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Research article

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Contributions to Iranian Etymology IV: Some peculiar developments of preverbs in Middle Iranian[1]

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Abstract: This article deals with the etymologies of a selection of words from various Middle Iranian languages, having as a common feature the assumption of an unusual treatment of the preverb. For the first group of words, a progressive voice assimilation is postulated instead of the expected regressive voice assimilation normally operating in Old Iranian. The second group comprises other phenomena such as dissimilation in contact with the root-initial consonant and double prefixation.

Keywords: Middle Iranian, etymology, preverbs, Parthian, Middle Persian, Sogdian, Bactrian

1 Progressive preverb assimilation

Not all morphological formations reflected in Middle Iranian languages go back to proto-forms that can be projected very far back in the pre-history of the Iranian or Indo-Iranian group. We must reckon that several word formation processes remained productive throughout the stage that is traditionally labelled as "Old Iranian", and kept forming new lexical bases in the pre-documentary history of each of the surviving Middle Iranian languages. The possibility that a word was built in comparatively recent times interacts with the relative chronology of the sound changes which could have affected it, and, consequently, it might happen that phonetic sequences resulting from recent processes of word-formation display unexpected outcomes.

In my view, the etymologies discussed in this section must be explained in this perspective. In particular, I assume that these are cases whereby the preverbs *uz-* and *niš-*, normally undergoing regressive voice assimilation to *us-* and *nіž-* in Old (Indo-)Iranian, generalised their voiceless form and caused progressive assimilation of the word-initial consonant instead. The selection of the voiceless variant as the only productive one must be understood in the framework of a gradual reduction of the range of old preverbs which were still vital in Proto-Middle Iranian, prior to the complete cessation of verbal prefixation. Recognising this development allows the explanation of a number of otherwise unexplained forms, mostly attested in one language only and lacking obvious *comparanda* within the Iranian group.

1.1 MParth. *ʻsp'w-* 'to scare away, frighten'

The MParth. verb *ʻsp'w-* is attested in the following forms (Durkin-Meisterernst 2004: 86–87): pres. /ispāw-/ 'to scare away, frighten' (3sg *ʻsp'wyd*, 3pl *ʻsp'wynd* etc.); ppp. /ispūd/ (*ʻspwd*); pres.pass. /ispūh-/ 'to be terrified, frightened' (3pl *ʻspwhynd*, impv.2pl *ʻspwhyd*).

1 This is a reworked version of the contribution presented in form of a poster at the Tenth International Conference on Iranian Linguistics (ICIL 10) held at the University of Tuscia (Viterbo), 13–15 January 2025.

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Szemerényi (1951: 206–207) proposed deriving this verb from a root **pau-*, which would represent the unextended form of Ir. **paud-* 'to run', seen in Parth. *pwd-* 'to move, run', MP *pōy-* 'id.' etc. The closest cognates of this unextended root would be Lat. *paveo* 'to fear' and Gr. πτοία 'terror, fright'. As a matter of fact, neither the inner-Iranian comparison nor the connection with Iranian **paud-* are very attractive. In particular, it does not seem plausible that a root **pau-* < PIE **peu-* survived only in this isolated Parthian form and nowhere else in the Indo-Iranian languages, and this is probably the reason why Szemerényi's suggestion is not mentioned in the reference etymological repertoires of Greek and Latin.[2] This difficulty has been emphasised by Cheung 2007: 301, who aptly pointed out the close similarity between the verb under examination and the lexical family of Ir. **m(y)auH-* 'to move' (Ved. *mīv-*, Av. *miuu-*), well attested with a meaning 'to frighten' both in transitive and intransitive (inchoative) formations: MParth. *prm'w-* 'to terrify', inch. *prmws-* 'to be terrified', OP *mūθa-* 'to flee'.[3] Cheung explains the shape of *'sp'w-* as influenced by the root **paud-* by "contamination", a concept which he often applies to explain unclear roots, and which – at least in my view – is seldom convincing. I would rather suggest interpreting the change *m* > *p* phonetically.

If one accepts that, in some late formations, the preverb *us-* could be attached to verbal roots preserving its voiceless sandhi form and causing progressive voice assimilation, as proposed above, then *p* can be interpreted as the outcome of devoicing and denasalisation of *m*. A similar phenomenon is seen in another sound change typically linked with a morphological pattern peculiar of Middle Iranian languages, i.e. the neo-formation of *ta*-participles from verbal roots in *m*. Some examples are MP *hanzām-* 'to finish, end' < **ham-ǰāmaya-*, ppp. *hanzāft* (instead of the expected **hamad* < **hamg-mata-*), MParth. *'bnm-* 'to withdraw, depart' < **apa-nama-*, ppp. *'bnft* (instead of the expected **'bnd* < **apa-nata-*), Khot. *dam-* 'to blow' < **dama-*, ppp. *daunda-* (no ppp. attested in Ved. or OIr.).[4] Just like in the case under examination, this change is not regular in all positions (e.g., it does not affect the preverb *ham-* followed by a voiceless consonant) and it seems to be aimed at preserving the transparency of the productive morpheme *-ta-* at the expense of the integrity of the lexical base.

By interpreting MParth. *'sp'w-* as issued from **us-mav-* (instead of the expected **uz-mav-*), all the attested forms can be traced back to regular verbal formations with parallels in Iranian or Vedic:

'sp'w- < **us-* + **māvaya-*, cf. MParth. *prm'w-* 'to scare, frighten', with preverb *pari-*.
'spwd < **us-* + **mūta-*, cf. MParth. *prmwd*, with preverb *pari-*, Ved. °*mūtá-* 'moved'.
'spwh- < **us-* + **mūya-*, cf. YAv. *a-muiia-mna-* 'unmovable, fixed'.[5]

1.2 MP *spōz-* 'delay, reject'

This verb, only attested as MP *spōz-* 'to thrust, overstep, disobey, delay, reject', ppp. *spōxt* (NP *sipūz-* 'to thrust, poke, draw forth', *sipūxt*) and in the Arm. loanword *spowžem* 'to put off, delay, neglect', has never received a convincing etymological explanation. In the absence of apparent cognates in the Iranian group, scholars were compelled to look for distant connections with other Indo-European languages or to postulate isolated phonetic developments: e.g. the comparison with Lat. *pungo* 'to thrust, strike' (Horn 1893: 156), Gr. σφύζω 'to throb, beat' and Arm. *p'oyt'* 'care, solicitude' (Petersson 1920: 61–62), or the reconstruction of a verb **us-vauǰ-*, an otherwise unattested reduplicated present stem from the same root as OP *vaj-* 'to gouge, cut out' (Pagliaro 1964: 190).[6] Cheung (2007: 354), despite recognising the weak foundation of a root **spauč-*, dedicates an entry of its dictionary to it and pro-

2 Cf. de Vaan 2008: 451, Beekes-van Beek 2010: 1250. Sims-Williams 2009: 264 tentatively interpreted the unclear word *pww* in the Manichaean Bactrian fragment (M 1224, v13) as the imperative of a verb *pww-* 'to tremble, be afraid', but the context is far too uncertain for this form to be taken into consideration.

3 Cf. Fattori 2025b: 3, especially fn. 4.

4 Cf. Yakubovich 2012 for a thorough discussion.

5 On the unetymological nature of the stem-final *h* in the passive form, see already Henning 1947: 52 and, most recently, Cantera 2024, who provides a more general discussion on *h* as a hiatus-filler in the MP passive suffix *-ī(h)-*.

poses an untenable connection with OKh. *haspäs-* 'to strive' and *haspīj-* 'to urge', which point to a root-vowel *-(a)i-*, not *-(a)u-*.[7]

This verbal base could be reconciled with a well-attested Iranian root by interpreting it as **us-bauǰ-*, a prefixed form of **bauǰ-* 'to free, release, save' (PIE **bʰeu̯g-* 'to release, flee', Gr. φεύγω 'to flee, escape', Lat. *fugio* 'id.', Got. *us-baugjan* 'to wipe off').[8] Most of the reflexes of this root in Iranian display a specialised meaning 'to save, deliver', i.e. 'to be released from something bad', usually with a religious connotation. However, the overrepresentation of this semantics is likely due to the particular subject of the extant texts. In reality, a more neutral meaning 'to escape, free oneself', closer to the semantics reconstructed for PIE **bʰeu̯g-*, is also attested. Traces of this meaning are:

- The usage of YAv. *baoj-* in Yt. 1.17 *aiβiiå̊ŋhanəm būjaiiamnō* 'untying the belt' (see Kellens 1974a: 55–56 for the analysis of other Avestan attestations of this verb).
- The OP words preserved in Elamite transcription *mi-bu-uk-taš* (PF 1223) and *mi-bu-uk-da* (PF-NN 2112), convincingly interpreted by I. Gershevitch as **vi-buxtā-* 'having freed herself, released', referring to women who have just given birth.[9]
- Bal. *bōǰ-* 'to open, free, untie' (cf. Shahbakhsh 2004: 114).
- Chor. *'βwzy-* 'to pull away, pull out' (NP *bar kašīdan*, *bīrūn kašīdan*), possibly from Ir. **ā-bauǰaya-* rather than **apa-bauǰaya-*, as proposed in Henning-MacKenzie 1971: 11.

The original meaning of **us-* + *bauǰ-* would then be 'to sweep away, shake off, free oneself from something', which fits quite well the attested usages of MP *spōxtan*. Among the range of meanings recorded in MacKenzie 1971 s.v., the oldest one must have been 'to push away, reject, delay', secondarily developed to 'thrust, poke', without a nuance of separation, in later MP and NP. Note that the meaning of Arm. *spowžem* 'to put off, delay, defer, neglect', which has the appearance of an old loanword, possibly from Parthian rather than MP, aligns with the primary semantics 'to push away, delay'.

As far as the formal aspects are concerned, an etymology **us-* + *bauǰ-* is unproblematic, as long as the possibility of a progressive voice assimilation **us-b°* < **us-p°* is accepted. The Arm. form *spowžem* warrants the reconstruction of Ir. **ǰ*, rather than **č*, which would have been preserved as *č* in Armenian.[10] Also, the spelling MMP ⟨'sp⟩, Pahl. ⟨sp⟩ for Ir. **usp-* > MP *əsp-* is attested at least in *spurrīg* 'complete' (MMP *'spwryg*, Pahl. ⟨spwlyk'⟩) < **us-pṛna-* + suff. *-īg*, alongside the rare conservative spellings Pahl. ⟨'wspwlyk'⟩ or ⟨'spwlyk'⟩.[11] The loss of unstressed **u-* in the first syllable of Arm. *spowžem* is equally regular.[12]

1.3 MP *spaxr* 'banquet, cheerfulness'

The word *spaxr* 'banquet, feast, revelry', attested in Pahl. ⟨sp'hl⟩, MMP *'spxr* and in the NP form **siparxī* (written *siparǰī* with wrong punctuation in Steingass 1892 s.v.) has been traditionally compared to OAv. *spaiiaθra-*. In turn, this obscure Gāthic word is usually traced back to an alleged root

6 Such an etymology is based on a phonetic law reconstructed by Pagliaro 1955: 155–156 according to which Ir. **us-* + *v-* could yield *sp-*. This development is problematic under several respects and has not been accepted by later scholars.

7 Cf. Emmerick 1968: 151, Sims-Williams 1992: 43, Maggi 2025: 211–212, especially fn. 11.

8 Cf. Cheung 2007: 18.

9 Cf. Gershevitch *apud* Hallock 1969: 38. The word *ab-ba-uk-ka₄-iš*, indicating female workers involved in nursing activity in the same document PF 1223 could represent OP **ā-baugā-* 'midwife', but this is less certain.

10 *Pace* Cheung 2007: 354 (**spauč*) and Henning 1933: 182 (**spuč*).

11 On the treatment of initial *usp-* in MP, cf. Fattori 2025a: 379-388.

12 Cf. Henning 1965: 246, fn. 29.

**spā-* ‘to satisfy’ or the like, connected with Ved. *sphā-* ‘to become fat, increase’.[13] In reality, even leaving aside the uncertainties concerning the semantic and etymological interpretation of OAv. *spaiia-θra-*,[14] a rapprochement with MP *spaxr* would be impossible on phonetic grounds, because OIr. **aya* yields MP *ē*, not *a*, and the cluster **θr* yields MP *hr*, not *xr*.[15]

A better idea, at least from a formal point of view, was that of Bartholomae 1906: 152, who posited a prefixed verbal noun **us-pax-θra-*, from the root **pač-* ‘to cook’.[16] Although it is not unconceivable for a banquet to be described as an event where much food is cooked, the suffix *-θra-* normally indicates an instrument (a cooking-pot or the like) rather than the abstract action expressed by the verb. Furthermore, a base **paxθra-* is not found elsewhere in the Iranian languages. A good compromise could then be **us-* + **baxθra-* (YAv. *baxəδra-* ‘part, portion’, MP *baxl* ‘id.’ etc.), which requires accepting a development fully parallel to that of MP *spōxtan*, described above in §1.2. The underlying semantics would be something like ‘distribution of free food, offering of food to guests’, which seems to me a more reasonable way to describe a feast.[17]

1.4 MParth. *nyš’m* ‘sunset, nightfall’, BSogd. *nšmy* ‘west’

The words discussed in this paragraph are quite rare, their meaning is not always clear, and they have been explained by means of etymological comparisons which are often unsatisfactory. In what follows I will attempt at clarifying their mutual relationship or lack thereof analysing them one by one.

Let us start from the least problematic, which is BSogd. *nšmy* ‘western, west’. The meaning is assured by bilingual evidence (Skt. *paścima-* ‘western, west’, Chin. 西 *xī* ‘id’.) and there are no doubts concerning its reading.[18] The Skt. translation and its usage as an apposition of *kwsy* ‘side’ and *kyr’n*

13 Cf. Salemann 1912: 45 and Pagliaro 1926 for the connection with OAv. *spaiiaθra-*, Bartholomae 1904 s.v. and Bailey 1959: 137–138 for the reconstruction of a root *spā-*.

14 The only attestation is in Y 30.10 *adā zī auuā drūjō auuō.bauuaitī skəṇdō spaiiaθrahiiā* of uncertain translation. Since we are dealing with something negative that falls upon Deceit, the connection with the root **ćvaH-* ‘to throw down’ etc. proposed by Humbach-Elfenbein-Skjaervø 1991/2: 56 seems promising: “the harm of being knocked down will fall upon Deceit” (for the passive value of the suffix **-aθra-* < PIE **-etlo-* see Olsen 2004: 421–422). As Humbach himself admits, such a translation implies a complicated construction, but I would not exclude that what we translate literally as “harm of being knocked down” could in fact be the technical term for a disease. Ved. *víṣkandha-* and *sáṃskandha-*, apparent cognates of OAv. *skənda-*, are the names of particular diseases, and possibly also in OKh. *vatcasta-* ‘crippled’ (< **ava-sčasta-*) and Sogd. *’sk’nt* ‘id.’ the root **skand-* takes on a technical medical meaning. This explanation seems preferable to a connection with *spaxr* and a derivation from an alleged root **spaH-*, which, by the way, is far from established. Among the possible reflexes listed by Cheung 2007 s.v., Yazgh. *spān-* ‘to fill, replenish’ is rather from **us-pārnaya-* or the like (cf. Morgenstierne 1974: 74b and Cheung 2007 s.v. **parH-*) and the Oss. verb *æfsad-*, *æfsast* ‘to satisfy’, intr. *æfsæd* ‘to be satisfied, have enough’ (a secondary pres. stem based on a postulated ppp. **spāta-*, in turn replaced by a secondary ppp. according to Abaev 1958–1995/1: 479f.) and OKh. *spai-*, *spata-* ‘to satisfy, be enough’ (with unexplained short vowel in the ppp., see Emmerick 1968: 136), although probably cognate with each other, both pose formal difficulties if derived from **spaH-*, and, moreover, do not match well the semantics of Ved. *sphā-* ‘to become fat’.

15 Cf. Pagliaro 1926: 286 “non manca qualche difficoltà fonetica”.

16 Pagliaro 1964: 191 proposed a slightly variated reconstruction **us-* + *vaxθra-* (YAv. *vaxəδra-* ‘speech’), which, however, is once again based on the problematic “Lex Pagliaro” described above in fn. 6.

17 Another common *Benennungsmotiv* for words meaning ‘party, feast, celebration’ – including English *party*, formerly ‘group of people’ – is the idea of ‘gathering, assembly’. I believe that this meaning could be the basis to explain the etymology of Parth., MP, NP *bazm* ‘feast, meal’. Instead of deriving it from the root **baǰ-* in the intransitive sense of ‘to obtain as one’s share, partake of’ (Horn 1893: 50), which is phonetically problematic (one would expect **bagman-* > **bahm*, or **bajman-* > Parth. **bažm*) or **(d)banz-* ‘to be dense, large, wide’ (Schwartz 1990: 205, cf. Cheung 2007: 71 for the root), which seems semantically unlikely, I would suggest an abstract noun Ir. **bazma(n)-* ‘gathering, bonding, grouping’, to root *band-* ‘to bind, unite’ (with *s*-extension, compare YAv. *aēsma-* ‘firewood’, MP *ēzm* ‘id.’, to root **aid-*, Ved. *edh-* ‘to kindle, burn’).

18 Cf. MacKenzie 1972 and Bi-Sims-Williams-Yan 2017: 315.

'id.' in the bilingual epitaph published by Bi-Sims-Williams-Yan 2017 suggest that the final *-y* is an adjectival suffix *-ē* < Ir. **-aka-* and not an inflectional ending.

A very similar MParth. word *nyš'm* occurs only one time in a parinirvāṇa-hymn for the death of Mār Zakū, one of Mani's early disciples. The text depicts a series of negative scenarios contrasting with the past situation, with special emphasis on the opposition of light and darkness. Here follows the strophe we are interested in (transl. after Asmussen 1975: 31):

'wn lmtyr nys'g, ky rwšn frd'b ṯ'b'd 'w 'ny p'dgws. 'm'ḫ bwd nyš'm
"O Bright Lamp whose light splendor shone towards others: to us came dusk (?)"

As can be seen, the context requires *nyš'm* to indicate a cessation of light, and a meaning 'dusk, sundown' seems perfectly fitting. Initially, Andreas and Henning (1934: 866, 904) left the word untranslated, only mentioning a possible relation with Pāzand *nišāmī* (on which see below). The clue for hypothesising its meaning was seen by Benveniste (1936: 230–231) in the comparison with Sogd. *nšmy*, but for some reason he opted for the translation 'obscurité', which does not precisely correspond to the meaning of its Sogd. counterpart. This choice was then followed by Boyce 1977: 65 'obscurity, darkness' (?) and Durkin-Meisterernst 2004: 254 'darkness'. Since I do not find Benveniste's reconstruction of a root **šam-* 'be bright, emanate light' particularly convincing (see below), I prefer not to depart too much from the meaning of Sogd. *nšmy* in translating Parth. *nyš'm*, and to translate the latter word as 'sundown, dusk' (so Asmussen).

In my opinion, these two words can be explained as compounds with a prefix *niš-* causing devoicing of the following consonant. Since we are dealing with sundown, I would propose a derivation from Ir. **niš- + ǰāma-* (compare Ved. *nirgam-* 'to go out, disappear', Khot. *naḷjsem-* 'to finish' < **niž-ǰāmaya-*, with regular sandhi of *niš-*), with a meaning close to that of MP *hanǰām* 'end'. The Parthian form *nišām* would represent the primary lexical base 'sundown, dusk', whereas Sogd. *nišamē* would be an *aka*-adjective (Gershevitch 1954: 145 §967) with a secondary shortening of the root vowel, which is not unparalleled in Sogdian: compare MSogd. *''zṯyy* 'free' < OIr. **āzāta- + -(a)ka-* (Gershevitch 1954: 16 §121–122). Such an etymology seems to me less problematic than the ones proposed so far, mostly depending on Benveniste (1936: 230–231), which require postulating a connection between these two forms and other words only partially compatible therewith both on the phonological and on the semantic side. Let us now go through these alleged cognates.

The first one is the above-mentioned word written *nišāmī* in two passages of the Pāzand text *Škand-gumānīg-wizār* (text after Cereti 2005: 9, my translation):

- *cuṇ aftāβ u āsāeaa vašą nə būṯ hāci nišāmī u vašādaī myą̊n* (XVI.51–52) 'Like sunlight and shadow. And between them there is no … and no gap'
- *diṯ īṇ ku akanāraa ą̊ bahōṯ i aparəxt-jā u *avīmaŋ-x́adī. vaš han jā ⟨u⟩ nišāmī ažaš parəxt nəst* (XVI.94–95) 'Furthermore, what is infinite has no leftover space, and its nature is without boundaries, and no other place or … is left over from it'

De Menasce (1945: 254, with literature), tried to reconcile the meaning of this word with Parth. *nyš'm* by translating the latter as 'crépuscule' and *nišāmī* as 'intervalle, transitions (entre jour et nuit)', which is not inconceivable at first glance. However, as rightly emphasised by Taillieu (2003), one must first of all assess whether the Pāzand transcription, traditionally ascribed to the medieval Zoroastrian scholar Neryosang and based on a lost Pahlavi version, is reliable or not. Unsurprisingly, this seems not to be the case. Neryosang translated this word by means Skt. *āsanatva-* and *āsana-* 'seat, abode', which suggests that he somehow connected it with Pahl. *nišēm* 'seat' < Ir. **nišadman-*. This, however, is hardly compatible with the context, and appears to be a *faute de mieux* solution to which the scholar resorted as he did not understand the correct word written in Pahlavi. We are therefore entitled to think of a possible alternative reading of the underlying Pahlavi spelling. Tail-

lieu, after a thorough discussion of the relevant material, proposes postulating, instead of †*nišāmīh*, an otherwise unattested word **wišāmīh* 'space, void', based on a questionable etymological reconstruction. I regard as largely preferrable to search for an existing word in Pahlavi that can fit the context. By reconstructing what Neryosang must have read in his source text, i.e. a Pahlavi spelling like 𐭭𐭩𐭱𐭥𐭬𐭩𐭲 ⟨nyš'myh⟩, we can easily notice that it closely resembles the word *wēhmīh* ⟨wyyhmyh⟩ 𐭬𐭩𐭲𐭥𐭬𐭩𐭲 'breadth, space' (MacKenzie 1971 s.v.), which is almost a synonym of *wišādīh* 'gap, interval' and matches perfectly the required meaning in both the passages cited above. It can be surmised that Neryosang, either due to a corruption already found in his manuscript or because he believed the correct spelling to be a corruption, mistook *wēhmīh* for an alleged †*nišāmīh* and transcribed consequently in Pāzand. It goes without saying that, if things are so, this occurrence has nothing to do with the two words discussed above.

Another group of words connected to MParth. *nyš'm* and BSogd. *nšmy* by Benveniste is the lexical family of Pahl. ⟨'dšm⟩, Ps. ⟨'dyšmy⟩ 'moonlight' (read as **āyišm* by MacKenzie 1971 s.v.), allegedly derived from Ir. **adi-šma-*.[19] In reality, if one looks at all the cognates of the word form 'moonlight' in modern Iranian languages, a better etymology can be formulated. The relevant data are as follows (Hakobian 2017 s.v., Vahman-Asatrian 1990: 269, Morgenstierne 2003: 75 s.v. *spoğm'əy*): Pasht. *oẓ̌m(əy)*, *uẓ̌məy*, *wəẓ̌məy* 'moonlight', Sgl. *wulmēk* 'id.', Wkh. *žəmak* 'id.', Yd. *imoɣo* 'month, moon', Kurd. *hayv*, *hīv* 'moon, moonlight', Zaz. *āšma* 'id.', Tal. *ovšəm* 'id.', Tat. *owešma* 'id.', and the element Bactr. βομοɣο- and Sogd. *'xšwm-* attested in theophoric names.[20] Building on Morgenstierne's insightful idea that these words could contain the root **vaxš-* 'to grow, wax', I would propose an adjective OIr. **ā-vaxš-ma-* 'crescent, growing', which can account for all the existing variants.[21] The Pahl. form ⟨'dšm⟩, Ps. ⟨'dyšmy⟩, which I read as *āyašm*, shows the typically SW sound-change *āw* > *āy* also seen in MP *hāyān* 'village, settlement' < OP *āvahana-*.[22] Most of the other forms seem to preserve an element **āwašm* (> **āwšm* with syncope or **wašm* with apocope of the initial vowel), with optional suffixation.

Having discarded this alleged cognate as well, there only remains to discuss the YAv. word **frāšma-*, attested in the compound *frāšmō.dāiti-*, the name of the first part of the first half of the night, possibly in *frāšmi-*, an epithet of Haoma, and perhaps borrowed into Pahl. *frāšm* 'glowing of twilight, emanation of glow'.[23] Following Benveniste's proposal **frā-šm-a-* should be seen as an abstract noun with zero grade root + *-á-* suffix (compare *°*gná-* in Av. *vərəθra-γna-* 'victory, defeat of the obstacle', to root **gan-* 'to hit, strike'), which is a quite rare and archaic morphological pattern, different from that of MParth. *nyš'm* and BSogd. *nšmy*. Given this difference in formation, the distance in meaning existing between 'dusk, sundown' and 'twilight, halo, glimmer' and the fact that a root **šam-* has no comparative basis in the whole Indo-Iranian group, it seems better to me to keep these words apart. Admittedly, I am unable to propose a definitive etymology for YAv. *frāšma-*, but the comparison with Ir. **fraša-* (OAv. *fərasă-*, YAv. *fraša-*, OP *fraša-* 'wonderful' etc.) and Ved. *pṛkṣá-* 'vigorous, strong' (?), repeatedly suggested in the literature, seems promising.[24]

19 Cf. also Gershevitch 1959: 233, Cheung 2007: 371 (hesitantly), Cantera 2017: 34 fn. 18.

20 On these personal names linked to a lunar goddess cf. Kreidl 2022 and Sims-Williams 2017: 451–453, who prefers a connection with the doubtful root **šam-* (see below).

21 Morgenstierne, followed with slight variations by Vahman, Asatrian and Hakobian, postulated a compound having Ir. **māh-* 'moon' as a second element, which would not be compatible with some of the cited words, including Pahl. ⟨'dšm⟩.

22 Cf. Henning 1952: 520. The SW form is possibly reflected (as a loanword?) also in Kurd. *hayv*, *hīv* (pointing to a pre-Kurd. base **āšm*, see Cabolov 2001–2010/1: 444) and in Zaz. *āšme*.

23 See the literature cited in fn. 19. The meaning of **frāšma-*, Pahl. *frāšm* is clearly 'twilight', i.e. light indirectly projected by the sun in the atmosphere when it is not directly visible, either at dawn or dusk. Scholars usually simply translate it as 'glow' (cf., e.g., Belardi 1961: 32, Shaked 1974: 251–253).

24 The first to trace this parallel was Foy 1896: 134, who noticed that both YAv. *frāšmi-* and Ved. *pṛkṣá-* are referred to Haoma/Soma. Then, Bailey 1953: 21–32, ignoring Foy's article, argued once again that these two words, as well

2 Other instances of unusual behaviour of preverbs

2.1 A note on the treatment of **fra-b°* in Sogdian

As was recognized by Gershevitch (1946: 181 fn. 3, see also Gershevitch 1954: 246), the Sogd. verb *θβar-* (B, M, S *δβr-*, C *θbr-*) 'to give' must be derived from Ir. **fra-bar-* > **fβar-* > *θβar-* with dissimilation of the two labial fricatives in contact (compare OKh. *haur-* 'to give', Chor. *hβr-* 'id.'). So far, no other example of such a treatment in Sogdian has been identified, and to my knowledge no etymology has been recognised which implies the contact of the preverb *fra-* and a root-initial **b-*.[25] Hereafter, I would like to propose two possible cases of this phenomenon:

Benveniste (1929: 162) had already understood that the Sogdian word for 'perhaps, maybe' *δβāt* B, M, S *δβ't*, C *db't* could represent a compound of *β't*, subj.3.sg of *βw-* 'to be, become', with the cross-linguistically very common meaning 'may-be, peut-être'. It seems to me that the most obvious candidate as a preverb for this form is **fra-*. A meaning 'to happen' is registered for Ved. *prabhū-* 'appear, become visible, happen, occur' and it could also be attested in the YAv. verb *frāuuōiṯ* in Yt 19.80.[26]

The second case is the word for 'flame, blaze' B, S, M *δβ'(')n*, C *db'n*. Gershevitch (1971: 286) explained this word from a root **dav-* 'to burn' (Ved. *dav-*) postulating an abstract noun **dv-āna-*.[27] In addition to being a morphologically implausible formation, this etymology involves a root which almost always shows a shape **θav-* in Iranian (see Cheung 2007: 67–68). Cheung's (2007: 83) alternative proposal of connecting *δβ'n* to a root **dvanH-* 'to fly up, fume' does not improve much the situation. Such a root is poorly attested in Iranian, and with quite distant meanings, and the formation would remain difficult anyway: YAv. *dunman-* 'cloud' suggests that the zero grade form of this root is **dunH-* rather than **dvaH-*, required to derive *δβān* from **dvaH(a)na-*.[28] Instead, I propose a noun **fra-bā-na-* 'glow, radiance', understood as the visible component of fire: compare Ved. *prabhā́-* 'light, radiance', later Skt. *prabhāna-*, and YAv. **fra-bā-* 'to shine, glow' attested in *frauuāiti* (for **fraβāiti*, Yt 14.13): *dūire frauuāiti ... tąθriiąm aipi xšapanəm* 'it gleams far and bright, even over the dark night'.

If these two etymologies are accepted – or at least the first one, which seems to me quite sound – the problem must be addressed of the divergent outcome between *θβar-*, with a voiceless *θ* and *δβāt*, with a voiced *δ* (this distinction is only visible in CSogd. script). I think that *θβ* (spelled as CSogd. ⟨θb⟩) must represent an earlier stage, being the direct outcome of a dissimilation *fβ* > *θβ*, and that it could survive as such because it belonged to an inflectional paradigm with an imperfect stem *θāβar-*, where the preverb and the root-initial consonant were not in contact. In the absence of the paradigmatic pressure exerted by the imperfect stem, it can be surmised that forms such as ** θβāt* and **θβān* were assimilated to *δβāt* and *δβān*, eliminating a quite harsh cluster of voiceless + voiced fricative which, to my knowledge, is only found word-initially in *θβar-* 'to give'.[29]

as Ir. **fraša-*, belong together and reflect a root meaning 'to invigorate' or the like. Cf. also Cantera 2017: 34–35 who emphasises the invigorating function of Haoma, which is "the one giving glow to the sun through the libation to the waters at the end of the day". Despite the inevitable semantic uncertainties due to the unclear meaning of Avestan *fraša-* and Ved. *pṛkṣá-*, a formation such as IIr. **prakš-ma(n)-* > YAv. *frāšma(n)-* (with secondary lengthening, see de Vaan 2003: 60–62) would be unproblematic.

25 See Sims-Williams 1983: 50 for a list of the outcomes of the preverb *fra-* with other root-initial consonants.

26 So Bartholomae 1904 s.v. *bav-* and Hintze 1994: 342–343 (with literature). Differently Kellens 1974b: 92–93.

27 Cf. also Schwartz *apud* Sims-Williams 2014: 46.

28 See now Fattori 2026 for a thorough discussion of the reflexes of this root in Indo-Iranian.

29 Note that all the other cases where Manichaean and Sogdian script have initial ⟨δβ⟩ surface as *θf-* or *tf-* in Christian Sogdian script, implying that OIr. **θv* might have had a different phonetic outcome than **fra-b°*: e.g. S *δβ'yz-*, C *θfyž-* 'to gain, acquire' (Bactr. αλφανζ-, Chor. *θfnc-*), S *δβ'nk*, C *θfng* 'grain, seed'.

2.2 MP *hangēz-* ‘to arouse, excite’ and *wigēz-* ‘to expound, explain’

The verbs MP *hangēz-*, NP *angīz-* ‘to arouse, stimulate’ and Pahl. **nigēz-* ‘to explain’ (so read) have been considered cognates since Horn (1893: 30, 286).[30] Horn mentioned as a possible term of comparison Skt. *saṃvigna-* ‘agitated’, implicitly hinting at the root Ved. *vej-*, Av. *vaēj-* ‘to swing, agitate’. The etymological discussion on these words has not progressed much since then, inasmuch as all the subsequent hypotheses are highly questionable. Bailey (1979: 440) assumed a connection between Pahl. **nikēž-* ‘to explain’ (his transcription) and OKh. *hamkhīys-* ‘to count’ postulating a “base *kaiz-*, *khaiz-*” which, in addition to lacking any comparative basis, cannot account for the ppp. ** nikēxt* of the MP verb, implying a root ending in a velar, not a palatal. The same problem is encountered in Cheung’s (2007: 97) reconstruction of a root **gaiz-*, where he puts together the above-mentioned verbs with BSogd. *’nγyznykh* ‘emetic, *un (remède) excitant*’ and several New Iranian forms (NP *gēǰ* ‘confused’, Oss. I. *qyzyn*, D. *ğizun* ‘to threaten, be hostile, be bad’, Oss. I. *ænqizyn*, D. *ænğezun* ‘to ferment’).[31] The matter deserves to be reassessed from scratch.

Let us start by discarding the verbs adduced by Cheung which must belong to different roots. Oss. I. *qyzyn*, D. *ğizun* ‘to threaten, be hostile, be bad (said of weather)’ shows no similarity in meaning with the verbs introduced above, and its root vowel, pointing to Ir. **ĭ*, differs from that of the alleged cognate Oss. I. *ænqizyn*, D. *ænğezun* ‘to ferment’, pointing to Ir. **ai*. I suspect that this verb could be a loanword from Turkic: compare Azer. *qızmaq*, Turkm. *gyzmak* ‘to get hot, become angry, lose one’s temper’.

BSogd.*’nγyznykh* ‘arousing, stimulating’ is also certainly unrelated. This word clearly reflects a verb **ham-xaiz-*, well attested both in intransitive (M, S *’nxz,’nγz*, C *’xz* ‘to rise’) and causative form (B *’nγ’yz*, *’nx’yz*, M *’nxyj* ‘to arouse, bring into being’). In particular, the form at issue, indicating some kind of medicine, must be a pres. ptc. of the causative form, closely paralleled by the forms M [*’n*](*γ*)*z*(*n*)*yy* and *’*(*n*)*γ*(*znyẖ*) ‘rising’ which represent the corresponding intransitive pres. ptc. (Gershevitch 1954: 133 §894). The same explanation might apply to the Oss. verb I. *ænqizyn*, D. *ænğezun* ‘to ferment’, taking /ɣ/ as the voiced reflex of Ir. **x* after a nasal.[32]

As was said above, the MP forms introduced at the beginning of this paragraph must belong to a root ending in a velar (with stem-final **č* or **ǰ* > MP *z*), as demonstrated by their ppp.s *hangēxt* and **nigēxt*. In my view, they should be traced back to the OIr. roots **vaiǰ-* ‘to swing, shake’ and **vaič-* ‘to separate, discern, sift’ respectively, and the outcome *g* of the root-initial consonant in MP must be explained as a consequence of the contact with the preverbs.[33]

The verb *hangēz-*, NP *angīz-* ‘to excite, arouse’ < Ir. **ham-vaiǰ-*, requires postulating a velarised outcome **v* > *g*, which is regularly found in MP only in **vi-* > *gu-* (in special contexts) and **vṛ-* > *gur-* (Hübschmann 1895: 154–164). However, exceptional cases of *g* instead of *w* are found in Middle Persian, perhaps as dialectal variants:[34] e.g. the PN IMP *Gwndply* /Gundfarr/, IParth. *Wyndprn* < Ir. **Vin-*

30 See also Herzenberg 2011: 210.

31 Cheung’s data are mostly taken from Abaev 1958–1995/1: 165, 2: 336.

32 The normal outcome of post-nasal **g* is *g*, as in I. *zæng*, D. *zængæ* ‘shin, stalk’ < Ir. **ǰangā-* (YAv. *zanga-* ‘ankle’, Ved. *jáṅghā-* ‘shank’), see Cheung 2002: 31. In fact, Cheung himself (2007: 97) is compelled to assume a secondary prefixation of **ham-* to justify the association of this verb to an alleged root **gaiz-*, which confirms the weakness of the whole reconstruction.

33 The appurtenance of MMP *hgjyn-* ‘to wake up, excite’ to Pahl. *hamgēz-*, NP *angīz-*, first proposed by Henning 1940: 54 and followed, for example, by Herzenberg 2011: 210, is quite doubtful. In light of the later discovery of a ppp. *hgjyst* (ms. Otani 6195, see Durkin-Meisterernst 2004: 177a), one might rather think of a connection with the root **zgand-* ‘to prance, mount, speed up’ (cf. Oettinger 2024), with the regular developments Ir. **zg* > MMP *gj* (cf. Gershevitch 1964: 16–17, suggesting a different etymology) and Ir. **nd* > MMP *nn* in the pres. stem.

34 The outcome *g* for Ir. **w* after palatal vowels is regular in Balochi, cf. Korn 2005: 98. The assumption of a borrowing from another dialect seems inevitable also for NP *gīǰ* ‘confused, dizzy’, Kurd. *gēž* ‘id.’, as post-vocalic *ǰ* does not represent the regular outcome of any OIr. phoneme according to the standard development of Persian. In light of compound forms like *sar-gīǰiš* ‘dizziness, vertigo’, *sar-gīǰa* ‘dizzy, confused’ (Steingass 1892 s.v. *sar-gījash*, *sar-gīja*),

dat-farnah- (OP *Vindafarnah-*) beside MP *windādan* 'to find', the outcome of the toponym IMP *Why'ndywkšhpwhry* /Weh-Andyōk-Šābuhr/ (Gr. Γουεαντιοχσαβώρ) > NP *Gundīšāpūr*, Pahl. *guzistag* 'accursed, hateful' < **vi-físta-ka-*, beside JP *wzsth*/*βzsth* (expected: Pahl. **wizistag*).[35] Also, it should be remarked that the outcome of OIr. **ham-v°* is not attested in other verbs,[36] and it cannot be excluded that *hang-* < [haŋgu̯] < [hanu̯] < **ham-v°* is simply a rare but regular development, perhaps before palatal vowel. The existence of nominal compounds such as *ham-war* 'level, abreast' or *ham-wār* 'always' in Pahlavi cannot be considered as reliable counterevidence, because the prefix *ham-* still productively formed nominal derivatives in MP, and for this reason it resisted assimilation: e.g. *ham-sāyag* 'neighbour', *ham-sardag* 'of the same kind'. Instead, *ham-* was no longer productive as a preverb and was fully assimilated in verbs like MMP *hassāz-* 'to make ready, fix, dispose' or **hassāy-* 'to whet' (ppp. *hassūd*).

The verb traditionally read as **nigēz-* ⟨nykyc-⟩, ppp. **nigēxt* ⟨nykyht'⟩ 'to expound, explain' is only attested in Book Pahlavi, which is famous for being ambiguous in the representation of some phonemes. As shown above, a typical example of this ambiguity is the confusion between *w* and *n*, both written as a vertical stroke. We should then ask ourselves what the reason is why all scholars transcribe this verb with an initial *n* rather than *w* and whether a reading with *w* would not yield a better etymology. At closer inspection, it is clear that the only basis for the current transcription of this verb is once again the traditional Pāzand reading *nigēž* 'explanation' (ŠGW IX.5),[37] which has already proved to be an unreliable indication of the actual reading of rare MP words. As an alternative, I would suggest reading this verb as *wigēz-* ⟨wkyc-⟩ and to explain it as the outcome of OIr. **vi-vaič-*, to root **vaič-* 'to sift, select, choose' (Cheung 2007: 407f.). A preverb *vi-* seems to fit better the semantics of the verb 'to explain, expound' (compare MP *wizīdan* 'to chose, select, discriminate', *wizārdan* 'to explain', *wizistan* 'to teach') and aligns perfectly with Skt. *vi-vic-* 'to distinguish, discern, discriminate'. This time, the outcome MP *g* < Ir. **v* can be easily understood as issued from dissimilation in the vicinity of another **v*. There are several parallels of this phenomenon, which must have had a relatively late chronology as it exhibits divergent outcomes: e.g. OIr. **vāvara-* 'truth, belief' (MParth. *w'wr*, Arm. *vawer*, Bactr. οαοοαρο) > MP *wābar* beside NP *bāwar*, OIr. **vi-grā-sa-* 'awaken, rouse' (MParth. *wygr's-*) > MP *gubrās-* beside *wigrās-*. Even though an etymological argument does not amount to actual proof, it nonetheless provides sufficient grounds to prefer a reading *wigēz-*, *wigēxtan* 'to explain, expound' over the traditional reading **nigēz-*, **nigēxtan*, which ultimately rests on a mere conjecture by Neryosang.

2.3 Bactr. βιν- 'to bind, oblige', αβινδαμο 'penalty, payment'

In the Bactrian document Y (Sims-Williams 2012: 142–143) there are two *hapax legomena* βιναδο and αβιδανο which are considered as etymologically related by Sims-Williams.[38] In order to properly discuss these words, it will be useful to examine the context where they occur (ll. 14–24):[39]

> κισο παδαχβανο μαβοοαδο μαγο αζαδο μαρδο οδο μαγο αζαζαδδιο … κιδασο μιρο χοαδο οδο μαγο ασο μιραγγο βραδο πορανο οδο μαγο ασο μιραγγο μασκονδανο … κισο πιδο βαβαγγο αχασο οδο

resembling *sar-gardān* 'dizzy', *sar-gardānī* 'dizziness' (vb. *gardīdan* 'to turn, go around'), it would not be out of place to derive these words from a form akin to Balochi *gēj-* 'to throw, swing' < Ir. **vaiǰ-*.

35 In fact, the alternation between an outcome *b* and *g* for word-initial **w* is well attested also in the earliest stages of New Persian: cf. Lazard 1963: 152–153 and Paul 2013: 38.

36 All the attestations of *(h)amw°* in Durkin-Meisterernst 2004 are from Parthian, and the Pahl. form *amwašt* is explicitly marked as Parthian in MacKenzie 1971, as it only occurs in the linguistically mixed text *Ayādgār ī Zarērān*.

37 See, for example, Nyberg 1934: 66.

38 Sims-Williams 2007: 203. Note that the word formerly read as †αβιναδαμο and interpreted as a ppp. + αμο in Sims-Williams 2000: 175 was then corrected to αβινδ{α}αμο, i.e. a form of αβινδαμο (see below) in the glossary of Sims-Williams 2007.

39 The translation follows Sims-Williams 2012: 142 with adjustments.

μαγο πιδο βαβαγγο παρο οδο μαγο πιδο οδαναγγο παδδιστο οδο μαγο πιδο οδαναγγο γαοοανο **αβιδανο** κισο μαιεσαδο οδο μαγο **βιναδο** οδο μαχωζαδο οδο μαγο σταμβο οδο γαμανο κιραδο φαρσο κιδαβο μιρο σταμβο οδο γαμανο κιραδο ... τωζαδο ταοοανο ζαροζιδαγο δδιναρο ṕ ...
'no-one should have the right, neither a freeman nor an aristocrat ... that, in respect of Mir himself, nor in respect of Mir's brothers (and) sons, nor in respect of Mir's people ... – no-one, on account of a dispute of Bab's, nor on account of a debt of Bab's, nor on account of a promise of the same, nor on account of an obligation (or) **liability** of the same anyone should not take (anything), nor **distrain** (anything), nor demand (anything), nor commit injury and wrong; but whoever may commit injury and wrong towards Mir ... shall pay a fine of a hundred dinars of struck gold.'

Sims-Williams interprets αβιδανο as a synonym of γαοοανο 'lack, need, obligation', and traces it back to an abstract noun **upa-(a)i-tan-a-* (presumably assuming a relation with the WIr. infinitives like OP *-tanai*, MP *-tan*), cognate with MP *abāy-* < **upa-ay-* 'to be necessary', MParth. *'byd* < **upaita-* 'necessary' etc. The subsequent verb βιναδο should in turn be a denominal verb 'to oblige, compel', based on a possible but unattested noun **upayana-*.

In my view, such a reconstruction entails some drawbacks. The main difficulty is that the semantics of the reflexes of Ir. **upa-ay-* is not much 'to be obliged, to be compelled' but rather 'to be necessary, to be needed, to be demanded by the circumstances'. Accordingly, nominals derived from this verbal base usually mean 'need, necessity' or 'needed, necessary', not 'obligation' or 'obliged, compelled': Aram. *'(w)pyty* 'provisions' (Naveh-Shaked 2012: 83), Arm. *pēt-k'* 'need, want, exigence, necessity' < Ir. **upaiti-*, MParth. *'byd*, MP *abēdān* 'necessary'. Thus, a hypothetical abstract noun **upa-ayana-* would probably mean 'necessity' or 'state of necessity', not 'obligation'. Now, if the postulation of a denominal verb is already not straightforward – given that denominal formations are, overall, less common than primary verbal roots – the fact that the supposed nominal base from which it would derive is both unattested and semantically problematic makes the hypothesis simply unlikely.[40] I believe that a different solution can be proposed.

If the meaning of βιν- is indeed 'to compel, oblige', which fits quite well the context, it would not be out of place to trace it back to a pres. stem **upa-hinā-*, to root **haiH-* 'to bind, tie' (Ved. pres. *sināti*), represented in Iranian in verbs such as MP *wišāy-*, MParth. *wyš'h-* 'to let loose, free' < **vi-šāya-* and, more remarkably, Sogd. *pyn*, Yaghn. *pẹn-* 'to open' < **apa-hinā-*.[41] The expected ppp. for a verb **upa-hay-* is **upa-hita-* (compare Av. *hita-*, OKh. *hīya-*, Yaghn. *pẹ́ta* < **apa-hita-*), so, sticking to Sims-Williams' morphological interpretation of αβιδανο, one might theoretically pose a verbal noun **upa-h(a)i-tan-a-* 'obligation, constraint'.

However, I believe that αβιδανο should be analysed differently. In my view, it is much more likely that it represents the preposition αβο 'to, towards', followed by a pronominal element. As Francesca Michetti has kindly suggested to me (p.c.), such a pronoun could be reconstructed as *ειδανο < ειο + τανο 'that person', with the same base Ir. **tanū-* 'body' found in the pronoun οδαναγγο, attested in the same sentence (and nowhere else in Bactrian).[42] She also adds that, in light of this explanation, one might consider deriving οδαναγγο from the pronominal base **ava-* 'that' rather than from **hāvat-* 'same' (normally surfacing as ω- in Bactrian, see Sims-Williams 2007: 281): we would then

40 Tremblay 2003: 127 speaks of a "causatif en *-ēn-* de type iranien occidental", which would be completely unparalleled in Bactrian, and takes αβινδαμο as a verb, which is at odds with the attestations in other languages (see below).

41 See Cheung 2007: 135–136 and Schwartz *apud* Yakubovich 2001: 484. In the same article Schwartz also proposed to explain Bactr. χοηδαγο 'free, released' from **vi-haita-ka-* (cognate with Sogd. *xwyck* < **vi-haita-čī-ka-* 'free of bonds') and Bactr. χοησιαοο 'resolution' (his translation instead of Sims-Williams' 'promise, undertaking') from **vi-haita-čī-* + suff. -αοο also seen in Sogd. *xwycq'wy* 'explanation, solution'. Despite being semantically acceptable, this idea is not devoid of some formal difficulties and has not been accepted in Sims-Williams 2007.

42 For οδαναγγο and τανο see Sims-Williams 2007: 244, 268.

have *ειδανο ‘this man’ for one party (Mir) and *οδανο ‘that man’ for the other one (Bab).[43] This interpretation is supported by the syntax of the sentence, which, in Sims-Williams’ construction, implies an odd asyndetic coordination after γαοοανο, whereas in the rest of the sentence all nominals are introduced by οδο μαγο πιδο ‘nor on account of’. Furthermore, the following sentence, mentioning the same harmful actions directed to Mir, also contains the preposition αβο: κιδ**αβο** μιρο σταμβο οδο γαμανο κιραδο ‘whoever may commit injury and wrong **towards** Mir’. The function of αβο must be that of bringing the focus back to the subject protected by this resolution, i.e. Mir, mentioned much further up in the text before a first list of his relatives, properties and employees and a second list of the possible reasons why his rights could be violated. Thus, a better translation for μαγο πιδο οδαναγγο παδδιστο οδο μαγο πιδο οδαναγγο γαοοανο αβιδανο κισο μαιεσαδο οδο μαγο βιναδο οδο μαχωζαδο οδο μαγο σταμβο οδο γαμανο κιραδο could be ‘nor on account of a promise of that party [i.e. Bab], nor on account of an obligation of that party – against the other party [i.e. Mir] no one should take (anything), nor distrain (anything), nor demand (anything) nor commit injury and violence’, involving a syntactic disruption similar to that found before κισο πιδο βαβαγγο αχασο ‘– no-one, on account of a dispute of Bab’s…’, understandably marked with a dash by Sims-Williams in his translation.

Another word which Sims-Williams connected to the verb βιν- is Bactr. αβινδαμο ‘fine, penalty’, also attested in Sogd. *βnt’m*, M *βnd’m*, C *bnd’m*, *bnṭ’m* ‘penalty, punishment’ and, as a loanword, in Gāndh. *aviṃdama*, *aviṃdhama* etc. ‘fine, recompense’. Semantically, a connection with βιν- ‘to oblige, compel’ would work, but the justification of the formation as an “abstract from *αβιν- = βιν-” is not persuasive, especially in light of the different etymology proposed above, according to which βιν- would be a nasal pres. stem. The assumed segmentation of the compound is unclear, and the suffixal element (-δαμο or -μο?) does not represent a productive morpheme in Bactrian. In my view, the direction suggested by Bailey (1982: 155), postulating a base **abidāma-*, is much more promising. Adjusting some formal weaknesses in Bailey’s etymology, I would reconstruct a noun **abi-ham-dāman-*, with a double preverb which, as happens in πιδαγγηρ- < **pati-ham-kāraya-* ‘to agree, settle’, does not undergo RUKI-palatalisation after *i*.[44] As is normal when dealing with technical terminology, it is not easy to establish how the semantics of the root is related to the actual meaning of the derived word. In principle, a meaning parallel to that of Ved. *abhisaṃdhā-* ‘to agree, be of the same mind, have the same aim’ would allow the reconstruction of a semantic evolution similar to that of Lat. *pacare* ‘settle, reconcile’ > Fr. *payer*, It. *pagare* ‘to pay’. However, this would only work if the formation was very old, dating to a period when verbal prefixation was still vital and the abstract suffix *-man-* was still productive. If the compound is more recent instead, it might be explained as a derivation by prefixation of Ir. **ham-dāman-* ‘part (YAv. *handāman-* ‘part, member’, MP *andām* ‘member, limb’ etc.). The prefix **abi-* could be seen as having augmentative meaning (late OP *ab^{i}y-apara(m)* ‘later on’, Ved. *abhírūpa-* ‘beautiful’, Skt. *abhyalpa-* ‘very small’), so that **abi-handāman-* would indicate an ‘additional part’, i.e. an additional fee to be paid as an overdue fee or the like. Whether or not the compound is recent is also relevant to the clarification of its phonological development. Judging from the Sogdian attestations, the vowel between the two preverbs is short, as it is never notated by a ⟨y⟩. This excludes an evolution such as **abi-ham°* > **abiyam°* > **abīm°* and rather suggests that the preverbs remained independent **abi-ham°* > **aβ-am°*. The vowel ι in the Bactrian form αβινδαμο will then have to be explained as the effect of secondary palatalisation caused by the following *nd*, which

43 Rather than being used for purely aesthetic reasons, to avoid repeating the names of the two contracting parties, these pronouns could represent the remnant of placeholders found in the template on which document Y was based, which were supposed to be replaced by the personal names in all their occurrences. One might compare the use of the MP word *wahmān* ‘so-and-so’ in the Pahlavi marriage contract: see Macuch 2007: 184–184.

44 *Pace* Skjærvø 2006: 315, the absence of RUKI is unproblematic. It could either be old, as it is also seen in Ved. *abhisaṃdhā-* and in other cases of Ved. compound preverbs, or recent, due to secondary prefixation of πιδο.

is very well attested: e.g. οανινδο 'victorious' < **vanant-* (YAv. *vanaṇt-*), υοσινδο 'satisfied, content' < **hu-ćandu-* (OP *uθandu-*).

I shall take the opportunity to discuss one last word found in the same document, which was also tentatively connected by Sims-Williams (2007: 232) to the (alleged) lexical family treated so far. The word is μινδδιο, occurring at l. 12 of document Y, translated as 'necessary' by Sims-Williams and tentatively explained as a later form of *αβινδιγο, a nominal derivative of βιν-. The context of attestation is as follows (Sims-Williams 2012: 142):

> ταδο ωσο ναγατο μανο βαγο σηρο καδγανο βαυο ασο μιρο πιδοοαυανο οδομο λαδδιιο οδο μινδδιο σιαδο
> 'So now, I, the lord *ser*, the king of the people of Kadag, have listened to the request (sent) by Mir, and it has seemed to me just and **necessary**.'

Since there is no clear evidence that the meaning of this word is in fact 'necessary' – and even if it were, Sims-Williams' etymology would remain problematic from a formal point of view – it seems to me that an alternative proposal can be advanced, based on a more satisfactory etymology. I would suggest analysing this adjective as from **imantaka-* 'little, moderate' (lit. 'this much'), to be compared to the privative prefix Sogd. *mnt-*, M *mnd-* (e.g. M *mnd-frnqy'* 'un-happiness'), Chor. *mnd-* (e.g. *mnd-'ktrm'n* 'disobedint, refractory'), lit. 'having few X', and Sarikoli *mund* 'so much, so many', Yidgha-Munǰi *mind* 'id.' correlatives to Sarikoli *čund* 'how much, how many' and Yidgha-Munji *čand* respectively.[45] The semantic shift from 'so much' to 'so little, so few' is well attested in the MIr. languages for adjectives/pronouns in **-ant-*, especially when extended with suffixes, as would be the case with Bactr. -ιιο (< -ιγο < Ir. **-ika-* or **-aka-*): e.g. OKh. *ttandaka-* 'so little', MP, NP *andak* 'little, few'. In the above passage, such an adjective would indicate that Mir's request seemed a small ask, fair and easy to accomplish. Thus, I suggest translating οδομο λαδδιιο οδο μινδδιιο σιαδο as 'and it seemed to me just and **modest**'. From a phonological point of view, the outome μινδ° < **(i)mant-* shows the same kind of palatalisation before *nd* mentioned at the end of the previous paragraph.

In contrast with the approach adopted by Sims-Williams (1997), who projects formations of this kind back onto the proto-Iranian stage as early combinations of pronominal bases and the suffixes **-vant-* and **-ant-* (in this case, **imaH-ant-*), I regard as more likely that many of them are secondary analogical formations. Inherited doublets such as OP *avākaram* 'of this kind, so much' : *cⁱyakaram* 'of what kind, how much' or YAv. *auuauaṇt-* 'so great' : YAv. *cuuaṇt-* 'how great' etc. must have functioned as a model to form, in Middle Iranian, new quantitative demonstratives by replacing **ava-* with other pronominal stems. Thus, for example, it does not seem necessary to derive OKh. *ttanda-* 'so great' from a very ancient Ir. form **taH-ant-*, as it can more plainly be explained as an analogical formation based, on the one hand, on *canda-* 'how great' < **čiyant-* (MP *čand*, Sogd. *cntn*) and, on the other hand, on the inherited doublet *ttu* 'that' : *cu* 'what', in view of the fact that a base like *vanda-* 'small' < **avant-* (Sogd. *wntn*) was no longer traceable to a transparent demonstrative stem. Another example of such a mechanism is seen in OKh. *cerä* 'how much', which I suggest deriving from Ir. **čiyakaram* – note that both are indeclinable –, having as its correlative OKh. *tterä* 'so much'.[46] Since this kind of formation with **-kara-* is very rare and the only comparable attestation as a demonstrative is the above-mentioned OP *avākaram* (from **avaH-at-*), OKh. *tterä* has little chance of being old and it seems much more likely that it was secondarily built from *cerä*. Likewise, I believe that the EMIr. stem **(i)mant-* is a secondary formation based on the **čiyant-*/*čivant-* series, represented by Sogd. *cntn* 'how much', Sarikoli *cund* 'id.', Yidgha-Munji *čand* 'id.', whose derivation was prompted by the important role played by the pronominal base **ima-* in the demonstrative system of these languages.[47]

45 Cf. Sims-Williams 1997: 318–319, also mentioning the Sogd. adverb *mnt* 'while, until' < 'for so much time'.
46 Sims-Williams 2025: 113 intead hesitantly derives this pronoun from a hypothetical Ir. **či-tara-*.
47 Cf. Sims-Williams 1994: 41–42, Rastorgueva-Èdel'man 2000–2020/1: 104–109.

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Index of words for which a new or different etymology is proposed

αβιδανο (Bactr.) §2.3; **αβινδαμο** (Bactr.) §2.3; *'βwzy-* (Chor.) §1.2; *'nγyznykh* (BSogd.) §2.2; *ænğezun* (Oss. D) §2.2; *ænqizyn* (Oss. I) §2.2; ***angīz-*** (NP) §2.2; ***'spw-*** (MParth.) §1.1; *āyašm* (Pahl.) §1.4; **βιν-** (Bactr.) §2.3; *βnt'm*, *βnd'm* (Sogd.) §2.3; *bazm* (Parth., MP, NP) §1.3 fn. 17; *cerä* (OKh.) §2.3; ***δβ'n*** (Sogd.) §2.1; ***δβ't*** (Sogd.) §2.1; *gīǰ* (NP) §2.2, fn. 32; *ğizun* (Oss. D) §2.2; ***hangēz-*** (MP) §2.2; *hgjyn-* (MMP) §2.2 fn. 31; μινδδιο (Bactr.) §2.3; ***nšmy*** (BSogd.) §1.4; ***nyš'm*** (MParth.) §1.4; †*nigēz-* (MP) → ***wigēz-*** (MP) §2.2; †*nīšāmī* (Pāz.) → *wēhmīh* (Pahl.) §1.4; *qyzyn* (Oss. I) §2.2; *spaiiaθra-* (OAv.) §1.3 fn. 14; ***spōz-*** (MP) §1.2; *tterä* (OKh.) §2.3;

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