

EKŠĪD, Arabo-Persian form of a Sogdian royal title attested in Sogdian script as (ʿ)χšyδ (more anciently and more commonly written by means of the ideogram *MLK*ʿ) and in Manichean script as (ʿ)χšy(y)δ. The Old Turkish title *šad* may be a dialectal variant of the Sogdian word, which is almost certainly etymologically identical with OPers. *xšāyaθiya-*, Mid. Pers. and NPers. *šāh* "king" (Bosworth and Clauson, pp. 6-7; Sims-Williams, 1985, p. 163, n. 61; and Yoshida, 1988, p. 148, where 'xš''y'δ is a misprint for 'xš'y-'δ).

Ebn Kordādbēh (p. 40) and Ṭabarī (II, pp. 1242, 1247) apply the title *ekšīd* exclusively to the rulers of Farḡāna, and it has often been assumed that this is the only authentic usage; but the discovery at Afrāsīāb (q.v.; ancient Samarkand, capital of Soḡd) of bricks stamped with the title *ekšīd* in Kufic script (Bernard et al., p. 375) helps to confirm that Ya'qūbī (*Ta'rik* II, p. 344) is equally correct in referring to Ġurak (Sogd. Ūrak, mistakenly transcribed Ġuzak in most Arabic texts), the last independent ruler of Samarkand, as "*ekšīd* of Soḡd" (though the later historians Ebn A'ṭam Kūfī (IV, p. 180) and Bal'amī (ed. Rowšan, p. 843) were mistaken to interpret *ekšīd* as the name of Ġurak's father). The full title of Ġurak is given by Ya'qūbī as *ekšīd al-Soḡd afšīn Samarqand* "*ekšīd* of Soḡd, *afšīn* of Samarkand," corresponding closely to the titulature of Dēwaštīč (q.v.) attested in the Sogdian documents from Mt. Mug as *šwōdyk MLK*ʿ *sm'rkndc MR*ʿY "king of Soḡd, lord of Samarkand" (Livshits, 1962, p. 56 and passim, with minor variants), where the ideogram *MLK*ʿ is used in place of the phonetic spelling *xšyδ* (for the equivalence of *xšyδ* and *MLK*ʿ cf. also *βγ'n(w)* (ʿ)*xšy(y)δ* and *βγ'(?)n(w)* *MLK*ʿ "king of the gods," a title of Zurvan in Manichean and Buddhist Sogdian texts, see Sims-Williams, 1976, p. 47). Besides the rulers of Soḡd and Farḡāna, the only other *ekšīd* referred to in pre-Islamic documents from Western Turkestan is a certain *βtyk* or *βxyk MLK*ʿ. This title is borne by a ruler of Panjikent at the beginning of the 8th century; according to Livshits (1979, pp. 58-60), it may originally have related to the Baḡdān district to the north of Panjikent, while Yoshida (1993, p. 254) understands it as indicating a ruler nominated by the Chinese emperor. (cf. also Bactr. *bagddiggo kagano* on some Hephthalite coins [Davary, pp. 170-71], where *ekšīd* seems to have been replaced by the Turkish royal title *kāqān*). Later Sogdian texts from Eastern Turkestan show that the title *ekšīd* was, or had become, widespread, being applied both to famous kings of the past such as Alexander and Aśoka (*nksyntr MLK*ʿ, *šwk*ʿ *MLK*y; Henning, p. 138, ll. 26-27, 30) and to contemporary petty rulers (*k'šy xšyδ* "king of Kāšḡar," Müller, p. 11, l. 75; *tm'r xwš xšyδ* "king Tāmār Quš," possibly a chief of the so-called "dragon clans," cf. Sims-Williams and Hamilton, pp. 68-69). Finally, in the 4th/10th century, the title was revived in Egypt by Muḥammad b. Toḡj, founder of the Ekhshidid dynasty, whose ancestors had come from Farḡāna.

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