



BAGINA

BAGINA, BAGINAPATI, reconstructed Old Iranian words. The first designates a temple housing a cult image (from *baga-* “god,” “image of a god” + suffix *-ina-* “belonging to”); the second, the master of such a temple.

The form and meaning of both words are obvious from their descendants in various Middle Iranian languages: Parthian (loanword in Armenian) *bagin* “pagan sanctuary” (the early Arm. historians list seven *bagink'*, two of which stood in Bagaran and Bagawan; in a Christian context; also “altar set before a pagan image”), *bagnapet* “chief of the temple”; Pahlavi *bašnbed*, “idol-priest” (once in a Manichean polemical text); Bactrian **βayənpat* (in Middle-Indian inscriptions from Mathura: *bakanapati-*, *vakanapati-*, designating an official in charge of an image-temple established by the Kushan emperors); Sogdian *vayn* (*βyn-*) “temple housing statues of gods,” in Christian context “altar”), *vaynpat* (*βynpt-*) “priest” and in a Buddhist context “sorcerer” (hence *βynpt'nch-* “sorceress”).

In Sasanian Iran these words fell into disuse, no doubt as a result of the policy of the State church to impose fire-worship as the only lawful form of the Zoroastrian cult.

This development did not take place in Sogdiana, where at the time of the Arab conquest *vaynpat* and *muypat* “magus” are still attested as distinct offices, as shown by the archive documents found at Mt Mugh. This duality is confirmed by the accounts of the conquest, which mention side by side “idol-temples” and “fire-temples.” Judging from the place-names ending in *-faġn* or



–*baġn* which can be gathered from the Medieval sources, image-sanctuaries had been widespread in Sogdiana as well as in neighboring Ustrushana, Farġāna, and Čāč, including in rural areas. The first element of the toponyms seldom provides a clue to the identification of the gods once worshipped in the temples (Smirnova’s attempts [1971] must be used with caution). It can be assumed that most of them belonged to the Iranian pantheon; but Shaivite intrusions or influences are also to be considered, and one place-name, *Sanjarfaġn* (next to Samarqand), shows that the name *vaġn* was eventually applied to Buddhist cult-places also (*sanjar* < Sanskrit *saṃghārāma* “Buddhist monastery”), despite the pejorative use of cognate words in Sogdian Buddhist literature.

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