



## SILK I. ETYMOLOGY

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### i. Etymology

The etymology of *abrīšam* (also *abrīšom* with dialectical labialization of *a* or delabialization of *o*, and *barīšam*) is not entirely certain. At present its apparent connection with New Persian *reštan/rēs-* “to spin” and its derivation from some such form as *\*upa-raišma-* may be maintained. NPers. *reštan* would traditionally correspond to Old Indic *riś-āti* “he plucks, tears off.” The Middle Persian has *parēšam* (H. W. Baily, “Three Pahlavi Notes,” *JRAS* 1931, p. 425). *Abrīšam* appears as a loan word from Iranian in Armenian *aprišum*, *aprešum*, Syriac/Mandean *ʾbryšwm*, and Arabic *ebrīsam*. The NPers. *rēšam/rīšam* is evidently only a shortened form of *abrēšam*. In dialects either the Mid. Pers. or the NPers. form, often considerably changed, occurs. Connected with *abrīšam* and its base are *rē/ēšma* “belt;” *rīšm(i)*, *rīšmān(i)* “silken, of silk;” *rīsmān* “cord, string” (thus not related to NPers. *rasan* “cord” and Old Indic *raśmí-*, masc., “cord”); *bād-rīs(a)* (from *pati<sup>o</sup>* with *vr<sub>o</sub>iddhi*) and *jaḡ-resta* (*jaḡ* “distaff”) “spindle,” etc. In East Iranian in place of *abrīšam* we have *pīl(e)*, which corresponds to NPers. *pīla* “silkworm, cocoon.” In dialects one also finds *čolla* (borrowed in Turkic dialects as *čille*), from *\*čullak*, arabicized as *šollaḡ* (see W. Eilers, *Westiranische Mundarten*, Wiesbaden, 1976, I, p. 347; II, p. 650) properly speaking, “very fine cotton.”



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Idem, in Geiger and Kuhn, *Grundr. Ir. Phil.* I/2, pp. 40f.

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G. Morgenstierne, *An Etymological Vocabulary of Pashto*, Oslo, 1927, p. 90.

C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*<sup>2</sup>, repr. Hildesheim, 1966, p. 3b.

M. Mayrhofer, *Altindisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* III, Heidelberg, 1976, p. 61 (*rištan* under *risati*).

J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* I, Bern, 1949-59, p. 858 (*rištan* under *rei-k-*).