ are the month-names from which Schmitt formulated his hypothesis.³⁰ for OP **Viyax(a)na-* a spelling with initial *mi-ia-* or simply *mi-* would be expected rather than /me/-ka₄-na-āš (PF 1775), and for *-ma-* in OP **Anāmaka-* the only possible ‘regular’ spelling would be *-ma-*, surely not *ha-na-/me/-ka₄* (PF 1048) or *ha-na-/me/-kaš* (PF 862). However, as was observed by several scholars,³¹ the transcriptions of OP month-names in Elam. administrative documents show an exceptional degree of spelling variability, often implying irregular phonetic correspondences with the OP form and suggesting that deformed pronunciations of these words circulated among non-native OP speakers.³²

In light of this special status of month-names, it is safer to trust the data coming from royal inscriptions, which show more systematic phonetic correspondences between OP words and Elam. transcriptions. Therefore, I propose to assign the Elam. sign <MAN> (471) a secondary phonetic value /me/ peculiar to the Achaemenid period. In the present article, I shall refer to this value as *me₀* for the sake of clarity.³³

²⁴ M. Fattori, ‘The Elamite version of A²Ha and the verb *vidiyā-* in Old Persian’, *Iran and the Caucasus* 26.4 (2022), pp. 385f.

²⁵ The Elam. signs are numbered following M.-J. Steve, *Syllabaire élamite: histoire et paléographie* (Neuchâtel, 1992), that is, according to the ABZ. A notation in capital letters between angle brackets (<MAN>) is employed to refer to the shape of the sign according to the Assyro-Babylonian syllabary whereas the conventional transliteration in italics (*man*) is employed to refer to the phonetic value assumed by the sign in Elam.

²⁶ Cf. the facsimile published in E. Norris, ‘Memoir on the Scythic version of the Behistun inscription’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 15 (1855), pl. VII and the detail reproduced in Fattori, ‘The Elamite version’, p. 384, fig. 2. The sign was actually read as <MAN> by several scholars, including M.-J. Steve, *Nouveaux mélanges épigraphiques: inscriptions royales de Suse et de la Susiane* (Nice, 1987), p. 92 and Schmitt, ‘Zu den elamischen Inschriften’, p. 286.

²⁷ Cf. Stolper, ‘Elamite’, p. 72.

²⁸ The Elam. transcription of the OP enclitic pronoun *-mai* is widely attested both in royal inscriptions and in administrative texts as <ME>, cf. R. T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* [hereafter PFT] (Chicago, 1969), p. 729.

²⁹ Compare again *da-a-ia-u-iš* (OP *dahyāuš*) and *a-ia-a-e* (OP *ahyāyā*) but also *Mi-iš-da-ad-da* for OP *Vahyazdāta-*, *Te-ia-u-ka₄* for OP **Dahyuka-* (cf. Tavernier, *Iranica*, pp. 163f.).

³⁰ Schmitt, *Menologium*, pp. 22f., fn. 48 and p. 24, fn. 63.

³¹ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 18f. and G. P. Basello, ‘Old Persian in Elamite: the spellings of month-names’, in *Proceedings of the 5th Conference of the Societas Iranologica Europaea held in Ravenna, 6-11 October 2003*, (eds) A. Panaino and A. Piras (Milano, 2006), vol. i, pp. 19–38.

³² For example, for **Anāmaka-* spellings such as *ha-na-mi-ik-ka₄* and *ha-na-muk-ka₄* are attested, where the phonetic deformation of the penultimate vowel is perfectly parallel to *ha-na-/me/-kaš*.

³³ According to the transliteration style of the Persepolis Fortification Archive project, a subscript <0> marks signs of the Assyro-Babylonian syllabary which, only in Elamite, are used with a special secondary phonetic

Whether or not this new label *me₀* should be adopted in the transliteration conventions of Elamite widely depends on one's opinion about the possible origin of this secondary value, a problem for which I have no certain solution to propose. If it is regarded as the generalisation of a phonetic variant (perhaps [maj]~[mã:] for /man/ in pre-consonantal position),³⁴ one may not want to represent it in the transliteration, following the model of regular spelling rules such as the lack of graphic distinction between /m/ and /w/ (both transliterated with <mV(C)> signs) or between /i/ and /u/ in <Cu> signs (so that <NU> can both represent /ni/ or /nu/). However, such a phonetic explanation is largely hypothetical and, as was pointed out in fn. 19 discussing Harmatta's position, there is no other evidence of a productive rule deriving /Ce/ values from <Can> signs in Elamite, so the status of <MAN> would be isolated anyway. I regard as equally possible that the secondary value /me/ for <MAN> has its basis in the paleographic similarity existing between <MAN> and <ME>, which could sometimes lead to ambiguous realisations of both signs.³⁵

In my view, as long as the value of the sign is not predictable on the basis of a general spelling principle, a special label like *me₀* would be useful inasmuch it would spare the modern reader the need to learn an ad hoc rule to properly read a single sign.

Evidence from onomastic data

In order to corroborate the abovementioned proposal, the following paragraph will be dedicated to the analysis of several Ir. anthroponyms from the Persepolis administrative texts containing dubious attestations of the sign <MAN>, some of which have already been mentioned in par. 1.³⁶

The most convincing examples supporting a reading *me₀* are cases in which the sign is followed by a <VC> sign, so that a value *man* would imply an irregular spelling not reflecting syllable boundaries (for example, *-man-iz-* instead of *-man-nu-iz-* or *-ma-nu-iz-*):

- *Har-me₀-iz-za* (T. 4.2.114): the name is clearly the same as T. 4.2.112 **Arvaica-* (*Har-ma-iz-za*, *Har-me-za*), a hypocoristic from Ir. **arva-* 'swift'. It can be compared with Parth. *'rwyš*, which could either be read as *Arwēč* or *Arwič* (< **Arv-ica-*).³⁷
- *Ia-u-me₀-iz-za* (T. 4.2.2030): as Tavernier himself recognised,³⁸ the man bearing this name is referred to elsewhere using spellings pointing unequivocally to **Yuvaica-* or **Yuvica-* (for example, *Hi-ú-ma-iz-za*, *I-ú-mi-za* etc.). To explain the irregular usage of <MAN>, Tavernier embraced Harmatta's hypothesis postulating a /ma/ value for the sign <MAN> (see above).
- *Ra-me₀-iš-(na)?* (T. 4.2.1340):³⁹ as we said, on a merely orthographic basis, it is better to read *Ra-me₀-iš* than *Ra-man-iš*. Since neither of the two options leads to an obvious etymology, one could interpret the *-na* following this anthroponym in PF 384 not as

value, cf. W. F. M. Henkelman, *The Other Gods Who Are: Studies in Elamite-Iranian Acculturation Based on the Persepolis Fortification Texts* (Leiden, 2008), pp. XIXf.

³⁴ Cf. Stolper, 'Elamite', pp. 70, 72 for some possible examples of vowel nasalisation in Elamite.

³⁵ Cf. Steve, *Syllabaire*, nn. 471 and 532. A comparable example of double value with a vague phonetical plausibility is *ram₀* alongside *dam₀* for Elam. <EL>, which is also formally very similar to the Akkadian sign <DAM> (cf. *ibid.*, p. 164, n. 564 with literature).

³⁶ For the sake of brevity, the previous etymological proposals based on a reading with *man* will not be cited unless they need comment. A bibliography concerning each name can be found in Tavernier, *Iranica* (abbreviated as T. in this section), which is referred to next to the Elam. forms.

³⁷ Cf. R. Schmitt, *Personennamen in parthischen epigraphischen Quellen* [hereafter IPNB II/5] (Wien, 2016), p. 53.

³⁸ Cf. J. Tavernier, '*Yuvaica- and *Yuvica-', *NABU* 1 (2006), pp. 29–31.

³⁹ Hinz, *ASN*, p. 197.

a genitive suffix, but as part of the name itself.⁴⁰ *Ra-me_o-iš-na* could then be interpreted as **Rāmayāšna-* ‘praying peacefully’ or ‘praying for peace’.

The following names should probably be read as beginning with *me_o-ia-* standing for OP **vahya(h)-*:

- *Me_o-ia-ba-du-iš* (T. 4.2.1047): OP **Vahyabādu-* ‘having a better arm’ to be compared with Gr. Οἰόβαζος, Ir. **Vahyabāzu-*.⁴¹
- *Me_o-ia-bar-ma* (T. 4.2.1052): OP **Vahyaparuva-*, a variant with thematised first member of the more common *Vahyasparuva-* ‘first and better’ attested in DB IV, 83 and in the P(ersepolis)F(ortification)T(ablets).⁴²
- *Me_o-ia-iš-kur-ra* (T. 4.2.1782): as rightly recognised by Tavernier, this should be regarded as a spelling variant of *Mi-iš-kar-ra* or *Mi-iš-kur-ra* transcribing OP **Vahyaskara-* ‘doing what is better’.⁴³
- *Me_o-ia-iš-na* (T. 5.3.2.111): the name is formally compatible with Ir. **Vahyayašna-*, which could either be interpreted as ‘better through prayer’ or, taking *vahya-* as the present stem of the verb *vah-* ‘to pray’ (see above par. 1), ‘reciting the prayer’.⁴⁴
- *Me_o-iš-da-ad-da* (T. 2.2.64): this is clearly a variant spelling of *Mi-iš-da-ad-da* etc. for OP *Vahyazdāta-* ‘whose law is better’ attested in OP and in the PFT.⁴⁵ Once again, a reading *man* is highly unlikely because of the following <VC> sign.

The following names can all be interpreted as (mostly theophoric) compounds having *vahya(h)-* as a second member:

- *Ab-me_o-ia* (T. 4.2.12): this spelling and the similar *Ab-ma-ia* (without /n/) can hardly reflect Ir. **Abivanya-* ‘victorious’, as suggested by Tavernier. They could rather be connected with an Ir. form **Āpvahya-* ‘better through Water (god)’.⁴⁶
- *Ba-ku-me_o-ia* (T. 4.2.294): as recognised by Tavernier, this name should not be separated from Gr. Βαρυόαζ and Aram. *bgwhy* as a rendering of Ir. **Bagavahya-* ‘better through god’.
- *Ir-du-me_o-ia* (T. 4.2.1522): in light of the parallel formation **Rtavahu-* (T. 4.2.1517, 1526) this form could well be read as **Rtavahya-* ‘better through *Rta*’ also attested in Aram. *’rtwhy* (T. 4.2.1518).
- *Mi-iš-šu-me_o-ia* (T. 4.2.1919): since Benveniste,⁴⁷ this name has been interpreted as **Visavanya-* ‘vanquishing all’. However, a theophoric name such as

⁴⁰ Cf. Hallock, PFT, p. 159 for the text of this tablet. The omission of an expected genitive suffix *-na* is fairly common in this kind of documents (for example, PF 382, 383, 403, 418 etc.).

⁴¹ Cf. the literature in Schmitt, who, however, takes Gr. -βαζος as a rendering of Ir. *-vazdah-*. Schmitt, IPNB V/5A, pp. 274f.

⁴² Cf. Schmitt, WAKI, p. 274 and T. 2.2.63.

⁴³ Cf. also Schmitt, reading as «Miškara» the name spelt as MAN-iš-ka₄-ra in Fort. 1227–101. Schmitt, ‘Neue Namen aus Persepolis’, pp. 164f.

⁴⁴ A similar name was postulated by Gershevitch, ‘Amber at Persepolis’, p. 246, who interpreted *ia-iš-na-MAN-ka₄* (T. 4.2.2014, see below) as **Yasnavajha-* ‘he who prays the *Yasna*’.

⁴⁵ Cf. Schmitt, WAKI, p. 274 and Tavernier, *Iranica*, pp. 64f.

⁴⁶ Such a name would also be compatible with spellings such as *Ab-bu-ia* and *Ab-bu-hi-ia-iš*, for which Tavernier accepts an etymology **Ābūya-* ‘helper, assistant’ (T. 4.2.21). On the other hand, *Ab-bu-MAN-ia* and *Ha-bu-MAN-ia* (**Abivaniya-* ‘victorious’ or **Abivayah-* ‘youthful, vigorous’, cf. Ved. *abhivayas-*), listed by Tavernier under the same lemma as *Ab-me_o-ia*, should be treated separately.

⁴⁷ Benveniste, *Titres*, p. 88.

**Miçavahya*- ‘better through Mithra’, paralleled by Gr. Μ(ε)ιθρόαζ (< **Miθravahya*-)⁴⁸ is an equally good alternative.

- *Kur-ra-ad-du-me₀-ia* (T. 4.2.1963): Ir. **Xratuvahya*- ‘better through wisdom’ possibly continued by MP *Xrad-weh*.⁴⁹
- *Zi-ut-ru-me₀-ia* (T. 4.2.431): this name could either be reconstructed as **Ciθravahya*- ‘better by lineage’ by comparison with **Ciçava(h)u-* (T. 4.2.406, 408) and **Ciθravahišta-* (Gr. Τιθραύστης,⁵⁰ or as **Ciθravāya-*, an extension of **Ciθrava-*/**Ciçava-* (T. 4.2.404, 430).

There are two names left, *Ka₄-mu-me₀-ia* (T. 4.2.921) and *Mi-du-me₀-ia* (T. 4.2.1872), which would yield plausible compounds postulating a second member *-vaya-* ‘chasing’ (from the Ir. root **vaiH-*).⁵¹ **Kānavaya-* ‘chasing his desires’ and **Vaida(h)vaya-* ‘chasing possessions’. However, it cannot be excluded that also in these cases the second member was *-vahya(h)-* (for **Kānavahya-* one could cite the specular formation *Mi-iš-ka₄-ma* **Vahyaskāma*).⁵²

The group of names containing a sequence written as MAN-*ka₄* in Elam. needs a more detailed discussion. Hinz,⁵³ followed by Tavernier, reconstructed an element **-manga-* «zu gathisch *mang-* ‘verherrlichen’». This position is probably related to a cautious proposal made by Schmitt,⁵⁴ who compared the name *la-iš-na-MAN-ka₄* (see below) with the OAv. form *mimayža-* ‘willing to offer’. However, unlike Schmitt, the two scholars did not make clear that the identification of the root underlying OAv. *mimayža-* (an adjective deriving from the desiderative stem) is conjectural, both from the formal and the semantic point of view. First, the reconstruction of a present stem with nasal infix **manj-* from an Iir. root **mag^h-* has no comparative basis, except for the superficial similarity of this verb with Ved. *maṃh-* ‘to give away, offer’ (< Iir. **manj^h-*, OAv. *mąza-* in comp.) which led some scholars to hypothesise a contamination between the two roots.⁵⁵ In my view, it is much more preferable to accept the other explanation proposed in the literature, according to which *mimayža-* should belong to a denominal verbal root **mag-* from Av. *maga-* ‘gift, offering’ (Ved. *maghá-* ‘id.’).⁵⁶ Furthermore, a meaning ‘to glorify’ for the alleged root **mang-* depends on Bartholomae’s outdated translation of the passage where *mimayža-* occurs (Y. 45.10), whereas the most recent and authoritative translations

⁴⁸ Cf. R. Schmitt, ‘Die theophoren Eigennamen mit altiranische **Miθra-*’, in *Études Mithriaques. Actes du 2^e Congrès International. Téhéran, du 1^{er} au 8 septembre 1975* (Leiden-Téhéran-Liège, 1978), pp. 448f.

⁴⁹ Cf. Ph. Gignoux, *Noms propres sassanides en Moyen-Perse épigraphique* [hereafter IPNB II/2] (Wien, 1986), p. 185.

⁵⁰ Cf. Schmitt, IPNB V/5A, pp. 365–367.

⁵¹ Cf. Cheung, *EDIV*, pp. 411f.

⁵² Cf. Hinz, *ASN*, p. 252.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 207, 273.

⁵⁴ Schmitt, ‘Kritische Bemerkungen’, p. 25.

⁵⁵ A verb Ir. **manj-* ‘verherrlichen’ was postulated by Ch. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* [hereafter *AirWb*] (Strassburg, 1904), col. 1135, unquestioningly followed by Hinz and Tavernier. Among the scholars considering the possibility of a contamination with Ved. *maṃh-* cf. J. Kellens, *Le Verbe avestique* (Wiesbaden, 1984), p. 196, fn. 2, not mentioning the phonological incompatibility with OAv. *mimayža-* and H. Humbach, J. H. Elfenbein and P. O. Skjærvø, *The Gāthās of Zarathushtra: And the Other Old Avestan texts* (Heidelberg, 1991), pp. 172f.

⁵⁶ This alternative is taken in account by H. Humbach *et al.*, *loc. cit.*, J. Kellens and É. Pirart, *Les Textes viel-avestiques* [hereafter *TVA*] (Wiesbaden, 1988–1991), vol. ii, p. 288 and M. Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen* (Heidelberg, 1981–2001), vol. ii, p. 289, with further literature. Cf. also J. Cheung, ‘Two notes on Bactrian’, in *Exegisti monumenta. Festschrift in Honour of Nicholas Sims-Williams*, (eds) W. Sundermann, A. Hintze and F. de Blois (Wiesbaden, 2009), p. 57, who proposed to derive Bactr. μγ(α)δο from the same denominal root **maga-*.

of the OAv. texts interpret *mimayža-* as ‘trying to present’⁵⁷ or ‘cherchant à gratifier’,⁵⁸ taking into account the likely etymological link with *maga-*.

Therefore, it seems well justified to reject the etymological proposals based on a verbal root **mang-* and to look for other solutions made possible by a reading *-me₀-ka₄* instead of *-man-ka₄*. As a matter of fact, most of the names containing this graphic sequence can be interpreted as compounds with a second member *-vaiga-* found in **Ṛštivaiga-* (see above) and in the *Kurzname* **Vaiga-* (Elam. *Ma-a-ka₄*, T. 4.2.1785):

- *Mi-šá-me₀-ka₄* (T. 4.2.1917): Ir. **Miçavaiga-* ‘striking like Mithra’. Since the Av. root *vaēj-* and its derivative *vaēya-* are only attested in the very concrete sense of ‘swinging a weapon’ or ‘hitting with a weapon’,⁵⁹ the element **-vaiga-* clearly cannot have a verbal meaning as in **Ṛštivaiga-* ‘swinging the spear’. The name should rather be interpreted as a *bahuvrīhi* with the noun **vaiga-* ‘stroke, blow’ as its second member. The connotation of Mithra’s fighting power by means of *vaēj-* and *vaēya-* is very well attested in Av. texts: for example, Yt. 6.5; Yt. 10.69, 96, 98.
- *Ir-da-me₀-ka₄* and *Ir-ti-me₀-ka₄* (T. 4.2.1544): Ir. **Ṛtavaiga-* ‘striking through Ṛta’. As an alternative, one could think of **Ṛtavaika-* ‘who has chosen Ṛta’ from an Ir. root **vaic-* ‘to choose, select’⁶⁰ with the same meaning as **Ṛtafavarā-* (T. 4.2.1465).
- *Me₀-ka₄-par-na* (T. 4.2.1034): Ir. **Vaigafarnah-* ‘glorious for his strokes’. A similar formation having a noun as a first member would be **Ciθrafarnah-* ‘glorious for his origin’ (T. 4.2.399).
- *Me₀-ki-iz-za* (T. 4.2.1035): Ir. **Vaigica-*, hypocoristic of the *Kurzname* *Ma-a-ka₄ *Vaiga-* (T. 4.2.1785).

The only name which clearly cannot be explained as a compound with **-vaiga-* is the abovementioned *Ia-iš-na-MAN-ka₄*. However, a new etymological proposal implying a reading *man* rather than *me₀* can be formulated:

- *Ia-iš-na-man-ka₄* (T. 4.2.2014): the first element of this name is clearly **yasna-/yašna-* ‘prayer, worship, sacrifice etc.’, but, as was argued above, the traditional reconstruction of a second member **-manga* ‘glorifying’ is inadequately founded. A possible alternative would be **Yašnavānka-* ‘reciting the prayer’ having as a second member either the OIr. antecedent of MP *wāng* ‘voice, cry’, Bal. *gwānk* ‘sound’, Arm. *vank* (loanword from pre-Sasanian Parthian or MP) ‘voice, sound’ or a form of the corresponding verbal root **vanc-* attested in Khot. *pyūmj-* ‘to deny’ (< **pativancaya-*), *byūmj-* ‘to abuse’ (< **vivancaya-*), *vaṃj-* ‘to dispute’ (< **abivancaya-?*).⁶¹

Finally, there remains a last anthroponym which does not belong to any of the previous groups:

- *Bat-ti-me₀-za* (T. 4.2.1268): Ir. **Pativaica-* ‘chosen one’ to be compared with Parth. *ptwšyik*, *Patwēčik*, hypocoristic of the same name.⁶² A similar formation from OIr.

⁵⁷ Humbach et al., *Gāthās*, vol. i, p. 166.

⁵⁸ Kellens and Pirart, *TVA*, vol. ii, p. 288.

⁵⁹ Cf. Ch. Bartholomae, *AtrWb*, col. 1313.

⁶⁰ Cf. Cheung, *EDIV*, p. 407. Perhaps a name **Vaika-* ‘chosen’ or ‘choosing’ should be recognised in Inscr.MP *wyky*, *Vēg* (cf. Gignoux, *IPNB* II/2, p. 181).

⁶¹ For the reconstruction of an Ir. root **vanc-*, possibly a nasalised doublet of **vac* ‘to speak’, cf. I. Gershevitch, ‘Iranian words containing -a/ān’, in *Iran and Islam. In Memory of the Late Vladimir Minorsky*, (ed.) C. E. Bosworth (Edinburgh, 1971), pp. 269–285 and H. W. Bailey, *Dictionary of Khotan Saka* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 252a, 309a, 373a.

⁶² Cf. Schmitt, *IPNB* II/5, p. 174f.

**Vaicana*- could be at the basis of Inscr.MP *wycn*, Inscr.Parth. *wyzn*, Man.Parth. *wyjn* (probably all representing a Parth. name *Vēžan*, cf. NP *Bīžan*).⁶³

Conclusion

Although not all the proposed etymologies are equally certain, I believe that I have collected enough evidence to show that a value *me*₀ for the Elam. sign <MAN> should be recognised. Admittedly, in order to clarify completely the usage of this sign, a thorough analysis of the genuinely Elam. lexicon in the Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions and in the Persepolis administrative texts would be needed. What needs to be looked out for are unexpected occurrences of <MAN> or cases in which <ME> could have been misread—or rather ‘normalised’—in place of *me*₀/*man*. Such an enquiry goes beyond the aim of this article, but I believe that the collection of Ir. evidence offered here represents a good starting point for further research on this subject.

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⁶³ Cf. Gignoux, IPNB II/2, pp. 181f. and I. Colditz, *Iranische Personennamen in manichäischer Überlieferung* (Wien, 2018), p. 526.

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