

## Young Avestan *pašne* and its etymology

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**Abstract.** Young Avestan *pašne* is attested ten times in constructions with genitive and accusative used to indicate the position of the figures at the moment of the worship of various deities. The only occurrence of the construction with the accusative in Yt 5.108 must be due to an analogy with the *upa* + accusative construction that occurs earlier in the text. The author argues that *pašne* does not mean ‘in the sight of’, but rather ‘at the shore of’ and is a loc. sg. of *pašna*- n. ‘bank, shore, side’. This word is most likely identical with *pašna*- ‘eyelid’ or ‘eyelash’. Similar semantic development can be found in Skt. *vārtman*- ‘track of a wheel, way’ (RV+) besides ‘eyelid’ (AV) or Skt. *vartani*- ‘way, wheel rim, track of a wheel’ (RV+) and ‘eyelashes’ (ŚBr.), with the meanings ‘eyelid’ and ‘eyelashes’ being derived from the meaning ‘circumference’.

From the etymological point of view, Young Avestan *pašna*- can be compared with other Indo-Iranian words for ‘side, flank’, like Skt. *pājas*- n. ‘side, surface’, Khot. *pāysa*- ‘surface, breast’, Sogd. *p’z* ‘face’, Oss. *faz / fazæ* ‘half, side; back, buttocks’. The semantic development ‘side’ > ‘shore’ is trivial, cf. English *river side*. These words are derived from the PIE root *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-* ‘to attach, fix’ (Gk. πῆγνυμι ‘to fix, join, congeal’, Lat. *pangō* ‘to attach, join’, etc.), PIIr. *\*paHj-* (this root loses its laryngeal, when followed by a consonant, cf. Skt. *pajrá-* ‘solid, strong, firm’ (RV) < PIE *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-ro-*). Avestan *pašna*- goes back to PIIr. *\*paj-na-* < *\*paHj-na-*, which, in theory, can reflect three PIE formations: *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-no-* (cf. Lat. *pignus* ‘pledge, hostage’), *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-mn-o-*, thematic variant of *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-m(e)n-* (cf. Gk. πῆγμα ‘joint together, stage, scaffold’) and *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-(e)n-* (cf. Lat. *pāgina* ‘side, sheet of paper’). Of these options, the latter is clearly preferable.

**Keywords:** Avestan, Yashts, Indo-European etymology, Glottalic theory, Historical linguistics.

## Младоавестийское *pašne* и его этимология

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**Аннотация.** В статье обсуждается словоформа *pašne*, встречающаяся в ряде младоавестийских гимнов в контекстах, описывающих местоположение персонажей, обращающихся к божеству с просьбой. В этих контекстах за *pašne* следует обозначение водоема в генитиве (единственное употребление конструкции с аккумулятивом в Yt 5.108 следует считать отклонением, развившимся, вероятно, по аналогии с конструкцией *upa* + аккумулятив). Автор отказывается от предложенной Х. Бартоломе интерпретации *pašne* как деривата от корня *spas-* ‘видеть’ со значением ‘в поле зрения’ и поддерживает предположение о том, что *pašne* является формой локатива единственного числа от *pašna-* ‘берег, сторона’. Далее предлагается идентифицировать это слово с *pašna-* ‘веко’ или ‘ресница’. Примером аналогичного семантического развития могут служить др.-инд. *vártman-* ‘колея, путь’ (RV+) наряду с ‘веко’ (AV) или др.-инд. *vartani-* ‘путь, обод колеса, колея’ (RV+) и ‘ресницы’ (ŚBr.), где значения ‘веко’ и ‘ресницы’ являются производными от значения ‘окружность’.

Автор возводит восстановленное таким образом многозначное авестийское *pašna-* к инд.-ир. *\*paj-na-* (ср. оглушение в мл.-ав. *barəšnu-* ‘высота’ из инд.-ир. *\*b<sup>h</sup>arj<sup>h</sup>-nu-*) из *\*paHj-na-* (с выпадением ларингального перед согласным, ср. др.-инд. *pajrá-* ‘прочный’ < и.-е. *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-ro-*) от инд.-ир. *\*paHj-*, ср. скр. *pájas-* ‘сторона, поверхность’, хот. *pāysa-* ‘поверхность, грудь’, согд. *p’z* ‘лицо’, оссет. *faz /fazæ* ‘половина, сторона; задняя сторона, ягодицы’. Семантическое развитие ‘сторона’ > ‘берег’ находит многочисленные параллели, ср. англ. *river side*. Инд.-ир. *\*paHj-* далее возводится к и.-е. *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-* ‘прикреплять, скреплять’, ср. др.-гр. *πῆγνυμι*, лат. *pangō* ‘скреплять, соединять’, etc.

Из трех рассмотренных вариантов реконструкции инд.-ир. *\*paHj-na-* — и.-е. *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-no-* (ср. лат. *pignus* ‘заклад’), и.-е. *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-mn-o-*, тематизированный вариант *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-m(e)n-* (ср. др.-гр. *πῆγμα* ‘скрепление’), и.-е. *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-(e)n-* (ср. лат. *pāgina* ‘сторона, страница бумаги’) — автор отдает предпочтение последнему.

**Ключевые слова:** авестийский, яшты, индоевропейская этимология, глотальная теория, историческое языкознание.

## 1

Yasht 5 to Anāhitā, Yasht 9 to Druuāspā, Yasht 15 to Vāiiu, and Yasht 17 to Aši all contain a list of suppliants who ask the respective deity for a boon, which is either granted or denied. For most of the figures it is indicated where they were at the moment of the worship. The locations are indicated with the help of different constructions, conveniently listed in [Kellens 1999–2000: 736–739]. These are in general not problematic except for the construction *pašne* plus a genitive (9×) or accusative (1×), which has not yet found a satisfactory solution.

Geldner in his edition [Geldner 1896] everywhere edits *pasne*, but as already pointed out by Bartholomae [1904: 885], the overwhelming majority of the manuscripts, including the most reliable ones, read *pašne*<sup>1</sup>. The latter reading is since then adopted in all subsequent publications and editions<sup>2</sup>.

The attested constructions are:

- <sup>+</sup>*pašne varōiš pišinaḡhō* (Yt 5.37) ‘*p.* of the lake Pišinah’;
- <sup>+</sup>*pašne varōiš* <sup>+</sup>*caēcistahe* (Yt 5.49, Yt 9.18, 21, 22) ‘*p.* of the lake Caēcista’;
- <sup>+</sup>*pašne āpō dāitiiaiiā* (Yt 5.112, Yt 9.29, Yt 17.49, 61) ‘*p.* of the river Dāitiiaiiā’;
- <sup>+</sup>*pašne āpəm frazdānaom* (Yt 5.108) ‘*p.* of the river Frazdānauu’.

<sup>1</sup> The manuscript readings in Geldner’s critical apparatus are: Yt 5.37: *pasne* P13, K19; *pašne* F1, Pt1, E1, L18; *pasni* K12; *pišne* J10 // Yt 5.49: *pašne* F1, Pt1, E1, L18, M12; *pasni* K12; *pašni* P13, K19; *pišne* J10 // Yt 5.108 = 112: *pašne* F1, Pt1, E1, L18, P13; *pišne* J10 // Yt 9.18: *pasne* Jm4; *pasni* Pt1, L18, P13, O3; *pašne* F1, E1, M12 // Yt 9.21: *pasni* Pt1, L18, P13, O3; *pašne* F1, E1, Jm4 // Yt 9.22: *pašne* F1, E1, M12; *pasnahe* Pt1, L18, P13, O3 // Yt 9.29: *pašne* F1, E1, M12; *pasni* Pt1, L18, P13; *pasnəm* O3 // Yt 17.49 = 61: *pašne* F1, Pt1, E1, H3, M12; *pisne* J10.

<sup>2</sup> On the basis of the reading *pasne*, Darmesteter [1882] translates with ‘behind’, presumably connecting *pasne* with *pasca*, etc. In his French translation [1892], he renders it with ‘derrière’ and explains in a footnote [1892: 376]: “Derrière, **pasnê**, signifie sans doute à l’ouest du lac, le visage étant dirigé vers l’orient.”

I agree with Kellens [1999–2000: 737] that the accusative in Yt 5.108 <sup>+</sup>*pašne āpəm frazdānaom* is “une aberration”<sup>3</sup>, probably due to the parallel construction of *upa* + acc. in the preceding passage Yt 5.76 *upa āpəm yaṃ vītaṃ<sup>v</sup>haitīm* ‘at the river Vītaṃ<sup>v</sup>haitī’, so that we can state that, normally, *pašne* requires a genitive.

## 2

Bartholomae assumed that *pašne* is a loc. sg. of *pašna-* m., which he glossed with “‘Hinsehen auf -’; nur LS. ‘in conspectu, angesichts’”, and derived from the root *spas-* ‘to see’. This etymological meaning was taken over by Malandra [1983] (‘within sight of’) and Oettinger [1983] (‘im Anblick + gen.’). Lommel [1927: 35] is agnostic and puts in his translation ‘bei (?)’ with a footnote “‘hinter?’; ‘angesichts?’”, the former referring to the translation of Darmesteter (see footnote 2), the latter to that of Bartholomae.

There are two problems with Bartholomae’s analysis. First, unlike Skt. (*s*)*paś-*, the Iranian root *\*spas-* is never attested without the initial *s-*. Secondly, as noticed by Kellens [1999–2000: 737], *pašne* is only used with hydronyms (*varōiš* ‘lake’, *āpō* ‘river’), which rather suggests the meaning ‘on the shore / riverside of’, so that *pašne* would then be a locative to *pašna-* ‘side, shore’<sup>4</sup>.

To my mind, these considerations suffice to demonstrate that Bartholomae’s etymological connection of *pašne* with the root for ‘to see’ must be abandoned, but before looking for cognates in other languages let us first consider possible parallels in Avestan itself.

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<sup>3</sup> Less probable is Bichlmeier’s suggestion [2011: 213] that “hier könnte noch ein Rest der Verbalrektion des dem Substantiv zugrunde liegendes Verbs vorliegen”. He probably has the root *paś-* ‘to see’ in mind, but this root (without the initial *s-*) is not found in Iranian (see further below).

<sup>4</sup> Kellens’ suggestion was — implicitly — followed by Skjærvø [2011: 114], who translates the Yt 5.37 passage “on the shore of deep Lake Chaēchasta”.

## 3

Next to <sup>1</sup>*pašna-* m. ‘Hinsehen auf -’, Bartholomae gives <sup>2</sup>*pašna-* n. ‘Augenlid’. This <sup>2</sup>*pašna-* refers to the entry *pašnəm* in the ‘Frahang ī oīm’ (F 122), which appears between ‘eye’ and ‘nose’ and is glossed by Pahl. *pyš ZY čšm /pēš i čašm/* ‘before the eye’. Bartholomae therefore translated it as ‘eyelid’<sup>5</sup> and connected Skt. *pákṣman-* n. (sg. and pl.) ‘eyelashes’ (YV+) and the Iranian words for ‘wool’ (Khot. *pe’ma-*, Bactr. *παμανο*]; Pahl. *pšm /pašm/*, NP *pašm*, Yi. *pām*, San. *pām*, Oss. *fæsm /fans* ‘wool from the autumn shearing’, etc. <PIr. *\*pašman-*). This etymological connection has been taken over by Mayrhofer [1986–2001, 2: 62].

The problem with this etymology is that Skt. *pákṣman-* and PIr. *\*pašman-* point to a common Proto-Indo-Iranian form *\*pačšman-* with the original meaning ‘wool’ (probably, related to Gk. *πέκω* ‘to comb, pluck’; Gk. *πέκος* n. ‘wool, fleece’, etc.). In order then to explain *pašnəm*, we have to assume that the meaning ‘eyelid / eyelash’ was already present in Proto-Indo-Iranian (<‘\*eye wool’), but then lost everywhere in Iranian except for Avestan, and that *pašnəm* goes back to a thematicized *\*pašmna-* with the loss of *-m-*, whereas the rest of Iranian has kept the athematic stem. Both assumptions are not impossible, but require a lot of special pleading<sup>6</sup>.

It seems much simpler and more probable to identify *pašna-* ‘side, shore’ and the Frahang word *pašnəm*<sup>7</sup>. From the viewpoint of semantics, ‘side, shore’ seems to be a good candidate for both ‘eyelid’ and ‘eyelash’, for a parallel cf. Skt. *vártman-* n. ‘track of a wheel, path, course’ (RV+) and ‘eyelid’ (AV) or Skt. *vartani-* f. ‘track, way, course, felloe of a wheel, track of a wheel’ (RV+) and ‘eyelashes’ (ŚBr.), where the

<sup>5</sup> It is also conceivable that the Avestan word meant ‘eyebrow’ or ‘eyelash’. Klingenschmitt [1968: 51] reckons with ‘eyelash’ as an option.

<sup>6</sup> An additional difficulty is that thematicizations of this kind are only typical of masculine derivatives in *-men-* and not of neuters, see further below, sub 6.

<sup>7</sup> Bartholomae considered <sup>1</sup>*pašna-* m. ‘Hinsehen auf -’ and <sup>2</sup>*pašna-* n. ‘Augenlid’ as homonyms of different origin, but even with those meanings one might have considered their identity, cf. Gk. *βλέφαρον* ‘eyelid’ next to *βλέπω* ‘to see, look’.

meaning ‘eyelid / eyelash’ has developed out of ‘circumference’. The similar meaning of Skt. *pākṣman-* would then be coincidental.

In this way we can also ascertain that *pašna-* ‘side, shore, eyelid’ was a neuter and not masculine as was guessed by Bartholomae.

#### 4

In his entry <sup>+l</sup>*pašna-*, Bartholomae refers to *nipašnaka-*, which he considers its derivative. Unfortunately, the meaning of the hapax *nipašnaka-* is impossible to determine. It occurs in a difficult passage Yt 5.95, where Anāhitā gives an answer to Zarathuštra’s question (Yt 5.94) as to what becomes of the libations to her which the *daēuua-*worshippers bring after sunset. Obviously, the general meaning of Yt 5.95 must entail the message that Anāhitā declines these libations, but the passage is most probably corrupt.

Yt 5.95    *āaṭ aoxta arəduuī sūra anāhita*  
             *ərəzuuō ašāum spitama zaraθuštra*  
             *niuuaiiaka nipašnaka*  
             *apa.skaraka apa.xraosaka*  
             *imā paiti.vīsəṅte*  
             *yā māuuōiia pasca vazəṅti*  
             *xšuuas̄.satāiš hazarəmca*  
             *yā nōiṭ haiti vīsəṅti*  
             *daēuuanəṃ haiti yasna*

The four forms *niuuaiiaka*, *nipašnaka*, *apa.skaraka*, *apa.xraosaka*, all hapaxes, are usually taken as the derogative terms for the *daēuuas* or for the *daēuua-*worshippers (in nom. pl.), although the translations are only based on etymological guesses. Bartholomae-Wolff [1910: 177] translate “Die Schaudererregenden, die Schelsüchtigen, die Hohnsüchtigen, die Schmäh-süchtigen”, Oettinger [1983: 120] ‘das Schreckende (Plural), das Neidische, das Beleidigende (und) das Schmähende’, whereas Lommel [1927] and Malandra [1983] refrain from translating most of these terms, including *nipašnaka*.

Skjærvø [2011: 62] takes the four words as standing in instr. sg. and translates: “Thus she spoke, Ardwi Sūrā Anāhitā: «O upright Spitāma-son, sustainer of Order, they are to be rejected with words of woe, to be ground under the heels, to be laughed back, to be booed back, these libations that fly after me by six-hundreds and a thousand, which are not accepted even at the sacrifice to the evil gods!»”. Since Skjærvø does not comment on his translation, it is not clear how he emends the text in order to arrive at his rendering. From Skjærvø’s translation of *nipašnaka* ‘to be ground under the heels’ it follows that he assumes an original *\*nipāšnaka*, containing *pāšnā*- ‘heel’ with irregular shortening<sup>8</sup>.

We must conclude that *nipašnaka* is so obscure that it does not contribute anything to our analysis of *pašna*.

## 5

We arrive thus at a Young Avestan word *pašna*-, which means ‘lake shore, river bank’ and also ‘eyelid or eyelash’. Since it can be connected neither with the root for ‘to see’ nor with the Iranian word for ‘wool’, we must look for another etymology. The Avestan group *-šn-* — in a non-RUKI context — can go back to PIIr. *\*-ć(š)n-* or to PIIr. *\*-j<sup>(h)</sup>n-* with devoicing, which is phonetically regular, e.g., YAv. *barəšnu-* m. ‘height, top’ < PIIr. *\*b<sup>h</sup>arj<sup>h</sup>-nu-*; YAv. *barəšna* instr. sg. m. ‘elevated place, height’ < PIIr. *\*b<sup>h</sup>arj<sup>h</sup>(m)nā*; YAv. *zi-xšnā-ŋhəmna-* ptcp. desid. mid. < PIIr. *\*ji-jnaH-sa-* (cf. [Hoffmann & Forssman 2004: 102]).

The meaning ‘shore, bank’ often develops out of ‘side’, cf. English *river side*, *lake side*, and it is therefore attractive to assume that *pašna*- is a derivative of the PIE root *\*peh<sub>2</sub>ǵ-* ‘to attach, fix’ (Gk. *πῆγνυμι* ‘to fix, join, congeal’, Lat. *pangō* ‘to attach, join’, etc.), because various nouns derived from this root do show the meaning ‘side’ < ‘attachment, fixation’.

<sup>8</sup> A similar interpretation had already been given by Gershevitch [1959: 201], who translates the four terms ‘chasing (?), heeling (??; cf. *pāšna*-, Sogd. *pšn* ‘heel’), shuffling (cf. Skt. *ava-caskarire*, *apa-skirate*, ‘to scrape with the feet’), reviling’.

In Indo-Iranian, for instance, we find PIIr. *\*paHjas-*, reflected in Skt. *pájās-* n. ‘side, surface’ (RV), *pājasyà-* n. ‘belly (of an animal); flanks, side’ (AV, YV) and in Khot. *pāysa-* ‘surface, breast’, Sogd. *p’z* ‘face’; Oss. *faz / fazæ* ‘half, side; back, buttocks’; Khwar. *p’z* ‘breast’; Wa. *pɔɪz* ‘breast, breast-bone, forepart (of an animal)’<sup>9</sup>. This *s*-stem is likely to be of PIE origin as it is also found in Lat. *compāgēs* f. ‘framework, joint’ and Gk. εὖ-πιηής adj. ‘well-built’.

The PIIr. root *\*paHj-* sometimes loses its laryngeal, most probably when followed by a consonant (cf. [Lubotsky 1981] for the mechanism and phonetic justification)<sup>10</sup>. A clear example of this loss is Skt. *pajrá-* ‘solid, strong, firm’ (RV) < PIE *\*peh₂ǵ-ro-* (with restored full grade)<sup>11</sup>, and we may suggest that Avestan *pašna-* goes back to PIIr. *\*paj-na-* < *\*paHj-na-*.

## 6

There are several ways to provide PIIr. *\*paj-na-* < *\*paHj-na-* with a derivational history. First, we can take the form at face value and project it into PIE *\*peh₂ǵ-no-*. We may then compare Lat. *pīgnus, -eris / -oris* n. ‘pledge, surety, hostage’ (< *\*peg-nos-*), the meaning of which strongly suggests a connection with *pango* [Sandoz 1986], since ‘pledge, surety’ is the ‘fixation’ of an agreement. This connection was interpreted by de Lamberterie [1996: 135–136] as being due to the PIE loss of the laryngeal *\*peh₂ǵ-no-* > *\*peg-no-*, a development which, however, remains uncertain because of the very scanty evidence. Moreover, the suffixes *-no-* and *-nos-* are not necessarily of the same origin.

<sup>9</sup> This word is possibly also contained in YAv. *pāzaŋ’hant-* (F 721), although the meaning of the latter is unknown.

<sup>10</sup> Recently, Neri [2017: 312f.] has explained these forms by a general loss of laryngeals before two consonants in PIE (the so-called *Wetterregel*), which is based on a number of weak etymologies and is unacceptable to me.

<sup>11</sup> Less clear is this conditioning in Skt. *pāpaje* 3 sg. pf. mid. ‘to stay behind = \*to stand stiff’ (RV 10.105.3).



Another option is to reconstruct a derivative with the suffix *-men-*, PIE *\*peh₂ǵ-m(e)n-* ‘framing’ (cf. Lat. *prōpagmen* ‘prolongation’ (Enn.), *antepagmentum* ‘the facing of a door- or window-frame’ (Cato+); Gk. πῆγμα n. ‘joint together, stage, scaffold’) and assume that PIIr. *\*paj-na-* is due to its thematicization with concomitant loss of *-m-*, PIE *\*peh₂ǵ-mn-o-* > PIIr. *\*paj-mn-a-* > PIIr. *\*paj-na-*, like in PIE *\*bʰudʰmno-* (Gk. πῶθμῆν m. ‘bottom, depth, root’) > PIIr. *\*bʰudʰna-*, Skt. *budhná-* m. ‘bottom, ground, depth’, Plr. *\*buna-* < *\*budna-*. This scenario is conceivable, but the problem is that thematicizations of this kind are only typical of masculine derivatives in *-men-* and not of neuters, and, further, the Greek and Latin formations are so productive that we cannot be sure that this *-men-* stem is of Indo-European age.

In my view, the most promising solution is to posit a PIE *n*-stem *\*peh₂ǵ-(e)n-*, which is reflected in Lat. *pāgina* f. ‘side, sheet of paper’. This stem was later thematicized in (Indo-)Iranian to *\*paHǵ-na-* > *\*paj-na-* ‘side’ with loss of the laryngeal before the cluster. In this way, we do not have to make additional assumptions and the semantics are straightforward.

## Abbreviations

adj. — adjective; desid. — desiderative; f. — feminine; loc. — locative; m. — masculine; mid. — middle; n. — neuter; pf. — perfect; pl. — plural; ptcp. — participle; sg. — singular.

Bactr. — Bactrian; Gk. — Greek; Khot. — Khotanese; Khwar. — Khwarezmian; Lat. — Latin; NP — New Persian; Oss. — Ossetic; Pahl. — Pahlavi; PIE — Proto-Indo-European; PIIr. — Proto-Indo-Iranian; PIr. — Proto-Iranian; San. — Sanglechi; Skt. — Sanskrit; Sogd. — Sogdian; YAv. — Younger Avestan; Yi. — Yidgha; Wa. — Wakhi.

AV — Atharvaveda, RV — Ṛgveda; ŚBr. — Śatapathabrāhmaṇa, Yt — Yasht; YV — Yajurveda.

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