EKŠİĐ. Arabo-Persian form of a Sogdian royal title attested in Sogdian script as (ـخشیا) (more anciently and more commonly written by means of the ideogram MLK') and in Manichean script as (ـخشیا) The Old Turkish title šad may be a dialectal variant of the Sogdian word, which is almost certainly etymologically identical with OPerš. خشیاها, Mid. Pers. and NPers. شاه "king" (Bosworth and Clauson, pp. 6-7; Sims-Williams, 1985, p. 163, n. 61; and Yoshida, 1988, p. 148, where ـخشیی is a misprint for ـخشیی). Ebn Kordâbeh (p. 40) and Tabâri (II, pp. 1242, 1247) apply the title ekšid exclusively to the rulers of Farğana, and it has often been assumed that this is the only authentic usage; but the discovery at Afrâsiây (q.v.; ancient Samarkand, capital of Soğd) of bricks stamped with the title ekšid in Kufic script (Bernard et al., p. 375) helps to confirm that Ya'qûbi (Ta'rîk II, p. 344) is equally correct in referring to Ƣûrak (Soğd. ÊÛrak, mistakenly transcribed Ƣûzak in most Arabic texts), the last independent ruler of Samarkand, as "ekšid of Soğd" (though the later historians Ebn A'tâm Küfî (IV, p. 180) and Bal'amî (ed. Rowshan, p. 843) were mistaken to interpret ekšid as the name of Ƣûrak's father). The full title of Ƣûrak is given by Ya'qûbi as ekšid al-Soğd afšin Samarqand "ekšid of Soğd, afšin of Samarkand," corresponding closely to the titulature of Dewâniq (q.v.) attested in the Sogdian documents from Mt. Mug as سجیوک MLK' smarknc MR'Y "king of Soğd, lord of Samarkand" (Livshits, 1962, p. 56 and passim, with minor variants), where the ideogram MLK' is used in place of the phonetic spelling خشیا (for the equivalence of خشیا and MLK' cf. also بیو(w) (ـخشیا) and بیو(w) MLK' "king of the gods," a title of Zurvan in Manichean and Buddhist Sogdian texts, see Sims-Williams, 1976, p. 47). Besides the rulers of Soğd and Farğana, the only other ekšid referred to in pre-Islamic documents from Western Turkestan is a certain بیوک or بیوک MLK'. 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 Bagdân 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 bagddiggo kagano on some Hepthalite coins [Davary, pp. 170-71], where ekšid seems to have been replaced by the Turkish royal title ەگەئ). Later Sogdian texts from Eastern Turkestan show that the title ekšid was, or had become, widespread, being applied both to famous kings of the past such as Alexander and Asoka (آبسک یاکسک MLK'; šuk MLK'; Henning, p. 138, ll. 26-27, 30) and to contemporary petty rulers (ک یسخ يخی ک خم ی ہاکگار, "Müller, p. 11, l. 75; تر یسخ يخی ک خم ی ہاکگار "king Tämär Qaš, 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. Töğ, founder of the Ekhshidid dynasty, whose ancestors had come from Farğana.


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