



BAGA I. GENERAL

i. General

Baga- is attested in early and late Iranian with two meanings (1) agent noun “distributor,” glossed by Parsi Sanskrit *vibhaktar-* and (2) noun of action and result “portion.” Beside the noun, the verb *bag-* “give or receive portions” is in frequent use: *bag-*, present *baj-* and *baxš-*, participle *baxta-*, and nominal derivative *bāga-*. The cognate words are cited in full in *Dictionary of Khotan Saka*, p. 300: Avestan *baž-*, *baxta-*, *bāga-*; Sogdian *βaxš-*, *βxt-*, *βγn-*; Zoroastrian Pahlavi *baxš-*, *baxt*; Khotan Saka *būšš-*, *būta-*; Old Indian (Sanskrit) *bhājatimbhaktá-*, *bhāga-*, *bhāgá*, traced in Indo-European in J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bern and Munich, 1959, p. 107 s.v. *bhag-*.

The agent noun *baga-* “distributor” was adopted as a name for “god” and “gods.” In Old Persian *baga-* occurs beside *maθišta bagānām* “greatest of gods” for Ahuramazdā. It renders the Akkadian Semitic *ilu* “god.”

In the Avesta the word *yazata-* “worshipful” was preferred, the later Zor. Pahl. *yazd* and Ossetic *izād*, in Greek script *isdi-* in the name Isdigerdēs, Yazdkirt, Armenian Yazkert. The other word of divinity, *dai-* “shine,” is retained once in the Avestan word *dyaoš* “from the sky” (genitive from *dyau-*) and in *daiva-* of the Avestan phrase *daēvāiš-ca mašyāiš-ca* “with gods and men.” Normally this word for the ancient gods was developed to “devils” in the Zoroastrian tradition. The North Iranian Khotan Saka also had developed *dyūva-* “devil” from *daiva*. A trace of the older “god” can be seen in the name *Dēv-dād*



“created by god.” Xerxes in a Persepolis inscription reported *daivadānam viyakanam* “I destroyed the house of devils” (XPh 37).

In the later Zoroastrian books Pahlavi and Pazand *baga-* became *bay* (*bk'*, *by'*, Pāzand *bay*) and occurs associated with *yazata-* in the phrase *yazdān bayān* “gods” (*bk'n*, *by'n*). A lost *nask* “book” of the Avesta (a word preserved in its earlier non-technical sense in Caucasian Georgian *nask'-v-i* “knot,” verbal *nask'-va*) was called *Bay* (*bk'*) and *Bayān*. The Avestan *bayō.baxta-* can be rendered either “bestowed as a portion” or “distributed by the gods,” the second meaning can be supported by the compound (*Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, p. 603.6) *bay-tāšit* “created by gods.” The Aramaic *ALḤA* “god” was interpreted by *bay*; it is used in the Hājjiābād inscription and in the inscription of Šāpūr I, Parthian line 1 *mzdyzn ALḤA*, **mazdēzn bay*, Greek *masdaasnēs theos*. The king Kōsrow I is called *im bay* “his present Majesty” (*Dēnkard*, p. 413.9). Šāpūr son of Ohrmazd is quoted in *Škand-gumānik Vičār* (ed. P. J. de Menasce, Fribourg, 1945, pp. 118-19, 10.70) *ōi bay šāhpūr ī šāhq šāh i hōrmazdq* “the god Šāpūr king of kings son of Ohrmazd.” The *bay yazdkart* is cited in *Dēnkard*, p. 949, 21. The word *baya-* gave Sogdian βγ (in Arabic script this β- was expressed by the letter *f* with three dots on it, which in normal Arabic could be replaced by *f*). The Buddhist Sogdian employed βγ- of the Buddha P 2.1137-45 *βγ'n βγtm pwty* “the most godlike of gods Buddha.” The Khotan Saka had preferred *gyastānu gyastā* “god of gods” from *yazata-*. Sogdian had the plural βγ'yst, *βγ'ist, gen. plural βγ'n, *βγ'ān, and βγ'st'n, *βγ'astān for “paradise.”

The Kušan *bagapouro* (from *baga-puθra-*) is represented in Turfan Parthian *bypwhr* and New Persian *fayfūr*, and found in Armenian *čēn-bakour*, the Chinese imperial title *ṭ'ien-tsi* “son of heaven,” to which the Old Indian word was *deva-putra-*. Manichean and Christian texts use this same word for “son of god.”

Turfan Parthian had *bg*, **bay* with plural *bayān* and adjective *bayānīy*. Turfan Persian had developed *-y-* from *-γ-* in *by*, **bay*, plural *ba'ān* (*b'n*) and adjective *bayānīy*. This *bai* is found in New Persian *bē-doxt*, *bē-loft* from **baga-duxtā* “daughter of god” for the planet Venus. About A.D. 800 Iranian *bay* is present in Kirkut (Qırғız) *bai*, written by the Chinese sign *bu'âi* (Mathews, *Chinese-English Dictionary*, no. 4991, modern *pei*) cited in *JA*, 1950, p. 298. The Kirkut adopted the Turkish language only in the 7th-8th centuries.

Khotan Saka has *be'ga-*, *ba'ga-*, and *be-* in the title *be'garakā*, *ba'garakā*, and *berakā* for Turkish *bägräk*. From Turkish, in proper names Ossetic has *bī*



“prince,” as in *Baras-bī* “tiger, prince.”

Turkish took the title *bäg*, *beg*, and later *bey*; in early Turkish in Brāhmī script it was *bhek*, and in Byzantine Greek the Khazar title was written *mékh*. The form *bägräk* occurs in a Turfan Manichean source. In Arabic script the Turkish title was *bag*, *bağ*, and *bāk*.

The sacred fire called *farn-bay* “the distributor (god) of *farn*” (*farn* was equated with Aramaic GDHj “fortune”) was located at Kārīān in Fārs. The Pāzand read the name as *farō-bag* and in Armenian it probably gave *hour-bak*.

In Kushan inscriptions this *baga-* is *vaka-* and *vvaga-* in the name Vaka-mihira and Vvaga-mihira “the god Miθra.” The *v-* and *vv-* are an attempt to express the fricative β. The Kushan *bakana-pati-* “temple official” is βγν-pt in Sogdian. Armenian has *bagin* (q.v.) “shrine, altar” from Parthian.

Choresmian from Toprak-kala has βγγ for the sixteenth day of the month corresponding to *mtr* “Miθra,” as Bīrūnī gave βγγ, *βαγ, from βαγι for the same day.

The word *baga-* occurs in many proper names in ancient Persia. In Greek these names are written with Baga- and Mega-. The name *bg-srw*, **baga-srava-* occurs in an Aramaic papyrus from Egypt.

Two toponyms contain the word *baga-* in Persia, others are in Armenia. The rock of *Behistūn*, Bīsotūn is on *tò Bagīstanon óros*. The *Bundahišn* cites *Bay-dāt ī bayān-dāt* “Baghdad which is created by the god(s)” (TD₂, p. 205.12).

In the sense of “portion” Gathic Avestan has *baga-*, beside later *baya-* and *bayā-*, which is glossed by Zor. Pahl. *bağ*, *bažišn*, and *baxtārīh*.

The derivative *baxta-* “distributed, allotted” also is frequent later. The Avestan phrase in *Vištāsp yašt* 38, *baxta-ca nivaxta-ca*, is explained to mean *pat nēvakīh ut frazandān* “possessed of good things and children” where “possessed” is Pahlavi *baxtadār* (*baxtiyār*). The *baxt* “fortune” takes the form of a *varrak ī vazurg* “great ram” mounted behind Artaxšaθr (Ardašīr) in his flight from Artapān (Ardavān).

The noun derivative *bāga-* is also important in connection with *baga-*. A later form is attested in Khotan Saka *haṃbāya-* (sing. *haṃbā*, plural *haṃbāya*) “portion” corresponding to Turfan Parthian *’mb’g*, **ambāy*, Turfan Persian



hmb'w, **hambāv*, “rival,” Zor. Pahl. *hambāγ*, Pāzand *hambāi*, *hambāe* “companion.” Through connection with “possessions” the Iranian *bāy* gave Turkish *bai* “rich,” whence Mongol *bayan* “rich.” In Ossetic the Turkish *bai*–occurs in the personal family name *Bai-tuyantä* “rich” and “bird of prey.” As a “portion of land” New Persian has *bāγ* “garden” and Pāzand has *bāγastq i vahəšt* “garden of Paradise,” that is *Garō'amān*, and *vahišt* is in Zor. Pahlavi *bō'astān* “garden as place of perfumes.” From Alanian (that is older Ossetic) Caucasian Čečen has (with many other words of Alanian origin) the word *bai* “meadow, lawn,” plural *beš*, with Inguš *bai*, plural *bäš* (the plural suffix is –*aš* and –*s*).

This *bāy* “rich” is also found in the Finno-Ugrian Ostyak *way*.