



BAGA III. THE USE OF BAGA IN NAMES

iii. The Use of Baga in Names

Baga- as a name element occurs in names of towns, e.g., *Bagadāta-*, modern Baghdad “given by *baga*” or “established by *baga*,” **Bagadāna-* “temple (?) of (the) god(s),” Old Armenian *Bagaran*, a town and a village (see Hübschmann), with derivative suffix *-ka-* Bactrian *bagolaggo* “altar” (or proper name “The Sanctuary”), today *Baġlān*, name of the region (see Henning), *Bagastāna-* in Media “place of the gods,” so named after the nearby Bīsotūn carvings and inscriptions, *Bag(e)is* in Lydia; rivers, e.g., *Bagrades*, today Nābendrūd, *Bagossala*, probably modern Bug, Ukraine; and mountains, e.g., *tò Bagīstanon óros* at Bagastāna, see above, *Bagōon óros* between Areia and Drangiana (see Pauly-Wissowa, II, 2, cols. 2765-74; S. I, col. 237). Most of the names, however, are personal names and exclusively men’s names. All three Indo-European name types are attested, namely, one-stem-names (“short names”), derivatives (mostly hypocoristica), and compound names. Short names are seldom (e.g., *Baga* inscription of Priene, 1st cent. A.D.; perhaps *Vaga*, “Indoscythian” stratega inscription, ca. 20 A.D.). The hypocoristica (e.g., *Bagaios*, *Bagauka-*) have been treated in many articles by R. Schmitt (see Schmitt, 1982 and “Indogermanische Chronik”). Of compound names, *Bagabigna-* and *Bagahuxša-* are attested in the Old Persian inscriptions (see *IPNB*), but more than 60 other Old Iranian names are found from the sixth or even eighth century B.C. in Aramaic, Armenian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Elamite, Greek,



Hebrew, Indo-Arian, Latin, Lydian, and Lykian tradition, see Schmitt, 1982 with references, also to the studies on the phonetic shape of Old Iranian *baga-* in these languages respectively. The Middle Iranian names are only partially published, see Gignoux, 1980a, 1980b, and forthcoming parts of *Iranisches Personennamenbuch*. At present, four *baga* names are known from epigraphical Middle Persian: 'twrbg, bg'twr, bg'whrm[zd], plnbgy (this itself part of compounds), and one from Sogdian: βyyfrn. On the linguistic classification and interpretation of these compound names, see Schmitt, 1981, and Zimmer, 1984.

Contrary to the opinion of Gignoux, 1980a and b, these names do not provide any evidence for the existence of an Iranian deity “Baga.” See the detailed analysis of the arguments in Zimmer, 1984. Old Iranian *baga-*, from Indo-Iranian **bhaga-*, means “allotment, distribution,” later also “god” [but see also *baga i*, above], and in Middle Iranian *bag/bay* “god, lord” as a mode of address of gods and noble men. Nowhere in Iranian is this word a name. Only in India did the concept of “allotment, distribution” become the Āditya Bhaga.

Mayrhofer’s suggestion (*Etymological Sanskrit Dictionary* II, p. 457) that *baga-* in Iranian names replaces the old **daiva-* whose meaning had been changed to “evil deity” by Zarathustra, is quite attractive, but hard to prove.

The Old Persian month name *Bāgayādi-* (q.v.) is interpreted by R. Schmitt as “(month of) worship of the god,” against Henning’s suggestion “(month of) fertilizing (?) the fields” (comparing Middle and Modern Persian *bāg* “garden” [q.v.]). This interpretation is supported by the parallel formation *Açiyādiya/*Açiyādiš* (Elamite) “(month of) fire-worship” (cf. the Middle Persian month *Ādur*, Armenian *Ahekan*; see *i*, above). This could imply a special worship of *Miθra* (?) in one month, and of *Ātar* in the other, perhaps because of some major feasts celebrated in these months.

For place and personal names containing Baga-, see, e.g., [bagaran](#); [bagawan](#); [bagayarīč](#); [bagazušta](#); [baghdad](#); [bagratids](#).

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